

# Responding to Harmful Behaviours Guidelines

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# Responding to Harmful Behaviours Guidelines

Greyhound Racing Victoria (GRV) and the Victorian greyhound racing industry are committed to a racing environment that fosters respect, dignity, and protection for all individuals involved both on and off the track.

This commitment extends to safeguarding against and speaking out against harmful behaviours such as abuse, bullying, family violence, harassment, sexual misconduct, discrimination, victimisation and vilification.

Harm or abuse can occur in person, online or through any other form of communication. It covers direct person to person conduct and conduct that while not directed directly to or at an individual, is intended to have or could reasonably have known it would have an impact on them.

GRV has in place victim centric and trauma informed practices to support the reporting and investigation of harmful behaviours within the greyhound racing industry. This includes providing support for people and their immediate families who report or experience harmful behaviour.

To hold individuals accountable for harmful behaviour, participants must speak out against and report harmful behaviours they witness or become aware of.

## Reporting Harm and Abuse

If you experience any harmful behaviours, see or hear about harmful behaviours or simply see something that appears not quite right, you can:

- make a report using the online form at [www.grv.org.au/report-suspicious-activity/](http://www.grv.org.au/report-suspicious-activity/)
- directly to a member of the Integrity and Welfare at tracks or property or through the GRV office on 8329 1100 (press 5) and leave a message.
- email the concern to [notify@grv.org.au](mailto:notify@grv.org.au);
- call the 24 Hour Investigations Hotline 1300 856 109; or
- contact the on-call GRV Investigator after hours on 03 8329 1100 (press 1)

We all want sport to be safe and fair for all participants. No one should have to tolerate abuse, harassment, or bullying in greyhound racing. All those participating in the industry are encouraged to speak up about unacceptable behaviour that they have experienced or witnessed.



Although it can be difficult, by speaking up, you can help ensure greyhound racing is a safe environment now and into the future.

GRV will treat very seriously any reports that a person is victimised for speaking up and swift action will occur to hold perpetrators accountable. GRV are committed to supporting those who speak up.

## **Responding to Harm and Abuse**

GRV will respond to reports of harm or abuse with a victim centric and trauma-informed approach. Those responding to these reports are trained and experienced in interviewing people including vulnerable persons, children and those who have suffered harm and will approach victims with respect, care and support.

There are core principles that GRV will follow when responding to or investigating a complaint or suspected case of harm and abuse:

### **1. Acknowledgement of the complaint**

GRV will:

- acknowledge the complaint in a timely manner
- provide an overview of what the process will be followed by GRIW to respond
- nominate an investigator to liaise with the complainant, ideally of the same gender and with the appropriate skills and experience to respond to the report
- encourage complaints to discuss any concerns regarding the process
- give an approximate time frame of the expected duration to review and provide further advice to the complaint
- respect the victim's privacy by keeping the information confidential to the extent possible, while still taking appropriate steps to address the issue
- ensure the victim's or witnesses safety by assessing any immediate risks and taking necessary actions to protect them from further harm
- maintain confidentiality
- inform the victim of their external options, which may include seeking counselling or medical assistance or involving law enforcement; and
- provide independent support and assistance through the Greyhound Participant Support Program – providing a 24-hour counselling service available at 1300 739 550.



GRV will also provide information about available resources such as support groups, hotlines, or counselling services and advocacy services when needed.

## **2. Assessment and identification of the issues relevant to the complaint**

When assessing the complaint, it is important that the specific behaviour can be identified. GRV will assess if the alleged specific behaviour (if it were to be proven) is in breach of a rule of racing, a criminal offence, a contravention of other GRV policies and within GRV's scope to investigate including if the those involved are bound by the rules of racing.

Identifying the specific behaviour (as far as practical) will also assist in determining:

- the seriousness of the complaint and level of response required
- whether an informal or formal complaint handling process is required; and
- whether the complaint should be referred to an external agency such as Victoria Police or Department of Families, Fairness and Housing

If a complaint includes conduct that is a criminal offence, GRV may need to report it to, or seek advice from, a law enforcement agency. Where the complainant is the alleged victim and an adult, GRV will inform them before this is done, unless GRV believes there is risk of imminent harm, in such cases an immediate report will be made to Victoria Police.

All behaviours that involve a reasonable belief of serious criminal offending, or sexual offending against a child will be referred to Victoria Police.

Any complaints that suggest child abuse or neglect will also be reported to DFFH.

In some circumstances GRV will be obliged to make a report to Victoria Police. This will be discussed with the reporting person and/or complainant as necessary.

## **3. Engaging with the complainant / witness**

The nominated investigator may seek further information including:

- evidence to support the complaint such as a written or recorded account from the reporting person in the form of a statement, email, letter, other supporting documents including documents, text messages or recordings.
- what outcome the person is seeking by raising the complaint
- identifying any witnesses to the alleged conduct that may need to be spoken to



- whether the person has already spoken to other parties about the complaint.

#### **4. Conducting the investigation**

In conducting an investigation, procedural fairness and natural justice applies and both the complainant and the respondent. Both will be provided a reasonable opportunity to be heard.

An investigation will commence in circumstances where:

- there are reasonable grounds to believe that a person has engaged in harmful behaviours connected with greyhound racing that is likely to be a breach of the rules of racing; and
- a) it is determined that an investigation is appropriate to:
  - b) examine and assess relevant documents and records
  - c) source other relevant evidence
  - d) identify and interview witnesses;
  - e) provide an opportunity for the alleged offender to provide evidence.
  - f) prevent further harm.

