

Dungannon Golf Club

Disciplinary and Grievance Policy

1.0 GENERAL

1.1 Policy Statement/ Purpose of Policy

This Policy is designed to outline the approach our Club takes to resolving grievances and disputes which may arise from time to time and which cannot be resolved informally. Where possible our Club will try and encourage members to resolve matters informally. However where this is not possible this policy will apply and the matter will either be treated as a grievance or a disciplinary matter as set out below. If the subject matter of a dispute is covered in a different club policy then the procedure set out in that policy shall apply. For example, a dispute arising as the result of a safeguarding issue is covered by our Clubs Safeguarding Policy.

The Club adopted this policy on 24 February 2026. We are committed to ongoing improvement and therefore this policy will be reviewed every three years and may be amended from time to time.

2.0 Objectives of Policy

This policy and our procedures are designed to provide mechanism to raise and deal with disputes with fairness and due process where no other policy or rule applies.

3.0 Scope of Policy

3.1 This policy applies in circumstances where no other policy or rule gives a process to resolve a dispute involving:

- a) Our members;
- b) Our activities and competitions;
- c) Volunteers who are officially engaged by our Club in various roles; and
- d) Volunteers who sit on our committees and other groups set up officially by the Club

3.2 This policy does not apply to:

- a) Our Employees, for whom there will be a specific policy;

3.3 Examples of other policies and matters which fall outside the scope of this policy:

- a) **Safeguarding:** Matters concerning safeguarding shall be dealt with under the safeguarding policy in the first instance and only referred back to be handled under this policy once all safeguarding concerns have been considered and addressed first.
- b) **Data Protection:** Matters concerning data protection shall be dealt with under the GDPR and Privacy Policies in the first instance and only referred back to be handled under this policy once all such concerns have been considered and addressed first.
- c) **Staff-related issues:** Any issue may be raised with Management who shall consider what action or process should be followed in such cases. The staff disciplinary and grievance procedure shall be followed if applicable.
- d) **Decisions made by Council:** Council is authorised and empowered to make decisions under the Club Constitution. The Committee may also delegate certain decisions to its Sub Committees. The appropriate forum to raise any queries or questions about these decisions is to write to the relevant Chair and/or raises any questions at annual meetings of the membership. Decisions of Council are not matters for review or appeal through this policy. However, we welcome feedback.
- e) **Decisions made by the operational Staff:** Any question may be raised with Management if it relates to a decision of a member of staff and Management will determine if any action is required.
- f) **Grievances/ allegations which relate to Golf Ireland specific regulations including;**
 - Any dispute related to any matter under the World Handicapping System is governed by Golf Ireland's Handicap Appeals Procedure.
 - Any dispute relating to an inter-club match or competition organised by Golf Ireland, the process of which is governed by Golf Ireland's Competition Regulations
 - Any dispute related to a ruling given by the Golf Club's Council in a competition organised and run by the Golf Club (in such matters the Rules of Golf provide that the Council's decision is final).

4.0 Disciplinary or Grievance Process - which will be followed?

When an issue is raised, we will firstly determine if the matter is a matter which should be handled under this policy or if another more appropriate policy applies as outlined in section 3.

Please note - complaints relating to an incident which occurred more than three months ago are inadmissible for consideration under either the Disciplinary or Grievance Process.

It may also be that a matter that initially starts as a grievance and at a later stage becomes a disciplinary case. Some issues may also require an initial review first to make this determination. Sometimes this determination will be straight forward but other times it may require further consideration.

This determination will be made by the Hon Secretary or allocated Disciplinary and Grievance Officer (DGO). The DGO may also decide to re-categorise an issue as a grievance or as a disciplinary matter as a matter proceeds. The DGO may also determine that the matter is not one which falls within the scope of this policy. The DGO may seek general guidance if necessary, from Golf Ireland or if necessary, a legal advisor when making this determination.

The DGO may be appointed on a case-by-case basis from within the Club or maybe an external appointment. The DGO may change from time to time.

4.1 Complaints deemed insufficient to proceed

The DGO will follow the procedure set out in Appendix 1 when they receive a complaint. If DGO determines that the matter falls outside the scope of this policy, or is insufficient to proceed, the complainant may request an appeal which will be considered on payment of an Appeal fee of £50. Appeals must be accompanied by a Bank Draft or Postal Order for the Appeal Fee of £50 made payable to the Club. This fee shall be refunded only if the appeal is successful. The Disciplinary Committee shall make this determination and if required may continue to hear the matter if the appeal is successful.

