

Guidelines for Away Trips

This is one of a series of documents intended to set the standard for implementation of the Code of Ethics within Rowing. It applies to all Clubs and Rowing Leaders with young & vulnerable persons participating in Irish Rowing.



Rowing for young people

We want sport to be safe, we want sport to be fun and we want to ensure that no matter what sport young people are involved in, that it takes place in the spirit of 'fair play'.

Fair play is the guiding principle of The Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport. The Code is designed to provide guidance for those working with young people in sport. It outlines for sports leaders the type of issues that need to be discussed and addressed to provide the safest and most enjoyable environment for young people.

We know sport has a lot to offer. Yet, irrespective of whether we want them to become fitter, more confident, more sociable or more skilful, we want young & vulnerable persons to enjoy what they are doing and we want to create the safest possible environment in which they can do this.

Away Trips

Travelling to away events and having trips away from home should be both safe and fun for children (which would include all those aged under 18) & vulnerable persons. It should be a chance for participants to grow in confidence, self-esteem, and social skills.

Parents and carers will nearly always worry when participants are away but careful planning and preparation should help to ease those worries and demonstrate that you have taken into account the various needs of participants and the potential dangers of a trip away.

Guide for Team Leaders

Here are some practical ways for safeguarding young & vulnerable persons who take part in activities:

- **Before the event**
- **Going Abroad?**
- **Suitable Ratios**
- **Changing rooms**
- **Medical Support**
- **Accommodation**
- **Insurances**
- **Communications**
- **Documentation**
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- **Swimming Activities**
- **Emergency Procedures**
- **Discipline**
- **Physical contact**
- **Rowers with Disabilities**
- **Responsibility to Report**
- **Mobile Phones etc.**

Before the event

No amount of planning can guarantee a safe and incident free trip but good planning and attention to safety measures can reduce the likelihood of serious incidents.

Check travel, venue, staffing, weather and catering arrangements for possible dangers and put in place safety and emergency procedures.

The Team Leader/Event Leader plans must include consideration of the:

- Age & ability of participants
- Nature of Event, particularly if non rowing activities are involved
- Ratio of staff to rowers (see below)
- Qualifications and experience of Staff
- Description and rota of Staff duties, including designation of Staff to carry and use first aid equipment
- Medical, educational and/or other special needs of individual children & vulnerable persons
- Travel arrangements
- Contingency measures for exceptional circumstances
- Insurance
- Communication arrangements
- Emergency procedures
- Designation and briefing of the Designated Person for Safeguarding if other than the Team Leader
- Other people who may visit the Event
- Any other person invited to attend the Event

Going Abroad?

The Team Leader must check the validity of passports of all members of the Event.

If any participant is subject to a care or court order, the appropriate Authority must be consulted well in advance and the necessary consent obtained for travel.

In the case of an Event to a country or countries, which require a visa, the Team Leader must ensure that all participants and Staff are in possession of a valid visa for the country or countries.

In the case of a visit to a country or countries that require vaccinations, the Team Leader must ensure that all participants and Staff have had the necessary vaccinations.

A Participant Friendly Event

See: [Codes of good conduct.](#)

Ratios

Adult/participant ratios should be based on the age and ability of the persons involved, the degree of risk the activity involves, and whether there are disability needs. The lower the age/ability of the participants, the greater the need for supervision. If the activity is mixed gender, male and female staff should be available.

Further information: [Guidelines on staffing/supervision ratios for children/young people's activities](#)

Changing rooms

- For rowing facilities, when young & vulnerable persons use changing rooms, they should be supervised by two members of staff/volunteers. Adult staff /volunteers should not change or shower at the same time using the same facilities. For mixed gender activities, separate facilities should be available for male & female.
- If a child/& vulnerable persons feels uncomfortable changing or showering in public, no pressure should be placed on them to do so. Instead, they should be encouraged to shower or change at their accommodation.
- If participants with disabilities are involved, make sure they and their carers are involved in deciding how they should be assisted. Ensure they are able to consent to the assistance that is offered.

Medical Support

One member of Staff must be qualified in first aid, and should be responsible for the appropriate first aid equipment and for it being available to them at the Event and for treating young players at the Event.

