

Complaints Procedure

The CMC Complaints Procedure is based on the guidelines issued by Mountaineering Ireland.

1. Introduction and Purpose

This document describes the Complaints Procedure that the Comeragh Mountaineering Club (CMC) complies with to ensure all complaints are resolved in an agreed and fair manner.

The procedure covers complaints related to CMC activities, interactions between members and other issues affecting the club's operation.

CMC members should be aware of the standards expected of them and any action that may be taken if their behaviour is not consistent with the club's Code of Conduct. The CMC Code of Conduct is based on the template issued by Mountaineering Ireland. The Code of Conduct document sets out the framework under which complaints can be considered. The CMC Code of Conduct document aims to foster a positive, safe and enjoyable environment for all members of the club. It is available on the members area of the CMC website.

Who should receive a complaint or a disciplinary matter?

The person receiving the complaint or disciplinary matter should not be directly involved in the issue.

A CMC member should report the complaint to either the club chairperson or a designated committee member. The complaint should be then dealt with impartially and objectively.

2. Definitions

Complaint: Dissatisfaction with a CMC member's behaviour, club activities or club matters/policies.

Complainant: The individual or group raising the complaint – club members, coaches/volunteers or members of the public.

Respondent: The individual or group against whom the complaint is made – other members who the complainant believes have failed to act in accordance with the club's code of conduct, rules or club policies.

3. Confidentiality and Fairness

All complaints will be taken seriously and will be dealt with promptly, fairly and handled confidentially.

Information is shared only with those directly involved in resolving the issue. All involved will be treated impartially, without bias, unlawful discrimination or prejudice.

4. Procedure Outline

Where the complaint is considered serious, the CMC committee may seek professional advice to consider suspending the person against whom the complaint has been made until the complaints process is concluded.

➤ **Informal Resolution**

As adults, it is expected that all members treat each other with respect and take personal responsibility for their actions/behaviour. As far as possible, any issue should be resolved in a low-key manner between the individuals concerned.

If a club member has concerns about making a direct approach on their own to the individual/s involved, they may speak in confidence to a member of the Committee first informally, and seek their support to resolve the issue in a low-key informal manner.

Comeragh Mountaineering Club

➤ **Formal Complaint Process**

A formal complaint must be submitted by hardcopy or email and should include the following information:

- Date, time and place where the incident occurred,
- Name(s) of whom the complaint is against,
- Name(s) of witnesses, if any present,
- Description of the issue,
- Other relevant information, if any.

An acknowledgement of receipt of the complaint should be issued within 7 days,

➤ **Investigation**

The complaint shall be investigated by either a designated committee member or a neutral party. In both instances, the person investigating the complaint shall be acceptable to both the complainant and the respondent.

The investigation shall include the following:

- Interviews with the complainant,
- Interviews with the respondent,
- Interviews with any witnesses,
- Examination of all relevant information submitted,

➤ **Resolution**

The findings and any action to be taken shall be communicated to both the complainant and the respondent.

The possible actions, such as mediation, disciplinary action or policy changes should be described.

The decisions and outcomes should be proportionate, fair and appropriate.

➤ **Complaints against the Club**

For complaints against the CMC, the complainant should submit their complaint in writing to the CMC Chairperson. This will be considered by the Committee or a complaints sub-group of the committee, who will respond in writing.

If the complainant(s) are not happy with the response and wishes to take the matter further, they should write to the CMC Chairperson detailing their reasons. The matter may then be referred to an independent third party nominated by the Committee who will investigate the complaint and respond in writing.

5. Disciplinary Actions

The disciplinary action that may be taken includes the following:

- A warning as to future conduct,
- Suspension of CMC membership,
- Removal of CMC membership,
- Removal from office of a CMC committee member,
- Exclusion of a non-member from joining the CMC, either temporarily or permanently,
- Not approving a non-member's current and/or future CMC membership applications,

Comeragh Mountaineering Club

6. Appeals Process

- The parties involved have a right to appeal.
- The appeal must be submitted to the CMC Chairperson within 28 days of the issuing of the findings and any proposed disciplinary actions. The appeal must be submitted by hardcopy or email and should include all supporting information.
- The appeal shall be dealt with by the CMC Committee (minimum of 5 members) and the findings issued to the parties in writing within 28 days of receipt of the written appeal.

7. Record Keeping

Detailed records of all complaints, investigations and resolutions shall be maintained by the CMC. These records shall be retained for a minimum of 6 years.

8. Training and Awareness

The Complaints procedure and the CMC Code of Conduct are available for review on the members area of the CMC website.

9. Review and Improvement

The Complaints procedure and the Code of Conduct shall be reviewed every 3 years by the CMC Committee to ensure they remain effective and relevant.

10. Contact Information

Phone contact details for all CMC committee officers are available in the members section of the **CMC Website** or the **WhatsApp CMC Noticeboard**.