4.2 Difference between a Disciplinary matter and a Grievance

- Disciplinary matters may arise from behaviour or conduct which may reasonably be considered to bring the Club into disrepute and may arise from a complaint made to us - but only within the scope of this Policy as set out in 3 above.
- Disciplinary matters usually but not always result in a full hearing of a matter with parties entitled to attend and make their case. Disciplinary matters may also result in a sanction of varying degrees if a party is found guilty of the particular charge being laid against them.



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- Grievances do not result in hearings or sanctions and can generally be categorised as a complaint about how a matter was handled.
- Grievance can often be resolved and issues improved or positions accepted or rejected. Not all grievances can be resolved but they can be aired and understood.
- Examples of grievance include but are not limited to:
 - Feeling something was not handled correctly
 - The service you received
 - Raising concerns over behaviour or tone of an individual
 - Not believing equity has taken place over a particular matter
 - Raising unfairness of any kind
 - General complaints and issues someone is unhappy about

5.0 DISCIPLINARY PROCESS

5.1 Our Disciplinary Committee

- We set up a Disciplinary Committee when the need arises to sit on cases which require a formal disciplinary hearing. The Disciplinary Committee members may be drawn from a range of backgrounds including those from within our membership, from other sporting organisations, from the legal profession or others whom we deem may have skills and/or experience considered suitable for particular cases. The Club Council has authority to appoint people to this Disciplinary Committee when required. No one will be appointed to a case where there may be a conflict of interest.
- For each hearing we will appoint 3 persons to sit as a Disciplinary Committee to hear and adjudicate cases. We will endeavour as much as possible to ensure a mix of persons with appropriate skills for cases which may arise. One of these persons will also be requested to be the Chair of the specific Disciplinary Committee set up for each case.

5.2 Our Disciplinary Process

- Disciplinary matters shall be fully investigated by the designated DGO and if necessary, a hearing convened to adjudicate on the matter of concern.
- The DGO will handle any disciplinary matters relating to this disciplinary policy which may arise from time to time. The role of the DGO is to take responsibility for processing the case prior to a hearing being set up, to determine if there is sufficient grounds to proceed with a disciplinary hearing in the first case, to conduct any preliminary investigations such as seeking evidence or submissions from parties and to set up a disciplinary hearing. The DGO does not adjudicate on the case

merits but rather determines that the complaint merits a hearing being opened and undertakes all the administration

- Our full disciplinary process is set out in Appendix 1.

6.0 GRIEVANCE PROCESS

6.1 Our Grievance Process

- If you have a grievance you are encouraged to raise your concerns openly and quickly so that they can be dealt with rather than left to develop. For this reason, raising such concerns should occur at the earlier convenience. You are also encouraged to voice constructive opinions and to suggest and contribute solutions to problems which concern you.
- It may be the case that the grievance you have will later be processed as a disciplinary matter but it will depend on the nature of the issue raised. If the problem is not satisfactorily resolved the DGO may investigate the matter further.

6.2 Grievance Procedure

The procedure below should be followed if you have a grievance or concern.

Informal Discussion

The majority of concerns are generally best resolved through informal discussions. If this discussion fails to resolve the matter to your satisfaction, you should refer your grievance in writing to the Honorary Secretary who will advise the DGO. Anonymous complaints will not be eligible for consideration under this procedure.

Letter/Email outlining the grievance

Grievances should:

- Outline the details of your grievance, stating clearly what the issue is and/or with whom your grievance is against and the reasons for this.
- Confirm that the issue has been raised initially informally or advise the reasons why you were unable to do this.
- State what outcome/resolution you are seeking from the grievance hearing. You will receive acknowledgement within 10 working days of receiving your grievance.

Grievance Meeting/Phone call

If the DGO considers the grievance is a valid matter which requires further consideration a meeting in person or by phone may take place. You must make yourself available. They will determine if an investigation is required. You have the right to be accompanied by another member. If you choose to take advantage of this right, you are asked to notify us of the name of the person prior to the grievance hearing. When the meeting has been held and/or where appropriate, the investigation completed, we will write to you within 10 working days to confirm the outcome.

