

Sheffield Vulcans Grievance Procedure

As an inclusive rugby club the Sheffield Vulcans aim to foster a spirit of good sportsmanship, teamwork and camaraderie among its members. We do understand however that sometimes disagreements or incidents will arise that will lead members to have to raise concerns about the conduct of a fellow member. The following policy sets out our procedures for dealing with such issues and ensuring that the Sheffield Vulcans remains an inclusive, safe and fun space for all members to engage in.

Please note this document is primarily guidance. It does not override the constitution of the club or RFU rules. This document is aimed at off the field incidents. For disciplinary related to on-field conduct please refer to RFU guidance.

Stage 1: Informal Grievance

Wherever possible we would encourage members to attempt to resolve matters informally. Often the conduct of others is not malicious and disagreement or offence can be caused due to a lack of reflection on how a members actions might impact others. We would encourage those who have an issue with the conduct of others to attempt to resolve it by approaching the person and raising it with them in a respectful manner and attempt to reach a mutually agreeable resolution.

Where this has been ineffective or where due to the nature of the situation a member does not feel comfortable approaching the fellow member concerned the matter should be raised with the Chair. The Chair has responsibility for ensuring club harmony and cohesion and therefore should be the first point of contact in this instance. Where the matter concerns the Chair, the member should raise this with the Secretary. In the circumstance where the matter involves both the Chair and the Secretary the member should approach an appropriate member of the committee. For the purposes of the following document the term Chair will be used but it should be presumed that the above delegation process would occur if the matter involves the Chair.

Unless the matter relates to serious misconduct (see below) the Chair should attempt to resolve this informally by either discussing it with members individually or with mediating a conversation between members. This should be aimed at reaching a mutually agreeable resolution on the conduct of members going forward. At the informal stage it is down to the Chair to establish what appropriate conduct is for members based on the guidance provided by the values of the IGR, RFU and Sheffield Vulcans RFC.

Stage 2: Formal Grievance

Where a matter cannot be resolved informally, or where the misconduct is serious enough (see below) that an informal approach is not appropriate, a formal grievance can be raised. This can be done in writing to the Chair. If approached verbally the Chair should provide appropriate details to allow the member to make a written complaint. This matter should then be investigated by the Chair and two other committee members. The investigation should involve taking statements from all parties as well as gathering any other relevant evidence. Ideally the investigation should not take longer than 2 weeks but may be allowed to be delayed if mitigating circumstances are a factor. This should be done in full consultation with the member who has submitted the complaint.

Once the investigation has been concluded the panel of 3 committee members will decide whether to uphold the complaint. This decision will be made on the balance of probabilities. If the complaint is not upheld then the relevant members will be informed as soon as possible. The member submitting the complaint will be given 1 week to appeal this decision. If no appeal is made the matter will be assumed to have been resolved and it will be taken no further.

If a member submits an appeal this will be considered by 2 members of the committee who were not involved in the original decision in consultation with the member and investigators. A decision on the appeal will be given within 1 week.

Stage 3: Disciplinary

If an investigation discovers that there has been wrongdoing then one of the following actions will be taken depending on the nature of the misconduct and any previous misconduct by the member in question:

1. Verbal Warning - The misconduct is minor and easily correctable. The member will be spoken to by the Captain and reminded of the expectations of a member of Sheffield Vulcans RFC. They will be asked to change their conduct going forward. A verbal warning will be marked against the member for 6 months during which it can be considered in any future disciplinary decision.
2. Written Warning - The misconduct is major or part of a repeated pattern of misconduct. The member will be written to by the Captain and be reminded of the expectations of a member of Sheffield Vulcans RFC. It should be made clear that repeated behaviour may result in their expulsion from Sheffield

Vulcans RFC. A written warning will be marked against the member for 12 months during which it can be considered in any future disciplinary decisions.

3. Final Written Warning - The members conduct is as above, the member has already received a written warning but the misconduct does not justify expulsion. This will be marked against the member for a further 12 months during which it can be considered in any further disciplinary actions. Any further disciplinary actions of a similar level made during this time will lead to expulsion.
4. Expulsion - The members misconduct is serious (see below) or repeated with little belief that the member is willing to change their behaviour. The member will have their membership of Sheffield Vulcans RUFC revoked and will not be welcome at any Sheffield Vulcans RUFC events. This will be permanent.

Any member will have the opportunity to appeal any of the above decisions and this must be submitted within 1 week of the decision. This will be considered by two non-investigating members of the committee in consultation with the member and the investigators.

Serious Misconduct

Sheffield Vulcans is an inclusive club and as such does not tolerate behaviour which seriously compromises its core principles. The following issues will be considered serious misconduct:

- Harassment of a member based on a protected characteristic under the Equality Act (e.g. Homophobia, transphobia, racism, sexism)
- Harassment of a member based on membership or identification of a structurally or historically oppressed group that is not covered by the Equality Act (e.g. non-binary, gender non-conforming members)
- Sexual Harassment or Assault
- Physical Assault
- Bringing Sheffield Vulcans RUFC into disrepute
- Committing a criminal offence which indicates that you are a danger to fellow members or is seriously contrary to the Values of Sheffield Vulcans RUFC
- Serious financial misconduct in relation to Sheffield Vulcans RUFC

Please note the above list is not exhaustive and it may be considered that other forms of misconduct are serious by those investigating and therefore the relevant disciplinary action may be escalated on this basis.