



WVMHA Discipline Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Discipline Policy is to establish a fair, timely, consistent, and transparent process for addressing allegations of misconduct involving any individual who is subject to WVMHA's policies. This policy supports the Association's commitment to providing a safe, respectful, inclusive, and positive hockey environment for all participants.

This policy is intended to complement WVMHA's Player Code of Conduct, Parent Contract, Zero Tolerance Policy, Social Media Policy, and any applicable policies or regulations of BC Hockey and Hockey Canada. It outlines the process the Association will follow when concerns arise that one or more of these policies has been violated.

Nothing in this policy prevents the Association from taking immediate action where necessary to protect the safety of participants or the integrity of Association programs.

2. Application

This policy applies to all individuals participating in or connected with the Association, including players, parents and guardians, coaches, assistant coaches, team officials, managers, volunteers, Board members, officials, contractors, spectators, and any other individual who participates in or attends Association activities.

The policy applies to conduct occurring during games, practices, tournaments, meetings, travel associated with Association activities, Association-sponsored events, and any activity reasonably connected to the Association. It also applies to conduct occurring through electronic communications, including email, text messaging, and social media, where that conduct affects the Association, its members, or the hockey environment.

3. Authority of the Board

The Board of Directors has the authority and responsibility to administer and enforce this Discipline Policy and to determine the appropriate process and disciplinary outcome in each matter, having regard to the unique facts and circumstances of the case. In exercising its authority, the Board will act reasonably, fairly, and in accordance with the principles of procedural fairness.

The Board may delegate responsibility for receiving complaints, conducting an initial assessment, investigating allegations, or making recommendations to a Discipline Committee, designated Board member, independent investigator, or other qualified individual as it considers appropriate. A Discipline Committee will be established by the Board on an annual basis.

Notwithstanding any delegation, the Board retains ultimate responsibility for disciplinary decisions unless authority has been assigned to another body under the Association's bylaws or the applicable rules of BC Hockey, Hockey Canada, or an independent Safe Sport process.

The Board has the discretion to interpret and apply this policy in a manner that is consistent with the purposes of the Association, its governing documents, and the principles of fairness and natural justice. Where a matter falls within the jurisdiction of BC Hockey, Hockey Canada, law enforcement, or another governing authority, the Board may defer, suspend, or discontinue its own disciplinary process and cooperate with that authority while implementing any interim measures it considers necessary to protect participants or the interests of the Association.

4. Guiding Principles

Every complaint will be considered on its own merits. WVMHA is committed to administering this policy in a manner that is fair, impartial, timely, respectful, and consistent. All individuals involved in the process will be treated with dignity and afforded procedural fairness.

In determining an appropriate response, the Board will seek to balance accountability, education, safety, and the long-term interests of the Association. Disciplinary outcomes will be proportionate to the seriousness of the conduct and will endeavour to promote respectful behaviour while maintaining confidence in the Association's governance.

5. Misconduct

Misconduct includes any behaviour that is inconsistent with WVMHA's Player Code of Conduct, Parent Contract, Zero Tolerance Policy, Social Media Policy, and any applicable policies or regulations of BC Hockey and Hockey Canada.

Examples of misconduct include, but are not limited to, bullying, harassment, discrimination, intimidation, abuse, hazing, threats, violence, retaliation, abuse of officials, inappropriate conduct toward volunteers, unsportsmanlike behaviour, damage to property, alcohol/drug/vaping violations, breaches of social media expectations, failure to comply with Board directives, interference with Association operations, and the making of knowingly false or malicious complaints.

This list is intended to provide guidance only and is not exhaustive. The Board may determine that other conduct constitutes misconduct where it is inconsistent with the values, expectations, or policies of the Association.

6. Reporting Concerns

Any member of the Association who believes that misconduct has occurred may report the matter as soon as reasonably practicable. Complaints should include sufficient information to permit the matter to be reviewed, including the names of those involved, the date and location of the incident, a description of the alleged conduct, the names of any witnesses, and any supporting documentation or evidence that may be available.

Where appropriate, members are encouraged to first attempt to resolve concerns at the team level through the coach or team manager, provided doing so is reasonable and the matter does not involve allegations of bullying, harassment, abuse, discrimination, violence, retaliation, or other conduct that raises participant safety concerns.

Complaints that cannot be resolved informally, or that involve allegations of serious misconduct, may be submitted to the WVMHA President, the Association's Ombudsman, Association Board Members or such other individual designated by the Board to receive complaints. Upon receipt, the complaint shall be reviewed in accordance with this Discipline Policy to determine the appropriate process, including whether the matter should proceed through informal resolution, investigation, disciplinary review, or referral to BC Hockey, Hockey Canada, an independent Safe Sport process, or another appropriate authority.

