

# Code of Conduct & Good Practice for Parents and Guardians



This is one of a series of documents intended to set the standard for behaviour within Rowing. It applies to all Parents or Guardians of young people participating in Rowing in Lee Rowing Club.

## Rowing and Young People

Rowing provides an excellent pathway for children and young 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.

People become involved in rowing, 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.

Parents, coaches and administrators all have an important role to play in promoting good practice in children's sport. They should have, as their first priority, the children's safety and enjoyment of the sport.

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'.

Fair play is the guiding principle of the Sports Council Code of ethics and good behaviour in children's sport, as well as the Rowing Ireland Code of Ethics and Good Practice, which is designed to provide guidance for those working with young people in rowing. It outlines the type of issues that need to be discussed and addressed to provide the safest and most enjoyable environment not only for young people but also the coaches and volunteers involved.

Focusing on individual participants' needs encourages young people to achieve and demonstrate enjoyment, equality and fair play. Through this they will come to realise that standards of behaviour are equally as important as sports performance.

In taking this approach children are encouraged to:

- Do their best – put in their best effort.
- Improve and develop their skills.
- Make friends.
- Play by the rules.
- Appreciate/accept everyone in the group, regardless of ability, race, religion, gender etc.

## Guide for Parents / Guardians

Parents / guardians play an important role in promoting children's happiness and success in rowing and sport in general.

Parental expectations and behaviour have a significant bearing on children's attitude and behaviour while participating in sport.

Parents / guardians need to be aware of why children want to participate. Children 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 children 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 their children want from rowing, and help them to set realistic targets to achieve this. **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 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 your child to treat umpires, rowers, coaches, and officials with respect regardless of race, creed, colour, sex or ability.
- Help children to set realistic targets.
- Help children with decision making.

### **Parents/Guardians should not:**

- Ignore or dismiss complaints or concerns expressed by a child which relate to his/her involvement in rowing.
- Ridicule or shout at a child for losing a race or making a mistake.
- Treat the club as a child minding service.
- Take safety for granted.
- Put undue pressure on any child to please or perform well.
- Engage in public gossip about other members.
- Make allegations against other members.

**Most importantly parents / guardians should:  
“LEAD BY EXAMPLE”**

### **Parent /Coach Co- operation**

It is important that parents / guardians establish contact with the individual responsible for coaching their child, for guidance see parent to coach communication guide

In addition, parents / guardians should:

- Give the coach help when asked and show appreciation for a job well done.
- Support the coach's and umpires decisions. These individuals are only doing the best they can and they need support not anger.
- Refrain from contacting the coach unless it is necessary, respect they have a private life.
- Inform the coach about any illness, injury, holidays, etc.
- Communicate any concerns you may have to the coach.
- Make sure the child has appropriate equipment/clothing/refreshments.
- Encourage **FAIR PLAY** at home and do not instil a “win at all costs” attitude in children.
- 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**.
- Always recognise the value and importance of Coaches and volunteers who give freely of their time to provide sporting/recreational opportunities for your child.

For safety and privacy reasons parents/guardians are not permitted on the pontoon or in the training areas of the clubhouse during training sessions unless requested by a coach or club official.

### **Parents / Guardians should never:**

- Insult rowers or club personnel.
- Argue with, or shout abuse at officials, and they should actively discourage children or 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".

**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 children's feelings.
- Teach rowers to respect different cultures.

**“Sport for young people is about Fun and Participation, best effort and Fair Play in a Safe environment”**

Children in rowing are entitled to:

- Be safe.
  - Be treated with dignity, sensitivity and respect.
  - Participate on an equal basis, appropriate to their ability and stage of development.
  - Be happy, have fun and enjoy rowing.
  - Make a complaint in an appropriate way and have it dealt with through a proper and effective complaints procedure.
  - Be afforded appropriate confidentiality.
  - Be listened to and to be believed.
  - Have a voice in the running of the club.
- Children 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.

In this regard children should agree to:

- Play fairly, do their best and have fun.
- Make high standards of Fair Play the standard others want to follow.
- Respect opponents. They are not enemies, they are partners in a sporting event.
- Congratulate opponents after events, whoever wins.
- Give opponents a hand if they are injured, make allowances so they can get attention.
- Accept apologies from opponents when they are offered.
- Respect fellow crew/squad members and support them both when they do well and when things go wrong.
- Treat rowers from minority groups with the same respect you show other people.
- Be modest in victory and be gracious in defeat “**BE A SPORT**”.
- Approach the Club Children's Officer with any questions or concerns they might have. Coaches

and parents should encourage children to speak out and support them in doing so.

#### Children should not:

- Cheat.
- Use abusive language, or argue with, the umpire, officials, crew mates or opponents.
- Use violence: they should use physical contact only when it is allowed within the rules.
- Bully.
- Tell lies about adults or other children.
- Spread rumours.
- Take banned substances to improve performance.
- Keep secrets about any person who may have caused them harm.

Any issues of a disciplinary or other nature should follow the clubs disciplinary/complaints procedure.

### Responsibility to Report

Any person, who has concerns about a child's welfare or who suspects that a child is being abused, or is at risk of abuse, has a responsibility to report their concerns to the Health Board or Gardai. Persons unsure about whether or not certain behaviours are abusive and therefore reportable, are advised that they can seek advice from Tusla where they will receive appropriate advice.

In cases of emergency where a child appears to be at immediate and serious risk and Tusla are not contactable, call the Gardai.

Under no circumstances should a child be left in a dangerous situation, pending intervention by the Statutory Authorities.

### Mobile Phones etc.

Mobile phones and communication devices are often given to children for security, enabling parents to keep in touch and make sure they are safe. However such technology has also allowed an increase in direct personal contact with young people, in some cases used to cross personal boundaries and cause harm. Athletes are not allowed have their mobile phones when they are training, they are requested to leave them in the changing rooms or in a designated secure area.

Within the club there is a need to encourage responsible and secure use of these devices.

In this respect Coaches are advised to:

- Use group texts for communication among athletes and teams and inform parents of this at the start of the season
- It is not appropriate 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.

### Maintaining Contact with the club:

Maintaining contact with the club is extremely important. In the event a rower is unable to attend training due to illness, holidays etc, it is expected that the parent or the rower informs one of their coaches of their absence or intended absence. If more than two weeks has passed with no contact with the coach or club, the Captain reserve the right to remove the member from club communications and log them as lapsed members. In situations where more than two weeks have passed with no attendance and no contact with the club, the member will need to speak to the Captain before the member can re-join the coaching group. In these instances the member will be unable to resume active training until a decision is made with the coach that the member is fit to re-join the group and/or assume training.

We strongly ask for parent and rower co-operation in this regard and to maintain regular communication with the club.