



Complaints Policy

Version	Policy owner	Date	Review Date
1	K Beddows	February 2014	February 2017
2	D Sutherill	February 2017	February 2020
3	D Sutherill	December 2019	December 2022
4	Executive Committee	June 2022	June 2025
4.1	Board of Directors	September 2023	June 2025

Version control

Version	Summary of changes
4.1	Added Complaints form template; minor changes to the overall wording and structure of the policy

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Introduction

At the BJJ GB we believe that all our directors, committee members, employees, volunteers and members should be able to work and participate in ju-jitsu in a respectful and inclusive environment. We have a zero-tolerance approach to any form of unacceptable behaviours, and are committed to prevention, management and challenging of such behaviours to create an environment in which everyone feels safe and able to enjoy ju-jitsu. We are committed to providing the highest standard of service and continually strive to meet expectations of our members. However, occasionally things can go wrong or are perceived by others to have gone wrong and a concern or a complaint might be identified.

This policy provides information on the BJJ GB's Complaints Policy. It explains the scope of the policy, provides definition of terms and outlines the procedure for dealing with and reporting of complaints. This policy also provides guidance on how to seek assistance and support if needed.

This policy needs to be viewed in conjunction with the Code of Ethics, Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination Policy, Trans Inclusion Policy, Social Media Policy, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan, and any other related BJJ GB policies.

We will address and endeavour to eliminate unacceptable behaviour, which can potentially lead to a complaint, by:

- promoting positive and inclusive working and training environments; making sure everyone is treated with respect and dignity and feels safe to practice and enjoy ju-jitsu;
- ensuring that all allegations are fully investigated and dealt with, using the relevant policies;
- providing access to confidential support and signposting to external services where appropriate.

Scope

This policy applies to the BJJ GB Board of Directors, all Committees, employees and volunteers acting in any capacity, and to member associations and member clubs where a separate policy does not exist.

Some member associations and member clubs may have adopted a separate Complaints Policy which should be followed.

Definition of terms

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about the actions, decisions or apparent feelings in the service provided. It suggests that something is unsatisfactory or unacceptable, for example someone's behaviour.

Application of the policy

This policy is intended to contribute to the effective and efficient operation of the BJJ GB, by providing a clear procedure for raising and dealing with complaints.

The BJJ GB will take all allegations seriously and aim to deal with complaints swiftly, sensitively and in strict confidence in order to resolve the issue while respecting the rights and dignity of the person raising the concern.

If appropriate, the BJJ GB will use complaints raised as an opportunity to take action to improve the service we provide.

Everyone connected with the BJJ GB has a duty to challenge unacceptable behaviour, either in an informal or formal way, and raise a complaint if necessary.

The procedure associated with this policy puts this policy into practical effect, clearly stating the steps that need to be taken when reporting a complaint. We do recognise that those making a complaint want the issue to be investigated as quickly as possible in order to stop it occurring again. Therefore, the following procedure aims to enable complaints to be reported, investigated and dealt with in a confidential, sensitive and effective manner. It also aims to further improve the working and training environment in which everyone feels able to call out unacceptable behaviour, knowing that any complaints will be addressed appropriately.

Procedure

One of the BJJ GB's objectives is to provide a safe, inclusive and fair environment in which everyone can work and train to their full potential. We expect all members to treat each other with respect and according to the standard of behaviours specified in our Code of Ethics, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and all other related policies and codes. All breaches of our codes and policies are taken seriously and can result in disciplinary action.

We recognise that if someone wishes to raise a complaint, it can be difficult to talk about and decide what to do next. The incident can be addressed informally or in a formal way, or a mix of both if needed.

Stage 1: Informal action

If an incident occurs at a member club or within a member association, the person affected should report this to their local Safeguarding Officer or Disciplinary Officer or similar. A meeting might be arranged between the relevant Officer, the person affected and the alleged perpetrator(s) and a third party in a hope that concerns raised can be addressed and resolved. A mediation process might take place.

Where possible, the person affected should be encouraged to resolve the issue informally, but only if they wish to do so. Advantages include:

- giving all parties an opportunity to explain their perspective on the issue and resolve any misunderstandings at an early stage and before the problem becomes more difficult and escalates;
- agreeing a way forward that allows for a change of behaviour while maintaining a working relationship between the parties involved;
- minimising the stress experienced by the parties involved;
- the matter is kept confidential between the parties concerned.

