

DGC-008-23 – Disciplinary, Complaints & Appeals Procedure

As a leader/employee/volunteer of *Doneraile Golf Club*, 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 *Doneraile Golf Club*.

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 Designated Liaison Person's or other Golf 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 *Doneraile Golf Club* Safeguarding Policy reporting procedures
- Spending excessive amounts of time with children away from others
- Taking sessions alone
- Constant communication with individual golfers 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 juniors, other participants, parents, officials and organisers.
- Behaving irresponsibly and seeking out to unfairly affect a player or the outcome of the game
- Intentionally exposing any junior to embarrassment or disparagement using flippant or sarcastic remarks
- Using inappropriate language and or demonstrating threatening/abusive/bullying

behavior

Parent/Guardian

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

Spectators

- Using inappropriate language towards children, participants, coaches, referees 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 *Doneraile Golf Club 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 to the Secretary or Club Children's Officer and should be responded to within 7 working days. If the complaint is against a junior, correspondence will be to the parent/guardian.
- On receiving a complaint, *Doneraile Golf Club Management Committee* will appoint a disciplinary committee of no less than three members. It will be the responsibility of this committee to select a representative (investigator) to meet with the complainant and any other witnesses to ask for their explanation of what happened.
- The committee will consist two representatives appointed by the Management Committee and the club 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 committee. U18's should be accompanied by a parent/guardian.
- While maintaining confidentiality the appropriate disciplinary committee with safeguarding knowledge will hear the case of all parties involved and decide if behaviour has breached *Doneraile Golf Club Safeguarding Policy*.
- If the complaint involves suspected abuse or a criminal offence the club children's officer/designated person will be consulted and the disciplinary committee disbanded. The statutory authorities will then be informed.
- The disciplinary committee 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 in a locked cabinet.
- Where it is established that an incident of misconduct has taken place, the disciplinary committee will notify the Management Committee who shall decide on any sanctions to be put in place. 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 10 days of the decision of the disciplinary committee.
- 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 against.

If any party is not satisfied with the outcome, the matter can be referred to the Governing Body. However, efforts to resolve the issue at local level should be exhausted before the Governing Body is engaged in attempts to resolve the matter.

Suspension for Safeguarding Purposes

If any leader/employee/volunteer of *Doneraile Golf Club* 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 *Doneraile Golf Club* reserves the right to impose a suspension without prejudice of their role until the matter has been fully investigated and a decision reached. 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 risk assessment to consider any possible breaches of *Doneraile Golf Club* Safeguarding policy. The recommendation by *Doneraile Golf Club* disciplinary committee should be confirmed by the Management Committee of *Doneraile Golf Club* and will be communicated in writing to the employee/volunteer/leader.

In this respect the Statutory Authorities are Tusla and An Garda Síochána in the Republic of Ireland

Possible Sanctions Involving Poor Practice (but not limited to)

Leader

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

Parent/Guardian and Spectators

- Issued with a verbal and/or written warning and warned as to their future conduct
- Forbidden to attend coaching sessions, tournaments and 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.