



**El Paraiso Golf Members Club  
Code of Conduct Handbook Version 2.4  
September 2022**

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**SECTION 1**

**a. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

The R&A and USGA introduced the concept of a Code of Conduct with its rules revision released in January 2019. El Paraiso Golf Members Club (Club) is adopting a Local Rule which creates its own Code of Conduct in line with these rules and the Club Code of Conduct is defined in this handbook. It covers

1. On course and in play conduct
2. Conduct expected as a member of the Golf Club
3. Disciplinary processes and procedures managed by the Committee.

This code of conduct is not intended to create a bureaucratic, regulatory environment, but rather to promote and enhance our Club's values.

**b. SUMMARY OF PRE-AUTHORISED DISCIPLINARY POWERS REFERRED TO IN**

**THIS CODE OF CONDUCT**

Verbal and written warnings or other penalties for on course and off course issues can be given by members of the Club Committee as follows:

1. H&C Secretary and Competition organisers can issue a verbal reprimand for a no show without good reason as per the no show policy.
2. Joint Captains can issue verbal and written reprimands agreed by the committee following a complaint
3. Vice Captains can issue verbal reprimands agreed by the committee following a complaint
4. Marshalls can ask a member to leave the course for repeated violations of the buggy rules

5. Marshalls can ask a player to leave the course if slow play is continued after requests to speed up
6. Competition organiser – can disqualify a member after a competition following a verbal complaint from another player

## **SECTION 2**

### **CODE OF CONDUCT ON COURSE AND IN PLAY**

The Rules of Golf require all players to play in the spirit of the game by acting with integrity, showing consideration to others and taking good care of the course.

The only penalty available to a committee for a player failing to act in any of these ways is disqualification under R&A and USGA rule 1.2. This can on occasion be seen to be harsh, particularly if the committee considers that while the misconduct is serious, it takes the view that a lesser penalty would be more suitable.

A Club can, under the Rules, establish its own standards of player conduct in a Code of Conduct and adopt it as a Local Rule. El Paraiso Golf Members Club has decided to do this and include a system of warnings and one or two stroke penalties for breaching its Code of Conduct in cases where disqualification may not be appropriate.

Examples of Serious Misconduct are shown in R&A and USGA Rule 1.2a/1 and breaches may be referred to the Club committee.

Misconduct or Unacceptable Behaviour is also covered by our Code of Conduct but a warning or a one/two stroke penalty may be sufficient rather than disqualification. Some examples are:

- 1 Failing to care for the course including raking bunkers and filling divots.
- 2 Abuse of clubs or the course.
- 3 Being disrespectful of other players, officials and marshals.
- 4 Failure to return a scorecard.
- 5 Failure to complete a round without good reason.
6. Breaches of Pace of Play regulations
7. Failure to shout 'Fore' when another player is in danger of being struck by a ball.

Whilst players are responsible for applying their own in play penalties as defined within the Rules, all players, under R&A and USGA Rule 20.1c(2), should protect other players in the competition by verbally reporting violations of the Rules of Golf to the organiser of the competition.

The Handicap and Competitions Secretary or appointed deputy has the authority to decide penalties and sanctions in accordance with the rules of golf. In the case of disqualification, the matter will be referred to the Club Committee to consider, within 3 days, whether further disciplinary action needs to be taken. The member, their partner or team members concerned will not be able to participate in any Club Competitions during those three days. Reports will be requested in writing under these circumstances.

### **Golf Offence grading**

First offence Warning – no penalty

Second offence One stroke penalty - This penalty applies under certain rules where the potential advantage from the breach is minor.

Third Offence General Penalty, 2 strokes, - This penalty applies for a breach of most rules where the potential advantage is more significant than where only one stroke penalty applies.

Fourth offence Disqualification applies to serious misconduct or where the potential advantage is too significant for the players score to be considered valid.

Stroke penalties will be applied prior to a card being entered into the Federation system.