Even when dealing with the matter informally, it is important that the person raising the concern keeps a record of the incident(s) so that this can be used during discussions.

Raising and addressing the concern directly with the alleged perpetrator(s), either verbally or in writing, can be difficult to face alone, and the individual affected may wish to seek support from a fellow member of their club or association, instructor, or anyone else they feel comfortable with. The person offering support should treat the matter sensitively and in confidence and act in accordance with the wishes of the individual who raised the concern.

In communicating with the alleged perpetrator(s), either face-to-face, via email or letter, it is very important they are informed that their conduct is unacceptable and the effect that it is having on the individual who raised the concern. Notes should be kept of all discussions and any further incidents.

Where informal action has not resolved the issue, or is inappropriate in the circumstances, the individual may choose to move to the formal stage of the procedure. If the individual decides not to pursue their complaint formally, the member association, if applicable, or the BJJ GB may still initiate formal action if the alleged behaviour is of a serious nature that cannot be ignored, and a formal investigation is required.

Stage 2: Formal action

If the individual decides to take formal action, they need to follow the procedure outlined by their member association or club in the first instance and register a formal complaint without unreasonable delay.

If the individual decides to register a formal complaint with the BJJ GB directly (either because the situation requires it or they aren't part of a member association), they must complete the Complaint form attached to this policy as appendix A. It is important that the form is completed in as much detail as possible. All complaints will be treated seriously, and any investigation will be conducted thoroughly, impartially and promptly. The following steps will take place:

1. Once the complaint is received, an acknowledgment email is sent within 5 working days.
2. The complaint is reviewed initially by the Disciplinary Committee and an Investigating Officer (IO) is assigned. The Director of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

is consulted if needed. Depending on the nature and scale of the complaint, more than one IO can be assigned.

3. The IO reviews the complaint thoroughly to establish if further information is needed and whether there are any previous complaints against the alleged perpetrator.
4. The IO liaises with the relevant member association (Safeguarding, Disciplinary or similar Officer), if applicable.
5. If an investigation is required, the complainant is advised of the name of the IO assigned, and the alleged perpetrator is contacted and informed of the nature of the complaint against them. Changes to working or training arrangements while the investigation is ongoing are considered, if needed.
6. The IO signposts both parties to wellbeing guidance and support, counselling services and any further external services that might be suitable.
7. All parties, including witnesses, are advised that strict confidentiality is required throughout the investigation.
8. The IO gathers statements from the alleged perpetrator and any witnesses. The IO offers the complainant and the alleged perpetrator a chance to discuss the issue in a meeting, if suitable.
9. The IO keeps both parties informed of the progress of the investigation.
10. The IO prepares a report for the Disciplinary Committee, summarising the findings of the investigation, whether the complaint has been upheld, the justification for the outcome of the investigation, any recommendations, and whether any external agencies need to be notified.
11. The Disciplinary Committee considers the findings and whether any further information is required. If all are in agreement, the outcome is communicated in writing to the complainant and the alleged perpetrator within 30 working days from the complaint being raised. If a full response cannot be provided within the time frame due to a more complex investigation being needed, an update will be provided with an expected completion date.

If a complaint is raised about a member of the Board of Directors or a Committee, the BJJ GB will ensure this is treated confidentially and the complainant does not receive any less favourable treatment. A member of the Board of Directors or a Committee under investigation will not be part of any investigation, nor shall any connected members. If a complaint refers to the general behaviour or culture of the Board of Directors or one of the Committees, the BJJ GB will seek a third party to investigate, to ensure fairness and objectivity.

Whilst the BJJ GB fully supports the right to raise a complaint, we expect the members of the Board of Directors and all Committees, employees and volunteers to be treated courteously at all times. Violent or abusive language or behaviour towards them is unacceptable. Where there is a threat or use of physical violence or verbal abuse towards our members, employees or volunteers, all direct contact with the complainant will cease and the behaviour may be reported to the police.

