Mullingar Sailing Club

Safeguarding Policy

For Children and Vulnerable Adults

v.6 / 2026

Mullingar Sailing Club (MSC) Safeguarding Policy

For the purposes of this Safeguarding Policy anyone under the age of 18 should be considered as a child, this policy also applies to vulnerable adults.

It is the policy of the MSC to safeguard children and young people taking part in boating from neglect, physical, sexual or emotional harm. MSC will take all reasonable steps to ensure that, through appropriate procedures and training, children participating in MSC activities do so in a safe environment. We recognise that the safety and welfare of the child is paramount and that all children, whatever their age, gender, ability, culture, ethnic origin, colour, religion or belief, social status or sexual identity, have a right to protection from abuse.

MSC actively seeks to:

- Create a safe and welcoming environment, both on and off the water, where children can have fun and develop their skills and confidence.
- Support and encourage recognised training centres, affiliated clubs and class associations to implement similar policies.
- Recognise that safeguarding children is the responsibility of everyone, not just those who work with children.
- Ensure that ISA organised training and events are run to the highest possible safety standards.
- Be prepared to review its ways of working to incorporate best practice.
- We will:
- Treat all children with respect and celebrate their achievements.
- Carefully recruit and select all employees, contractors and volunteers.
- Respond swiftly and appropriately to all complaints and concerns about poor practice or suspected or actual child abuse.

This policy relates to all employees, contractors and volunteers who work with children or vulnerable adults in the course of their MSC duties. It will be kept under periodic review.

Mullingar Sailing Club:

Designated Liaison Person; Club Commodore: Mark Collins Contact 087 2050920

Deputy Designated Liaison Person: Junior Organiser : David Maxwell Contact 086 8201350

Children's Officer; Caroline Butler: Contact 086 860196

This document is based on the following:

- Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport, Irish Sports Council and Sports Council Northern Ireland 2000 (2006)
- Safeguarding Policy for Children and Vulnerable Adults 2021, Irish Sailing Association
- Children's First Guidance 2017
- Children's First Act 2015
- Criminal Justice (Withholding of information on offences against children and vulnerable persons) Act 2012

Contents

Underlying Principles4
Roles and Responsibilities5
Children's Officer5
Managers and or Committee members5
The Centre Principal6
Junior Organiser6
Leaders6
Officials6
Vulnerable Adults6
Guidelines for Sports Leaders7
Guidelines for Parents and Guardians9
Guidelines for Children10
Supervision and General Guidelines11
Transport11
General Supervision11
Overnight & Away trips12
Changing Rooms12
Physical Contact13
Use of Photographic and Mobile Equipment13
Working in Partnership to protect young people14
Mobile Phones14
Websites and Social Media14
Disciplinary, Complaints and Appeals Procedures15
Recruitment and Selection of Leaders16
Bullying Policy17
What is Bullying?17
Who should deal with bullying?17
How can it be prevented?17
What is the 'No Blame' Approach?18
Step 1 – Interview with the victim18
Step 2 – Meet with all involved18

Step 3 – Explain the problem18
Step 4 – Share the responsibility19
Step 5 – Ask the group for their ideas19
Step 6 – Leave it to them19
Step 7 – Meet them again19
Child Welfare and Protection Procedures20
Response to a Child Disclosing Abuse20
Code of Reporting Suspected or Disclosed Child Abuse21
Allegations Against Sports Leaders21
Reporting Procedure22
Confidentiality22
Anonymous Complaints23
Rumours23
Appendix 1 - When there is suspected child abuse internal/external to the organisation24
Appendix 2 - Concern about behaviour of leader/instructor/assistant25
Appendix 3 – Instructor Application Form26
Appendix 5 - Contact Details**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Underlying Principles

The work of Mullingar Sailing Club is based on the following principles that guide the development of sport for young people.

- Children and Young People's experience of sport should be guided by what is best for the young person.
- The stages of development and the ability of the young person should guide the types of activity provided.
- Adults need to have a basic understanding of the needs of young people, including physical, emotional and personal.

Safety

Young people participating in water sports have a right to expect that those organising and running the activity will do all they can to ensure the safety and well being of those participating.

Integrity in relationships:

Adults interacting with young people in sport should do so with integrity and respect for the child. There is a danger that sporting contexts can be used to exploit or undermine children. All adult actions in sport should be guided by what is best for the child and in the context of quality, open working relationships. Verbal, physical, emotional or sexual abuse of any kind is unacceptable within sport.

Quality atmosphere and ethos

Sport for young people should be conducted in a safe, positive and encouraging atmosphere. A child-centred ethos will help to ensure that competition and specialisation are kept in their appropriate place.

Equality

All children should be treated in an equitable and fair manner regardless of age, ability, sex, religion, social and ethnic background or political persuasion. Children with disability should be involved in sports activities in an integrated way, thus allowing them to participate to their potential alongside other children.

