



Kielder Water Sailing Club

Complaints Policy and Procedure

Kielder Water Sailing Club is a small, volunteer-led water sports club. Historically we have a very small number of complaints, but this document sets out our policy and procedures for dealing with a complaint should it arise.

We are committed to a friendly welcoming and supportive environment. Should a complaint arise we will take this seriously and deal with it as quickly as practicable. We will feed back throughout the process and ensure the complainant is aware of the procedure at all steps and that the outcome is properly and clearly communicated with the complainant.

Any lessons learned by the Committee or Training team will be acted upon as soon as possible. That includes any need to change this policy or procedures.

The definition of a complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the club or the public about KWSC's action or lack thereof, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of KWSC.

A complaint is not a personal attack on an individual.

Policy

To provide clear guidelines on the structure of the complaints procedure.

Our policy is to resolve complaints quickly and, where possible, to retain a satisfied club member/member of the public.

Applicability

This policy applies to all club members and members of the Training team. (who may receive complaints),

This policy will remain in place for one year before review.

Procedure

What to do if receiving a complaint

Club member or Instructor

1. Take all complaints seriously.
2. You are an important and valued member of KWSC/Training team; you are not expected to handle complaints. Only attempt to resolve the complaint personally if you feel able and comfortable to do so and the complaint does not involve you personally.

3. Record as much of what is said and done by writing it down to include the complainant's name, contact details and details of the complaint itself – along with anything that you have said or done to resolve the issue. Include any names and contact details of witnesses. Even if you resolve the problem satisfactorily, please record the complaint and the actions taken as we may learn valuable lessons from it in how we operate.
4. Advise the complainant that the complaint will be looked in to and they will be informed of the progress.
5. A club member should email the details to the Honorary Secretary who will investigate the complaint.
6. In Training, the instructor will inform the Senior Instructor verbally at the time who may be able to resolve the complaint with the complainant. The Senior Instructor will make a written record as above and email this to the Chief Instructor. If not resolved, the Chief Instructor will look into the complaint.

Honorary Secretary / Chief Instructor

1. The club member/ instructor may be the first person dealing with a complaint and may resolve it quickly and easily to everyone's satisfaction. However, there may still be lessons learned from the experience so still collect the information and email on as above.
2. The Honorary Secretary / chief instructor should contact the complainant as soon as possible to resolve the complaint satisfactorily, if it has not already been resolved by a club member/instructor. If the complaint concerns the galley, the House Committee member will look into the complaint. Ensure that you have understood the complaint and the outcome the complainant is expecting.
3. You may be the recipient of the complaint yourself or even the cause of a complaint. In such cases always escalate the complaint to the next level and do not try to resolve the problem yourself. (If it concerns a chief instructor, the Principal will review. If it concerns the Principal, the Commodore will review. If it concerns the Honorary Secretary, the Commodore will review. If it concerns the Commodore, the Rear Commodore will review.)
4. The Honorary Secretary / chief instructor will immediately acknowledge that a complaint has been received and give a timescale in which they will get back to the complainant with a progress report or outcome. This timescale can be repeated until an outcome is achieved. You will listen to the complainant and record any further information.
5. Where the complaint involves a witness/second party the Honorary Secretary / chief instructor will contact that person and seek their views as appropriate, making no judgements in doing so.

6. The Honorary Secretary will inform the Commodore and the Committee. The Chief Instructor will inform the Principal.
7. Any complaints of a serious nature, harassment, bullying, etc must be immediately notified to the Commodore/Principal by the Honorary Secretary / chief instructor. This protects the club member/instructor, and the Honorary Secretary / chief instructor, and ensures serious issues are escalated and dealt with appropriately, including the involvement of outside authorities where required.
8. If the Honorary Secretary / chief instructor cannot resolve a complaint it must be escalated to the Commodore/Principal.

Commodore/ Principal

1. The Honorary Secretary / chief instructor may feel it is necessary to involve the Commodore/Principal in proceedings.
2. The Commodore/Principal will be the first contact if the complaint involves the Honorary Secretary / chief instructor.

Once the issue has reached its conclusion, it is in the best interest for everyone involved to leave the matter there. KWSC may however, learn valuable lessons as a result of the complaint and it is for the Committee/Training team to analyse and act upon these lessons.

Appeal

A request for an appeal can only be made if the initial evidence is incorrect or missing.

A request cannot be made because the outcome is not to their liking.

A minimum of two people will investigate the appeal. This will be from a level higher than those looking into the complaint who have not previously been involved. For example, the Commodore and Principal. Any new information will be collected. The process may be in person or by a virtual meeting. A non-verbal witness may be present although this will not be a solicitor.

END

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