

The following guide outlines responses that may be useful when communicating with members and participants while navigating the complaint management process. Please note that the purpose of this document is only to guide conversations in conflict management, and the examples listed may be adapted as deemed necessary.

## Acknowledging Receipt

### 1. Formal Acknowledgment:

- a. "Thank you for submitting your complaint. This email confirms receipt, and I will review it to determine the appropriate next steps. You will hear back from me within [X days]. If you are concerned about your immediate safety, please contact emergency services."

### 2. Clarification of Role and Scope:

- a. "My role as [Title] is to [assess complaints, refer them as necessary, and notify relevant parties]. Please note that our organization addresses complaints that may be violations of our policies, including the [specific policy]. Not all complaints fall within our scope, but I will guide you on the next steps."

## Complaint Triage

### 1. Clarifying Information Needed:

- a. "To better understand and process your complaint, I kindly ask for the following details:
  - i. A description of your concerns.
  - ii. Who was involved.
  - iii. Any witnesses to the incident.
  - iv. Where and when the incident occurred.
  - v. Whether you believe this constitutes maltreatment."

### 2. Distinguishing Between Disclosure and Formal Complaint:

- a. "Can you clarify whether this is a disclosure of concerns or a formal complaint? This helps us determine the right steps for addressing the issue."

## Managing Escalation

### 1. Boundary Setting:

- a. "I understand this situation is frustrating, and I want to ensure we handle it appropriately. Our process is designed to ensure procedural fairness. Here are the steps we can take: [outline steps]. Please understand that immediate sanctions are not within our procedures unless specific conditions are met."

## 2. De-escalation:

- a. "I hear your concerns, and I want to assure you that we are taking this seriously. Let's focus on what we can address immediately and how we can best move forward within our policy framework."

## Deciding and Communication Next Steps

### 1. Review and Recommendation:

- a. "I have reviewed your complaint. Based on the details provided, I recommend the following course of action: [specific steps]. Do I have your consent to proceed with this?"

### 2. Duty to Report:

- a. "Based on the information shared, I have a duty to report this matter as it may involve [maltreatment/criminal activity towards a minor/vulnerable person]. I will ensure this is reported to the appropriate authorities and will confirm once this has been done."

## Managing Conflict of Interest Management

### 1. Disclosure and Assurance:

- a. "To maintain the integrity of this process, I want to disclose that [individual] has a real or perceived conflict of interest in this case and will not be involved in assessing this complaint. If you have concerns, please feel free to raise them."

### 2. Ensuring Impartiality:

- a. "The complaint will be managed by [designated individual] who is impartial and well-equipped to handle this situation. They will adhere strictly to the outlined procedures."

## Providing Mediation Options

### 1. Offering Mediation:

- a. "We can offer mediation as a way to resolve this conflict. Mediation is a consent-based process supported by a neutral third party, allowing both sides to present their concerns and work towards a mutually acceptable outcome. Would you like to explore this option?"

### 2. Informing About Arbitration:

- a. "If mediation is not suitable or agreed upon, arbitration is another option. An arbitrator will review the facts and provide a binding decision. Let me know if you'd like more information about this process."

## Handling Limited Information

### 1. Requesting More Details:

- a. "Thank you for sharing your concern. To proceed, I'll need additional details to understand the situation fully. Could you please provide more information about [specific missing details: people involved, dates, locations, etc.]?"

### 2. Acknowledging Gaps and Moving Forward:

- a. "Based on the limited information provided, I'll proceed with the steps I can take within our policy. However, more details may be required for a thorough resolution. Please feel free to share any further information."

## Communicating Procedural Fairness

### 1. Explaining the Process:

- a. "Our process ensures that all parties involved are treated fairly. This includes gathering information from everyone, considering all perspectives, and making decisions in alignment with our policy. This takes time, but I assure you it's designed to reach a fair and just resolution."

### 2. Clarifying What's Not Possible:

- a. "I understand the urgency of your concern. However, certain actions, like immediate sanctions, cannot occur without a complete review as outlined in our policy. This ensures fairness for all involved."

## Responding to Concerns about Confidentiality

### 1. Addressing Privacy:

- a. "Your privacy is important to us. The information you've shared will only be disclosed to those involved in resolving the complaint or as required by law. If you have specific concerns about confidentiality, please let me know."

### 2. Reassuring Anonymity (if applicable):

- a. "If you prefer to remain anonymous, I'll do my best to address your concern without revealing your identity. However, please note that anonymity might limit the steps we can take."

## Escalating a Complaint

### 1. Explaining Escalation:

- a. "Based on the nature of your complaint, this matter needs to be escalated to [specific body or individual, e.g., Sport NB, NSO, or external authority]. I'll ensure the necessary information is shared and will update you on next steps."

## 2. Referral for Higher-Level Review:

- a. "This matter falls under the jurisdiction of [external organization/authority]. I will assist you in submitting the necessary details to them, and they will guide you on their process."

## Providing Options for Resolution

### 1. Presenting Choices:

- a. "There are several options available to address your concern:
  - i. Informal resolution through a facilitated discussion.
  - ii. Formal investigation and assessment.
  - iii. Mediation, where both parties work with a neutral third party to reach an agreement. Let me know which option you'd like to pursue, and I'll guide you through the process."

### 2. Highlighting Mediation Benefits:

- a. "Mediation is often a quicker and more collaborative way to resolve concerns compared to formal processes. It allows both parties to express their perspectives and work towards a solution. Would you like to consider this option?"

## Dealing with Emotional Complainants

### 1. Empathy and Redirection:

- a. "I understand that this situation is upsetting, and I want to assure you that I'm here to help. Let's focus on what steps we can take to address your concerns effectively."

### 2. Setting Boundaries Kindly:

- a. "I can see this is a deeply emotional issue, and I want to give it the attention it deserves. Let's take a moment to focus on the key details so we can ensure the best outcome for everyone involved."

## Managing Procedural Conflicts

### 1. Reaffirming Scope:

- a. "I understand that you've raised additional concerns beyond this complaint. Unfortunately, these matters are outside the scope of this specific process. However, I'd be happy to direct you to the appropriate channel for those issues."

### 2. Providing Clear Next Steps:

- a. "To ensure fairness, we will follow our outlined procedure. This includes [steps specific to the complaint]. If you feel any part of the process is unclear or unfair, I'd be happy to explain further."

## Handling Threats of Litigation or Media Attention

### 1. Professional and Calm Response:

- a. "I hear your concerns, and I want to assure you that we are addressing this complaint in accordance with our policy. Our process is designed to ensure fairness and transparency for all parties. If you decide to involve external parties, I'll cooperate as appropriate."

### 2. De-escalating with Clarity:

- a. "I understand your frustration, and I want to help resolve this matter effectively. Our policy requires that we follow specific steps to ensure a fair process for all parties. Let's focus on what we can do together to address your concerns."

## Providing Updates

### 1. Mid-Process Update:

- a. "I wanted to update you on the progress of your complaint. We are currently [e.g., gathering additional information, consulting with relevant parties, etc.]. I will provide a further update by [specific timeframe]."

### 2. Explaining Delays:

- a. "Thank you for your patience. The review process is taking longer than expected due to [reason]. Please know that we are working diligently to ensure this is handled thoroughly and fairly. I will provide a further update by [specific timeframe]."