



An Droichead Mhaigh Eo C.L.G.

DISCIPLINARY COMPLAINTS & APPEALS PROCEDURE

In addition to the rules of the GAA governing player behaviour, Mayobridge GAC has in place a number of policies and procedures that are intended to guide the behaviour of its members, i.e. Codes of Conduct, Health and Safety and Child Protection/Safeguarding Policies. These policies require the club to take action where the standards of behaviour expected of members and visitors are not met.

The purpose of the Complaints, Disciplinary and Appeals procedure is to ensure that all complaints of misconduct and alleged misconduct are treated seriously, that they are investigated where necessary and that appropriate action is taken. The procedure includes time limits as it is in everyone's interest to deal with a complaint/incident of misconduct as soon as is reasonably possible.

NOTE:

The investigation of suspected/alleged child abuse is the responsibility of the statutory authorities and will not be undertaken by the Children's Officer or other Club Volunteers/Officials.

However, under law, Mayobridge GAC has a duty to report suspected child abuse to the statutory authorities. In such a case, it is the responsibility of the club chairperson to liaise with the statutory authorities, either directly or through the GAA guidelines for dealing with allegations of abuse. A team manager or team mentor who is the subject of an allegation which has been reported to the statutory authorities will be temporarily suspended while the matter is being investigated. Reinstatement will be immediate if the allegation is proved to be unfounded.

Children's and Vulnerable Adults' Officer

The Children's and Vulnerable Adults' Officer, as a member of Mayobridge GAC, is appointed by the club's executive committee to act as a resource for children and to represent them at the committee. Their role includes being available to discuss any concerns a child/parent or guardian may have and to ensure that children are aware of how to make a complaint known to appropriate adults or agencies. Where a complaint concerns a team manager, the Children's and Vulnerable Adults' Officer will refer the complaint to the Complaints & Disciplinary Committee for consideration. It is not the responsibility of the Children's and Vulnerable Adults' Officer to investigate a complaint.

Dealing with a Complaint

All complaints should be submitted in writing, or verbally, either to the Children's Officer (in the instance of a child protection issue) or to the Chairperson or Secretary, in the case of other complaints. If the complaint is submitted at club level it is the responsibility of the club to deal with the complaint. If the complaint is submitted at County Board Level, the County Board must take responsibility to deal with the complaint. If, in the opinion of the Children's Officer, there are grounds for concern in relation to a child protection issue, the statutory authorities should be contacted.

Complaints Procedure

There are a number of stages in the complaints procedure and, where appropriate, each stage must be exhausted before a complaint moves to the next stage:

Stage 1 - Team Manager,

Stage 2 - Complaints & Disciplinary Sub-Committee,

Stage 3 - Executive Committee

Stage 4 - Down County Committee Management Committee

Stage 1 Team Manager

A member (adult or juvenile) or parent/guardian of a juvenile member who wishes to make a complaint of misconduct should, in the first instance, discuss the complaint with the team manager. The complaint should be made within 7 days of becoming aware of the alleged incident of misconduct. The team manager will, after making enquiries if necessary, advise the Children's Officer of the complaint. If the enquiries require discussion with a juvenile team member(s), this will be done in the presence of an independent adult or the Children's Officer.

The team manager will advise the member, parent or guardian of the outcome of the complaint. If the member, parent or guardian is not happy with the outcome of the complaint they may proceed to Stage 2 of the Complaints Procedure. The team manager must note the date on which the complaint is made, the nature of the complaint, action taken and the outcome of the complaint

If a complaint concerns the team manager, the member should contact the club secretary in the case of an adult or the Children's Officer in the case of a child to ask for their complaint to be considered by the Complaints & Disciplinary Committee under Stage 2 of the procedure.

Stage 2 Complaints & Disciplinary Sub-Committee

The Complaints & Disciplinary Committee, which will be appointed annually, will consist of 5 members of the Executive Committee (Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and two others nominated by the Chair). It will hear complaints of misconduct against any Club member and decide on any appropriate disciplinary action. It will not investigate suspected misconduct relating to child abuse (see paragraph 1.3). At least 3 members of the Complaints & Disciplinary Committee must be present before business can proceed.

