



Child Safeguarding Policy

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Child Safeguarding Statement

Shannon Rowing Club is fully committed to safeguarding the well-being of all its members in their interactions with the Club. As a Club that caters for children and young people under 18 years of age (“junior members”), we are particularly concerned that every member should, at all times, show respect and understanding for the rights, safety and welfare of our junior members and conduct themselves in a way that reflects this principle. All members must, as a condition of membership, commit to providing a safe, friendly and supportive environment for our junior members.

This Policy applies to all those involved in SRC, including but not limited to, coaches, members, administrators, officials, volunteers, participants and parents, and the Committee and Trustees.

SRC is committed to creating a safe environment for junior members to grow and develop within sport. The following set of principles should be adhered to:

- Equality - All junior members should be valued and treated in an equitable and fair manner regardless of ability, age or gender.
- Integrity in relationships – Coaches of junior members in a position of trust and influence. They should always ensure that our junior members are treated with integrity and respect, and the self-esteem of junior members is enhanced.
- Encourage Fair Play - All sport should be conducted in an atmosphere of fair play. The principles of fair play should always be emphasised, and coaches should give clear guidelines regarding acceptable standards of behaviour.
- Quality atmosphere & ethos – Encourage a safe, positive and

encouraging atmosphere.

- Competition - Competition is an essential element of sport and should be encouraged in an age-appropriate manner. Have fair expectations of all participants.
- Coaches involved in coaching junior members should have a basic understanding of the emotional, physical and personal needs of young people and put those needs first and foremost.

Objectives of the Child Safeguarding Policy

The Club is committed to being proactive in implementing Rowing Ireland's recommendations and procedures outlined in '*Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults Policy 2014*'. This Policy ensures Shannon Rowing Club is compliant with those regulations and with the statutory regulations in respect of children's welfare and safety whilst under the care of the Club. The obligations of the Club include:

- Ensuring all junior members are safe from harm as members of Shannon Rowing Club
- Defining Child Abuse and Child Welfare
- Outlining procedures for making and investigating allegations
- Nominating a Club Children's Officer and a Designated Liaison Officer
- Liaising with external agencies regarding child safety
- Maintaining compliancy with Rowing Ireland by-laws and TUSLA register
- Ensuring safe recruitment and compliancy of all coaching/volunteer staff in the Club

What is Child Abuse?

Child abuse includes the neglect, emotional, physical or sexual abuse of a child or young person. These acts include physical and sexual assault, threatening behaviour and intimidation, deliberate sexualised behaviour in the child's presence, online

sexual exploitation, neglect and deliberate failure to provide for the child's physical safety. Where these acts are committed by someone under the age of 18 against a child they may still be considered 'Child Abuse' if there is a significant age difference between the perpetrator and the victim.

What is a Child Welfare Concern?

A child welfare concern is a problem experienced directly by a child, or by the family of a child that is seen to impact negatively on the child's health, development and welfare. This concern can be apparent as a result from either 'a once off occurrence' or a persistent issue in the young person's life.

Any feature of the Club organisation or activities that interfere with a junior member's ability to enjoy his or her sport in a friendly, supportive and safe environment may be considered to be a Child Welfare concern. Child Welfare issues include bullying, substance abuse and self-harm. Child welfare issues brought to the Clubs attention may relate to issues both internal and external to the Club. These issues warrant an assessment and support from the Club in addressing same.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is a pattern of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim. It hurts and is intended to hurt. It is *systematic and on-going*, and may be carried out by more than one person. Individual acts of aggression are not condoned and must not be tolerated but by definition bullying is *a continuous pattern of aggression* focused on one or more victims. Bullying can take many forms:

- *Emotional*: being unfriendly, excluding the victim from group activities or interactions, hurtful comments, tormenting (e.g. hiding belongings or equipment), spreading rumours, name-calling, sarcasm, teasing.

- *Physical*: pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching, punching or any use of violence or threat of violence by word or gesture.
- *Racist*: racial taunts, graffiti or gestures
- *Sexual*: unwanted physical contact or sexually explicit comments or gestures
- *Homophobic*: commenting on or referencing the sexuality of the victim.
- *Cyber*: All areas of internet and electronic media use intended to upset or intimidate a victim.

