

AKTIVE

# POLICIES AND PROCEDURES TOOLKIT

HOW TO APPLY GOOD  
BUSINESS PRACTICES



# OVERVIEW

A well-managed club leads to a better experience and a sustainable future. Having appropriate policies and procedures in place and communicating these effectively to everyone involved plays an important role in the running of your club and helps your members and officers.

Once your club is established and running, it's important to constantly review processes and progress and look for ways to improve. Monitoring your club's performance and how your members and community are will allow you to find out what is working and what could be made more effective and efficient.

Doing this will help you to achieve your goals as a club and will also help your members to become the best they can be.

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## THE PURPOSE



Auckland is a complex multi-cultural environment with many challenges and unparalleled opportunities to increase and sustain participation in sport and recreation. This has led to the establishment of *The Auckland Approach to Community Sport*, a strategic response aiming to create a world-class community sport system in *Tāmaki Makaurau*, community by community. This toolkit has been developed (and will be updated) by Aktive, with input from delivery partners CLM Community Sport, Harbour Sport, Sport Auckland and Sport Waitākere, based on insights and good practice examples from across Auckland.

The purpose of this generic policies and procedures toolkit is to provide information, insights and ideas that will assist leaders of clubs/codes to establish a basic set of rules to help with the daily running of your club or group. It can be tailored and implemented as each club/code sees relevant.

## WHAT ARE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES?

Your policies (what) and procedures (how) set the rules and expectations for your club/code in more detail. Thinking about how you want your club to run, documenting it and sharing it with your members, can save you

time and money in the long run. Everyone involved in your club/code should be responsible for putting these into practice – no matter what level of engagement they have.

There are many policies and procedures that your club/code could have, including (but not limited to):

- Membership & fees / refunds
- Code of conduct & discipline
- Consent
- Health and safety
- Child protection
- Risk management
- Facility use & parking
- Anti-harassment & privacy
- Travel
- Equity and inclusion
- Complaints and disputes
- Selection & player poaching
- Alcohol and drugs & Smoke Free
- Uniforms and equipment
- Internet, email and social media
- Conflicts of interest
- Match fixing
- Diversity



The number of policies and procedures your club/code has will depend on the needs or formality of your group. A policy can be as short or as long as you need and should be written in clear, simple language so that anyone can read and understand it. The more people understand, the more likely your members and community will interact like a family and know what your club is about.



## PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The process your club uses to develop a policy and procedure will vary. Below is an indicative timeline to help:

**1** Committee meeting(s) to determine the need for the policy and procedure – what are you trying to achieve and what are the principles you will follow?

**2** Formation of a working group to discuss and write up the policy

**3** Working group to lead the writing of the policy and procedure

- Focus on describing fair and reasonable behaviour you want to drive through the policy
- Think about how you will know people are following it
- Consider how you will handle it if people behave in a way that is against the policy and procedures

**4** A draft policy and procedure is shared with club and community for feedback

**5** Working group meets to consider feedback and make any changes

**6** Updated draft is presented to committee / board for sign off (new policy is usually documented in the minutes)

**7** Final copy is communicated with club and community

**8** Policy and procedure are reviewed and updated

## TURNING POLICIES INTO EVERY DAY PROCEDURES

The key to transforming your policies into procedures is to put words into action. This requires investing time to discuss what the

policies mean and what acceptable behaviour (above the line) and not acceptable behaviour (below the line) looks like.



Everyone must be speaking a common language. The more your members are informed, educated and encouraged to live the procedures above the line, the more

likely you'll get aligned behaviours – which establishes a culture of working together towards a common purpose.

## IMPORTANT POLICIES TO HAVE IN PLACE

Some important policies to consider include code of conduct, child protection policy, health and safety and the privacy of your members. Below is an explanation of these policies.

# CODE OF CONDUCT

An important component of maintaining a quality club culture is to set standards of acceptable behavior which must be upheld by all involved and those participating in club run activities and competitions.

One way is to define and communicate what acceptable and not-acceptable standards of behavior look like and feel like in a documented Code of Conduct.

