



HARROGATE STRAYS WALKING FOOTBALL CLUB DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

Harrogate Strays Walking Football Club's (HSWFC) Code of Conduct sets out the standards of behaviour expected from all members of HSWFC. It is designed to make all Club activities safe and enjoyable for all participants.

The Disciplinary Procedure describes what happens in the event of alleged behaviour that contravenes the required standards of conduct.

Procedure

If anyone believes that there has been a possible breach of the Club's Code of Conduct, they should report it to a member of the Club Management Committee as soon as practicably possible by providing a brief verbal account of the nature of the alleged breach.

Minor misconduct

If the alleged incident appears minor, attempts will be made to resolve it amicably, with the offending member reminded of the standard of conduct required.

Serious misconduct

If, however, the incident is considered sufficiently serious, the matter will be passed promptly to a member of the Club Management Committee for evaluation.

A gathering of the facts of the alleged breach will be initiated for an incident report to be placed on record, addressing the context in which the alleged breach occurred and assembling the fullest evidence from the complainant, relevant witnesses, and the alleged offender. At this stage, a brief suspension from all Club activities may be applied while the Committee determines the appropriate action. In this instance a suspension is a neutral act, not a disciplinary penalty, and does not presume guilt.

This process will be carried out as quickly as possible without compromising its fairness and thoroughness. The Club Management Committee will then determine whether a case has been proven to its satisfaction and will apply an appropriate sanction. The complainant and the offender will be informed of any decision.

Serious complaint against a Member of the Management Committee

Where a serious complaint is made against a Member of the Management Committee the matter will be referred to a quorum (10%) of the membership who will be asked to appoint an independent panel of 3 members to undertake an investigation and report back to the quorum along with the complainant and the offender. In line with the Club Disciplinary Policy the quorum will then decide what action to take.

Appeals

All members have a right of appeal in disciplinary matters. Appeals will be heard before an independent member, a Disciplinary Panel of 3 independent members or a general meeting depending on the severity of the breach (level 1, 2 or 3 below). The basis for the appeal must be outlined in writing and may challenge the decision and/or the proposed sanction. New evidence

Issued October 2023
Next Review October 2024



or additional mitigating factors not presented during the initial investigation cannot be raised at this point. The eventual decision resulting from the appeal process is binding on all parties and not subject to further appeal.

Sanctions

(1) A breach of conduct that is sufficient to warrant an investigation and a Management Committee review will normally result in a **written warning** being placed on record. A two week suspension may also be applied in order to provide appropriate breathing space for all affected members.

(2) If a member commits a serious breach of the Code or a further breach after receiving a written warning, **a final written warning** shall then be issued along with a longer suspension by way of a sanction.

(3) If, following a final written warning, a member is responsible for a further breach, or if the offence is judged to be gross misconduct, the club will be justified in **terminating that individual's membership with immediate effect**. In the first instance the Club may conclude that a repeat offender is incapable of complying with the Club's required behavioural standards. In the second the determination of gross misconduct would itself be sufficient to expel the individual.

NOTE: This full sequence of sanctions is typically followed in cases of repeated offences, but in the event of more serious offences stages may be omitted. In extreme cases, termination of membership would be recommended for a proven gross first offence.

Matters which may justify summary dismissal for gross misconduct include, but are not limited to:

- Dishonesty, theft and fraud from the club or its members
- Vandalism or sabotage of club equipment and property
- Physical violence or assault at a Club event, including threatening, intimidating, or forceful behaviour
- Serious misuse of computer, email, and internet systems, including posting to club websites or emailing offensive or obscene emails to members
- Misuse of club financial or other confidential Club information
- Acts of bullying, harassment, or discrimination
- Misconduct which may bring the club into disrepute
- Reckless breaches of the club's policies, procedures, and safety rules
- Deliberate or serious damage to the Club's/facility provider's property or causing loss, damage, or injury through serious negligence
- Criminal conviction, whether committed at Club events or elsewhere, where such offence is deemed to potentially impact adversely upon the club and/or its reputation