COMPLAINTS AND DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

A clear and fair process for our United family

1. Purpose

Shepparton United Soccer Club is committed to providing a safe, respectful and inclusive environment for all players, families, coaches, volunteers, officials and supporters.

This procedure explains how complaints are raised, managed and resolved, and how disciplinary action may be taken when club rules, policies or expected standards of behaviour are not followed.

All complaints will be treated seriously, fairly and as confidentially as reasonably possible.

This procedure operates alongside the club constitution and applicable Football Victoria and Football Australia rules, policies and regulations.

2. Who does this procedure apply to?

This procedure applies to all club members and participants, including:

- Players and parents or guardians.
- Coaches, team managers and other volunteers.
- Committee members and club officials.
- Spectators and supporters attending club activities.

3. How to raise a complaint

Step 1 — Speak to the appropriate person

For minor concerns, where appropriate and safe, speak respectfully with the person involved or the relevant team coach or manager.

Step 2 — Submit a formal complaint

If the issue cannot be resolved, is serious, or you are uncomfortable raising it directly, submit your complaint in writing using the contact details in Section 4.

Step 3 — Provide the details

Include the following information wherever possible:

- What happened.
- The date, time and location of the incident.
- The people involved.
- Names of any witnesses.
- Any relevant messages, photographs or other supporting evidence.

A complaint can be made by a player, parent, guardian, member or other person involved in club activities. A child may ask a trusted adult to help them report a concern.

Important: Child safety concerns, abuse, harassment, discrimination, threats or other serious misconduct do not need to go through the informal steps first. They can be reported directly to the appropriate club contact or external authority.

4. Who to contact

Please direct your complaint or concern to the most appropriate contact below.

General complaints — Club Secretary
secretary@sheppunitedsc.com.au

Junior-related complaints
For concerns relating specifically to junior players, teams or junior football operations:
juniors@sheppunitedsc.com.au

Complaints requiring escalation — Club President
president@sheppunitedsc.com.au

Child Safety Officer — Kevin Singh
childsafety@sheppunitedsc.com.au

Member Protection Information Officer (MPIO) — Sheridan Fairless
mpio@sheppunitedsc.com.au

The MPIO can provide information and guidance about available complaint pathways and relevant member protection policies. The MPIO does not automatically investigate or determine complaints.

If a complaint involves the person who would normally receive or manage it, it must be directed to another appropriate, uninvolved contact. Complaints involving the President or other committee members should be referred to an independent, uninvolved person or the appropriate external body.

Child safety concerns and serious misconduct may be reported directly to the appropriate club contact or external authority. They do not need to follow the usual informal complaint pathway first.

5. How the club will manage a complaint

The club will follow these steps when managing a complaint:

Step 1 — Acknowledge the complaint
The club will confirm receipt and explain who will handle the complaint, where practicable.

Step 2 — Assess the concern
The club will assess whether the matter may be resolved informally, requires a formal investigation, or should be referred to Football Victoria, Football Australia, police or another appropriate authority.

Step 3 — Gather information
Relevant people may be spoken to, available evidence reviewed and a written record maintained.

Step 4 — Give everyone a fair opportunity to respond
A person accused of misconduct will be informed of the substance of the allegations and given a reasonable opportunity to respond, subject to applicable safeguarding requirements.

Step 5 — Make a decision
The club will consider the available information fairly and determine the appropriate outcome or next steps, within its authority.

Step 6 — Communicate the outcome

The relevant parties will be informed of the outcome and any action that can appropriately be shared, while respecting privacy.

The club will aim to deal with complaints promptly. More serious or complex matters may take longer, particularly where external organisations are involved.

6. Disciplinary action

If a complaint or investigation identifies a breach of the club's rules, policies or expected standards of behaviour, disciplinary action may be considered, subject to the club constitution and applicable rules.

Depending on the seriousness of the matter and the club's authority, action may include:

- A verbal or written warning.
- A request for an apology or agreed corrective action.
- Education, counselling or additional training.
- Removal from a particular club duty or position, where permitted.
- Suspension from club activities or facilities, where authorised.
- Termination of club membership, where permitted under the club's rules.
- Referral to Football Victoria, Football Australia, police or another relevant authority.

The club will consider the seriousness of the behaviour, any previous incidents, the available evidence, the safety of participants and any applicable football regulations.

Fair process

No disciplinary action will be imposed without a fair process. The person concerned must have a reasonable opportunity to respond, and any action must be consistent with the club's rules and applicable Football Victoria and Football Australia requirements.

Where a matter falls under Football Victoria's disciplinary or tribunal regulations, the relevant process and appeal rights will apply.

7. Serious incidents and immediate safety concerns

Some matters must be escalated immediately and should not be dealt with informally. These include:

- Suspected child abuse, grooming or other child safety concerns.
- Physical violence, threats or serious intimidation.
- Bullying, harassment or discrimination.
- Sexual misconduct or abuse.
- Serious breaches of football integrity policies.
- Any incident involving an immediate risk to someone's safety.

The club will take appropriate steps to protect those involved and refer the matter to the relevant authority or football body. Police or emergency services should be contacted where necessary.

The club will not attempt to conduct its own investigation where doing so could interfere with a police investigation or an external safeguarding or integrity process.

8. Confidentiality and records

Complaints will be handled sensitively. Information will only be shared with people who reasonably need it to manage the matter, meet reporting obligations or protect participants.

The club will:

- Keep appropriate records of complaints, evidence, decisions and actions.
- Store complaint records securely.
- Avoid discussing complaints through team chats, social media or other public forums.
- Take reasonable steps to protect people from victimisation for raising a genuine concern or participating in a complaint process.

Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in every circumstance, particularly where information must be shared for safety, legal or reporting reasons.

9. What if someone disagrees with the outcome?

A person who believes a complaint was not handled fairly may request a review in writing, explaining their concerns.

Where appropriate, the club may arrange for an uninvolved committee member or independent person to review whether the correct procedure was followed. A review should be conducted by someone who was not involved in the original decision wherever practicable.

A review is not automatically a new investigation simply because someone disagrees with the decision. Any external appeal or review rights under Football Victoria or Football Australia rules will continue to apply.

10. Expected behaviour during the process

Everyone involved in a complaint is expected to:

- Treat others respectfully.
- Provide honest and accurate information.
- Cooperate with reasonable requests for information.
- Respect confidentiality.
- Avoid threatening, intimidating or retaliating against anyone involved.

Knowingly providing false information, interfering with a complaint process or victimising someone for raising a concern may itself result in disciplinary action, subject to the club's rules.

11. External guidance and resources

Where appropriate, individuals may seek further information or assistance through Football Australia, Football Victoria or other relevant authorities.
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Relevant resources include the Football Australia Member Protection Framework and Football Victoria's applicable grievance, disciplinary and tribunal regulations.

The club recognises that some matters may need to be managed by an external organisation, particularly where safeguarding, integrity or formal disciplinary processes apply.

Quick Guide — What should I do?

1. **A concern arises.** Decide whether it is a minor concern that can safely be raised informally or a serious matter requiring immediate reporting.

2. **Contact the right person.** Use the Secretary for general complaints, the junior email for junior-related matters, or the Child Safety Officer or MPIO for relevant safeguarding or member protection guidance.

3. **Provide the details.** Explain what happened and include any relevant evidence.

4. **The club assesses the matter.** It may be resolved informally, investigated formally or referred externally.

5. **The outcome is communicated.** The club records the outcome and any appropriate action.

Committed to a safe, respectful and inclusive United family.