

Dartmouth Rowing Club

Policy Statement

(from ARA guidelines)

Introduction

Everyone who participates in Rowing is entitled to do so in an enjoyable and safe environment. To ensure this, the Amateur Rowing Association (ARA) has developed principles that all its personnel and member clubs should follow.

These principles apply to all participants, but young people in particular are entitled to a higher duty of care and to be protected from poor practice or abuse. Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and the sporting environment. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with children in order to harm them. The ARA is committed to devising and implementing policies so that everyone in the sport accepts their responsibilities to safeguard children from harm and abuse.

This means following procedures to protect children and to report any concerns about their welfare to appropriate authorities.

Everyone working in rowing either in a paid or a voluntary capacity, together with those working in affiliated organisations, has a role to play in safeguarding the welfare of children and preventing their abuse. Anyone may have regular contact with children and be a very important link in identifying cases where a child needs protection.

The Association advises that coaches of Juniors be ARA qualified and that in any case they fully accept the Sports Coach UK Code of Conduct which is included in all ARA Coaching Course Handbooks.

All policies and procedures discussed below refer to vulnerable adults as well as to children.

Dartmouth Rowing Club is committed to:

- the welfare of young people is paramount
- all young people, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity should be able to participate in rowing in a fun and safe environment
- taking all reasonable steps to protect young people from harm, discrimination and degrading treatment and to respect their rights, wishes and feelings
- all suspicions and allegations of poor practice or abuse will be taken seriously, and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- all DARC employees who work with young people will be recruited with regard to their suitability for that responsibility, and will be provided with guidance and/or training in good practice and child protection procedures

Terms and abbreviations

The following terms and abbreviations are used in this document.

- Anyone under the age of 18 is considered to be a child/young person
- 'Parent' is used as a generic term to include parents, carers and guardians
- 'Personnel' includes employees of DARC as well as volunteers and all participants in the sport of Rowing
- 'Welfare Officer' is the individual within an affiliated club whose responsibilities are explained in section 3.4.
- DARC - Dartmouth Amateur Rowing Club
- CPO - Child Protection Officer (of the ARA)
- CRB - Criminal Records Bureau

Good Practice, Poor Practice and Abuse

To provide young people with the best possible experience and opportunities in Rowing, everyone must operate within an accepted ethical framework and demonstrate exemplary behaviour. Not only will this allow Rowing to make a positive contribution to the development of young people and safeguard their welfare, but it also protects all personnel from the risk of false allegations of abuse or poor practice.

It is not always easy to distinguish poor practice from abuse, whether intentional or accidental. It is not therefore the responsibility of employees or participants in Rowing to make judgements about whether or not abuse is taking place. It is, however, their responsibility to identify poor practice and possible abuse and to act if they have concerns about the welfare of a child, as explained in section 4.

Good practice

All personnel should adhere to the following principles and actions.

- Before undertaking any activities involving young people, conduct a risk assessment to identify possible sources of danger and take appropriate action to minimise these risks
- Make the experience of Rowing fun and enjoyable; promote fairness, confront and deal with bullying and do not condone rule violations or the use of prohibited or illegal substances; insist on adherence to the *ARA Water Safety Code* and its *Child Protection* procedures
- Treat all young people equally; this means giving both the more and less talented members of a group similar attention, time, respect and preserving their dignity
- Respect the developmental stage of each young person and do not risk sacrificing their welfare in a desire for club or personal achievements. This means ensuring that the training intensity is appropriate to the physical, social and emotional stage of the development of the rower. Training and competition schedules must be suited primarily to the needs and the interests of the child, not those of the parents, coaches or club
- Build relationships based on mutual trust and respect, in which young people are encouraged to take responsibility for their own development and decision-making.
- Avoid situations where the coach or team manager use their position and power to decide what the rower should or should not do without consideration of the young person's needs and capabilities
- Always be publicly open when working with children.
- Avoid coaching sessions or meetings where a coach and an individual athlete are completely unobserved

