

Disciplinary Proceedings Involving Children

This guidance applies to all settings where a child is involved in disciplinary matters. All processes that are followed must pay due consideration to safeguarding and welfare issues.

Anyone under the age of 18 is a child in law. The welfare of the child **MUST** always be paramount.

No part of the process should be oppressive or intimidating for the child. As soon as it becomes apparent that the process involves a child, the County Safeguarding Officer **MUST** be informed. Any panel should consider whether it needs the child to attend in person. It should discuss this with the County Safeguarding Officer. When making this decision, consideration should be given to:

- the age of the child
- the seriousness of the offence
- the evidence likely to be given
- the possible effect on the child.

Parents/carers **MUST** be included in all communications.

The County Safeguarding Officer will ensure the child is properly supported and will, in consultation with the child's parents/carers either act as or appoint a suitable individual to act as supporting adult for the child during the investigative/disciplinary process.

The supporting adult is likely to be the child's Club Safeguarding Officer, unless there is a potential conflict of interest (e.g. if the Club Safeguarding Officer is the parent or was involved in the incident). If this is the case, then a Club Safeguarding Officer from another club, a League Safeguarding Officer, or County Safeguarding Officer may assist. Best practice is for a safeguarding specialist to fulfil this role.

The supporting adult should have no other role in the proceedings. Their role is purely regarding the child's welfare. The supporting adult should liaise directly with the child and their parents/carers throughout, making sure the child is kept fully informed. The supporting adult can act for more than one child at the same hearing if this is thought appropriate.

The supporting adult will discuss the process with the child and their parents/carers to ensure they fully understand the procedure. If a child does not wish to attend, they should not be compelled to do so.

If the child chooses to give a statement to the panel, then ordinarily that statement should be prepared in advance in writing. This can be written by the child or any other person. It is important this statement is the child's views and words.

If, when attending the panel, the child is to be questioned regarding their behaviour or what they have witnessed, all involved should bear in mind the age and potential vulnerability of the child in such a setting. Questioning should be conducted in a considerate manner and must not be oppressive, persistent, demeaning, or lengthy. The supporting adult should ask the Chair of the panel to suspend proceedings immediately if they have any concerns about the manner or duration of the questioning.

Where a child is found to have committed a disciplinary offence requiring potential sanction, consideration should be given to the child's age and understanding, as well as their experience of life and of cricket, before any sanctions are issued.

Where it is necessary for a report to be circulated (either within the relevant cricket league or even to the press), any child involved must not have their details published.