



Offaly Rowing Club updated 1.10.23

Code of Conduct & Good Practice for Parents and Guardians

This document is based on Rowing Ireland's Code of Conduct & Good Practice for Parents and Guardians

It applies to all Parents or Guardians of young people or vulnerable persons participating in Offaly Rowing Club activities.

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. Offaly Rowing Club 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 demonstrate their enjoyment. Through this they will come to realise that standards of behaviour are equally as important as sports performance. Unless rowers are in danger the coach or the designated coach is responsible for the safety and will designate duties and jobs as required for the rowers?

Designated coach is defined as the coach that has been assigned to you on an on-going basis.

Fair Play is defined as both rule adherence and commitment to contest in a good spirit. It encourages a good attitude towards sport that includes respect, modesty, generosity, and friendship.

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, this should be discussed with the designated / head coach. 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:

Show respect to all, help when asked and not interfere in any way except in case of an emergency.

- Encourage but not force young / vulnerable people to be active.
- Know when he / she (they / them) 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 rowing targets, in conjunction with the designated / head coach.
- Help young / vulnerable people with decision making in respect of rowing.
- 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 Offaly Rowing Club as a “child minding service”
- Take safety for granted.
- Put undue pressure on any young person to please or perform well.

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

Bully / interfere, ignore rules or harass any member of ORC – for any potential issues there are policies in place.



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 only when asked and show appreciation for a job well done. Pay entry fees and transport cost promptly and before events **Parents / Guardians or any member of ORC should never undermine a coach.**
- Support the coach's and umpires' decisions. These individuals are volunteers giving their time freely to your children and they deserve support and respect.
- 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, etc.
- Make an effort to attend training and regattas/ heads and all mandatory and non-mandatory sessions.
- Communicate any concerns you may have to the head / designated coach / DLP.
- Make sure the young/vulnerable person has appropriate equipment/clothing/refreshments.
- 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 counterproductive.
- 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 or is not in keeping with the ethos of the club or there is disregard for the club rules, policies and procedures.

Parents / Guardians should never:

- Insult / undermine rowers or club personnel to include all coaches.
- Argue with, or shout abuse at officials, and they should actively discourage young players from doing likewise.
- 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" or active disrespect of club officials
- Parents/Guardians 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).

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 the Club Children’s Officer, the Offaly Rowing Club 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 the duty Officer at their 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 Gardaí. Under no circumstances should a young or vulnerable person be left in a dangerous situation, pending intervention by the Statutory Authorities.

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.

Mobile Phones and Social Media

Mobile phones and communication devices are often given to young people and vulnerable persons for security, enabling parents/guardians to keep in touch and make sure they are safe. However, such technology has also allowed an increase in direct personal contact with young and 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 will adhere to the following requirements (the following is a sample of the advice given to coaches):

- 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, or may cause a safety risk e.g., on the water.



- Parents / Guardians 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).
- Parents / Guardians will not network with youth members of their organisation/group via closed [one-on-one] chats e.g. Facebook messenger, WhatsApp, etc.
- All emails will be sent to parent/guardians Coaches/volunteers will ensure any disclosures of abuses reported through a social networking site must be dealt with according to ORCs reporting procedures. Any breach in this Code of Conduct will be dealt with appropriately and in accordance with the Offaly Rowing Clubs Complaints and Disciplinary process.

Parents / Guardians will comply with all reasonable rules, policies and procedures as approved by ORC.

It is acknowledged that Parents / Guardians may need to contact coaches / committee outside of training times, Parents / Guardians should limit contact to all coaches / committee outside of training times. Coaches and committee members give of their time in a voluntary capacity and without their considerable dedication the club would not function. Should there be a need to contact a coach / committee member all contact should be within the hours between 8am – 8pm except in the case of an emergency.

These rules and policies are subject to alteration. Any such changes will be displayed on the club noticeboard. It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians of young/vulnerable members to make themselves aware of the changes, once notified of the same by the committee.

Signature of Parent/Guardian:

Printed name of Parent/Guardian:

Date:
