



Badger Pets and Handlers (Badger-PAH)

Standard Operating Procedures

Grievances

Version 2.0.0

Revision Date: 03/16/2025

1. Purpose

- a. This policy regards open acceptance of Badger-PAH complaints regarding, but not limited to, physical abuse, emotional abuse, harassment, sexual consent violations, hate speech, or personal misconduct that negatively impacts Badger-PAH. Complaints will receive the full consideration of either the Board of Directors or the designated Investigatory Committee. Badger-PAH is a social organization with limited authority to enforce actions beyond group membership and participation. While we take all complaints seriously and strive to maintain a safe and welcoming environment, we encourage individuals to seek appropriate legal and /or professional resources when necessary. This policy aims to ensure victims are free from retaliation by any member, including leadership. Procedures detailed herein govern the response to such complaints.

2. Investigatory Committee

- a. The Investigatory Committee will be 3 current Board Members. The members should be as unbiased as possible. If three Board Members are not available to act as an unbiased group, the Board of Directors, excluding any biased members, is empowered to choose other members who are unbiased. It is recommended to choose those in formal or informal leadership roles, or those who have served on the Board of Directors previously.
 - i. A Board member MAY NOT serve on the investigatory committee if:
 1. They are the complainant, victim, or aggressor in the complaint.
 2. They have a personal or professional relationship with any party involved that could create a conflict of interest (e.g., close friendship, familial tie, or known bias)
 3. They have been involved in a prior grievance as a complainant, victim, or aggressor involving either party.
 4. They refuse to disclose potential biases or conflicts of interest when asked by the Board.
- b. If necessary, the Board of Directors may select an individual external to Badger-PAH to be included as a non-voting consultant to the investigatory committee if deemed necessary due to the circumstances of the grievance.
- c. When the committee votes, abstentions are not permitted.

3. Privacy

- a. Unless otherwise stated in this policy, all incidents are to remain confidential, as much as reasonable, to the Board of Directors, the members of the Investigatory Committee, and those involved in the reported incident. This is not intended to

prevent individuals from seeking appropriate peer support but aims to discourage gossip and the unnecessary spread of sensitive information. Incidents may occur publicly; therefore, the Board, at its discretion, may comment on publicly known information, but may not add additional private details that may be considered confidential information. The Board is not required to comment on any ongoing investigation.

- b. Complaints in which a complainant and/or victim wishes to remain anonymous to the aggressor will remain on record with the Board of Directors in perpetuity for future follow-up should further incidents involving the aggressor occur or if additional victims come forward. The complainant/victim will be notified that the complaint has been logged and that the investigation shall cease.
- c. Once an aggressor has been made aware of the full details of the complaint that has been filed, the aggressor can revoke their membership at any time to conceal their identity. The complaint will be logged, the investigation will cease, and the aggressor will be unable to rejoin for one calendar year after leaving the group.
- d. Consequences delivered to the aggressor shall remain confidential to the Board and disciplined parties. This is intended to prevent gossip. If the individual was removed from membership, the Board of Directors will then, in the next monthly business meeting, announce the name of the member and that they have been removed. The announcement will also include a request/reminder that this individual is not allowed at any Badger-PAH-hosted events, such as but not limited to, SnB, Munches, Yappy Hour, and moshes. Badger-PAH can not bar people from public spaces, but can ask our members to be mindful that this person is not to be brought to public events. Venues will have their independent criteria for bans.
- e. Any intentional privacy violations for the sake of gossip or harm may result in suspension, bar, or ban from membership to be decided by the Board of Directors. If a person feels that there is harmful gossip being said about a current grievance they should reach out to the board of directors at admin@badgerpah.org.

4. Lodging the Complaint

- a. Individuals wishing to take advantage of the Policy must initiate their complaint by sending an email to a Board Member or sending an email to admin@badgerpah.org. This email should contain as much information about the grievance as possible to help the Board make its decision to move forward.
- b. Non-victims may register a complaint on the victim's behalf, with the victim's consent, as a complainant.

