



PERSONAL CONDUCT POLICY

League Policies for Players

2020

It is a privilege to be part of the National Football League. **Everyone** who is part of the league must refrain from “conduct detrimental to the integrity of and public confidence in” the NFL. This includes owners, coaches, players, other team employees, game officials, and employees of the league office, NFL Films, NFL Network, or any other NFL business.

Conduct by anyone in the league that is illegal, violent, dangerous, or irresponsible puts innocent victims at risk, damages the reputation of others in the game, and undercuts public respect and support for the NFL. We must endeavor at all times to be people of high character; we must show respect for others inside and outside our workplace; and we must conduct ourselves in ways that favorably reflect on ourselves, our teams, the communities we represent, and the NFL.

To this end, the league provides annual and ongoing education regarding the Policy and related topics such as respect and appropriate behavior, as well as resources for all employees to assist them in conforming their behavior to the standards expected of them. Our goal is to prevent violations, but when violations of this Policy do occur, appropriate disciplinary action must follow.

This Policy is issued pursuant to the Commissioner’s authority under the Constitution and Bylaws, Collective Bargaining Agreement and NFL Player Contract to define, address and sanction conduct detrimental to the league and professional football. The provisions below apply to players under contract; all rookie players selected in the NFL College Draft; all undrafted rookie players following the NFL College Draft; all Draft-eligible players who attend a Scouting Combine; all unsigned veterans who were under contract in the prior League Year; and all other prospective players once they commence negotiations with a club concerning employment.

I. Expectations and Standards of Conduct

It is not enough simply to avoid being found guilty of a crime in a court of law. We are all held to a higher standard and must conduct ourselves in a way that is responsible, promotes the values of the NFL, and is lawful.

Players convicted of a crime or subject to a disposition of a criminal proceeding (as defined in this Policy) are subject to discipline. But even if the conduct does not result in a criminal conviction, players found to have engaged in any of the following conduct will be subject to discipline. Prohibited conduct includes but is not limited to the following:

- Actual or threatened physical violence against another person, including dating violence, domestic violence, child abuse, and other forms of family violence;
- Assault and/or battery, including sexual assault or other sex offenses;
- Violent or threatening behavior toward another employee or a third party in any workplace setting;

- Stalking, harassment, or similar forms of intimidation;
- Illegal possession of a gun or other weapon (such as explosives, toxic substances, and the like), or possession of a gun or other weapon in any workplace setting;
- Illegal possession, use, or distribution of alcohol or drugs;
- Possession, use, or distribution of steroids or other performance enhancing substances;
- Crimes involving cruelty to animals as defined by state or federal law;
- Crimes of dishonesty such as blackmail, extortion, fraud, money laundering, or racketeering;
- Theft-related crimes such as burglary, robbery, or larceny;
- Disorderly conduct;
- Crimes against law enforcement, such as obstruction, resisting arrest, or harming a police officer or other law enforcement officer;
- Conduct that poses a genuine danger to the safety and well-being of another person; and
- Conduct that undermines or puts at risk the integrity of the NFL, NFL clubs, or NFL personnel.

II. Evaluation, Counseling, and Services

Any player arrested or charged with violent or threatening conduct that would violate this Policy will be offered a formal clinical evaluation and appropriate follow-up education, counseling, or treatment program, the cost of which will be paid by the league. The evaluation, counseling and other services will be provided on a confidential basis and are not disciplinary but are instead intended to help and assist the player, and the beneficial use of such services will be favorably viewed with respect to any discipline later imposed.

In appropriate cases (for example, cases involving domestic violence or child abuse), the league will make available assistance to victims and families, as well as the player. This assistance may include providing or direction to appropriate counseling, social and other services, clergy, medical professionals, and specialists in dealing with children and youth. These resources will be provided through specialized Critical Response Teams affiliated with the league office and club. These teams will develop standard protocols based on experts' recommendations of appropriate and constructive responses to reported incidents of violence, particularly incidents of domestic violence, child abuse, or sexual assault. These response teams will assist victims and families in matters of personal security and other needs following a reported incident. In addition, information about local non-league resources to help victims and family members will be provided to affected parties.