Good practice - continued

- Where children need to be supervised in the changing rooms, coaches should work in pairs, and involve parents if possible. Maintain an appropriate and open environment, with no secrets
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact with young people. Where any form of physical guidance is required in teaching technique, this should be provided openly and with the consent of the athlete. It is important to educate parents of what is and is not acceptable technically in the context of rowing. Physical contact (touching) can be appropriate so long as it is neither intrusive nor disturbing and the athlete's permission has been given
- Maintain a safe and appropriate relationship with athletes. It is inappropriate for coaches and others in positions of authority to have an intimate relationship with a young person, even if they are over 16, the normal age of legal consent. (This could also be a criminal offence 'abuse of trust' in certain circumstances defined by the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000)
- Maintain appropriate standards of behaviour at social events that young people attend
- Be an excellent role model, for example by not smoking or drinking alcohol while working with young people
- Communicate regularly with parents and involve them in decision-making. Gain their consent in writing to act in loco parentis to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid or other medical treatment if the need arises
- Be aware of any medical conditions, existing injuries and medicines being taken. Keep a written record of any injury or accident that occurs, together with details of any treatment given. Arrange that someone with knowledge of first aid is readily available
- Gain written parental consent for any significant travel arrangements, especially if an overnight stay is involved.

Poor practice

The following are regarded as poor practice and should be avoided at all costs.

- Unnecessarily spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others
- Taking children alone in a car on journeys, however short
- Taking children to your home where they will be alone with you
- Sharing a room with a child
- Engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- Allowing or engaging in inappropriate touching of any form
- Allowing children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Making sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun
- Reducing a child to tears as a form of control
- Letting allegations a child makes go unchallenged, unrecorded, or not acted upon
- Doing things of a personal nature that children can do for themselves
- Having children stay at your home with you unsupervised

Where cases arise where it is impractical to avoid any of the situations mentioned in this section, they should only occur with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge in the organisation and the children's parents.

If during your care of a child you accidentally hurt them, the child seems distressed in any manner, appears to be sexually aroused by your actions, or misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done, report any such incidents as soon as possible to another colleague and make a brief written note of it. Parents should also be informed of the incident.

Abuse

Abuse in all its forms can affect a child at any age. The effects can be so damaging that if not treated, they may follow an individual into adulthood. For example, an adult who has been abused as a child may find it difficult, or impossible, to maintain a stable, trusting relationship; may become involved with drugs or prostitution; may attempt suicide; or may abuse a child in the future.

Children with disabilities may be at increased risk of abuse through various factors such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, isolation, and a powerlessness to protect themselves, or adequately to communicate that abuse has occurred.

Children from ethnic minorities, who may also be experiencing racial discrimination, may be, or feel, doubly powerless in these respects.

Abuse may take a number of forms, and may be classified under the following headings:

Neglect

This is where adults fail to meet a child's basic needs like food, shelter, warm clothing or medical care, or to protect them from physical harm. Children might also be constantly left alone or unsupervised.

Neglect in a sport situation could include a coach not keeping children safe, or exposing them to undue cold, heat or the unnecessary risk of injury. In particular, those in charge of young people must always make sure that they have adequate clothing for the prevailing conditions.

Physical Abuse

This is where someone physically hurts or injures children, for example by hitting, shaking, throwing, squeezing, burning, suffocating and biting or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Giving children alcohol or inappropriate drugs would also constitute physical abuse.

In sports situations, physical abuse might occur when the nature and intensity of training disregard the capacity of the child's immature and growing body.

Sexual Abuse

Girls and boys can be abused by adults or other children, both male and female, who use children to meet their own sexual needs. This could include full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse or fondling. Showing children pornographic material is also a form of sexual abuse.

In sport, activities which might involve physical contact with children could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed. Also the power of the coach over young athletes, if misused, may lead to abusive situations developing.

Emotional Abuse

Persistent lack of love and affection, where children may be led to believe that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve the child being constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted which may make the child very nervous and withdrawn. It may also feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children.

Emotional abuse also occurs when there is constant overprotection, which prevents children from socialising.

Emotional abuse in sport might include situations where children are subjected by a parent or coach to constant criticism, name-calling, sarcasm, bullying, racism or unrealistic pressure in order to perform to high expectations.

