



Olney RFC

Discipline Policy and Procedures

Scope of Policy

The disciplinary policy exists to deal with issues arising from:

- Incidents occurring on the field of play reported through the RFU process (such as red cards);
- Incidents that have occurred where Club Members, supporters or spectators have been in breach of the Club's Codes of Conduct, The Club's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy or the Club's Safeguarding Children Policy;
- Any other matters referred by the main committee of the Club or the Club Discipline Secretary.

It is the Club's responsibility to deal with any act of indiscipline on the field of play by players, and/or any of their supporters and spectators on the touch line, or any club member who at any time uses threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour towards any other member, match official or visitor to the club or in any way brings the club or the game into disrepute; such behaviour is deemed to include that which is displayed or communicated through the use of technology including e-mail, telephone, voicemail, internet and other communication platforms such as social media including Twitter, Facebook, Instagram or website forums.

Any member, whether player/supporter/spectator will have a right to the Club appeals procedure following any penalty imposed.

This Policy is to be read in conjunction with the [RFU Disciplinary Regulations](#)

1. DISCIPLINE PROCEDURE

The following outlines the procedure to be followed where an act of alleged indiscipline has taken place:

Red Cards

1.1 Player sent off (Red Cards) by the referee (Society or Club)

The Manager/Coach of the team concerned **MUST** report the name, contact detail and playing position of the player sent off, the match including the opposition and any relevant details to the Club Discipline Secretary within **24 hours** of the sending off.

In the case of **Youth Players (those who are 17 years old at the time of the offence/incident) and are playing in a club adult match, U19 or U'20 match the same procedure will apply.** With the coach or manager of that team reporting the name, age, DoB playing position, contact details of the player concerned, the referee's name and society (if any) and the opposition and any relevant match details to the Club Discipline Secretary.

This is important as it is mandatory that the Club Secretary has to report the incident to the Constituent Body Discipline Secretary (CBDS) within 72 hours of the incident.

Referees (Society or Club) must in all adult matches report all players sent off to the CBDS on the **RFU Discipline Report form**.

For all incidents involving Female and Junior players, playing in club matches from U13 to and including U18, the Society appointed referee will send the report form to the CBDS who will forward to the Club for appropriate disciplinary action. Club referees must send the report to the Club Discipline Secretary and the Mini & Junior Chairman within 48 hours of the incident. However, a lack of a referee's report should not prevent a case being heard nor should it delay the case by more than 72 hours.

The Club Discipline Secretary has the power, at his discretion, to impose a temporary suspension from playing matches until the outcome of the Constituent Body Disciplinary hearing or Club Disciplinary Panel hearing is known. Any such suspension, if judged to be appropriate, should be taken into account in any sanction imposed.

Yellow Cards

1.2 Player Sin Binned for foul play and/or abuse of match officials (Yellow Cards) by the referee (Society or Club)

The Manager of the team must report the name of any player sin binned (shown a yellow card) during a game for foul play or abuse of match officials (this relates to all teams and is irrespective of there being a Society or Club referee officiating) to the Club Discipline Secretary within 24 hours following the sin binning.

A record of players being sin binned for foul play will be kept by the Club Discipline Secretary. Any player, who in the opinion of the Club Discipline Secretary, has an excessive amount of yellow cards will be asked to appear before that Discipline Panel to explain the reasons why.

In the case of **Junior Players** the coach or manager of the relevant team should report the name of the player sin binned for foul play to the Mini & Junior Chairman who will keep a record.

Undetected Foul Play

1.3 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 club team), can report the incident giving name(s) and details of the incident to the Club Discipline Secretary 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 *Olney RFC* player/member can be

reported to the Club Discipline Secretary without delay so consideration and action can be taken if appropriate.

