

# Canadian Pony Club

## CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROCESS



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## Conflict Resolution

The Canadian Pony club is committed to sustaining a positive environment in which the volunteers at all levels can work constructively together. The Conflict Resolution Policy and process was established as a foundation for ensuring that the environment remains positive and respectful.

The conflict resolution process is intended to:

- Provide the opportunity to resolve a conflict or complaint quickly, fairly and without judgement.
- Improve communication and understanding between branch volunteers and between branch and regional volunteers.
- Ensure confidence in committee and executive members by providing a mechanism whereby decisions can be objectively reviewed.
- Support a positive environment by allocating a process to preventing and resolving conflicts or complaints.

Volunteers who are experiencing a conflict or have a complaint are encouraged to resolve it through conversations with the immediate next chain of command. See Proper Chain of Communication.

For complaints that cannot be resolved satisfactory through communication between the parties a more formal process has been adopted by the Canadian Pony Club through their safe sport policy suite, approved in 2023.

## Informal complaint resolution

As a first step in the dispute resolution process, volunteers or members who are experiencing a conflict or have a complaint are encouraged to resolve their dispute through conversations with the immediate next chain of command so that all parties may collaboratively work to resolve the related issues.

1. Volunteers who experience a conflict or who have a complaint should first attempt to discuss the matter with their immediate chain of command. In some situations, this may be difficult or inappropriate. In these cases, the volunteer may request a meeting with the next level of command to discuss the problem.
2. The person contacted about the issue will analyze the merits of the conflict resolution request or complaint and will contact the complainant to inform them of the proposed plan of action. This research should always include the accused party to gain full knowledge of both sides of the story.
3. If the volunteer is not satisfied with the informal resolution of the problem, they may proceed informally to the next level of command or proceed with the formal complaint process.

In the next section you will find steps to take as part of this informal complaint process. In such a case attempts are made to resolve an issue internally, through the proper chains of communication.

## Proper Chain of Communication

### Branch Communications

- Matters specific to a discipline and/or testing, should contact the Branch Rep for that discipline first. They can communicate with their Regional Reps who can involve their National Rep for resolution and guidance. The branch rep should be familiar with the Regional and National rules of that discipline. The branch executive should be made aware of all issues that have been brought forward.
- Members, Parents, Volunteers, Branch Reps should contact their branch executive regarding any matters to be brought to the Region. If there are issues with a member of the Branch Executive, the remaining members of the executive will act as the committee.



- Branch Discipline Reps should work with their Regional Discipline Reps wherever possible around issues with their specific discipline.

### Regional Communications

- Branch Executives who need assistance rectifying issues within their branch could ask for assistance from the Regional Executive and / or the Visiting Commissioners in their region.
- If it is determined that the allegation is beyond the scope of local controversy and is thus of a regional nature or involves regional members or volunteers, the allegation must be made to a Regional Officer. The Officer receiving the allegation will contact the Regional Chair who will be the formal recipient of the allegation and will preside over all the Region's considerations of the allegation which may be done by the full Regional Board or a subcommittee assigned by the Regional Board for that purpose.
- If the Regional Chair is the accused, this responsibility shall be transferred to the Regional Vice Chair or if one does not exist to another Regional Director.
- Communication to a Regional Board is made by contacting any one of the Region's Officers (Chair, Vice Chair, Director, Deputy Director, Secretary, or Treasurer).
- The best approach to start the communication is either an e-mail outlining the details of the issue, parties involved and what outcome you are seeking or the request for a meeting with the executive to discuss the matter but still outlining the nature of the request.
- Communication to the National Board is made by contacting the Regional chair for your Region or in their absence the Regional Vice-chair.

Although not required, volunteers are encouraged to follow the informal approach to problem resolution prior to making a formal complaint. The CPC hopes that complaints can be resolved internally and informally between parties. At any time during this informal process the parties can reach out to the National office to request mediation.

The CPC has partnered with a third-party organization that can help **mediate** conflict situations.

### Event complaint resolution

For complaints at a specific event the procedure described in the 'Event discipline policy' will need to be followed. Generally speaking, the organizer of the event or, in case of a competition, the ground jury will be the party hearing and adjudicating the complaint.

In those cases, an event discipline panel may, upon receipt of a notification of a violation, administer an oral or written warning or reprimand, suspension, or ejection of the participant from the event or administer other appropriate penalties as determined by the panel. Their finding will be final.

Event discipline / penalties may not exceed the duration of the event and must be administered prior to the conclusion of the event. For example, a competitor may be disqualified for the further duration of the competition, but the jury cannot determine that they also cannot compete in any following events.

In case either party feels the incident needs to be dealt with further, they can file a formal complaint as under the 'general complaints' guidelines. An example would be the violation of the CPC code of conduct during an event that is of a more severe nature.



For disciplinary actions as a result of breaking competition rules (e.g., unauthorized assistance, misuse of aids or showing up with the wrong tack) we refer you to our individual competition rules.

