

PSNI Football Club

Code of Conduct (Club Rules)



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Section One

Introduction

PSNI Football Club fully endorse the Irish Football Association's Community Relations Policy Statement which respects and values diversity. In addition the officials, staff, management, players and supporters of PSNI Football Club fully endorse UEFA's 10 Point Plan to tackle racism and sectarianism. We, at PSNI Football Club, will endeavour to provide an environment which values and enables the full involvement of all people, in all aspects and at every level of the Club, regardless of perceived cultural identity, political affiliation or religious beliefs. We support the IFA's philosophy of "*Football For All*" and we fully endorse the policies and guidelines contained within the IFA's "*Safeguarding Children in Football*". PSNI Football Club is responsible for setting standards and values to apply throughout the Club at every level. Football belongs to and should be enjoyed by everyone, equally. The Clubs' commitment and intent is to uphold these beliefs by confronting and eliminating discrimination whether by reason of sex, sexual orientation, race, nationality, ethnic origin, colour, religion or disability.

PSNI Football Club is responsible for ensuring:

- that everyone within the club (club members), whatever their role, has read, their relevant Code – and understands the actions which could be taken if Codes are broken;
- to deal fairly and consistently with anyone who breaks 'their' Code;
- to respect the rights of everyone attending Newforge whilst recognising those rights are qualified and come with responsibility.

PSNI Football Club will do all it reasonably and practically can to show its level of commitment to stamp out discreditable conduct and will deal with cases of reported misconduct and unacceptable behaviour from players, coaches, club officials or spectators that bring the club into disrepute. The club will not tolerate any offensive or inappropriate behaviour or chanting that could potentially offend others within the football ground. The action and sanctions by the club can range from education, mentoring, official warnings and advice (verbal or written), suspension, or even exclusion from the club and its grounds. Where criminal offences have been committed the police will be asked to intervene and arrest and prosecute where appropriate. Disciplinary proceedings will follow any criminal investigation/proceedings. PSNI Football Club's introduction of this Code of Conduct should result in the provision of football in an environment where everyone feels safe and respected and inclusive.

This Code of Conduct applies to:

- Club officials;
- Management and coaches of senior teams;
- Players of the senior team;
- Management and coaches of the Olympic team;

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- Players of the Olympic team;
- Parents/carers of players in the Olympic team;
- Supporters of PSNI Football Club;
- Away supporters attending Newforge for a football match;

In addition, it will also apply to behaviour outside of the ground where that behaviour is associated to matters pertaining to the affairs of PSNI Football Club. In line with the Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 this Code of Conduct will equally apply to behaviour at an away match and whilst travelling to or from a football match.

Obstructing, resisting or disobeying any lawful request of a Club official or Safety Steward, whether at a home match or an away match, will be deemed to be a breach of this Code of Conduct.

Failure to comply with any banning order issued by PSNI Football Club in accordance with this Code of Conduct will in itself be regarded as a further automatic breach of the Code and dealt with accordingly.

PSNI FC will reserve the right to prohibit any article being brought into its property and grounds if it believes the article may interfere with the safety, comfort of others or run contrary to its ethos and policy of openness, respect and tolerance.

Where issues arise over the meanings of various labels attached to behaviour in this Code, it will be for the PSNI FC Committee. or ultimately a Discipline Panel if one is conveyed, to decide on the meanings and interpretation.

Section Two

Club Rules for ALL Club Officials

Obligations towards the game:

- set a positive example for others, particularly young players and supporters;
- promote and develop the various club teams having regard to the interest of the players, supporters and reputation of the national game;
- share knowledge and experience when invited to do so, taking into account the interest of the body that has requested this rather than personal interests;
- avoid all forms of gamesmanship;
- show due respect to Match Officials and others involved in the game;
- always have regard for the best interests of the game, including where publicly expressing an opinion of the game and any particular aspect of it, including others involved in the game;
- not use or tolerate inappropriate language.

Obligations towards the team:

- make every effort to develop the sporting, technical and tactical levels of the club/team, and to obtain the best results for the team, using all permitted means;
- give priority to the interests of the team over individual interests;
- resist all illegal or unsporting influences, including banned substances and techniques;
- promote ethical principles;
- show due respect for the interests of the players, coaches and officials, their own club/team and others.

