

**St.Patricks GAC**

**Complaints Policy**

**Dealing with Complaints and Associated Disciplinary Issues.**

**Official Guide (T.O.) Part 1 2022 1.14**

The Central Council shall adopt a Code of Conduct for Officers, Members, Players, Parents/Guardians, Mentors, Supporters, Match Officials, Teams, Units and Non-Members, defining appropriate behaviour and practices. The Code shall specify the disciplinary procedures to be applied for breaches of the Code. This Rule shall give and constitute authority for the carrying out of all functions and actions in accordance with the Code.

**Code of Conduct**

The GAA is based on the core values of mutual respect, valuing each person and support and encouragement among team members, managers, coaches, mentors and other members of the association. This is a specific rule in the club constitution: -

7*.19c*

*All Members are required to demonstrate the highest level of respect, integrity and loyalty to the Club at all times. Respect for fellow members, opposition players and supporters, coaches, referees and club property is expected at all times. The G.A.A. Code of Conduct; including the mechanisms for disciplinary action; shall apply to all Members regardless of affiliation. The cross-association Code of Behaviour (underage) will apply to Youth Members and to all Members involved in underage coaching, mentoring, refereeing or other club activity*

**Context**

In generally terms, club disciplinary issues are centred on, on-field match infractions that are dealt with by the CCC/ CODA/ County Disciplinary Committees. Our club has a good disciplinary record in All County competitions, and this is reflected in the good role models that manage teams.

**This policy is aimed at putting a clear and transparent club discipline and appeals process in place with an appropriate** sanctions policy in place for the direction of the Club Disciplinary Hearings and Appeals Committee.

As a one club model is applicable, the Executive Committee have agreed to use the LGFA CODA procedures as the basis of the off – field sanctions guide.

The Executive Committee have agreed to use the LGFA CODA as a framework, based on the LGFA document process, to formalise the whole disciplinary process for the club. *(CODA- Complaints, Objection, Discipline & Appeals)*

The Club has an agreed and appropriate disciplinary, complaints and appeals procedures in place. This document represents the working disciplinary procedures of Naómh Padraig.

**Complaints, Disciplinary and Appeals Procedures**

All complaints should be submitted in writing either to the Runai (Club Secretary) – email – [secretary.lisburnstpatricks.antrim@gaa.ie](mailto:secretary.lisburnstpatricks.antrim@gaa.ie) or the Children’s Officers Sheena Dixon (in the instance of a child protection issue).

Email- childrensofficer.lisburnstpatricks.antrim@gaa.ie using the complaint form attached.

If the complaint is submitted at Club level it is the responsibility of the Club to deal with the complaint through the Complaints & Disciplinary Hearings Committee. Any subsequent Appeals will go to the Club Appeals Hearings Committee, then to the County Hearings Committee, if the club process is exhausted.

**Safeguarding /Child Protection Concerns**

If, in the opinion of the Chairperson / Designated Liaison Officer/Children’s Officer, there are grounds for concern, the Statutory Authorities should be contacted. The investigation of suspected child abuse is the responsibility of the statutory authorities and will not be undertaken by the Children’s Officer or other Club Volunteers / Officials.

The standard reporting procedure outlined in the Statutory Authorities guidelines should be followed by the Club. The safeguarding team will take the lead on this.

**Stage 1**

**Informal discussions**

It is hope that members can resolve issues in an informal manner through appropriate discussions, however, if an issue is not resolved, the following procedures should be followed by any club member who wishes to raise a complaint.

If a member has a concern or issue, they should speak to team coach or committee member, who will direct them to the appropriate person to speak to.

Alternatively, members can email – [secretary.lisburnstpatricks.antrim@gaa.ie](mailto:secretary.lisburnstpatricks.antrim@gaa.ie)

**Stage 2**

**On receipt of a written complaint**

The Club Secretary will instigate the formation of the Disciplinary Committee\*.

**Complaints & Disciplinary Hearings Committee Members (CDHC)**

The Committee will consist of:

1. The Club Vice -Chairperson (who shall be Chair)
2. The LGFA Secretary (who shall be Secretary)
3. The Safeguarding’ Officer

The CDHC will carry out an investigation – see information below.

**Stage 3**

If a member wishes to appeal the CDHC findings, outcomes or sanctions imposed, they should email the club secretary [secretary.lisburnstpatricks.antrim@gaa.ie](mailto:secretary.lisburnstpatricks.antrim@gaa.ie) to instigate an appeals panel.

The Club Secretary will instigate the formation of the Appeals Hearing Committee\* on receipt of an appeal.

The AHC will carry out a review of the CDHC investigation – see information below.

**The Appeals Hearing Committee Members (AHC)**

(a) The Club Chairperson (who will be Chair)

(b) The Club Secretary (who will be Secretary)

(c) The LGFA sub committee chair.

* + \* Where a complaint is made against any of the above officer’s, there will be an appropriate replacement.
  + The committee will be made aware of the issue of confidentiality.

**Frivolous or Vexatious Complaints**

Where the **CDHC** considers the nature of a complaint to constitute a frivolous or vexatious complaint, it will not proceed with the investigation and will take the appropriate actions to protect club members from further such frivolous or vexatious actions.

**Role of the Complaints & Disciplinary Hearings Committee – (Stage 2)**

It is the responsibility of the CDHC to resolve problems relating to the conduct of the members of Naomh Padraig. A complaint of any incident of suspected misconduct, including bullying will be dealt with by the CDHC.

Disciplinary Procedures

* + The CDHC will inform the individual with details of the complaint made against them and afford them the opportunity of responding either verbally or in writing and /or presenting evidence, in written or electronic or digital formats
  + The CDHC will meet with all parties involved, affording each party the same rights and opportunities.
  + The CDHC will provide a written report outlining the following:
  + the procedure followed.
  + the findings.
  + the conclusions.
  + the disciplinary actions to be taken, if any.
  + All parties will receive a copy of this report and it will be kept on record.

The CDHC 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 CDHC 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 parent(s) / guardian(s).

The LGFA CODA guidelines have been adopted by the club as an appropriate sanctions policy as it deals with a wide range of off field misconduct.

See page 131 – 132 of LGFA Official guide

Please note that LGFA equates to GAA – under one club model, that St.Patricks GAC have adopted.

**Appeals Process (Stage 3)**

Any individual has the right to appeal the decision of the CDHC to the Club’s Appeals Hearing Committee (independent of the CDHC). An appellant must make an appeal using the appropriate appeals form (available by emailing the club secretary.)

All appeals must be lodged with the Club Secretary within **5 working days** of the receipt of the outcome of the CDHC findings. The applicant should email the club secretary for an appeals form.

The Appeals Committee have the power to confirm, set aside or change any sanction imposed by the Disciplinary Committee.

Further appeals (Stage 4)

If having exhausted the Club Disciplinary and complaints procedures a complainant has the right to bring their appeal to the Count Hearings Committee.

An appeal form is available from the Club Secretary for this process.

[secretary.lisburnstpatricks.antrim@gaa.ie](mailto:secretary.lisburnstpatricks.antrim@gaa.ie)

**All forms are available directly from the club secretary**

**Email – secretary.lisburnstpatricks.antrim@gaa.ie**

The Sanctions are directly taken from the LGFA official guide page 98/99, as agreed by committee, in line with our one club model agreement