



SWF Complaint Handling Policy

Outline:

This policy is issued in accordance with the Scottish Women's Football (SWF) Articles of Association. For the avoidance of doubt, these procedures are designed to cover all complaints and breaches of policies. In some cases the complaint may be referred to Senior/Youth League Management Committees and the Scottish FA's Judicial Panel where appropriate.

Scope of Policy:

The policy and procedures outlined apply to all complaints received or raised by SWF which include, but are not exclusive of, breaches in relation to below policies and procedures:

- SWF Privacy Policy
- SWF Transgender Policy
- SWF Social Media, Online and Media Policy
- SWF Player Approach Policy
- SWF Fraud Policy
- SWF Business and Integrity Policy
- SWF Information and Data Protection policy
- SWF Ethical Policy
- SWF Health and Safety Policy Statement
- SWF Child Wellbeing and Protection Policy*
- SWF Code of Conduct
- SWF Articles of Association
- SWF Player Registration Procedures
- SWF Equity Policy
- SWF Modern Slavery Voluntary Statement
- SWF Football Betting Policy
- SWF Anti Bribery and Corruption Policy

*Note – all concerns regarding child wellbeing and protection should still be reported to SWF's Child Wellbeing & Protection Officer and managed in accordance with Child Wellbeing & Protection Policy



Scottish Women's Football Complaint Handling Process

A complaint about a participant of Scottish Womens Football may be made by any member of the general public including but not limited to a player, a representative of a club or sport organisation, a coach, a parent or any participant or representative of Scottish Womens Football.

Complaints shall be directed to the SWF via swf@scotwomensfootball.com where it will be screened, ensuring the complaint is made on the proper form and determine whether the complaint is within the jurisdiction of any SWF committee, Rules or Discipline.

A complaint concerning the conduct of a Scottish Womens Football participant shall be in proper form which shall:

- a) Be made in writing (email accepted form) and signed by the Complainer;
- b) Identify the Scottish Womens Football participant, so far as possible, against whom the complaint is made;
- c) Set out details of the complaint; and
- d) Identify the name and address of the complainer.
- e) Be submitted within 7 days of the date of incident.

If a complaint falls within the jurisdiction of the Discipline procedures or Competition Rules, SWF shall inform the complainer in writing (email accepted form), that the complaint shall be referred to the Competition Manager who shall arrange for the complaint to be investigated and determined under the Discipline procedures or Competition Rules.

If a complaint does not fall within the scope of the Discipline Procedures, Complaints policy or Competition Rules, or is not in proper form, the CEO shall inform the complainer in writing (email accepted form), after which time the complaint shall be considered closed.

Complaint regarding Child Protection

A complaint that involves an incident where there is significant concern about conduct towards children will also be reported to the WPO or CEO.

In the case of any incident where, in the opinion of the WPO and/or CEO, children could be a risk, the WPO and/or CEO can precautionarily suspend the staff member / volunteer. Suspension is not a form of disciplinary action. This precautionary suspension will be in writing (email form accepted) and confirmed by the CEO, Development Manager or National CWPO within 48 hours.