All Staff must know how to contact the emergency services and a working mobile phone must be carried with the group at all times.

Parent/Guardian/Carer should be informed as soon as possible if their child/vulnerable person suffers a significant injury or accident.

You should always ensure you have up-to-date contact details at activities or events and information about any relevant medical conditions. Injuries should be recorded, with a note of action taken in relation to each one. It is recommended that an accident book be maintained with a specific form to be completed by leaders.

[Accident Reporting Form](#)

Accommodation

In an ideal world you would visit the accommodation before booking, but this is not always possible. So

check with another club who have used this accommodation before or check with the local Tourist Information or visit their website.

- At all times the Team Leader must be satisfied that buildings meet health and safety required standards. When you arrive at your accommodation, check that windows and doors are safe.
- Check all rooms (are there the correct number of beds?) Check the rooms for any damage and report any you find to avoid a bill!
- Ensure there is no access to alcohol in rooms
- Ensure movie access is appropriate or indeed not available in the rooms
- Young & vulnerable persons accommodation must be close to rooms occupied by Staff.
- If there is a bar, what rules are in place?
- Some children & vulnerable persons have enuresis (bed-wetting) so ensure that the hotel can deal with this discretely
- Consideration should be given when groups comprise both male and females by allocating the same gender, rooms within the same area. Also consider agreeing who is sharing with whom before you go, however, be ready to change this as friendship groups can change very quickly!
- Where possible similar age/ability groups should be kept together.
- On arrival, players should be shown the accommodation plan and be made aware of Staff rooms and fire exits. A fire drill should be carried out as soon as possible.
- At no time can a member of Staff share a room with any young/vulnerable person.
- Staff must not use changing, shower or cloakroom facilities at the same time as young & vulnerable persons, except in the most exceptional circumstances.
- Where groups are of mixed gender, there must be separate male and female sleeping and bathroom facilities for both young & vulnerable persons and for adults.

Insurances

Rowing Ireland shall ensure that it has adequate insurance cover for all Staff and club members, but you should inform them of your plans and check that this cover will meet your needs. Parents/Guardians/Carers should be made aware of the need for comprehensive insurance to cover their children & vulnerable persons, e.g. health/medical insurance.

If the Event is to include any potentially hazardous activities, once having taken into account the risk assessment guidelines, (e.g. other sports or adventure experiences) particular care should be taken to ensure that children/vulnerable persons and Staff are covered appropriately.

Additional insurance may be necessary for Staff or participants with known medical conditions. The Team Leader should check this out, long before departure date.

Communications

With parents/guardians/carers

The Team Leader is responsible for ensuring that Parents and young/vulnerable persons complete and return all consent forms.

Parents should be informed that when a participant still attending school is selected, permission should be sought from the Principal to release them from school during term time.

Prior to any Event, parents/carers will be informed if a player is selected. The Team Leader must give parents/carers written details of the Event including:

- Dates of the Event
- Times of departure and return
- Clearly specified pick up and set down points for players and the beginning and end of any Event
- Names of the Head of Delegation and accompanying Staff
- Details of rowing and non rowing activities (adventure and potentially hazardous activities at the Event must be emphasised)
- Specific parental consent should be obtained for any water-based activities.
- Addresses and telephone numbers of the accommodation being used
- Contact telephone numbers of the Event Administrator and contact number/s for the group
- Insurances
- Standards of behaviour and dress
- Clothing and equipment required
- What expenses are covered

With Clubs

Permission will be sought from their club(s) as well as from parents/carers.

When the player selected is still attending school, Clubs shall be advised whether permission has been sought from the parent/carer and the player's school. Dates of the Event will also be supplied.

With children & vulnerable persons

The Head of Delegation/Leader must tell participants:

- The standard of behaviour and dress expected of them, both on and off the water. Standards of behaviour are equally as important as levels of performance. Check with Event Organisers for any specific rules or requirements.
- The safety precautions, including supervision arrangements, to be taken
- To wear seat belts (when provided) when travelling in cars, minibuses or coaches
- Which expenses will be their own responsibility and which will be met by the Event Host
- To carry the Group mobile telephone number, identity cards and address and telephone number of their accommodation with them at all times
- The name of the Designated Person for Safeguarding at the Event
- That they can approach any member of Staff if they have concerns or worries while at the Event.