In the case of **Junior Players** the report should be given to the Mini & Junior Chairman

A Citing may be initiated where there is an allegation that a player committed an act of foul play but has not been awarded a red card for that act. The citing must be in writing, stating:

- The date, venue and teams participating in the match;
- Details of the alleged act of foul play, including as accurately as possible the point of time in the match, score at the time and position on the field when and where the incident is alleged to have occurred;
- The identity of (or means of identifying) the player or players alleged to be guilty of foul play; and
- Sufficient evidence to establish a prima facie case.

Only Unions, Constituent Bodies and Clubs or an accredited Referee Assessor/Advisor may cite, not a player or a spectator.

Any consideration for a Citing must be reported to the Club Discipline Secretary immediately as there is a very short time scale and a detailed procedure that has to be followed. [See RFU Regulation 19, Appendix 4](#)

Bad Behaviour and acts detrimental to the game and/or Olney RFC

Acts of Bad Behaviour by Players, Members, Spectators, Supporters or Visitors

1.4 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 Discipline Secretary or any member of the Club Committee so the appropriate action can be taken. This complaint must be made within 72 hours from the alleged incident.

1.5 In the event if it being alleged that any Olney RFC Club Member has acted in breach of any of the Club Rules, or has acted in a manner prejudicial to the interests of Olney RFC, the Club Discipline Secretary will arrange for the allegation to be investigated.

1.6 If on investigation, there appears to the Club Discipline Secretary to be substance to the allegation, he shall appoint a minimum of 3 to form a discipline panel to consider the allegation and adjudicate on it. The member against whom the allegation is made must be given the opportunity to appear before the Discipline Panel and give evidence or make representations to it. If, on the balance of probabilities, the Discipline Panel is satisfied that the allegation is proven, the Discipline Panel is empowered to impose such penalties as it thinks appropriate, including expulsion.

1.7 Members, against whom an allegation of the nature referred to in 1.5 above has been proven, have the right to appeal against the Discipline Panel's findings to an Appeal Panel.

2. THE DISCIPLINE PANEL

A discipline panel will be convened by the Club Discipline Secretary. The Discipline Panel will be responsible for investigating and taking action on any sending off, or any incident of foul play or bad behaviour by an Olney RFC player not detected by the Match Officials and instances where a player has been sin binned for foul play an excessive number of times.

The Discipline Panel will also investigate and take action on any instance of Indiscipline, bad behaviour, acts in breach of any of the Club Rules or acts prejudicial to the interests of Olney RFC by any Olney RFC member, supporter or spectator.

The Discipline Panel will exercise such power in a fair and open manner with the accused always having a right to attend and put his/her case after first been given reasonable notice of the hearing and to exercise its power without prejudice.

The Discipline Panel

2.1 The Discipline Panel for a hearing will be drawn from at least 3 of the following:

- The Club Chairman
- The Chairman of the Playing Committee
- The Club Safeguarding Officer
- The Mini & Junior Chairman
- The Hon Secretary
- The Hon Treasurer
- The Club President
- Director of the Club

In the event of unavailability of the above officers of the club the Club Chairman will appoint a suitably experienced member of the club to sit on the Discipline Panel.

For junior members the Mini & Junior Chairman, or his representative, must be a member of the panel.

The Club Discipline Secretary will attend all meetings of the panel acting as first officer to the panel, presenting cases, recording outcomes and reasons for decisions and offering procedural and other advice. However, the Club Discipline Secretary is not part of the decision making process.

Such a panel will meet within five (5) days of the act of indiscipline, offence or incident in question. Further meetings may be held if circumstances require this.

The meeting may be held remotely using an appropriate video link where all can take part.

The reported player, member, supporter or spectator **MUST** attend the discipline hearing. He/she may, if they wish, be supported and/or represented by one person of his/her choice.

The Committee may also receive evidence (either verbally or in writing) from any other person(s) who witnessed the incident or was involved in it.

Persons attending the Hearing

2.2 Those present at a discipline hearing will be:

- The player, member, supporter or spectator.
- His/her representative.
- Witness(es) to the incident.
- Club Discipline Secretary
- The Discipline Panel members.

