

Star-Mites Gymnastics

Complaints, Reporting & Integrity Policy

Version	2025
Approved by	Directors
Review Year	2025

Reviewed: 2025



Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear and reliable process for members of Star-Mites Gymnastics to raise complaints and concerns, and for the club to address them fairly, promptly, and consistently. Having a formal complaints and reporting framework ensures that every individual's rights are respected, and that no one is left without support when issues arise. A safe, inclusive, and transparent environment can only exist if members feel confident that their concerns will be taken seriously.

This policy applies to all athletes, parents and guardians, coaches, officials, staff, contractors, and volunteers connected to Star-Mites Gymnastics. It covers behaviour that occurs within the gym, at competitions, during travel, at events, and through digital communication such as social media or messaging platforms. Any time a person is acting as a representative of Star-Mites, they are covered by this policy.

The scope of this policy includes not only complaints about misconduct but also broader issues such as breaches of policy, concerns about safety, and conflicts between members. It also explains the process for reporting integrity-related matters such as cheating, dishonesty, or misuse of club resources. In all cases, the policy provides clear pathways for raising issues and explains how those matters will be handled.

By creating a structured and accessible complaints process, Star-Mites Gymnastics aims to build trust within its community. The club recognises that problems will sometimes arise, but how they are addressed is what defines the culture. This policy ensures that fairness and accountability remain at the heart of every resolution.

Guiding Principles

The complaints process at Star-Mites Gymnastics is guided by the principles of fairness, transparency, confidentiality, and timeliness. Fairness means that everyone involved in a complaint — whether raising it or responding to it — is treated with respect and given a genuine opportunity to be heard. This includes applying the principles of natural justice, where decisions are not made until all parties have had a chance to present their perspective.

Transparency means that the process for handling complaints is clear and predictable. Members should know who to approach, what steps will be taken, and how long the process is likely to take. While outcomes may vary depending on the nature of the complaint, the pathway itself is designed to be open and accessible to all members.

Confidentiality is critical in maintaining trust. Information shared as part of a complaint will be treated with discretion and only provided to those who need it to resolve the matter. This protects both the complainant and the respondent, reduces gossip and speculation, and creates an environment where people feel safe to come forward.

Timeliness is equally important. Delays in addressing complaints can cause unnecessary stress, prolong conflict, and allow harmful behaviour to continue. Star-Mites Gymnastics is committed to acting quickly while also ensuring thoroughness. The goal is always to resolve issues as soon as practicable without compromising fairness.

Definitions

In order to avoid confusion, this policy clearly defines key terms. A “complaint” is an expression of dissatisfaction about behaviour, decisions, or processes within the club. Complaints may range from interpersonal issues between members, to allegations of bullying, harassment, or unsafe practices. Complaints may be formal (submitted in writing) or informal (raised verbally).

A “concern” is a less formal expression of worry about a situation or behaviour. Concerns often involve seeking clarification or early intervention before an issue escalates. For example, a parent asking a coach about communication or training methods may be considered a concern rather than a formal complaint.

“Integrity” refers to honesty, fairness, and adherence to rules. In a gymnastics context, this includes upholding fair play, respecting judging standards, accurately reporting scores, and avoiding any actions that could bring the sport or the club into disrepute. Integrity also includes proper use of club resources and responsible behaviour when representing Star-Mites in the community.

A “respondent” is the person against whom a complaint is made. A “complainant” is the person raising the issue. Both complainants and respondents have rights and responsibilities under this policy, and both deserve to be treated respectfully and fairly throughout the process.

By providing clear definitions and examples, the policy helps members recognise the difference between concerns that can be resolved informally and complaints that require formal processes. Clarity at the start reduces confusion later, and supports consistent, fair decision-making.

Reporting Pathways

Star-Mites Gymnastics has established clear reporting pathways to ensure that complaints can be raised in ways that are comfortable and accessible. In many cases, the first step is to raise the issue directly with the person involved, if it is safe to do so. Often, misunderstandings can be resolved through open conversation. However, if direct resolution is not possible or appropriate, the next step is to report the matter to a coach, team manager, or senior staff member.

For complaints of a more serious nature, or where impartiality is required, members should report directly to the Club Manager or the Member Protection Information Officer (MPIO). At Star-Mites Gymnastics, the MPIO is Lauren Murray, who can be contacted via lauren@starmites.com.au. The MPIO acts as an independent support person to explain processes, provide information, and guide members through the complaint pathway.

If a matter involves child safety, discrimination, harassment, or any issue that may breach state or federal law, it may also be necessary to involve external authorities. This could include Sport Integrity Australia, the WA Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, the Department of Communities, or the WA Police. Star-Mites Gymnastics will provide support in connecting members to the appropriate agencies.

