



Complaint Resolution Guideline



Updated: March, 2024

1. Purpose

This document is a guide to resolving complaints within the NKMLA and its members, ensuring that all persons have a clear and well-defined method of making a concern known, and dealing with complaints in a fair and timely manner at the appropriate level.

Complaints may be made by any NKMLA stakeholder (player, referee, bench staff, guardian, or other stakeholder) should another stakeholder (or stakeholders) act in a manner that is inconsistent with Regulations, Rules, Code of Conduct, and / or By-Laws of the NKMLA, or its governing bodies (OLA).

2. Disciplinary Guiding Principles

NKMLA have implemented a formal disciplinary process to supplement the Code of Conduct for players, parents, team officials and executive members and the Code of Conduct policies as set out by OLA.

All players, parents and team officials are responsible to the Executive for their own actions and must sign (or acknowledge in their registration application) the appropriate Code of Conduct before any player takes to the floor for camps, tryouts or house sorts.

The Executive will ensure that all members have access to this document. The Program Directors (Boys, Girls, House) will ensure that ALL NKMLA members have completed the Code of Conduct.

Every team is responsible to the Executive for the action of their players, parents, spectators and team officials and are/is required to take all necessary precautions to prevent threatening or assaulting behavior to game officials, team officials, players and spectators during, at the conclusion of games or during team activities/functions. Good sportsmanship prevails, and profane language is not tolerated.

Any team official or player who is found to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs while preparing for a game, during a game, immediately following a game, before/ during/immediately after any on-floor team activity, or who uses abusive language (to anyone including parents, players, and spectators) while at a game or practice is

potentially subject to an immediate suspension pending an investigation and hearing by the NKMLA Disciplinary Committee.

Any coach, manager, player, or team official entering the referee's room to dispute a ruling will be automatically suspended for four (4) consecutive league games, over and above any other suspensions they may receive.

All players must show the utmost respect for arena property—both at home and away—and in accordance with the NKMLA Players Code of Conduct signed at the start of the season. Players failing to do so are subject to suspension and further disciplinary action as dictated by the NKMLA Discipline Committee.

3. Disciplinary Process

The disciplinary process is designed to create a fair, unbiased, and objective process for disciplining behavior that violates the Code of Conduct. NKMLA reserves the right to discipline players, parents, spectators or team officials in addition to, and regardless of, any discipline that may have occurred through OLA for any part of the Code of Conducts.

At the discretion of the NKMLA Rules and Discipline committee, a player, a team official, and/or a game official may be suspended by NKMLA for one or more games for committing, but not limited to, any of the following infractions immediately before, during, or after a game:

- Foul language
- Fighting
- Unsportsmanlike conduct
- Abuse of equipment and uniforms owned by the Association
- Verbal abuse of officials, parents, or bench staff
- Stealing the property of others
- Violation of any rule and regulation that may be posted on bulletin boards or in dressings rooms of any arena
- Participating while under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs

NKMLA Rules and Discipline Committee will consist of the Vice President, Risk and Safety Director and two (2) Neutral Individuals chosen by the NKMLA Vice President. Additional members may be chosen to avoid conflict of interest issues or to bring an unbiased opinion into the decision of the infraction.

The investigation will consist of the following process and timelines:

- Where the subject of the complaint is minor in nature (as deemed by the Rules and Discipline Committee), or where a single complaint is made, no investigation will be required.
- Where the subject matter of the complaint is serious in nature (as deemed by the Rules and Discipline Committee), or where multiple complaints are made, the Rules and Discipline Committee will call for an investigation into the matter.
- At any time, a NKMLA stakeholder may refer a conflict to the Rules and Discipline Committee if the conflict is thought to be serious in nature and outside the scope of the process taken for minor conflicts.

Investigation processes:

- a) The investigation of the complaint must be impartial, timely, fair, and address all relevant issues. The Rules and Discipline Committee will conduct a thorough, fair and impartial investigation of the allegations in the complaint. The Rules and Discipline Committee will thoroughly interview both the complainant(s) and the respondent(s). All parties will be interviewed separately and individually if there are more than one; either complainant(s), respondent(s), or witness(es). The respondent(s) should be given the opportunity to respond to each of the specific allegations raised by the complainant(s). Follow up interviews may be required.
- b) The Rules and Discipline Committee will also interview any relevant witnesses identified by either the complainant(s) or the respondent(s), and gather any relevant documents.
- c) Proper notes will be taken during interviews. If the complainant is a minor, a legal guardian may speak on their behalf. In most cases, investigations should start within 48hrs after the Rules and Discipline Committee receives a complaint, and finish within 14 days. All members of the organization are required to cooperate with the investigator. At the conclusion of the investigation, the Rules and Discipline Committee will prepare a written report summarizing the allegations and the investigation results. The committee will forward the report to all impacted parties, including the Vice President of the NKMLA. The report may be used as part of any hearing on the matter. A ruling will follow the investigation and/or hearing. Any discipline, if required, will be handed out at this time.

