

# **NORTHERN IRELAND JUDO FEDERATION**

## **Complaints Policy.**

There may be an issue that arises which does not constitute action within a child protection policy, but that is of sufficient concern to warrant action by the NIJF's Complaints and Discipline panel. For example, a complaint from a parent about the conduct of a NIJF Coach, Volunteer or a person in a Regulated position ie: Offensive language, which requires addressing through some sort of formal action. By promoting clarity in terms of processes for dealing with complaints or grievances, the Northern Ireland Judo Federation believes it will enable a transparency that gives confidence in our organisation's commitment to providing quality and safe services.

## **Disciplinary policy.**

We believe that our guidelines in terms of a code of conduct and good practise will dictate appropriate and acceptable behaviour, but without any system of regulating this, there is no clarity for staff/volunteers, parents or children about what may happen if they do not follow our guidelines.

## **Grievance Policy.**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that every member has the opportunity to resolve problems in a consistent and fair manner, if in exceptional circumstances the problem has remained unresolved after discussion.

## **Complaints Procedure.**

Any member, parent, child or interested party who believes the conduct of another member is contrary to that agreed by NIJF and its member clubs into disrepute, may inform any member or the Complaints and Discipline panel in writing.

It is vitally important to record the details of an allegation or reported incident, regardless of whether or not the concerns are shared with a child protection agency. An accurate note should be made of:

- Date and time of the incident or disclosure
- Parties who are involved
- Any action taken by the organisation to investigate the matter
- Any further action e.g. suspension of a member/volunteer
- Where relevant, reasons why there is no referral to a statutory

The record should be clear and factual as may be needed by child protection agencies investigating the incident and may, in the future, be used in court (the NIJF will not investigate the issue if it is a child protection matter). The record will be stored securely and shared with only those who need to know about the incident or allegation. Keeping such a record may also help to protect our organisation.

Consideration has also been given to the Data Protection Act 1998 which requires that personal information is obtained and processed fairly and lawfully; only disclosed in appropriate circumstances; is accurate, relevant and not held for longer than is necessary; and is kept securely. The Act allows for the disclosure without the consent of the subject in certain conditions, including for the purposes of the prevention or detection of crime, or the apprehension or prosecution of offenders. The need to safeguard children from harm should be considered within these parameters and is also addressed under article 8 of the European Convention of Human rights whereby the disclosure of information would usually be for “ the protection of health or morals, for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others and for the prevention of disorder or crime.....Disclosure should be appropriate for the purpose and only to the extent necessary to achieve that purpose.”

A meeting of the Complaints and Discipline Panel shall be held within 21 days after the complaint has been received. All parties involved will be invited to attend individually to speak to the Complaints and Discipline panel at a predetermined time for a hearing.

The Complaints and Discipline Panel shall inform in writing both the member who made the complaint and the member who is the subject of the complaint, of their decision within 21 days of a decision being made. The time frame of the decision making process itself shall be open ended and dependant upon the Panel’s evidence gathering and investigation into same.

Notification of the complaint will be forwarded to the Northern Ireland Judo Federation’s central committee and or the British Judo Association if necessary.

### **Disciplinary Procedure.**

Where a complaint is deemed of appropriate severity by the Complaints and Discipline panel, the panel have the right to invoke the Disciplinary procedure.

The Complaints and Discipline panel will have the following options at its disposal under the disciplinary procedure;

1. Impose a fine where applicable. The member being fined will be informed in writing of the amount, and the date by which it must be paid. All fines will be paid to the treasurer. Failure to pay will result in further disciplinary options being invoked.
2. Impose points upon the concerned member’s judo licence, for any specified time period as deemed necessary by the panel.
3. Recommend the member undertakes a period of re-training or re-education if applicable.
4. Terminate the membership of the person as outlined in the constitution.
5. Inform Social Services / PSNI if the reason for the termination was in relation to Child Protection.

During the period of suspension the member is suspended from all activities at or on behalf of the NIJF and therefore shall be ineligible to attend or participate as a member of the NIJF or train at any NIJF club.

The member shall be informed in writing of the reasons for the suspension and the date from which the suspension shall commence. The Complaints and Discipline panel shall inform all involved members of the said suspension in writing. The member concerned may invoke the appeals procedure.

The Complaints and Discipline panel has the power to reinstate the suspended member if the decision of the appeal procedure finds in favour of the member and the Administrative Secretary shall inform the member in writing of the date from which he/she is reinstated.

Notification of the disciplinary action taken and the outcome of any appeal will be forwarded to the Northern Ireland Judo Federation's Central committee and or the British Judo Association if necessary.