Procedure at the Hearing

2.3 Procedure

It should be borne in mind that neither a Disciplinary Panel nor an Appeal Panel is a court of law! In the interests of achieving a just and fair result, procedural and technical considerations must take second place to the paramount object of being just and fair to all parties as is consistent to a duty to the game.

The hearing will be conducted at the discretion of the Disciplinary Panel and normally in the following order:

- The referee's report will be read, or details of the alleged conduct or the citing explained;
- The person or player will be asked if the allegations are admitted;
- If the allegations are not admitted the Referee (if present) will be invited to comment upon his report; or the Club Discipline Secretary will be invited to comment on any investigation that has been undertaken into the alleged incident;
- Questions can be put to each witness upon conclusion of his/her evidence at the request of the person or player or by any member of the Disciplinary Panel
- Witnesses supporting the allegation will be heard
- Questions can be put to each witness upon conclusion of his/her evidence at the request of the person or player or by any member of the Disciplinary Panel
- The person or player against whom the allegations are made may present evidence and witnesses in rebuttal;
- Questions can be put to each witness upon conclusion of his/her evidence by any member of the Disciplinary Panel;
- The person, player, witnesses and others will be asked to retire to allow the Disciplinary Panel to come to a finding of fact based on the balance of probabilities (The Club Discipline Secretary will remain to advise the Panel and record outcomes but will not a member of the Panel and their decision making deliberations);
- Evidence of the player's previous disciplinary record will not be given until after the finding of fact has been made;
- The Disciplinary Panel will consider an appropriate sanction if any in line with RFU recommended sanctions;
- The person or player and their representative as appropriate will be recalled or notified of the finding of fact and sanction if any.
- The person or player should be reminded of their right to appeal which must be submitted to the Club Discipline Secretary within 7 days.

The Discipline Panel for junior hearings will in principle follow this format but usually with less formality. However; the age etc of the person must always be taken into account in the way the hearing is conducted.

Hearings will be conducted in accordance with the [RFU Regulations](#).

Sanctions

2.4 Sanctions

The Club Discipline Panel will have the power to decide upon one or more of the following:

RFU REGULATION 19 - DISCIPLINE (APPENDIX 2) Sanction Entry Points. It states the various entry points based on the scale and seriousness of the player's conduct.

- No further punishment additional to the punishment of sending off.
- To take no action but to leave the matter to the Constituent Body Discipline Panel.
- That the player (or other, person if the enquiry is into incidents off the field of play) be cautioned or severely cautioned as to his/her future conduct with a written warning.
- A fixed term period of suspension of meaningful games from playing, or taking part in the administration of Rugby Union Football (within the Club context only), or both, be imposed on the player, member, supporter or spectator.
- Suspend or terminate membership of the club for such period as it thinks fit.
- A financial penalty to cover part or all of damages to club premises or property.
- Any other penalties or suspensions as decided by the Panel.

A record of any penalty awarded against any player/supporter/spectator etc, plus the reasons how that decision was arrived at by the Club Discipline Panel will be kept on file. This penalty can be taken into account when deciding any future penalties at any subsequent discipline hearing relating to that member.

Costs

Any costs reasonably incurred to hold the hearing by the Club or the Constituent Body may, at the Club Discipline Panel or Discipline Secretary's discretion, be charged to the individual concerned. The Club will invoice the player for the said amount. Failure to pay the Club will result in the player being banned from playing any further matches or use any club facilities until the levy is paid in full. If a player leaves consequent to not paying the costs they will not be entitled to a refund of their annual subscription.

A member/player/supporter/spectator has the right to an appeal process as outlined in sections 5 as appropriate.

3. JUNIOR DISCIPLINE

The Club also has a duty to deal with all Junior Discipline matters. **Junior being a player from U13 to U18 at the time of the offence, providing the player is playing in an U17 or U18 club match. Any player who has reached their 17th birthday and is playing in either an U19, U'20 or adult match is classed as an adult and will therefore be dealt with under the procedure outlined in section 1 above.**

Discipline matters for any player **U12 or below** will be dealt with by the head coach of the age group. An education approach shall be used in conjunction with appropriate sanctions.