Anonymous complaints may be considered where sufficient information exists to permit a meaningful review. However, anonymous complaints may limit the Association's ability to investigate the matter or provide procedural fairness to the individuals involved.

7. Initial Assessment

Upon receiving a complaint, the WVMHA President, Ombudsman, or designate will confirm receipt of the complaint within 3 days to the party who initiated it. An initial assessment will then be conducted to determine whether the complaint falls within the Association's jurisdiction, whether immediate protective measures are required, whether the matter should proceed under this policy, or whether it should be referred to BC Hockey, Hockey Canada, law enforcement, or another appropriate authority.

Where appropriate, the President may appoint the Discipline Committee or retain an independent investigator to review the matter. The President, or designate, will advise the parties whether interim measures or an investigation are warranted.

8. Interim Measures

Where circumstances warrant, the Association may implement interim measures before a final decision has been made. Interim measures are intended solely to protect participants, preserve the integrity of the process, or reduce the risk of further misconduct while the matter is under review.

Interim measures may include temporary suspension from Association activities, restrictions on attendance at games or practices, temporary removal from coaching or volunteer responsibilities, communication restrictions, supervision requirements, or any other reasonable conditions the Board considers appropriate.

The implementation of interim measures does not constitute a finding of misconduct and should not be interpreted as disciplinary action.

9. Investigation

Where the Board determines that further review is necessary, an investigation may be conducted. The nature and scope of the investigation will be proportionate to the seriousness and complexity of the allegations. Depending on the circumstances, the investigation may include interviews with the complainant, respondent, and witnesses, together with a review of documents, photographs, video recordings, electronic communications, social media content, or other relevant evidence.

Any individual alleged to have engaged in misconduct will be given a reasonable opportunity to respond to the allegations before a decision is made. Where a complaint involves multiple respondents, the allegations against each respondent will be considered and assessed separately, based on the evidence relating to that individual.

Minors who are participating in the investigation process as a complainant, respondent, or witness, will have a parent or legal guardian accompany them during investigation meetings.

The parties will be notified of the commencement of the investigation process within 3 days of the Board making a decision to investigate. The Discipline Committee or external investigator will endeavour to complete the investigation process and prepare findings and recommendations to the Board within 14 days. It is understood that more serious and complex situations may require a longer investigation period.

10. Decision Making

Following completion of the investigation or review, the Board of Directors will determine, on a balance of probabilities, whether misconduct occurred.

In making its decision, the Board may consider the seriousness of the conduct, whether it was intentional or repeated, its impact on participants and the Association, previous disciplinary history, acceptance of responsibility, cooperation during the investigation, demonstrated remorse, the likelihood of recurrence, and any mitigating or aggravating circumstances.

The parties of the investigation process will be notified about the outcome within 3 days of the Board making their decision.

11. Discipline

The Association recognizes that disciplinary outcomes should be appropriate to the nature and seriousness of the misconduct. While the Board may consider progressive discipline where it is reasonable and appropriate to do so, nothing in this policy requires discipline to proceed in a progressive manner. Certain conduct, including conduct addressed under the Association's Zero Tolerance Policy or involving participant safety, may warrant immediate and significant disciplinary action, including suspension pending review, regardless of whether previous disciplinary action has occurred.

Depending on the circumstances, disciplinary measures may include education, coaching, verbal counselling, written warnings, written apologies, behavioural agreements, probation, suspension from practices, games, tournaments, or other Association activities, suspension from attending Association facilities, removal from coaching or volunteer responsibilities, season-long suspension, expulsion from the Association, or referral to BC Hockey, Hockey Canada, law enforcement, or another appropriate authority.

In determining the appropriate disciplinary outcome, the Board will consider all relevant circumstances, including the seriousness of the conduct, its impact on others, the individual's disciplinary history and amount of remorse shown for actions, any mitigating or aggravating factors, and the objectives of maintaining a safe, respectful, and positive hockey environment. Repeated misconduct may be treated as an aggravating factor and may result in progressively more serious consequences.

12. Bullying, Harassment and Safe Sport Matters

Complaints involving bullying, harassment, discrimination, abuse, sexual misconduct, or other Safe Sport concerns will be addressed with particular care. The Association may implement immediate interim measures while the matter is being reviewed and may retain an external investigator where appropriate.

Where required or considered appropriate, the Board may refer the matter to BC Hockey, Hockey Canada, an independent Safe Sport process, law enforcement, child protection authorities, or any other appropriate agency.

13. Retaliation

The Association strictly prohibits retaliation against any individual who reports a concern in good faith, participates in an investigation, provides information, or acts as a witness during the disciplinary process. Retaliation includes but is not limited to: any verbal or written (text, email) questioning or confrontation of the witness or complainant.

Any act of retaliation will itself constitute misconduct and may result in separate disciplinary action.