## **Grievance Procedures.**

The Northern Ireland Judo Federation seeks to create a working environment that is harmonious as possible, where effective working relationships are maintained.

Eligibility.

This policy applies to all the Northern Ireland Judo Federation's members.

Definition of a Grievance.

- A grievance is a complaint made by a member about their treatment at any club or event or any matter related to the NIJF affecting the member.
- A member cannot bring a grievance about a Central Committee decision, but may do so if they believe that the decision or the process used to reach the decision was incompatible with the Northern Ireland Judo Federation's policies or applied in a discriminatory or unreasonable fashion.
- It is not possible to raise a grievance against a Northern Ireland Judo Federation's policy or against a piece of legislation or statutory regulation, which the NIJF is required to follow.

## **Use Of Grievance Policy.**

The policy is designed to allow an initial informal discussion at which it is hoped that the majority of grievances will be settled. Grievances should be resolved as close to the event as possible, to minimise disruption and upset, and where possible resolved informally. If an informal settlement of the grievances is not possible, it will be dealt with under the formal procedure.

If you have a grievance but are uncertain as to what action you might take, or if your grievance involves sensitive issues, you should seek advice from a Northern Ireland Judo Federation official, this must take place first, in all situations, before taking the matter any further.

In the event of any difference arising, which cannot immediately be resolved, then whatever practise or agreement existed prior to the difference shall continue pending a settlement or until the agreed procedure has been exhausted.

Since grievance cases are often complex, guidance notes and procedures to be followed on the use of the procedure have been drawn up by the Northern Ireland Judo Federation to expand on some of the steps in the procedure itself.

## **Procedure.**

- **Informal stage.**

You should inform your club coach and or club chairperson that you have a grievance and that you wish to discuss it with him/her. This informal notification should take place as soon as possible and, in normal circumstances, within 15 working days of the event or circumstance which has given rise to the grievance.

After seeking advice from a Northern Ireland Judo Federation official, your club coach and or chairperson will talk to you about your grievance within a further 10 working days after receiving the informal notification.

Within 5 working days of this discussion, you will be advised verbally of any action he/she proposes to take to resolve the grievance.

**NOTE.** The said coach and or club chairperson will record events, times and dates.

- **Formal stage.**

If you believe that the grievance has not been satisfactorily resolved at the informal stage, then you must submit a written statement of grievance to your coach and or club chairperson, setting out the areas of dissatisfaction with the earlier decision. You should do this within 10 working days of receiving their response.

Your coach and or chairperson will pass on your grievance to the Northern Ireland judo Federation's Complaints and Discipline panel, who will investigate the grounds of the complaint, meeting with witnesses and gathering information and reviewing all documentation as appropriate

The Northern Ireland Judo Federation Complaints and Discipline panel will meet with you within 21 working days to discuss your grievance and to clarify any points necessary for their investigation of the grievance. They will inform you in writing as to the outcome of their decision within 21 days of them having made a ruling and or decision reference your grievance. Again the time frame for the panel's decision-making process will be open ended, as it will be dependant upon their investigation into the matter.

Notification of any action taken and the outcome of any appeal will be forwarded to the Northern Ireland Judo Federation's Central Committee and or the British Judo Association if necessary.

- **Appeal.**

If the response at the end of the formal stage does not satisfactorily resolve the grievance, you may appeal against the decision.

You do this by giving written notification for your dissatisfaction to the British Judo Association as the National Governing Body for judo in the United Kingdom within 15 working days of receiving the written response.

This notification should be copied to the Chairperson of the Northern Ireland Judo Federation. The paperwork from the previous stages will be passed to the British Judo association chairperson who will decide; after consultation with the National Governing Body Executive group how to proceed with your grievance.

The NGB group member handling your appeal will meet with you to consider your appeal.

The meeting should be held within 21 working days of the receipt of your written request. The NGB member (or senior nominee) handling your appeal will decide whether or not if your grievance has been substantiated and if so, what action should be taken. This decision will be communicated to you in writing.

- **Time limits.**

Through out all these procedures, there are time limits, which should be adhered, too as closely as humanly possible. This is not possible in all cases, as some investigations will be time consuming and complex in their own nature. However in exceptional circumstances, with the agreement of all parties involved, the time limits will be extended, eg due to the absence of information critical to the investigation or the unavoidable absence of key individuals.

The Northern Ireland judo Federation will continue to monitor and evaluate its policies and procedures and as and when necessary change, add or omit any articles which it believes to be beneficial to the running of the Federation. Also these changes will occur as and when any Statutory Legislative Acts / Articles are amended or indeed changed.