

It is the Club's responsibility to deal with any act of indiscipline on the field of play by players, and /or any supporters and spectators on the touchline, or any club member who at any time uses threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour towards match officials, players, any other member or visitor to the club or in any way brings the club or the game into disrepute.

Any member who appears before the Kent RFU Disciplinary Sub – Committee is reminded that there is a levy imposed as detailed in Section 6 below, for which they may be liable.

## 1. Discipline Procedure

### 1.1 Players sent off (Red Cards) by the Referee (Society or Club)

The Captain of the team **MUST** report the name, contact details and playing position of the player who was sent off during the match, including the opposition and any relevant details to the Head Coach and Disciplines Secretary **within 24 Hours** of the sending off. Junior players (those who are 17 years old at the time of the offence/incident) and are playing in a club adult match will be subject to the adult regime.

**This is important as it is mandatory that the Hon. Secretary has to report the incident in writing to the Kent RFU Disciplinary Secretary within 48 hours of the incident.**

Referees (Society or Club) must in all adult matches report all players sent off to the Discipline Secretary of the relevant Constituent Body of the player's club on the RFU Discipline Form.

For all incidents involving Junior (Mini and Youth) players, playing in Club matches at any age group below and including Under 17 fixtures, the referee (Society or Club) **must** send the report to the Head Coach and Disciplines Secretary **within 48 hours** of the incident.

### 1.2 Acts of Foul Play not Detected by the Referee/Match Officials.

Any member/player who witnesses an act of foul play or bad behaviour by a player (of any team), can report the incident giving name(s) and details of the incident to the Head Coach as soon after the incident as possible.

Any incident of foul play involving a member of an opposition team that has or has not been dealt with by the Match official(s) and is witnessed by an Ash Rugby Club player/member can be reported to the Head Coach without delay so consideration and action can be taken if appropriate.

A **Citing** may only occur where an act of foul play was **not** detected by the Match Officials.

Only Unions, Constituents Bodies and Clubs may cite not a player or spectator.

Any consideration for a Citing must be reported to the Head Coach, in respect of a Junior Player (under 17) immediately as there is a very short time scale and detailed procedure to be followed.

## **1.3 Acts of Bad Behaviour by Players, Members, Spectators, Supporters or Visitors.**

Any Member/Player who witnesses an act of bad behaviour at any time by any Club Member, or visitor to the Club, of whatever age, can report the matter to the Club Chairman, Head Coach, Disciplines Secretary or any member of the committee, so appropriate action can be taken.

## **2. The Discipline Committee & It's Members**

The Discipline Committee will be responsible for investigating and taking action on any "sending off", or any incident of foul play or bad behaviour by an Ash player not detected by the Match Officials.

The Discipline Committee will also investigate and take action on any instance of indiscipline or bad behaviour by any Ash member, supporter or spectator.

The Discipline Committee will exercise such powers in a fair, proportionate and open manner with the accused always having a right to attend to put his/her case after first being given reasonable notice of the hearing.

### **The Discipline Committee shall consist of:**

The Club Head Coach (who will chair the Discipline Committee), the Disciplines Secretary and two Board members.

If the Head Coach has a conflict so that they cannot sit, then the Disciplines Secretary will sit. If the Disciplines Secretary has a conflict, so that they cannot sit, then the Chairman shall appoint another Board member to take their place.

In cases concerning Junior Players (under 17), the Team Coach shall attend the hearing as one of the Board Members.

The Discipline Committee will meet within 5 days of the act of indiscipline, offence or incident in question. Further meetings may be held if the circumstances require.

The reported player, member or supporter or spectator **must** attend the Discipline hearing when required to do so, or seek adjournment as soon as possible to a suitable date. For the avoidance of doubt on notice being given and if no adjournment is requested, the Committee may make a decision in the absence of the reported person.

The reported player or member may, if they wish, be represented by one person of his/her choice.

Junior players and members **must** also be accompanied by a parent/guardian or appropriate adult.

The Committee may receive evidence (either verbally or in writing) from any other person(s) who witnessed the incident or was involved in it. The Burden of Proof rests on the person making the allegation. The Committee will consider its verdict in the Balance of the Probabilities.

## 2.1 Hearings

The Panel is introduced and any objections to its composition requested.

The report of the incident is read to the meeting.

The member will be invited to say whether they admit or denies the allegation.

If the member admits the allegation he/she can make a statement and call character

If the member denies the allegation, then witnesses will be called. The member will cross examine if he/she so wishes. The Committee may also ask questions.

The member may then make a statement and be asked questions by the Committee.

If after consideration in private the Committee find the allegation to be proved the member may make a statement and call character witnesses.

The Committee will then consider in private what action to take.

The meeting will then reconvene and the penalty (if any) will be announced.

## 2.2 Penalties

The Discipline Committee will have the power to decide one or more of the following:

- No Order
- No punishment beyond that already given (sending off)
- That the member be cautioned or severely cautioned as to future conduct
- That there be a period of suspension from playing, or taking part in the administration of Rugby Union (within the Club only) or both, be imposed on the member.
- Suspend or terminate membership from the club for such period as it thinks fit.

