

Wildcats Volleyball Club Discipline and Complaints Policy

1. PURPOSE

Wildcats Volleyball Club (“Wildcats” or the “Club”) is committed to a safe, positive, respectful, inclusive, and sport-focused environment. This Policy establishes a fair, timely and confidential process for receiving, reviewing, investigating and resolving complaints connected to Club programs and activities.

This Policy operates consistently with applicable Ontario Volleyball Association (“OVA”) policies, including its Discipline and Complaints Policy, Code of Conduct and Safe Sport policies. Applicable law and mandatory OVA requirements prevail in the event of a conflict.

2. APPLICATION

This Policy applies to athletes, parents and guardians, coaches, managers, volunteers, directors, officers, employees, contractors, officials where applicable, spectators and other Club participants.

It covers conduct connected to practices, games, tournaments, training, camps, meetings, travel, accommodations, social and fundraising activities, electronic communications, social media, group chats and other circumstances that adversely affect the Club or its participants.

3. EXPECTED STANDARD OF CONDUCT

Participants must follow applicable Wildcats and OVA codes and policies, Volleyball Canada requirements where applicable, the law, and reasonable directions from Club representatives. Everyone must treat athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, parents, spectators and Club representatives with dignity and respect.

4. REPORTING RESPONSIBILITY

Individuals are encouraged to report reasonably suspected policy breaches. For immediate danger, contact emergency services or police first. Suspected child abuse or circumstances requiring mandatory reporting must be reported to the appropriate child protection authority and/or police in accordance with Ontario law. Individuals may also report directly to the OVA or another appropriate authority.

5. COMPLAINTS HANDLED BY WILDCATS

Subject to OVA jurisdiction and seriousness, Wildcats may address disrespectful or unsportsmanlike behaviour, breaches of team rules, inappropriate communications or social media use, disruption, parent or spectator conduct, failure to follow reasonable directions, team conflicts and other minor or moderate Club policy breaches. Less serious matters may be resolved informally.

6. REFERRAL TO OTHER AUTHORITIES

Wildcats may refer abuse, sexual misconduct, grooming, harassment, discrimination, violence, serious bullying, maltreatment, retaliation, abuse of authority, risks to minors, potentially criminal conduct, serious OVA breaches, matters involving several clubs, or matters beyond Club expertise to the OVA, its designated independent process, police, child protection authorities or another appropriate body. Wildcats may refer any matter where independent administration is appropriate.

7. DISCIPLINE AND COMPLAINTS OFFICER

Wildcats will designate a Discipline and Complaints Officer (“DCO”) who is impartial and free of a material conflict. If conflicted, the Club will appoint another qualified person or independent third party. The DCO receives complaints, reviews jurisdiction, selects the process, appoints investigators or panels when needed, maintains procedural fairness, communicates decisions and maintains records.

8. MAKING A COMPLAINT

A complaint should normally be sent in writing to the DCO, identifying the complainant and respondent, the conduct, dates, locations, witnesses, available evidence and requested outcome. A parent or guardian may submit for a minor. Reasonable accommodation may permit another format.

9. TIMELINESS

Complaints should be made as soon as reasonably possible. Delay does not automatically bar a complaint. The DCO may consider seriousness, reasons for delay, available evidence, participants’ interests and safety.

10. INITIAL REVIEW

The DCO may dismiss a matter outside Club jurisdiction, without a potential policy breach, frivolous or vexatious, in bad faith, or already appropriately addressed. The DCO may pursue voluntary informal resolution through discussion, clarification, education, mediation, behavioural expectations, apology or warning; initiate a formal investigation or hearing; or refer the matter to an appropriate authority.

11. INFORMAL OR MINOR DISCIPLINE

An authorized coach, manager, Club Director or DCO may administer proportionate minor discipline, such as a verbal or written warning, apology, behavioural agreement, education, temporary removal from an activity or temporary communication or spectator restrictions. Repeated minor misconduct may warrant a formal process.

12. INTERIM MEASURES

When reasonably necessary for safety, investigation integrity or the Club environment, Wildcats may temporarily suspend participation, restrict contact or communication, change supervisory duties, restrict spectators, remove an individual from facilities or travel, or take another protective step. An interim measure is not a finding of misconduct and may be reviewed as circumstances change.

13. INVESTIGATION

Wildcats may appoint an impartial investigator to interview parties and witnesses, review documents and other evidence, and prepare findings or a report. Both parties will normally have a reasonable opportunity to provide relevant information. Findings use the balance-of-probabilities standard: whether the conduct more likely than not occurred. An independent external investigator may be used.

