Appendix 6 – Hockey Ireland Disciplinary, Complaints & Appeals Procedure

As a leader/employee/volunteer/member of Hockey Ireland, your behaviour must always reflect the high standards of our organisation and all that is good within our sport. Fair play in all competitions is expected. Where an allegation or complaint arises that your behaviour has fallen short of the standard expected of you, an inquiry will be made to establish if you should be subject to a disciplinary process.

Safeguarding complaints are complaints that involve a person under the age of 18. This document is written to provide a clear and easy to follow guide on how alleged poor practice complaints of a safeguarding nature are handled within Hockey Ireland It is important to note that the investigation of suspected child abuse is the responsibility of the Statutory Authorities and **should not** be undertaken by National Children's Officers/ Designated Liaison Person's or other Hockey Leaders. The standard reporting procedure outlined in the Statutory Authorities guidelines will be followed.

If an incident occurs that appears to breach the expected standards, the following procedure will be followed:

Complaints Procedure for alleged Poor Practice

What is Poor Practice

Incidents of poor practice occur when the needs of a child are compromised. Examples of poor practice are likely to be once off incidents and these might include but are not limited to:

Leader

- Being negative during sessions and competitions
- Not putting the welfare of the young person first
- Giving preferential treatment to individuals and unfairly rejecting others
- Discouraging fair play and not treating participants equally
- Not recognising developmental needs, ensuring activities are appropriate for the individual
- Not planning and preparing appropriately
- Not reporting concerns in accordance with Hockey Ireland's Safeguarding Policy reporting procedures
- Spending excessive amounts of time with children away from others
- Taking sessions alone
- Constant communication with individual hockey players by mobile phone or email
- Taking children to their home
- Taking children on journeys alone in their car
- Using inappropriate language

Representative Players

- Not maintaining high standards of conduct when interacting with young people, other participants, parents, officials, and organisers.
- Behaving irresponsibly and speaking out to unfairly affect a player or the outcome of the match
- Intentionally exposing any young people to embarrassment or disparagement using flippant or sarcastic remarks
- Using inappropriate language and or demonstrating threatening/abusive/bullying behavior

Members

- Must not bully other persons
- Make another person feel unwelcome in the club/sport
- Never show disrespect to coaches and officials

Parent/Guardian

- Not maintaining high standards of conduct when interacting with young peoples, participants, other parents/guardians, officials, and organisers.
- Behaving irresponsibly and speaking out to unfairly affect a player or the outcome of the match
- Intentionally exposing any young people to embarrassment or disparagement using flippant or sarcastic remarks
- Interfering with the coach or professional while working with the child
- Using inappropriate language and or demonstrating threatening/abusive behavior

Spectators

- Using inappropriate language towards children, participants, coaches, umpires, technical officials or other spectators
- Entering the course or practice facilities or training sessions without being asked to do so
- Making inappropriate comments about a child's performance

Process for dealing with alleged Poor Practice

Where alleged poor practice has been identified or reported, it must be dealt with in a fair and impartial manner. All information should be treated in the strictest of confidence, in accordance with procedures concerning confidentiality outlined in Hockey Ireland's Safeguarding Policy.

If the complainant believes the concern is of a safeguarding nature, then the following procedure should be followed:

- The complaint should be in writing marked confidential to the National Children's Officer[1] and should normally be acknowledged within 7 working days. If the complaint is against a young person, correspondence will be to the parent/guardian.
- On receiving a complaint, the Hockey Ireland Board will appoint a Disciplinary Committee of at least three members within seven working days, who shall convene within a further seven (7) working days, in line with the Hockey Ireland Bye Law 18.
- The panel will normally consist of representatives with appropriate safeguarding knowledge, e.g. representatives from the National Welfare committee, the Hockey Ireland Board and the National Children's Officer.
- The disciplinary committee will furnish the individual with the nature of the complaint being made against them and afford them the opportunity of providing a response either verbally or in writing, but usually at a meeting with the disciplinary panel. U18's should be accompanied by a parent/guardian.
- The Inquiry Committee may adjourn its meeting if considered appropriate but for no more than seven (7) days. The parties to the enquiry must be informed of the re- commencement date.
- While maintaining confidentiality the appropriate disciplinary panel with safeguarding knowledge will hear the case of all parties involved and decide based on the balance of probability if behaviour has breached Hockey Ireland's Safeguarding Policy.
- If the complaint involves suspected abuse or a criminal offence the National Children's Officer/Designated Liason Person will immediately inform the statutory authorities and consult with the HI safeguarding case management group if any interim internal action is required.
- The disciplinary panel will review any relevant paperwork and hold any necessary meetings with all parties to proceed with complaints into any incident of suspected misconduct that does not relate to child abuse.
- Written confidential records of all complaints will be kept safely and confidentially electronically by the National Children's Officer. .
- Where it is established that an incident of misconduct has taken place, the disciplinary panel will notify the alleged of any sanction being imposed. The range of sanctions should reflect the seriousness of the alleged misconduct, whilst at the same time, being fair and proportionate to the complaint. The notification should 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.
- If the leader/employee/volunteer against whom the complaint was made is unhappy with the decision of the disciplinary committee, they have the right to appeal the decision to an appeals committee (independent of a disciplinary committee). Any appeal should be made in writing within 14 days of the decision of the disciplinary committee in line with Hockey Ireland Bye Law 19.
- Following the appeals meeting the Appeals Committee will either confirm the original sanction or modify it in respect of further information provided through the appeal hearing. This decision is final and cannot be appealed agains

[1] National Children's Officer: Anne McCormack, anne.mccormack@hockey.ie

Suspension for Safeguarding Purposes

If any leader/employee/volunteer/member of Hockey Ireland becomes the subject of an allegation of sexual misconduct or abuse involving a child or young person, resulting in an investigation by any statutory agencies charged with that responsibility, then Hockey Ireland reserves the right to impose a suspension without prejudice of their role until the matter has been fully investigated, a decision reached and an internal risk assessment completed. Upon the successful resolution of the matter by the statutory agencies, the employee/volunteer/leader may have their suspension lifted. But the removal of a suspension will only follow an additional Hockey Ireland risk assessment to consider any possible breaches of the Hockey Ireland Safeguarding policy.

The recommendation by the Hockey Ireland disciplinary committee/case management group should be confirmed by the Board of Hockey Ireland and will be communicated in writing to the employee/volunteer/leader/member.

In this respect the Statutory Authorities are Tusla and An Garda Síochána in the Republic of Ireland and Heath &Social Care Trusts Gateway Team and The PSNI in Northern Ireland.

Possible Sanctions Involving Poor Practice (but not limited to) Leader

- Issued with a verbal and/or written warning
- To re-attend a Safeguarding 1 workshop
- To step aside from duties for a specified period of time, or permanent removal
- Asked to work alongside a more experienced leader for mentoring for an agreed period to ensure best practice is followed at all times
- Monitored by a nominated person as directed by the appropriate committee

Representative Players

- Issued with a verbal and/or written warning and warned as to their future conduct. This will be noted on the player's record
- Removal from team/coaching panels
- Reduction or removal in subvention in relation to travelling or accommodation expenses
- Reduction or removal in grant aid
- Suspension from competing in National & Provincial tournaments

Members

- Issued with a verbal and/or written warning and warned as to their future conduct. This will be noted on the player's record
- Removal from team/coaching/playing selection for a agreed period panels
- Suspended from the club/team

Parent/Guardian and Spectators

- Issued with a verbal and/or written warning and warned as to their future conduct
- Forbidden to attend coaching sessions, championships for a period of time, or permanent removal
- To attend a Safeguarding workshop

Note: Any suspension/removal of a parent or guardian should not impact the involvement of the child. Drop off and collection of their child should be facilitated to allow the child attend coaching sessions, tournaments, or championships.