



Code of Conduct

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Part 1 - Introduction

This Code of Conduct is issued by Rowing Ireland in support of its commitment to protect the values and integrity of rowing. This document sets the standard for behaviour within Rowing Ireland.

1.1 Who does this Code of Conduct apply to?

This Code of Conduct applies to anyone who is: (i) involved in the sport of rowing on the island of Ireland or overseas¹; or (ii) represents the Republic of Ireland or Northern Ireland, including (but not limited to):

- Rowers and coxes;
- Parents, Guardians, Carers;
- Anyone attending an event in a supporting capacity including those with a close family link;
- Clubs and Competitions (and all activities connected to a Club or Competition);
- Umpires and Officials;
- Coaches and Instructors;
- Rowing Ireland Employees, Contractors, Coach Educators, or any others who provide a service on behalf of or to Rowing Ireland;
- Rowing Ireland Board of Directors, Committees or Panels;
- Volunteers; and
- Members (i.e. fully paid-up or otherwise, e.g. honorary)

(together, the “Participant” or “Participants”).

This Code of Conduct applies to the above-listed Participants, irrespective of membership status. While all Participants engaged in Rowing Ireland activities are required to always hold a valid Rowing Ireland membership, failure to take out, renew or pay for such membership does not preclude such Participants from being bound by the standards set out in this Code of Conduct. In addition, any failure by any Rowing Ireland club to give effect to any Participant’s membership does not preclude such Participants from being bound by the standards set out in this Code of Conduct. For the avoidance of doubt, this Code of Conduct governs the conduct of the Participants wheresoever they are located.

1.2 Rights of Everyone in Our Rowing Community

While all those participating in rowing are obliged to observe this Code, the following individual rights apply to everyone in our rowing community no matter at what level, age, ability or involvement. Everyone has the right:

- to participate in rowing;
- to enjoy safe participation in rowing without fear or harassment;
- to be respected and treated as individuals at all times;
- to receive support for their individual needs within reason;
- not to be pressurised to train or compete;

¹ This refers to any rowing activity, on the island of Ireland or overseas, in an organisation or event affiliated or associated to Rowing Ireland, or organised, recognised, convened, or authorised by Rowing Ireland.

- to be communicated with in a respectful manner; and,
- to be treated in accordance with Rowing Ireland Codes, Regulations, Rules, and Policies.

1.3 Breaches of this Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct prohibits conduct ranging from serious criminal acts to unsporting behaviour or a lack of courtesy. Any Participant may take a complaint if they are of the opinion that the Rowing Ireland Code of Conduct has been breached. All complaints will be investigated according to the Rowing Ireland Disputes Resolution and Disciplinary Policy, but not all breaches/complaints will justify taking formal disciplinary action.

Affiliated Clubs and Competition Organisers will be able to, and are expected to endeavour to, resolve, formally or informally, many issues arising from breaches occurring within their own activities in accordance with their own disciplinary and grievance procedures. Rowing Ireland encourages all individuals to work together in a collaborative manner to identify and resolve minor breaches.

Reports or complaints should be made in the first instance to the Club concerned and if not resolved satisfactorily to the Club Support Officer (clubsupport@rowingireland.com). At Competitions, reports should be made to the host Club or relevant organising committee which can be escalated to the Club Support Officer for further investigation. Significant or repeated breaches of this Code of Conduct may be investigated in accordance with Rowing Ireland's Disputes Resolution and Disciplinary Policy.

Where the behaviour of an employee or Board member of Rowing Ireland is concerned, reports should be made to the CEO or the Senior Independent Director, as appropriate.

1.4 Responsibility to Report

Any person, who has concerns about a young person or vulnerable persons welfare or who suspects that a young person or vulnerable person is being abused, or is at risk of abuse, has a responsibility to report their concerns to the Child Welfare Officer or to the local statutory authorities.

Persons unsure about whether certain behaviours are abusive and therefore reportable, are advised that they can also seek advice from the relevant person at the local An Garda Síochána / PSNI station where they will receive appropriate advice. In cases of emergency where a young or vulnerable person appears to be at immediate and serious risk and the duty social worker is not contactable, call An Garda Síochána/the PSNI.

Under no circumstances should a young person or vulnerable person be left in a dangerous situation, pending intervention by the statutory authorities.

All Affiliated Clubs will have clear procedures for responding to reports or concerns relating to the safety and welfare of young person or vulnerable person. All Participants should be aware of how and to whom they report concerns within the club or organisation.

