



Man O'War GFC

Complaints and Discipline Procedure

Created By	MOW Executive
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1.0 Introduction

Man O'War GFC strives to uphold and promote positive relationships and the highest standards of conduct at all times among our club community, in line with club policies and the regulations of the joint GAA and LGFA Associations.

Where issues arise, it is expected and recommended that the majority of disagreements and complaints can and will be resolved informally between the relevant parties or through mediation. This formal Complaints and Discipline procedure will apply to cases where these approaches do not resolve an issue.

1.1 Aims

The aims of this document are to:

- Outline formal complaints and disciplinary procedures involving members of our Club community.
- Comply with the rules and requirements of the joint Associations.
- Comply with the Association guidelines and the legislation on Child Safeguarding.
- Provide a transparent and helpful process that meets the needs of our Club context.

1.2 Rationale

This document is informed by current GAA rules and guidelines, in particular the Code of Behaviour (Underage), the Official Guide (GAA) and the Official Guide (LGFA). These documents are available at www.gaa.ie and www.lgfa.ie

Sections 5.11.1 and 5.11.2 of the Club Constitution outline the remit of the disciplinary and appeals process.

All adult and juvenile playing and non-playing members of Man O'War GFC commit to the Code of Behaviour (Underage) as part of their annual membership registration on www.foireann.ie and are expected to uphold this Code at all times. The Club Executive holds the same expectations for behaviour among the wider Man O'War GFC community, even if they do not hold club membership.

1.3 Roles and Responsibilities

- The Club Chairperson will oversee the implementation of the procedures.
- The Club Secretary will process correspondence regarding the complaint.
- The Hearings Committee has responsibility for investigating complaints and making a recommendation to the Executive Committee.
- The Hearings Committee Chairperson will oversee the investigation and hearings process.
- The Hearings Committee Secretary will assist with all scheduling and record keeping.
- The Club Executive will decide on the outcome of any disciplinary hearings, including any disciplinary action.
- The Children's Officer (as stated in the Code of Behaviour) may play a role in cases for complaints involving persons under the age of 18 years or vulnerable adults and
 - may be called upon to facilitate a Hearings Committee, although not in membership of that Committee
 - may deal with an alleged breach of the Code of Behaviour in an informal manner.

1.4 Timescale

While it is not realistic to specify exact timescales for each stage of the process, all actions will be completed as expeditiously as possible.

The Club Executive will aim for a target of eight weeks from the date of receipt of the written complaint until the conclusion of all Club actions.

Apart from exceptional circumstances, this timescale should not exceed three months.

1.5 Allegations of Abuse (Child Safeguarding)

This process does not apply to allegations of abuse for persons under the age of 18 years or vulnerable adults, as defined in the Child Safeguarding procedures and legislation. These allegations will be processed separately using the "Guidance for Dealing with and Reporting Allegations or Concerns of Abuse" in the current version of the Code of Behaviour (Underage).

Allegations of abuse should be forwarded to the club's Designated Liaison Person (DLP). Contact details for the current DLP are available on the club website and on the clubhouse notice boards.

1.6 Complaints Concerning Persons Under 18 years or Vulnerable Adults

If a complaint or disciplinary hearing involves a person under the age of 18 years or a vulnerable adult as the Complainant or Respondent, that person must always be accompanied to any meetings or hearings by one parent/guardian, or the meeting cannot proceed.

All Club correspondence will be sent to the parent/guardian only.

It is recommended that the Club Secretary will inform the Children's Officer in writing immediately if a formal complaint concerns a person under the age of 18 years or a vulnerable adult. The Children's Officer can offer guidance to the family and instructions on procedures to the Club Executive, as appropriate, and in line with the "Dealing with Alleged Breaches of the Code of Behaviour (Underage)" guidelines in the Code of Behaviour.

2.0 Complaints

2.1 Scope

This process concerns complaints about members of the Man O'War GFC club community only, including club members (playing and non-playing), officers and committee members, team coaches/mentors/managers and regular supporters and visitors.

Complaints may cover allegations of infringements of the Code of Behaviour, the Official Guide or Club policies as well as conduct deemed to harm the operations or reputation of the Club or the Associations.

Complaints will be accepted from club members (playing and non-playing), the relevant County Board, other Association clubs strictly via their Club Secretary only, members of the public, statutory bodies, and other relevant parties.

The Club Executive has no remit to apply these procedures to a person who is not a member of the Club community.

If a complaint concerns a member or official of another Association club or County Board, the Club Executive will assess whether it is appropriate for the Club Executive to formally forward the complaint to that organisation on behalf of the Complainant. The Club Secretary will inform the Complainant in writing of the decision.

2.2 Complaints Procedures

Complaints will only be accepted in writing to the Club Secretary at secretary.manowar.dublin@gaa.ie.