III. Investigations

Whenever the league office becomes aware of a possible violation of the Policy, it will undertake an investigation, the timing and scope of which will be based upon the particular circumstances of the matter. Any such investigation may be conducted by league office personnel, independent parties, or a combination of the two. In cases that are also being investigated by law enforcement officials, the league will continue its separate investigation, and will work to cooperate with law enforcement to avoid any conflict or interference with the law enforcement proceedings.

In conducting investigations, the league office will make reasonable efforts to accommodate requests for confidentiality from witnesses and others with information. In addition, the league will not tolerate any retaliation against anyone who in good faith reports a possible violation or provides truthful

information during an investigation. Any person who directly or indirectly through others interferes in any manner with an investigation, including by retaliating or threatening to retaliate against a victim or witness, will face separate disciplinary action under this policy. Prohibited interference could include, but is not limited to, an offer or gift of money, property or anything of value, particularly if undisclosed, to either a witness or person having a familial relationship or association with a witness. Prohibited retaliation includes, but is not limited to: threats, intimidation, harassment, or any other adverse action threatened, expressly or impliedly, or taken against anyone who reports a violation or suspected violation of this Policy or who participates in an investigation of a complaint.

In investigating a potential violation, the league may rely on information obtained by law enforcement agencies, court records, or independent investigations conducted at the direction of the NFL. League and team employees including players are required to cooperate in any such investigation and are obligated to be fully responsive and truthful in responding to requests from investigators for information (testimony, documents, physical evidence, or other information) that may bear on whether the Policy has been violated. A failure to cooperate with an investigation or to be truthful in responding to inquiries will be separate grounds for disciplinary action. Players who are interviewed in the course of an investigation may be accompanied by an NFLPA representative as provided by Article 51, Section 11 of the CBA.

Because the Fifth Amendment's protection against self-incrimination does not apply in a workplace investigation, the league will reserve the right to compel a player to cooperate in its investigations even when he is the target of a pending law enforcement investigation or proceeding. A player's refusal to speak to a league investigator under such circumstances will not preclude an investigation from proceeding or discipline from being imposed.

IV. Leave with Pay

A player may be placed on paid administrative leave pursuant to the Commissioner Exempt List under either of the following circumstances:

First, when a player is formally charged with: (1) a felony offense; or (2) a crime of violence, meaning that he is accused of having used physical force or a weapon to injure or threaten a person or animal, of having engaged in a sexual assault by force or against a person who was incapable of giving consent, or having engaged in other conduct that poses a genuine danger to the safety or well-being of another person. The formal charges may be in the form of an indictment by a grand jury, the filing of charges by a prosecutor, or an arraignment in a criminal court.

Second, when an investigation leads the Commissioner to believe that a player may have violated this Policy by committing any of the conduct identified above, he may act where the circumstances and evidence warrant doing so. This decision will not reflect a finding of guilt or innocence and will not be guided by the same legal standards and considerations that would apply in a criminal trial.

Third, in cases in which a violation relating to a crime of violence is alleged but further investigation is required, the Commissioner may place a player on the Commissioner Exempt List on a limited and temporary basis to permit the league to conduct a preliminary investigation. Based on the results of this investigation, the player may be returned to duty, be placed on the Commissioner Exempt List for a longer period or be subject to discipline.

A player who is placed on the Commissioner Exempt List may not practice or attend games, but upon request and with the club's permission he may be present at the club's facility on a reasonable basis for meetings, individual workouts, therapy and rehabilitation, and other permitted non-football activities.

A player placed on the Commissioner Exempt List will be notified promptly in writing with a copy to the NFLPA. Within three (3) business days following such notification, the player, or the NFLPA with the player's approval, may appeal his placement in writing to the Commissioner. Such appeals will be processed pursuant to Article 46 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement on an expedited basis, and the player will remain on Commissioner Exempt pending the decision on appeal of his placement.

