

**LARPWEST GRIEVANCE SUBCOMMITTEE
GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

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PURPOSE

This document is the official procedure that the LARPwest Grievance Subcommittee must abide by when handling Grievances regarding past, present or potential LARPwest Members. It aims to provide a clear and ethical process to standardise Grievance handling, and also to provide transparency to LARPwest Members about how issues brought forward are considered and addressed.

Please note these procedures are not criminal investigation tools. The Grievance Subcommittee has jurisdiction to process complaints and make recommendations regarding LARPwest memberships. At no point do we make judgement regarding criminal guilt or certainty of allegations made.

We recommend serious matters also be referred to the Police and/or mental health services.

CORE VALUES

SAFETY

The physical, mental, and emotional safety of LARPwest Members is paramount. This Grievance Procedure document will continue to develop the WA LARP community as a safe and inclusive environment. It is the welfare of the community and its members that is the primary concern when following these procedures.

CONSENT AND CONFIDENTIALITY

The consent and confidentiality of the involved parties must always be considered at every step of this procedure. Action must not be taken on reports unless consented to by the reporter. Information must not be disclosed to any parties outside of the Grievance Subcommittee without explicit consent of the involved party, unless required by law.

PROCEDURAL FAIRNESS

Every individual has the opportunity to file a report, regardless of their LARPwest status. Likewise, actioned reports will provide the opportunity for the reported party to provide a statement and evidence in response. All statements that are collected must be reviewed and deliberated without bias or prejudice.

DEFINITIONS

Administrator - Two LARPwest Committee Members who facilitate the Grievance Subcommittee.

Authorised Action - Sanctions approved by the LARPwest Committee.

Grievance - The general term for an actual or potential Report or incident. Includes potential or alleged breaches of the LARPwest Code of Conduct.

Grievance Subcommittee Representative - A member of the LARPwest Grievance Subcommittee. Does not include the LARPwest Administrators.

Handlers - The two Grievance Subcommittee Representatives assigned to investigate the Report. Responsible for all record keeping and communication with Involved Parties.

Investigative Report - The Handler's write up of all details of the case and investigative actions taken. The Grievance Subcommittee and Administrators have access.

Involved Party - Includes Reporters, Respondents and Witnesses.

LARPwest Member - An individual who holds a valid LARPwest membership.

Point of Contact - A third party that an Anonymous or vulnerable Involved Party can be contacted through. Must only be done with the consent and knowledge of that Involved Party.

Recommended Action - Sanctions proposed by the Grievance Subcommittee to the LARPwest Committee.

Report - An official statement sent to the LARPwest Grievance email. Reports can be actionable or non-actionable depending on the wishes of the Reporter.

Reporter - The individual or individuals who submit a Report.

Respondent - The individual or individuals against which allegations are made in the Report.

Sanction - Limits and conditions that LARPwest can impose on LARPwest memberships. A potential outcome of the Grievance process.

Summary Report - The Handler's final write up containing steps in the investigation and the Recommended Action.

Witnesses - Parties who give statements or are mentioned in Reports, who are not the Reporter or the Respondents.

GRIEVANCE HANDLING

PHASE ONE

1. RECEIVING A REPORT

- a. Every LARPwest Member has the right and opportunity to file a Report.
- b. LARPwest Members may reach out to the Grievance Subcommittee Representatives or Grievance email.
- c. Support and guidance may be provided on the Grievance process. Grievance Subcommittee Representatives can assist LARPwest Members in the writing and submission of a Report.
- d. Official Reports and statements are emailed to the Grievance Subcommittee.
 - i. larpwestgrievance@gmail.com
- e. The Reporter may elect to remain anonymous - see **Section 3: Anonymous Reports**.
- f. The Reporter elects their preferred action:
 - i. No Action - see **Section 2: Non-Actioned Reports**; or
 - ii. Potential Action - see **Sanctions**.
- g. Grievance Subcommittee reply to the Reporter to acknowledge the Report has been received, and the appropriate Grievance process initiated.
- h. If a Reporter is reporting on behalf of someone else, the Grievance Subcommittee will enquire if the other individual is aware and has consented to the Report.
- i. If the matter is of particular urgency, the Grievance Subcommittee may place temporary measures in place while the Grievance process is being conducted - see **Sanctions: Interim Sanctions**. Respondents and Event Organisers are notified of these Sanctions.

2. NON-ACTIONED REPORTS

- a. A confidential case folder is created in the LARPwest Grievance Subcommittee Google Drive.

