

Westside Ringette Association

Draft Dispute Resolution Policy

June, 2008

Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of the policy is to establish a methodology for dispute resolution for the Westside Ringette Association that achieves the following:

- Establishes a step-by-step method for resolving disputes
- Establishes a record of the decision making process so others can see that the decision made was based on sound methods, principles and ethics

General Methodology

When a situation occurs that requires dispute resolution the following general steps will be followed:

- A committee of 3 to 5 people will be established by the President
- The committee members can not be directly related to the participants or involved in the situation
- The majority of the committee must be Westside Ringette Association Executive Board members
- A committee chair will be established
- The only discussions regarding the situation will be in face-to-face meetings
- The face-to-face meeting will take place within 7 days of the situation requiring dispute resolution
- The participants in the situation will be required to meet with the Committee
- The Committee can meet with the participants either individually or collectively
- More than one meeting may be conducted
- The steps to follow to resolve the dispute are detailed below, but will include:
 - Determine the facts of the situation
 - Determine the issues associated with the situation
 - Identify the implications of different decisions that may be undertaken
 - Analyze (or consider the end result of) the different decisions
 - The Committee makes a recommendation to the Executive Board
 - The Executive Board, by vote, ratifies or rejects the recommendation
- Members of the Executive Board that are in a conflict-of-interest (as determined by other Board members) can not vote on the situation
- The Executive Board decision will be made within 7 days of the face-to-face meetings with the participants.
- The recommendations of the Committee and the decision of the Executive Board will be considered final

Step 1 - Determining the facts of the situation

The facts can only be established by talking to all the affected parties and asking relevant questions. The committee shall establish before meeting with situation participants what questions to ask and how to ask them. One relevant fact always is finding out what the affected parties think is an appropriate solution.

The questions and the answers must be written down. It may be appropriate to record the conversations.

After establishing the facts of the situation, the appropriate authorities will be contacted if one of the following has taken place:

- Criminal or quasi-criminal actions
- There are reasonable grounds to believe that a child may be in need of protection
- Actions that are considered discriminatory
- Actions that constitute harassment

Usually the situations will not involve any appropriate authorities and the Committee will go on to the next step.

Step 2 - Determining the issues associated with the situation

Generally, the issues are at least one of the following:

- A policy of the Westside Ringette Association is not being followed
- Respect for established principles, rules or code of conduct is not given
- Obligations, loyalties, word given or prior commitments have not been met
- Power has been abused
- Objectives or goals are not appropriate
- The standard of behaviour is not appropriate
- The actions taken have not been fair or equitable
- The methods used have not been appropriate
- The confidentiality of information or privacy has been breached.
- There is a personality conflict

A litmus test to use is whether or not the parties have acted ethically. Ethical conduct is described as behaviour that meets accepted standards or principles of moral, professional or just conduct.

The Committee must clearly identify the issues that are relevant to this situation. There will usually be more than one. The identified issues must be written down.

Step 3 – Identify the implications of different decisions

For any situation there will be several options for decisions. One option is always “Do nothing”.

Identify the options and ask “What might happen if –“.

The “What might happen if –“ questions and answers must be written down.

Step 4 – Analyze the different decisions

Next, evaluate the pros and cons of each option.

The pros and cons for each decision must be written down.

Step 5 – Recommend a decision to the Executive Board

Decisions that are “just and reasonable” usually include a mix of the following:

- It results in a positive outcome for the majority on individuals concerned
- Minimizes the negative implications for all parties involved
- Appears to be the “right thing to do”
- Follow a fair and equitable process
- Are consistent with expected standards of behaviour such as BCRA’s “Players Code of Conduct”, “Parents Code of Conduct” and/or “Coaches Code of Conduct”

Often there will be no clear-cut answer. One strong value may need to over ride another strong value. That is the ethical dilemma that the Committee will likely have to come to terms with. The challenge is to come to a decision that will be maintained even though it might be questioned.

A written recommendation to the Executive Board must be made. It may be appropriate to provide the reasons for coming to this recommendation.

Step 6 – Executive Board Vote

The Executive Board must meet to review the Committee Recommendation. The preferred method for meeting is face-to-face. Alternatively, the meeting can be held by conference call.

The Executive Board will vote to either accept or reject the Committee recommendation.

If the Executive Board rejects the recommendation, a new solution must be established following the steps identified in this policy.