

Discipline at Pony Club Activities



Discipline in sport should always be positive in focus, providing the structure and rules that allow participants to learn to set their own goals and strive for them. It should encourage young people to become more responsible for themselves and therefore more independent.

- The main form of discipline should be positive reinforcement for effort. It should encourage the development of emotional and social skills as well as skills in competition.
- Children should be helped to become responsible about the decisions and choices they make within competition, particularly when they are likely to make a difference between competing fairly and unfairly.
- There should be no place for fighting, over-aggressive or dangerous behaviour in competition. Participants should treat others in a respectful manner. They should not interfere with, bully or take unfair advantage of others.
- There should be no place for bad sportsmanship. No-one, child or adult, should be allowed to revile, demean or bully another for failing to win, to succeed, or for a poor performance, under any circumstances.

Disciplinary Action

On rare occasions it may be necessary to indicate to members, parents / guardians or supporters that their behaviour is not acceptable at Pony Club activities and competitions. In such instances it is essential that an agreed procedure is followed so that the member may continue to take part in, and benefit from, Pony Club activities. It is anticipated that formal disciplinary action will only be used when all other avenues have been tried.

When behaviour at any Pony Club activity is excessively poor or when there is consistent bad behaviour at successive events, formal disciplinary action may be necessary.

Before any formal disciplinary action is taken the District Commissioner should investigate the allegations against the member, parent / guardian or supporter. This should concentrate upon facts and details of what actually happened. Where possible witnesses should be spoken to. Once the facts of the case have been established, the appropriate course of action can be decided upon. While the time taken to investigate the incident may be beneficial as a “cooling off” period, the investigation should be completed as quickly as reasonably practicable. This should not prevent a verbal warning being given on the day of the incident with the investigation being carried out by the activity organiser who can then give the warning and inform the District Commissioner of their actions.

In the first instance a formal verbal warning should be given by the District Commissioner or the activity organiser. When such a warning is given, it is essential that strict confidentiality is maintained. The member or their parent / guardian or suitable adult representative may discuss the warning at the time with the person giving the warning which may be withdrawn as a result of those discussions. There is no formal procedure to appeal against a verbal warning.

Subsequent bad behaviour within a period of two years will result in a written warning being given. If the behaviour is considered to be sufficiently bad it may be necessary to give a written warning without first giving a formal verbal warning. Anyone given a written warning may appeal to the Area Representative against that

warning within a period of 21 days from receipt of the warning. The decision of the Area Representative shall be final.

In the event of the bad behaviour recurring within two years of a written warning it may be considered necessary for the benefit of the other members of the Branch to terminate or suspend membership. This may in extreme cases be considered necessary after a single act by the member. The Member should be informed of the decision in writing. The Member may appeal within a period of 21 days from receipt of the warning in the first instance to the Area Representative, and subsequently, within a period of 21 days from receipt of the Area Representative's decision, either party may appeal against the Area Representative's decision to the Rules and Compliance Committee.

Verbal

A formal warning should be given with a witness and the member's parent / guardian or other suitable adult present when in a private setting. The warning should be given by the District Commissioner or the activity organiser with another member of the Branch Committee present. The Member or their adult representative should have the opportunity to respond. If the warning is given by the activity organiser, the District Commissioner should be informed as soon as reasonably practicably. The District Commissioner should keep a confidential record of the warning.

A verbal warning may also be given to a parent / guardian or supporter. The warning should be given by the District Commissioner or the activity organiser with another member of the Branch Committee present. The parent / guardian or supporter should have the opportunity to respond. If the warning is given by the activity organiser, the District Commissioner should be informed as soon as reasonably practicably. The District Commissioner should make a confidential record of the warning.

Written

A formal warning should be given in the form of a letter to the Member. Normally this would be given to the Member by the District Commissioner with another member of the Branch Committee, a witness and the member's parent / guardian or other suitable adult present but may be sent by email. The Member or their adult representative should have the opportunity to respond. The District Commissioner should keep a confidential record of the warning.

Appeal

Members may appeal against a written warning within 21 days of receiving the warning. Either the Member or their parent / guardian should in confidence write to their Area Representative indicating their wish to appeal and a reason for the appeal. The Area Representative will either request written submissions to be able to consider the appeal or will arrange to meet all parties at a suitable location; the Area Representative will obtain assistance to hear the appeal as they consider to be necessary. The Area Representative will give their decision on the appeal to the Member in writing. The decision of the Area Representative shall be final.

Parents / Guardians and Supporters

A formal warning should be given in the form of a letter to the parent / guardian or supporter. Normally this would be given to the parent / guardian or supporter by the District Commissioner with another Member of the Branch Committee present as witness but may be sent by email. The parent / guardian or supporter should have the opportunity to respond. The warning should indicate that the parent / guardian or supporter can appeal against the warning to the Area Representative. Any such appeal must be submitted within 21 days of receipt of the warning. The District Commissioner should keep a confidential record of the warning. The appeal procedure is the same as that for a Member.

Termination of Membership

Where the behaviour of a member is considered to injurious or detrimental to the character or reputation of The Pony Club or of any of its Branches or Centres or to the interests of The Pony Club or its Members or whose conduct shall in the opinion of the Committee, make a Member unfit or unsuitable to continue as a Member, it may be necessary to terminate their membership or to suspend membership for a period of time. In the case of a Branch Member, the request for such a termination should be initiated by a decision of a Branch Committee to recommend to their Area Representative the expulsion of the Member. The member should be informed of the decision by means of a letter from the District Commissioner which may be sent by email. The letter should indicate the reasons for the decision and that the member can appeal against the termination to the Rules and Compliance Committee within 21 days of receipt of the warning. The Area Representative with the assistance of a Branch Operations Director, if necessary, will present the case to the Rules and Compliance Committee. In the case of a Centre Member, or Centre Plus Member an Area Centre Coordinator will recommend the expulsion to the Chairman of the Centre Membership Committee, who will present the case to the Rules and Compliance Committee. In either case the decision of the Rules and Compliance Committee shall be final.

Parents / Guardians and Supporters

Where the behaviour of a parent or supporter is considered to be detrimental to the conduct of Branch activities it may be necessary first to give a warning and ultimately (although The Pony Club may dispense with a warning in exceptional cases) to ban them from attending Pony Club activities. The parent or supporter should be informed of any such decision by means of a letter from the District Commissioner which should indicate the reasons for the decision and indicate that the parent or supporter can appeal against the warning to the Rules and Compliance Committee. Such appeal must be made within 21 days of receipt of the letter. They should also be informed that the Member with whom they are associated is still welcome at Pony Club activities and that the District Commissioner will indicate on entry forms to competitions run by other Branches that the parent has been banned from attending Pony Club activities. The decision of the Rules and Compliance Committee shall be final.