- i. Grievance Subcommittee Representatives and the current Administrators have access to this file until it is Archived - see **Archiving**.
- b. The Report and all relevant information is filed.
- c. Case is closed and no further action is taken.
- d. May be accessed if:
 - i. A future Report is filed against the same Respondent; or
 - ii. Further Reports are filed regarding the same matter where a request for action is made.
- e. Information contained in non-actioned Reports will not be included in an actioned process unless:
 - i. Consent of the Reporter is gained; and
 - ii. The Respondent is given the opportunity to respond.

3. ANONYMOUS REPORTS

- a. The Report is filed without the Reporter's name.
- b. A Point of Contact who knows the identity of the anonymous Reporter is included. This is in case future action is required.
- c. If no action is elected - see **Section 2: Non-Actioned Reports**.
- d. If the Reporter requests action, the case will be processed as per the following procedures
- e. It is acknowledged that anonymous Reports are less verifiable than named Reports. This is factored into the investigation and decision-making process.

4. ASSIGNING HANDLERS

- a. The Grievance Subcommittee receives a Report.
- b. The Reporter may request a Handler they feel comfortable with.
 - i. Please note if the requested Handler feels they are unable to perform their duties, they must recuse themselves.
- c. Grievance Subcommittee Representatives who are unduly biased will recuse themselves from the Grievance process.
- d. Two Handlers are assigned based on availability and suitability to the case.
- e. Additional Handlers may be assigned if necessary.

- f. The role of the Handlers is to:
 - i. Investigate the Report;
 - ii. Be impartial and empathetic with all Involved Parties;
 - iii. Offer support and guidance to Involved Parties;
 - iv. Keep records and write reports; and
 - v. Ensure compliance with procedure.

PHASE TWO

5. INVESTIGATION

- a. The Handlers review the Report
- b. Handlers may ask additional questions of the Reporter as needed.
- c. Handlers may contact Witnesses to gather statements, with the consent of the Reporter.
 - i. Witnesses are given a two week window to respond and prepare statements. This is to avoid cases dragging on for all Involved Parties. Extensions may be given if needed.
- d. Please note that the safety of community members is the utmost concern when conducting these procedures. Involved Parties may not be contacted if the Handlers believe that doing so would put their mental, physical or emotional well being at risk.
 - i. In these cases, the Handlers will consult with the Subcommittee before taking any action.
 - ii. If appropriate, a Point of Contact may be voluntarily recruited to inform the Involved Party of a case and offer them the opportunity to be involved in the Grievance.
 - iii. As with any Involved Party, there is no obligation or pressure to be formally involved in the Grievance process.
- e. Handler formulates the initial email to the Respondent. This email must balance:
 - i. The need to disclose enough detail to allow the Respondent a fair chance to respond; and
 - ii. The Reporter's confidentiality, consent and safety.
- f. This formulation is reviewed and approved by the Grievance Subcommittee.
- g. The Respondent is given the opportunity to provide a statement.
 - i. Respondents are given a one week window to acknowledge they have received an email, and a two week window to prepare a response. This is to avoid cases dragging on for all Involved Parties. Extensions may be given if needed.
- h. Further questions may be asked if necessary.
- i. The Respondent's Witnesses may be contacted if consent is given.

6. INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

- a. Handlers compile records of all information gathered in the investigation.
- b. These records are kept in the confidential case folder in the Grievance Subcommittee Google Drive.
- c. Handlers write the Investigative Report, containing all information relevant to the case.
- d. Involved Parties may request access to the section of the Investigative Report containing **only** information that they themselves have supplied.

7. GRIEVANCE SUBCOMMITTEE CASE MEETING

- a. Grievance Subcommittee Representatives who are unable to perform their duties due to bias or otherwise must recuse themselves from this stage.
- b. The Grievance Subcommittee reads the Investigative Report.
- c. A case meeting is held to discuss:
 - i. The facts of the case;
 - ii. The conduct of the Handlers and adherence with Grievance procedure; and
 - iii. Recommended Action.
- d. The Grievance Subcommittee decides on what sanctions are appropriate, if any - see **Sanctions**. This is the Recommended Action.
- e. If Grievance Subcommittee Representatives are unable to attend this meeting, their input can be submitted before or after the meeting to ensure their opinion is still considered.

8. SUMMARY REPORT

- a. The Handlers write the Summary Report.
- b. The Summary Report includes:
 - i. Name of Respondent and Respondent's previous case history;
 - ii. Allegations and potential Code of Conduct breaches;
 - iii. Investigative actions taken; and
 - iv. The Recommended Action.
- c. The Summary Report does not include:
 - i. Identity of the Reporter or Witnesses; or
 - ii. Excessive details of alleged incidents.

