

Peel Region Football Discipline and Complaints Policy

Policy Number	PRF-POL-008
Policy Owner	Board of Directors
Applies To	All Individuals, including Athletes, Parents/Guardians, Coaches, Officials, Volunteers and Spectators
Approved By	Board of Directors
Effective Date	September 22, 2026
Last Reviewed	September 22, 2026
Next Review	Annually, before registration opens

1. Purpose

Peel Region Football (“PRF” or the “Club”), home of the Peel Panthers, is committed to providing an environment in which all Individuals involved with the Club are treated with respect. Membership in PRF, and participation in its activities, brings many benefits and privileges. At the same time, Individuals are expected to meet certain responsibilities, including complying with the Club’s by-laws, policies, rules and regulations, and meeting the standards of conduct expected by the Club.

Non-compliance can seriously damage the integrity of the Club and may result in sanctions under this policy. Because discipline may be applied, this policy sets out a process for handling complaints fairly, quickly and affordably.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Individuals. It covers discipline matters that arise during the Club’s business, activities and events, including, but not limited to:

- competitions, games, practices, tryouts and training camps;
- travel associated with Club activities;
- social media; and
- any Club meetings.

This policy does not prevent discipline from being applied during a competition or event under the procedures in place for that event, including the discipline policies of Football Ontario. PRF may apply further discipline under this policy.

Infractions or complaints that occur within a competition will be dealt with under the procedures specific to that competition, where applicable. In those cases, sanctions apply only for the duration of the competition, training, activity or event. Further sanctions may be applied only after the matter is reviewed under this policy.

Discipline matters and complaints that arise within the business, activities or events of other organizations, including Football Canada and Football Ontario, will be dealt with under those organizations' policies, unless PRF agrees, at its sole discretion, to deal with the matter.

3. Definitions

Adjudicator – the individual appointed by the Case Manager to hear a major infraction complaint.

Board – the Board of Directors of Peel Region Football.

Case Manager – the individual appointed by PRF under section 7 to manage and administer complaints under this policy.

Complainant – the Party alleging an infraction.

Days – calendar days, including weekends and holidays.

Individuals – all categories of membership defined in the Club's by-laws, and all individuals appointed, elected or employed by, or engaged in activities with, PRF. This includes, but is not limited to, athletes, coaches, convenors, referees, officials, volunteers, managers, administrators, committee members, directors and officers of PRF, spectators at events, and the parents/guardians of athletes.

Panel – the Discipline Panel appointed under section 9.3, made up of a single Adjudicator or, in extraordinary circumstances, three persons.

Parties – the Complainant, the Respondent, and any other Individuals, persons or organizations affected by the complaint.

Respondent – the Party alleged to have committed an infraction.

4. Reporting a Complaint

Any Individual may report a complaint to the President of PRF and to the Director of Football Operations for the Spring/Summer season. A complaint must be in writing, signed, and filed within fourteen (14) Days of the alleged incident. Anonymous complaints may be accepted at the sole discretion of PRF.

A Complainant who wishes to file a complaint after the fourteen (14) Day period must provide a written statement giving reasons for an exception. PRF will decide, at its sole discretion, whether to accept a late complaint. This decision may not be appealed.

At its discretion, PRF may act as the Complainant and start the complaint process under this policy. In that case, PRF will name an individual to represent the Club.

5. Conflict of Interest

All Board members, Case Managers and Adjudicators must declare any actual or perceived conflict of interest before acting on a complaint. A conflict of interest includes any family, personal, business or team relationship with a Party that could affect, or appear to affect, their impartiality. A person with a conflict of interest must not take part in the complaint, and PRF will appoint a replacement where needed.

6. Informal Resolution

Before a complaint moves to the formal stage, it will first be referred to the Vice President and one other member of the Board for review, with the goal of resolving the dispute informally, such as through discussion or facilitated mediation between the Parties.

7. Case Manager

If the review under section 6 does not resolve the dispute, PRF will appoint a Case Manager to manage and administer the complaint. This appointment may not be appealed. The Case Manager does not need to be a member of PRF.

The Case Manager is responsible for making sure procedural fairness is respected at all times and that this policy is applied in a timely manner. In particular, the Case Manager will:

- decide whether the complaint is frivolous or vexatious, or outside the scope of this policy, in which case the complaint will be dismissed immediately (this decision may not be appealed);
- decide whether the complaint is a minor or major infraction;
- appoint the Panel, if needed;
- coordinate all administrative aspects of the complaint;
- provide administrative and logistical support to the Panel as required; and
- provide any other service or support needed to make sure the proceeding is fair and timely.

The Case Manager will tell the Parties whether the incident will be dealt with as a minor or major infraction. The matter will then proceed under section 8 or section 9, as applicable.