Leave with pay will generally last until the league makes a disciplinary decision and any appeal from that discipline is fully resolved. Any regular and/or postseason games a player misses while placed on Commissioner Exempt will be credited against any suspension later imposed on him, in which case the player will return any salary proportionate to the credited games.

V. Discipline

A player violates this Policy when he has a disposition of a criminal proceeding (as defined), or if the league's investigation demonstrates that he engaged in conduct prohibited by the Policy. In cases in which a player is not charged with a crime, or is charged but not convicted, he may still be found to have violated the Policy if the credible evidence establishes that he engaged in prohibited conduct.

To oversee the review and assessment of potential violations, the league and NFL Players Association will designate a jointly selected and compensated Disciplinary Officer, who will be a highly qualified individual. Where appropriate, the Disciplinary Officer will follow the process outlined below to assemble evidentiary records and/or reports with factual findings and make disciplinary determinations.

To assist in evaluating a potential violation, expert and independent advisors may be consulted by the Disciplinary Officer, the Commissioner and others as needed. Such advisors may include former players and others with appropriate backgrounds and experience in law enforcement, academia, judicial and public service, mental health, and persons with other specialized subject matter expertise. Any experts or advisors consulted in this respect may provide advice and counsel or testimony as appropriate but will not make any disciplinary determinations.

Players who are subject to discipline will be given notice by the league of the potential violation for which discipline may be imposed. The player, through the NFL Players Association, will be furnished with a copy of any investigatory report, including any transcripts or audio recordings of witness interviews, expert reports and court documents obtained or prepared by the NFL as part of its investigation, and any evidentiary material referenced in the investigatory report that was not included as an exhibit. The player will be permitted to submit information in writing to rebut or otherwise respond to the report.

For matters referred to the Disciplinary Officer for consideration, the Disciplinary Officer may request additional argument, require the production of additional evidentiary material and/or conduct an evidentiary hearing pursuant to Article 46 of the CBA as appropriate. In cases where there has been a criminal disposition, the underlying disposition may not be challenged in a disciplinary hearing and the court's judgment and factual findings shall be conclusive and binding, and only the level of discipline will be at issue. Notwithstanding, the player will be free to offer facts regarding the disposition that may mitigate the discipline imposed, as was permitted in previous versions of this Policy.

Following review of the record including the positions of the parties on appropriate disciplinary terms or other conditions, the Disciplinary Officer will promptly communicate the decision to the player regarding any disciplinary action to be taken. Depending on the nature of the violation and the player's record, discipline may be a fine, a suspension for a fixed or an indefinite period of time, a combination of the two, or banishment from the league with an opportunity to reapply. Discipline may also include a probationary period and conditions that must be met for reinstatement and to remain eligible to participate

in the league. Players with a prior history of misconduct, including misconduct occurring prior to their association with the NFL, will be subject to enhanced and/or expedited discipline, including banishment from the league with an opportunity to reapply. In determining discipline, both aggravating and mitigating factors may be considered. Reference also may be made to requirements to seek ongoing counseling, treatment, or therapy where appropriate as well as the imposition of enhanced supervision, which upon satisfactory compliance would serve to mitigate the discipline otherwise imposed.

Ownership and club or league management have traditionally been held to a higher standard and will be subject to more significant discipline when violations of the Personal Conduct Policy occur.

With regard to violations of the Policy that involve: (i) criminal assault or battery (felony); (ii) domestic violence, dating violence, child abuse and other forms of family violence; or (iii) sexual assault involving physical force or committed against someone incapable of giving consent, a first violation will subject the violator to a baseline suspension without pay of six games, with possible upward or downward adjustments based on any aggravating or mitigating factors. The presence of possible aggravating factors may warrant a longer suspension. Possible aggravating factors include, but are not limited to, a prior violation of the Policy, similar misconduct before joining the NFL, violence involving a weapon, choking, repeated striking, or when an act is committed against a particularly vulnerable person, such as a child, a pregnant woman, or an elderly person, or where the act is committed in the presence of a child. Possible mitigating factors include prompt acceptance of responsibility and cooperation with any league investigation, voluntary engagement with appropriate clinical resources and demonstrated compliance with any recommended program of counseling or other therapeutic intervention, and voluntary restitution with the victim. A second violation will result in permanent banishment from the NFL. An individual who has been banished may petition for reinstatement after one year, but there is no presumption or assurance that the petition will be granted.

