Onslow Junior Football Club
Discipline and Misconduct Policy

Constitution alignment: This policy is a bylaw/policy made under clause 14 of the OJFC Constitution. It is binding on Members. If there is any inconsistency, the Constitution and applicable Capital Football / New Zealand Football regulations and rules prevail.

Status: Current

Version: 1.0
Approved by: Executive Committee
Approval date: 02 / 11 / 2026
Next review date: 2027
Policy owner: Executive Committee

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a fair, transparent, and proportionate process for managing misconduct and discipline within Onslow Junior Football Club (OJFC).

OJFC is committed to providing a safe, positive, and development-focused environment for children and young people. Discipline processes are intended to protect player wellbeing and enjoyment, uphold the Club's Code of Conduct and The Onslow Way, support learning and behaviour improvement, and ensure consistent decision-making.

2. Principles

All disciplinary matters will be managed in accordance with the following principles:

- Child-centred: the wellbeing of children and young people is paramount.
- Proportionate: responses will be appropriate to the seriousness and frequency of the behaviour.
- Natural justice: individuals will be informed of concerns and given an opportunity to respond.
- Educational first: wherever possible, issues will be addressed through guidance and learning.
- Consistency: similar situations will be treated in similar ways.
- Confidentiality: information will be shared only on a need-to-know basis.

3. Scope

This policy applies to misconduct occurring at matches, training sessions, tournaments, programmes and club events; during travel associated with OJFC activities; in online/digital communications related to OJFC; and by any person participating in, supporting, or attending OJFC activities.

4. What is misconduct?

Misconduct includes behaviour that breaches the OJFC Code of Conduct or undermines the safe and respectful operation of the Club.

Examples include (but are not limited to):

- Player misconduct: repeated unsporting behaviour; deliberate disrespect toward teammates, opponents, officials or club coaches and volunteers; aggressive or dangerous conduct beyond normal play.
- Adult misconduct (parents, coaches, spectators, volunteers): abusive, aggressive or threatening behaviour (verbal or physical); harassment, bullying or discrimination; repeated inappropriate sideline behaviour; undermining referees or volunteers; failure to follow club directions or venue rules.

5. What this policy does not cover

- Safeguarding: any concern involving child safety, abuse, or harm must be escalated immediately under the Club's Safeguarding Policy.
- Referee decisions: decisions made by referees during matches are final and are not disciplinary matters.
- Minor complaints: low-level service or communication concerns should be handled under the Club's Complaints & Dispute Resolution Policy.

6. Disciplinary pathway

OJFC uses a graduated approach to discipline, recognising most issues can be resolved early and informally.

6.1 Informal response (preferred) – used for first-time or low-level issues:

- Reminder of expectations
- Informal discussion with coach, manager, or Grade Coordinator
- Education about appropriate behaviour

6.2 Formal disciplinary response – used where behaviour is serious, repeated, or unresolved:

- Written warning or behaviour agreement
- Temporary stand-down from matches, training, or sidelines

- Removal from a volunteer or club role for a defined period.

6.3 Escalation

Where appropriate, matters may be referred to the Executive Committee and/or escalated to Capital Football or New Zealand Football under their regulations.

7. Disciplinary process (formal)

1. Triage: determine whether the matter is discipline, complaint, or safeguarding.
2. Information gathering: obtain relevant information and accounts.
3. Opportunity to respond: inform the person(s) involved and provide an opportunity to respond.
4. Decision: decide on the balance of probabilities and document the rationale.
5. Outcome: communicate actions and expectations clearly and respectfully.
6. Recording: record outcomes securely in line with privacy requirements.

8. Authority and decision-making

- Grade Coordinators and the Club Captain may address low-level matters in their area, consistent with this policy.
- Formal disciplinary decisions rest with the Executive Committee or its delegated representatives in line with the 'Disputes Resolution' section of the OJFC constitution.
- Any conflicts of interest must be declared and managed in line with the Interest Register Policy.

9. Possible outcomes

Disciplinary outcomes may include:

- Verbal or written warning
- Behaviour agreement
- Apology or restorative action
- Temporary stand-down (player, coach, parent, or spectator)
- Removal from a volunteer role
- Referral to external football authorities

The objective is to restore positive behaviour and protect children's experience.

10. Review / appeal (club level)

Any requests for review or appeal are to be in accordance with the 'Disputes Resolution' section of the OJFC constitution.

11. Confidentiality and records

All disciplinary matters will be handled confidentially. Records will be stored securely and retained in accordance with the Club's Privacy Policy.

12. Review of this policy

This policy will be reviewed at least every two years, or sooner if required by changes to legislation, federation rules, or club operations.