Outcome

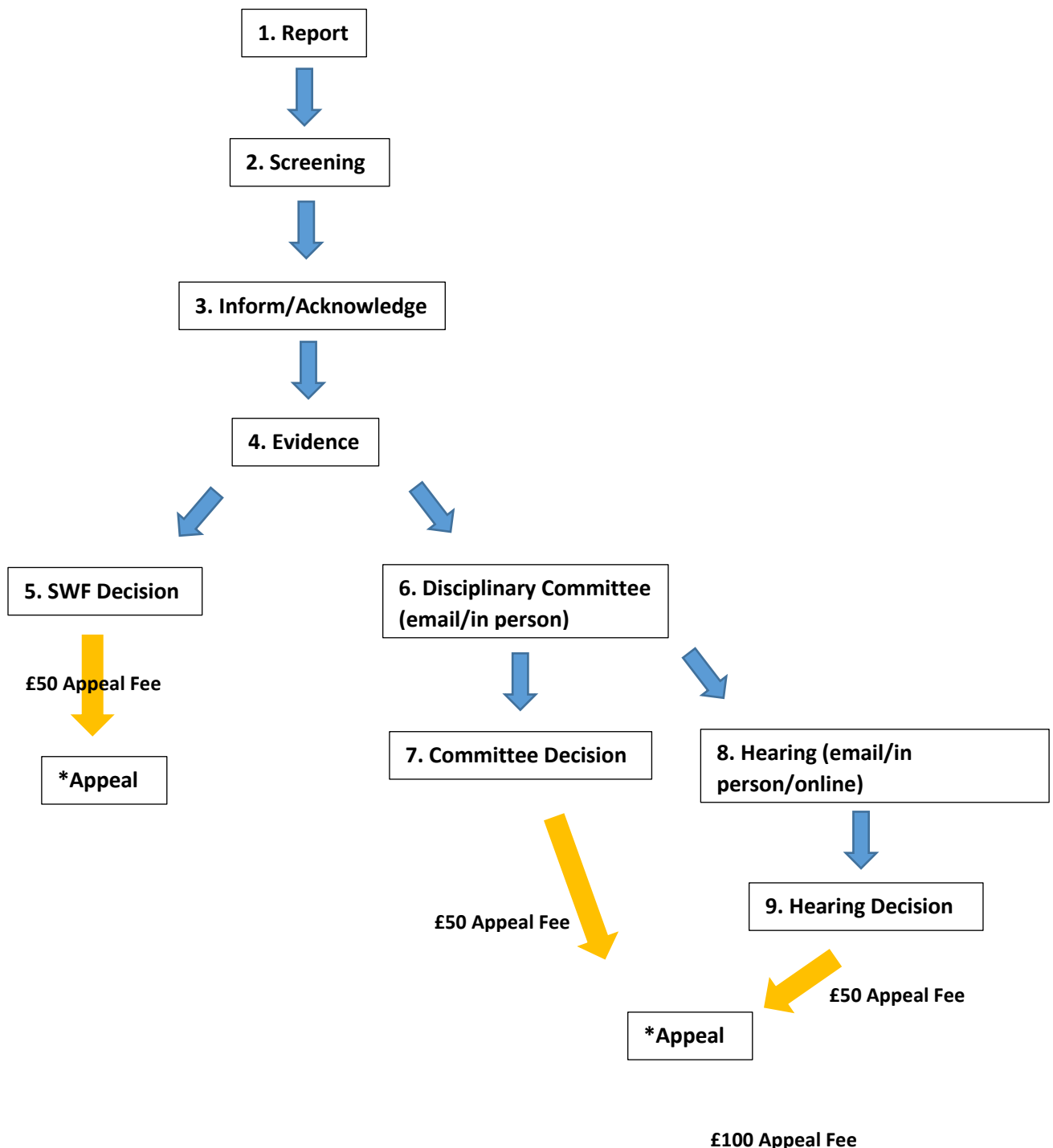
The following sanctions, singly or in combination, may be applied by the SWF Complaint Administrator and/or Discipline Committee:

- a) a written reprimand to be placed in participant(s) file;
- b) a verbal and/or written apology;
- c) further education, training or counselling;
- d) publication of all or some of the details of the complaint and the sanction;
- e) suspension from the activities of Scottish Women's Football for a specified period of time;
- f) termination of membership of Scottish Women's Football;
- g) monetary fine;
- h) payment of part of all costs of the hearing, investigation or both; and

i) any other sanction(s) deemed appropriate in the circumstances.

In applying these sanctions, the SWF may have regard to the following aggravating or mitigating circumstances:

- a) the nature and severity of the offence;
- b) whether the incident is a first offence or has occurred repeatedly;
- c) the participant's acknowledgement of responsibility;
- d) the participant's extent of remorse;
- e) the participant's extent of co-operation with the procedures set out in these procedures
- f) the age, maturity or experience of the participant;
- g) the participant's prospects for rehabilitation; and
- f) the extent to which others were harmed by the participant's actions.