Red Cards

3.1 Player sent off (Red Cards) by the referee (Society or Club)

In the case of Junior 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 relevant match details to the Club Discipline Secretary and Mini & Junior Chairman within 24 hours of the incident.

This is important as the Club Discipline Secretary will need to liaise with the Constituent Body County Youth Discipline Secretary (CBAGDS) within 72 hours of the incident.

If a player is Sent Off or cited in a club youth match, that player's Club Discipline Secretary (via the club disciplinary panel) shall be responsible for taking disciplinary action against him or her, under the guidance of the CBAGDS. Unless it is contested Citing.

The Club Discipline Secretary should receive the Referee's Report before he or she takes any further action. However, the lack of a referee's report should not prevent a case being heard, nor should it delay the case by more than 72 hours, as delays in proceedings should be kept to an absolute minimum.

Referees (Society or Club) who red card a player who has reached 17 years of age (and is playing in an U19, U'20 or adult match) must send the report to the Discipline Secretary of the County Constituent Body of that players club.

For all incidents involving Junior players, playing in club matches at any age group below and including U18, the referee (Society or Club) should send the report form to the Club Discipline Secretary or Mini & Junior Chairman within 48 hours of the incident.

All reports should be on the [RFU Discipline Report form](#). Copies of this and other forms for referees are available on the RFU Website. [Referee Forms](#)

Yellow Cards

3.2 Player Sin Binned for foul play (Yellow Card) by a referee (Society or Club)

In the case of Junior Players the manager of the relevant team should report the name of the player sin binned (shown a yellow card) to the Mini & Junior Chairman.

A record of players who have been sin binned will be kept by the Mini & Junior Chairman. Any player who has been **sin binned more than twice** in a season for foul play will be asked to appear before the Discipline Panel.

Bad Behaviour

3.3 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 Mini & Junior Chairman who will consult with the Chairman of the Club and Club Discipline Secretary so the appropriate action can be taken.

Bullying

3.4. Acts of Bullying

Bullying of any kind is not acceptable in any form or at any age at Olney RUFC. Any instances will be taken seriously, responded to promptly, and procedures followed to deal with the situation.

Rugby is a 'telling' culture and anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to report it to the Club Safeguarding Officer. S/he will follow the guidelines as outlined in the RFU Anti Bullying Policy.

It is the responsibility of every adult working in rugby union to ensure that everyone, adults and all young people can enjoy the sport in a safe, enjoyable environment.

Verbal or physical abuse of match officials, club officers or volunteers in carrying out their duties on behalf of the Club and game will not be tolerated.

4. DISCIPLINE PANEL FOR JUNIOR HEARINGS

The Discipline Panel for junior hearings will follow the format as in section 2 above however; the age etc of the person will be taken into account in the way the hearing is conducted. The panel must consider the child's emotional wellbeing throughout the hearing. Children at Under 12 and younger will not appear before a panel but will be heard by the team coach and the Mini & Junior Chairman or his representative.

4.1 The members of the Discipline Panel for junior hearings will consist of 3 of the club officers in 2.1 above. However the Mini & Junior Chairman, or his representative, must be a member of the panel.

The Junior member should be accompanied by a parent/guardian and can be represented by an adult of his/her choosing. In addition it would be appropriate for the player's team coach to be present in support.

Sanctions

4.2 Sanctions

RFU REGULATION 19 – DISCIPLINE (APPENDIX 6) A list of recommended sanctions for Junior players (Under 18 years of age: Age Grade Rugby Regulations)

A record of the penalty awarded against any Junior player (if any), plus the reasons how that decision was arrived at by the Discipline Panel will be kept on file. This penalty can be taken into account when deciding any future penalties at any subsequent discipline hearing relating to that member (in the case of a player this is restricted to the age of 18 when the provisions relating to adults will apply).