The Role of the Club Children's Officer

The role of the Club Children's Officer is to promote the welfare and wellbeing of junior members within the Club and to assess any child welfare or child abuse concerns brought to their attention by any Club member or family member of junior member. The Club Children's Officer will also maintain the risk register and take action on any outcomes of their risk assessments on behalf of the Club. The Club Children's Officer is nominated annually by the Club Management Committee, must be an active member and experienced in risk assessments/managing complaints.

The Club Children's Officer's contact details must be accessible to all Club members and distributed to all junior members and their parent/ guardian at the beginning of the season for their information. They will also be included in the 'information pack' disseminated to new volunteers.

Reporting a Concern – Allegations & Investigation Procedure

All concerns relating to child welfare will be dealt with in the strictest of confidence and the first priority of the Club is to ensure no junior member is exposed to unnecessary risk. Should an allegation of child abuse or a welfare concern be made against a coach, club official or member, the following procedures shall apply:

1. Any concern for child welfare should be brought to the attention of the Club Children's Officer and/or the Designated Liaison Person.

2. Concerns should be set out in writing by the reporting party.
3. An initial assessment of the concerns reported will be carried out by the Club Childrens Officer and/ or the Designated Liaison Person to determine the appropriate actions to be taken which may include conducting an internal investigation and/ or reporting the matter to statutory authorities (an Garda Siochana/ Tusla).
4. Where an internal investigation is appropriate, this will be carried out in accordance with RI's procedures for investigating allegation of child welfare concerns.
5. The Club Childrens' Office will complete the Incident Report Form <https://www.rowingireland.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/RI-SFGT5-Incident-Report-Form-template.pdf>
6. Should risks be identified or incidents become apparent, appropriate measures will be taken to protect the welfare and safety of the junior member. These measures may include the suspension of the club member from the Club or from certain club facilities or activities (for example, coaching) until a full investigation is complete (this includes investigation by statutory authorities) and may be implemented with immediate effect and pending investigation where necessary to ensure the immediate safety of the child or young person involved.
7. Where two minors are indicated as both the reporting and responding party of these concerns, parents for both parties will be notified at the earliest date.

Note: The above procedure does not apply to allegations of physical or sexual abuse which require mandated reporting under Children's First and will be referred directly to TUSLA and the Gardaí.

Confidentiality

Information of a confidential nature will only be communicated on a "need to know" basis, with the welfare of the child and vulnerable person always being paramount. Considerations of confidentiality will not be allowed to override the rights of children and vulnerable persons to be protected from harm.

Obligations of Coaching Staff and Volunteers

The primary objective of all adult members in the Club is to provide a safe, respectful and understanding environment for junior members.

All club members have a duty to report any concerns to the Club Children's Officer/DLP that are brought to their attention, in addition to reporting and assisting TUSLA when requested to do so.

A number of coaches may be mandated persons by way of their employment, however this does not apply to all coaches.

Recruitment Procedures for all Volunteers/Coaches

In line with Rowing Ireland's 'Code for Coaches and Leaders' and the national 'Children's First' policy, the Club has a responsibility to ensure all volunteers and coaches are carefully selected, trained and supervised. To ensure compliancy, all adults within the Club must:

1. Abide by the Child Safeguarding Policy
2. Undergo Garda Vetting and Complete Child Safeguarding training where they are involved with coaching of junior members
3. Assist the Child and Family Agency in any assessments or investigations if child welfare concerns, if they are requested to do so.
4. Maintain a annual Register of Coaches with contact details

To provide support in this process, the Club will ensure a nominated 'Designated

Liaison Person' is assigned to deal with disclosures within the Club. It is the role of the DLP to report relevant concerns to the Child Family Agency and/or An Garda Siochana.

For queries on this Child Safeguarding Statement, please contact the Club Childrens' Officer or the Designated Person

Review date: June 2023

Next Review: June 2025