**Complaints Procedures and Club Discipline**

**Youth Disciplinary Procedures**

Misconduct by athletes will result in a warning issued by a coach, mentor or club official. If this misconduct is repeated, minor sanctions, such as a time out from a training session will be invoked. If the misconduct continues after 3 minor (or including 1 major) incidents the child’s parents will be informed or the coach/mentor may request a parent/guardian to collect their child from training or play. This action is appropriate where a player has continued to offend, does not respond to the instructions of the coach, has wilfully damaged club property or property of visiting clubs or teams or where the player has brought the team or club into disrepute during training sessions, competitions or other organised events. Examples of such serious behaviour are: striking another member of the club, using repeated bad language, bullying, failing to attend competition classes or missing a major event, or refusal to abide by the Clubs Code of Behaviour. Also inappropriate use of a mobile phone (i.e. taking inappropriate pictures in a dressing room or anywhere else) or uploading inappropriate images or videos of club members to the internet will be considered a serious offence by the Club.

Where a serious problem has occurred the coach may refer the incident to the Club Children’s Officer who will review all matters and may decide to meet the parents/guardians with the coach to try to resolve the difficulties. Where the problem is not resolved the sanctions outlined below may be imposed.

* Issue warning as to future behaviour
* Suspension from training and/or competitions/events.
* Suspension from competition teams
* Suspension from club
* Expulsion from club

Reports of misconduct by a coach or youth leader will result in the coach being immediately suspended from working with the team involving the athlete who has made the claim.

The Club Welfare Officer will then initiate proceedings to investigate the alleged misconduct. In the case of suspected abuse, the Club Welfare Officer will inform the relevant authorities at the Health Service Executive immediately and they will investigate. The coach or youth leader will be suspended from the club immediately pending an outcome of the investigation.

Where there is not sufficient evidence of an offence of abuse, as per Children First guidelines, the account of the child must be believed.

In the case of a complaint that does not include an allegation of abuse eg, coach has demoted an athlete to a lower level, coach disciplines a child for their behaviour in a method that the parent/guardian deems inappropriate, etc the club may choose to allow the coach to continue working with the team while a solution is being reached. If it is clear, the coach’s presence at class with negatively affect the child, then the child should be put first.

Any athlete found to be lying about abuse or exaggerating or misrepresenting a claim of misconduct by a coach will be immediately expelled from the program. We must protect our staff and the good name of the club.

**Stage 1 (informal complaint)**

The Club will endeavour to deal will all informal/verbal complaints as soon as possible.

A complaint may be made to the Clubs Welfare Officer, Designated Person or a member of the Committee. All complaints should be noted and kept on file.

The clubs first course of action will be to encourage the complainant to speak directly to the person they have an issue with in a calm and non-aggressive manner. If the issue cannot be resolved then the Children’s Officer (if deemed appropriate) may mediate to try to resolve the issue.

If there are numerous complaints about a club member/coach/parent/player etc. the club may bring the matter to the Disciplinary Committee to resolve it.

**Stage 2 (formal complaint)**

If the complaint cannot be resolved at the first stage (informally) then the complaint must be put in writing and given to the Club Welfare Officer.

The complaint will be forwarded to the Disciplinary Committee to resolve the problem.

**Disciplinary Committee**

The Disciplinary Committee will be made up of the Club Coaches, Welfare Officer, and an independent person elected for the purpose of mediation.

If the complaint is about any of the above mentioned people then that person cannot be part of the Disciplinary Committee.

The complaint shall be responded to in writing within 2 weeks.

If the complaint involves suspected abuse then the Procedure for Reporting Allegation of Child Abuse shall be implemented.

The Disciplinary Committee shall hold a meeting to discuss the complaint.

The Disciplinary Committee shall inform the person whom the complaint is being made against in writing. They may provide a response either verbally (at a meeting with disciplinary committee) or in writing. They must be accompanied by a parent.

All process will be clearly and accurately recorded at every stage.

All information from the process written or verbal will be kept confidential.

When dealing with a complaint it is important to be clear about:

• The particular incident of concern

• Any previous incidents taken into account

• Any remedial action to be taken, e.g. an apology

• Any new behaviour expected

• what will happen if the arrangements agreed are not adhered to.

Following its deliberations the disciplinary committee may issue any of the following sanctions as it deems necessary:

* Issue warning as to future behaviour
* Suspension from training and/or competitions.
* Suspension from club
* Expulsion from club

**Appeals Procedure**

A finding of the disciplinary committee may be appealed to an Appeal Committee made up of the Club Welfare Officer, Head Coach, Club Administrator and an independent adjudicator from the Irish Cheer Sport Association.