Meeting

With parents/carers

It is also advisable to have a meeting with parents/carers and participants to run through the trip's programme of events and address any questions or concerns. Before you leave, work together with the participants to establish rules for the trip (and what will happen to those who break them).

Documentation

With Team Leader

The Team Leader or nominated member of Staff must carry the following documentation on the trip:

- A list of all group members, both Staff and participants
- Participant/Staff Personal Contact Forms
- Consent Forms/Contact Numbers
- Name, address and telephone number of the groups accommodation
- Emergency Procedures Guidance
- The Medical Staff must carry all relevant Medical Consent Forms

With Club/Organisation

Someone from the Club/Organisation who is not going away should be identified as a point of contact, and they should have a list of who is on the trip and their contact details (including the leaders/helpers) They should also have copies of:

- The itinerary
- Names, addresses and telephone numbers of parents/carers
- Contact addresses and telephone numbers for Staff
- A copy of the Emergency Procedures Card carried by the Team Leader
- Copies of all documentation carried by the Team Leader
- Copies of all Consent Forms for Parents/carers, participants and Staff
- Copies of all Medical Information

For foreign travel

In addition to the documentation carried at Events in Ireland, the Team Leader must ensure the appropriate staff carry:

- Travel tickets
- Passports, visas and vaccination certificates
- Insurance arrangements and contact telephone numbers
- Address and phone number of the home Embassy or Consulate
- Location of hospital(s) and medical services and how to contact them
- A separate list of the numbers of any documents and passports

The home Club/Organisation must be provided with appropriate matching documentation.

Other Planning

The mobile phone carried with the group must be capable of use in the country or countries concerned and all the travelling party participants and staff should be informed of the number. (A good idea would be that all of the party enter the number into their own phones at the beginning of the trip)

Contingency funds (or access to them) must be available

During the Trip

Supervision Arrangements

The staff to children/vulnerable persons ratio will depend on

- The risk assessment. (Check travel, venue, staffing, weather and catering arrangements for possible dangers and put in place safety and emergency procedures)
- The age/ability of the participants: one staff member to 10 is recommended for players over 11, more staff are recommended for groups of younger/less able participants, whether they are single or mixed sex groups. If mixed there should be at least one male and one female
- Any special needs; you may need extra staff if there are participants with special needs or disabilities
- If you are taking any player who has been a management problem in the past who may need close supervision

The Team Leader must communicate with Staff to inform them of their exact supervisory responsibilities and ensure that these responsibilities are clearly understood by staff.

The Team Leader must ensure that there is a Designated person for Safeguarding. All participants must be made aware as to who is to carry out this role at the beginning of the Event.

All Staff must have access to a list of the names of children & vulnerable persons at the Event and access to the Emergency Procedures.

Members of Staff are advised not to be alone with a young/ vulnerable person. Medical Staff will adhere to Good Practice Guidelines when treating children/vulnerable persons.

The Team Leader and appropriate staff should liaise in relation to participants who might need closer supervision and/or support.

Roll calls should take place frequently and must be made before the group leaves a venue. Participants must be given rendezvous points and told what to do if they become separated from the group.

Children & vulnerable persons should be provided with the address and telephone number of their accommodation, which they will be advised to carry with them.

During free time, Staff will continue to supervise children & vulnerable persons. This should be explained to the participants.

Where groups are of mixed gender, there must be a minimum of one male and one female member of staff.

Children & vulnerable persons at an Event must be easily identifiable and should wear designated kit, unless the Team Leader is advised otherwise. Ideally they shouldn't wear clothing with their names on.

Children & vulnerable persons should not wear name badges unless these are specifically required by the Event Organiser.

All children & vulnerable persons are advised to carry the phone number of the Group Mobile Phone.

During the time away, make sure you consider:

- The need for daily briefings to discuss the day's events, problems and future planning. Provide an opportunity for participants to speak alone with staff if necessary. Although private, remember this should always be in view, not behind closed doors.
- The need for daily staff meetings to review, plan and troubleshoot. It is important to deal with problems (e.g. any conflict within the group, poor behaviour) as early as possible.