Obligations towards the supporters:

Show due respect for the interests of supporters.

Respect towards match officials:

- accept the decisions of the Match Official without protest;
- avoid words or actions which may mislead a Match Official;
- show due respect towards Match Officials.

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Section Three

Club Rules for Managers & Coaches

Managers and coaches at every level of football within PSNI Football Club have a duty of care towards their staff and players. In respect of young players there are additional vulnerabilities and dangers and for that reason there are separate Sections in this Code of Conduct dealing with policies and guidelines surrounding young players.

Managers and coaches are the key to the establishment of ethics in football. Their concept of ethics and their attitude directly affects the behaviour of players under their supervision.

Managers and coaches are, therefore, expected to pay particular care to the moral aspect of their conduct.

Managers and coaches have to be aware that almost all of their decisions and choices of actions, as well as strategic targets, have ethical implications.

It is natural that winning constitutes a basic concern for managers and coaches. This code is not intended to conflict with that.

However, the code calls for managers and coaches to disassociate themselves from a *'win-at-all costs'* attitude.

They should therefore comply with the following:

- respect the rights, dignity and worth of each and every person and treat each equally within the context of the sport;
- never engage in, or tolerate, offensive, insulting or abusive language or behaviour;
- place the well being and safety of each player above all other considerations, including the development of performance;
- adhere to all guidelines laid down by governing bodies;
- develop an appropriate working relationship with each player based on mutual trust and respect;
- not exert undue influence to obtain personal benefit or reward;
- encourage and guide players to accept responsibility for their own behaviour and performance;
- ensure that the activities they direct or advocate are appropriate for the age, maturity, experience and ability of players;
- at the outset, clarify with the players (and where appropriate parent) exactly what is expected of them and also what they are entitled to expect from their manager or coach;
- co-operate fully with other specialists (e.g. other coaches, officials, sports scientists, doctors, and physiotherapists) in the best interests of the player;
- always promote the positive aspects of the sport (e.g. fair play) and never condone violations of the Laws of the Game, behaviour contrary to the spirit of the Laws of the Game or relevant rules and regulations

- or the use of prohibited substances or techniques;
- consistently display high standards of behaviour and appearance;
- not use or tolerate inappropriate language.

Where the IFA Discipline Committee finds a Manager/Coach or other member of the management team guilty of any offence which resulted in a sanction imposed on the club then the Club (Committee) may deduct the amount of fine imposed from the expenses, or otherwise direct payment of the appropriate fine. Depending on the gravity of the offence, and the sanction, the Club may also take additional action.

Section Four

Club Rules for Senior Players

The players at PSNI Football Club carry a huge responsibility in acting as ambassadors for the Club. In the eyes of many young persons and parents and guardians they are role models.

They will comply with the following charter as part of their contract with PSNI Football club:

- the player undertakes to play to the best of his ability in all football matches in which he is selected to play by the club;
- the player must attend all training sessions at all times and at such locations, as reasonably directed by the Club.
- the player shall play football solely for the PSNI Football Club, unless prior permission has been obtained from the manager.
- except to the extent prevented by injury or illness to maintain a high standard of physical fitness at all times and not to indulge in any activity sport or practice which might endanger such fitness or inhibit his mental or physical ability to play or train;
- to comply with and act in accordance with all lawful instructions of any authorised official of the club;
- to observe the Rules of the Irish Football Association and his club;
- to attend promptly to any medical appointments (including dental) as the Club may reasonably request and to undergo, at no expense to himself, such treatment as may be prescribed by the Club or the Club's insurers including complying with the condition of the World Anti Doping Agency and to facilitate any doping control tests which may from time to time be conducted;
- on the termination of this contract shall return to the Club in a reasonable and proper condition any property, which has been provided or made available by the Club to the Player;
- the player shall not, without written consent from his club, participate in
- any other football, sporting or athletic activity.
- any incapacity or illness must immediately be reported by the player to the manager/head coach.

Following an accident or incapacity sustained in the course of his representing the club the club shall promptly arrange appropriate treatment and shall ensure that such treatment is undertaken and completed without expense to the Player.

