



Code of Conduct & Good Practice for Parents and Guardians

Version	Date	Author	Changes
3.0	23 Mar 2025	WBC	New Version

Committee Approval:



Introduction

This is one of a series of documents intended to set the standard for behaviour within Waterford Boat Club (WBC) and Rowing Ireland. It applies to all Parents or Guardians of young people and vulnerable persons participating in rowing.

Rowing and Young people / Vulnerable persons

Rowing provides an excellent pathway for young people and vulnerable persons to learn new skills, become more confident and maximise their own potential. Through their participation, they can learn and develop life skills, have fun and enjoyment, make friends and experience life in a way that can enhance their personal growth throughout their lives.

People become involved in rowing for young people and vulnerable persons for a variety of different reasons. They come from a variety of sporting backgrounds and take on various roles within clubs and other rowing organisations. Yet irrespective of their role or responsibility, they all share the common goal of providing opportunities for young people and vulnerable persons.

Parents, coaches and administrators all have an important role to play in promoting good practice in sport for all. They should have, as their first priority, safety and enjoyment of the sport for young people and vulnerable persons.

WBC & Rowing Ireland wants rowing to be safe, and to be fun and wants to ensure that no matter what level of the sport young people are involved in, that it takes place in the spirit of 'FAIR PLAY'.

Focusing on individual participants' needs encourages people to achieve and enhances their enjoyment. Through this they will come to realise that standards of behaviour are equally as important as sports performance. The Code of Conduct for Young Persons ensures all young people and vulnerable people know what behaviour is expected of them, and encourages them to make the most of their experiences in our club.

Guide for Parents / Guardians

Parents / guardians play an important role in promoting young people's and vulnerable people's happiness and success in rowing and sport in general. Parental expectations and behaviour have a significant bearing on people's attitude and behaviour while participating in sport.

Parents / guardians need to be aware of why young people and vulnerable people want to participate. Young people and vulnerable people want to learn new skills,



make new friends, be part of a group, to win and be successful, experience challenges, excitement and action.

While winning is important, it must be remembered that winning at all costs does not meet the needs of participants. Results are not necessarily a good indicator of coaching effectiveness or ability. The improvement level of rowers and their level of enjoyment is a better measure.

Support and encouragement from parents / guardians will contribute to young / vulnerable people having:

- *A sense of personal achievement.*
- *An enjoyment of rowing.*
- *Improved physical fitness.*
- *Higher self-esteem.*
- *A greater level of skill.*
- *Improved social skills.*

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.

Parents/Guardians should:

- *Encourage but not force young / vulnerable people to be active.*
- *Know when he / she is ready to race/train.*
- *Encourage healthy lifestyle habits.*
- *Attend training and events where possible.*
- *Promote and teach FAIR PLAY.*
- *Teach young people to treat umpires, rowers, coaches, and officials with respect regardless of race, creed, colour, sex or ability.*
- *Help young / vulnerable people to set realistic targets.*
- *Help young / vulnerable people with decision making.*
- *Be positive in the debrief with your young person, on the drive home or after an event.*



Parents/Guardians should not:

- *Ignore or dismiss complaints or concerns expressed by a young person which relate to his/her involvement in rowing.*
- *Ridicule or shout at a young person for losing a race or making a mistake.*
- *Treat any Club as a “child minding service”*
- *Take safety for granted.*
- *Put undue pressure on any young person to please or perform well.*
- *Put undue pressure on any young person to train or race when not fully fit or suffering some kind of illness or ailment.*
- *Should not share any photos or videos of other children on their social media without consent from that child’s parent.*

Most importantly, parents / guardians should: “LEAD BY EXAMPLE” and remember the message “children see children do”.

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**:

- *Give the coach help when asked and show appreciation for a job well done.*
- *Support the coaches and umpires’ decisions. These individuals are only doing the best they can and they need support not anger.*
- *Understand and respect that the coaches are responsible for deciding crews and boats for training and entries for competitions.*
- *Respect the coach’s private life and limit the need to contact them outside of the club time and only when essential.*
- *Inform the coach about any illness, injury, holidays, running late etc.*
- *Make an effort to attend training and events.*
- *Communicate any concerns you may have to the coach.*
- *Make sure the young person has appropriate equipment/clothing/refreshments.*
- *Be responsible for organising their child’s transport to and from competitions. By allowing their child to travel with another parent, they consent for that parent to supervise and have responsibility for their child for the duration of their supervision.*



- *Encourage FAIR PLAY at home and do not instil a “win at all costs” attitude in young people.*
- *Be positive or be quiet, negative comments are counter-productive.*
- *Conduct themselves in such a way which promotes the definition of FAIR PLAY.*
- *Be prepared to be asked to leave by officials or club personnel if behaviour is contrary to the definition of FAIR PLAY.*

Parents / Guardians should never:

- *Insult rowers or club personnel.*
- *Argue with, or shout abuse at officials, and they should actively discourage young players from doing likewise.*
- *Try to influence or change the crews or entries that have been decided by the coaches.*
- *Suggest or encourage cheating, aggressive or unfair behaviour.*
- *Placing undue or inappropriate criticism on a rower, causing them unnecessary or unhealthy levels of stress.*
- *Behave with physical or verbal aggression towards another person (actual or threat).*
- *Engage in any "harassment".*

In promoting “Rowing for Fun” **everyone involved** should:

- *Encourage participation and fun*
- *Promote the development of skills as opposed to winning at all costs.*
- *Emphasise and praise effort.*
- *Act as a good role model.*
- *Insist on Fair Play.*
- *Be realistic with expectations.*
- *Be aware of young people’s feelings.*
- *Teach rowers to respect different cultures.*

Young people should also be encouraged to realise that they also have responsibilities to treat other children, umpires, fellow players, coaches and volunteers with the same degree of fairness and respect.



Responsibility to Report

Any person, who has concerns about a young or vulnerable person's welfare or who suspects that a young or vulnerable person is being harmed, abused, or is at risk of abuse, has a responsibility to report their concerns to the Club Children's Officer, or to the local Statutory Authorities.

Persons unsure about whether or not certain behaviours are abusive and therefore reportable, are advised that they can seek advice from the duty Officer at their local Garda.

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 the Gardai/Police.

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

WBC has clear procedures for responding to reports or concerns relating to the safety and welfare of young or vulnerable persons.

Coaches/volunteers, young or vulnerable persons and parents/guardians/carers should be aware of how and to whom they report concerns within the club or organisation.

The names of the Children's Officer and Health and Safety Officer can be found on the Health and Safety Noticeboard in the boathouse.

Mobile Phones and Social Media

Mobile phones and communication devices are often given to young people and 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 & 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 working with your young person are advised to adhere to the following requirements:

- *Use group texts for communication among athletes and teams and inform parents/carers of this at the start of the season*
- *Not 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.*
- *Not 'friend' or 'follow' young people on social media. (Young people may 'follow' leaders on social media so leaders should make sure any content they post is appropriate.)*



Parents/guardians:

- *Are expected to be a consistent point of contact, as the communication of notices and information about training and races will be relayed to parents via group texts or messages.*
- *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).*
- *Should be asked for permission before pictures of videos of young / vulnerable people are posted online.*
- *Must ensure any disclosures of abuses or poor practice related to WBC through any social networking site is reported according to WBC procedures.*
- *Are expected to behave in an appropriate manner online and in discussion forums by refraining from posting negative comments about the sport, other rowers, parents, coaches or officials online.*

By signing below, you are committing to and agreeing with the above. Any breach in this Code of Conduct will be dealt with appropriately and in accordance with the WBC Complaints policy.

Signed:

Name: On Date: