Grievance and Complaints Policy

1. Our Commitment

All members, participants, officials, coaches, judges, volunteers, employees, spectators and other people attending FISAF Australia events have the right to feel and be safe, respected and included.

The welfare, safety and wellbeing of children and young people are paramount. FISAF Australia and its Member Organisations are committed to a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse, grooming, exploitation, neglect and other forms of harm.

We are committed to providing a child-safe, child-friendly and inclusive sporting environment where children and young people feel safe, have a voice, are listened to and can enjoy participating in sport aerobics.

FISAF Australia encourages concerns and grievances to be raised without fear of victimisation, disadvantage or reprisal. All complaints will be taken seriously and managed fairly, promptly, confidentially and in accordance with applicable laws and FISAF Australia's policies.

2. Purpose and Scope

This policy establishes a clear process for receiving, assessing, investigating and resolving grievances and complaints involving FISAF Australia activities.

It applies to FISAF Australia members, Member Organisations, athletes, parents and guardians, coaches, judges, officials, employees, volunteers, contractors and other people participating in or attending FISAF Australia events and activities.

The policy covers grievances relating to conduct, bullying, harassment, discrimination, breaches of the code of conduct, competition-related concerns and other matters affecting the safety, welfare or fair treatment of participants.

Complaints involving child abuse, suspected criminal conduct, serious misconduct or an immediate risk to safety must be managed under the relevant safeguarding, incident-reporting and legal procedures. They must not be delayed or dealt with solely through informal mediation.

3. Responsibilities for Handling Grievances

3.1 FISAF Australia

FISAF Australia is responsible for receiving and responding to concerns arising at an event, taking immediate steps to manage risks, and referring complaints to the appropriate FISAF Australia representative.

FISAF Australia may resolve minor operational issues within their authority. They must not independently investigate serious allegations of child abuse, sexual misconduct or other matters requiring specialist or independent investigation unless specifically authorised and appropriately qualified.

3.2 FISAF Australia Integrity Unit

The FISAF Australia Integrity Unit is responsible for receiving complaints, acknowledging receipt, maintaining secure records, assessing the appropriate handling pathway and monitoring progress.

The Integrity Unit will provide information about the process, communicate with the parties as appropriate and recommend whether a complaint should be resolved informally, investigated formally or referred to another authority.

Any member of the Integrity Unit must declare any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest and must not manage a complaint where impartiality could reasonably be questioned.

3.3 Child Safety Officer

FISAF Australia will appoint a Child Safety Officer or clearly identify the person responsible for child-safety concerns. The Child Safety Officer will be a member of the Integrity Unit.

This person will ensure that concerns involving children are prioritised, assessed for immediate risk and referred through the applicable safeguarding and reporting pathways.

Where a complaint concerns the Child Safety Officer, the Grievance Officer or another senior representative, the complaint must be referred to an independent and appropriate person.

3.4 FISAF Australia Management

The appropriate management representative delegate is responsible for overseeing serious complaints, approving outcomes and disciplinary action within their authority, and ensuring that conflicts of interest are managed.

Where a complaint concerns a management team member who would ordinarily oversee the process, an independent decision-maker must be appointed.

4. How to Make a Complaint

Anyone with a genuine concern about conduct or safety may make a complaint, including participants, parents, guardians, members, officials, employees and volunteers.

Complaints may be made verbally or in writing to FISAF Australia via phone or email (integrity@fisafaustralia.com.au). FISAF Australia will publish contact details and provide accessible ways for children and young people to raise concerns.

Parents and athletes should first raise complaints about judging or sport politics with their club or school owner. The club or school is responsible for escalating the complaint to FISAF Australia if it cannot resolve the matter or considers escalation necessary.

A person making a complaint should provide as much relevant information as they reasonably can, including what happened, when and where it occurred, who was involved and whether there are any immediate safety concerns.

A complaint will not be dismissed solely because it is made verbally, is not submitted on a form or is made by a child.

Anonymous complaints will be considered to the extent possible, recognising that anonymity may limit the ability to investigate or provide an outcome.

5. Complaint Handling Procedure

Step 1 - Receive and acknowledge

The responsible officer will listen respectfully, record the information accurately and acknowledge a complaint as soon as reasonably practicable.

Where a child raises a concern, the child must be listened to in an age-appropriate and supportive manner. They must not be pressured to provide unnecessary details or repeatedly recount distressing experiences.