The Player agrees that he shall not:

- undertake or be involved in any activity or practice which will knowingly cause exclusion of the player's cover pursuant to any policy of insurance which may be maintained for the benefit of the club on the life of the player or covering his physical well-being (including injury and incapacity and treatment thereof);
- knowingly or recklessly do, write or say anything, or omit to do anything, which is likely to bring the club or the game of football into disrepute, cause the player or the club to be in breach of the Rules or cause damage to the club or its officer or any match official. Whenever circumstances permit, the player shall give to the club reasonable notice of his intention to make any contributions to the public media in order to allow representations to be made to him on behalf of the club if it so desires;
- players are strictly forbidden from gambling on any football matches within Northern Ireland. All matches will be monitored by the IFA and UEFA Betting Fraud Detection System. The player hereby agrees that he will not, either on his own behalf or with or through any third party, take part in betting, gambling, lotteries and similar events or transactions connected with football matches within Northern Ireland (further guidance/information is available in the IFA's "A Short Guide to the IFA Betting Rules);
- the Players shall not through his acts or omissions bring the Club into
- disrepute or assist or encourage others to do so.

Where the IFA Discipline Committee find a player guilty of comments in the media or social media in which (a) they imply bias, question integrity and/or bring the game into disrepute or (b) are abusive, offensive and/or insulting and such comments are considered to be football related, resulting in a sanction which includes a fine imposed on their club, then the Club (Committee) may deduct the amount of fine imposed from the player's expenses, or, in the case of police players, required to pay the relevant fine.

Depending on the gravity of the offence and the sanction the Club may also take further action.

Section Five

Club Rules for Managers/Coaches/Volunteers involved with Young Players

PSNI Football Club fully recognise that the safety and welfare of young persons associated with the club are paramount. We will endeavour to provide an environment which values and protects young persons in all aspects and at every level of football at PSNI Football Club regardless of perceived ability, cultural identity or religious beliefs. It is the policy of this Club to protect young persons involved in football from inappropriate behaviour and all types of abuse. Increased responsibility is requested from all managers and coaches involved in coaching young people at PSNI Football Club. The health, safety, welfare and moral education of young people are a first priority, before the achievement or the reputation of the club, manager, coach or parent.

Complaints alleging any abuse of young persons will be reported to the Committee member with responsibility who will deal with the matter.

Codes of Conduct for Coaches/Volunteers

All coaches and volunteers are encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect young people in their care and themselves from false allegations. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate within PSNI Football Club:

Manager/Coachs/volunteers within PSNI Football Club agree to the following charter:

- respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person and treat everyone equally within the club;
- develop an appropriate working relationship with young people based on mutual trust and respect. I will not exert undue influence to obtain personal benefit or reward;
- always promote the positive aspects of football (e.g. fair play) and never condone rule violations or the use of prohibited substances;
- be an excellent role model. This includes not smoking, using foul/racial/sectarian language or taking drugs in the company of young people;
- always work in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging an open environment, e.g. no secrets);

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- always put the welfare of each young person before winning or achieving goals;
- maintain a safe and appropriate distance with players (e.g. it is not appropriate to have an intimate relationship with a young person);
- make football, enjoyable and promoting fair play;
- ensure that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it is provided openly and according to agreed guidelines. If physical support is needed, I will talk aloud to the young person explaining what I am doing and why as it is difficult to maintain hand positions when a young person is constantly moving. I agree that young people should always be consulted before they are touched and their agreement gained. Parental/guardian views about manual support will always be carefully considered;
- involve parents/guardians wherever possible (e.g. for the responsibility of their young persons in the changing rooms) provided they have been successfully vetted, are of the appropriate gender and work in pairs;
- give enthusiastic and constructive feedback, encouraging achievements rather than using negative criticism;
- recognise the developmental needs and capacity of children/young people, including those with a disability – avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will;
- keep a written record or inform the Manager/Head Coach/Coordinator of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given;
- bullying is not acceptable behaviour towards anyone, whether coach/volunteer, parent/guardian or young player. Anyone found to be bullying others will be dealt with seriously, both in relation to the behaviour exhibited and the reasons for the behaviour;
- never condone rule violations, rough play or the use of prohibited substances;
- protect myself from false accusations by not spending excessive amounts of time alone with young people away from others, by taking children/young people to my home and by not administering First Aid involving the removing of children's clothing unless in the presence of others;
- make football fun;
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Practices to be avoided

- spending any time alone with young people away from others.

