



## **Crossgar Golf Club**

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## **Complaints Policy**

### **Introduction**

1. Crossgar Golf Club ('the Club') prides itself in having a culture of respect and inclusivity throughout its workforce, its membership and visitors alike.
2. The Club takes complaints very seriously and aims to ensure that its workforce, its membership and visitors feel respected and have a positive experience whether on the golf course or when using the Club's facilities.
3. Complaints will be dealt with courteously and promptly so that the matter is resolved as quickly as possible.

### **Aim**

4. The aim of this Policy is to make the Club's workforce, its membership and visitors aware of how to submit a complaint or grievance.

### **General**

5. Complaints may be made by any person including the workforce, volunteers, members, visitors and members of the public.
6. Informal complaints of a relatively minor nature should be communicated to a current member of the Club's Committee, who should deal with the matter and attempt to resolve the matter forthwith.
7. If the matter is deemed to be of a more serious nature, or if it cannot be resolved by the Committee member and complainant agreeing on a recourse, a formal complaint should be made in writing (letter or email) to the Secretary as soon as possible.
8. In the letter or email, the person making the complaint must:
  - a. Clearly state the details of the complaint and confirm who the complaint is against;
  - b. Confirm that the complaint was raised initially informally or advise of the reasons as to why this was not possible; and
  - c. Clearly state your desired outcome.
9. The Secretary is responsible for acknowledging formal complaints in writing as soon as possible, and for bringing the complaint before the Club's Committee.

10. If the complaint involves a golfing matter, the Captain or President may refer the matter to the respective Men's, Ladies or Juvenile Sections for resolution.

11. Any complaint(s) that are not raised within 10 working days of the event occurring will be considered out of time and will not be progressed further.

### **Complaints Committee**

12. If a complaint cannot be resolved, then a Complaints Committee shall be convened by the Captain or, in his or her absence, the Vice-Captain, to investigate the matter.

13. The Complaints Committee should consist of three members of the Club's Committee, one of whom will be nominated as the Chair of the committee. It should be drawn from the Men's, Ladies or Juvenile Sections in order to ensure parity, but must not include any member who is directly or indirectly involved in the matter, nor should it include, any member or individual who has had a prior relationship with either party and whose participation may be perceived to compromise the ultimate decision or ruling.

### **Initial investigation**

14. Upon receipt of the complaint, the Complaints Committee will:

a. Meet with the complainant, who is entitled to be accompanied by a Club member of their choice, in order to gather information and evidence;

b. Having met with the complainant, the member who is the subject of the complaint ('the respondent') will be made aware in writing of the precise allegations being made against him or her and will be given the opportunity (in person or in writing) to rebut any such complaints in accordance with the principles of natural justice; and

c. Interview and take statements from witnesses that have been identified during the course of the initial investigation. This may be done by telephone, electronically or in person.

15. Upon completion of the initial investigation, the Complainants Committee may take any of the following steps:

a. Decide that no further action is required, in which case the Complaints Committee is responsible for informing the complainant and respondent in writing explaining why the complaint will not be progressed.

b. Deal with the matter informally by way of advice, information or mediation between the complainant and respondent. If required, advice should be sought from the Club's Mediation Officer.

c. If deemed appropriate and the matter is of a serious nature, following consultation with the Club's Committee and any other appropriate person, the matter may be referred to the Captain or Vice-Captain, who will be responsible for convening the Disciplinary Committee in accordance with the Club's Discipline Policy.

16. As soon as is reasonably practicable, the Complaints Committee shall inform the complainant and respondent of the course of action taken (ideally within 10 working days).

17. If the Captain or Vice-Captain choose to convene a Disciplinary Committee in accordance with the Club's Disciplinary Policy, the respondent shall be informed of the charge being brought against them in writing and granted the opportunity to either deny or accept the charge.

18. If the respondent denies the charge, then the matter shall be determined by the Discipline Committee at a disciplinary hearing in accordance with the Club's Discipline Policy.

19. If the respondent accepts the charge, then the matter shall be referred to the Disciplinary Committee to determine an appropriate penalty. In this case, the respondent shall only be granted leave to appeal the penalty imposed on the grounds that it was disproportionate to the circumstances of the case.

20. Where the complaint is from a member of the public, the Club's duty to inform the complainant of their course of action, detailed at paragraph 15 above, shall not apply.

21. Where the decision or ruling issued by the Complaints Committee is not to the satisfaction of the complainant or respondent, it may be appealed by either party to the Secretary.

22. Any such appeal must be submitted in writing (by letter or email) to the Secretary within 10 working days of the decision being issued by the Complaints Committee.

### **Complaints Appeal Committee**

23. If an appeal is lodged, the Captain or, in his or her absence, the Vice-Captain, shall convene the Complaints Appeal Committee, made up of three members, one of whom will be nominated as the Chair of the committee, and shall be drawn from the Men's, Ladies or Juvenile Sections in order to ensure parity.

24. The Complaints Appeals Committee must not include any member who is directly or indirectly involved in the matter concerned, nor should it include any member or individual who has had a prior relationship with either party and whose participation may be perceived to compromise the ultimate decision or ruling reached by the Complaints Appeal Committee.

25. The Complaints Appeal Committee is responsible for investigating the matter as set out in paragraph 14 above, and for formally communicating the outcome of their decision to the complainant and respondent within 10 working days of their findings. The decision of the Complaints Appeal Committee is final.

### **Penalties**

26. In accordance with the Club's Disciplinary Policy, the Complaints Committee and Complaints Appeal Committee have the authority to recommend to the Club's Committee such penalty, up to and including suspension or expulsion from the Club, as it may think fits.

## Summary

27. If a situation arises, where no official complaint has been made, but the Club is made aware of unacceptable behaviour or actions by anyone using the Club's facilities or golf course, the Committee will act as if an official complaint has been received.

28. Where the Club's Committee believe a complaint has been made with malicious intent, or with a view to cause provocation, the Club's Committee reserve the right to investigate and take disciplinary action in accordance with the Club's Disciplinary Policy where necessary.

29. The time frames stated in this Discipline Policy are recommendations that should be met in most cases. They may be extended provided there are reasonable and credible extenuating circumstances for doing so.

30. The Club will not be liable to any person or body for any loss arising out of, or in connection with, any disciplinary action taken under these procedures, for example, suspension or permanent withdrawal of Club membership, with no refund of any membership fees.

31. At all times, the Club's Committee, Complaints Committee members and Complaints Appeal Committee members should treat all information relating to a complaint or allegation "*in confidence*" and it should only be discussed with individuals directly involved and never in the presence of other Club members.

32. The Club's Committee may amend this policy from time to time as it sees fit and any such amendment shall come into force and have effect from such date as the Club's Committee may determine. The Club's Committee will review this Policy at least every two years, when there are changes in legislation, and will ensure that it is published on the Club's website and posted on the Club's noticeboard.

{Signed on Original}

Tony Moore  
Secretary  
Crossgar Golf Club