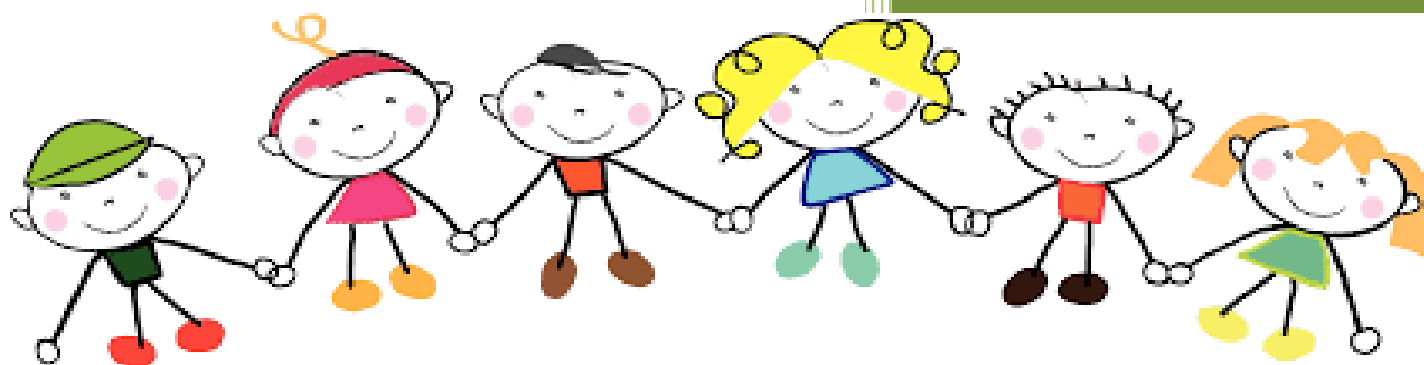


**2022**

# ***Child Safeguarding Policy & Procedures***



**Neptune Rowing Club**

# Index

- I. Child Safeguarding Statement**
- II. Objectives of the Child Safeguarding Policy**
- III. What is Child Abuse?**
- IV. What is a Child Welfare Concern?**
- V. The Role of the Child Welfare Officer**
- VI. Reporting a Concern – Allegations & Investigation Procedure**
- VII. Confidentiality Statement**
- VIII. Obligations of Coaching Staff and Volunteers**
- IX. Recruitment Procedures for all Volunteers/Coaches**
- X. Policy References**
- XI. Contact details**

## I. Child Safeguarding Statement

Neptune Rowing Club is fully committed to safeguarding the wellbeing of all its members in their interactions with the Club. As a Club that caters for young people we are particularly concerned that every member should, at all times, show respect and understanding for the rights, safety and welfare of children 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.

## II. Objectives of the Child Safeguarding Policy

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

- Ensuring all children are safe from harm whilst availing of the Clubs service
- Defining Child Abuse and Child Welfare as per the purpose of this policy
- Outlining procedural guidelines, nominating a Child Welfare Officer (Designated Liaison Officer) and Confidentiality Statement for any child welfare/safety concerns brought to the attention of the Club
- Liaising with external agencies re. child safety
- Maintaining compliancy with Rowing Ireland by-laws & TUSLA register
- Ensuring safe recruitment and compliancy of all coaching/volunteer staff in the Club

### III. What is Child Abuse?

Child abuse occurs whenever a criminal act is committed by an adult against a child. 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, for example between an eleven year old victim and a seventeen year old perpetrator.

### IV. 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 child's right 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 be:

- 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.

Bullying of a child is usually perpetrated by another child or children but can also be perpetrated by adults. Both forms would warrant the Child Welfare Officer's involvement. Bullying behaviour when perpetrated by adults against children could be regarded as both a child welfare concern or child abuse depending on the severity on assessment.

