



IRISH PONY CLUB/LOUTH HUNT PONY CLUB COMPLAINTS, DISCIPLINARY AND APPEALS PROCEDURES

The Code of Ethics adopted by the Irish Pony Club includes a Policy Statement and a Code of Conduct for Members, Parents and Officials. The Irish Pony Club is committed to providing the best possible environment for all young people involved in sport. The Irish Pony Club also has a duty to care for volunteers working with its members on behalf of the organisation. The Irish Pony Club expects appropriate behaviour from all members, parents, guardians and others participating in any Pony Club activity. Without prejudice to the generality to the foregoing the following shall be deemed to be inappropriate behaviour:

- Possession, use or distribution of any illegal drugs or alcohol
- Profanity, base &/or vulgar language or gestures
- Harassment/Bullying including cyber bullying— using words, actions, text messages, social media comments etc. that intimidate, threaten or persecute others before, during or following Pony Club activities.
- Failure to follow rules and or obey instructions.
- Cheating (deliberate attempt to circumvent or undermine the spirit or letter of the rules as is deemed by the Committee, in accordance with accepted good practice and in conformity with the written rules).
- Abusing a horse/pony, and or any other animal.
- Dishonesty (statement or endorsement of an untruth) and or theft.

Any conduct/action not befitting or in breach of Pony Club ethos by a member, parent, guardian, instructor, official or committee member can be considered by the Disciplinary Committee.

Under this Code the Irish Pony Club has developed a Complaints, Disciplinary and Appeals Procedure. This Procedure covers three distinct areas:

- Difficulties or disputes which arise regarding the behaviour of members, officials, parents, guardians and others.
- Complaints by members, their parents/guardians, and/or officials regarding any issue about which they are in dispute.
- Difficulties or disputes which arise at competitions or as a result of competition. (These are covered separately in each Competition Rule Book).

Disciplinary Procedures

Irish Pony Club Officials are instructed to abide by the following procedure:

1. **First incident** of inappropriate/unacceptable behaviour/breach of IPC Code of Conduct or Rules:

♣ This incident should be reported to the DC or Chief Steward or Member of the Executive Committee who may issue a verbal warning and catalogue same in Branch records or Chief Steward competition report. IPC Code of Ethics 6 Updated Dec 2006

2. **Second Incident**

♣ Issue a formal, witnessed, second verbal warning. This action should be reported to the District Commissioner who in turn reports the matter to the Area Representative concerned, and formally records this fact.

3. **Third incident**

♣ A written warning is issued by the District Commissioner or Member of the Executive Committee referring to this and previous incidents. Area Representative, Executive Committee and HQ to be advised.

4. **Fourth incident**

♣ May incur suspension from Irish Pony Club activities. This action will be decided upon by the Executive Committee of the Irish Pony Club on advisement from the Disciplinary Committee.

♣ Before such action (No. 4 above) is taken, the conduct of the member or adult or other person shall be inquired into by the District Commissioner and the Branch Committee and he/she shall be given a full opportunity to defend himself/herself, and to offer explanation for his/her conduct. There must be seven or more of the Branch Committee present when the matter is discussed. If they are of the opinion that the member, adult or other person in question has been guilty of misconduct and that such member, adult or other person has failed to offer a reasonable and acceptable explanation, the majority of the Branch Committee shall forthwith inform the Executive Committee who may enforce the expulsion as in No. 4 above.

♣ The Executive Committee shall within one week, notify such member, adult or other person of its decision in writing. Such notification to be sent by registered post to the last known address of such member and his or her parent, adult or other person, and shall also register a copy with the Secretary of the Irish Pony Club.

♣ Any person who is dissatisfied with the decision of the District Commissioner and Branch Committee or Disciplinary Committee or Executive Committee shall have the right to appeal to the Executive Committee of the Irish Pony Club. Such Notice of Appeal shall be in writing, setting out the grounds of appeal and shall be sent by registered post to the Secretary of the IPC within seven days of the receipt by such person of the decision.

♣ In the event of a member being expelled, such member shall forthwith forfeit all privileges and membership rights.

The Disciplinary Committee is appointed by the Executive Committee, who will consist of three of the following:

The President of the Irish Pony Club

The Chairman of the Irish Pony Club

Member of the Executive Committee

Branch District Commissioner

IPC Sub Committee Member (SJ, Dr. Tetrathlon, Mounted Games, Horse Trials, Hunter Trials etc.) IPC Code of Ethics 7 Updated Dec 2006 Parent/guardian of a Member of the Irish Pony Club .

The Chairman of the Irish Pony Club may appoint any additional person(s) who has in his/her opinion expertise in dealing with breaches of disciplinary procedures or disputes.

Duties Of The Disciplinary Committee.

- To deal with all matters concerning the conduct of members/parents and officials of the Irish Pony Club, or anyone else who is otherwise connected to the Irish Pony Club.
- Complaints which relate to anything occurring at a Pony Club activity or in direct connection with any activity of the Irish Pony Club.
- The disciplinary committee will deal with complaints, which must be in writing, signed by the authorised person making the complaint and either handed personally to the Chairman of the Irish Pony Club or sent by registered post to the Secretary of the Irish Pony Club. This complaint must be accompanied with any supporting evidence and names of witnesses.
- In addition any person has the right to report unseemly or unworthy conduct of a member or other adult, to the presiding officer of the Irish Pony Club activity in hand.
- The Disciplinary Committee will initiate **an investigation** following a complaint into any incident of reported misconduct that does **not** relate to child abuse. It is important to note that the investigation of suspected child abuse is the responsibility of the statutory authorities/Tusla and should not be undertaken by the Children's Officers or by any other Branch official.