10. SFA Judicial Panel

- 1. Report:** A complaint is reported by a third party, an SWF Administrator and/or individual.
 - 2. Screening:** SWF shall validate the submitted complaint document before opening the case for investigation.
 - 3. Inform:** SWF shall inform the respondent of the report and acknowledge receipt to the reporter within 7 working days.
 - 4. Evidence:** SWF shall seek evidence from the respondent and, if necessary, from the reporter and other sources. A period of up to 7 working days from acknowledgement will be provided for this.
 - 5. SWF Early Decision:** If there has been a manifest breach of the policy concerned, the SWF Administrator shall issue an early decision and, where applicable, an appropriate sanction; likewise, if there is clearly no case to answer, the complaint shall be discharged by the SWF Administrator. The respondent will be informed of this within 7-14 working days from acknowledgement. The respondent will have a further 5 working days to lodge a notice of appeal against the early decision. The Disciplinary Database will be updated on the 5th working day if no notice of appeal is lodged.
 - 6. Disciplinary Committee Panel:** If the case is ambiguous, the report will be referred to a 3-person Panel of the SWF Disciplinary Committee to consider. The Panel may request more or specialist evidence and will decide if a Hearing in Person is required. The Panel will be convened within 7-14 working days from the referral or the appeal being lodged pending availability of the respondent and the Disciplinary Committee Panel.
 - 7. Disciplinary Committee Panel Decision:** If the Panel is satisfied with the evidence available, they may issue a decision including any sanction if appropriate. The respondent may lodge an appeal within 5 working days. The Disciplinary Database will be updated on the 5th working day if no notice of appeal is lodged.
 - 8. Hearing in Person:** If the respondent appeals a Panel decision the report will be referred to a Panel of the SWF Appeals Committee to consider. The Panel may request more or specialist evidence and will decide if a Hearing in Person is required. The Panel will be convened within 7-14 days from the referral or the appeal being lodged pending availability of the respondent and the Appeals Committee
 - 9. Hearing Decision:** Following a Hearing in Person the Appeals Committee will issue its final determination; respondents will have 5 working days to lodge an appeal against this decision to the Scottish FA. The Decision will be added to Disciplinary Database 5 working days after the decision if there is no notice of appeal.
- *Appeal:** If the respondent appeals a decision the report will be referred to a Panel of the SWF Appeals Committee to consider. The Panel may request more or specialist evidence. The Panel will be convened within 7-14 days from the referral or the appeal being lodged pending availability of the Appeals Committee
- 10. SFA Judicial Panel:** An appeal can only be lodged with the Scottish FA. Should you require more information regarding this stage of appeal, please contact judicialpanelsecretary@scottishfa.co.uk

Key Documents

[SWF Intimation of Alleged Breach of Policy Form](#)

[Respondent Submission Form](#)

[Further Information Submission Form](#)

Outcomes:

Upon the completion of its investigation into any complaint received the range of sanctions open to be imposed on a player, official or club include, but are not exclusive of:

- a) a written reprimand to be placed in participant(s) file;
- b) a verbal and/or written apology;
- c) further education, training or counselling;
- d) publication of all or some of the details of the complaint and the sanction;
- e) suspension from the activities of SWF for a specified period of time;
- f) player and or club termination of membership of SWF;
- g) impose a financial sanction;
- h) payment of part of all costs of the hearing, investigation or both; and
- i) any other sanction(s) deemed appropriate in the circumstances.
- J)deduction of points
- K)To take no action
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The Committee reserves the right to escalate sanctions if it is determined that the respondent has repeatedly breached SWF Policy and/or Procedures.

Note: All outcomes relating to matters managed via this Disciplinary Policy will be posted accordingly on SWF's website. No publication of a decision or sanction shall take place until the time for appeal has expired or an appeal has been decided.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

How do I raise a complaint/report a policy breach?

- A complaint will only be considered if it has been submitted to Scottish Women's Football (SWF) on the correct form. The 'SWF Intimation of Alleged Breach of Policy Form' should be completed fully and accurately with supporting evidence attached where applicable, before submitting to SWF@scottish-football.com. The complaint will not be considered unless this form has been submitted in full. The form is available to download from the SWF website.

How long does the process take?