Part 2 - Standards of Behaviour and Conduct

All Participants should be aware of both the general and additional conduct standards that apply to them and must appreciate that it remains their personal responsibility to fulfil them on every relevant occasion. All Participants should note that they may fall into various categories when fulfilling different roles which may change on a day-to-day basis. If there is any doubt, they should seek to meet the highest standard, and seek advice from Rowing Ireland's Disciplinary Officer and/or Chair of the Governance Committee.

2.1 General Conduct Standards that apply to all Participants

All Participants must understand that their own competitive aspirations or those of other members of the rowing community do not ever justify failure to promote and follow Rowing Ireland's Code of Conduct, Regulations, Rules, and Policies.

All Participants must:

- adhere to the letter and the spirit of Rowing Ireland Codes, Regulations, Rules, and Policies, and those of their own Club or a Competition;
- not behave or conduct themselves in any manner which could bring the sport of rowing and Rowing Ireland into disrepute;
- not allow any form of behaviour to go unchallenged that might violate any of Rowing Ireland's Code of Conduct, Regulations, Rules, or Policies²;
- not engage in acts of verbal or physical abuse;
- not use or encourage others to use illegal drugs whilst participating in rowing or assisting others in rowing;
- respect the rights, dignity and worth of other Participants;
- act in a way that does not undermine other Rowing Ireland staff, officials, and Participants while they perform their roles;
- comply with any relevant laws, e.g. data protection;
- respect the confidentiality and privacy of Rowing Ireland Participants;
- act equitably and not allow any form of discrimination (on the basis of gender, age, race, skin colour, sexual orientation and expression, political opinion, etc) or victimisation to go unchallenged;
- not engage in bullying or any other behaviour that could be viewed objectively as inappropriate;
- never engage in inappropriate relationships which involve one person having a position of authority or influence over another;
- not carry out any acts with the purpose or effect of cheating or the manipulation of competition;
- not consume intoxicants or be under the influence of intoxicants, whilst participating in rowing, or coaching, officiating or assisting others in rowing;

² When challenging inappropriate behaviour or poor practice, consider whether you can talk to the person directly if it is something minor that can be easily resolved. In more serious circumstances, you may wish to escalate to your club following their disciplinary and grievance procedures, report to Rowing Ireland, or contact local services as appropriate.

- not permit or encourage Children to consume intoxicants or be under the influence of intoxicants whilst participating in rowing;
- follow the directions of coaches, instructors, umpires and officials of a Club or Competition;
- act in a sporting way during training and competition;
- not act in any way that could result in an actual or potential conflict of interest; and
- Cooperate fully with any investigation into a breach of the Irish Anti Doping Rules.

All Participants agree to uphold the regulations of Rowing Ireland, including but not limited to:

- Rowing Ireland Memorandum and Articles of Association;
- Irish Anti-Doping Rules and Rowing Ireland's Anti-Doping Policy;
- World Rowing Rulebook;
- Rowing Ireland Rulebook;
- Policies, procedures and codes of practice as issued by Rowing Ireland from time to time;
- Rowing Ireland's Safeguarding [Policy](#), Safeguarding Plan and Safeguarding plan for [young people](#), Child Safeguarding [Statement](#), and other related safeguarding policies and procedures; and
- Sport Ireland's Safeguarding [Guidance](#) for Children & Young People in Sport.

2.2 Additional Conduct Standards for Parents and Guardians of Young People or Vulnerable Persons

Parents and guardians play an important role in promoting young people or vulnerable persons happiness and success in rowing and sport in general, and parental expectations and behaviour have a significant bearing on people's attitude and behaviour while participating in sport. It is important for parents / guardians to find out what young / vulnerable people want from rowing and help them to set realistic targets to achieve this. **For some this may involve controlling their own aspirations and avoiding the desire to force their own dreams or unfulfilled ambitions on them.**

It is important to:

- encourage but not force children or adults at risk to participate in the sport or place undue pressure on them;
- conduct yourself with respect for coaches and officials of the Club, Event or Competition, and other participants, supporters, and other members or parent/carers;
- teach young people to treat umpires, rowers, coaches, and officials with respect regardless of race, creed, colour, sex or ability;
- focus on and encourage learning and enjoyment of all aspects of involvement in rowing; work with the club and/or coach to ensure that the level and type of participation is appropriate to their child, or the adult's stage of development;
- encourage fair play and sportsmanship;
- never engage in or tolerate offensive, insulting, or abusive language or behaviour;
- ensure that their child or the adult, understand the requirement to follow the rules of their Club and of Events and Competitions and to adhere to the policies, procedures and codes of

practice as issued by Rowing Ireland from time to time;

- ensure you understand what good safeguarding practice is and understand your child or adult at risk's commitment to clean sport;
- behave in an appropriate manner when using electronic means by refraining from making negative comments about the sport, other rowers, parents, coaches or officials; and
- not ignore or dismiss complaints or concerns expressed by a child which relate to his/her involvement in rowing.