## **SECTION 3**

### **CODE OF CONDUCT GOVERNING MEMBERSHIP OF THE CLUB**

#### **1. General**

Each member of the Club is expected to respect the dress code as displayed outside the Pro Shop. Each member is further expected to behave in a manner that will support his or her membership of the Club and in particular avoid any of the following scenarios:

- Failure to pay annual fees.
- Verbal or physical aggression toward another member.
- Failure to show appropriate levels of respect to other members, golfers and members of staff on the terrace, in the clubhouse and on the course.
- Members who make unsubstantiated allegations against any other member, Club or Board official should themselves be held to account under the Clubs Disciplinary procedures.
- Serious or repeated violations of the rules of golf.
- Expulsion by any other golf club.
- Refusal to accept Committee decisions concerning personal discipline.
- Being responsible for actions and/or deeds likely to bring a member or the Club into disrepute.

A member proven to be non-compliant with any of these scenarios will be subject to the formal disciplinary process as described in Section 4.2 below.

#### **2. Attendance**

If for some urgent reason you are unable to play in a competition in which you have been drawn, it is Club policy to notify the competition organiser, the caddy master and your playing partner. Any alteration to competition draw lists should only be made by the competition organisers or their authorised representative.

The Club 'No show' policy is a ban from ALL competitions for a total of two weeks. This will apply should a Member simply fail to turn up with no valid reason. Note: - that 'no buggies on the course' is only a valid excuse for possessors of blue / red flags.

#### **3. Pace of play**

It is in the interests of all members and visitors to maintain a steady pace of play, defined as keeping up with the group in front of you. Marshalls and Committee members are authorised to point out to players if they have lost ground on the group in front and ask them to increase the speed of play or leave the course.

The code of conduct requires that marshalls and committee members are not verbally abused whilst carrying out these responsibilities. Such behavior will render the player potentially subject to the disciplinary process described in SECTION 4 below, particularly following a repeat violation.

#### **4. Use of buggies**

***The full guidance policy for Buggy and Blue flags users is available separately***

##### **i. General**

- The 90-degree rule must be followed at all times
- Buggy users must comply with directions from Course Marshalls
- Avoid all areas marked as Ground Under Repair and wet areas of the course.
- Buggies should exit from the fairway at or before the direction signs and drive directly to the path and then follow the path round the green and on to the next tee until the exit point to the next fairway is reached. Shortcuts must not be taken to the next tee.
- The shortcuts which are **NOT** permitted include as examples the following, but this is not a complete list:
  - a. Exiting the 1st hole fairway to the right of the green
  - b. Direct access from the 2nd fairway to the 3rd tee.
  - c. Directly from the left hand side of the 4th fairway up the slope and over the kerb to the 5th tee.
  - d. Driving to the left of the 5th green and the 6th tee.
  - e. From the right hand side of the 6th green and fairway to the 7th tee.
  - f. Directly up the slope from the 10th green to the 11th tee.
  - g. Exiting the 18th hole from the left of the green to the path in front of the clubhouse.
- Buggies must park on the path at the nearest access point to the green and then proceed on the path to the next tee and fairway.
- Buggies must park on the path by the tee and not on tee surrounds or slopes.
- Buggies must not enter or proceed past roped off areas

##### **ii. Insurance and Safety**

Buggies **MUST NOT** be used by more than 2 people and never driven by anyone under 16 years of age. No more than 2 buggies may be used in each flight, regardless of the number of players.

##### **iii. Course care**

Buggies, including those with blue flags, **MUST NOT** under any circumstances be driven onto tees or their banks, bunker edges or close to the collar or apron of a green. Do not drive closer to the green than the direction signs pointing back to the buggy path. From this point buggies must stay on the buggy path around the green, to the next tee and then on to the exit point to the next fairway.

#### **iv. Specific Blue Flag rules**

- Blue flag holders sharing a buggy with a non-blue flag user must not pass on the privileges of use.
- The 90 degree rule must be followed at all times
- Buggy users, including those with blue flags, must comply with directions from Course Marshalls
- Blue flag users can go past the fairway exit signs but only if this is required in order to play a shot to the green. The buggy should be driven no closer than 10 metres to the green and to the side of the green approaches and green. The trolley exit signs will mark this line.
- The exit point from this position must be to the path round the green and not by taking shortcuts to the next tee. The shortcuts which are **NOT** permitted include as examples the following, but this is not a complete list:
  1. Direct access from the 1st fairway right to the right of the green to the 2nd tee.
  2. Directly from the 2nd fairway to the 3rd tee
  3. Directly from the left hand side of the 4th fairway up the slope and over the kerb to the 5th tee.
  4. Driving to the left of the 5th green and 4th & 6th tees.
  5. From the right hand side of the 6th fairway and green to the 7th tee
  6. Directly up the slope from the 10th green to the 11th tee.
  7. Exiting the 18th hole from the left of the green directly to the path in front of the clubhouse.
- Blue flag users must park on the path at the nearest access point to the green or tee whenever possible and then proceed on the path to the next tee and fairway.
- Blue flags must be visible 20cm above the top of the buggy so players/visitors can see them.