## **V. The Role of the Child Welfare Officer**

The role of the Child Welfare Officer is to investigate any child welfare or child abuse concerns brought to their attention by any Club member or family member of a minor who utilises the services of the Club. The Welfare Officer will also maintain the risk register and action any outcomes of their risk assessments on behalf of the Club. The Officer is nominated annually by the Club Management Committee, must be an active member and experienced in risk assessments/managing complaints.

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

## VI. Reporting a Concern – Allegations & Investigation Procedure

All concerns will be dealt with in the strictest of confidence and the first priority of the Club is to ensure no child 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:

- Where allegations of abuse are disclosed any form of disclosure (written or verbal) will be responded to with an urgent Risk Assessment on the same working day by the nominated Child Welfare Officer. Measures with immediate effect will be implemented where necessary to ensure the immediate safety of the child involved.
- Where concerns for Child welfare is brought to the attention of the Child Welfare Officer, s/he will request these concerns in writing from the concerned party. In turn:
  1. The Officer will nominate another Officer of the Club, who is independent to all parties, to become a witnessing third party to the investigation.
  2. The Officer and nominated third party will meet with all parties concerned in the complaint (parents of child, the child and when appropriate the club member to whom the allegations relate) to establish circumstances. This will be conducted in a timely manner. Investigative meetings should be held separately and minutes should be documented by the Officer of the Club. Clauses pertaining to confidentiality should be explained at the outset of the meeting.
  3. Should risks be identified or incidents become apparent, appropriate measures will be taken to protect the welfare and safety of the child. This may include the suspension of the alleged club member from club activities until a full investigation is complete
  4. The outcome and recommendations of this complaint should be clearly documented in report format and held on file by the Club and a copy given to the parties involved. This report may also indicate a review date.
  5. Where two minors are indicated as both the victim and perpetrator of these concerns, parents for both parties will be notified at the earliest date.

*Note: The above assessment 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.*

## **VII. Confidentiality Statement**

**All adult members of Neptune Rowing Club** will undertake to never promise to keep secrets for children particularly with issues pertaining to child abuse & welfare. 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.

## **VIII. 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 all children availing of the Club's services. Under the Children's First Act 2015, all club members who work in a coaching capacity or position of power within the club are considered Mandated Reporters.

As a reporter, the club member has a duty to report any concerns to the Club's Child Welfare Officer that are brought to their attention, in addition to reporting and assisting TUSLA, the Child and Family Agency when requested to do so.

## **IX. 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:

- Abide by the Child Safeguarding Policy and sign the enclosed form acknowledging their compliance with same
- Complete Children's First training and provide acknowledgement of completion
- Sign and complete the National Vetting Bureau Form. Any past convictions or cases pending must be disclosed to the Club at the time of application.
- Complete the *Rowing Ireland* own application form, which includes a coach/volunteer self-declaration section *Available at Safeguarding Recruitment*
- Assist the Child and Family Agency in a risk assessment, if they are requested to do so.

In an effort to provide support in this process, the Club will endeavour to provide a copy of this paperwork and instructions to complete same in annual 'Coaching Packs'. The Club will also ensure a nominated 'Designated Officer' is assigned to deal with disclosures within the Club. An annual Register of Coaches with contact details will be maintained by the Club Secretary.



This policy must be reviewed and amendments made every three years or prior to same in line with Rowing Ireland recommendations.

Commencement Date: January 2022

Next Review: January 2025

## **X. Policy References**

Child Protection & Welfare Practice Handbook 2011 (TUSLA)

Children's First National Guidelines 2015 (DCYA)

RI Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy 2014

*RI 'Code for Coaches and Leaders'*

RI 'Training for Coaches and Volunteers'

## **XI. Contact Details**

Club Child Officer – [safeguarding.neptunerc@gmail.com](mailto:safeguarding.neptunerc@gmail.com)

TUSLA - [tusla.ie/services/child-protection-welfare/contact-a-social-worker/dublin/](https://tusla.ie/services/child-protection-welfare/contact-a-social-worker/dublin/)

An Garda Síochána – 999/112