PHASE THREE

9. LARPWEST AUTHORISATION

- a. The Summary Report is provided to the LARPwest Committee.
- b. The LARPwest Committee reviews the conduct of Grievance Subcommittee, including adherence to procedure.
- c. If found appropriate, the LARPwest Committee signs off on Recommended Action, and it becomes the Authorised Action.

10. IMPLEMENTING ACTION

- a. The Reporter and the Respondent are informed of the Authorised Action by the Handlers.
- b. Respondent is provided with a Rationale containing:
 - i. Reasons for the Authorised Action; and
 - ii. Recommendations for behavioural improvement - see **Rehabilitation**.
- c. The Authorised Action is implemented.
- d. Involved Parties are informed of the outcome of the case.
- e. Event Organisers are informed of all **Sanctions** through an email they have nominated.
- f. If the Authorised Action includes a membership suspension, this is logged on the LARPwest Membership Suspension list.

11. FINALISING CASE

- a. Handlers file all Reports, information, communication and action in the case folder.
- b. Compliance with Grievance procedure is reviewed.
- c. Handlers transfer ownership of all documents in case file to the Grievance email address.
- d. Handlers add Sanctions to the Sanction Register in the confidential Google Drive.
- e. Case is closed.

SANCTIONS

LARPwest has the power to make decisions regarding the status of LARPwest memberships. If appropriate, a Grievance process can result in sanctions being placed on the Respondent's LARPwest membership. Please note that the following index of sanctions is not exhaustive, and LARPwest has the discretion to place other restrictions on membership if deemed appropriate.

The Grievance Subcommittee handles cases as confidentially as reasonable in the situation. Given the nature of the LARP community, Event Organisers are considered among a limited category of individuals who need to be aware of sanctions. This is to provide better communication between LARPwest and Event Organiser teams, and better promote community safety. An Event Contact from each active LARPwest event is notified of all official sanctions.

INTERIM SANCTIONS

The Grievance Subcommittee may place interim sanctions on cases of particular urgency and severity. This could take the form of temporary probationary conditions or an interim LARPwest suspension. Interim LARPwest suspensions may be put in place if the Grievance Subcommittee considers it necessary to temporarily separate an individual from the community while a case is being investigated.

Interim sanctions may be passed by a Grievance Representative and either another Grievance Representative or an Event Organiser. In extreme situations, one Grievance Representative may pass an interim sanction but must take steps to inform the Grievance Subcommittee as soon as practical. Where possible, interim sanctions should always be passed with the knowledge and consent of the Event Organisers.

Interim sanctions are temporary conditions that will be handled with discretion. Event Organisers of current LARPwest events will be notified. They will not be logged on the LARPwest suspension list available on the LARPwest website. Please note this does not replace the rest of the Grievance procedures, which will be conducted with consideration of procedural fairness.

MEMBERSHIP SUSPENSIONS

A Respondent may have their LARPwest membership suspended. This means the individual will be prevented from purchasing membership, and therefore from attending LARPwest events, until the end of their suspension term. This will be specified to the Respondent and listed on the LARPwest Membership Suspension List. The Suspension List contains the name of the Respondent, the start and end of the suspension term, and the colour code according to the following chart. Listings on the Suspension List will be removed after the Respondent's probationary period is deemed to be complete

Colour	Level	Suspension Duration
 Yellow	1. Minor	Weeks to Months
 Orange	2. Moderate	Months to Years
 Red	3. Severe	Months to Years
 Black	4. Indefinite	Indefinite

OFFICIAL WARNINGS

A Respondent may receive an official warning for alleged behaviour/s. This warning is kept on file and considered if future Grievances of similar nature are raised. Warnings are kept confidential to the Grievance Subcommittee, LARPwest Committee, and Event Organisers.

PROBATIONARY CONDITIONS

Probationary conditions may be placed on LARPwest memberships, which the Respondent may voluntarily accept. Reviews on that individual's LARPwest membership will consider compliance with these probations - see **Reviews**. The following list is not exhaustive, LARPwest reserves the right to implement other probations if appropriate. Please note that Respondents are expected to reasonably follow the spirit of the probation as well as the letter of the probation, in cases of uncertainty.

Alcohol Probation - Ban on consuming alcohol at LARPwest sanctioned or related events.

Camping Probation - Limits to where the individual may camp overnight.

Combat Probations - Limits to who and how the individual may engage in LARP combat.

Contact Probations - Limits to who and how the individual may contact other Members of LARPwest, especially the Reporter or Witnesses.

Leadership Probation - Ban on being in a position of leadership including:

- LARPwest Committee or Subcommittees;
- Event Organiser;
- Warband leader, Storyteller, Game Master or Ego; and
- Other in character or out of character positions of power, including NPCs.

Overnight Probation - Attendance at multiple day LARPwest events is allowed, provided the individual is not present at the event overnight. For example, leave the site in the evening and arrive back in the morning.