Indicators of abuse

Even for those experienced in working with child abuse, it is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur or has already taken place. The ARA acknowledges that most people involved in Rowing are not experts in such recognition, but indications that a child is being abused may include one or more of the following:

- ? Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries
- ? An injury for which an explanation seems inconsistent
- ? The child describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him/her
- ? Someone else – a child or adult, expresses concern about the welfare of a child
- ? Unexplained changes in a child's behaviour – e.g. becoming very quiet, withdrawn, or displaying sudden outbursts of temper – or behaviour changing over time
- ? Inappropriate sexual awareness
- ? Engaging in sexually explicit behaviour in games
- ? Distrust of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected
- ? Difficulty in making friends
- ? Being prevented from socialising with other children
- ? Displaying variations in eating patterns including overeating or loss of appetite
- ? Losing weight for no apparent reason
- ? Becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt

Bullying

This may be bullying of a child by an adult or another child. Bullying is defined as deliberate hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. It may be physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, theft), verbal (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, threats, name-calling, graffiti, abusive text messages transmitted by phone or on the internet), emotional (e.g. tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating, ignoring, isolating from the group), or sexual (e.g. unwanted physical contact or abusive comments).

In sport, bullying may arise when a parent pushes a child too hard to succeed, a coach adopts a win-at-all-costs philosophy, or a rival athlete or official uses bullying behaviour.

Signs of Bullying

- ? Behavioural changes such as reduced concentration or becoming withdrawn, clingy, depressed, tearful, emotionally up and down, reluctant to go to training or to competitions
- ? an unexplained drop-off in performance
- ? physical signs such as stomach-aches, headaches, difficulty in sleeping, bedwetting, scratching and bruising, damaged clothes and bingeing on food, cigarettes or alcohol
- ? a shortage of money or frequent loss of possessions

Abuse

Responding to Suspicions and Allegations

Most cases of child abuse in fact take place within the family setting. However, abuse can and does occur in other situations as well, which may include sport or other social activities, and is rarely a one-off event when it occurs within such a setting.

It is crucial that those involved in rowing are aware of this possibility and that all allegations are taken seriously and appropriate action taken.

It is not the responsibility of anyone working under the auspices of the ARA or in a member club, whether in a paid or a voluntary capacity, to decide whether or not child abuse is taking place.

However, there is a responsibility to inform appropriate agencies of possible abuse so that they can then make inquiries and take any necessary action to protect the child.

This applies both to suspicions of abuse occurring within the context of rowing activities and to allegations that abuse is taking place elsewhere.

Receiving evidence of possible abuse

We may become aware of possible abuse in various ways. We may see it happening ourselves; we may suspect that it is occurring because of signs such as those listed above; it may be reported to us by someone else, or directly by the child affected.

In the last of these cases, it is particularly important to respond appropriately. If a child says or indicates that he or she is being abused, or information is obtained which gives you concern that a child is being abused, you should:

- ? React calmly so as not to frighten the child
- ? Tell the child they are not to blame and that it was right to tell
- ? Take what the child says seriously, recognising the difficulties inherent in interpreting what is said by a child who has a speech disability and/or differences in language
- ? Keep questions to the absolute minimum necessary so that there is a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said
- ? Reassure the child, but do not promise to keep the matter secret – explain that to resolve the problem it will be necessary to inform other people as appropriate.

All suspicions or allegations should be reported to the club's "Welfare Officer" as soon as possible.

Abuse

Recording Information

As with other forms of information arising in relation to child protection, information of this kind is highly sensitive and confidential.

Accordingly, it should be held under secure conditions and only made available to those who have a definite need for it.

You should make a note as soon as possible of whatever information you obtain, both for your own future reference and possibly for passing on to others, such as the ARA's Child Protection Officer or appropriate agencies such as the social services department or the police.

In writing such a note, you should confine yourself to the facts, and distinguish between what is your own personal knowledge and what you have been told by other people.

You should not include your own opinions on the matter, to avoid the possibility of libel. Information should include the following:

- ? The nature of the allegation, in as much detail as possible, including times, dates, locations and other relevant information
- ? Details of the child involved, including name, age, address and other contact details, and identifying who has parental responsibility for the child
- ? Details of the person against whom the allegation is made, including name, relationship with the child, age and contact details (if known)
- ? The identity and contact details of any informants or other witnesses
- ? The child's account, if he or she can give one, of what has happened
- ? A description of any visible bruising or other injuries
- ? Details of who else has been informed of the alleged incident
- ? Any other relevant information

Please see the attached "***Incident report Form***"

The Welfare Officer within the club

This person will have the primary responsibility to check that everyone who has significant access to young people within the club is suitable for that role and has been vetted as described above.

The Welfare Officer should be identifiable to the junior members of the club and their parents, but should have a degree of independence from their activities – for example he or she should not be the junior co-ordinator or actively coaching juniors.

