THE NVFC CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROCESS:

The following is the dispute resolution method utilized by North Vancouver Football Club when faced with complaints brought forth by parents, players or coaches. It is always the desire of the club to reach a fair and equitable resolution to the concerns presented to it. The club will only hear complaints in instances where the parties involved have follow the dispute resolution steps as described below.

If any situation develops related to playing, coaching conditions, or perceived problems of harassment or mistreatment, those who feel they have a valid complaint must be free to come forward and voice their concerns without fear of reprisals against them or any player. For this purpose the following dispute resolution mechanisms are.

1. Any complaint made in good faith will be processed in accordance with this policy and it is a condition of participation in the club's activities that all those involved accept the process and its outcome, or otherwise voluntarily withdraw from further involvement in the club.
2. Any complaints will be treated as privileged and confidential. The complaint and any information provided by any persons regarding the complaint will not be used except for the purposes of resolving the dispute.
3. A progressive mechanism will be put into place to quickly deal with any complaint without interruption of any team activities wherever possible.

The steps to be followed if any player, coach or parent has a complaint or dispute are as follows. The club will NOT hear any complaints which have not been through the following step by step process. It must be a primary goal of all involved to ensure that NO player is at any risk of physical or emotional harm of any kind.

- ***Talk Directly to the Involved Party:*** Approach the person with whom you have a difficulty, off the field, away from games or practices at an appropriate time and place. Voice your concerns and attempt to reach an understanding informally between the persons involved. Particularly with respect to the younger teams, these meetings should be held away from the players unless their involvement is necessary.
- ***Talk to your team's coach or manager:*** If the matter cannot be resolved between the parties, contact the coach/team manager and clearly express the concerns that are outstanding. Team coaches/managers should attempt an informal resolution if possible and suggest any compromise with a view to allowing team play or involvement of the player to continue.
- ***Seek Assistance from the Next Level Up:*** If your problem is not resolved at the first step, you may contact the Club official directly above the person involved: e.g., if your concern is with your Coach, you would contact the Age Group Coordinator (AGC) for your Division.
- ***Ask for Director Involvement:*** If you are still not satisfied, ask the Club official to take your concern the Director responsible for your area of concern: e.g., if your issue is related to player development, your AGC will contact the Development Director. The Director will investigate the situation, and will respond to you in accordance to Club policies and guidelines.

  In some circumstances, the Director may be unable to resolve a Member's concern, and will seek guidance from the Club President or the Board of Directors.

- ***Request Assistance from the Club Mediator:*** At any point in the process, you or the involved Club officials can invite our Club Mediator to assist the process.

The Role of our Club Mediator:

Our Club Mediator is a volunteer, who works directly with our Members and our Club officials to facilitate an agreeable outcome for a Member's concern or complaint.

After ensuring that the member has followed the recommended steps (see prior page) to resolve the issue the Club Mediator may:

- Call or meet privately with Members to discuss their issues,
- Facilitate informal conflict resolution meetings,
- Attend Disciplinary Hearings, and
- Offer solutions or recommendations to the Member, Club officials, or the Board of Directors.

The Club Mediator ensures that both sides have an opportunity to fairly present their concerns, and may ask either side for additional information to assist finding an appropriate outcome. Either the concerned Member, an involved Club official, or a Club Director can invite the Club Mediator into the process.

The Club Mediator does ***not*** make the final decision on the situation. The Club will strongly consider the opinion and recommendations of the Mediator; however, the final resolution to a problem will be decided by the Board of Directors.

Requesting Assistance from the Club Mediator:

Members can contact the Club Mediator directly, via email *(please see below, Requesting Assistance.)*

The Club Mediator will then advise the appropriate Director and the Second Vice-President that they have received a concern, and the Mediator will also contact the Member (usually by telephone or by email) to discuss the next steps. *Typically, you should allow two to three working days for the Club Mediator to contact you.*

- ***A dispute resolution panel will be convened:*** If the recommendations of the mediator are not acceptable or one of the parties involved is unwilling to participate in the mediation process the Board of Directors shall appoint a panel of three individuals. The dispute resolution panel shall hear both parties to the complaint and any other people with relevant information and shall deliver a written decision as quickly as possible. The written decision and the directions contained in it will be binding on both parties.