- c. The first Board Member to receive the complaint will acknowledge receipt within 48 hours of receipt. The response should also include a copy of the Grievance Policy. This is just an acknowledgment that the complaint was received. No actions will be taken at this time.
 - i. If a complaint is received by direct message, the Board member who was contacted should tell the member to contact them by email at admin@badgerpah.org.

5. Complaints Involving Board Members

- a. If a sitting Board Member is named in a grievance, additional steps will be taken to ensure impartiality:
 - i. Immediate Recusal – The named Board Member(s) must recuse themselves from all discussions, reviews, and votes regarding the grievance. They will have no role in determining whether an investigation is warranted.
 - ii. Maintaining Integrity – Any attempt by the accused Board Member to influence the investigation or discussion may result in disciplinary action, including possible suspension or removal from the Board.
 - iii. Voting on Consequences – If disciplinary action is recommended, only Board Members who are not named in the grievance and who have not recused themselves due to bias will participate in the final vote.

6. Reviewing the Complaint

- a. The Board of Directors will review the formal grievance within 24 hours of receipt. The purpose of this review is to determine if the complaint is worthy of an investigation.
 - i. There will be times when complaints/grievances received will not be matters warranting investigation. These can include but are not limited to:
 - 1. General complaints about the structure of the group. Feedback should be given to the Board of Directors.
 - 2. Feeling isolated at events/in the chat. Feedback should be forwarded to the Social Committee. This excludes an obvious and coordinated effort to shun a member.
 - 3. Budgetary complaints, complaints about merchandise, or cost of membership, or other complaints of this nature should be forwarded to the Board of Directors.
 - 4. Arguments stemming from a difference of opinion.

- b. Should the Board of Directors determine the complaint is not worthy of an investigation, the complaint will be dismissed, and the complainant will be notified of the dismissal and the reason for doing so.

7. Forming the Investigatory Committee

- a. If it is an extreme circumstance, an emergency meeting should be called.
- b. The Board of Directors will conduct a self-bias check within 48 hours to determine who is eligible to be on the Investigatory Committee.
 - i. As a small organization, Investigatory Committee members will inevitably know at least one of the parties involved. Board Members should outline their relationship with the individuals involved. Examples of relationships with potential negative bias include, but are not limited to: packmates, romantic partners, or other close familial relations.
 - ii. Other biases may be present. It is the duty of each Board Member to identify their specific situation to help form the Investigatory Committee in such a way that it does not lose integrity.
 - iii. Optics outside the Board of Directors should not be considered when possibly recusing oneself if objective decisions can still be reached.
 - iv. A Board Member who declares themselves, to the Board of Directors, biased must state their reasoning to the rest of the Board. If determined that they cannot be part of the Investigatory Committee, they must recuse themselves from involvement in the complaint and not discuss the complaint further.
 - v. If a majority of the Board of Directors feels that a Board Member does have a bias and should recuse themselves, they may conduct a vote to remove that member.
- c. After the bias check is complete, the Board will select the members to serve on the investigatory committee as per Section 2: Investigatory Committee.

8. Investigatory Steps

- a. The Investigatory Committee will be identified via separate emails to both the aggressor and the complainant. This must happen within 24 hours of the formation of the Investigatory Committee. They will explain that they will be handling the investigation, and future communication should be directed to the Investigatory Committee's designee.
 - i. If the victim, complainant, or the aggressor has substantial concern with the committee's ability to remain impartial, they have 24 hours to respond, requesting to petition for a change of committee. The email

must detail the issue member(s) and their reasoning for why they believe the person(s) cannot make an impartial decision. The member must have a compelling argument for wishing to change the Investigatory Committee.