Training

All personnel who have significant access to young people should be made aware of the club's policies regarding child protection and if possible should have completed a "Child protection course" locally.

Formal training in child protection will help people to:

- ? compare their own practice against what is regarded as good practice in Rowing and check that their practice is likely to protect them from false allegations
- ? recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice or abuse

Guidelines on the selection and recruitment of personnel to work with children.

Anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and it is important that all reasonable steps are taken to prevent unsuitable people from working with children. This applies equally to volunteers as well as paid staff, and to both part time and full time workers.

The particular circumstances of individual cases need to be taken into account, but the fundamental principle is that those in charge of activities involving young people must take all reasonable steps to satisfy themselves as to the suitability of those who are given access to the children in their care.

Controlling access to children

Anyone involved with significant access to young people (for example junior coaches or junior coordinators) should first complete procedures designed to elicit information about their past career (including any gaps), and to disclose any criminal record or other matter that has a bearing on their suitability to work with children e.g. previous investigations with police or social services or disciplinary investigations in relation to work with children.

Where a coach transfers from one club to another, it would be appropriate to contact the previous club to see whether there is any reason that they should not be given access to young people.

All information received in relation to applicants must be kept secure and treated with strict confidentiality.

Vetting & CRB forms

All personnel who will have significant access to young people must first be vetted to establish whether they have any criminal convictions or other past behaviour that suggests they are unsuitable to work with children.

This is done by obtaining a Disclosure about the individual from the Criminal Records Bureau.

It is important to emphasise that the absence of any relevant disclosure emerging from this vetting process does not guarantee that the individual is safe to work with children, so it should not be relied on excessively. It is only one of a number of factors in the initial assessment of the person's suitability for such responsibilities.

Procedures for Obtaining CRB Disclosure

Who needs to be checked?

All club personnel (including non-member helpers) who will have significant access to young people and/or vulnerable adults must be checked.

The Club Welfare Officer (CWO) should keep a record of all these personnel and ensure that they have been vetted through the CRB.

Volunteers, that is people who spend time working at your club, unpaid for the benefit of others, do not have to pay for their disclosure. However, a charge is made to the ARA's account when a form is requested and is only cancelled on return of the completed form.

It is therefore important that any requested forms are returned. It should be pointed out to those requiring a CRB disclosure that a previous criminal record is not necessarily a bar to working in rowing.

Obtaining the CRB Form

Persons who are required to obtain a 'Disclosure' from the CRB will need to telephone the CRB Call Centre on 087090 90 844 to obtain an Enhanced form. Photocopies are not permitted.

It is essential that you request an Enhanced disclosure as the CRB will not accept changes to this part of the form. If you are a volunteer you must state that you are a volunteer as a charge will be made for those taking up paid posts. The Call Centre will ask you for some information that applies to you personally, so that they can confirm identity. They will also ask for the 'position applied for', this refers to the role in which you will come into contact with young people or vulnerable adults, e.g. volunteer junior coach, volunteer junior coordinator.

You will also be asked to provide the ARA's 11 digit Registered Body number which can be obtained from the ARA or your club welfare officer. The form will be sent to your home address.

Completing the CRB Form

Please read the guidance notes sent to you by the CRB with your form and note their request for the form to be completed in black ink. Any mistakes should be crossed through and the correct information written in the given boxes immediately to the right if space permits, or as close as possible to the intended area. Do not use liquid paper – the CRB will reject these forms. A guidance document produced by the ARA is available from the ARA website entitled 'CRB Disclosure Forms: The Most Common Mistakes'.

Sections A-D and Sections G-H on the form must be completed by the applicant. All sections must be completed legibly in black ink. It is important to record all details, e.g. previous names used, all addresses used during the past 5 years. A supplementary sheet can be used if necessary but must be clearly marked with the applicant's name, the application reference number and the ARA's registered body number.

Sections E and F are no longer required. Applicants are advised to leave these sections blank – please do not put a line through these parts of the form or state not applicable.

Section X to be completed by the Club Welfare Officer, who will check the documentary evidence to confirm identity. This must always be provided, even if the applicant is known to the person checking identity. The form should then be retained by the CWO who will send it (and where applicable any fee) to the CPO at the ARA.

Section Y will be completed by one of the nominated counter-signatories at the ARA office. If your club does not have a nominated Welfare Officer, the ARA office should be contacted for advice.