1. Verbal complaints will not be accepted.
2. Anonymous complaints will not be accepted.
3. Written complaints should clearly specify the name and contact details of the Complainant, the date, time and location of the alleged incident, the name of the alleged Respondent, the names of other parties and witnesses and a description of the alleged incident.
4. The Children's Officer may decide to escalate an unresolved complaint they have been dealing with informally to the Club Secretary and will do so in writing.

3.0 Investigations and Disciplinary Hearings

3.1 Procedures

When the Club Secretary receives a written complaint, they will, in the first instance, contact the Complainant in person to discuss whether they have exhausted informal and/or mediation routes before engaging with the formal complaints process and whether they have all the relevant information.

- the Complainant will be directed to this Complaints and Discipline procedure document, which will be available on the Club web site.
 - The Complainant will be referred to the Children's Officer for guidance if they have not previously done so, where appropriate.
1. If the Complainant confirms that they wish to proceed with the written complaint, it will be acknowledged in writing by the Club Secretary.
 2. The Club Secretary will refer the complaint to the Club Chairperson.
 3. The Club Chairperson will assemble a Hearings Committee (see Sections 3.3 and 3.4 below). All participants will be instructed that they are bound by confidentiality.
 4. The Club Chairperson will notify the Club Executive that a Hearings Committee has been convened at the next scheduled meeting but will uphold confidentiality where possible.
 5. It would be strongly recommended that, with due consideration to appropriate etiquette and respectful relationships in our club context, the Club Chairperson will inform both the Complainant and the Respondent that a Hearings Committee has been convened in advance of any contact being made by the Hearings Committee.
 6. The Hearings Committee should consult with the "Dealing with Alleged Breaches of the Code of Behaviour (Underage)" guidelines in the Code of Behaviour.
 7. The Hearings Committee will appoint a Hearings Committee Chairperson, who is responsible for overseeing the process.
 8. The Hearings Committee will appoint a Hearings Committee Secretary, who will coordinate the scheduling of meetings and documentation.
 9. The Hearings Committee Chairperson will advise the Respondent of the allegation in writing.
 10. The Hearings Committee will conduct an investigation and may inquire into any matters it deems relevant to the complaint and require the Complainant, Respondent and any relevant persons to meet with the Committee.
 11. The Hearings Committee will meet with each party separately.
 12. All meetings should be held in the Clubhouse unless there are exceptional circumstances.
 13. While meetings will generally be in person, the Hearings Committee has the discretion to conduct meetings using an approved GAA video conferencing system.
 14. The Hearings Committee, having carried out its investigation of the complaint, will prepare a written report and recommendation for the Club Executive.
 15. The Hearings Committee Chairperson will forward this report and all case notes to the Club Chairperson. The Hearings Committee will not retain any records.
 16. The Club Executive will decide on the sanction to apply, if any, and advise the Respondent of this in writing. Sanctions may include a request for an apology, re-compensation, a warning, suspension, or expulsion.
 17. The Respondent will be advised of the Appeals procedure with the relevant County Board, as provided for in the Club Constitution.
 18. The Club Secretary will inform the Complainant in writing of the decision of the Club Executive.

3.2 Appeals

As per the Club Constitution, any club member who has been expelled, suspended, warned, or fined or whose rights of membership have been withheld, restricted or suspended will have the right to appeal to the relevant committee of the relevant County Board within seven days of being notified of such decision.

The Club Executive will accede to the Appeals processes of the relevant County Board.

3.3 Hearings Panel

The Club Executive will identify at least six club members (playing or non-playing), aged 18 years or older, who are not members of the Club Executive at the time of selection and who are willing to participate on a Hearings Panel. The panel should have a gender balance, with a minimum of two male candidates and two female candidates.

The Children's Officer is not permitted to participate on the Hearings Panel.

The Hearings Panel will remain in place for three years. If members of the panel become permanently unavailable or ineligible, the Club Executive should seek eligible replacement members for the remainder of the panel's term.

Members of the Hearings Panel can be re-appointed to subsequent panels.

All appointments will be recorded in the Club Executive meeting minutes.

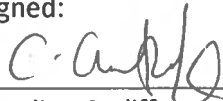
3.4 Hearings Committee

The Club Chairperson will appoint a Hearings Committee for each case, consisting of three members from the Hearings Panel. There must be at least one male and one female member on the committee. If three members of the Hearings Panel are not available or eligible for a particular case, the Club Chairperson will appoint replacement members from the Club Executive.

Anyone from the Hearings Panel or Club Executive who has a potential conflict of interest is not eligible to participate on the Hearings Committee for that particular case. This includes the following relationships with either the Complainant or Respondent: relative, partner, neighbour, friend, team coach/mentor/manager, employee, or employer. This also includes a person who holds a role in a Statutory Body or County Board that could lead to a future conflict of interest should the particular case be escalated to the relevant Statutory Body or County Board.

The club's Executive Committee will be responsible for ensuring the guiding principles outlined in this policy are implemented and followed by all club members.

Signed:



Caroline Cutliffe
Chairperson

Date: 18.3.25



Tom Hoare
Secretary

Date: 18/03/2025

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