

Poway National Little League Code Of Conduct, Complaint, and Grievance Policy

PURPOSE

It is our hope that you and your child will have a fun and positive year with Poway National Little League (“PNLL”). Occasionally, however, a conflict can arise among parents, managers and coaches. For example, a parent might not approve of the behavior and/or actions of a manager or coach. Occasional as they are, these situations can be quite distressing to all involved, particularly the children, taking the fun out of the game. As stated in the article *Little League’s Greatest Challenge* “...The heart of Little League baseball is what happens between manager and player. It is the manager more than any other single individual who makes the program a success or failure. He controls the situation in which the player may be benefited or harmed...” Actions of our managers and coaches must be held to the highest standards and be beyond reproach. Likewise, in order for the manager to be able to do his job successfully, parents must understand that their actions should not interfere with that process.

Complaints generally come in two forms; qualified and unqualified. An example of a qualified complaint would be one in which the manager violates the PNLL Code of Conduct (see below). An example of an unqualified complaint would be playing time or positioning issues, unless the manager has violated a Little League or local PNLL rule.

The PNLL Complaint and Grievance Policy is designed for, and should be followed by, all adult participants in the league if a conflict arises. Problems with umpires, however, are to be handled outside of this Grievance Policy. Umpiring concerns should be addressed by the manager to the League’s Umpire-In-Chief. The Umpire-In-Chief will then investigate the matter. The Umpire-In-Chief, if unable to resolve the situation, will bring the matter to the PNLL Board.

The PNLL Board is committed to making sure that all conflicts are resolved quickly, objectively, and equitably with the very first consideration being given to the welfare of the children. Therefore, the PNLL Board has adopted the following Code of Conduct, Complaint, and Grievance Policy.

Please note all Managers are directed by the Board to deal fairly and impartially with each issue and ANY retaliation will not be tolerated. Please see “retaliation” paragraph below.

The Grievance policy does not in any way hinder or restrict the Board from addressing any potential issues or taking any action it deems necessary. This policy has been created to ensure open lines of communication between the Board, parents, and volunteers. However, the Board maintains all authority and all volunteers, parents, and players as subject to the authority of the Board.

POWAY NATIONAL LITTLE LEAGUE CODE OF CONDUCT

PNLL is a volunteer organization. The parents of players shoulder most of the authority, responsibility and effort for making this program successful. It is in the interest of all parents to ensure a code of conduct throughout the organization which ensures every player has an opportunity for a respectful, fair and fulfilling playing experience while playing at PNLL. The elements outlined in this policy are designed to assist and guide all members of the organization towards positive and respectful youth baseball competition. The policies outlined within this Code of Conduct are intended to urge positive and constructive behavior by all involved.

1. Displays Of Temper – Displays of temper by a player, coach, manager or spectator is considered unsportsmanlike conduct and are subject to a verbal warning and possible ejection from a game under discretion of the umpire. They may also be subject to an official complaint/grievance as per the PNLL Grievance Policy. Displays of temper include but are not limited to throwing, kicking or abusing equipment, expressions of rage, shouting or screaming at the opponent from across the field, not shaking hands after a game, etc.
2. Bad Language – Expressions of bad language by a player, coach, manager or spectator is considered unsportsmanlike conduct and are subject to a verbal warning and possible ejection from a game under discretion of the umpire. They may also be subject to an official complaint/grievance as per the PNLL Grievance Policy. Expressions of bad language include but are not limited to swearing and cussing in the presence of a player, coach, manager, umpire or spectator.
3. Taunting – Taunting by a player, coach, manager or spectator is considered unsportsmanlike conduct and are subject to a verbal warning and possible ejection from a game under discretion of the umpire. They may also be subject to an official complaint/grievance as per the PNLL Grievance Policy. Taunting includes but is not limited to verbal or visible body expressions with the intention to belittle or show disrespect for an opponent.
4. Running Up The Score – Running up the score is considered unsportsmanlike conduct. The manager is responsible and may be subject to an official complaint/grievance as per the PNLL Grievance Policy. Running up the score includes the pursuit of aggressive actions (i.e. base stealing) to continue to add to the score of a non-critical game which demonstrates and maintains a run differential greater than 10 runs at the end of an active inning. A non-critical game includes any game that does not determine placing, seeding, or rankings in season or tournament play.
5. Physical Violence – Physical violence by a player, coach, manager or spectator is unacceptable is subject to a verbal warning and possible ejection from a game under discretion of the umpire. It may also be subject to an official complaint/grievance as per the PNLL Grievance Policy and/or referral for civil/criminal prosecution.
6. Violation Of Privacy – A violation of privacy by a parent, coach or manager is unacceptable is subject to an official complaint/grievance as per the PNLL Grievance Policy. A violation of privacy includes but is not limited to attempting to contact a league member on league related business between the hours of 10:00 PM and 8:00 AM (unless pre-approved by the league member).
7. Substance Abuse – Substance abuse by a player, coach, manager or spectator is unacceptable and is subject to an official complaint/grievance as per the PNLL Grievance Policy and/or

referral for civil/criminal prosecution. Consumption of alcoholic beverages and/or use of tobacco products on league grounds or parking lots is strictly prohibited.