#### **v. Specific Red Flag rules**

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In certain very exceptional circumstances a red flag may be issued to a member with debilitating health problems or a disability.

Rules and guidance for the use of red flag holders are the same as for blue flag holders. However, users may park their buggy closer to the green surfaces at the sides and rear of greens when the terrain from buggy paths makes access difficult. Users may also take their buggy closer to tees when this is both practical and necessary.

#### **V1. Compliance**

Anyone who is observed to be using a buggy in breach of these rules, or of a request by a Course Marshall will be given a verbal warning. A further infringement will result in them being required to leave the course immediately. Any member who is in breach of these rules or who is abusive to a Marshall, Club Official or anyone else employed at the Club will be reported to the Committee for consideration of disciplinary action.

## 5. Social Media

Where a member publishes information on ANY of the Social Media platforms regarding any aspects of El Paraiso Golf Club, members, staff or activities related to the Club, he or she must comply with the following rules,

use moderate language at all times

do not publish photos of any member or visitor without prior permission

do not harm, disgrace or cause offence to the Club or any person/related Company

do not publish personal disagreements between fellow members or staff

do not disclose any confidential or sensitive information about the club, members, staff or suppliers

do not breach copyrights or any other proprietary interest belonging to the club including the use of the club logo

Members should be aware that there are many examples of Social Media in addition to forums such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Youtube, Whatsapp blogs and video and image sharing websites and this is a constantly changing area. Members should follow these guidelines in relation to ANY Social Media that they use.

Members who contravene these rules may face disciplinary action under the Club disciplinary procedure.

The full Social Media policy is available as an appendix to the Code of Conduct

## SECTION 4

### DISCIPLINARY PROCESS AND PROCEDURES

1. The disciplinary process whether implemented verbally, in writing or under the formal process is to be kept confidential. The minutes and procedures under this Code of Conduct shall not be made available until such time as all procedures under this Code of Conduct have been completed. Disclosure is then at the discretion of the Committee when all the circumstances of the process have been taken into account. If there is to be any disclosure then it should be minuted at the first full Committee meeting after the end of the disciplinary process. The level of detail included is at the discretion of the Committee and appropriate to the nature and circumstances of the disciplinary.

#### 2. Reprimands

In the event of a verbal report of a member committing what is agreed by the committee to be a minor misdemeanour then the Joint Captains and the Joint Vice Captains shall have the power to issue a verbal reprimand, either separately or together. Written reprimands may be issued by either of the Joint Captains if the minor misdemeanour is repeated or if the committee agrees that a more serious offence has been committed. These reprimands are to be issued with the agreement of the Committee and without entering the formal disciplinary process. No reference shall be made in a written reprimand to a particular future disciplinary sanction but they may include the possibility of a future disciplinary referral to the Committee.

#### 3. Formal disciplinary stage

If at any time a majority of the Committee shall be of the opinion that the reputation or interests of the Club so require it, the Committee may invoke the formal disciplinary process to



suspend from the Club and premises for a period at their discretion, revoke rights to play golf, invite resignation or recommend the EPGC Board to expel the member. Should suspension or expulsion be likely in any instance then the Joint Captains will be required to brief the EPGC Board as a courtesy.

