

**Policies & Procedures  
of the  
Vancouver  
Minor Hockey Association**

*P-3*

**DISCIPLINE AND SUSPENSION POLICY**

Date Revised:	May 2015	Revision No.:	1
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## **P-3: Discipline and Suspension Policy**

### **1. Overview**

- 1.1. VMHA teams are expected to be well disciplined, exhibit good sportsmanship and incur fewer penalty minutes than their opponents.
- 1.2. VMHA team officials and parents are expected to demonstrate high levels of sportsmanship and treat others within the VMHA as well as all others involved in minor hockey with respect.
- 1.3. Players, parents and team officials are expected to observe the letter and spirit of the VMHA Codes of Conduct (as set out in Policy P-2), as well as the playing rules of hockey and the rules, regulations and policies of the PCAHA, BC Hockey and Hockey Canada.
- 1.4. The coaching staff is responsible for ensuring a high level of sportsmanship, maintaining team discipline and, when appropriate, taking disciplinary action.
- 1.5. Coaches are expected to ensure that players respect the rules of the game and play in a manner that does not create unreasonable risks for the player or for his / her teammates or opponents. In appropriate circumstances, coaches are expected to further discipline players who have received, or should have received, a penalty during a game. In particular, coaches are expected to take further action in connection with instances of checking from behind and other dangerous on-ice conduct.
- 1.6. The VMHA Board is also expected to ensure that players, team officials, parents and all other representatives of the VMHA respect the rules of the game and exhibit good sportsmanship.

### **2. Interpretation**

- 2.1. References in this policy to “parent” shall include both parents and / or guardians.
- 2.2. References in this policy to “coaching staff” shall mean the Head Coach, or a person designated by the Head Coach, when there is a difference in opinion between or among members of the coaching staff.
- 2.3. The refusal or neglect of a parent to attend a meeting set up pursuant to this policy shall not invalidate a decision made at such a meeting. Similarly, if for good reason a parent cannot be notified of a meeting, the absence of that parent from a meeting shall not invalidate a decision made at such a meeting.
- 2.4. This policy does not apply to situations falling within the scope of Policy P-1: *Harassment and Abuse Policy*, except that in the case of preliminary efforts by a team official to resolve matters, Part 3 of this Policy shall apply.

**3. Team Discipline**

3.1. A coach may suspend a player for disciplinary reasons, whether the conduct for which the player is being suspended occurs on or off the ice, but such a suspension shall be imposed only in accordance with this policy.

3.2. Team discipline shall be administered in a manner which is procedurally fair, the more serious the discipline and / or penalty, the higher the standard of procedural fairness. Such procedural fairness shall include:

- a) A right to know why one is to be disciplined;
- b) A right to offer a defence or explanation or to dispute the appropriateness of the discipline meted out;
- c) Except in the case of minor disciplinary matters, the right of a parent to be informed of the reason for discipline and to be given an opportunity to comment;
- d) A right to have a disciplinary decision reviewed pursuant to the VMHA Dispute Resolution Policy;
- e) A right of persons in addition to the coach and player to be involved in the disciplinary process when the issue significantly affects those other persons;
- f) An expectation that similar conduct shall merit similar disciplinary consequences.

3.3. Where appropriate, a parent may be invited to become involved in the disciplinary process.

3.4. The coaching staff may, at its sole discretion, suspend a player for one game.

3.5. If the coaching staff wishes to suspend a player for more than one game or impose a second one game suspension later in the season, the following procedure shall be followed:

- a) One or more members of the coaching staff shall immediately meet with the player and a parent to review the reasons for the proposed suspension;
- b) The coaching staff will then decide either to:
  - i) Seek a further suspension, or
  - ii) Permit the player to continue to play on such condition(s) as the coaching staff may decide;
- c) If the decision is to permit the player to continue to play on condition and the coaching staff is of the opinion that the player has failed to satisfy the condition, the coaching staff may then suspend the player for one or two games;
- d) If the decision is to seek a further suspension, the coaching staff shall immediately so inform the player and a parent and then refer the matter to the Division Manager and appropriate Vice-President who shall immediately convene a meeting with the player, his / her parent and the Head Coach;
- e) Following the meeting a majority of the Division Manager, Vice-President and

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Head Coach shall decide whether to impose a further suspension and shall advise the player and parent accordingly.

