

Netball NSW

Child Focused Guide to Complaint Processes

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A CHILD-FOCUSED APPROACH TO COMPLAINT PROCESSES

Background

Netball NSW (**NNSW**) considers the safety and wellbeing of children paramount in everything that it does.

This resource outlines the key considerations for all NSW Netball organisations to take into account and action when managing complaints, reports and disputes involving children and young people under the age of 18 years. In using this guide, please consider that every child or young person is different, with differing needs, preferences, backgrounds and vulnerabilities. As such, implementing a child-focused approach is not a “one size fits all” exercise. Rather, it is necessary to tailor your approach – in consultation with the child or young person’s parent(s) and/or guardian(s), as appropriate - to account for a range of possibilities that may benefit and safeguard the wellbeing of the child or young person in question.

Key Considerations for a Child Focused Approach to Complaint Processes:

In conducting any complaint process involving children and young people, please consider and take the following steps, which are not exclusive and should be adapted for individual circumstances:

1. Plan for children and young people’s involvement in matters based on the circumstances of the child and young person and the matter at hand.
2. Appoint one person to liaise with the child or young person and/or their parent/guardian throughout the matter.
3. Inform children and young people about the process being undertaken and their rights from the outset.
4. Be honest and open about the things that children and young people can control and those they can’t control and/or may be able to influence. This is likely to include such things as who will be involved, timelines and dates, why the process is needed and their role in it as well as others, who will be present, protecting their confidentiality and privacy, etc.
5. As appropriate, consult with the child or young person’s parent/guardian throughout the process.
6. Ensure that support from their parent/guardian and/or advocate (depending on the circumstances) is available for a child or young person and that inquiries are made as to any other support (ie, counselling via their GP) that may be necessary for the child or young person participating in any process.
7. Assume that all children and young people are capable of being involved in the complaints process. In the presence of their parent/guardian(s) and/or advocate (as appropriate), ask the child for their input, including about the type of support(s) they need, how they prefer to provide input (eg, written, verbal, in-person or online, via video, etc)
8. Ensure that processes are trauma-informed. That is, the process recognises the potential distress and re-traumatisation that sharing their personal experiences may have and accommodates reasonable adjustments in any process to meet children and young people’s needs. Adjustments may include (but

are not limited to) taking breaks in interviews or witness accounts, clearing the room of other people in a tribunal setting to make the setting less confronting, not requiring a child or young person to front a tribunal at all and gathering evidence via other means, etc.

9. If the child feels able to do so, encourage the child or young person to provide an account of the circumstances of the matter in their own words.
10. Listen to what children and young people say without judgment and take their views seriously.
11. Don't dismiss or give less value to children's or young people's views because they are not adults.
12. Do not value or prioritise an adult's opinion over that of a child or young person where they may differ.
13. Inform children and young people of the outcome(s) of a matter and/or action taken and the reasons for it and check in with them as to whether they have any questions.
14. Ensure that children and young people know how the decision or outcome(s) can be reviewed, if applicable.
15. Ensure that records are kept of all complaints and/or conversations with children and young people in a secure location for a period of not less than seven (7) years.