Appealing an outcome of a Grievance

If you are unhappy with the outcome and decide to appeal you must confirm this in writing within 5 working days, setting out the reasons why. We will arrange another appropriate person to re-consider your grievance. When a decision has been made, we will confirm the outcome in writing. The decision is final. Where we believe a grievance has been made with malicious intent, or with a view to cause provocation, we reserve the right to investigate and take disciplinary action where necessary.

Where we believe a matter is more appropriately dealt with under the Disciplinary Process, we will advise you of same.

6.3 Restrictions on the extent of remedies for upheld grievances

Where the outcome of this process means a grievance is upheld, there may be limitations on the extent to which the grievance can be fully remedied. This will depend on the practical circumstances that apply on a case-by-case basis.

Appendix 1 - Disciplinary Procedure

1. Investigation

- a) Complaints may be made by any person to the Honorary Secretary. Such complaints must be in writing and must include all evidence as to the breach alleged. Anonymous complaints will not be eligible for consideration under the following clauses of this procedure.
- b) The appointed DGO will then review the complaint and if necessary delegate responsibility to another appropriate person including a person with specific expertise outside of the Club if this is needed in the circumstances.
- c) If the DGO considers the complaint is a legitimate complaint, the DGO shall set up a case file, set out the process, inform all parties involved in writing of the complaint and allow all parties an opportunity to respond. An example of legitimate grounds could include but is not limited to; preliminary evidence provided of any kind which in the opinion of the DGO may mean a rule, policy or code may have been breached; a complaint which the DGO considers is reasonably grounded on genuine or serious concerns and merits an initial investigation; information provided that in the opinion of the DGO could result in potential risk to any individuals or to the organisation as a whole and merits opening an initial investigation.
- d) In all cases the DGO will make an initial assessment and determine whether a complaint merits opening an initial investigation. If the DGO considers a matter is spurious, or has no grounds, or there is no initial evidence and there is no risk to any individuals or to the organisation from not proceeding with an initial investigation, then the DGO has the authority to deem the complaint insufficient to proceed.
- e) The DGO will also determine whether the matter is a grievance or a disciplinary issue. Examples of grievances are set out earlier in this policy.
- f) The DGO may also be able to resolve the matter through discussion with the parties or by having relevant personnel address a specific matter which has been raised.
- g) The initial determination by the DGO to proceed with a case is not reflective of the final outcome of a matter or indicative of any guilt by any party which will be at the sole discretion of the Disciplinary Committee hearing the case.
- h) The DGO may issue initial time frames to the parties for all responses but shall ensure the initial complaint is examined and responded to within 14 days unless there are sufficient grounds to delay procedures. The DGO can conduct any necessary preliminary investigations and seek expert opinion and/or reports and an inspection of documents or files may be necessary. The DGO may conduct any initial enquiry deemed necessary in order to fully investigate the complaint so a full file is ready for the Disciplinary Committee hearing.



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- i) On completing an initial investigation the DGO shall decide if a Disciplinary Committee hearing is required and if any charge for breach of policy, code, direction or such other disciplinary offence needs to be issued against anyone. In the event such a charge is brought, the case will be submitted for consideration to a Disciplinary Committee hearing.
- j) The DGO shall not discuss the merits of any case with the Disciplinary Committee prior to the hearing and shall be there to provide details on the procedure to date, the file prepared and any background to the initial complaint.
- k) Failure to reasonably co-operate with an investigation of the DGO, may also be advised to the Disciplinary Committee who may sanction accordingly.
- l) In the event of the DGO considers the complaint insufficient to proceed, the complainant may request an appeal which will be considered by a Disciplinary Committee on payment of an Appeal fee of £100. Appeals must be accompanied by payment for the Appeal Fee of £100 made payable to the Club. This fee shall be refunded only if the appeal is successful. If the Appeal is successful the Disciplinary Committee may proceed to hear the case.