- 3.6. A decision to suspend a player for the balance of the season may only be made by a majority of the President, Division Manager, Vice-President and Head Coach.
- 3.7. Unless otherwise decided by the coaching staff, a player under suspension pursuant to this section 3 is expected to attend all practices.
- 3.8. A decision to suspend a player for more than one game may be reviewed under the VMHA Dispute Resolution Policy. However, a decision to suspend a player for one game only is not reviewable under that policy.

#### **4. Discipline involving a VMHA response**

- 4.1. Disciplinary action may be assessed pursuant to this Policy against any team, team official, parent or any person associated with the team or with the Association for unfair or unsportsmanlike conduct, for conduct which is injurious to hockey or brings discredit to the Association, for failure to comply with the Constitution, Bylaws, Rules and Regulations, or Policies of the Association, of the PCAHA, of BC Hockey or of Hockey Canada.
- 4.2. Any person who is of the view that disciplinary action should be considered against any person described in section 4.1 above shall report his / her concern to the President. As well, any person who is of the view that any serious act or omission of a player, parent or team official requires a response other than, or in addition to, the response meted out by the coaching staff shall report his / her concern to the President.
- 4.3. The President shall investigate the matter or refer the matter to such person(s) as would be appropriate for the investigation. The person shall be impartial and shall not have been directly involved in the matters giving rise to the investigation.
- 4.4. Where an apparent violation has occurred that is of a serious nature, the person(s) conducting the investigation shall be authorized to issue a temporary suspension pending the outcome of the disciplinary process outlined in this Policy.
- 4.5. The coach and manager of any team whose player(s), parent(s) or team official(s) are involved in the investigation shall be notified of the investigation. The parents of any player who is the subject matter of an investigation shall also be notified of the investigation.
- 4.6. As part of each investigation, the person(s) who is (are) the subject of the investigation shall be provided an opportunity to present his / her version of the matter in question and to respond to the alleged rule violation(s), prior to consideration of the disciplinary action.

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- 4.7. Such investigation shall be pursued diligently and the President, or other person(s), shall endeavour to prepare a report with recommendations within five days of receiving notice of the matter.
- 4.8. In the event that the recommendations include further action of a disciplinary nature, the President or other person(s) making the recommendations shall immediately convene a meeting of the interested parties, which parties shall normally include the player, parents or guardians, head and / or assistant coach(es), division manager and appropriate vice president.
- 4.9. If the appropriate vice-president has been directly involved in the investigation or is not impartial, then the President shall direct that another vice-president participate in the meeting and make the determination set out in the subsequent paragraph.
- 4.10. Following the meeting the appropriate vice president shall decide on an appropriate penalty, if any, provided that the vice president shall first have sought the opinion of the persons at the meeting as to penalty.
- 4.11. The vice president shall immediately notify the parties of his decision, such decision to be subject to review under the Dispute Resolution Policy.
- 4.12. All disciplinary investigations shall be conducted in a timely fashion and the individuals who are the subject of the investigation, as well as the coach and manager, shall be notified as soon as possible of the outcome. The results of any disciplinary action shall be communicated in writing.
- 4.13. The President shall treat a suspension handed down by the BCAHA or the PCAHA as a report for purposes of this policy.
- 4.14. Where the conduct giving rise to the investigation is also the subject of a disciplinary review by BC Hockey or the PCAHA, the imposition of any discipline by the VMHA shall await the result of and take into consideration any discipline imposed by those bodies.
- 4.15. Any suspension imposed by the VMHA shall be served in accordance with the PCAHA Suspension Policy, unless otherwise specified by the person(s) assessing disciplinary action.