



## COMPLAINTS & CONFLICT RESOLUTION POLICY

### Purpose:

To establish a Complaints & Conflict Resolution procedure for the Altona Junior Football Club (AJFC; the **Club**) and provide a robust identification and response mechanism which is intended to guide the Club through documented complaint and conflict situations, provide equitable support to all affected and ensure continuity of Club operations.

### Scope:

This policy applies to all members of the Club, including (but not limited to) Committee Members, Coaches, Trainers, Team Managers, Players, Parents / Guardians / Relatives of Players, and other Officials or Volunteers Associated with the Club. This Policy complements the *Conflict of Interest Policy*.

### Definitions:

- **Complaint:** A statement of dissatisfaction where someone expresses that they are unhappy about something that has happened or continues to occur.
- **Complainant:** The person who reports a complaint or makes an allegation of conflict.
- **Conflict:** A disagreement between two or more people resulting from a difference in opinion, attitude or idea of how things should be done.
  - **Healthy conflict:** Respectful, solution-oriented discussion of different viewpoints. Strengthens Club relationships, fosters innovation and improves decision making when managed effectively.
  - **Unhealthy conflict:** Characterised by personal attacks, blame and/or avoidance. Damages Club relationships, diverts energy and is detrimental to the culture.
- **Conflict of Interest:** A *situation* in which an individual in a Position of Authority<sup>1</sup> has competing interests or loyalties.
- **Impartial:** Ability to judge or consider a circumstance fairly and without preference to personal interest.

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<sup>1</sup> For the definition of a Person of Authority, see the *Conflict of Interest Policy*  
Approved by the AJFC Committee August 2025

- **Subject:** The person against whom a complaint or allegation of conflict has been made.

### **Guiding Philosophy:**

It is recognised that people associated with the Club will, from time to time, have complaints and/or unhealthy conflicts that need to be resolved. The Club Committee believes that:

- People have the right to have their complaint and/or conflict receive careful consideration through established processes based on fairness and respect;
- The best resolution is one that is reached cooperatively and fairly; and
- The path to successful resolution is achieved through the involved people focusing on what is in the best interests of the Club and finding new ways to work together.

### **Designated Person:**

- The Club Administrator is the Designated Person to which all complaints and/or conflicts are to be addressed, either verbally or in writing, in the first instance;
- In the event that the Club Administrator is a party to the complaint and/or conflict, or has an identified Conflict of Interest with **any** of the parties (as defined in the *Conflict of Interest Policy*), the President, Vice President or other Committee Member may act as the Designated Person for that particular complaint and/or conflict or may delegate responsibility as set out below;
- On receipt of a complaint and/or conflict, the Designated Person must advise the President on the matter as soon as practical;
- The Designated Person *may*, if they see fit and in consultation with the President and/or Vice-President, delegate responsibility to another Committee Member to act as the Designated Person for that particular complaint and/or conflict. For example:
  - In some circumstances it may be suitable for the relevant Co-ordinator to resolve complaints and/or conflicts (e.g., a Coaching Co-ordinator may act as the Designated Person for complaints against a Coach, or the Trainer Co-ordinator may act as the Designated Person for complaints against a Trainer); or
  - In other circumstances, it may be more suitable for the President or Vice-President to act as the Designated Person, especially in circumstances that may have serious or legal consequences for the Club;

- In circumstances where a complaint and/or conflict arises between two (or more) sitting Committee Members, the Designated Person may delegate responsibility for that matter to a suitable impartial person outside the Committee, such as for instance, the Tribunal Officer of the Club, professional Mediator, or other person with suitable skills to ensure a fair and efficient resolution of the issues;
- The Designated Person may, if they see fit, establish a temporary Complaint and Conflict Sub-Committee (CCSC) to deal with any particular complaint and/or conflict, consisting of Committee Member(s) or Ordinary Members of the Club (including parents or guardians of players) that are impartial and are able to assist the Designated Person in reaching a resolution, especially in situations where more specialist knowledge or skills are required to reach a suitable outcome;
  - The Designated Person and/or any temporary CCSC Member will **not** be considered impartial where they have a Conflict of Interest (as defined in the *Conflict of Interest Policy*) with any of the parties to the complaint and/or conflict and **must** be recused in those circumstances;
  - It is the preference of the Committee that temporary CCSC Members consist of sitting Committee Members. However, from time to time, circumstances may arise where insufficient impartial Committee Members are identified or willing to participate in a temporary CCSC, or additional skills are required to resolve an issue. In such circumstances, the Designated Person *may* enlist the assistance of Ordinary Member(s) of the Club, at their discretion;

#### **Register:**

- This Policy establishes a Complaint and Conflict Register (the **Register**).
- The Club Administrator will have responsibility for maintaining the Register.
- The Register **must** include the following details:
  - Names of the relevant parties (including, but not limited to, the Complainant, the Subject(s), the Designated Person, the main issues that have arisen, steps taken to resolve the complaint and/or conflict, and any enforcement actions;
- The Register is also to include details of any identified Conflicts of Interest (as governed by the *Conflict of Interest Policy*) as any identified Conflicts of Interest may be relevant to complaints and/or conflicts that arise between two or more Members and/or the establishment of a CCSC with suitable membership;

- Details of the Register are to be made accessible to any Committee member upon request, but must be treated as confidential by that Committee Member. Failure to abide by this confidentiality may result in recusal of that Committee Member from the Club Committee, at the discretion of the President or Vice President.

**Procedure:**

- All complaints and/or conflicts are to be reported to the Designated Person (which is the Club Administrator in the first instance).
  - Preferably, details of the complaint and/or conflict are to be provided in writing to the Designated Person at [admin@altonajuniorfc.com.au](mailto:admin@altonajuniorfc.com.au).
  - Where a verbal report is made to the Designated Person, and they believe that formal resolution is required in those particular circumstances, they are to record the details of the complaint and/or conflict, including (but not limited to):
    - the Complainant (unless anonymity is required for Child Safety purposes)
    - the subject of the complaint and/or conflict; and
    - the main details of the issues identified by the Complainant;
- Anonymous complaints and/or conflict reports are *not* covered by this Policy; Complainants **must** be identified or identifiable in order to enliven in this Policy, to ensure that a fair and just resolution can be reached;
- When formalised in writing (either by the Complainant or the Designated Person), a complaint and/or conflict will be considered in a timely and confidential manner by the Designated Person and any temporary CCSC Members in accordance with the flowchart provided in Appendix A;
- Where any meeting is held between Parties to a complaint and/or conflict, minutes must be taken and distributed afterwards to:
  - The Complainant;
  - The Subject(s);
  - The Designated Person;
  - The President or Vice-President; and
  - The Administrator (if they are not the Designated Person);
- Upon resolution of the complaint and/or conflict, the details of the matter are to be entered in the Register.

**Enforcement:**

If a complaint and/or conflict is substantiated and reflects a serious breach of the Code of Conduct or Club Values, the President should consider calling a Special Committee Meeting to discuss this matter with the Committee Members and conduct a majority vote on appropriate actions or sanctions, which may include, for example, a written official warning for a player or parent, referral to a relevant body, notifying the WFNL, or cancellation of registration.

**Review and Compliance:**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the committee to ensure its effectiveness.

Non-compliance with this policy may result in appropriate action, up to and including removal from the position of authority within the Club.

## Appendix A: Complaint and/or Conflict Resolution Flowchart