2. Disciplinary Procedure - Disciplinary Committee remit and role

Disciplinary cases shall be heard by the Disciplinary Committee which is ultimately responsible for hearing cases and adjudicating case. The following applies:

- a) The Disciplinary Committees shall be made up of a panel of 3 persons -based on availability, independence and knowledge of the issues to be considered. One member of the Committee shall act as Chair of the Committee.
- b) The Disciplinary Committee can agree its general Terms of Reference for specific cases such as requiring evidence, hearing of witnesses, written statements or other such terms as may be required in certain cases.
- c) The Disciplinary Committee may request the attendance (in-person or online) of any persons at a hearing. Failure to comply with any reasonable request may in itself result in disciplinary action if deemed appropriate in the circumstances.
- d) The DGO takes charge of the administrative work for the Disciplinary Committee and may also delegate a person to assist in minute taking and correspondence.
- e) The Disciplinary Committee make their decisions entirely independently of other parties but can ask the DGO for information on the process and the investigation they conducted to date.
- f) The Disciplinary Committee shall decide by simple majority vote.
- g) Members of the Disciplinary Committee shall decline to participate in any hearing concerning a matter where there are serious grounds for questioning their impartiality or where conflicts of interest may arise.

- h) All proceedings and disclosures made in relation to a case remain confidential to the parties however decisions may be disclosed and made public (subject to the sensitivity and specifics of each individual case).
- i) The decision issued in each case shall be provided to all parties to the procedure.

3. Disciplinary Procedure - Hearing procedures

- a) The DGO must inform all parties to the case of the venue, date and time of the hearing and all Parties are entitled to attend the hearing. A party shall not be prejudiced if they do not wish to attend a hearing unless they have specifically been requested to attend by the Disciplinary Committee and fail to do so.
- b) All parties involved in the hearing must confirm to the DGO in writing the name and the role within, or relationship to the party, of all persons who will be attending the hearing on their behalf, or at their request within time limits as stated in the notification. The Disciplinary Committee shall have discretion to permit the attendance of any persons not confirmed within the stated deadlines.
- c) The Disciplinary Committee, once appointed, can issue directions to the parties in respect of the hearing prior to proceedings commencing.
- d) All parties shall be notified by the DGO within five days by fax and/or electronic mail and/or registered post, of the decision of the Disciplinary Committee. In urgent matters an oral decision may be issued.
- e) A hearing can be postponed if the appointed Disciplinary Committee requires additional information prior to proceedings commencing or to allow technical or other issues to be addressed.
- f) The Disciplinary Committee may adjourn or suspend proceedings for further deliberation or to seek further or additional evidence or expert advice or where it is otherwise considered necessary to do so, provided an adjournment does not unduly prejudice any party. Following an adjournment the Disciplinary Committee must reconvene within ten days.
- g) The Disciplinary Committee shall consider all evidence that it deems relevant to the case.
- h) The DGO and the Disciplinary Committee shall remit all matters pertaining to the protection of children or vulnerable adults to the statutory authorities as required under the Child Safeguarding Policy.
- i) Any type of proof may be produced in a hearing unless it does not serve to establish relevant facts. The following are, in particular, admissible: reports, declarations from the parties and witnesses, material evidence, social media extracts, expert opinions and unedited audio or video recordings.

- j) The Disciplinary Committee will have absolute discretion regarding proof. The Disciplinary Committee shall hear all evidence it considers relevant to the case and shall decide on the basis of the proof before them. The Disciplinary Committee may request a party or any other body to submit information or documentation. Such a request shall be complied with.
- k) The parties may be represented at a hearing by a third party, but should appear personally where requested to do so by the disciplinary body. l) It is expected that all parties shall bear their own costs.
- l) The DGO shall notify a copy of each decision to all parties to the procedure.
- m) It shall also be a breach offence not to comply with a decision, and any party that fails to respect such a decision may be sanctioned further

4.Appeals

- a) An appeal may be lodged against a decision of the Disciplinary Committee
- b) Appeals must be lodged to the Honorary Secretary within seven days of the date on which the written notification of the decision being appealed against was received by the appellant. For the avoidance of doubt time limits begin from the day after receipt of the notification.
- c) Appeals must be accompanied by an Appeal Fee of £100 made payable to the Club. This fee shall be refunded only if the appeal is successful.
- d) The Honorary Secretary shall within 21 days of receiving notification of Appeal convene an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Club to hear the Appeal. The member shall be entitled to produce evidence and to call witnesses on his/her behalf at the Appeal Hearing. The E.G.M. shall have power to confirm or vary the suspension or expulsion. The decision of the E.G.M. shall be by simple majority. Pending the hearing of an appeal the member or members shall remain suspended.