



Worcester City Women's Football Club ("WCWFC", "the Club")

Policy: **Disciplinary policy**

Purpose: To ensure that our club promotes, supports, and protects a culture of inclusion. We have a culture of commitment to those who play, support, and enjoy our football.

Values: Respectful, inspiring, successful, and exceptional

Scope: This policy applies to our employees and workers.

Associated policies: Grievance policy

WCWFC reserve the right to amend or withdraw this policy at any time.

Our commitment to you

We are committed to promoting an environment and culture based on dignity, trust and respect. The Club will ensure that any issues relating to an employee's conduct are dealt with promptly and fairly.

It is recognised that a disciplinary process can be stressful and upsetting. Everyone in the process is entitled to be treated in a calm and respectful manner. There is a zero tolerance to abusive or insulting behaviour from anyone taking part in the disciplinary process. Any such behaviour will be treated as further potential misconduct.

Informal discussion

If the Club has concerns about your conduct, the Club will attempt to address this on an informal basis. An early, informal conversation may be sufficient to address an issue and take the appropriate steps to resolve it. Most minor conduct-related issues can be resolved informally.

If an informal approach is unsuccessful, or if the allegations are so serious that an informal approach is not appropriate, then the Club will follow the disciplinary process detailed in this policy.

Remote meetings

- The disciplinary process can be managed remotely. Your rights will not be affected, and the Club will ensure that the process is fair and reasonable. You and your representative will be given the necessary technology to participate.

Adjustments to meetings

- If you have a disability that may impact your ability to participate fully in this process, or you need other assistance, for example English is not your first language, then you should let the Club know and appropriate arrangements will be made to support you.

Recording of meetings

- A written record will be made of the meeting. This will be done by the person conducting the meeting or an additional person in the role of notetaker.
- No electronic recording can be made of any meeting held under this policy except in limited circumstances, for example, to make a reasonable adjustment for an employee with a disability. Any breach of this provision may result in further disciplinary action.
- The Club will be responsible for making an electronic recording if it has been permitted. Data protection obligations will be applied, and all participants will be notified in advance.

Change of circumstances

Circumstances can change which prevents part of the process from being followed in full. For example, employees may be too ill to participate in a disciplinary meeting. In these circumstances, the Club will make reasonable efforts to ensure that you fully understand the allegations and that you are given a proper opportunity to respond to them. Your response will be fairly and carefully considered.

Postponement of meetings

Every effort will be made to ensure meetings are during working hours, at a reasonable time and place. You should therefore attend the meeting if it is possible for you to do so. If you are too ill to attend or have another reasonable excuse, consideration will be given to rearranging the meeting.

Conduct and behaviour

- **Gross Misconduct** is conduct that is so serious in nature that it justifies dismissal without notice or payment in lieu of notice. Each case will be considered based on the circumstances before deciding the appropriate penalty.

Examples of gross misconduct include (but not limited to):

- theft and dishonesty;
- physical violence;
- serious instances of bullying or harassment (in person or online);
- acts of discrimination against fellow Club staff, players, volunteers or fans;
- deliberate damage to Club property;
- any conduct that negatively affects the Club's reputation;
- unauthorised disclosure of confidential information;
- serious breaches of Club rules, including health and safety;
- consuming alcohol or unlawful drugs in the workplace;
- smoking (including e-cigarettes) in any unauthorised area;
- unauthorised use of computer equipment;
- misuse of Club passwords and log-in details;
- deliberate breach of procedures on handling of personal data;
- deliberate refusal to follow reasonable instructions;
- accessing obscene or pornographic materials while at work or on Club equipment;
- breach of requirements relating to safeguarding of children or vulnerable adults;
- breaching FA guidelines relating to betting in football;
- offering or accepting a bribe within the meaning of the Bribery Act 2010.

- **Misconduct**

Examples of misconduct for which disciplinary action is appropriate include (but not limited to):

- persistent poor timekeeping;
- breach of absence reporting procedures;
- general poor behaviour;
- careless work;
- disruptive behaviour;
- insulting or offensive behaviour towards others, not amounting to serious harassment or bullying.

Actions outside work

Actions (including social media) outside work may be considered to be gross misconduct, or misconduct, if these actions affect your ability to carry out your duties or have a negative impact on the Club's reputation.