## Formal complaint resolution

If the complaint is escalated to the formal complaint process, we will refer the situation to our independent third party.

### Filing a formal complaint

Complaints can be forwarded to our independent third party “Sport Matters Services Ltd” through a designated email address: [sportmatters@outlook.com](mailto:sportmatters@outlook.com). Send our third party an email stating you would like to report a complaint, and you will be informed about further steps to take, and further information to provide to Sport Matters Services

## Alternative Dispute Resolution

The Canadian Pony Club supports the principles of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) and is committed to the techniques of negotiation, facilitation, and mediation as effective ways to resolve disputes. ADR also avoids the uncertainty, costs, and other negative effects associated with lengthy appeals or complaints, or with litigation.

Through the formal complaint process as described in our [Discipline and Complaints policy](#) parties are first offered the option to follow the procedure under the [Alternative Dispute Resolution Policy](#).

When all parties to a dispute agree to ADR, a mediator or facilitator shall be appointed to mediate or facilitate the dispute. Any negotiated settlement will be binding on the parties and may not be appealed.

## Formal Complaint Resolution Process

Complaints can ultimately follow the steps for the formal complaint process. This is likely to happen when the complaint is of a very serious nature or you believe the case will not be treated fairly through the internal process (e.g., conflict of interest, fear of reprisals).

If a complaint cannot be resolved through ADR, our third part complaint handler will determine whether the complaint meet threshold, i.e., the complaint falls within the jurisdiction of the policy, the complaint is not frivolous or made in bad faith and is made within procedural timelines.

If the complaint meets threshold one of two procedures will be started:

### Process 1:

Meant for disrespectful comments or conduct, minor violations, conduct contrary to CPC values or non-compliance with CPC policies and procedures etc.

These will be handled by an Internal Discipline Chair, appointed by the CPC upon referral by the Third party.

### Process 2:

Meant for more serious complaints such as repeated smaller incidents, prohibited behaviours according to the Code, violence, consistent disregard of policies, procedures and rules, Criminal offences, etc.

In that case an external discipline panel is appointed (1 or 3 people) and there will be a hearing of complaint



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In both cases it will be determined whether the incident or infraction has occurred, and an appropriate sanction will be determined. The third party will inform parties of the decision.

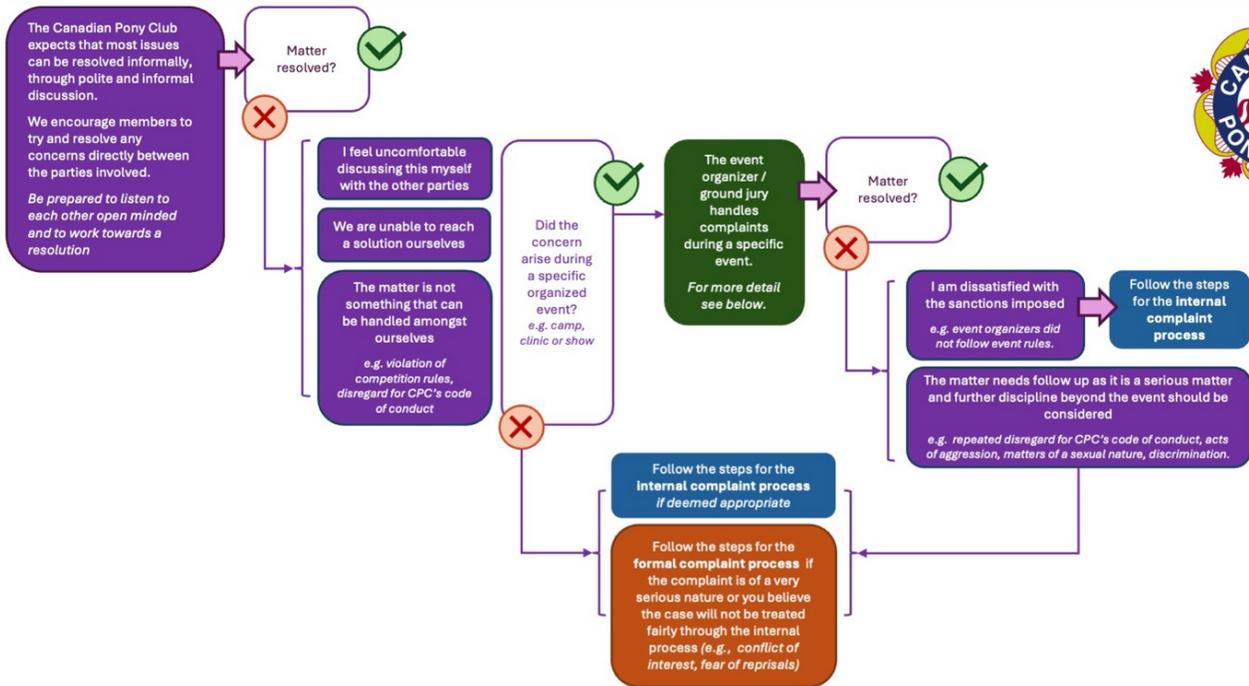
More information around the formal complaint process can be found in the [Discipline and Complaints policy](#).