POWAY NATIONAL LITTLE LEAGUE COMPLAINT and GRIEVANCE POLICY

COMPLAINTS

- 1) Parent complaints must be communicated with the manager in one of three ways, either:
 - Option 1: The parent should discuss the issue directly with the manager. The purpose of this Grievance Policy is to foster open communication, without fear of retaliation, between the parent and the manager. The Board of Directors prefers that all complaints be handled in this manner if at all possible. The manager may or may not have been aware of the problem. The issue should be discussed quickly in a courteous and positive manner. When approached promptly and in a calm manner, many problems quickly become non-issues and a higher level of cooperation and understanding is achieved. These discussions should not take place in front of any children, other parents, nor during a game or practice. If the issue cannot be resolved directly between the parent and the manager, then the complaint should be made by the parent to the Division Player Agent. The Division Player Agent shall then discuss the issue with the manager. If the issue still cannot be resolved, or if it continues, the parent may file a formal grievance. Or
 - Option 2: In the rare circumstance where the parent would prefer to have a PNLL Board member present for the initial conversation with the manager, the parent may elect to write a letter to the PNLL Board of Directors. The letter must outline the specific area(s) of concern, provide only facts, and not include any judgments or conclusions. Upon receipt of the letter the Board will forward the letter to the manager to make them aware of the concerns. The Division Director will then schedule a meeting providing an opportunity for the parent(s), manager, and Division Director to all sit down together and attempt to resolve the conflict. This provides both the parent and manager an independent third party to help facilitate the conversation. It is expected that the manager and parent will work together to facilitate a positive resolution. Or
 - Option 3: As noted above, in the rare circumstance when a parent is unwilling to utilize one of the first two options, the parent(s) may reach out to a Board member and express their concern. The parent(s) should provide only facts and not include any judgments or conclusions. The Board member will then work to facilitate a meeting between the parent(s) and the manager.
- 2) If (and only if) the issue cannot be resolved directly through one of the three options outlined above, the issue may be elevated through the Grievance Policy outlined below.

GRIEVANCES

- 3) Filing A Formal Grievance - If a complaint is not resolved by the above process, the parent can file a formal grievance in writing with the Vice President. The written grievance should contain the following:
 - a. The name, telephone number and email address of the person filing the grievance;
 - b. The name of the person against whom the grievance is filed;
 - c. The nature of the complaint;
 - d. The relevant dates and locations;
 - e. The desired resolution.

- 4) The Grievance Review - The grievance will be reviewed by the Vice President and the two Division Player Agents within 48 hours of receipt to see if the grievance has merit and if it should be reviewed at a grievance hearing.
 - a. If the grievance will be heard, the Vice President shall convene a meeting of the Grievance Committee giving the committee members at least 48 hours notice of the meeting. The Grievance Committee shall be comprised of the Vice President (as Chair), the two division player agents, the Umpire-In-Chief, and the Secretary.
 - b. If the grievance will not be heard, the Vice President will notify the parent in writing why the grievance was dismissed. The grievance dismissal action of the Vice President shall be final unless the person who filed the grievance decides to appeal the decision to the full PNLL Board. The appeal must be by written request to the President within 48 hours of the dismissal by the Vice President (see “Right to Appeal” below).

- 5) The Grievance Hearing –
 - a. Both the person filing the complaint and the person against whom the grievance is filed, may produce witnesses to speak on their behalf (no children witnesses). The witnesses must provide their written statements to the Chair no later than 24 hours prior to the hearing.
 - b. The Committee shall hear testimony in the following order:
 - i. The parent filing the complaint (10 min max);
 - ii. Witnesses for the parent (2 min each);
 - iii. The person against whom the grievance is filed (10 min max);
 - iv. Witnesses for the person against whom the grievance is filed (2 min each).Statements should be recorded by the Secretary and should only address the issue at hand and not reference any past accusations or violations, if any. Only facts may be presented, not assumptions or preconceived conclusions. No questions shall be allowed during testimony. After the statements are made, the Chair may allow questions from Committee members. The parties shall then be dismissed.
 - c. After the parties are dismissed, the Grievance Committee shall then discuss the case in private and reach a decision as to the imposition of any disciplinary action by majority vote. The Chair shall issue a letter to the person against whom the grievance is filed as soon as practical after the decision of the Committee, informing the person whether the complaint was dismissed, if there will be disciplinary action, or know the issues raised in the complaint were resolved by the Committee. The person filing the complaint shall also be promptly informed in writing of the Committee’s decision.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

- 6) The Grievance Committee may impose sanctions as follows:
 - a. Dismiss the action without sanction;
 - b. Written warning from the Chair;
 - c. Suspension from one or more games or practices;
 - d. Recommendation against post season positions;
 - e. Removal from League position;
 - f. One year suspension from League
 - g. Recommendation for criminal prosecution or civil action.

The action of the Grievance Committee shall be final unless the person against whom the grievance is filed decides to appeal the Committee decision to the full PNLL Board. If so, the person must appeal by written request to the President of the PNLL Board within 48 hours of receiving the decision of the Grievance Committee.

RIGHT TO APPEAL

The PNLL Board President shall schedule the appeal for the next regularly scheduled board meeting (a minimum of 72 hours notice is required). The President shall Chair and conduct the appeal in the same manner as the Grievance Hearing (above). A final decision will be made by majority vote of all board members present at the meeting. The President shall issue letters to both the person against whom the grievance was filed and the person who filed the complaint, within 48 hours of the hearing informing that person of the outcome. This decision will be final with no further appeals.

RETALIATION

Retaliation will not be tolerated. The purpose of this Grievance Policy is to foster open communication between the volunteers who manage/coach the teams and the league participants. Communication between managers/coaches and parents must be able to occur with no fear or concern of retaliation. Retaliation is defined as an observed change in playing time, position, batting order, or disposition. All concerns of retaliation will be fully investigated by the Grievance Committee. If the Committee determines the player has been subjected to retaliation the manager/coach will be suspended indefinitely.

RECORDS RETENTION

All complaints, resolutions and disciplinary letters must be retained by PNLL and passed on to the President of the incoming Board. Records will be destroyed after 3 years of the final decision.