



LAKES AREA HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

Disciplinary Committee Policy & Process 2026-2027 Season

I. Purpose

LAHA is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and positive environment for all players, parents, and coaches. The disciplinary process is designed to:

- Ensure accountability for behavior that violates the Code of Conduct or undermines the values of LAHA.
- Provide parents and players with a clear understanding of how disciplinary matters are handled.
- Support positive development by pairing consequences with opportunities for learning and restoration.
- Share responsibility through a Disciplinary Committee that works independently but under Board oversight.

II. Code of Conduct

At the start of each season, all players, parents, and coaches must sign the LAHA Code of Conduct. This agreement includes:

- Respect for teammates, opponents, coaches, officials, and spectators.
- Zero tolerance for bullying, harassment, discrimination, threats, fighting, or substance use.
- Commitment to punctuality, effort, and adherence to team rules.
- Acknowledgment that violations may result in disciplinary action, including suspension or removal from LAHA.

For clarity, Players, players' parents and family members (including siblings) are subject to review and discipline for both **on-ice and off-ice violations** of the Code of Conduct under this process.

Off-Ice Conduct & Jurisdiction

LAHA jurisdiction includes behavior occurring:

- At LAHA facilities or events;
- At away games, tournaments, hotels, or travel-related activities connected to LAHA participation;
- During team-related functions or gathering; and
- On digital platforms or social media when conduct materially impacts player safety, team environment, or the reputation and operations of LAHA.

LAHA does not assert authority over purely private matters unrelated to hockey participation unless the conduct directly affects the safety, wellbeing, or functioning of the association.

III. The Disciplinary Committee

Unless a conflict exists, the LAHA Disciplinary Committee consists of:

- SafeSport Coordinator (Chair)
- Hockey Director
- Designated Board Appointee (Non-Board Member)

Committee members selected for a specific case must have no conflict of interest (e.g., not a coach or parent directly connected to the player/parent/family involved).

The Committee is responsible for reviewing incidents, conducting investigations when necessary, and issuing findings and disciplinary decisions.

The Disciplinary Committee serves as the decision-making body for discipline.

The Board does not participate in disciplinary determinations except when acting in an appeals capacity.

IV. Process Overview

1. Incident Report

- Any coach, parent, player, or official may report a potential violation.
- Reports should be submitted promptly to the SafeSport Coordinator via email at safesport@lakesareahockey.com
- The reporting party will receive confirmation of receipt within 48 hours from the SafeSport Coordinator.

2. Initial Review

Upon receiving an incident report, the SafeSport Coordinator will conduct an initial assessment to determine jurisdiction and the nature of the allegation. Reports are typically categorized into one of the three areas:

a. SafeSport Violation

- All suspected SafeSport violations will be referred to the U.S. Center for SafeSport or MWAHA for review.
- If deemed not a SafeSport matter by the governing body, the report will be returned to LAHA's Disciplinary Committee for handling.

b. Code of Conduct Violation

- Suspected Code of Conduct violations will be handled by the LAHA Disciplinary Committee.

c. No Action Required/Administrative Closure

- The report is determined to be unfounded, or there is insufficient evidence of misconduct.
- The SafeSport Coordinator reserves the right to have an informal conversation with the accused individual or reporting party if the matter does not require formal committee review.

3. Formal Notification & Investigation

When a matter proceeds to disciplinary review, the member (and parent/guardian if applicable) will receive formal written notification including:

- A description of the alleged conduct and applicable policy provisions.
- Notice that a disciplinary review is underway.
- An opportunity to respond prior to a decision.

Member Rights

The notified member shall be informed of the following rights:

- The right to be heard and respond to allegations.
- The right to present information or evidence.
- The right to call relevant witnesses.
- The right to be accompanied or represented by a person of their choosing.

Investigation Timeline

The Disciplinary Committee will gather facts, interview involved parties, and review materials as needed.

Investigations will normally be completed within seven (7) days, unless:

- Additional time is reasonably required due to complexity, availability of participants, or governing body involvement; or
- Immediate interim action is necessary to protect safety or program integrity

4. Standard of Proof

Disciplinary decisions shall be based on a Preponderance of Evidence standard, meaning the Committee determines that it is more likely than not that the alleged conduct occurred.

This standard ensures consistent and fair decision-making while recognizing the educational and community-based nature of youth sports discipline.

5. Governing Body Jurisdiction

Certain matters may fall under the authority of MWAHA, USA Hockey, or SafeSport.

In such cases:

- LAHA does not control the investigation, disciplinary process, or timeline.
- LAHA discipline shall not conflict with, modify, duplicate, or extend discipline imposed by USA Hockey, SafeSport, or MWAHA.
- LAHA may take administrative actions necessary for local program operations only when consistent with governing body rulings.

6. Decisions & Notifications

- Decisions are made by majority vote of the Disciplinary Committee
- Written findings and disciplinary outcomes will be provided to the member.
- Notification will include appeal rights and timelines.

V. Progressive Discipline & Outcomes

LAHA follows a progressive discipline model, recognizing that behavior correction and education are primary goals whenever appropriate.

Discipline may escalate based on severity, repetition, or failure to comply with prior corrective measures. Steps may include:

1. Verbal or Written Warning

Education-focused response for minor or first-time issues.

2. Probation

Continued participation under defined behavioral expectations.

3. Suspension

Removal from practices, games, or events for a defined period.

4. Season Suspension or Removal

Applied for serious or repeated misconduct.

5. Permanent Removal

Reserved for severe violations or conduct posing safety or reputational risk.

The Committee may bypass steps when conduct involves safety concerns, harassment, violence, discrimination, or other serious violations.

VI. Appeals Process

Any disciplinary action beyond a warning may be appealed.

Filing an Appeal

- Appeals must be submitted in writing to president@lakesareahockey.com within **seven (7) days** of the decision.

Appeals Authority

The LAHA Board serves solely as the Appeals Body and does not participate in initial disciplinary decisions.

Appeals Hearing Procedures

Appeals shall follow USA Hockey By-Law 10 and include:

- Written notice of the hearing will be given at least seven (7) days in advance.
- Opportunity for the appellant to:
 - Present information or additional evidence
 - Respond to the Committee's findings
 - Ask and answer questions with the Appeals Body

Decision

- The Board (excluding any conflicted members) will issue written decision within **five (5) business days** following the hearing.
- A written record of the appeal decision will be maintained.

Further appeals may be submitted to MWHAA in accordance with USA Hockey By-Law 10 procedures

Governing Body Decisions

If a matter is handled by MWAHA, USA Hockey, or U.S. Center for SafeSport, their disciplinary and appeals procedures apply. LAHA does not control those timelines or outcomes. Families will be directed to the appropriate governing body for appeal procedures.

VII. Documentation & Confidentiality

- All reports, investigations, and outcomes are documented by LAHA Secretary and maintained confidential.
- Records are retained to track repeat conduct across seasons.
- Information is only shared with individuals directly involved in the disciplinary process.

VIII. Parent Involvement

- Parents are required to participate in meetings if their child is subject to discipline beyond a warning.
- Parents are expected to model positive behavior at all LAHA events.

IX. Annual Review

The policy will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary. The Board reserves the right to amend the policy at any time to ensure fairness, transparency, and alignment with MWAHA, USA Hockey, and SafeSport standards.