The Disciplinary Committee should inform the Executive Committee of the progress of their investigation. The Disciplinary Committee will furnish the individual with appropriate details of the complaint being made against him/her and afford him/her the opportunity of providing a response either verbally or in writing.

Where it is established that an incident of misconduct has taken place, the Executive Committee will notify the member of any sanction being imposed. This notification will be in writing, setting out the reasons for the sanction. If the member is under 18 years of age, correspondence should be addressed to parents/guardians.

Appeals Committee

If the member/official/adult against whom the complaint was made is unhappy with the decision of the Disciplinary Committee s/he shall have the right to appeal the decision to an **Appeals Committee** (independent of the Disciplinary Committee). Any appeal should be made in writing within a period of two months of the issue of the original decision of the Disciplinary Committee (such period to start from the day following that decision). The Chairperson of an Appeals Committee should be a member of the Executive Committee or a Director of the Irish Pony Club or an Appointee. The Appeals Committee shall be appointed by the Executive Committee when required. It shall be understood that any person(s) hearing an original complaint shall not form part of an Appeals Committee or be involved with the hearing of any subsequent appeal. Terms of reference IPC Code of Ethics 8 Updated Dec 2006 of the Disciplinary and Appeals Committee will be determined and agreed by the Executive Committee.

If a member wishes to make a verbal representation to the Committee, the Committee will require the presence of a guardian over the age of 18 years.

The Appeals Committee will have the power to confirm, set aside or amend any sanction imposed by the Disciplinary Committee.

Sanctions Available To The Disciplinary And Appeals Committee

— Request an apology (whether verbal or written to be decided by the appropriate Committee).

- Eliminate the member from the competition.
- Eliminate the team from the competition.
- Suspend the adult or member for an appropriate period of time (from the Committee, Branch, or activity). Such period of time to be decided by the Disciplinary or Appeals Committee.
- Suspension or expulsion from the Irish Pony Club.

Complaints by members, their parents, and/or officials

- Complaints may be lodged by a member, parent, guardian or official.
- A Complaint must be ***in writing***, addressed to the Secretary of the Branch concerned.
- The complaint should outline all relevant details about other parties involved and any corroborative evidence of misconduct/breach of the Code of Conduct.
- The Secretary will bring the complaint to the attention of the District Commissioner who should convene a meeting of the Branch Committee.
- The Branch Committee will investigate the matter allowing all parties involved a full hearing. They will decide if Disciplinary action is required. The District Commissioner will then inform the Area Representative and the Chairman of the Irish Pony Club and who will decide if a full Disciplinary Hearing is required.
- The Branch Committee or the Disciplinary Committee should hear the evidence from all parties involved and decide if a rule or Code has been breached. They should, inform those involved in writing of the sanctions to be imposed.
- Written notification should be given to parents/guardians if the complaint is against a member under 18 years.
- If any party does not agree with the decision of the Branch or Disciplinary Committee, they may appeal the decision within 10 days.
- The Appeals Committee may confirm, set aside or amend any sanction imposed by the Disciplinary Committee. *IPC Code of Ethics 9 Updated Dec 2006*
- The decision of the Appeals Committee is final and brings the issue in dispute to closure.

Procedure For Dealing With Queries, Objections And Appeals At Competitions

- Competitors, and/or their parents should not approach a Fence Steward to enquire about the marking of a fence.
- Only a District Commissioner or his/her appointed Representative may query the results of a competition at the Secretary's tent. The Chairman of the Sub Committee involved or Chief Steward will explain/investigate any query or question brought to him/her.
- If the DC or his/her representative is unhappy with the explanation they must make an Objection in writing and lodge a deposit of €30, not later than 30 minutes after provisional scores have been posted.
- Queries and/or Objections will only be dealt with on the day of the competition.
- The formal Objection is dealt with by the Chief Steward and/or the Chairman of the Sub Committee.
- Each interested party must receive a fair hearing and be allowed the facility to properly state their case and present all the relevant facts.
- All relevant witnesses must be heard. Judges, Course designers/builder and Stewards who were in the area may be able to give relevant evidence.
- In the case of all formal objections the decision by the Chief Steward/Chairman of the Sub Committee should be given in writing to the Organising Committee and copies to each interested party.

If the competitor and his/her District Commissioner are dissatisfied with the ruling of the Chief Steward/Chairman of the Sub Committee on the objection – s/he has the right to Appeal.

Appeals At Competition

- When the Appeals Committee is called they will first read the decision of the Chief Steward/Chairman of the Sub Committee.
- They then hear the appellant and his witnesses followed by other interested parties and other witnesses.
- The Chief Steward/Chairman of the Sub Committee and the Appeal Committee are entitled to take into account that which they have seen happen. Interested parties may be invited to comment on the facts before a decision is reached.
- The decision of the Appeals Committee should be given in writing to the Organising Committee and copies to each interested party.
- *When a complaint has been adjudicated upon by the Appeals Committee, this decision is final and the matter is closed.*

LHPC February 2018

Date of next review: February 2020