Malicious or vexatious complaints

The BJJ GB is committed to dealing with all complaints in a fair, comprehensive and timely manner. However, there are some instances where an individual complains in a way that is considered vexatious or behaves in a manner that is inappropriate or unacceptable, which in turn places undue strain on the BJJ GB's time and resources. There may be times when nothing more can be reasonably done to address a real or perceived issue or concern. The BJJ GB does not expect the members of the Board of Directors and Committees, employees and volunteers to tolerate inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour and will take reasonable steps to protect them from this.

Definition of terms

Unreasonable complaints are complaints that, because of the nature of the contact or frequency with which the complaint is pursued, hinder the BJJ GB's ability to properly consider the matters at hand or place unwarranted demands on our time. Unreasonable complaints may be justified grievances pursued in inappropriate ways, or they may be complaints which appear to have no substance, or which have already been fully investigated and responded to.

A **vexatious complaint** is one that is pursued, regardless of its merits, solely to harass, annoy or subdue somebody; something that is unreasonable, without foundation, frivolous, repetitive, burdensome or unwarranted. A complainant's vexatious or aggressive behaviour may include excessive and repeated attempts to contact the members of the Board of Directors or Committees, pursuing multiple complaints against the organisation at the same time, making unreasonable demands of the members of the Board of Directors or Committees, threats (including those of legal action) against the members of the Board of Directors or Committees or the BJJ GB, repeated raising of unreasonable complaints, making multiple complaints to multiple external organisations about the BJJ GB.

A **malicious complaint** is one that is made with the intention of causing harm. A malicious complaint can be defined as one that the investigation has shown to be without foundation, one where the investigation evidence demonstrates that the complainant knowingly lied to the Investigating Officer, and/or one that has been made deliberately to harm another individual or the organisation.

Where a complaint is deemed to be repeat, unreasonable, malicious, vexatious or aggressive, or is considered to have no basis or genuine substance, the BJJ GB reserves the right not to investigate. In extreme cases of vexatious and/or persistent complaints disciplinary action against members and connected participants may be taken.

Review and monitoring

The Disciplinary Committee are responsible for reviewing and updating the policy in line with any new legislation or statutory changes at regular intervals, i.e. every 3 years or sooner if required.

All personal information will be held fairly, lawfully and securely in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the BJJ GB Privacy Policy.

Monitoring complaints, both informal and formal, is important in order to identify areas that need addressing and any training that may be required.

A confidential record will be kept of all formal complaints and their outcomes, and will include information relating to 'protected characteristics', member club and/or association, time scales and any feedback provided by parties involved.

A yearly report will be provided to the Board of Directors to inform any review or update needs and future actions.

Support available

- [National bullying helpline](#)
- [Anti-bullying Alliance](#)
- [Childline](#)
- [Citizens Advice](#)
- [ACAS](#)
- [Supportline](#)
- [Mind](#)
- [Disability Rights UK](#)

Appendix A Complaint form

All information disclosed in this form will be treated as strictly confidential.

Guidance on completing this form

Once completed this form should be emailed to complaints@bjjagb.com and marked "Private and Confidential". Following receipt of this form, an acknowledgement email will be sent to your email address within 5 working days. Please make sure all your contact details are correct.

The form should contain the following:

- clear and specific allegations against named person/people;
- dates, times and witnesses provided, if known;
- detailed description of the incident(s);
- direct quotes, if able to recall;
- brief description of the context of the incident(s);
- indication of how the incident(s) made you feel;
- the affect the incident(s) has had on your wellbeing;
- details of any action that you or others have taken already, for example attempting to address the matter informally.

You may wish to seek assistance in completing this form from a fellow club or association member, instructor or anyone else you feel comfortable with. You may also wish to consult external services in order to get further advice and support.

Name:

Preferred correspondence address:

Preferred email address:

Preferred contact number:

Name of member club:

Name of member association if applicable:

Please give details of the incident(s) causing you to make a formal complaint. Please include the name(s) and member club/association details, if known, of all alleged perpetrators and any witnesses to the incident(s), as well as dates and times.

Please give details of how, if at all, you have attempted to deal with the issue informally and the outcome of your attempt.

Please give any further details or information you believe is relevant to your complaint.

Signature:

Date:

To be completed by the BJJ GB only

Date form received by the BJJ GB:

Date acknowledgment email sent:

Investigating Officer(s):