Step 2 - Assess safety and urgency

The responsible officer will promptly assess whether anyone is at immediate risk and whether urgent protective action is required.

Where a child may be at risk of harm, appropriate steps must be taken to protect the child and notify the relevant authorities in accordance with applicable law.

If there is an immediate danger or suspected criminal conduct requiring police intervention, the matter must be referred to police promptly. Internal complaint procedures must not interfere with a police or child-protection investigation.

Step 3 - Determine the appropriate pathway

The complaint will be assessed and directed to the appropriate process, which may include:

- Informal resolution of a minor dispute, where appropriate and freely agreed to by the parties.
- Formal investigation of alleged misconduct or a breach of policy.
- Referral to FISAF Australia's safeguarding, member protection, disciplinary or competition rules.
- Referral to an external investigator, regulator, child-protection authority, or police.

Mediation must not be used where it would be unsafe, inappropriate or inconsistent with safeguarding obligations.

Step 4 - Investigate fairly

Where a formal investigation is required, an impartial person with appropriate skills will be appointed.

The investigator will gather relevant information, speak with the parties and relevant witnesses where appropriate, consider available evidence and give the person against whom allegations are made a reasonable opportunity to respond, subject to any lawful restrictions needed to protect a child, preserve evidence or comply with an external investigation.

Investigations will be conducted as promptly as reasonably practicable, with appropriate confidentiality and procedural fairness.

Step 5 - Make a decision

The authorised decision-maker will consider the investigation findings, applicable policies, relevant evidence and any response provided by the parties.

Where appropriate, possible outcomes may include:

- No further action where the allegation is not substantiated.
- Informal resolution or an agreed outcome.
- Education, training, counselling or a formal warning.

- Conditions on participation or access to events.
- Disciplinary action, suspension or termination of membership or engagement, where authorised by applicable rules.
- Referral to an external authority or further safeguarding action.

Any finding or disciplinary action must be proportionate, consistent with the applicable rules and made by a person with appropriate authority.

Step 6 - Communicate the outcome

The complainant and respondent will be advised of the outcome, to the extent appropriate and lawful.

Information provided will respect privacy, confidentiality, procedural fairness and any restrictions arising from child-safety concerns or external investigations.

The responsible officer will also explain any available review or appeal process.

Step 7 - Review and close the complaint

Where a review mechanism is available, a party may request a review on the grounds and within the timeframe specified in the relevant rules or outcome letter.

A review must be conducted by someone who was not materially involved in the original decision, wherever practicable.

The complaint will be closed when the appropriate actions have been completed or a documented decision has been made that no further action is appropriate. Any ongoing safety measures must continue for as long as necessary.

6. Timeframes

FISAF Australia will acknowledge complaints as soon as reasonably practicable, assess urgent safety concerns immediately and provide updates at reasonable intervals.

The time required to resolve a complaint will depend on its seriousness, complexity, the availability of evidence and any external investigation. Where a complaint cannot be resolved within the expected timeframe, the responsible officer will provide an update and explain the reason for the delay, where appropriate.

7. Confidentiality and Records

Complaints will be handled sensitively and information will be shared only with people who reasonably need it for assessment, investigation, safety, decision-making or legal compliance.

FISAF Australia will maintain secure records of complaints, risk assessments, actions taken, findings and outcomes in accordance with applicable privacy, recordkeeping and safeguarding requirements.

Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where disclosure is necessary to protect a person, comply with law, report suspected abuse or misconduct, or provide procedural fairness.

8. Protection from Victimisation

No person may intimidate, threaten, disadvantage or retaliate against someone because they have raised a concern, made a complaint, assisted an investigation or acted in good faith to protect a child or another participant.

Allegations of victimisation will be taken seriously and may result in disciplinary action. A complaint will not be treated as misconduct merely because it is unsubstantiated.

9. External Reporting and Legal Obligations

FISAF Australia will comply with applicable mandatory reporting, child-safety, police notification and regulatory obligations.

Depending on the nature and location of the incident, complaints may need to be referred to police, child-protection authorities, the Queensland Family and Child Commission or another relevant body.

Internal complaint handling does not replace a person's right to contact an appropriate external authority.

10. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and following significant incidents, changes in applicable law or identified deficiencies in complaint handling.

FISAF Australia will ensure that relevant staff, officials and volunteers understand their responsibilities under this policy and that complaint procedures are accessible to children, young people, families and members.