The Complaints & Disciplinary Committee may consider:

- Complaints presented to it verbally at a meeting
- Complaints made in writing

- (Alleged) inappropriate behaviour, brought to the attention of the Executive Committee, that is not the subject of a formal complaint but which may bring the Club or the GAA into disrepute.

The Complaints & Disciplinary Committee will:

- Investigate the complaint/inappropriate behaviour promptly
- Provide the person, about whom the complaint is being made, with details of the complaint made against him/her
- Provide the person, about whom the complaint is being made, with an opportunity to respond either verbally or in writing
- Keep the complainant and person(s) about whom the complaint is being made, advised of the progress of the investigation
- Ensure that the complaint is dealt with in confidence and that any related documents and records, e.g. of interviews with witnesses, are held in confidence

After the investigation has been completed, the Complaints & Disciplinary Committee will notify the outcome of the complaint in writing to the:

- Complainant or his/her parent/guardian, and
- The person about whom the complaint has been made

A copy of the notifications will be provided to the Club Secretary.

Where it has been decided that an incident of misconduct has occurred, the notification will include details of the sanction being imposed and the reasons for the sanction. Correspondence will be addressed to the parent/guardian where the complaint is made by or concerns a youth member.

Sanctions available to the Complaints & Disciplinary Committee will include:

- Verbal warning/In the case of a child, where the parent(s) is/are present
- Written warning
- Suspension (e.g. from training, from team selection, Club activities)
- Fine
- Expulsion

If the member who made the complaint, or person about whom a complaint has been made, is unhappy with the decision of the Complaints & Disciplinary Committee he/she may appeal to the Executive Committee against the outcome of the investigation/sanction imposed.

Stage 3 Executive Committee

Each Full Member of the Club has the right to be heard by the Executive Committee with regards to any complaint or representation sent by him/her, in writing, to the Secretary. In accordance with the Club Constitution, the Executive Committee has the power to investigate any matter and to expel, suspend, warn, fine or disqualify Members from Club activities for breach of the Constitution and Rules or the Official Guide or for conduct considered to have discredited or harmed the Club or the G.A.A.

An appeal to the Executive Committee must be received by the Club Secretary no later than 7 days from the date of the Complaints & Disciplinary Committee notification. The Executive Committee will provide the member with an opportunity to be heard by the Committee. The membership of the Executive Committee considering an appeal will exclude those members who sit on the Complaints & Disciplinary Committee. At least 5 members of the Executive Committee must be present before an appeal hearing may proceed. One member of the Complaints & Disciplinary Committee may attend the hearing to inform the Executive Committee of the reason(s) for its decision but must leave before any discussion or decision is made on the appeal.

Following its consideration, the Executive Committee will notify the member of its decision. The Executive Committee may uphold, set aside or change the finding on a complaint/sanction imposed by the Complaints & Disciplinary Committee. Within the Club's complaints and disciplinary procedure, the decision of the Executive Committee is final.

Stage 4

A Club member (including honorary and youth members) has the right to appeal to the Management Committee of the County Committee of the G.A.A., within 7 days of being notified of the Executive Committee decision. Unless the offence is brought to the notice of the County Committee of the G.A.A. by

the Club, and that body, having considered the merits of the case and having regard to the rights of the player or member, confirms the penalty imposed, the member continues to be a legal member of the Association and is suspended from Club activities only.

Player Discipline

Maintaining discipline is not about being controlling but rather it is the means by which Team Managers and mentors can direct team activities and provide a safe environment for everyone to develop their skills. At the start of the season Team Managers should let players know the standard of behaviour expected of them (as set out in the rules of the game and in the Club Code of Conduct) and the consequences of not meeting the standard expected.

During training and matches it is the responsibility of the Team Management to ensure discipline is maintained by team members both on and off the field of play. Foul language, abusive, threatening or dangerous behaviour towards team mates, team management, opponents or match officials are all unacceptable in any circumstances.