The Club Discipline Secretary should inform the CBAGDS of any decision taken, within 7 days of the sending off /citing incident.

The CBAGDS may review sanctions imposed by schools or clubs on his own motion. If the club imposes what appears to be an unduly lenient sanction, they will be asked to review this and then justify it to the CBAGDS.

The details of any sanction will be also be sent to the school of the player involved. The Club will expect the school to support any sanction. The Club will support any sanction imposed by the school. The parent or guardian is expected to inform the Mini & Junior Chairman and team manager/coach of any sanction imposed by the school within 24 hours of the sanction being imposed.

A Junior player has the right to an appeal process as outlined in section 5.

5. APPEALS

Players reported by a match official

5.1 Players Reported by a Match Official

Any senior male, female or Junior player (who has reached their 17th birthday and were playing in an adult or U19 Colts match when the offence occurred) who has been reported by a match official has the right of appeal against the club's Discipline Panels decision to the club's Appeal Panel.

Non Playing Members or Players not reported by a Match Official

5.2 Non Playing Members or Players not reported by a Match Official

All other members, senior or Junior or any player dealt with by the club Discipline Panel for an offence not detected by a match official have a right of appeal to the club's Appeal Panel.

Lodging an appeal

5.3 Notice of any such appeal must be lodged with the Club Discipline Secretary within 7 days of the date on which the written notification of the decision of the Discipline Panel was given. The appeal will be held within the following 7 days.

5.4 A deposit of up to £50 towards the cost of any reasonably incurred expense of conducting the appeal hearing will be lodged with the notice of appeal. The amount of deposit will be determined by the Club Discipline Secretary. In the event of a successful appeal all of the deposit will be returned. If the appeal is unsuccessful the member will, in addition to any penalty imposed pay to Olney RFC the costs reasonably incurred by Olney RFC in hearing the appeal.

5.5 Any penalties imposed by the original Discipline Panel will be suspended pending the determination of the appeal

5.6 The Appeal Panel will afford to the Member against whom the allegation is found proven the opportunity to appear before the Appeal Panel and provide evidence or make representations to it.

5.7 The Appeal Panel are given the power to confirm, vary, or set aside the decision of any penalties imposed by the original Discipline Panel.

5.8 Any financial compensation for damages will be payable within 7 days of receipt of the written notification of the Discipline panel or, as the case may be, the Appeal Panel.

5.9 A member who refuses to adhere to the Panel's decisions, or, who fails to pay such financial compensation, will automatically be suspended from membership of Olney RFC and denied all the membership benefits until the penalties are adhered to.

Appeal Panel

5.10 An Appeal Panel comprising at least 3 people appointed for the purpose by the President (or in his absence or incapacity ~ the Chairman of the Club), none of whom served on the first hearing by the original Discipline Panel and who have not been involved with nor in the alleged incident. Those eligible to sit on the Appeal Panel shall include those persons as described at 2.1 above and/or any other full member of the Club appointed for this specific purpose by the President.

The Appeal Panel may uphold the Discipline Panel judgement, it may increase or decrease the length of any period of suspension or it may annul the judgement. The result of any appeal will be kept on file as outlined above.

6. COSTS

It is the club's policy that any such costs reasonably incurred to hold the appeal hearing **MUST be paid by the individual concerned and therefore the Club will invoice the player for the said amount.** Failure to pay the club will result in the player being banned from playing any further matches or use any club facilities until the levy is paid in full. If a player leaves consequent to not paying the costs they will not be entitled to a refund of their annual subscription.

REFERENCES

[Relative Laws of the Game](#): Laws 6 & 10

[World Rugby Regulations 17 & 20](#) (www.world.rugby)

[Discipline Regulations](#))

[R.F.U. Rule 12](#)

[Recommended Adult Sanctions](#) (Appendix 2 of the Discipline Regulations)

[Recommended Age Grade Sanctions](#) (Appendix 6 of the Discipline Regulations)

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