



**SUFFOLK TENNIS**

# **SUFFOLK LAWN TENNIS ASSOCIATION**

## **DISCIPLINARY POLICY**

**Approved: 28<sup>th</sup> March 2024**

**For review by: March 2027**

## INTRODUCTION

Discipline in sport is essential to maintain standards both in the game and in the playing of it by all those who participate in tennis. It is critical to the concept of 'Fair Play'<sup>1</sup>; to the potential for achieving 'Tennis Opened Up'<sup>2</sup> to more players; and to the reputation of the sport and its organisations.

Suffolk Lawn Tennis Association (SLTA) has adopted the Lawn Tennis Association's (LTA) Code of Conduct<sup>3</sup> (2022) which sets out very clearly the standards of conduct for all participants in tennis (including players of all ages and at all levels, player support persons<sup>4</sup>, officials, and spectators). Taken in association with the LTA's Disciplinary Code (January 2023), there is a process for the LTA to manage the more serious disciplinary matters that arise in all sports from time to time.

At the same time, all LTA registered venues (clubs) are expected to have their own disciplinary policies and processes for managing acts, omissions and behaviours by their members and participants that contravene the required standards.

## SCOPE

In consequence of this solid framework, SLTA only has responsibility for managing disciplinary matters as they relate to:

- Participants in tennis activities for which it has responsibility: County Cup Suffolk teams<sup>5</sup> and all players in SLTA organised practice sessions, coaching and tournaments (including County Cup and the annual Inter Club Doubles tournament) and other official events

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<sup>1</sup> Promoted by the LTA as relating to 'respect... making tennis enjoyable, fun and safe'

<https://www.lta.org.uk/4ac47f/siteassets/about-lta/file/fair-play-poster-values.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.lta.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/mission-statement/>

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.lta.org.uk/494b8d/siteassets/about-lta/file/lta-code-of-conduct.pdf?\\_gl=1\\*5lut7v\\*\\_ga\\*MTkzNTg0NDU2Ni4xNzA2ODg3OTg0\\*\\_ga\\_R8CDFT1V4H\\*MTcxMDQyNTI1MS4zNS4xLjE3MTA0MjU4MjUuNjAuMC4w#\\_ga=2.188157288.1384193870.1710326457-1935844566.1706887984](https://www.lta.org.uk/494b8d/siteassets/about-lta/file/lta-code-of-conduct.pdf?_gl=1*5lut7v*_ga*MTkzNTg0NDU2Ni4xNzA2ODg3OTg0*_ga_R8CDFT1V4H*MTcxMDQyNTI1MS4zNS4xLjE3MTA0MjU4MjUuNjAuMC4w#_ga=2.188157288.1384193870.1710326457-1935844566.1706887984)

<sup>4</sup> Player support persons, as defined by the LTA, are any coach, trainer, manager, agent, representative, team staff, official, nutritionist, medical or paramedical personnel; any other person working with, treating or assisting a player; or any parent, guardian, carer, family member, relative, or other associate or supporter of a player

<sup>5</sup> Playing home and away, on and off court (unless dealt with by the LTA under its' Disciplinary Code)

- Volunteers including management committee members but excluding the Councillor (remit to LTA)
- Contractors.

Staff, if SLTA employs anyone in the future would be managed under a separate employment disciplinary procedure consistent with good employment practice.

Contractors will have expectations around conduct built into their contracts. They may be found in breach of their contract but this policy would not apply to them.

Thus, this policy only applies to the management of alleged misconduct that is not the responsibility of the responsible LTA official managing on court behaviour during a tournament; the LTA in respect of more serious allegations; an LTA registered venue where SLTA has no jurisdiction; or SLTA as an employer/contractee. Another important exclusion is allegations relating to the safeguarding of a child(ren) or adult at risk of abuse. Such allegations must be reported as required by SLTA's safeguarding policy.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

SLTA will deal with disciplinary matters sensitively and with due respect for the privacy of any individuals involved. All parties involved in disciplinary matters and procedures must treat as confidential all information connected to the investigation.

## **WELFARE**

SLTA will implement the Association's safeguarding procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving Children, Vulnerable Adults, parents, families and carers appropriately;

## **PROCESS**

### **Investigation**

If an allegation of misconduct is made, it will be forwarded without delay to the SLTA Secretary assess whether it is a potential safeguarding matter or whether the allegation should be managed within this, the SLTA Disciplinary Policy.

The only exclusion would be if the allegation was of misconduct by the SLTA Secretary, in which case another member of the management committee would be asked to make the initial assessment as to whether it was a potential safeguarding matter to be reported to the LTA directly or, if not, whether it met the criteria to be managed within this, the SLTA Disciplinary Policy.

With the exception in the paragraph above, allegations of misconduct will usually be investigated by the Secretary, who will, without delay:

- Inform the person about whom misconduct is alleged (unless in doing so this would compromise the safety of another person) of the allegation, process that will be followed, and to provide them with a copy of this policy
- Contact the referrer to confirm the process that will be followed, and to provide them with a copy of this policy.

The investigating officer will then establish the facts by necessary means that may include:

- Conducting face-to-face meetings or using other forms of communication involving the referrer, witnesses, and other relevant persons
- Accessing and make use of information available to be read, viewed or listened to (including but not limited to documents, social media posts, videos, voice recordings, and CCTV)
- Create a summary of the fact-finding in a written report that will be submitted to the management committee.

The investigating officer will then form their opinion and add that to the written report, together with their recommendations, which may include:

- No further action
- Apology
- Future undertakings

- Other specific sanctions that SLTA can impose (within its sphere of control)
- Onward referral to the LTA for further consideration under its Disciplinary Code.
- Onward referral to any authority deemed more appropriate in practice or in law to handle it, including local authorities, statutory bodies and law enforcement agencies.

### **Consultation**

The draft report will be shared with the parties (the person facing the allegation of misconduct and the referrer/complainant/victim) who will be given 7 days in which to comment on factual accuracy, and whether the proposed recommendations seem fair to them.

### **Decision making panel**

The investigating officer then has 7 days in which to finalise the report and arrange a meeting of the Management Committee to consider the recommendations and make a decision. This meeting shall take place within 21 days and be chaired by a member of the Management Committee. This meeting will exclude the Chair of the Management Committee.

The Chair of the hearing or a designated deputy will inform the parties of the outcome and the right of appeal that the person being disciplined may exercise.

### **Appeal**

If the person against whom allegations were found proved is unhappy with the fairness of the process and/or the decision of the panel, they may appeal within 28 days of the date of the communication of the panel's determination to the chair of the hearing or a designated deputy.

That officer will liaise with the SLTA Secretary who will convene a hearing before the Chair of the Management Committee within 21 days of the appeal. The decision of the Chair of the Management Committee as to whether the disciplinary hearing and decision making was fair, is final.

If the appellant does not comply with the sanction(s) imposed, they may be subject to further disciplinary action.