Practices never to be sanctioned by coaches/volunteers

The following will never be sanctioned:-

- engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay;
- share a room/tent/changing room/bath or shower with a young person;

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- allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching;
- allow young people to use foul, abusive, sectarian or racial language unchallenged;
- make sexually suggestive comments to a young person, even in fun;
- reduce a young person to tears as a form of control;
- allow allegations made by a young person to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon;
- undertake personal care for young people.
- invite or allow young people to stay with me at my home.

Coaches/volunteers have the right to:

- access ongoing training and information on all aspects of leading/managing football for young people, particularly on safeguarding;
- support in the reporting of suspected abuse;
- access to professional support services;
- fair and equitable treatment by the governing body/club;
- be protected from abuse by young people, other adult members and parents/guardians.

Misdemeanours or breach of this code will be dealt with immediately and reported verbally and in writing to the Secretary of PSNI FC. A serious or persistent breach of the code will result in dismissal from PSNI Football Club.

Dismissals can be appealed by the coach/volunteer with final decisions taken by a Disciplinary Panel set up by the Chairman of PSNI Football Club.

Section Six

Club Rules for Young Players

PSNI Football Club is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the well being of all its members. The club believes that it is important that staff/coaches/volunteers and parents/guardians associated with the club should, at all times, show respect and understanding for the safety and welfare of others. Therefore, everyone is encouraged to be open at all times and to share any concerns or complaints that they may have about any aspect of the club with any official, manager or coach.

PSNI Football Club believes that the club should offer a positive experience for young people where they can learn new things in a safe and positive environment. As a member of PSNI Football Club, you are expected to abide by the following code of practice:

Young players are expected to:

- be loyal and give their team mates a second chance;
- be friendly and particularly welcoming to new members;
- be supportive and committed to other team mates, offer comfort when required;
- not get involved in inappropriate peer pressure and push others into something they do not want to do;
- be responsible for their own kit;
- wear appropriate footwear/shin pads;
- bring their own water bottle/fluid;
- keep within the defined boundary of the playing/coaching area;
- behave and listen to all instructions from the coach/volunteers;
- take care of equipment owned by the club;
- refrain from the use of bad language or racial/sectarian references;
- refrain from bullying or persistent use of rough and dangerous play;
- show respect to other players, staff/coaches/volunteers and parents/guardians;
- report inappropriate behaviour;
- play fairly;
- respect officials and accept decisions;
- be gracious in defeat;
- respect opponents and not cheat;
- not use violence;
- arrive on time;
- be collected on time.

Young people have the right to:

- be safe and happy in football;
- be listened to;
- be respected and treated fairly;
- privacy;
- enjoy football in a protective environment;
- be referred to professional help if needed;
- be protected from inappropriate behaviour/abuse by other club members or outside sources;
- participate on an equal basis, appropriate to their ability;
- experience competition and the desire to win;
- be believed when asking for help.

Any breach of the Code of Conduct for Young Players will be addressed by the immediate coach/volunteer and reported verbally and in writing to the designated Committee member. If a young player continues to breach the Code of Conduct after an initial verbal warning from the immediate coach/volunteer, the following disciplinary action should take place:

First Official Warning will be reported to the parent/guardian, both verbally (if practicable) and in writing. Sanction can be up to a two-week suspension.

Second Official (final) will be reported to parent/guardian, both verbally (if practicable) and in writing. Sanction should be a minimum of six months suspension.

In more serious or extreme cases there may be no requirement for warnings and the accused person suspended forthwith. However the matter should be referred to the Chairman.

The Committee member responsible for discipline will enquire into the matter. He/she will deal with the matter taking into consideration all the available evidence and report findings to the Committee.