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## ROAD MAP for COMPLAINTS within CANADIAN PONY CLUB



At any point in time the CPC can refer parties to a mediator to help resolve issues. This can be a part of both the internal and formal complaint process.  
 Contact the National office if you would like to be referred to our mediation partner.  
 When accepting mediation as described in the Alternative Dispute Resolution Policy, parties agree that any negotiated settlement will be binding.

<p><b>Concerns arising during a specific event</b> e.g. camp, clinic or show</p>
<p>Event specific complaints fall under the CPC Safe Sport - "event discipline procedure"                  Competition rules and possible penalties are available in CPC's respective discipline rule books.</p>
<p><b>Breach of competition rules</b>                  E.g.: use of a cellphone during quiz, dangerous riding, unauthorized assistance, inappropriate tack or turnout.</p>
<p><b>Breach of code of conduct</b>                  E.g.: disruptive behaviour such as constant talking or inappropriate use of cellphones, showing up late, heckling an opponent, disrespecting an official or volunteer, abuse of horses.</p>
<p>Protests or complaints will be addressed by the ground jury or the event organizers.                  They will hear and adjudicate the complaint.                  Their decision during the event is final and there is no further appeal process.</p>
<p><b>Any penalties must be implemented prior to the conclusion of the event and cannot exceed the event duration.</b>                  Examples of penalties: a warning, suspension from further parts of the event, ejection from the event. In case of a competition: penalty points, disqualification or elimination.</p>
<p>While most incidents at an event can be dealt with during the event itself, participants can still file a further complaint if parties feel the incident requires follow up.                  E.g.: event organizer is part of the complaint, a physical fight broke out, the use of alcohol by a minor, incidents of discrimination or of a sexual nature, extreme aggression towards a volunteer or official.</p>

<p><b>INTERNAL PROCESS</b>                  Internal process for resolving an issue</p>
<p>General code of conduct complaints – INTERNAL ROUTE                  More information is available in the "CPC conflict resolution policy"</p>
<p>Members and volunteers that experience a conflict or have a complaint are encouraged to resolve this through the proper chain of command.</p>
<p><b>Branch communications</b>                  Speak to your branch executive about problems or incidents within the branch                  E.g.: questions around branch testing results, concerns about a coach, problem with another member or volunteer in the branch.</p>
<p><b>Regional communications</b>                  Branch executives that need assistance resolving a branch issue or members with complaints involving the branch executive itself, or members addressing a regional issue can contact the regional executive for support.                  E.g.: Mismanagement of branch finances, gearing the branch program towards a part of the membership only, complaints around a regional event.</p>
<p>At the branch and regional level complaints will be handled through a process of mediation as opposed to arbitration.                  Branch and regional executives work with parties to help them come to a resolution that is sustainable, voluntary, and acceptable to all. The help of visiting commissioners or discipline chairs can be solicited in these cases.                  Complaints escalated to the National level will be dealt with through the formal complaint process</p>
<p>Complaints that cannot be resolved through this internal conflict resolution method can be escalated to a formal complaint with the National organization</p>
<p>The internal complaint process is first and foremost a mediation process.                  Arbitration and imposing sanctions or penalties can happen but should only be administered in rare cases.</p>

<p><b>FORMAL COMPLAINT PROCESS</b></p>	
<p>General code of conduct complaints – FORMAL ROUTE                  For more information consult the CPC Safe Sport "discipline and complaints policy"</p>	
<p>Members or volunteers can indicate that they would like to file a complaint by sending an email to <a href="mailto:complaints@canadianponyclub.org">complaints@canadianponyclub.org</a>.                  CPC's third-party complaint handler will contact complainant regarding further steps to take and how to file the complaint.                  Third party will then determine whether the complaint falls within the jurisdiction of the CPC complaints policy, is not frivolous and is filed within set timelines.                  If the complaint meets this threshold, third party will start one of two processes.</p>	
<p><b>Process 1</b>                  Minor violations                  E.g.: Disrespectful comment, non-compliance with policies.</p>	<p><b>Process 2</b>                  More serious incidents                  E.g.: Repeated minor incidents, violence, endangering others, criminal behaviours, use of alcohol by a minor.</p>
<p><b>Step 1:</b> (if appropriate) Alternative Dispute Resolution is offered first  <b>Step 2:</b> under process 1 refer the matter to the national executive committee to be handled by an internal discipline panel.                  under process 2 refer the matter to an external external discipline panel  <b>Step 3:</b> discipline panel to review and adjudicate the case, set appropriate sanctions  <b>Step 4:</b> third party to inform parties of the decision.</p>	<p>Depending on the seriousness of the allegations provisional measures can be imposed (such as a temporary suspension)                  After a decision has been communicated, an appeal can be filed through the CPC Safe Sport "appeal policy".</p>
<p>EMAIL for starting a formal complaint:  <a href="mailto:spormatters@outlook.com">spormatters@outlook.com</a></p>	