**This Code should apply to everyone involved in your club and its activities, including:**

- Players
- Coaches
- Officials
- Volunteers
- Parents/whanau
- Spectators
- General public

Here are examples you could include in a Code of Conduct with statements that include wording such as I will, I will not behave in a certain way:

**1** I will respect the rights, dignity and worth of all individuals within the context of my involvement in ABC Club, including refraining from any discriminatory practices on the basis of race, religion, ethnic background, or special ability/disability.

**2** I will be reasonable in the demands I make on the time commitments of the players in my care, having due consideration for their health and well-being.

**3** I will refrain from any form of personal abuse or unnecessary physical contact with the players in my care.

**4** I will stress and monitor safety always.

**5** I will ensure that players are involved in a positive environment where skill learning, and development are priorities are not overshadowed by a desire to win.

■ [Examples of code of conducts for coaches, players and spectators >>](#)



## FOLLOWING A CODE OF CONDUCT REQUIRES CONSCIOUS ACTION. EVERYONE INVOLVED WITH YOUR CLUB HAS A RESPONSIBILITY TO LEAD THIS.

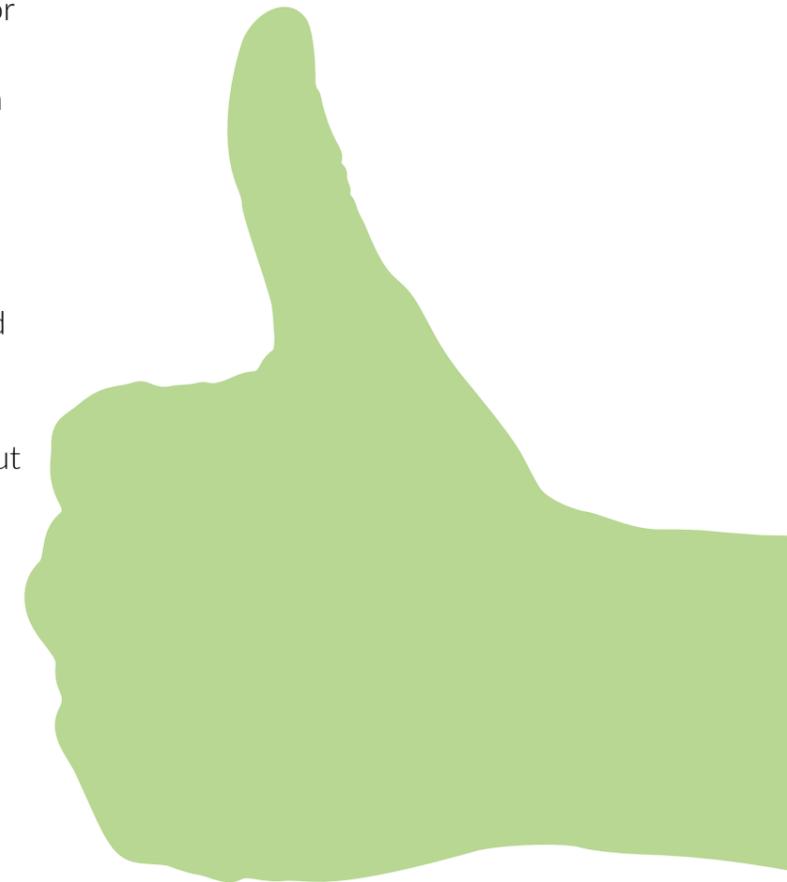
**Below are some ways your club could ensure your code of conduct is communicated and followed:**

**1** Include the Code of Conduct as part of the membership application process for applicants to sign, declare and accept the associated terms and conditions of being a member of your club.

**2** At the start of each season or term, discuss the Code of Conduct with the coaches, athletes and volunteers to remind each other of the expected behaviours and rules of the club. Often the Code of Conduct is signed when joining the club but not revisited until something goes wrong.

**3** The Code of Conduct can be gently reinforced through having the club rules on a poster around the club. Place printed copies around the facility and on your club's website and social media pages.

**4** Always acknowledge and reward good behaviour, such as fair play, helping others, supporting the coaches and volunteers and so on. This reinforces a culture within the club of supporting one another and confirms the accepted behaviours of the clubs.



