

## Resolving Complaints

### **Information for members, parents, volunteers, and officials wishing to raise a complaint or problem.**

The purpose of The Pony Club resolutions procedure is to ensure that complaints are taken seriously, dealt with fairly, and appropriately, and recorded accurately.

(This document seeks to clarify and update existing procedures)

The Pony Club also has a Volunteer Grievance Policy which should be invoked where the Complaints Policy is inappropriate.

### **What complaints are accepted?**

We accept complaints about how you, whether a member, parent, volunteer, or official have been treated by The Pony Club, or, if you are a parent or carer of a Pony Club member, how that young person has been treated by The Pony Club.

We have some basic rules for the acceptance of complaints:

- Complaints must be raised within three months of you knowing the facts (we do not deal with complaints that are older).
- We do not generally investigate anonymous complaints.
- We do not accept complaints that are raised on behalf of or regarding other people (except by parents/carers about the treatment of their children aged under 18 in The Pony Club).
- We do not accept complaints that are broadly or substantively the same as a previous complaint by the same complainant.
- We do not progress complaints that we believe to be vexatious or malicious.
- Complaints and objections relating to Competitions will be dealt with by the relevant Sport Chairmen aided by their Committees.

### **How do I complain?**

- Initially, you should try an informal approach to your District Commissioner (Branch issues) or Centre Proprietor (Centre issues), to attempt to resolve the matter. It is hoped that many complaints can be dealt with quickly and informally.
- If the initial informal approach fails to resolve the matter, then the help of the Area Representative should be enlisted, informally at first.

- If this informal approach fails to resolve the matter, then the matter may need to become a formal written complaint.
- The Area Representative may consult with the relevant Sport Committee Chairman (if appropriate) or may obtain advice from one of the Branch Operations Directors (BOD). Recording of telephone conversations or the taking of contemporaneous notes may be appropriate

### **How do I make a formal written complaint?**

- If the initial informal complaint process has failed to resolve the matter, a formal written complaint should be addressed by email to **resolution@pcuk.org** where it will be acknowledged by a Pony Club Staff member, who will manage the complaint throughout the formal process. Your complaint will be allocated a **start date**, a **case number** and a **target completion date**.
- Your formal complaint needs to include: your full contact details, the Branch or Centre details, the details of the member, a concise statement of the complaint, and your desired outcome to resolve this complaint. A complaints template is also available on our website.
- A Pony Club representative may need to speak to you and others to fully understand your complaint, and the circumstances surrounding your complaint in order to investigate further.
- In submitting your complaint you acknowledge and accept that the information you supply will be shared, as necessary, to enable that complaint to be considered fully.
- The Pony Club representative will refer the matter to the Rules and Compliance Committee, who will make their decision and advise you of their decision in writing.

### **Who deals with complaints about volunteers?**

- If your complaint is about a volunteer, it should initially be dealt with by the District Commissioner or the Centre Proprietor
- If your complaint is about a Centre Proprietor or District Commissioner, then it should initially be dealt with by the Area Representative.
- If your complaint is about the Area Representative or Area Centre Co-ordinator your complaint will be dealt with by the Chairman of the Rules and Compliance Committee.

### **Who deals with complaints about Pony Club staff?**

In the first instance, complaints regarding a member of The Pony Club Staff should be addressed by email to [resolution@pcuk.org](mailto:resolution@pcuk.org) where it will be passed to the relevant line manager.

If the complaint is regarding the CEO, the complaint should be addressed to the Chairman of The Pony Club.

## **How will my complaint be dealt with?**

Your complaint will be dealt with fairly and objectively.

We handle complaints in a positive and pro-active manner and expect resolutions and outcomes to contribute to a process of continuous improvement.

The person(s) conducting investigations may need to speak to you, and a number of other people, to fully understand your complaint and the circumstances surrounding it.

Please bear in mind that the majority of those taking part in the complaint resolution process are volunteers and have other calls on their time. It may therefore take a little longer to sort out your complaint. You will be kept informed of the progress and outcome of your complaint with an acknowledgement within seven days and regular updates.

## **What if I am not satisfied with the outcome of my complaint?**

1. If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint or the way in which it was handled, then you may appeal, in accordance with the following procedure.
2. The Appeal must be lodged in writing with the Vice Chairman of the Pony Club, within 28 days of receiving the decision of the Rules and Compliance Committee.
3. You must pay an Appeal Deposit to The Pony Club (as set out in the current Handbook) to The Pony Club. (£100)
4. You will receive an acknowledgement of your appeal within seven days.
5. The Vice Chairman of the Pony Club, will convene an Appeal Hearing consisting of two ARs and one Sport Chairman not previously connected to the case - the Appeal Committee
6. The BOD will prepare the case.
7. In your appeal, you must clearly explain the basis on which you are making the appeal and your preferred outcome to resolve the issue.
8. The Appeal Committee, or its appointed representative, may need to speak to you and a number of other people to fully understand your appeal, and the circumstances surrounding the investigation of your complaint.
9. The Appeal will consider the process undertaken to handle the original complaint.
10. The Appeal will consider the outcome of the original complaint.
11. You will be kept informed of the progress of your appeal with regular updates.
12. You will be advised of the outcome of the Appeals Committee.
13. The Appeals Committee's decision is final. There is no further escalation or action to be made. The Pony Club will not consider

further any action regarding the complaint or the appeal. Appeal fees will only be returned in the event of a successful appeal.

### Charity Regulatory Bodies

As a charity, The Pony Club is regulated by the relevant regulatory body in each country of the United Kingdom. In very serious matters, which may include whistleblowing, the regulatory body may consider acting on a complaint made to it directly. The regulatory body will not generally become involved with a dispute between members of the charity or where a concern is about policies followed or actions taken by the trustees within the law and the provisions of the charity's governing document (The Pony Club Handbook)

The Pony Club complaint process should deal properly with your complaint, however you have the right to raise a serious issue directly with:

The Charity Commission at [www.charitycommission.gov.uk](http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk) for England and Wales

The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland at [www.charitycommissionni.org.uk](http://www.charitycommissionni.org.uk)

The Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) at [www.oscr.org.uk](http://www.oscr.org.uk)

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### The Pony Club

#### Optional FORMAL COMPLAINT FORM

Area		Office use only DATE/Timing control
Branch or Centre name		
Name		
Address		
email address		
telephone number		

Pony Club member's name		
What is the problem?		
When did the problem occur?		
Where did the problem occur?		
Who do you consider has failed your child?		
What is their role within the Pony Club?		
What is your desired outcome?		
Signature		
Date		