8. Minor Infractions

8.1 What Is a Minor Infraction

Minor infractions are single incidents of failing to meet expected standards of conduct that generally do not cause harm to others, to PRF or to the sport. Examples include, but are not limited to, a single incident of:

- disrespectful, offensive, abusive, racist or sexist comments or behaviour;
- disrespectful conduct, such as outbursts of anger or arguments directed at athletes, players, officials, families or other clubs;
- conduct contrary to the values of PRF;
- being late for, or absent from, Club events and activities where attendance is expected or required;
- non-compliance with the Club's policies, procedures, rules or regulations;
- minor breaches of the Club's standards of conduct, including the Coaching Code of Conduct (PRF-POL-006); or
- tampering.

8.2 Procedure for Minor Infractions

Minor infractions will be dealt with by the appropriate person who has authority over both the situation and the Individual involved, such as the Director of Football Operations. This person may include, but is not limited to, staff, officials, coaches, judges, organizers or Club decision-makers. Where applicable, discipline specific to the event or competition will also apply.

The procedure for minor infractions is informal and is decided by the person responsible for the discipline, provided that the Respondent is told the nature of the infraction and has an opportunity to provide information about the incident.

8.3 Sanctions for Minor Infractions

One or more of the following sanctions may be applied for a minor infraction:

- a verbal or written reprimand from PRF to one of the Parties;
- a verbal or written apology from one Party to the other;
- service or another contribution to PRF;
- removal of certain membership privileges for a set period of time;
- suspension from the current competition, activity or event;
- discipline specific to the event or competition, where applicable; or
- any other sanction considered appropriate for the offence.

Minor infractions that result in discipline will be recorded and the records kept by PRF. Repeated minor infractions may result in later incidents being treated as a major infraction.

9. Major Infractions

9.1 What Is a Major Infraction

Major infractions are instances of failing to meet expected standards of conduct that cause, or could cause, harm to other persons, to PRF or to the sport. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- repeated minor infractions;
- any incident of hazing;
- incidents of physical or verbal abuse;
- behaviour that is harassment, sexual harassment or sexual misconduct;
- pranks, jokes or other activities that endanger the safety of others;
- conduct that intentionally interferes with a competition or with any athlete's preparation for a competition;
- conduct that intentionally damages PRF's image, credibility or reputation;
- consistent disregard for the Club's by-laws, policies, rules and regulations;
- major or repeated breaches of the Club's standards of conduct, including the Coaching Code of Conduct (PRF-POL-006), or of the confidentiality requirements in section 12;
- intentionally damaging Club property or improperly handling Club money;
- abusive use of alcohol, any use or possession of alcohol by minors, or any use or possession of illegal drugs or narcotics; or
- any possession or use of banned performance-enhancing drugs or methods.

9.2 Major Infractions During Competition

A major infraction that occurs during a competition may be dealt with immediately, if necessary, by a person with authority. In that case, sanctions apply only for the duration of the competition, training, activity or event, and any discipline specific to the event or competition will also apply. Further sanctions may be applied only after the matter is reviewed under this policy. This review does not replace the appeal provisions of this policy.

All other major infractions will be handled under the hearing procedure in section 9.3, unless a dispute resolution procedure in a contract or other formal written agreement takes precedence.

9.3 Hearing Procedure

The Case Manager will tell the Parties that the complaint may be valid and will be dealt with as a major infraction. The Case Manager will then decide the format of the hearing. This decision is at the sole discretion of the Case Manager and may not be appealed.

The Case Manager will appoint a Discipline Panel made up of a single Adjudicator to hear the complaint. In extraordinary circumstances, and at the Case Manager's discretion, a Panel of three persons may be appointed, in which case the Case Manager will name one member as Chair.

The hearing may be held in person, by telephone or video, by a review of written evidence submitted in advance, or by a combination of these methods. The hearing will follow the procedures the Case Manager considers appropriate, provided that:

- the Parties are given appropriate notice of the day, time and place of the hearing;
- copies of any written documents the Parties want the Panel to consider are provided to all Parties before the hearing;
- the Parties may be accompanied by a representative, advisor or legal counsel at their own expense;
- the Panel may ask any other individual to take part and give evidence at the hearing;
- the Panel may accept any oral evidence, document or thing relevant to the complaint, may exclude evidence that is unduly repetitive, and will give the evidence the weight it considers appropriate; and
- decisions are made by a majority vote of Panel members.

If the Respondent acknowledges the facts of the incident, the Respondent may waive the hearing, and the Panel will decide the appropriate sanction. The Panel may still hold a hearing to decide the sanction. If a Party chooses not to take part, the hearing will go ahead anyway.