- ii. If a petition for a change in committee is made, the Board of Directors will review and decide if a Committee member will be replaced. The victim, complainant, and aggressor will be notified of either the new Committee member or be notified that the Board of Directors believes the original Committee capable of issuing an unbiased decision.
- b. The Investigatory Committee may investigate as it sees fit, depending on the situation. Steps shall be taken to utilize a neutral platform for conducting the investigation. Phone calls shall not be recorded, but there will be notes taken during any phone calls with the aggressor, complainant or witnesses.
 - i. Messages on text-based chat platforms, email, or other services shall not be deleted by any parties (including but not limited to aggressor, complainants, witnesses, Investigatory Committee) until the investigation has been completed. Screenshots may be taken for documentation.
 - ii. If messages or other contacts are deleted by a member of the Investigatory Committee before completion of the grievance, the Board of Directors will convene, review the circumstances, and decide the appropriate punishment.
 - iii. If an aggressor deletes messages/contacts after the investigation has started, the Investigatory Committee will use the best available information to continue their investigation.
 - 1. Destruction or removal of evidence must be investigated.
 - 2. The aggressor must be informed that the deletion of messages reflects negatively upon their character and could impact the outcome of the grievance.
 - iv. If the complainant deletes messages after the investigation has started, the Investigatory Committee will use the best available information to continue the investigation.
 - 1. Because the messages were deleted, there may be insufficient evidence to proceed. If so, the member shall be notified, the complaint will remain on file, and the investigation shall cease.
 - 2. If there is still enough information to proceed, the member shall be notified that it reflects negatively upon them and could negatively impact the outcome of the investigation.

- v. The committee will review and consider all available information and submitted evidence to the best of their ability.
- c. The Investigatory Committee shall strive to answer the following questions. These are the bare minimum. If the information for these questions is not available, the complainant will be notified that there is not enough information, and the investigation will cease. The complaint and responses to the following questions will be documented and filed for future reference.
 - i. What date(s) did the incident(s) or behavior(s) occur?
 - ii. What led up to the incident(s) (argument, sexual play, scene gone wrong, etc)?
 - iii. What was the relationship of the involved parties before the incident?
 - iv. What happened during the incident(s)?
 - v. What was said during the incident(s)?
 - vi. Were there any witnesses? If so, who?
 - vii. What happened after the incident(s)?
- d. If a complaint is received against a non-member, an investigation should still be conducted to the best of the Investigatory Committee's ability. The Investigatory Committee can then decide if the non-member should be barred from membership and, if so, for how long.
- e. The Investigatory Committee will decide whether discipline should be issued. If discipline will be issued, the Investigatory Committee will use the Disciplinary Policy to determine the appropriate punishment. Decisions will be delivered via individual emails to all involved parties. The email will contain the full reasoning of the decision, including information that was presented if necessary.
- f. Decisions can be appealed for up to 7 days after the decision is rendered. The Board of Directors and Investigatory Committee will host a meeting on a neutral platform. The Board of Directors will review the evidence before facilitating a discussion with all parties present. Absence of victim/complainant participation will in no way negatively affect perceptions of the board.
 - i. An appeal can only be filed if something potentially invalidates the original decision. (e.g., crucial evidence was ignored, someone was biased, a procedure was not followed, etc.).
 - ii. A simple majority vote by the Board and Investigatory Committee is all that is required to overturn the Investigatory Committee's decision. Abstentions are not allowed. Decisions and reasoning will be documented and filed. Upon request, a complainant and or aggressor can ask for copies of decisions made about that specific grievance.

- g. Decisions and reasoning will remain on file for 5 years after the decision unless the member is banned/non-member is barred. Those shall be held indefinitely.
- h. For permanent bans or barring, or bans lasting over 1 calendar year, the aggressor can request the Board of Directors to overturn the previous consequence at the start of each fiscal year in July.
 - i. The Board of Directors can base their decision on, but not limited to: The facts of the case, if the aggressor has changed/improved, if they have seen a medical professional, etc.
 - ii. A unanimous vote is required. Members of the Board of Directors are not allowed to abstain.

Version	Revision Date	Adoption Date	Comment
1.0.0	08/20/2020	08/20/2020	Original
1.0.1	11/01/2020	12/16/2020	Clarified wording around what a grievance is
1.0.2	03/11/2024	3/17/2024	A selection of grammatical updates and small clarifications.
2.0.0	3/16/2025	3/16/2025	Major overhaul of many/the majority of sections of the document. Mostly adding clarification and context as much as is reasonable.