Money and Valuables. The Team Leader must tell children & vulnerable persons how to carry money and valuables discreetly. The group's money including participants own pocket money should be held at a secure central location and distributed on a regular basis by a designated member of Staff.

After the trip, you should hold a staff debrief session to discuss what went well, what did not go so well, what you have learnt and to make recommendations for further trips.

Swimming Activities

Swimming in the sea or other natural waters

- Swimming in the sea or other natural waters is potentially dangerous activity. It should only be allowed as a formal and supervised activity, preferably in recognised bathing areas, which have official surveillance i.e., qualified lifeguard cover.
- Nevertheless, young & vulnerable persons should always be in sight of their supervisors. One supervisor should always stay out of the water for better surveillance.
- A member of staff should hold a relevant lifesaving award especially where lifeguard cover may not be available.
- Swimming is prohibited if there is no lifeguard present

The Team Leader should:

- Be aware that many children/vulnerable persons who drown are strong swimmers.
- Ascertain directly the level of the participants swimming ability.
- Be aware of local conditions, such as currents, weeds a shelving, uneven or unstable bottom, using local information from the lifeguard, coastguard, harbourmaster, police or tourist information office.
- Designate a safe area of water for use by the group.
- Be aware of the dangerous effects of sudden immersion in cold water.
- Ensure that participants have not eaten (at least half an hour before swimming).
- Ensure the activity is suitable for participants (especially for those with any disabilities).
- Adopt and explain signals of distress and recall.

Swimming Pools

Team Leaders should consider a minimum ratio of 1 adult to 8 participants for swimming pools. If using a pool that has not been used before it is advisable to check the following:

- Is there constant pool supervision and a sufficient number of lifeguards?
- Where there is no lifeguard, the Team Leader delegated staff member should stay at the poolside at a raised location. In such circumstances, the Team Leader or designated member of staff should have a relevant lifesaving award and be accompanied by an appropriate number of supervisors.
- Is the water temperature appropriate?
- Is the water clear?
- Are there signs clearly indicating the depth and is there a shallow end?
- Does the deep end allow for safe diving?
- Is there a poolside telephone?
- Are there resuscitator and other pieces of first aid and rescue equipment, and is there someone trained to use them?
- Have the children & vulnerable persons been instructed how to behave in and around the water?

Swimming is prohibited if there is no lifeguard present

Specific parental consent should be obtained for water-based activities. Parental consent does not mean that the Team Leader or designated staff should not check for themselves the level of a participant's swimming ability.

Emergency Procedures

An emergency may be defined as an accident or incident for example:

- An accident leading to death, serious or multiple fractures, amputation or other serious injury.
- Any circumstances in which a party member might be at serious risk or suffer serious illness.
- Any unusual circumstance in which the press or media are involved or might become involved.
- Any incident which may give rise to a legal liability claim against a participant/staff member

First Steps – Care of the Group

- Ensure their safety from further danger
- Arrange search, rescue medical care or hospitalisation of casualties as necessary

Next Steps – What Happened?

- Listen carefully, write down
- What happened?
- To Whom?
- Where?
- When?
- What has happened since?
- Who witnessed it? (Get witnesses to sign and give their address)

Telling people about the incident

As soon as possible:

- Inform the contact person as soon as possible
- Notify the Irish Embassy or Consulate (for Events outside the Irish Republic)
- Whoever you contact you will need to know:
 - What happened?
 - To whom?
 - Where?
 - When?
 - What has happened since?
 - A telephone number where you can be contacted

Do:

- Keep a written record of all that happens

Don't

- Speak to the press or media – refer in the first instance to the relevant press contact.
- Admit any liability
- Let anyone talk to any participant involved in the incident without a member of Staff being present.

Remember

- Nobody, unless they have an official capacity (e.g. the police), has a right to see anyone who does not want to see them.
- If anyone tries to force a confrontation, do not do anything but call the police.
- Try your best to be compassionate with everyone involved.

Discipline

When discipline is used it should be with the clear intention of teaching or reinforcing appropriate behaviour. It must not be used impulsively, to gain power, or to embarrass or humiliate a young/vulnerable person.

Discipline should be used only to:

- develop a sense of responsibility for behaviour
- develop respect for others and their property
- reinforce the rules or values of the sport
- reinforce positive behaviour or attitudes
- reinforce awareness of health and safety aspects of the activity.

