**Glasgow HF Outdoor Club Complaints Procedure**

*Agreed at the Club AGM 15 February 2022*

This document sets out the procedure for complaints by members or guests (the ‘Complainant’) of the Club against other members or guests who they believe have failed to act in accordance of the club’s code of conduct, rules or other policies (the ‘Respondent’).

Complaints will be dealt with confidentially by all parties involved, except where it is necessary to disclose information to carry out a fair investigation.

**Informal resolution**

The person making the complaint should consider taking steps to resolve the matter informally before making a formal complaint. This might include discussing the matter with the Respondent, and/or seeking advice from Committee members.

**Making a formal complaint**

A formal Complaint should be made to the Club Secretary (the ‘complaints handler’) within 14 days of the conduct complained of (the “Complaint”). In the event that the Club Secretary were the Complainant or Respondent, the complaint should be made to the Club President or Vice President.

1. The Complainant should report the matter in writing to the complaints handler within 14 days of the conduct or incident being complained of (the ‘Complaint’). The email addresses of club officials are given on the club’s website and in the circulated summer and winter walk programmes.

The report should include:

1. **A detailed description** of what occurred
2. **Details** of **when and where** the occurrence took place;
3. Statements by any **people who witnessed** the event(s) or were affected by them
4. **Names** of any others who have been treated in a similar way (provided that those people consent to their names being disclosed);
5. **Details of any former complaints** made about the incident, including the date and to whom such complaint was made; and
6. An indication as to the **desired outcome**.

Within 7 days of receipt of the Complaint, the complaint handler will write to the Respondent attaching the Complaint, accompanying evidence and a copy of this procedure and stating that the Respondent has 10 days to provide written representations and any evidence in response to the Complaint (the “Response”).

The complaint handler will circulate the complaint, the response and any evidence produced to the Club Committee (or a sub-committee without any involvement in the circumstances of the complaint appointed by the Club Committee for the purpose). Following consideration of the Complaint, the Committee may consider whether it is appropriate and proportionate to immediately suspend a member from the Club until the complaints process is concluded. The Committee should consider the seriousness of the complaint, and the impact it has had on the Complainant and balance that against the need to conduct a fair and impartial investigation and the impact suspension may have on the Respondent. Matters which may warrant immediate suspension include breaches of the law e.g. the Equalities Act or criminal matters.

1. Upon receipt of the Response, the Club Committee may make any further enquiries of any party that they consider necessary or desirable.
2. The Club Committee may:
* decide to uphold or dismiss the complaint without holding a hearing;
* arrange a hearing (whether or not such a hearing is requested by either party) at which both parties will be entitled to attend and present their case to the club committee or a sub-committee.
* If the Committee /subcommittee considers that any other sanction is appropriate, it shall record its decision and the reasons for it in writing and shall send a copy of the reasoned decision to the parties within 10 days of the deadline for the Response.
1. The sanctions that may be imposed under this procedure include:
2. **a warning** as to future conduct;
3. **suspension** of membership;
4. **removal** from membership of the Club: as specified in clause 3.4 of the Club Constitution, this should be only for serious offences such as breaches of relevant legislation or criminal matters, or bringing the club into disrepute in some way;
5. **exclusion of** a non-member guest from Club activities, either temporarily or permanently.
6. **turning down** a non-member’s current and/or future membership application.
7. Either party may appeal a decision of the committee by writing to the Club Secretary within 28 days of the Club’s decision being notified to that party giving grounds as to why they believe the decision of the Committee is wrong or unsafe. The Committee will consider any such appeal and give a final decision, which is final.
8. If the complaint is regarding removalfrom office of a Committee Member, the Committee will convene a Special General Meeting of all Club members to decide the outcome, as specified in clause 6.3 of the Club Constitution.
9. If the nature of the complaint is with regard to the Club committee’s management of the club, a complainant has the right to report the complaint to **Mountaineering Scotland** butonly if it is on one of the following grounds: (a) that the Committee has failed to follow its own written procedures or Club Constitution; or (b) that an action or decision of the Committee constitutes a breach of natural justice or relevant legislation.