Any other penalties or suspensions as are decided by the Committee.

**NB** Appendix 2 and 3 at the end of the Disciplinary Procedures in the RFU Handbook prints a list of recommended sanctions from World Rugby. It states the various entry points based on the scale and seriousness of the conduct.

A Record of any penalties imposed against any player, member or supporter plus the reason for the decision will be kept for **3 years** by the Hon. Secretary.

This penalty can be taken into account when deciding any future penalties at any subsequent discipline hearing relating to that member within the 3-year period.

### **3. Junior Disciplinary Procedure**

The Club has a duty to deal with all Junior Discipline matters.

Junior players are defined as those under 18 at the time of the offence or incident providing the player is playing in an under 18's match or younger age group. The rules for players aged 17 playing an adult game are set out in Section 1 above.

#### **3.1 Junior Players sent off (red carded) by the referee (Society or Club).**

In the case of Youth Players, the Coach or Manager of the relevant team **MUST** report the name, age, DOB, playing position and contact details of the player concerned, the referee's name and Society (if any), the opposition and any match details to the Director of Rugby, Chairman of Youth Rugby and Club Secretary within 24 hours of the incident.

**This is important as it is mandatory that the Club Secretary has to report the incident in writing to the Kent Discipline Secretary within 48 hours of the incident.**

Referees (Society or Club) who red card a player who has reached 17 years of age (and is playing in an under 18 colts match must send the report to the Discipline Secretary of the relevant constituent body of that players club.

For all incidents involving Junior Players, playing in Club Matches at any age group below and including under 18, the referee (Society or Club) should send the report form to the Chairman of Youth rugby within 48 hours of the incident.

All reports should be on the RFU Discipline Report Form which can be obtained from the Club Secretary.

#### **3.2 Acts of Bad Behaviour by Players, Spectators, Supporters and Visitors**

Any member /player who witnesses an act of bad behaviour at any time by any Club Member or visiting supporter/spectator, of whatever age, can report the matter to the Chairman of Youth Rugby who will consult with the Director of Rugby as to the appropriate action to be taken.

### **4. Junior Penalties.**

The Discipline Committee can impose the same penalties as for senior players as at Section 2.3 above however the age and seriousness of the offence must be

considered when deciding penalties. Generally, players under the age of 18 will be suspended for shorter periods than adults.

**A list of recommended sanctions for Junior Players (under 18 years) are outlined in Appendix 3 at the end of the Disciplinary Procedures Section in the RFU Handbook.**

A record of the penalty imposed against any Junior Player /spectator plus the reasons for the sanction will be kept on file for **3 years**. This penalty can be taken into account when deciding any future penalties at any subsequent discipline hearing relating to that member within the three years.

It is the responsibility of the Club to report the circumstances of the offence (together with the referees' report if available) together with the penalty to the Kent RFU Discipline Secretary. The Kent RFU Discipline Sub Committee shall confirm or vary the findings of the Club Discipline Committee.

**Any person affected may Appeal as outlines in Section 5.**

#### **4.1 Acts of Bullying.**

Bullying of any kind is not acceptable in any form or at any age at Ash RFC.

Any instance will be taken seriously, responded to promptly and procedures followed which could include an appearance before the Discipline Committee.

Rugby has a culture that where anyone is aware that bullying is happening is expected to report to the Club's Welfare and Safeguarding Officer. The Club will follow the guidelines in the RFU Anti Bullying Policy. (Please also see the Ash RFC Safeguarding policy.)

It is the responsibility of every adult working in Rugby Union to ensure that everyone, adult and young people alike can enjoy the sport in a safe, enjoyable environment.

#### **5. Appeals Procedure**

Any Player, Junior Player, supporter or spectator who has had a case dealt with has a right of appeal against the decision of the Discipline Committee.

The Appeal must be submitted in writing within 7 days of receipt of the Decision of the Discipline Committee to the Rugby Secretary containing the substance of the grounds of Appeal. The club will endeavour to hear the Appeal within a further 14 days.

The Appeal panel will be made up of the Chairman of the Board and two other Directors who have not sat on the first hearing.

If it is a full Appeal on the allegation(s) then the matter will be considered afresh as per Section 2.2.

If the Appeal is against Sanction, then the respondent will be invited to make submissions and introduce character references as at first instance.

Appellants can be represented or have a friend with them. Those under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a parent guardian or appropriate adult.

## **6. Costs of Attending a County Discipline Hearing**

There is a levy imposed on the Club under CB Resolutions for any player or member appearing before the County Discipline Committee. The amount of such levy shall be as determined from time to time by the Kent RFU.

However, the Club reserves the right to recharge this levy to the individual concerned.

Failure to pay this levy could result in suspension of membership until paid in full.

**Document Reviewed By:**

**Sam Gunter (Co-Chairman)**

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