NKMLA Hearing procedures;

- a) The Discipline Committee will convene a hearing within five days .
- b) The Disciplinary Committee serves, or causes to be served, reasonable notice upon the subject(s) of the hearing that a disciplinary hearing is scheduled. Where the subject(s) of the hearing is a minor person, that persons' parents/guardian are served notice.

- c) All parties to a disciplinary hearing are afforded a reasonable opportunity to attend the hearing and to make any argument or representations bearing upon the conduct of the issue.
- d) The Disciplinary Committee considers all material facts, factors, and arguments prior to rendering a decision.
- e) The decision of the Disciplinary Committee is final and binding. Appeals are to be made in accordance with the OLA guidelines for the appeal process and reasoning. Fees may apply and are due at the time of the scheduled appeal hearing.

Minor violations of the Code of Conduct may be met with a written warning from the Disciplinary Committee. The Player/Parent Code of Conduct will be re-signed and the player/official/parent may be required to complete an appropriate training program before being permitted to participate in NKMLA activities.

Major or subsequent violations of the Code of Conduct will have cumulative disciplinary actions and may include but are not limited to:

- In-person meeting with at least two executive members of the Disciplinary Committee
- Minimum 1 game suspension
- Immediate suspension of all lacrosse activities pending the outcome of a hearing with the Disciplinary Committee
- Expulsion from NKMLA for the remainder of the year

The Disciplinary Committee has the authority to hand out disciplinary action as it deems necessary and will weigh the severity of the offense as well as the offender's past history when rendering judgment.

Appendix A – Complaint Procedure

Complainant, after adhering to the 24 hour rule, voices concern directly with the respondent.

If after bringing the complaint to the respondent there is no resolution, and the complainant feels the situation requires resolution, they may take their concern directly to the Program Director.

Program Director may:

- Hold an informal meeting with both parties involved and try to resolve the conflict.
- Request an investigation and refer the matter to the Disciplinary Committee.

If, after an informal meeting, there is still no resolution the Program Director will ask all parties to submit in writing their part in the situation and they will submit these to the Vice President with their written statement on actions taken to this point.

If the Vice President feels that ALL informal avenues have been exhausted, they may inform the board that The Disciplinary Committee is to be convened for the purpose of conducting a hearing.

If the Vice President feels that not ALL avenues have been exhausted, they may decide to send it back to the Program Director for another attempt to resolve.

The complaint will be documented, closed and unless otherwise specified, this information is retained for up to five (5) years.

Appendix B – Incident Management and Reporting Procedures

The following is a guideline that outlines the steps to file a concern or complaint:

- Starting from the parent level (depending where the origin of the concern/complaint is the starting point may vary) the concern/complaint must travel up the ladder in sequence.
- It should be noted if a Director of Programming has a concern it should be brought to the attention of the Vice President first and not directly to another association.
- Failure to follow the guidelines may delay a ruling on your complaint or concern.
- All levels will be notified if need for escalation is warranted.
- If a step is skipped the complaint/concern may be dismissed at the discretion of the Vice President.
- The sequence is as follows:
 1. Team Parent representative (best practice to have a neutral team parent available to represent parents that is not the manager or bench staff member). If no Team Parent then the Team Manager.
 2. Head Coach
 3. Program Director
 4. Vice President
 5. Disciplinary Committee
 6. Full Executive

Appendix C – Guideline on Conduct Management

Any member of NKMLA may raise an issue when they feel the NKMLA Code of Conduct has been violated.

If the issue is in regard to a player, parent, coach or other team volunteer then follow this process:

Step 1 – Observe the 24-hour Rule.

The 24-Hour Rule is simply explained as when problems arise it is a benefit for all concerned to wait for a full day (24 hours) before you report an issue so as to not let the emotion of a situation get in the way of the facts. The only time this rule may be bypassed is due to behavior that poses' safety risk.

Step 2 – Try to deal with the issue at the level where it occurred.

Speak to your team Head Coach, Assistant Coach or Manager regarding the issue to see if it can be resolved at that level. If the issue cannot be resolved the Coach/Manager the complainant can escalate the issue.

Step 3 – Escalation to Director.

Issues should be escalated to either the House League Director or the Competitive Director (Girls or Boys), depending on the program where the issue was raised. The Program Director will attempt to bring resolution to the issue. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, then the issue will be escalated to NKMLA Disciplinary Committee.

Step 4 – Issue Resolution Form

The complaint must be made in writing using the "Issue Resolution Form".

Step 5 - Completed Issue Resolution Form

Completed forms should be sent to the Risk and Safety Director who will contact the complainant for any necessary clarification and will determine if this issue requires a hearing. If the Risk and Safety Director determines that an official hearing is necessary, then a date and time for the hearing will be set.

* If the issue is in regards to any Executive member, the process should commence at Step 4, except in the case that the issue involves the Risk and Safety Director, in which the issue must be reported directly to the President.

**Importantly, executives should be more carefully assessed given the board is their peers, this results in a biased assessment which is not fair to the member who files a complaint.

***The Risk and Safety Director is responsible for investigating all issues brought forward. Not every issue that is investigated will end with a disciplinary action, some cases will be found to be without merit, others may be resolved via mediation.