# CHILD PROTECTION



All administrators, coaches, athletes, referees, support staff and spectators have a responsibility to ensure that every person who wants to be or is involved in your club/code is treated with respect and dignity, are encouraged to be the best they can be, can enjoy what they are doing and are safe and protected from harm and abuse. This will increase the chances of instilling a lifelong love of sport and active recreation.

Abuse can take many forms including: physical harm from engaging in a physical activity, emotional abuse, bullying, putdowns, inappropriate cultural practices, physical and sexual abuse, and other harmful practices.

## PRINCIPLE STATEMENTS THAT FORM PART OF A CHILD PROTECTION POLICY INCLUDE:

Children have a right to participate in sport and recreation that is safe and where they are protected from harm

Children should feel respected, valued and encouraged to enjoy their participation and to reach their full potential

Sport and recreation organisations have a duty of care when it comes to children and should take steps to ensure that children can participate safely in the activities they provide

## POLICY ACTIONS SHOULD INCLUDE WAYS TO:

Prevent those who have been identified as causing harm to children from having contact with children in your sport

Remove/minimise any risks of and opportunities for harm to children

Identify and stop inappropriate behaviour if they occur

Support the child and the family should a child be harmed

■ For more information on child protection policies >>

■ The Aktive Child Protection Policy >>

Aktive is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of children by identifying and responding to vulnerability, child abuse and neglect in an effective and efficient manner.

# PRIVACY

Whether your club is an incorporated society or not, you will be collecting information about your members – names, addresses and phone numbers. This means your club is obliged to meet the rules set out in the **Privacy Act 1993** >>

## HERE ARE SOME ASPECTS TO CONSIDER:

- Personal information collected must be necessary for what you are doing. For example, it may be important to know about a member's past injuries but unnecessary to know about a member's partner or children.
- The information collected can only be used for the reason you have collected it. For example, injury information could be used to decide what level a player will play at but should not be given to someone who sells products to people with that particular injury.
- Anyone has the right to look at the information you have collected about them and they can ask you to correct it if wrong.
- Private information needs to be kept private and secure.
- The form used to collect information (usually your club's membership application form) should include a paragraph that explains why information is being collected and who will have access to it.



## AN EXAMPLE PRIVACY STATEMENT (ON MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM):

*I understand that the club will collect my personal information in order to process my membership application and for account administration and marketing purposes. I have the right to see and ask for correction of any personal information about me and that this information will be held securely.*

*Signed: (Member)*

It is important to ensure your privacy statement and conditions are reviewed regularly and include changes to available technology such as social media and internet use of any information and images.

# SELECTING PLAYERS

A common approach to choosing athletes for squads or teams is to establish a selection policy document, which should contain the following sections:

**1 Selection philosophy** – The first step in the development of the selection policy is to determine what the aim of the selection process is. The aim of the selection process will almost certainly be determined by the type of competition / event being considered. The aim of the process should be to enable selection of the best possible team in line with the overall philosophy / aim for the event.

**2 Selection methods** – The next part should clearly outline how the players will be judged against the Selection Criteria.

**3 Post-selection processes** – Communicating with all players is an important part of the selection process.

**4 Appeals** – The process for appealing a decision should be determined at the same time as the selection process and should be part of the selection policy. It should set out who can appeal and how they can do this.

Below are some objectives of the squad or team selection process which can be included in a policy document:

- To provide players every possible opportunity to reach their maximum potential.
- To ensure that the selection policy applies equally to all players.
- To aim for continuous improvement of all players and teams.
- To maintain open lines of communication and co-operation between coaches, players, parents and committee.
- To achieve success whilst conducting a manner that instils pride in our club and earns the respect of opponents and the community in general.
- To have in place a suitable process to handle issues arising from the team selection process.



# LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

Clubs/codes should also consider the following legal requirements with regards to health and safety, accident and injury compensation (ACC), liquor licensing and employment.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

Your club is not liable for personal injury from accidents for volunteers and members participating in club activities. However, your club could be fined if it is at fault for not providing a safe environment. If any of your members or volunteers are injured while participating in club activities, their medical expenses will be covered by ACC (up to 80% of their wages).

