



## **METRO FC Anti-Harassment Policy**

### Purpose

To ensure that all committee members, players, coaches, officials, volunteers and spectators associated with the Metro Football Club enjoy an environment free from harassment of any kind including sexual harassment.

### Policy statement

Harassment of any kind is not acceptable at the Metro Football Club or within any activity associated with the club. Complaints related to behaviour of this nature will be treated as serious and will be dealt with promptly, confidentially and impartially by the Committee or chosen independent party. No person who lodges a complaint with respect to harassment or has a complaint of harassment made against them will be disadvantaged because of the complaints process and will be treated with fairness and professionalism.

### Policy review

This Policy will be reviewed annually by the Committee or a Sub Committee nominated by the Committee prior to the annual general meeting and any recommended changes to the policy will require approval by a majority vote at the annual general meeting.



## METRO FC Anti-Harassment Process

Harassment is any unwanted and unwarranted behaviour that a person finds offensive, intimidating or humiliating and is repeated, or significant enough as a single incident, to have a detrimental effect upon a person's dignity, safety and well-being. The behaviour can range from that causing slight embarrassment through to criminal acts.

### What is harassment

- a generally 'hostile' club atmosphere of repeated put-downs, offensive stereotypes, malicious rumours, or fear tactics such as threatening or bullying;
- a general club atmosphere of repeated jokes, teasing, flirting, leering or sleazy 'fun'
- harassment using social media;
- comments or behaviour that express hostility, contempt or ridicule for people of a race, age, sexual orientation or any other identified group; and
- an isolated but significant incident, such as a violent attack or sexual assault.

### What is not harassment

- friendly banter, light-hearted exchanges, mutually acceptable jokes and compliments
- friendships and relationships where both people consent to the relationship
- issuing reasonable instructions and expecting them to be carried out
- warning or disciplining someone in line with the club's policy
- insisting on high standards of performance in terms of quality, safety and team cooperation
- legitimate criticisms about performance (not expressed in a hostile, harassing manner)
- giving critical feedback
- assertively expressing opinions that are different from others
- free and frank discussion about issues or concerns in the club, without personal insult

# Harassment Resolution Process

## Informal Resolution

1. the member should appropriately make the person aware that the behaviour or material is unwelcome and /or offensive in the first instance.
2. for more serious issues, or if it is too difficult to inform the person, or if the unacceptable behaviour continues, the member should report the complaint to a contact person/ team manager and or club representative.
3. where the complainant wishes, the contact person/ team manager/ or club representative may speak to the alleged harasser on their behalf. This may result in issues being resolved, or mediation or reconciliation may be suggested as an option.

Mediation should treat the complaint not as an offence but as a breakdown in a relationship. The aim of mediation is not to establish whether the harassment allegations are true, or to apportion blame, or to supply justice for a wronged person. It should focus on repairing the relationship and forging an agreement between the parties over how they will act towards each other in the future.

The person selected to carry out the mediation/reconciliation shall be agreed to by both parties.

## Formal Resolution

Formal resolution may be appropriate where

1. the nature of harassment is serious or
2. informal resolution is not considered appropriate or has failed.

Should a formal investigation be deemed appropriate an investigator may be appointed.

An investigator may be a committee member or an external person.

Parties should be offered external support.

A formal investigation is likely to involve the following:

1. a formal written complaint to the team manager/ club representative
2. the investigator (either a club representative or an external person) interviews and obtains from the complainant a detailed account of the allegations, identifying any potential witnesses and physical evidence of harassment
3. the alleged harasser is notified that a complaint of harassment has been made and of the identification of the complainant



4. all parties involved in the investigations should be advised that the complaint is to be treated in strict confidence
5. the investigator will meet with the alleged harasser, provide them with a copy of the complainant's allegations and ask them for their response, any alternative explanation he or she has, potential witnesses and any physical evidence that may refute the allegation
6. additional information may be gathered if necessary and this may include interviewing of other relevant parties, recording times, dates and alleged events using the witness's words and checking with the witness to ensure accuracy
7. all parties should be invited to bring a support person to the interview

All meetings, discussions and interviews should be fully documented throughout the investigation.

There may be little direct proof that what was alleged did happen. On the balance of probabilities, the investigator should be satisfied that the allegations are correct before deciding that the complaint is well founded. The investigator may feel unable to decide one way or the other on the evidence. In this case the decision will be that the complaint cannot be established.

If harassment is found to have occurred, the committee will determine the appropriate course of action.

All meetings, discussions and interviews should be fully documented throughout the investigation and filed for reference.

***If the allegation is of a sexual nature, involving a minor, the NZ Police must be notified immediately.***