### **3. Formal disciplinary process**

The Committee will hold a disciplinary meeting within 7 days of the offence being reported preferably but not exclusively in writing, and the member will be given that same seven days' notice of the meeting. The member will be given an opportunity to provide any written or verbal explanation they may see fit and may also opt to be present at the discussion and call any relevant witnesses before the Committee but not be represented legally or otherwise by a third party. If the explanation offered by the member is unacceptable to the Committee or none is offered, then the Committee shall have the right to suspend or recommend to the EPGC Board expulsion of the member whereupon they shall cease to be a member of the Club or be able to use the Club facilities for whatever period of suspension is stated. In such circumstances, the member shall be notified in writing within two days of the Committee's decision being taken. The Committee's decision is final in the absence of an appeal, albeit that the EPGC Board needs to approve an expulsion. In exceptional circumstances, a member's conduct may necessitate immediate suspension. If this is considered to be so by a minimum of three Committee members, one of whom must be one of the Joint Captains or Joint Vice Captains; the member shall be suspended immediately and notified in writing, within two days, with the grounds for such suspension included in the notification. A member suspended or expelled under this Code of Conduct shall forfeit all rights to and claims upon the Club, its property and funds including any part of their annual subscription or entrance fee paid to EPGC relating to their period of suspension or expulsion.

### **4. Appeal process**

A member suspended or expelled under this Code of Conduct will have the right of appeal. Such appeal must be made in writing to the Secretary of the Committee within seven days of the sanction being imposed and will be heard by an Appeals Committee comprising the President of the Club (Chairman) and two Past Captains or Past Presidents selected by the President . These Captains or Presidents must not be involved in or have influenced the disciplinary process in any way and shall not be members of the Committee at the time. Such appeal must be heard within ten days of receiving the request for an appeal. The suspension or expulsion will remain in force until the Appeals Committee makes a decision, which must be reached and communicated within two days of the hearing.

In the absence of the President, then the Vice President if in post or if not then the most recent Captain or President who is at that time present in Spain, will assume the role of Chairman of the Appeals Committee.

The Appeals Committee will have the power to reduce or confirm the period of suspension or confirm the expulsion of the member concerned or reduce it to a period of suspension.

The member may call any relevant witness before the Appeals Committee but may not be

represented legally or otherwise by a third party but may be accompanied by a supporter who may assist them in the conduct of their appeal but may not represent them by addressing the Appeals Committee, unless invited to do so by the Chairman.

The Appeals Committee's decision is final albeit the EPGC Board will have to agree a decision to expel the Member. The Chairman of the Appeals Committee will be required to brief the Board at an appropriate time.

## **SECTION 5**

### **GRADING OF OFFENCES AGAINST THIS CODE OF CONDUCT**

All complaints and charges are to be graded 1 to 3 with 1 being the least serious and 3 being the most serious. The Club Committee is to determine the grading of the offence and that grading will determine the action to be taken and the potential penalty a player may receive.

#### **Grade 1 offences**

- Use of bad language
- Ill-mannered and disrespectful behaviour to members, guests and staff
- Offences as described in Section 2 or 3 of this Code of Conduct
- Breaking the rules of golf in a competition

Penalties that can be applied for Grade 1 offences are:

- Verbal warning with notice on file for 12 months
- Written warning issued and kept on file for 12 months
- A penalty as described in Section 2 or 3 of this Code of Conduct

#### **Grade 2 offences**

- A second offence within the 12 month period of a warning given for a Grade 1 offence
- Excessive use of bad language
- Verbal abuse or threatening a player, member or staff member.
- Refusal to accept Committee decisions concerning personal discipline.
- A subsequent offence of cheating on the Course

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Penalties that can be applied to Grade 2 offences are:

- Written warning issued and on file for 12 months
- A minimum of a six month suspension from the premises or 6 months loss of golfing rights without full exclusion from the premises.

#### **Grade 3**

- A second or subsequent offence within the 12 month period of a warning given for a Grade 2 offence
- Expulsion by any other golf club.
- Bringing the Club into disrepute
- Theft
- Physical assault
- Serious misuse of substances on the premises
- Sexual or verbal harassment



Penalties that can be applied to Grade 3 offences are:

- Suspension from the Club for a minimum of 6 months
- Expulsion, a refusal of rights to be readmitted or an invitation to resign membership

The penalties indicated in each grade of offence are to be regarded as advisory and subject to variation at the entire discretion of the full Club Committee's approval

## **6. SUMMARY**

This code of conduct has been devised to make sure all members enjoy the course and facilities equally and to act as a guide as to expectations of conduct and sanctions. It has covered expected conduct both in play and generally as a member of the Club, along with a description of what a member can expect should the disciplinary process be invoked. Should there be any clarification required on any aspect of this handbook please contact a member of the Committee.

The handbook is version controlled and dated, kept by the Committee Secretary and, as a local rule, is subject to change management by the Club Committee.