- Once your complaint has been received by SWF you should receive a response to acknowledge receipt within 7 days. If the complaint is valid, you should receive an outcome within 21 days. Should you wish to appeal the decision, the process can take up to a maximum of a further 21 days from the date of the original outcome.

Can anyone raise a complaint?

- Yes, anyone can raise a complaint however, our preferred means of club communication is via the Club Secretary. A third party or any other individual can still raise a complaint to SWF.

Can I request to attend a hearing?

- You can request that you wish to be present at the hearing of your complaint. The relevant committee will determine if your attendance is required and confirm to you via email. Should you appeal the outcome of the original decision making body, you may be invited to attend a further hearing.

Is there a fee attached to the process?

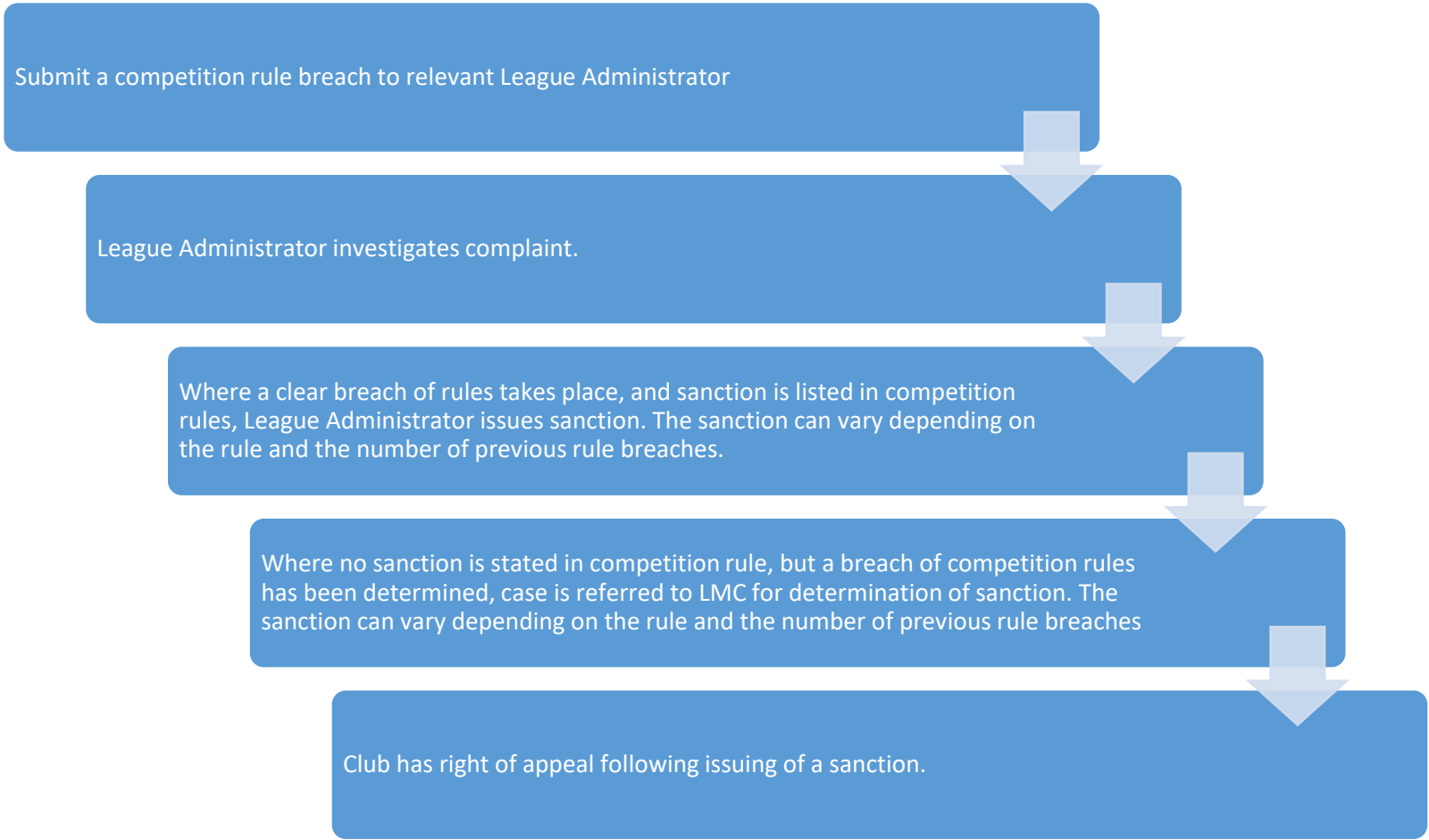
- Should you wish to appeal the decision of the relevant SWF committee, a £50 fee is required.