Information for Team Managers about sanctions is given in the following paragraphs. However it is not possible to be prescriptive about the sanction to be imposed in any one particular instance of misconduct as much will depend on the:

- Circumstances at the time
- Type/severity of the misconduct
- Frequency of the misconduct,
- Sanctions previously imposed for similar misconduct – from an equality perspective it is important that similar acts of misconduct are treated similarly

To maintain discipline Team Managers, where appropriate, may impose disciplinary sanctions such as:

- Verbal warning
- Written warning
- Time out from training
- Suspension from a training session
- Non-selection for the (starting) team
- Substituting the player during the match

Where it is considered appropriate, the Team Manager may refer repeated misconduct to the Complaints and Disciplinary Committee for consideration. It should also be noted that

- Suspension from a sporting discipline
- Suspension from Club activities, or
- Expulsion from the Club

are sanctions that may be imposed only by the Complaints & Disciplinary Committee/Executive Committee. When imposing a disciplinary sanction it is important that the Team Manager tell the player:

- Which aspect of their behaviour is unacceptable
- Why it is unacceptable, e.g. disruptive, dangerous, abusive, etc.
- What sanction is being imposed
- Whether the matter is being referred to the Club Complaints & Disciplinary Committee.

The annual awards made for Player of the Year and Most Improved Player are based not only on performance and contribution on the field of play but also on a player's general approach, attitude and behaviour. For this reason it is important that the Team Manager maintains a record of any disciplinary action taken during the year, as well as penalties (red/yellow cards or warnings) issued or imposed by match officials.

Disciplinary Committee

Mayobridge GAC Disciplinary Committee will consist of: the Chairperson (who shall be Chair); the Secretary (who shall be Secretary); the Children's Officer; the Treasurer and a senior committee member nominated by the Chairperson. The committee will be made aware of the issue of confidentiality.

Role of the Disciplinary Committee

It is the responsibility of the Disciplinary Committee to resolve problems relating to the conduct of the members of Mayobridge GAC.

A complaint of any incident of suspected misconduct, including bullying, will be dealt with by the Disciplinary Committee.

Disciplinary Procedures

The Disciplinary Committee will inform the individual about details of the complaint made against him/her and afford him/her the opportunity to provide a response, either verbally or in writing.

The Disciplinary Committee will meet with all parties involved, affording each party the same rights and opportunities.

The Disciplinary Committee will provide a written report outlining the following: the procedure followed; the findings; the conclusions and any disciplinary actions to be taken.

All parties will receive a copy of this report and a copy of the report will be kept on record.

The Disciplinary Committee will, as soon as possible, inform the Executive Committee of the progress and conclusions of the disciplinary process.

Sanctions

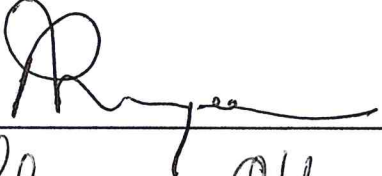
Where it has been established that an incident of misconduct has taken place, the Disciplinary Committee will notify the member of any sanction being imposed. The notification will be made in writing, setting out the reasons for the sanction. If the member is under 18 years of age, correspondence will be addressed to the parents/guardians.

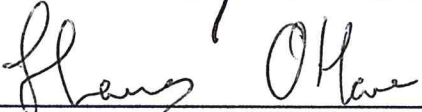
Appeals Process (See above re. Executive committee)

If the member against whom the complaint was made is unhappy with the decision of the Disciplinary Committee he/she will have the right to appeal the decision to an Appeals Committee (independent of the Disciplinary Committee).

Mayobridge GAC Appeals Committee will consist of: the Vice Chairperson (who shall be Chair); the Assistant Secretary (who shall be Secretary); the Assistant Treasurer and one other senior committee members (nominated by club chair).

Any appeal should be made in writing within 7 days after issue of the decision of the Disciplinary Committee. The Chairperson of the Appeals Committee should be a member of the Executive Committee. The Appeals Committee has the power to confirm, set aside or change any sanction imposed by the Disciplinary Committee. If any party is not satisfied with the outcome the matter can be referred to the County Board. However, efforts to resolve the issue will be exhausted before the Governing body is engaged in attempts to resolve the matter.

Signed (Cathaoirleach)  _____

Signed (Rúnaí)  _____