Parent / Coach Co-operation

It is important that parents / guardians establish contact with the individual responsible for coaching their young person. In addition, parents / guardians should:

- Support the coach's and umpires' decisions;
- Respect the coach's private life and limit the need to contact them outside of the club time and only when essential; and
- Communicate any concerns you may have to the coach.

2.3 Additional Conduct Standards for Coaches, Instructors, Officials, Umpires and Volunteers ("Coaches")

Anyone with a position of authority or responsibility should lead by example. Everyone should conduct themselves with a high degree of honesty, integrity, and competence.

Coaches must:

- hold Rowing Ireland membership;
- not assume responsibility for any role which they are not qualified or prepared for, or mislead others as to the level of their qualification or competence;
- act equitably in officiating and combat discrimination based on gender, age, race, colour, sexual orientation, political opinion, etc.;
- condemn cheating, manipulation of competition, and the use of prohibited substances or methods and take responsibility for providing guidance and education to participants on these issues;
- uphold an environment of inclusivity, free of fear and harassment;
- take action to report concerns they may have about behaviour towards any Participant in accordance with Rowing Ireland policies and guidance;
- be cognisant of the physical and emotional needs of all Participants (especially at the developmental stage), and ensure that training loads and intensities are appropriate;
- recognise the rights of Participants to seek advice from other coaches and experts;
- always be clear about the nature and scope of coaching services or any other services being offered including costs involved;
- promote the concept of a balanced lifestyle, supporting the well-being of Participants in and out of rowing;
- be appropriately discreet in any conversations about Participants, coaches, or any other individuals;
- commit to ongoing continuing professional development to ensure safe and correct practice;

- work respectfully with other organisations, ensuring that required levels of communication, collaboration and permissions are observed;
- observe appropriate boundaries and relationships with their participants;
- not behave in a manner that could be seen as abuse of any kind.

Parents/guardians:

- Should be asked to give their approval for leaders to communicate with their young people via social networking sites, or by any other means of internet communications (e.g. email); and
- Should be asked for permission before pictures or videos of young / vulnerable people are posted online.

Safety

Coaches have a responsibility to ensure the safety of the participants with whom they work as far as possible within the limits of their control. Coaches should seek to create a safe and enjoyable environment for rowing and training. In this respect:

- Regular safety checks should be carried out in relation to premises, training facilities and equipment;
- Appropriate safety rules should be adopted and implemented;
- Refer to Rowing Ireland's IROW safe reporting system and Rowing Ireland Safety Manual;
- Parent/guardian/carer should be informed of the starting and finishing times of training sessions and events;
- A first aid kit should be available at all training sessions /events and injuries should be recorded, with a note of action taken in relation to each one. Never put injured rowers out to compete; and
- Parent/guardian/carer should be notified of injuries/illness which their children/young persons incur while participating in any rowing activity.

2.4 Additional Conduct Standards for any Coach working with Young People or Vulnerable Persons³

Most coaches work in an environment where it is recognised that, in a sporting context, certain types of coaching require a 'hands on approach', i.e., it may be necessary to support a participant in order to physically demonstrate a particular technique. This should only occur when necessary and in an open and appropriate way within the boundaries set by the coaching award or needs for safety, but with the knowledge, permission and full understanding of the participant concerned and his/her parent/guardian/carer.

Coaches must realise that certain situations or friendly actions could be misinterpreted, not only by the rower, but by others with limited knowledge of the requirements of the sport or person's

³ Rowing Ireland has a Safeguarding Children and a Safeguarding Adults Policy to reflect the differences of risk and needs but our codes of conduct for volunteers/staff/officials applies to both groups.

motivated by jealousy, dislike or mistrust and could lead to allegations of sexual misconduct or impropriety. Therefore, coaches should be aware of, and avoid all situations conducive to this risk.

In addition to the above, anyone working with young people (rowers and coxes under the age of 18) or vulnerable persons who have care and support needs must be familiar with, comply with and promote the Rowing Ireland Safeguarding Policies (listed out at section 2.1).

