

Disciplinary, Grievance and Dispute Resolution Policy

Public policy document for disciplinary matters, grievances, disputes, appeals, independent resolution, confidentiality, record keeping, and review.

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1. Purpose

The Padel Federation of Ireland (PFI) is committed to maintaining the highest standards of integrity, fairness, respect and professionalism across all aspects of the sport.

As the National Governing Body for padel in Ireland, PFI recognises that disputes, grievances and disciplinary matters may arise from time to time involving members, affiliated clubs, coaches, officials, volunteers, athletes, committees, employees or Board members.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Promote fair, transparent and consistent decision-making.
- Protect the rights of all parties involved in a dispute.
- Ensure compliance with the Governance Code for Sport.

Support positive working and sporting relationships.

Provide an independent appeals mechanism where appropriate.

PFI is committed to resolving issues as early, fairly and efficiently as possible.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Affiliated clubs.
- Individual members.
- Players.
- Coaches.
- Officials and umpires.
- Volunteers.
- Committee members.
- Board members.
- Employees and contractors of PFI.

Participants in PFI sanctioned competitions and events.

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

PFI Constitution.

Code of Conduct.

Safeguarding Policies.

Competition Regulations.

Club Affiliation Regulations.

Any applicable employment policies.

3. Principles

PFI will ensure that all disciplinary, grievance and dispute matters are managed in accordance with:

- Natural justice.
- Procedural fairness.

Confidentiality.

Timeliness.

Proportionality.

Transparency.

Respect for all parties.

No person shall be subject to disciplinary action without being given an opportunity to respond to any allegation made against them.

4. Definitions

Grievance

A grievance is a concern, complaint or dissatisfaction raised by an individual or organisation regarding actions, decisions, conduct or treatment within PFI.

Dispute

A dispute is a disagreement between two or more parties relating to the administration, governance, operation or sporting activities of PFI.

Disciplinary Matter

A disciplinary matter arises where an individual or organisation is alleged to have breached:

The PFI Constitution.

PFI Code of Conduct.

Competition Regulations.

Safeguarding requirements.

Any policy, rule or regulation adopted by PFI.

5. Informal Resolution

PFI encourages parties, where appropriate, to attempt to resolve issues informally before invoking formal procedures.

Informal resolution may include:

- Direct discussion.
- Facilitated meetings.
- Mediation.

Intervention by an appropriate committee or designated officer.

Where informal resolution is unsuccessful, a formal complaint may be submitted.

6. Formal Complaints Procedure

A complaint must:

- Be submitted in writing.
- Clearly outline the nature of the complaint.
- Include relevant facts, evidence and supporting information.
- Be submitted within a reasonable period of the incident occurring.

The CEO shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint and determine the appropriate process for investigation.

Where a complaint concerns the CEO, the complaint shall be referred directly to the President and Board.

Where a complaint concerns the President or a Board member, the complaint shall be referred to the Competition, Disciplinary and Child Welfare Committee or an independent investigator appointed by the Board.

7. Investigation Process

PFI may appoint an investigator or investigation panel as appropriate.

The investigation process may include:

- Receipt of complaint.
- Preliminary assessment.
- Collection of evidence.
- Interviews with relevant parties.

- Opportunity for all parties to respond.
- Preparation of findings.

Recommendation to the appropriate decision-making body.

All parties shall be treated fairly and given reasonable opportunity to present their position.

8. Disciplinary Procedure

Where a breach is established, disciplinary measures may include:

- Verbal warning.
- Formal verbal warning.
- Written warning.
- Final written warning.
- Suspension.
- Removal from a committee or official role.
- Suspension of membership.
- Expulsion from membership.
- Any other sanction deemed appropriate by PFI.

The sanction imposed shall be proportionate to the nature and seriousness of the breach.

9. Employee Disciplinary Matters

The CEO shall be responsible for managing employee disciplinary matters in accordance with Irish employment legislation and PFI employment policies.

Employees shall:

- Be informed of allegations against them.

Be entitled to representation.

Be given an opportunity to respond.

Receive written confirmation of any disciplinary outcome.

The Board shall oversee disciplinary matters involving the CEO.

10. Competition, Disciplinary and Child Welfare Committee

The Competition, Disciplinary and Child Welfare Committee shall:

Consider disciplinary matters referred to it.

Conduct hearings where required.

Make recommendations to the Board.

Ensure compliance with safeguarding obligations.

Monitor adherence to competition regulations.

The Committee shall operate independently and fairly in all matters before it.

11. Appeals

Any person or organisation subject to a disciplinary decision may appeal in writing within twenty-one (21) days of receiving the decision.

Appeals must be based on one or more of the following grounds:

Procedural irregularity.

New evidence.

Disproportionate sanction.

Error in interpretation of rules or regulations.

Appeals shall be considered by an Appeals Panel appointed by the Board, whose members shall have had no prior involvement in the matter.

12. Independent Dispute Resolution

PFI recognises the importance of independent dispute resolution within Irish sport.

Where appropriate, disputes may be referred to:

- Sport Dispute Solutions Ireland (SDSI)
 - SDSI provides independent mediation and arbitration services for sporting disputes.
- PFI recognises the jurisdiction of SDSI in accordance with its rules and procedures.

Where disputes are referred to arbitration through SDSI, the resulting arbitral award shall be final and binding upon the parties, subject only to any appeal rights provided under SDSI rules or applicable sporting regulations.

13. Confidentiality

All parties involved in a grievance, disciplinary matter or dispute shall respect the confidentiality of the process.

Information shall only be shared where necessary to investigate, determine or resolve the matter.

14. Record Keeping

PFI shall maintain secure records of:

- Complaints.
- Investigations.

Hearings.

Decisions.

Appeals.

Sanctions.

Records shall be maintained in accordance with applicable data protection legislation.

15. Policy Review

This policy shall be reviewed by the Board at least every two years, or earlier where required by legislation, Sport Ireland governance requirements, or operational need.

Source of reference: Sport Ireland Governance Code Resources -
<https://www.sportireland.ie/GovernanceCode/Resources/>