



Offaly Rowing Club updated 1.10.23

Code of Conduct & Good Practice for Coaches and Club Officials

This is one of a series of documents, based on Rowing Ireland guidelines, intended to set the standard for behaviour within Offaly Rowing Club (ORC). It applies to all Coaches, with or without qualifications, umpires, officials, and anyone left in charge of young people or vulnerable persons, within ORC whether at home or away.

Rowing Guidance for Working with Young People and Vulnerable Adults

ORC is indebted to all the volunteers who give of their time in providing rowing opportunities for young people and vulnerable persons. Rowing provides an excellent pathway for people 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.

ORC wants rowing be safe, fun and to ensure that all rowing and associated activity takes place in the spirit of fair play. Fair Play is both rule adherence and commitment to contest in good spirit. It encourages a good attitude towards sport that includes respect, modesty, generosity and friendship. Focusing on the individual participants' needs and performance encourages young people to achieve and demonstrate enjoyment, equality and fair play. Coaches must understand that standards of behavior are as important as sporting performance.

Rower Centred Approach

While winning is important, it must be remembered that winning at all costs does not meet the needs of rowers. Results are not the only indicator of coaching effectiveness or ability. The improvement level of those in rowing and their level of enjoyment are other indicators. Coaches together with all members / parents/ guardians should aim to provide a safe and enjoyable environment where young people and vulnerable persons are placed at the centre of all activities. All training programmes/sessions must be approved by the Head Coach.

In promoting good practice and creating a rower centred approach coaches must always:

- Follow the instruction of the head coach in relation to all aspects of coaching.
- Obey ORC Water Safety Policy and any and all other policies that are and may be applied
- Register as a coach with Rowing Ireland
- Act as good role models, be polite, considerate to all and respect the views of others.
- Encourage and be positive during sessions so that participants leave with a sense of achievement
- Set challenging, realistic but achievable goals on an individual basis
- Plan and prepare each session appropriately and ensure proper levels of supervision
- Ensure that all activities are inclusive and allow all participation in an enjoyable way
- Put the welfare and enjoyment of the rowers first and strike a balance between this and winning



- Enforce the principles of fair play treating each person equally, with dignity and respect and ensure that everyone plays within the rules
- Be aware of the developmental stages and needs of those in rowing and ensure that any progression is appropriate to the needs and ability of the rower
- Avoid over training and over emphasis on competition. Where possible, parents should not coach their children.

Coaches / Volunteers must

1. Follow all club rules, policies and procedures. For the avoidance of doubt it is the coaches' responsibility to familiarise themselves to include any updates with same.
2. Implement all ORC committee decisions.
3. Coaches should only ensure that only members who are fit to attend training can do so. Risk Assessments where required should be undertaken. In the first instance ORC Safety Advisor must be contacted who will determine and review risk. Risk Assessments must be kept on file.
4. Comply with ORC insurance obligations – not to invalidate or put ORC and its insurers at an undue risk.
5. Should keep an attendance record for all sessions both home and away.
6. Ensure that there is sufficient supervision, both on and off the water. This is specifically vital where rowers are split between land and water training.
7. Where there is insufficient supervision for the safety and number of rowers training must be cancelled.
8. **Training of any kind should NEVER take place unless it is safe to do so.**

Coaches/volunteers should never:

- Share a room with a young or vulnerable person alone on away trips except where related or on the express written authority of a parent / guardian.
- 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 disciplinary procedures.
- Use any form of corporal punishment or physical force on any member.
- Take measurements or engage in certain types of fitness testing without the presence of another adult.

Coaches and officials 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 motivated by jealousy, dislike or mistrust and could lead to allegations of sexual misconduct or impropriety. Therefore, coaches and officials should be aware of, and avoid all situations conducive to this risk. Coaches/volunteers must never:



- Spend excessive amounts of time with young or vulnerable rowers away from others.
 - Take sessions alone (always employ “Two Person” supervision)
 - Take young people or vulnerable persons to their homes
 - Take young people or vulnerable persons on journeys alone in their car
 - Have contact with young people or vulnerable members, unsanctioned by parent/guardian outside of the club
 - Coaches and Club officials must not have any non-rowing contact with non-family junior/vulnerable members, unless sanctioned by parents/guardians of the individual junior/vulnerable member (thus recognising family and community ties, while safeguarding junior/vulnerable members).
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- Interfere with any other coach’s crew except where a crew is in danger to themselves or others.
 - Bully or discriminate against any other member of the club to include parents / guardians and committee members.
 - Not to give preferential treatment to any member.

Safety

Coaches strive to ensure the safety of the rowers with whom they work as far as possible within the limits of their control. Therefore, 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 (equipment officer/life jacket/fire extinguishers....)
- 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. ▪ Parent/Guardian/Carer should be notified of injuries/illness which their rower incurs while participating in any rowing activity. For the avoidance of doubt rowers should only attend if fit to row.

In promoting “Sport for Fun” coaches 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
- Actively discourage participants from abusing umpires, officials, crew mates or opponents or any other member of ORC/ coaches / committee members / directors.
- Insist on fair play
- Be realistic with your expectations

Coaches should be aware that rowers, parents and guardians also have a Code of Conduct and should also be encouraged to realise that they also have responsibilities to treat other participants, officials, 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 abused, or is at risk of abuse, has a responsibility to report their



concerns the ORC's Child Welfare Officer, ORC's Designated Liaison Person 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 Tusla's duty Officer at the local Garda 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 the Gardai. Under no circumstances should a young or vulnerable person be left in a dangerous situation, pending intervention by the Statutory Authorities. ORC has clear procedures for responding to reports or concerns relating to the safety and welfare of young people and vulnerable persons. Coaches / volunteers, young people, vulnerable persons and parents/ guardians/ carers should be aware of how and to whom they report concerns within the club.

Mobile Phones and Social Media

The following are the rules around usage with junior/vulnerable members / all on club grounds / at all events attended by ORC:

- Coaches will not have contact via Social Media with junior/vulnerable members. All communication will be channelled via sms to the parents/guardians (currently WhatsApp, though this may change in the future).
- Coaches may only use the camera function as a coaching aid. It is prohibited in changing rooms. Coaches/volunteers will 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.)
- Coaches/volunteers will not network with youth members of their organisation/group via closed [one-on-one] chats e.g. Facebook messenger, WhatsApp, etc.
- Any /All emails will be sent to parent/guardians or directly to adult members / committee members.
- Coaches/volunteers will ensure parental permission is received before pictures of videos of children or young people are posted online, this consent is implied following the signing of the membership forms.
- Coaches/volunteers will ensure any disclosures of abuses reported through a social networking site must be dealt with according to ORCs reporting procedures.

Coaches have the right to:

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| ▪ Be safe and happy in their chosen activity | ▪ Be protected from abuse or harm by others in rowing or outside sources |
| ▪ Be listened to | ▪ Be believed |
| ▪ Be respected and treated fairly | |
| ▪ Privacy | |
| ▪ Enjoy rowing in a protective environment | |
| ▪ Ask for help | |



By signing below, you are committing to and agreeing with the above policy and accepting and complying with all other policies and any policies that are currently in place at ORC or those that will be introduced to ensure the safe and proper operation of the club. Any breach in this Code of Conduct will be dealt with appropriately and in accordance with the ORCs Complaints and Disciplinary process.

These rules and policies are subject to alteration. Any revisions to club policies / rules / procedures, will be displayed on the club noticeboard. It is the responsibility of the members to make themselves aware of the changes-

Signature of Coach/Official: _____

Printed name of Coach/Official: _____

Date: _____