If the enquiry merits a disciplinary committee to adjudicate the findings will be reported to the Chairman who will appoint a Disciplinary Committee of three persons.

This committee will consist of two committee members, and an independent member. They will adjudicate on the issue and inform the parents/guardians in writing of their decision.

Should the parents/guardians wish to appeal the findings they must do so in writing, by special delivery letter, to the Chairman of PSNI Football Club, within seven days of receiving official notification of the findings of any such disciplinary hearing.

The decision of the Chairman shall be final and binding on all parties concerned and there will be no further appeals from it.

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Section Seven

Club Rules for Parents/Guardians

Parents/guardians of Young Persons are expected to:

- positively reinforce and show an interest in their football. Support their involvement and help them to enjoy football;
- not place them under pressure or push them into activities they do not want to do;
complete and return the Registration/Consent Form pertaining to participation;
- deliver and collect punctually to and from coaching sessions/matches;
- ensure proper and adequate attire for the weather conditions;
- ensure that proper footwear and protective equipment are worn at all times. Any young person not in possession of the fundamental requirements may not be permitted to participate;
- detail any health concerns to the coach prior to coaching sessions;
- inform the coach prior to departure from the field of play if there is to be early collection from a coaching session;
- encourage to play by the rules and teach them that they can only do their best. Help to recognise good performance, not just results;
- acknowledge the importance and role of the club coaches who provide their time free to ensure participation;
- show appreciation and support the coaches;
- be realistic;
- ensure hygiene and nutritional needs are met;
- accept the referee/game supervisor's judgement;
- behave responsibly on the sidelines; do not cause embarrassment;
- encourage respect;
- promote participation in playing football for fun.

Parents/Guardians have the right to:

- be informed of problems or concerns;
- be informed if there's injury;
- have their consent sought for issues such as trips;
- contribute to decisions within the club;
- speak to the coach/co-coordinator and voice their genuine concerns about the standard of coaching.

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Any misdemeanours and breach of this code of conduct will be dealt with immediately by the coach/volunteer.

Persistent concerns or breaches will result in the parent/guardian being asked not to attend the club if their attendance is detrimental to the young person's welfare.

The ultimate action, should a parent/guardian continue to breach the code of behaviour, may mean the coach/coordinator regrettably asking the young person to leave the club.

If the coach decides that it is in the interests of another young person, parents/guardians or PSNI Football Club then he will report the matter to the person responsible for discipline who will enquire into the matter and inform the coach, the parent/guardian and the Committee of his findings and action taken.

Should the parents/guardians wish to appeal the decisions they must do so in writing, by special delivery letter, to the Chairman PSNI Football Club, within 7 days of receiving official notification of suspension or expulsion.

The decision of the Chairman shall be final and binding on all parties concerned and there will be no further appeals.

Section 8

Club Rules for Spectators

The crowd at Newforge doesn't, and is not expected to, watch the game in silence.

The Club unreservedly recognises that encouragement of both teams by shouting, cheering and non-abusive and non-threatening singing has a positive influence on the atmosphere and can contribute to the enjoyment and outcome of the match. PSNI Football Club is proud of its supporters and their good behaviour, and the passion they show for their team.

The Club will however take steps to prevent people from behaving in a manner likely to jeopardise the safety and enjoyment of others, or to bring discredit on the club.

Any supporter who publicly disparages, discriminates against or denigrates someone in a defamatory manner on account of race, colour, language, religion, ethnic origin, sex or sexual orientation will be subject to investigation and may be evicted from the ground and face further sanctions.

This includes the display of offensive banners.

If a crime has been committed the offence will also be reported to the police.

If you or your fellow supporters hear any abuse of this nature, then please report it to the nearest steward.

Obstructing, resisting or disobeying any lawful request of a Club official or Safety Steward, whether at a home match or an away match, will be deemed to be a breach of this Code of Conduct.

Supporters are asked to refrain from:

- using sectarian, racist, homophobic, sexually offensive, threatening or any other inappropriate language. The club will not tolerate any behaviour that potentially offends other persons within the ground and infringes their rights.
- the display of any racist, sectarian or inappropriate emblems or banner;
- Using foul, abusive, obscene, insulting language, gestures or threatening behaviour;
- Missile throwing or entering the pitch area;
- behaving in a manner likely to jeopardise the safety and enjoyment of

- others;
- consume intoxicating liquor to such an extent that he is a nuisance to others and a danger to himself and others;
- bring alcohol into the stands.

Supporters should:

- Comply with this Code of Conduct at all times when attending a match; whether at home or away and whilst travelling to and from an away match;
- respect all players, team attendants and match officials;
- follow directions and instructions given by stewards and club officials
- respect other supporters;
- report breaches of our code to a steward or club official;
- remember to observe the code both at Newforge and away games;
- support PSNI Football Club loudly and proudly and in a manner that offends no one!

Visiting supporters are also asked to respect our Code of Conduct. All supporters should note that observing the Code of Conduct is a condition of entry to the Newforge.

Any person not observing the Code may be refused entry to the ground or ejected and face further sanctions.

Section Nine

Dealing with Complaints/Breaches of the Code

This Section outlines the normal processes and procedures that should be followed when a complaint is being investigated.

However the committee will reserve the right to derogate from the normal processes and procedures outlined in Section 9 if they feel that it is in the best interests of the security, safety and wellbeing of staff, officials, potential panel members/witnesses and their families, or in the best interest of PSNI Football Club.

Where anyone wishes to make a complaint against any official, staff member, coach, player or supporter of PSNI Football Club they should refer the complaint to the Chairman of PSNI Football Club or any other committee member who will immediately bring it to the attention of the Chairman.

Criminal allegations will be referred to the police if the complainant agrees however in serious matter the Chairman may still refer the matter to the police even if the complainant objects.

Where the complaint is of a criminal nature no disciplinary hearing will take place until the conclusion of criminal proceedings.

The Chairman of PSNI Football Club may suspend the accused person from the club and grounds pending the outcome of the criminal and/or disciplinary hearing if he believes it is in the interest of the public and PSNI Football Club to do so.

Where the Chairman feels it more appropriate to do so he may defer the above decisions to the committee.

If the complaint is suitable to be investigated by the person responsible for discipline the chairman will instruct him to do so. Upon receiving the findings from the investigation the chairman will appoint a Disciplinary Committee consisting of three persons, one of which should be independent of the committee and officials of the club.

The Chairman of the Disciplinary Committee cannot be the Chairman of the Committee.

The members of the Disciplinary Committee shall determine their own procedures. The Committee will set a date for the hearing of the evidence and give the accused at least 21 days notice in writing of the date, time, the venue of the hearing and an indication of the allegations made against them. The accused party will be allowed to attend in person or make a written submission. He may also call witnesses in his defence however, if he is attending in person or bringing witnesses he must notify the chairman of the committee in writing at least seven days before the hearing.

The onus of proof of posting will be on the accused party.

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The committee can hear evidence from witnesses or take their written evidence into account when deliberating on the issue. Any question as to whether any evidence is admissible, or whether any questions should or should not be put to a witness, shall be determined by the Disciplinary Committee. At any time the Chairman and through him, members of the Committee may ask questions of any of the parties. The Committee may draw such inferences, as it considers appropriate from the failure of the person accused to give evidence or answer a question put to him.

CCTV/video recorded evidence may be used by the Committee if available.

The Committee shall consider the evidence and submissions presented to it and determine whether the accused person is, on the balance of probabilities, guilty or not guilty of the alleged misconduct.

After reaching a decision on the guilt or innocence of the accused person the Committee, if it makes a finding of guilt, shall allow the accused, if present, to address it in terms of any matters of mitigation before imposing sanctions.

The accused person if guilty will then be informed of the sanctions being imposed and this will be confirmed in writing to the accused person within 14 days.

Should the accused person not be present then he will be notified in writing within 14 days of the hearing.

The person found guilty will be informed in the letter outlining the findings and sanctions that he may appeal in writing to the Chairman of PSNI Football Club within 14 days of the letter being posted to him. Again, it will be for the person found guilty to show proof of posting should their letter not be received by the Chairman.

The decision of the Chairman shall be final and binding on all parties concerned and there will be no further appeals from it unless there are specific regulations in IFA policy directing same.