Members can raise complaints verbally, in writing, or by using the formal complaint form provided in the appendices to this policy. Anonymous complaints will be considered where possible, but it may be more difficult to investigate matters without full information. Regardless of how complaints are raised, every report will be taken seriously.

Investigation and Response Process

Once a complaint is received, the first priority is the safety and wellbeing of those involved. If there is any immediate risk, temporary measures such as separating parties, modifying training arrangements, or restricting contact may be put in place while the issue is addressed. Safety always takes precedence over procedure.

The next step is an initial assessment to determine how the complaint should be managed. Some matters may be suitable for informal resolution, such as mediation or discussion facilitated by a neutral party. Others may require a formal investigation, where statements are gathered, evidence is reviewed, and findings are made. The level of response will always match the seriousness of the issue.

During investigations, both complainant and respondent will be given the opportunity to present their perspective. No decision will be made until all relevant information has been considered. The process will be guided by fairness, with both sides having equal opportunity to be heard. Witnesses may also be consulted where relevant.

When the investigation is complete, the outcome will be communicated in writing to both parties. Where a breach of policy is confirmed, appropriate action will be taken. This may include education, mediation, disciplinary measures, or referral to external authorities. The aim is always to resolve matters in a way that restores trust, protects members, and upholds the integrity of the club.

Support for Complainants and Respondents

Raising or responding to a complaint can be stressful, which is why both complainants and respondents are entitled to support. Complainants should feel safe to come forward without fear of retaliation or negative treatment. Retaliation against a complainant is itself a breach of this policy and will result in serious consequences.

Respondents also deserve fair treatment. Being accused of misconduct does not mean that misconduct has occurred. Respondents will be treated with respect, given clear information about the complaint, and offered the chance to respond fully. Support is available for respondents through coaches, the MPIO, or external advisory services.

In some cases, mediation may be offered as a way to resolve issues constructively. Mediation provides a safe environment where both parties can express concerns, listen to each other, and agree on a way forward. Mediation is not appropriate in cases involving serious misconduct such as abuse, but it can be helpful in resolving interpersonal conflicts.

The club also recognises the emotional impact that complaints can have on children and families. Additional support may be provided through referrals to counselling services, community resources, or specialist organisations. The wellbeing of members is always the priority.

Confidentiality and Record Keeping

All complaints will be handled with strict confidentiality. Information will only be shared with those directly involved in managing or investigating the complaint. Gossip, speculation, or public discussion of complaints is not acceptable and may itself be treated as a breach of this policy.

Records of complaints will be kept securely by the Club Manager and MPIO. These records are important for tracking patterns of behaviour, ensuring accountability, and demonstrating compliance with legal and governance requirements. Records will include details of the complaint, the steps taken, and the outcome.

Access to complaint records is restricted to authorised personnel only. These records will not be shared outside the club except where required by law or where external agencies are involved in the investigation. Members can be assured that their personal information will be handled in line with the Australian Privacy Principles.

Retention of complaint records is also important. Documents will be kept for a minimum period consistent with legal requirements, after which they may be securely destroyed. This ensures both accountability and respect for privacy.

Breaches and Consequences

Breaches of this policy — including failure to follow reporting pathways, retaliation against complainants, or breaches of confidentiality — will be taken seriously. Consequences will vary depending on the severity of the misconduct, but may include education, warnings, suspension, or expulsion from the club.

Where serious misconduct is confirmed, such as abuse, harassment, or criminal behaviour, the matter will be referred to external authorities. Star-Mites Gymnastics will cooperate fully with investigations by Sport Integrity Australia, WA Police, or other relevant agencies.

Consequences are not designed to be punitive alone. The aim is to correct behaviour, restore safety, and protect the integrity of the club. However, where members refuse to accept responsibility or where behaviour is severe, strong disciplinary action will be taken.

By enforcing consequences consistently, Star-Mites Gymnastics ensures that every member understands the importance of integrity, accountability, and respect for the rules that protect our community.

Education and Training

Prevention is always better than cure, which is why education and training are central to this policy. Coaches, staff, and officials are required to complete training in complaints handling, child safeguarding, and integrity standards. This ensures they understand both the process and the responsibilities of their role.

Athletes and parents will also be given opportunities to learn about the complaints process. Education may take the form of information sessions, newsletters, or resources provided on the club website. By building awareness, the club empowers members to recognise issues early and take appropriate action.

Training also reinforces the club's culture of openness. When members understand that raising concerns is normal and welcomed, they are more likely to speak up before issues escalate. This helps protect individuals and strengthens the overall integrity of the club.

The club is committed to updating its training regularly to reflect changes in legislation, best practice, and community expectations. Education is an ongoing process, not a one-time requirement.

Review and Continuous Improvement

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains effective, relevant, and aligned with national and state guidelines. Reviews will take into account feedback from members, lessons learned from handling complaints, and changes in external requirements.