Sanctions

The use of sanctions is an important element in the maintenance of discipline. The age and developmental stage of the participant should be taken into consideration when using sanctions. Sanctions should be fair and consistent and in the case of persistent offence, should be progressively applied. They should never be used to retaliate or to make a coach feel better.

The following steps are suggested and should always be used in conjunction with the codes of conduct for young people & vulnerable persons:

- rules should be stated clearly and agreed
- a warning should be given if a rule is broken
- a sanction (for example, use of time out) should be applied if a rule is broken for a second time. The use of green, yellow and red cards are encouraged, irrespective of the sport
- if a rule is broken for the third time the participant should be spoken to, and if necessary, parents/carers may be involved
- sanctions should not be applied if a coach is not comfortable with them. If an appropriate action cannot be devised right away, the participant should be told that the matter will be dealt with later, at a specified time and as soon as possible
- a child/vulnerable person should not be sanctioned for making errors in practice
- physical activity (e.g. running laps or doing push-ups) should not be used as a sanction. To do so only causes him/her to resent physical activity, something that s/he should learn to enjoy throughout his/her life
- sanctions should be used sparingly. Constant sanctioning and criticism can cause a participant to turn away from sport
- once sanctions have been imposed, it is important to make the young/vulnerable person feel s/he is a valued member of the group again
- where relevant, some sanctions may need to be recorded and parents informed.

Physical contact

Many sports require a degree of physical contact between sports staff and children/vulnerable persons. Coaches and staff may need to use it to instruct, encourage, protect or comfort. Your organisation should develop and publicise clear guidelines about physical contact, so that adults and young/ vulnerable persons understand what are the appropriate types of touching and their appropriate contexts.

Physical contact during sport should always be intended to meet the participant's needs, NOT the leader's. The leader should only use physical contact if their aim is to:

- develop sports skills or techniques
- to treat an injury
- to prevent an injury
- to meet the requirements of the sport.
- The leader should explain the reason for the physical contact to the participant. Unless the situation is an emergency, the leader should ask the participant's permission.
- The contact should not involve touching genital areas, buttocks or breasts.
- Physical contact should not take place in secret or out of sight of others.
- All injuries should be fully recorded by staff.

Rowers with disabilities

Guidance is available within Clubmark templates at www.rowingireland.ie/club-development/documents/.

Responsibility to Report

Any person, who has concerns about a child/vulnerable person's welfare or who suspects that a child/vulnerable person is being abused, or is at risk of abuse, has a responsibility to report their concerns to the Gateway/Health Board or Gardai/Police.

Persons unsure about whether or not certain behaviours are abusive and therefore reportable, are advised that they can seek advice from the duty social worker in their local health board area where they will receive appropriate advice.

In cases of emergency where a child/vulnerable person appears to be at immediate and serious risk and the duty social worker is not contactable, call the Gardai/Police.

Under no circumstances should a child/vulnerable person be left in a dangerous situation, pending intervention by the Statutory Authorities.

All clubs should have clear procedures for responding to reports or concerns relating to the safety and welfare of children/vulnerable persons. Coaches/volunteers, children/vulnerable persons and parents/guardians/carers should be aware of how and to whom they report concerns within the club or organisation.

Mobile Phones etc.

Mobile phones and communication devices are often given to children/vulnerable persons for security, enabling parents/carers to keep in touch and make sure they are safe.

However such technology has also allowed an increase in direct personal contact with young people/vulnerable persons, in some cases used to cross personal boundaries and cause harm. Within clubs there is a need to encourage responsible and secure use of these devices.

In this respect Coaches are advised to:

- Use group texts for communication among athletes and teams and inform parents of this at the start of the season
- It is not appropriate to have constant communication with individual athletes
- Don't use the phone in certain locations; inappropriate use of your camera phone may cause upset or offence to another person, e.g. changing rooms, or may cause a safety risk e.g. on the water.

For further information or advice see:

www.rowingireland.ie

Or contact: National Children's Officer, c/o Rowing Ireland, National Rowing Centre, Farran Wood, Ovens, Co. Cork. Tel. +3521 743 4044
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