14. DISCIPLINE PANEL

The DCO may appoint one impartial decision-maker or a panel free from material conflicts. Fair proceedings may use written submissions, telephone, videoconference, in-person meetings or a combination. Formal court procedures are not required.

15. PROCEDURAL FAIRNESS

Before a finding of misconduct, the respondent will normally receive the substance of allegations and a reasonable opportunity to respond and provide relevant information. The complainant may respond to material information. Procedures may be adapted to protect minors, accommodate participants, address safety or comply with law or OVA requirements.

16. DECISION

The decision-maker determines on a balance of probabilities whether an applicable Wildcats or OVA policy was breached. Where practicable, the written decision identifies the issues, findings, applicable provision, outcome, sanction and any appeal route. The complainant receives outcome information appropriate to privacy obligations.

17. SANCTIONS

Proportionate sanctions may include warnings, education, apology, behavioural agreement, probation, supervision, loss of privileges, removal from an event or team, suspension, spectator or communication restrictions, removal from a coaching or leadership role, termination of Club membership, recommendation to the OVA, referral to another authority, or another reasonable measure.

18. SANCTION FACTORS

Relevant factors include seriousness, intent, pattern, age and vulnerability, power imbalance, disciplinary history, responsibility and remorse, corrective action, impact, safety, deterrence, rehabilitation, applicable OVA guidance and other relevant circumstances.

19. SERIOUS MISCONDUCT

Serious misconduct may result in significant discipline, including suspension or termination of membership. Wildcats may take immediate reasonable safety action and will cooperate where the OVA has jurisdiction.

20. APPEALS

A final Club disciplinary decision may be appealed for lack of jurisdiction, a significant procedural error, bias or conflict, relevant evidence unavailable earlier, or a sanction outside the reasonable range. Disagreement alone is insufficient. An appeal should normally be submitted in writing within 14 days of receiving the decision. Wildcats will appoint an impartial appeal decision-maker or panel, which may dismiss or allow the appeal, modify the outcome, return it for reconsideration or order another appropriate remedy. The applicable OVA appeal process governs OVA decisions or where OVA policy requires it.

21. CONFIDENTIALITY

Wildcats will make reasonable efforts to protect privacy. Information may be shared as needed to administer the process, ensure fairness, meet OVA or legal requirements, protect an individual, or administer Club activities. Participants should respect confidentiality; absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

22. MINORS

The process will be adapted reasonably to a minor's age and circumstances. A parent or guardian may normally assist, unless limited to protect the athlete, comply with law, address a conflict or follow an authority's direction. Athlete safety and best interests are important throughout.

23. RETALIATION

Retaliation for a good-faith complaint, report, participation, evidence or assistance in a complaint process is prohibited and may be disciplined separately.

24. FALSE OR BAD-FAITH COMPLAINTS

An unsubstantiated complaint is not necessarily false. Knowingly false complaints, materially false information or use of the process primarily to harass or harm may result in discipline.

25. RECORDS

Wildcats will keep appropriate complaint and discipline records under applicable privacy requirements and Club retention practices. Records may be provided to the OVA where required or reasonably necessary.

26. OVA JURISDICTION

Club participation does not prevent access to OVA complaint processes. Wildcats will cooperate if the OVA assumes jurisdiction and may recognize sanctions from the OVA, Volleyball Canada or another governing body where required.

27. REPORTING TO THE OVA

Current OVA complaint and Safe Sport reporting information is available through the Ontario Volleyball Association. Wildcats may direct or refer matters to the OVA's designated discipline process. Participants should consult current OVA policies because procedures and reporting contacts can change.

28. CONFLICT WITH OVA POLICIES

A mandatory OVA rule, policy, decision or procedure applicable to Wildcats prevails to the extent of any conflict. Wildcats may amend this Policy to remain consistent with OVA requirements and law.

29. POLICY REVIEW

Wildcats may review and amend this Policy periodically, including after material changes to OVA Safe Sport, discipline or conduct policies.

COMPLAINT PROCESS SUMMARY

1. Safety first: contact emergency services, police or child protection authorities where appropriate.
2. Submit the complaint to the Wildcats DCO.
3. Initial review: informal resolution, Club discipline, investigation, hearing or referral.
4. Interim protective measures may be imposed.
5. The parties receive a fair chance to provide relevant information.
6. The decision uses the balance-of-probabilities standard.
7. Proven misconduct may attract proportionate sanctions.
8. Eligible Club decisions may be appealed within 14 days on the stated grounds.