

## **Code of Conduct, Discipline & Complaints**

### **a. Philosophy**

Dartmouth Whalers Minor Hockey Association (DWMHA) is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment. All members—including players, coaches, officials, parents/guardians, and volunteers—are expected to uphold high standards of behavior that reflect positively on the association and support the development and enjoyment of all participants.

### **b. Objectives**

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Define the behavior expected of all members and participants
- Establish procedures for handling misconduct complaints fairly and consistently
- Outline possible sanctions and disciplinary actions for breaches of conduct
- Provide an appeal process that ensures due process and transparency

### **c. Scope**

This policy applies to all individuals involved in DWMHA activities, including but not limited to:

- Players
- Coaches
- Parents/guardians
- Team staff
- Officials
- Volunteers
- Board members

It covers behavior at all DWMHA-sanctioned activities and events, both on and off the ice, including online communications and social media.

### **d. Code of Conduct**

### **i. Demonstrate Respect**

- Treat all individuals with dignity and fairness
- Support a welcoming and inclusive environment

### **ii. Promote Positive Conduct**

- Prioritize safety, fair play, and teamwork
- Demonstrate respect, integrity, and positive sporting spirit
- Avoid disrespectful, unfair, or aggressive behavior
- Support teammates and opponents with encouragement and inclusivity
- Model behavior that reflects the spirit of the game

### **iii. Respect Authority**

- Accept decisions of officials and volunteers without abuse
- Use appropriate channels to raise concerns

### **iv. Model Integrity and Responsibility**

- Use respectful language and avoid profanity or threats
- Refrain from public criticism, especially on social media
- Represent DWMHA positively in all settings

### **v. Prevent Harmful Conduct**

- Avoid bullying, harassment, hazing, or retaliation
- Report any misconduct to appropriate officials

## **e. Unacceptable Behavior**

### **i. Abuse or Harassment**

- Verbal, physical, or emotional abuse
- Harassment or discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or disability

### **ii. Intimidation or Retaliation**

- Threatening or retaliating against any participant, volunteer, or official
- Initiation or hazing rituals

### **iii. Inappropriate Communication**

- Harassing, inflammatory, or disrespectful language via social media or messaging platforms
- Public criticism of officials, coaches, or players

### **iv. Violations of Policies**

- Conduct that breaches DWMHA, HNS, or Hockey Canada policies
- Damage to property, facilities, or equipment

## **f. Complaints and Enforcement**

### **i. Informal Resolution**

- Members are encouraged to resolve minor issues directly and respectfully
- Informal resolution may include discussions with a coach, team manager, or division coordinator
- Members are encouraged to respect the **24-hour rule**—waiting 24 hours before addressing a concern—to allow for a calm and more productive conversation. If there are **safety or abuse concerns**, they should be reported immediately.
- While encouraged, informal resolution is not mandatory or always appropriate

### **ii. Formal Complaints**

- Formal complaints should be submitted following the Discipline and Complaints and Complaints Management Process noted in the sections below
- Complaints must include:
  - A description of the incident
  - Date, time, and location
  - Names of individuals involved and witnesses (if applicable)
- Complaints may be submitted to:

- The appropriate Division Coordinator
- A member of the DWMHA Conduct & Discipline Committee
- A member of the Board of Directors
- The identity of complainants will be kept confidential to the extent possible, though anonymity cannot be guaranteed in all cases

### **iii. Investigation Process**

- Complaints will be acknowledged and reviewed promptly
- An impartial investigation may include:
  - Interviews with involved parties and witnesses
  - Review of written or video evidence (if applicable)
- The outcome will be communicated in writing, including:
  - Summary of findings
  - Any disciplinary decisions or required actions

## **g. Disciplinary Actions and Sanctions**

### **i. Types of Disciplinary Action**

- Verbal or written warning
- Probationary period with behavior monitoring
- Mandatory conduct-related education or training
- Temporary suspension from games, practices, and/or events
- Removal from coaching, team staff, and/or volunteer roles
- Permanent removal from DWMHA programs
- Referral to Hockey Nova Scotia, Hockey Canada, or law enforcement

### **ii. Factors Considered**

- Severity and impact of the behavior
- Disciplinary history of the individual

- Cooperation and willingness to accept responsibility

## **h. Appeals**

### **i. Right to Appeal**

Members may appeal a disciplinary decision if they believe:

- The process was unfair or inconsistent with this policy
- The decision was based on incorrect or incomplete information
- The sanction was excessive or inappropriate

### **ii. Appeal Process**

- Appeals must be submitted in writing within seven (7) days of receiving the decision
- Appeals must clearly state the grounds for appeal
- Appeals will be reviewed by:
  - The DWMHA Appeal Committee, or
  - The Board of Directors, if the original decision involved the Conduct & Discipline Committee
- The appeal review will include:
  - Consideration of evidence from the original process
  - Review of any new, relevant information
- The final decision will be communicated in writing
- Sanctions remain in effect during the appeal unless a stay is granted by the Appeal Committee