*In respect of Young People or Vulnerable Persons, Coaches **must**:*

- recognise that the welfare of young people or vulnerable persons is paramount and that the need to ensure that young people or vulnerable persons are protected is a primary consideration and may override the rights and needs of those adults working with them;
- follow Rowing Ireland's additional standards on the use of social networking services and social media, and text and email messaging and safety in the digital world (refer to the Additional Standards regarding mobile phones and social media);
- observe appropriate boundaries and relationships with young people or vulnerable persons including use of contact and in language and communication both in person and in a virtual context (refer to the Additional Standards that apply to Coaches insofar as they relate to young people or vulnerable persons);
- always be publicly open when working with young people or vulnerable persons, avoiding coaching, meetings or situations where young people or vulnerable persons and the individual are completely unobserved (always employ "Two Person" supervision);
- work with the Child's parent/carer to ensure that the level and type of participation is appropriate to the child's stage of development;
- work with any appropriate carer or guardian of a young person or vulnerable persons to ensure that the level and type of participation is appropriate for the vulnerable person and any care and support needs they have; and
- be cognisant of the rights of young people (that are set out in section 2.5 of this Code of Conduct).

*Additionally, in respect of vulnerable persons, Coaches **must**:*

- understand that diversity is valued, and all adult participants should be treated with dignity and respect;
- understand that a vulnerable person may participate in the sport for personal development reasons that are not related to competition and performance, and that participation in sport creates opportunities for such vulnerable persons to realise their full potential;
- ensure that the well-being of vulnerable persons who are at risk of harm will be put first and the adult will be actively supported to communicate their views and the outcomes they want to achieve from disclosing concerns; and
- ensure that a "person-centred" approach to safeguarding adults is taken, meaning that no decision about the vulnerable person is made, without consulting them first. Vulnerable persons have the right to be involved in the safeguarding process concerning them.

Coaches/volunteers must never:

- Exert undue influence over a participant in order to obtain personal benefit or reward;
- Share a room with a young or vulnerable person alone on away trips;
- Engage in rough physical games, sexually provocative games or allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any kind, and/or make sexually suggestive comments about or to a young or vulnerable person;
- Abuse their position of trust by engaging in any sexual activity with under 18's or adults defined as adults at risk. This will be subject to club/governing body disciplinary procedures;
- Use any form of corporal punishment or physical force on a young or vulnerable person;
- Take measurements or engage in certain types of fitness testing without the presence of another adult;
- Undertake any form of therapy (hypnosis etc.) in the coaching of young or vulnerable people;
- Spend excessive amounts of time with young people or vulnerable persons away from others;
- Take sessions alone (always employ "Two Person" supervision); and
- Take young people or vulnerable persons to their homes or on journeys alone in their car.

2.5 Additional Conduct Standards applicable to Athletes

Additional conduct standards apply to high-performance athletes who represent Rowing Ireland. Those standards are set out in the Athletes Agreement signed by each athlete.

Defined Terms

Vulnerable Person An adult who has care and support needs; is vulnerable; is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect; and because of their care and support needs cannot protect themselves against actual or potential abuse or neglect.

Athlete(s) A person who is a registered member with Rowing Ireland and/or who participates in a regatta and/or whose name is referenced on any prospectus/entry form (or equivalent) of a regatta under the jurisdiction of Rowing Ireland;

Child or Children or Young Person or Young People Anyone under the age of eighteen years. Throughout this policy, we will refer to both children and young people as a child or children.

Club Welfare Officer (CWO) The designated individual in a Rowing Ireland whose responsibilities are explained in the Rowing Ireland Children and Young People and Adults at Risk Policies.

Coach A paid or unpaid individual who develops the skills and abilities of one or more athletes, through imparting technical knowledge, and/or guiding practical activity, and/or supporting or coordinating activity.

Code of Conduct The set of behavioural standards that establish the expected minimum standards of behaviour.

Competition A group of one or more events managed by one Organising Committee. This includes, but is not limited to, regattas, indoor rowing events, head races, time trials, bumping races, etc.

Conflict of Interest A situation in which an individual has competing interests or loyalties or there may be a perception of or actual bias.

Event Shall mean a race or series of races, including all time trials, heats, repechages, finals etc., that together determine the winner and the order of placement in a particular class of competition.

Individuals All participants in rowing, including children, parents/carers, participants, competitors, coaches, umpires, marshals, and volunteers.

Officer A paid or unpaid individual with a role in a club or competition that contributes to the running or coordination of club or competition activities.

Participant Any individual who takes part in, attends, or is involved in any capacity in a rowing activity, competition or event (as defined in section 1.1) sanctioned by Rowing Ireland.