14. Confidentiality

The Association will make every reasonable effort to maintain confidentiality throughout the disciplinary process. Information will only be shared with those individuals who require it to fulfill their responsibilities under this policy or where disclosure is required by law or necessary to ensure a fair and thorough review of the matter.

Participants in the disciplinary process are expected to respect the strict confidentiality of the proceedings and refrain from discussing the matter publicly unless required by law.

15. Appeals

An individual who is subject to a final disciplinary decision may appeal the decision by submitting a written notice of appeal to the Association within fourteen (14) days of receiving written notice of the disciplinary decision.

Appeals will generally be limited to circumstances where there has been a significant procedural error, where new evidence or information has become available that could not reasonably have been presented during the original process, or where the decision was clearly unreasonable based on the evidence before the Board.

Upon receipt of a valid appeal, the Board shall appoint an independent individual with appropriate qualifications and experience in investigations or sport governance to review the appeal. The individual appointed must have had no prior involvement in the matter and must be free from any actual, perceived, or potential conflict of interest.

The independent reviewer shall determine the appropriate appeal process, which may include a review of the written materials, interviews with the parties, or any other steps the reviewer considers necessary to conduct a fair and impartial review. Upon completion of the review, the independent reviewer shall provide the Board with a written recommendation, including reasons for the recommendation.

The Board shall consider the independent reviewer's recommendation before making its final determination on the appeal. While the Board retains final decision-making authority, it will give significant weight to the independent reviewer's findings and recommendations and will only depart from those recommendations where there are compelling reasons for doing so. Where the Board departs from the recommendation, its reasons shall be documented in writing.

Following consideration of the appeal, the Board may uphold the original decision, modify the disciplinary outcome, set aside the original decision and substitute a new decision, or refer the matter back for further investigation or reconsideration. Subject to any further rights of appeal available under the bylaws or policies of BC Hockey or Hockey Canada, the Board's decision on appeal shall be final.

16. Records

The Association will maintain confidential records relating to complaints, investigations, interim measures, disciplinary decisions, and appeals arising under this policy. Records will be maintained in a secure manner and access will be limited to those individuals who require the information to carry out their responsibilities under this policy or as otherwise required by law.

Records relating to allegations of bullying, harassment, discrimination, abuse, retaliation, Safe Sport matters, violence, or other serious misconduct, as well as matters resulting in season-long suspensions, indefinite suspensions, expulsions, or legal proceedings, shall be retained for a minimum of two (2) years following the conclusion of the matter, or longer where required by law or where the Board determines that continued retention is necessary for governance, insurance, legal, or participant safety purposes.

Records relating to less serious disciplinary matters, including behavioural concerns, verbal or written warnings, minor Code of Conduct violations, or other matters not involving participant safety, shall generally be retained for a minimum of one (1) year following the conclusion of the matter. The Board may retain such records for a longer period where it reasonably determines that doing so is necessary due to repeated misconduct, a pattern of behaviour, pending legal proceedings, or other legitimate operational or governance reasons.

At the conclusion of the applicable retention period, records shall be securely destroyed unless they remain necessary for legal, insurance, governance, or operational purposes. The Secretary of the Association, or such other individual designated by the Board, shall be responsible for maintaining the Association's official disciplinary records in accordance with this policy.

17. Responsibilities of Board Members

Board members involved in administering this policy have a responsibility to act with integrity, impartiality, and professionalism throughout the disciplinary process.

Any Board member who has a real, perceived, or potential conflict of interest, including a personal relationship with any of the parties involved or prior involvement in the matter that could reasonably call their impartiality into question, must immediately disclose the conflict and refrain from participating in the investigation, deliberations, or decision-making process.

Board members shall maintain the confidentiality of all complaints, investigations, deliberations, and decisions except where disclosure is authorized by the Board or required by law.

Information obtained through the disciplinary process shall not be used for any purpose unrelated to the administration of this policy.

Board members are expected to make decisions based solely on the information available through the disciplinary process and shall avoid prejudging matters or engaging in discussions outside the formal process that could compromise the fairness or integrity of the proceedings.

18. Immediate Action

Nothing in this policy prevents the Association from immediately removing an individual from any WVMHA activity where the Board reasonably believes such action is necessary to protect the safety and well-being of participants, officials, volunteers, spectators, or the integrity and reputation of the Association while the matter is being addressed.

Approved By: WVMHA Board of Directors

Effective Date: September 9, 2026

Next Review Date: On or before, September 9, 2029

This policy shall be reviewed by the Board of Directors at least once every three (3) years, or earlier where required to reflect changes to applicable legislation, the bylaws or policies of BC Hockey or Hockey Canada, or the operational needs of the Association.

This policy was approved by resolution of the Board of Directors of the West Vancouver Minor Hockey Association and comes into effect on the Effective Date noted above. Upon its adoption, this policy supersedes any previous procedures of the Association to the extent they are inconsistent with this policy.