Pre-hearing suspension may be considered to protect the complainant, witnesses and others within the industry.

If the complainant and / or the respondent is a child – a vulnerable person – or under the care of a recognised carer, they will be appropriately supported by a parent, guardian, carer, and/or a support person of their choosing. The support person of the complainant and / or respondent should not be a witness to the matter.

Each complaint varies, and every process is different. There are lots of factors that impact how long an investigation can take, including how complex the issue is, the availability of people to participate in the investigation process. As far as possible, the complainant will be updated on the progress of the investigation.

#### **Resolution of the complaint and concluding the investigation.**

At the conclusion of the investigation, the investigation will be reviewed by the Head of Integrity and Welfare and all available evidence to determine whether the elements of an offence have been made out, whether the matter is best resolved by an external agency such as Victoria Police, whether charges under the rules or racing will be laid, whether a fit and proper person determination has been triggered or whether no further action is required.



## Internal review

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint, you can ask GRV to review the decision. The complaint will then be escalated to the Executive General Manager integrity and Welfare.

*GRV has a zero-tolerance stance towards any form of harm behaviours directed toward a child or young person. Greyhound racing includes young people, both as participants themselves and through their wider support network who may also be participants. It is vital that the greyhound racing industry fosters an inclusive, respectful and safe environment.*

*The safeguarding of children in greyhound racing is everyone's responsibility. All individuals involved in greyhound racing have a responsibility to prioritise the safety and well-being of children, ensuring they are protected from any harm arising directly or indirectly from their involvement in the sport.*

*Any adult who fails to disclose to police a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria by an adult against a child (aged under 16) commits an offence. The offence provisions apply to all adults in Victoria, not just professionals who work with children.*

*Victoria's Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) lead the response to reports of child abuse and neglect. Further information is at [Reporting child abuse - DFFH Services](#).*

## Other Important Contacts

- Greyhound Participant Support Program is an independent 24-hour counselling service available to those involved in the Victorian greyhound racing industry and their immediate families at 1300 739 550.
- DFFH lead the response to reports of child abuse and neglect. You can find further information at [Reporting child abuse - DFFH Services](#).
- During business hours call the relevant Child Protection Contact at [Reporting child abuse - DFFH Services](#).
- To report concerns about the immediate safety of a child after hours, call the After-Hours Child Protection Emergency Service: 13 12 78
- [Sexual offences and child abuse support teams and centres](#) | Victoria Police



- National Family and Sexual Violence Support Service on 1800 737 732 (1800 RESPECT)
- To report concerns that are life threatening or require immediate attention, ring Victoria Police on 000.

## Offences

The racing rules have offences relevant to unacceptable behaviour in greyhound racing that cause or have the potential to cause harm to any participant:

- LR 61A makes it an offence for any person to assault, abuse, interfere with, threaten or harass another person while undertaking any activity in connection with greyhound racing or in or at any place in connection to greyhound racing;
- GAR 156(f) makes it an offence to, in relation to greyhound racing, do something, or omitted to do something, which, in the opinion of the Stewards constitutes misconduct or is improper;
- GAR 156(g) provides that it is an offence to willfully assault, obstructs, impedes, abuses, interferes with, threatens or insults Stewards, GRV or club staff or committee members;
- GAR 165(a) makes it an offence to engage in conduct prejudicial to the interest, welfare, image, promotion or control of greyhound racing,
- LR 66.1 provides for immediate suspension of a participant including where a serious allegation suggests a risk of harm to any person with greyhound racing.





## Glossary

Term	Definition
<b>Abuse</b>	Any type of behaviour (including physical, emotional/psychological, sexual, and inappropriate use of power and/or process) that has caused, is causing or is likely to cause harm to a person's wellbeing, whether in-person or online.
<b>Bullying</b>	A person or group of people repeatedly and intentionally using words or actions, or the inappropriate use of power, against someone or a group of people to cause distress and risk to their wellbeing, whether in-person or online.
<b>Discrimination</b>	Includes both direct and indirect discrimination (either in-person or online) which have the following meaning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) 'Direct discrimination' occurs where, because a person has a Protected Characteristic, they are treated less favourably than a person without that characteristic would be treated in the same or similar circumstances.</li> <li>b) 'Indirect discrimination' occurs where a practice, rule, requirement, or condition that applies to everyone disadvantages people with a Protected Characteristic and the practice, rule, requirement, or condition is not reasonable in the circumstances.</li> </ul>
<b>Harassment</b>	Behaviour towards a person that they do not want and that is offensive, abusive, belittling or threatening and is reasonably likely to cause harm to the person who is the subject of the harassment, whether in-person or online.
<b>Sexual misconduct</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Sexual harassment, which is any unwanted or unwelcome sexual behaviour where a reasonable person would anticipate the possibility that the person being harassed would feel offended, humiliated or intimidated; and</li> <li>b) Behaviour that may constitute a sexual offence that is unlawful</li> </ul>



Term	Definition
<b>Victimisation</b>	Subjecting a person, or threatening to subject a person, either in-person or online, to any unfair treatment because the person has made, or intends to pursue their right to make a complaint, report or lawful disclosure, including under applicable legislation or the GAR, or for supporting another person to take such action.
<b>Vilification</b>	A public act, conduct or behaviour, either in-person or online, which incites hatred, serious contempt for, or revulsion or severe ridicule of, a person or group of people because of a Protected Characteristic they hold, as covered by applicable legislation.





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