Allegations of misconduct

Where an allegation of misconduct is made against you that cannot be resolved informally, or if it not appropriate to do so, the allegation will be explained to you by a Club representative.

The details of the allegation will be confirmed in writing, together with a copy of this disciplinary policy and process.

Suspension

It may be appropriate to suspend you from work for a temporary period while the disciplinary matter is dealt with. This is not intended to indicate any guilt on your part. The suspension is intended to be an administrative measure to protect the Club or to ensure the smooth running of the disciplinary process. Any period of suspension will be reviewed regularly, kept as short as possible and paid in full, if appropriate.

○ Stage 1: Investigation

Allegations will be investigated to determine whether there is sufficient evidence to justify taking the matter further.

In an early part of the investigation your will be asked for your response to the allegations and to talk to anyone else with relevant information.

The investigation may include the examination of documents, including emails and other forms of electronic communications. You are required to cooperate fully with the investigation process to ensure a fair outcome.

Once the investigation is complete, the Club will decide whether to proceed to a formal disciplinary meeting or whether the matter can be resolved informally or without any further action.

○ **Stage 2: Hearing your disciplinary case**

Invitation to the disciplinary meeting – if a disciplinary meeting is necessary you will be notified in writing and given at least five working days' notice. This will allow you to prepare and arrange for a companion to accompany you.

You will be entitled to be accompanied by a fellow employee or a trade union official.

Any evidence collated during the investigation will be shared with you in advance of the disciplinary meeting and you will be invited to submit any further evidence you consider to be relevant.

The disciplinary meeting

The disciplinary meeting will be conducted by a Club representative. As far as possible the disciplinary meeting will be conducted by a representative who has not been previously involved in the matter.

The evidence gathered through the investigation will be presented to you and your companion and you will be given the opportunity to confer and to respond. You may also call on any witnesses to give evidence on your behalf; if they are willing to do so and their evidence is relevant to the issues being considered in the meeting.

The chair of the meeting may adjourn the meeting so that further evidence can be gathered. If this happens, the meeting will be reconvened, and you will be given an opportunity to respond to any new evidence. Before the meeting closes you (or your companion) will be given the opportunity to make any comments or representations that you consider to be relevant, and which may explain the situation.

The outcome

The chair of the meeting will usually adjourn the meeting to consider the outcome. The outcome will be communicated when the meeting is reconvened and in writing within seven working days after the meeting.

Disciplinary penalties

If the allegations are upheld to any extent, formal disciplinary action may be taken. This will usually take the form of a first written warning for a first

offence. However, the Club reserves the right to implement this process at any stage depending on the circumstances and misconduct.

First written warnings are appropriate for instances of misconduct that are sufficiently serious to warrant disciplinary action, but there is no current warning in place.

Final written warnings are given in cases of serious misconduct or where there is a live written warning in place and the circumstances justify it.

Gross misconduct may result in you being dismissed without notice. Your contract of employment will end immediately, but this does not affect your right to appeal.

○ **Stage 3: Appeal**

If you believe the disciplinary penalty is unfair you are entitled to appeal.

- Any appeal should be made in writing within five working days of receipt of the disciplinary outcome letter.
- You should clearly set out the grounds on which you believe the outcome of the original meeting to have been unfair.

Appeal meeting

- Following receipt of an appeal, an appeal meeting will be arranged within five working days.
- You are entitled to be accompanied by a fellow employee or a trade union official.
- Your appeal will be conducted by a senior manager (Club CEO or Club Board Representative), who will consider the grounds for your appeal and review the conclusion reached in the original disciplinary meeting.
- At the appeal meeting you will be given an opportunity to explain why you feel the initial meeting reached the wrong conclusion.
- Following the appeal meeting the relevant Club representative will inform you in writing of the outcome within seven working days.
- If the appeal overturns the dismissal decision you will be reinstated with immediate effect.
- The outcome of the appeal is final.

Warnings

You will be provided with details of the warning and how long the warning will remain live. The length of the warning will depend on the circumstances, such as serious misconduct and the wider circumstances of the case.

However, in general:

- A first written warning remains live for up to six months; and
- A final written warning remains live for 12 months.