■ [More information relating to ACC >>](#)

■ [Risk and Compliance toolkit for more health and safety information >>](#)

## LIQUOR LICENSING

If your club chooses to sell alcohol regularly, you will need a liquor license. Special licenses can also be obtained for one-off events.

■ [The Facilities Toolkit covers this in more detail >>](#)

## EMPLOYMENT

If your club hires someone to manage your club's operations you will need to:

- pay the minimum wage
- look after your employee(s)
- know about PAYE and ACC levies
- ensure a safe working environment

Clubs are subject to new health and safety requirements and liability rules once you hire someone.

■ [Information on paid staff within your club >>](#)

# DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS AND CONFLICT

## COMPLAINTS

Complaints might emerge from many quarters – coaches, officials, parents, players and even members of the public. They could be about behaviour of individuals or they could be about decisions made by the club committee. Complaints will vary from minor to major and may escalate rapidly from one to the other unless they are well managed. It is important point to have a complaint process ready to follow for whatever turns up and to deal with the complaint at the lowest level possible.

As some complaints may be sufficiently serious to warrant membership suspension or expulsion from time to time, you will need to ensure that your club constitution gives you the powers to deal with such complaints as they arise.



**Most national sporting and recreation bodies have policies and procedures, such as a Code of Conduct, and develop a process for dealing with complaints which include the following options:**

- trying to sort the matter out yourself
- informal discussions with the other party
- mediation
- lodging a formal written complaint at the level the incident occurred
- appealing to the next level if you believe the outcome was; biased, you have been denied natural justice or the process didn't follow your sport's procedures
- referring or lodging a complaint with an external authority (e.g. police, child protection or anti-discrimination agency)

## TIMEFRAME FOR LODGING COMPLAINTS

The club rules should state the timeframe in which a complaint must be received. For example, a written complaint to the club secretary not later than four working days following the incident that has led to the complaint.



## PROCESS FOR DEALING WITH A COMPLAINT

When a complaint is received this will immediately be referred to the Club President (or Chairperson) who will act as the Complaints Review Officer who is responsible to ensure the correct procedures are followed.

Should there be a conflict of interest, the Club President (or Chairperson) must delegate the role of Complaints Review Officer to another club officer or committee member.

**Organisations should therefore:**

- Take all complaints seriously and act promptly
- Listen to both sides of the story
- Treat people fairly (e.g. not take sides and focus on the facts)
- Keep everyone informed
- Maintain confidentiality
- Take disciplinary action appropriate to the breach of policy
- Make sure the person complaining is not victimised

The Complaints Review Officer will meet with the complainant and:

LISTEN



INFORM



GATHER EVIDENCE



CONSIDER OPTIONS AND DECIDE

■ Detailed complaint process flow chart >>





**CONFLICT**

Conflict occurs in a sport club because people have different values, needs and motivation. It should be seen as an opportunity for change and new possibilities. Conflict is not a problem if it is handled in an appropriate manner. If conflict is not handled appropriately, it can lead to power struggles, faction fighting and loss of important volunteers.

**THERE ARE THREE LEVELS ON WHICH CONFLICT MAY OCCUR:**

THE INDIVIDUAL



THE GROUP



THE ORGANISATION

Conflict between individuals may develop as a result of differences in background, expertise and experiences. When conflict arises between individuals, it very often results in the loss of a key volunteer.

Conflict may also occur between groups within an organisation. One typical situation is when conflict arises between the management committee (or key personnel

in the management committee) and groups within the organisation. Another typical situation is as a result of key changes within the organisation.

**Other reasons for inter-group conflict include:**

- Loyalty to a person who is perceived to have been unfairly treated
- Organisation leaders who are perceived to be motivated by self-interest
- Lack of consultation with sections of the organisation in developing key plans, for example the strategic plan.

Conflict can also occur between sporting organisations. For example, a club may have difference of opinion with a parent body (regional and/or national). The parent body may seek to impose rules and regulations that are unpopular with the club, or the club and the parent body have differences of opinion over the best way forward for growth and development of the sport.

**KEY FACTORS IN SOLVING CONFLICT**

It is sometimes necessary to obtain the services of an independent person who is skilled in conflict resolution to assist the parties to negotiate and reach agreement.

With or without an independent person to act as negotiator, conflict will only begin to subside when parties have the opportunity to meet and properly hear each other's argument to find some common ground and work their way positively out of the conflict situation.



**THE FIVE STEPS TO CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

**STEP 1 // Identify the source of the conflict.**

The more information you have about the cause of the conflict, the more easily you can help to resolve it. Use a series of questions to identify the cause, like, "When did you feel upset?" "How did this incident begin?"

Give both parties the chance to share their side of the story. It will give you a better understanding of the situation, as well as demonstrate your impartiality.

**STEP 2 // Look beyond the incident.** Often, it is not the situation but the perspective on the situation that causes anger to fester and ultimately leads to a shouting match or other visible evidence of a conflict.

The source of the conflict might have been a minor problem but the level of stress has grown to the point where the two parties have begun attacking each other personally instead of addressing the real problem. Ask: "What do you think happened here?" or "When do you think the problem between you first arose?"

**STEP 3 // Request solutions.** After getting each party's viewpoint on the conflict, the

next step is to get each to identify how the situation could be changed. Again, question the parties to solicit their ideas: "How can you make things better between you?"

As mediator be an active listener, be aware of verbal clues, as well as a good reader of body language, steering the discussion away from finger pointing and toward the issue and ways of resolving the conflict.

**STEP 4 // Identify solutions both disputants can support.** You are listening for the most acceptable course of action. Point out the merits of various ideas, not only from each other's perspective, but in terms of the benefits to the organisation.

**STEP 5 // Agreement.** The mediator needs to get the two parties to shake hands and agree to one of the alternatives identified in Step 4. A documented agreement may be needed, however it might be sufficient for the individuals to answer these questions: "What action plans will you both put in place to prevent conflicts from arising in the future?" and "What will you do if problems arise in the future?"

This mediation process works between groups, as well as individuals.

# REVIEWING AND IMPROVING YOUR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Once your club/code has established policies and procedures, they need to be reviewed on a regular basis. This should involve taking the changes to your members and gaining their input and approval. Regularly reviewing each policy and procedure (and making any updates necessary) will ensure they remain current and, more importantly, are lived everyday by your members.

To do this, you should use feedback from at least two methods. For example, a regular members feedback survey and using feedback from that to show what is working well or not, to help develop and evolve policies; a “suggestions box”; or online feedback form to allow members to feedback at any time.

## LOOK FOR:

### WHAT PEOPLE ‘SAY’ LISTEN TO THE LANGUAGE

Who is speaking? Who is listening?  
What words are being used? How is information being shared? Where are people talking? When is this happening?

### WHAT PEOPLE ‘DO’ WATCH CLOSELY TO SEE THE BEHAVIOURS

Who uses the facilities? Who talks with who? How long are people staying for? Where do people congregate? Which rules are being followed? Which ones aren't? What are people doing instead?

### WHAT CAN BE ‘COUNTED’ LOOK FOR PATTERNS

How many people are saying it?  
How many people are doing it? Why are they? When asking for opinion and feedback from your members, include all areas of club activity, such as the venue/facility, activities offered, coaching, social functions and any injury data which will highlight potential hazards within the club.

## LOOKING FOR FURTHER INFORMATION?

There is a range of resources available to assist with the running of your club/code. Sport NZ has recently updated the legislative compliance section of the existing policy templates and can be found here.

### HERE TO HELP

Your Regional Sports Trust/Organisations are also here to help – please don't hesitate to contact us if you would like to talk through any of this material and/or assistance for your club and/or code.

### MORE INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND AT THE FOLLOWING:

[aktive.org.nz](http://aktive.org.nz) >>

[harboursport.co.nz](http://harboursport.co.nz) >>

[sportwaitakere.co.nz](http://sportwaitakere.co.nz) >>

[sportauckland.co.nz](http://sportauckland.co.nz) >>

[clmnz.co.nz/counties](http://clmnz.co.nz/counties) >> 

Information in this toolkit is for guidance only and does not constitute formal professional advice. Where specific issues arise in your club/code, advice should be sought from the relevant expert(s) as necessary.

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■ [Participation and Membership Toolkit for more ideas on members feedback >>](#) 