

Midlands & Northern Rhodesian Ridgeback Club

Code of Ethics – Complaints Paper



1. Purpose

This procedure provides a clear framework for handling complaints received by the Midlands & Northern Rhodesian Ridgeback Club ("the Club") relating to the conduct, actions, or behaviour of its members. It aims to ensure all complaints are, managed promptly, consistent and transparently, with due regard for fairness and confidentiality.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to all written complaints submitted by:

- Members of the public,
- Club members,
- External organisations

It covers matters relating to the behaviour of individual club members when representing or associated with the Club. It does not cover general grievances about club policy, show results, or other issues that fall outside member conduct (these maybe address through other club mechanisms).

3. Submitting a Complaint

- Complaints must be **submitted in writing** (email or post) to the Club Secretary.
- The complaint must include:
 - The name and contact details of the complainant.
 - The name(s) of the member(s) being complained about.
 - A clear description of the incident or concern, including dates, locations, and any evidence or witness statements.
- Anonymous complaints will **not normally be considered**, unless there are exceptional circumstances and compelling evidence.
- The club may decline to investigate complaints that are unsubstantiated, vexatious or without reasonable cause.

4. Acknowledgement and Initial Review

- The Secretary will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within **28 days**.
- The complaint will be referred to the Club Chairperson (or Vice-Chair if there is a conflict of interest) for **preliminary assessment**.
- The Chair will decide:
 - If the complaint falls within the remit of the Club.
 - Whether it is of sufficient substance to merit further investigation.
 - If the complaint should be escalated to another body (e.g., The Kennel Club, legal authorities, etc).
- If no further action is to be taken, the complainant will be advised accordingly

5. Investigation Process

If an investigation is warranted, a panel of **at least three committee members** (excluding any with conflicts of interest) will be appointed to oversee the matter.

- The member or members concerned will be:

- Notified in writing of the complaint.
- Given a summary of the allegations and supporting documents.
- Given an opportunity to respond in writing within **14 days**.
- The panel may also:
 - Request additional evidence or witness statements.
 - Interview the parties involved, where appropriate.

Both parties will be treated fairly and respectfully throughout the process.

6. Decision and Outcome

- The panel will review all evidence and aim to reach a conclusion within **28 days** of starting the investigation.
- Outcomes may include:
 - No further action.
 - A formal written warning.
 - Suspension of membership (temporary or fixed-term).
 - Expulsion from the Club (subject to Club constitution/rules).
- The outcome will be communicated in writing to both the complainant and the respondent.

7. Appeals

- A member subject to disciplinary action may appeal in writing to the Committee within **14 days** of being notified of the decision.
- A separate appeals panel, comprising of members not involved in the original investigation, will review the case.
- The appeal decision will be final, and both parties will be notified in writing.

8. Confidentiality

All complaints and proceedings will be handled in **strict confidence**. Information and details will only be shared with those directly involved in the process or as required by law or the Kennel Club

9. Record Keeping

All complaints and outcomes will be logged by the Secretary and retained for a minimum of **three years**.

10. Review of Procedure

This procedure will be reviewed annually by the Committee and updated as necessary to ensure it remains effective, transparent and fair.

Paper review date: February 2028