Single Day Probation - Attendance at LARPwest events limited to single day events. Note this does not include attendance at a single day of a multiple day event.

Training Probation - Attendance at LARPwest events limited to official and unofficial training events

APPEALS

The LARPwest Grievance process is committed to being fair, transparent, confidential, and prioritising community safety. An Involved Party may Request an Appeal of their case if they have concerns regarding the outcome or process. A valid Request for Appeal will result in a Review of the relevant aspects of the case.

12. REQUEST FOR APPEAL

- a. An Involved Party may Request an Appeal if:
 - i. A minimum of 28 days has passed since the resolution of the case; and
 - ii. The Grievance Subcommittee deems there is a valid reason for appeal, which includes either:
 1. Additional information or change in circumstances relating to the case; or
 2. Valid procedural concerns, including compliance with the Grievance procedure.
- b. A Request for Appeal is kept confidential to the Involved Party who lodged it and the Grievance Subcommittee.
- c. Upon receiving a Request for Appeal, the Subcommittee must discuss and consider its validity.
- d. New Handlers are assigned.
- e. The new Handlers review the original reports and investigations, and then read and consider the information provided in the Request for Appeal.
- f. Handlers recommend a course of action to the Subcommittee, which is either to dismiss or endorse the Request for Appeal.
- g. If the Request for Appeal is dismissed, the Involved Party who lodged the appeal will be notified and justification given.
 - i. There is a cooldown period of 3 months between an unsuccessful appeal and a new attempt. All time and cooldown requirements may be waived in extreme cases, at the Grievance Subcommittee's discretion.
- h. If the Request for Appeal is endorsed, it is progressed to a Review. Please note this does not necessarily mean Sanctions are overturned.

REVIEWS

Cases may be reviewed by the Grievance Subcommittee in a number of circumstances. The first is if a valid appeal has been lodged. The second is three months prior to the end of a suspension term or sanction period, in which case the Respondent's eligibility for LARPwest membership will be assessed.

Reviews for the end of a suspension term will consider:

- Any new information or procedural concerns (if Appealed);
- The views and wishes of all Involved Parties;
- Circumstances relating to the case between the date of sanction and the date of review; and
- Rehabilitation of the Respondent.

The Grievance Subcommittee believes in keeping Involved Parties informed and able to give feedback. For this reason all Involved Parties of a case will be notified if there is a Review occurring, and of the outcome.

REHABILITATION

LARPwest emphasises the importance for education and rehabilitation in our Grievance process. The Review should consider the need to protect the Reporter and the wider community as well as the need to allow a genuine chance for a Respondent to rehabilitate and reintegrate into the community.

The Respondent will be provided the opportunity to provide a statement and evidence of rehabilitation. This is not mandatory, but will support the Respondent's eligibility for LARPwest membership.

Potential evidence of rehabilitation may include:

- The Respondent demonstrates insightful understanding of alleged misconduct;
- The Respondent communicates a plan to avoid future misconduct;
- A Record of having seen a psychologist or mental health professional; or
- A Record of having attended a training course or seminar on the misconduct that was alleged. For example, an aggression management course or consent seminar.

RECORD KEEPING

Keeping records is an important way to monitor community safety. However, access to these records will be strict and purposeful to avoid breaching confidentiality or causing adverse consequences for the Involved Parties.

CASE FOLDERS

A confidential record of case information kept on a google drive, which the Grievance Representatives and Grievance Administrators have access to. Case folders contain all statements and information that has been consented to be included in the Grievance process. If information is given anonymously, the reporter's identity will not be included. It also contains the Investigative and Summary Reports written by the Handlers.

Case folders and all the information contained in them will be archived 12 months after the end of the sanction period. This involves moving the case folder to a locked folder with limited LARPwest access. The Grievance Subcommittee may only access an archived case folder if they have adequate reason and approval from the LARPwest Administrators. Adequate reason may include a future Grievance being brought against the same person whereby accessing past history is necessary. For accountability, an access log is to be kept for these occurrences.

SANCTION REGISTERS

The Grievance Subcommittee keep a confidential sanction register, which is a list of all official sanctions that have been handed out, including warnings and probations. They also keep an updated suspension list which can be accessed with a LARPwest login on www.larpwest.net so the community may be informed of active LARPwest suspensions. The Grievance Subcommittee also keeps a database of event sanctions. This is to be passed on to the Subcommittee from each organiser team within 7 days of the completion of an event. This list includes all official action taken by Event Organisers, including cards and bans. This database is for the purpose of record keeping, accountability and monitoring. If official action is to be taken, Grievance Procedures will be followed.