Continuous improvement means not only updating the document but also assessing whether the process is working in practice. Are complaints being handled fairly? Are members aware of the process? Are timelines being met? These are the questions the club will consider during each review.

Star-Mites Gymnastics encourages members to provide feedback on the complaints process at any time, not just during formal reviews. This feedback is invaluable for making the system stronger and more responsive.

By committing to regular review and improvement, the club demonstrates its dedication to integrity, accountability, and the welfare of its members.

Appendices

Appendix A: Complaints Form

The Star-Mites Gymnastics Complaints Form is designed to provide members with a structured way to raise concerns formally. While verbal discussions are often the first step, a written complaint ensures that details are recorded accurately and can be followed up properly. The form asks for key information such as the complainant's name, contact details, the nature of the complaint, and the date and location of the incident. These details are essential for ensuring the matter is investigated fairly.

Completing the form helps members organise their thoughts and express concerns clearly. It encourages complainants to describe not just what happened, but also how the incident affected them or others. This provides investigators with context and assists in identifying the impact of the behaviour in question. Members are encouraged to be as specific as possible, including names, times, and any witnesses, as this makes it easier to assess the situation accurately.

The form also provides space for complainants to state the outcome they are seeking. For some, this might be an apology or a change in behaviour, while others may seek disciplinary action or referral to external authorities. Stating the desired outcome does not guarantee it will be met, but it helps guide the resolution process and ensures that the complainant's voice is heard.

Confidentiality is a central part of the form. Complainants are assured that their details will only be shared with those who need them to resolve the matter. The form explains how personal information is protected under Australian privacy law, reinforcing the trust that complaints will be handled with care.

The form can be submitted in hard copy to the Club Manager or MPIO, or via email. Members may also ask a trusted person to help them complete the form, ensuring that literacy or language barriers do not prevent access to the process. Alternative formats, such as verbal dictation or translated versions, may also be arranged.

By providing this form, Star-Mites Gymnastics demonstrates its commitment to transparency and accountability. It ensures that every member has an accessible, reliable, and respectful pathway for raising concerns when informal conversations are not enough.

Appendix B: Reporting Flowchart

The reporting flowchart provides members with a clear visual guide to how complaints and concerns are handled. While some may prefer written explanations, a flowchart helps simplify the process by showing each step in sequence. It reassures members that there is a structured pathway and that their concerns will not be ignored or lost.

The process begins when a concern arises. If it is safe, members may first try to resolve the issue directly with the other person involved. If this is not possible, the concern should be taken to a coach, team manager, or staff member. These individuals may be able to address the matter informally, through discussion or mediation, without the need for a formal complaint.

If the issue is more serious, or if informal resolution fails, the matter progresses to the Club Manager or the MPIO. At this stage, the safety of those involved is assessed immediately. Where necessary, temporary measures may be put in place to protect members while the complaint is

investigated.

From there, the pathway branches depending on the seriousness of the issue. Some matters can be resolved internally through mediation or education. Others may require a formal investigation, where evidence is gathered and findings are made. In cases involving child safety, discrimination, or criminal conduct, the matter is referred to external authorities such as Sport Integrity Australia or the WA Police.

Once the issue is resolved, the outcome is communicated to both the complainant and respondent. A record of the process is kept securely, ensuring accountability and transparency. This final step closes the loop and reassures members that complaints are not only heard but also acted upon.

By using this flowchart, Star-Mites Gymnastics makes the complaints process easier to understand. Members can see at a glance what to do, who to approach, and what will happen next, which builds confidence and trust in the system.

Appendix C: Support Services Directory

Complaints and integrity issues can be emotionally challenging, which is why Star-Mites Gymnastics provides a directory of support services for members who need additional help. These services ensure that no member is left to deal with the stress of a complaint on their own.

Internal support begins with the MPIO, Lauren Murray, who is available to listen, provide guidance, and explain the process in plain language. Coaches and staff may also provide informal support, but the MPIO is the primary contact for independent advice. This ensures members have someone they can trust outside of direct coaching relationships.

External support is also available. Sport Integrity Australia provides resources for athletes, parents, and coaches on reporting integrity breaches, including bullying, harassment, and doping. The WA Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries offers information on safe sport practices and conflict resolution. The Department of Communities and the WA Police are available for cases involving child safety or criminal behaviour.

Mental health and wellbeing support is also recognised as important. Organisations such as Headspace, Kids Helpline, and Beyond Blue provide free and confidential services for children, young people, and parents. Contact details for these services are made available through the club so families can access them easily.

The directory also encourages members to seek support from trusted friends, family, or cultural networks. Complaints can be stressful, and having a strong support system helps individuals feel less isolated and more capable of handling the process.

By providing access to these services, Star-Mites Gymnastics ensures that members are supported not only in resolving complaints but also in maintaining their wellbeing. The directory reinforces that raising a complaint is not a burden to carry alone, but a process supported by both the club and wider community resources.