- ***Request a Review of the Problem by the Club Ombudsman:*** If you feel that your concerns have not been appropriately resolved at the Board level, you may submit a request for a review of the situation by our Club Ombudsman.
    - *Please note: Prior to bringing an issue to the Club Ombudsman, Members are expected to communicate directly with the Director responsible for the area of concern, and advise the Director of their intent, and reasons for the review request.*

The Role of our Club Ombudsman:

Our Club Ombudsman is a volunteer who, at the request of a Member, may conduct a formal review of the handling of a concern or complaint after a decision has been made at the Board level.

The Club Ombudsman does ***not*** overturn or overrule decisions made by the Club or the Board. Rather, the Ombudsman will look at the circumstances to ensure that all relevant information was appropriately considered, and that the Club polices, guidelines, and procedures were properly applied, and provide a report on those findings to the complainant and the Club President.

Requesting a Review by the Club Ombudsman:

A Member who is unhappy with a decision reached by the Board, and has reasonable expectation that the situation could be otherwise resolved, may submit a request in writing for a review of their situation.

The Member may submit their request directly, via email *(please see below, Requesting Assistance.)*

The ombudsman will ensure that the member has informed the involved Director of the member's intent to request a review.

The Club Ombudsman will contact the Member (usually by email) to acknowledge the request and advise the Member of the expected timeframe for the investigation. *Typically, you should expect approximately two to three weeks for a full investigation.*

Please note:

- The intent of this process is to provide an arm's length review of the facts, circumstances, and decisions, as they already exist. This is not the place to introduce new evidence or material.
- If the Club Ombudsman requires further information, the Ombudsman may choose to contact the Member or other concerned parties. *However, this will not always be the case.*
- In some circumstances, the Ombudsman may determine that the concern is not one that is appropriate for formal review. This decision is entirely within the Ombudsman's determination. In such cases, the Ombudsman will inform the complainant that there will not be a review.

Once the investigation into the complaint is concluded, the Club Ombudsman will issue a review of the complaint to the Club President and the Member who submitted the complaint. If the Club Ombudsman feels that action is recommended, the Club Ombudsman will include such recommendations in the final report.

In some situations, the Club Ombudsman may make recommendations to the Board regarding suggested changes or updates to Club's policies, guidelines, and procedures. The Club Ombudsman may also comment on policies, guidelines, and procedures that the Club Ombudsman feels are well worded and appropriate. The final decision regarding such recommendations remains with the Board of Directors.

Why does the NVFC have a Club Mediator and a Club Ombudsman?
Appropriate conflict resolution is important to our Members and our Board of Directors. We believe that the intent of all our Members and volunteer Club officials is to solve problems quickly and fairly, with the common goal of arriving at the best outcome possible for the sake of our individual players, teams, and our Club as a whole.

Most concerns and complaints are successfully handled by the volunteers who make up our Club officials and Board of Directors. While we cannot always satisfy every request, we will ensure that any answers we provide are reasonable and well considered within the policies, guidelines, and procedures of our Club, and of our governing bodies, such as the BC Soccer Association.

To aid in this process, we invite our Members to talk to our **Club Mediator**, who works to help both sides of a conflict to reach a clear, acceptable understanding.

And we also know that there will be occasions when our Members feel that their concerns have not been appropriately resolved at the Board level. In these circumstances, we offer the choice of a review by our **Club Ombudsman**.

REQUESTING FOR ASSISTANCE OR REVIEW:

When requesting assistance from either the **Club Mediator** or the **Club Ombudsman**, please include the following information:

- Your name & contact information (email, telephone numbers),
- Member(s) involved,
- Player(s) involved, and
- A detailed outline of your concerns; please be sure to include dates, and the names of the Club officials who you dealt with throughout this concern.

You are welcome to use point form / bullets.

Please note: you are required to advise the involved Director of your intent to pursue a review via the Club Ombudsman, prior to submitting your request.

Club Mediator:	Kim King	kingtalk@shaw.ca
Club Ombudsman:	Cal Johnson	caljohnson@shaw.ca

Remember: neither the **Club Mediator** nor the **Club Ombudsman** has the authority to overturn the decisions of the NVFC Board of Directors. The Board will strongly consider the input from the Mediator or the Ombudsman; however, the final decision on any issues or concerns remains with the Board.