VI. Appeals of Discipline

Following communication of the disciplinary decision, either the league (through the Management Council) or player (through the NFL Players Association) may appeal the decision to the Commissioner or his designee. Such appeals will be: (i) processed on an expedited basis; (ii) limited to consideration of the terms of discipline imposed; and (iii) based upon a review of the existing record without reference to evidence or testimony not previously considered. No additional evidence or testimony shall be presented to or accepted by the Commissioner or his designee. Any factual findings and evidentiary determinations of the Disciplinary Officer will be binding to the parties on appeal, and the decision of the Commissioner or his designee, which may overturn, reduce, modify or increase the discipline previously issued, will be final and binding on all parties.

VII. Reporting

Clubs and players are obligated to promptly report any matter that comes to their attention (through, for example, victim or witness reports, law enforcement, civil litigation, or media reports) that may constitute a violation of this Policy. Clubs are expected to educate their employees on this obligation to report. [REDACTED]

Failure to report an incident will be grounds for disciplinary action. This obligation to report is broader than simply reporting an arrest; it requires reporting to the league any incident that comes to the club's or player's attention which, if the allegations were true, would constitute a violation of the Policy.

It is important to remember that the obligation to report is a continuing one and is not satisfied simply by making an initial report of an incident. The obligation includes reporting on a timely basis all information of which a club or player becomes aware. If a club learns additional information, including but not limited to information regarding the nature of an incident, the identity of witnesses, statements regarding the incident (including by the accused), or the existence of evidentiary material (such as documents, electronic communications such as emails or text messages, medical reports, photographs, audio or video recordings, or social media activity), it must promptly report that information to the league office.

Anyone who believes that he or she is a victim of conduct that violates the Policy or who learns of or witnesses such conduct is strongly encouraged to report the matter to the club or the league office. Reports will be addressed promptly and confidentially, and the Critical Response Teams will be available to address issues regarding victim and family security and other support services. Any player with questions regarding either this reporting obligation or any other aspect of this Policy may contact his club's Director of Security, Director of Player Engagement, the NFLPA, or the NFL Management Council.

VIII. Conduct Committee

To ensure that this policy remains current and consistent with best practices and evolving legal and social standards, the Commissioner has named a Conduct Committee. This committee will be made up of NFL club owners, who will review this policy at least annually and recommend any appropriate changes to investigatory practices, disciplinary levels or procedures, or service components. The committee will receive regular reports from the league office, and may seek advice from current and former players, as well as a broad and diverse group of outside experts regarding best practices in academic, business, and public sector settings, and will review developments in similar workplace policies in other settings.

IX. Definitions

“Disposition of a Criminal Proceeding” – Includes an adjudication of guilt or admission to a criminal violation; a plea to a lesser included offense; a plea of nolo contendere or no contest; or the disposition of the proceeding through a diversionary program, deferred adjudication, disposition of supervision, conditional dismissal, adjournment in contemplation of dismissal, pretrial intervention or similar arrangement.

“Probationary Period” – Players found to have violated this Policy may be placed on a period of probation, during which restrictions on certain activities, limitations on participation in Club activities, or other conditions may be imposed. Failure to comply with such conditions may result in additional discipline including an extension of the period of suspension.

“Workplace Setting” – The workplace setting means any location or conveyance used in connection with NFL activities, including the club facility, training camp, stadium, locker room, location at which a club-sponsored event takes place, and while traveling on team or NFL-related business.