



**American Football South Australia (AFSA)**

**Grievance & Dispute Resolution Policy**

**Policy Owner:** AFSA Board of Management

**Date Approved:** May 2026

**Last Reviewed:** May 2026

**Next Scheduled Review:** May 2028

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## 1. Policy Overview and Purpose

This policy establishes a clear, fair, and consistent framework for managing grievances and disputes within AFSA.

It ensures that concerns are addressed promptly, transparently, and in accordance with procedural fairness, while protecting the integrity of the sport and the welfare of participants.

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## 2. Underlying Principles

- Procedural fairness and natural justice apply to all matters
  - Timely and transparent resolution of issues
  - Respect for all parties involved
  - Consistency in decision-making
  - Protection of participant welfare and confidentiality
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## 3. Scope and Application

This policy applies to all AFSA participants, including:

- Players
- Coaches
- Officials
- Volunteers
- Club administrators
- Parents and supporters

This policy applies to all AFSA sanctioned activities, including matches, training, events, and digital interactions.

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## 4. Core Policy Requirements

### 4.1 Definitions

- **Grievance:** A formal complaint regarding conduct, decisions, or actions within AFSA
- **Dispute:** A disagreement between individuals or organisations within AFSA

- **Complainant:** The party lodging the grievance
  - **Respondent:** The party the grievance is made against
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## 4.2 Lodging a Grievance

Grievances must:

- Be submitted in writing
- Include a clear description of the issue
- Identify parties involved
- Include relevant dates, locations, and supporting evidence where available

Grievances may be submitted to:

- The relevant club, or
- AFSA directly for state-level matters

Email: [integrity@americanfootballsports.org.au](mailto:integrity@americanfootballsports.org.au)

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## 4.3 Resolution Pathway

AFSA adopts a staged approach to resolving grievances:

1. **Club-Level Resolution** (where appropriate)
    - Informal discussion between parties
    - Club-led mediation
  2. **AFSA Review**
    - Formal assessment of the grievance
    - Request for written submissions
  3. **Mediation / Facilitated Resolution**
    - Independent or AFSA-appointed mediator
    - Structured resolution meeting
  4. **Escalation to Tribunal**
    - Serious or unresolved matters referred to AFSA Tribunal
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## **5. Procedures / Processes**

### **5.1 Investigation Process**

Where a formal investigation is required, AFSA may:

- Collect evidence and statements
  - Interview relevant parties
  - Review documentation and supporting materials
  - Make findings based on the balance of probabilities
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### **5.2 Outcomes and Determinations**

Outcomes may include:

- No further action
  - Informal resolution agreement
  - Formal warning
  - Behavioural directives
  - Suspension or removal from participation
  - Competition penalties
  - Referral to Tribunal or external authorities
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### **5.3 Appeals Process**

An appeal may be lodged where:

- New evidence becomes available
- Procedural fairness is questioned
- The outcome is considered disproportionate

Appeals must be submitted within AFSA defined timeframes.

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### **5.4 Confidentiality and Record Keeping**

AFSA will:

- Maintain confidentiality where possible

- Store records securely
  - Limit disclosure to relevant parties only
  - Protect individuals from retaliation
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## **6. Breaches and Penalties**

Failure to comply with this policy, including refusal to participate in processes or providing false information, may result in:

- Disciplinary action
  - Suspension from participation
  - Referral to Tribunal
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## **7. Enforcement and Responsibility**

This policy is enforced by:

- AFSA Board of Management
- Authorised AFSA officials
- Tribunal (where applicable)

All decisions must be fair, consistent, and evidence-based.

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## **8. Related Policies**

- Code of Conduct Policy
  - Member Protection Policy
  - Tribunal Policy
  - Game Day Policy
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## **9. Policy Review and Approval**

This policy will be reviewed every two (2) years or earlier if required.

It will be assessed to ensure alignment with governance standards, operational requirements, and best practice sport integrity frameworks.