If a decision may affect another party to the extent that the other party could bring a complaint or appeal in their own right, that party will become a Party to the complaint and will be bound by the decision. In carrying out its duties, the Panel may obtain independent advice.

9.4 Decision

After hearing the matter, the Panel will decide whether an infraction occurred and, if so, the sanctions to be imposed. Within fourteen (14) Days of the end of the hearing, the Panel's written decision, with reasons, will be sent to all Parties, the Case Manager and PRF. In extraordinary circumstances, the Panel may first issue a verbal or summary decision soon after the hearing, with the full written decision to follow within the fourteen (14) Day period. The decision will be a matter of public record unless the Panel decides otherwise.

9.5 Sanctions for Major Infractions

The Panel may apply one or more of the following sanctions for a major infraction:

- a verbal or written reprimand from PRF to one of the Parties;
- a verbal or written apology from one Party to the other;
- service or another voluntary contribution to PRF;
- removal of certain membership privileges;
- suspension from certain teams, events or activities;
- suspension from all Club activities for a set period of time;
- withholding of prize money or awards;
- payment of the cost of repairs for property damage;
- suspension of funding from PRF or from other sources;

- expulsion from PRF; or
- any other sanction considered appropriate for the offence.

Unless the Panel decides otherwise, sanctions take effect immediately. Failure to comply with a sanction will result in automatic suspension until the Individual complies. Major infractions that result in discipline will be recorded and the records kept by PRF.

10. Suspension Pending a Hearing

PRF may decide that an alleged incident is serious enough to justify suspending an Individual until the process, hearing or Panel decision is complete.

11. Criminal Convictions

An Individual's conviction for any of the following Criminal Code offences will be treated as a major infraction under this policy and will result in expulsion from PRF and/or removal from the Club's competitions, programs, activities and events, at the sole discretion of PRF:

- any child pornography offence;
- any sexual offence;
- any offence of physical or psychological violence;
- any offence of assault; or
- any offence involving trafficking of illegal drugs.

12. Confidentiality

The discipline and complaints process is confidential and involves only the Parties, the Case Manager, the Panel and any independent advisors to the Panel. Once the process has started and until a decision is released, none of the Parties may share confidential information about the discipline or complaint with any person not involved in the proceedings.

13. Timelines

If following the timelines in this policy would not allow a complaint to be resolved in a timely way, the Panel may direct that the timelines be changed.

14. Records and Distribution of Decisions

Minor and major infractions that result in discipline, and the decisions of any appeals, will be recorded and kept by PRF. Other clubs and organizations may be told of any decision and, if there was an appeal, the appeal decision.

Decisions and appeals are matters of public interest and will be made publicly available with the names of the individuals removed. The names of persons disciplined may be disclosed to the extent needed to give effect to a sanction. The Panel may decide that disclosing a person's identity would unduly violate their privacy, and that all or part of the decision will be kept confidential.

15. Responsibilities

All Individuals – meet the Club's standards of conduct, take part in good faith in any complaint process, and respect the confidentiality of proceedings.

Board – owns and approves this policy, receives appeals and appoints the Appeal Panel under section 16, appoints the Case Manager, and may suspend an Individual pending a hearing.

Case Manager – manages and administers complaints and ensures procedural fairness, as set out in section 7.

Director of Football Operations – receives complaints and deals with minor infractions within the Director's authority.

Panel – hears major infraction complaints, decides whether an infraction occurred, and imposes sanctions.

President – receives complaints and answers questions about this policy.

Vice President – leads the informal review of complaints under section 6.

16. Questions and Appeals

Questions about this policy should be directed to the President. A Party may appeal a decision of the Panel by sending a written notice of appeal, with reasons, to the Board within fourteen (14) Days of receiving the written decision. An appeal may only be based on the grounds that the Panel did not follow this policy, made a clearly unreasonable decision, or was influenced by bias or a conflict of interest.

The Board will appoint an Appeal Panel of one or three persons who were not involved in the original complaint. The Appeal Panel will review the decision, may confirm, change or overturn it, and will issue a written decision, with reasons, within fourteen (14) Days of receiving the appeal. The Appeal Panel's decision is final. Sanctions remain in effect while an appeal is under way, unless the Appeal Panel decides otherwise.

Decisions that this policy states may not be appealed are final.

17. Policy Review and Administration

This Discipline and Complaints Policy is subject to change at the discretion of the Board and will be reviewed annually before registration opens. The current version is posted on the Club website. This policy replaces any previous version of the Discipline and Complaints Policy.

Decisions under this policy will be made in accordance with the Club's commitment to athlete safety, fairness, transparency, and responsible program management.