

NORC Formal Grievance Policy & Procedure

Effective July 15, 2023

Purpose

The grievance policy and procedure intends to support the healthy, respectful, and inclusive culture at New Orleans Rowing Club for all of its members and beneficiaries (including all rowers, families of rowers, volunteers, and guests of the club).

Policy Statement

A grievance may be filed by any beneficiary of NORC regarding incidents related to club activities.

Definition

The definition of a formal grievance for the purpose of this procedure is a complaint that cannot be rectified by a Director or suspected misconduct of a parent, rower, coach, or board member and will be handled as per the procedure below. Informal resolution of grievances through direct conversation between the parties with a program Director prior to the filing of a formal grievance is strongly encouraged.

Objectives

This grievance procedure is designed to provide an open and transparent route for complaints to be made and to be resolved fairly and within a reasonable period. Unprocessed grievances, when aired without clear communication between parties, can damage the culture and reputation of the club; as such, we ask beneficiaries of the club to use the procedure in lieu of airing grievances more widely.

General Principles

The NORC Board will provide general oversight to ensure the grievance procedures are carried out in a professional, conscientious, and objective manner through a thorough review process. This procedure seeks to operate in a fair and expedient manner to handle non-legal aspects of issues; it is not a formal legal process, but will follow legal requirements of reporting to outside bodies as required. The process provides for maximum confidentiality of all parties involved.

Filing a Grievance

This formal grievance process is in place to ensure that when informal means of grievance resolution are untenable due to a power differential, or when they have become unproductive, the club can support grievance resolution and thereby maintain the health and wellbeing of the club's members and other beneficiaries.

To begin a formal grievance procedure, the complainant contacts the appropriate grievance processor as designated below.

- Board members, coaches, and other staff of the club who have a grievance should contact the club president or vice president.

- Members and other beneficiaries of the club who have a grievance should contact any member of the Board to alert them to an issue.

From there, it will be directed to a three-person group of board members who will review and process the claim, known as the processor.

Processor

A panel of three board members, with at least one being an elected member (President, Vice President, Treasurer, or Secretary), will be designated to review the claim and be known as the Processor. The board member who was approached about the claim will assemble this group. These individuals will be selected from the board based on situational availability for any given claim. They will provide oversight of the process and a resolution.

Grievance Review Procedure

1. The first step in the grievance process is for a board member to be alerted to an issue. They will then assemble from the NORC board a Processor group. During this time, the complainant will also provide comprehensive written documentation of the interactions related to the grievance.
2. Once a written complaint explaining Who, What, Where, When, Why, and How is provided from the complainant, the designated Processor will review and interview the complainant.
3. The designated Processor will convey to the complainant the next steps required to achieve resolution of the grievance.
4. If these steps require sharing information with any other individual, the designated processor will inform the complainant of what information will be shared and with whom. With the exception of required reporting protocols for criminal conduct and/or Safesport violations, the complainant may request the resolution process be halted to protect their privacy.
5. The Processor will then interview all parties involved to understand the full nature of the grievance and better prepare a resolution
6. The Processor will communicate to club members and beneficiaries if the grievance requires a change to club operations during this time.
7. The goal is to resolve each grievance within 15 days of written receipt. The Processor will do their best to address the grievance in this time period; should the process take longer than 15 days, the Processor will update the complainant no later than 15 days after the complaint is submitted.
8. Once a resolution has been arrived at by the Processor, the Processor will inform the complainant and other parties involved of the resolution.
9. If there is a need to review the decision, any involved party can request that the board be presented with the issue, from which the entire NORC board will have 15 days to review and seek additional information before providing a final decision.

Grievance Resolution & Communication

Grievances can lead to anything from no action all the way up to permanent removal from the club for the parties involved. Examples below:

1. Reprimand: A communication, either public or private, of the club's disapproval of the initiating action. A reprimand may be combined with probation or suspension.
2. Probation: A ruling that, for a specified time, continued participation at regattas or other club activities is conditioned upon satisfaction of certain conditions. These conditions shall be described specifically, as shall the consequences of failing to meet them.
3. Suspension: A ruling that, for a specified time, one is forbidden from participating in or sponsoring registered regattas or other club activities.
4. Removal from Membership: A ruling that one is removed either for a specified period or permanently from membership in club.
5. The Processor may order such other relief as it deems appropriate (e.g., letter of apology or restitution including payment for damaging equipment) but may not impose monetary fines as part of its penalty.

A summary of the grievance and its resolution will be documented by the Processor and shared with the entire NORC board within 10 days of the resolution of the grievance; should the grievance take longer than 30 days to resolve, the processor will provide a written summary of the grievance and its current status and provide it to the board not later than 30 days after the written filing of the grievance, providing updates at least every 30 days until such time as the grievance is resolved. If the grievance leads to a change in club operations, the processor will communicate as such at the end of the grievance process.