STOOLBALL ENGLAND

DISCIPLINARY POLICY AND PROCEDURES (2026)

Applicable to: Stoolball England volunteer workforce, including Board members, elected officers, affiliated club officials, volunteers, freelance and self-employed coaches
Effective From: January 2026
Policy Owner: Safeguarding & Welfare Lead (in conjunction with Chair / Governance Lead)
Review Cycle: Annual
Next Review: January 2027

1. POLICY STATEMENT

Stoolball England is committed to maintaining the highest standards of conduct, behaviour and integrity across all areas of the sport.

This policy establishes a fair, transparent and proportionate disciplinary framework to address misconduct by:

- Board members
- Elected officers
- Volunteers
- Coaches (including freelance and self-employed)
- Club officials operating under Stoolball England affiliation

The organisation will ensure that disciplinary processes:

- Are consistent with safeguarding principles
- Comply with legal and governance standards
- Uphold natural justice and fairness
- Protect the reputation and integrity of the sport

Safeguarding matters will always take precedence and may run in parallel with disciplinary action where appropriate.

2. LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

This policy is informed by and aligned with:

- Employment and volunteer best practice principles
- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

- CPSU Safeguarding Standards for Sport
- Sport England Code for Sports Governance

This policy must be read alongside:

- Safeguarding Children & Adults at Risk Policy (2026)
- Recruitment & Selection Policy (2026)
- Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy (2026)
- Disclosure Information Handling Policy (2026)
- Code of Conduct

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- All volunteers acting on behalf of Stoolball England
- Board members and elected officers
- Coaches, including freelance and self-employed
- Club officials where matters affect Stoolball England governance or safeguarding

Affiliated clubs must operate compatible disciplinary arrangements.

4. PRINCIPLES

All disciplinary processes will:

- Be fair and unbiased
- Be conducted without unreasonable delay
- Be based on evidence
- Allow representation or support
- Allow the individual to respond to allegations
- Provide a right of appeal

Precautionary suspension may be implemented where necessary to protect:

- Children or adults at risk
- The integrity of an investigation
- The reputation of the organisation

Suspension is a neutral act and does not imply guilt.

5. TYPES OF MISCONDUCT

Examples include (but are not limited to):

5.1 Safeguarding-Related Misconduct

- Breach of safeguarding policy
- Failure to report safeguarding concerns
- Inappropriate conduct toward children or adults at risk

5.2 Conduct Misconduct

- Breach of Code of Conduct
- Discrimination or harassment
- Bullying or abusive behaviour
- Bringing Stoolball England into disrepute

5.3 Governance Misconduct (Board Members)

- Breach of fiduciary duty
- Conflict of interest failures
- Misuse of organisational funds or resources
- Serious governance non-compliance

6. PROCEDURE

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution (where appropriate)

For minor concerns:

- Concern raised
- Discussion held
- Guidance or improvement plan agreed
- Outcome recorded

Safeguarding concerns will not normally be dealt with informally.

Stage 2 – Formal Investigation

1. Written allegation received
2. Initial risk assessment conducted
3. Investigator appointed
4. Evidence gathered
5. Individual invited to disciplinary meeting

Where safeguarding is involved, statutory agencies may be informed prior to any internal process.

Stage 3 – Disciplinary Hearing

- Conducted by an impartial panel (minimum two individuals)
- Panel members must have no conflict of interest
- Individual may be accompanied
- Evidence reviewed
- Decision made on balance of probabilities

Possible outcomes:

- No action
- Written warning
- Final written warning
- Removal from role
- Suspension or termination of volunteer status
- Referral to statutory or regulatory authorities

For Board members, removal must comply with constitutional provisions.

Stage 4 – Appeal

- Appeal must be lodged within 14 days
- Appeal heard by a different panel
- Appeal decision is final

7. SAFEGUARDING REFERRALS

Where allegations involve:

- Harm to a child
- Harm to an adult at risk
- Risk of serious harm

The Safeguarding & Welfare Lead will:

- Consider referral to statutory agencies
- Consider referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- Consider referral to DBS if required

Disciplinary action may proceed alongside statutory investigations where appropriate.

8. CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA PROTECTION

All disciplinary matters will be:

- Treated confidentially
- Shared strictly on a need-to-know basis
- Stored securely in line with data protection legislation

Records will be retained in accordance with data retention policies.

9. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Board:

- Oversight and governance assurance
- Appoint disciplinary appeal panels where required

Chair / Governance Lead:

- Oversight of Board-level matters

Safeguarding & Welfare Lead:

- Safeguarding referral decisions
- Advice on risk and suspension

Investigators / Panel Members:

- Conduct fair and impartial processes

10. MONITORING AND REVIEW

This policy will be:

- Reviewed annually
- Reviewed following any significant disciplinary or safeguarding case
- Subject to Board oversight

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Disciplinary Flow Summary

1. Concern received
2. Risk assessment
3. Safeguarding referral (if required)
4. Informal resolution OR formal investigation

5. Hearing
6. Outcome
7. Appeal (if lodged)

Appendix 2 – Precautionary Suspension Guidance

Suspension may be appropriate where:

- There is risk to children or adults at risk
- Evidence may be compromised
- There is serious reputational risk

Suspension will:

- Be confirmed in writing
- Be reviewed regularly
- Be lifted if no longer necessary

Appendix 3 – Panel Composition Guidance

Panels should:

- Include at least two individuals
- Have safeguarding expertise where relevant
- Exclude anyone with conflict of interest
- Include independent input where appropriate

Appendix 4 – Board-Level Misconduct Procedure

Where allegations involve a Board member:

- Chair or Vice Chair initiates process
- Independent investigator may be appointed
- Panel must exclude conflicted members
- Removal must comply with constitutional rules

Appendix 5 – Governance & Safeguarding Alignment Statement

This policy forms part of Stoolball England's integrated safeguarding and governance framework and aligns with:

- Safeguarding Children & Adults at Risk Policy (2026)
- Recruitment & Selection Policy (2026)

- Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy (2026)
- Disclosure Information Handling Policy (2026)

Last Updated: January 2026
Approved by: Board
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