What if I'm not satisfied with the SWF outcome?

- In accordance with Section 14.4 of the Scottish FA Judicial Panel Protocol, you have the right to appeal against the decision of a recognised football body. There is a £100 appeal fee required.

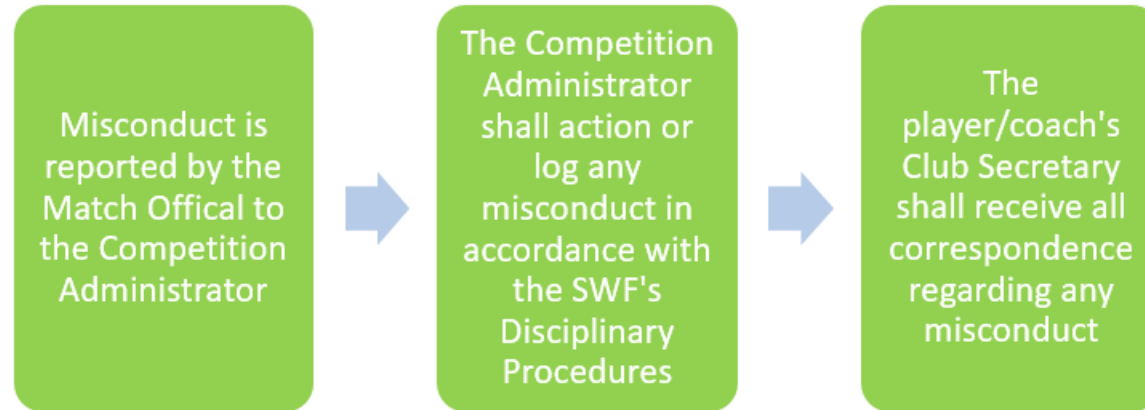
14.4 A player, official, match official, club, League or association has the right to appeal to an Appellate Tribunal under this Protocol against a Determination of a disciplinary or adjudicatory nature involving a defined process or procedure by a recognised football body which is imposed upon such person or body, provided that the Appellant has exhausted such appeals as were available to the Appellant consequent to the Determination in question, unless a satisfactory reason is given for not having done so, and provided that the appeal to the Appellate Tribunal is not excluded by any provision of the Articles, this Protocol, or by law.

How do I report an SWF Competition rule breach and how is this processed?



How is in-match disciplinary recorded and processed?

SWF Youth Competitions, SWFL, H and I and YPL



SWF Senior Competitions: Championship and League One



Scottish FA Judicial Panel – management of Championship & League One in-match disciplinary including suspensions and accumulation of cautions/points and any other breaches of the JPP.

SWFL League Management Committee – breaches of SWFL League and League Cup competition rules & management of misconduct reports submitted by match officials in line with SWF's Disciplinary Procedures for Team/Staff Officials Misconduct in Scottish Women's Football Leagues and SWF's Disciplinary Procedures for Players in Scottish Women's Football Leagues

Highlands & Islands League Management Committee – breaches of Highlands & Islands League and League Cup competition rules & management of misconduct reports submitted by match officials in line with SWF's Disciplinary Procedures for Team/Staff Officials Misconduct in Scottish Women's Football Leagues and SWF's Disciplinary Procedures for Players in Scottish Women's Football Leagues

Youth Regional & National League Management Committees - breaches of Youth Regional & National League and League Cup Competition Rules in youth game including breach of 'Player Movement Guidelines' & management of misconduct reports submitted by match officials in line with SWF's Disciplinary Procedures for Team/Staff Officials Misconduct in Scottish Women's Football Leagues and SWF's Disciplinary Procedures for Players in Scottish Women's Football Leagues