Completing Section B

Please note Section B must be completed as follows –

B13 - the applicant's job/role, e.g. voluntary coach, voluntary parent helper, paid junior co-ordinator, voluntary trailer driver, etc. It should be the role for which a Disclosure is required. For example a club chairman who coaches juniors must put 'Voluntary Junior Coach' and NOT 'Club Chairman'. If you are a volunteer you must state it here.

B14 - the 'organisation' means the name of the club, that is the ARA affiliated club/school/university where the person will be working with children. Please do not enter the ARA details unless you are directly employed by the Association to work with children.

B15-B19 - the club's full address including postcode, or the Association's address if that is the case. This is the address the ARA will contact on receipt of your CRB disclosure.

Documentation required

Photocopies are not permitted. Applicants need to provide at least 3 original documents as evidence of identity. These must all be in the applicant's name as given on the form including any middle names, and any addresses must be the same as the current address given on the form. At least one primary source must be provided, e.g. passport, driving licence or original birth certificate. At least one should contain a photograph of the applicant and at least one must contain their date of birth. Two others, from a secondary source, must be recent, and show the applicant's current address. These might be utility bills, bank/building society statements, credit card statements, work permit/VISA, marriage/birth certificates etc. The CWO should be able to help identify which documents may be used.

Checking Identity

The Club Welfare Officer should carefully check the documentation against the details shown in Sections A-D and G-H of the form. A 'Documentary Evidence Sheet' must be included listing ALL documents checked. Ensure a likeness check is carried out where photo documents are seen.

The Welfare Officer should cross no.15 of Section X to confirm that at least 2 valid address documents have been seen. If the Welfare Officer for your club is a family member you should ask a senior Club Officer, armed with guidance about how to do the check or with the help of the Welfare Officer, to complete this section and send a covering note explaining this to the ARA with the form.

Sending the Form to the ARA

The completed form should then be sent to the Child Protection Officer at the ARA, 6 Lower Mall, Hammersmith, London W69DJ.

Payment

CRB checks for volunteers are free of charge, however you must state this at the time of applying for your form. Checks for club employees carry a charge and this fee, payable to the ARA must accompany the form. The fee is paid by the ARA to the CRB on account.

Disclosure

The result of the check, 'the Disclosure', will be sent to the applicant and to the ARA. The ARA will deal with information received as required of a Registered Body with the CRB and as described in the document ARA Policy on the Recruitment of Ex- Offenders. Clubs will be advised of the names of persons for whom checks have been completed. In the event that a person is not suitable to work in the position applied for, the ARA Child Protection Officer will notify the Club Welfare Officer. It is not possible to share any of the information given by the CRB, Police or Social Services, which may be additional to that on the applicant's Disclosure certificate, and which may have influenced this decision.

Incident Report Form

Name of child -----Age/date of birth -----

Parent/Carer's name -----

Home address -----

Telephone(H) -----(M)-----

Are you reporting your own concerns or passing on those of someone else?

Give details of witnesses

Brief description of what has prompted the concerns: include date, time, location etc of any specific incidents

Any physical signs? Behavioural signs? Indirect signs?

Have you spoken to the child? If so, what was said?

Have you spoken to the parent(s)? If so, what was said?

Has anybody been alleged to be the abuser? If so give details, including relationship with the child. Have you consulted anyone else? Give details.

Your name and position -----

To whom reported and date of reporting? Give contact information for future reference.

Signature----- Date-----

Child Protection Audit Checklist

Name of Club-----

Welfare Officer-----

Full Name-----

Address-----

-----Postcode-----

Telephone (H)------(M)-----

Email address-----

(please tick where appropriate)

Is the identity of the Welfare officer, and the procedure for reporting any concerns:

- ? made known to junior members
- ? made known to parents?
- ? on display in the club?
- ? Is the Welfare Officer independent of any direct role involving activities with young people, such as junior coordinator or coach?
- ? Is parental consent for possible emergency medical attention obtained for all junior members?
- ? Has the club formally adopted the ARA Child Protection procedures in its constitution?
- ? Is the Sports Coach UK Code of Conduct on display?

Have all junior coaches and others with access to young people:

- ? satisfied the Welfare Officer of their suitability for the role?
- ? completed a self declaration form or CRB Disclosure?
- ? been made conversant with the ARA Child Protection procedures?
- ? Has it been made clear that access to young people is restricted to those who have satisfied these requirements?