Fair Play:

Fair play should be the guiding principle when organising and participating in children's sport.

Fair Play is "much more than playing within the rules". It incorporates the concepts of friendship, respect for others and always playing with the right spirit. Fair play is defined as a way of thinking, not just behaving. It incorporates issues concerned with the elimination of opportunities, excessive commercialisation and corruption.

(European Sports Charter and Code of Ethics, Council of Europe, 1993).

Competition

A balanced approach to competition can make a significant contribution to the development of young people, while at the same time providing fun, enjoyment and satisfaction. Leaders and parents must be aware that when competitive demands are placed on children too early, it may result in excessive levels of pressure on them. This can contribute to an elevated level of drop out from sport. The welfare of the child must be placed first and competitive standards second. A child-centred approach will help to ensure that competition and specialisation are kept in their appropriate place.

Roles and Responsibilities

Children's Officer

The Children's Officer should be a member of or have access to, the Club Management Committee, have completed their Safeguarding 1 & 2 Course, cleared Garda Vetting and should be introduced to the young people in an appropriate forum. The Children's Officer should have the following role:

- To promote awareness of the code within the organisation, among young members and their parents/guardians.
- To influence policy and practice within the club to prioritise children's needs
- Establish contact with the Mullingar Sailing Club's National Children's Officer.
- To ensure that children know how to make concerns known to appropriate adults or agencies.
- To encourage the appropriate involvement of parents/guardians in the club activities
- To act as an advisory resource to Leaders on best practice in children's sport
- To report regularly to the organisations Management Committee where this exists.
- To monitor changes in membership and follow up any unusual dropout, absenteeism or club transfers by children or Leaders
- To ensure that the children have a voice in the running of their club and ensure there are steps young people can take to express concerns about their activities / experiences.
- Establish communication with other branches of the club, e.g. facilitate parent's information sessions at the start of the season
- Ensure that records are kept on file for members / participants & leaders.
- Where appropriate, ensure each member / participant helps design and signs up to the code of conduct
- Ensure that the club rules and regulations include: -
    - complaints, disciplinary and appeals procedures
    - an anti-bullying policy
    - safety statement
    - rules in relation to traveling with children
    - supervision and recruitment of leaders

It is recognised by Mullingar Sailing Club that some organisations management committees already have a member representing junior members. This could make it difficult to implement the recommendation that the organisations Children's Officer sit on the main management committee. Where this is the case the organisations Children's Officer, while not sitting on the committee, should have right of hearing at all management committee meetings dealing with matters likely to affect children within that organisation.

Managers and or Committee members

Managers and committee members would usually have responsibility for the setup of any activities including scheduling, bookings and recruitment of leaders.

The Centre Principal

Mullingar Sailing Club Training Centre must have a nominated "Centre Principal". This should be the person who has overall responsibility for the implementation of Mullingar Sailing Club accredited training and coaching activities within the organisation.

The Centre Principal is responsible to Mullingar Sailing Club for the conduct of Mullingar Sailing Club accredited activities within that organisation including the issuing of certificates on behalf of Mullingar Sailing Club.

The Centre Principal is the primary contact for Mullingar Sailing Club and will be the person with whom Mullingar Sailing Club communicates. The Centre Principal may however inform Mullingar Sailing Club of other people assuming those roles within the organisation defined below.

Junior Organiser

Mullingar Sailing Club affiliated sailing clubs running Mullingar Sailing Club courses for young sailors would usually have a Junior Organiser to administer this programme. Where the club run no other Mullingar Sailing Club Training courses the JO would also usually assume the role of Centre Principal.

Mullingar Sailing Club recommends that the Junior Organiser is not the Children's Officer.

Leaders

Leaders are those people like instructors & coaches and team managers who are responsible for organising and running activities and whom would be expected to have direct responsibility for the safety and conduct of children while they are under their care

Officials

These are people with responsibility for overseeing the conduct of activities run by Mullingar Sailing Club affiliated organisations and would include club committee members, race officers, judges etc.

Children

For the purposes of this Safeguarding Policy anyone under the age of 18 years old should be considered as a child

Vulnerable Adults

Definition of a vulnerable person for the purposes of this Safeguarding Statement uses The Garda Vetting Bureau Act 2012, which defines a vulnerable person as a person, other than a child, who (a) is suffering from a disorder of the mind, whether as a result of mental illness or dementia, (b) has an intellectual disability, (c) is suffering from a physical impairment, whether as a result of injury, illness or age, or (d) has a physical disability, which is of such a nature or degree— (i) as to restrict the capacity of the person to guard himself or herself against harm by another person, or (ii) that results in the person requiring assistance with the activities of daily living including dressing, eating, walking, washing and bathing.

Guidelines for Sports Leaders

Leaders in children's sport should always strive to interact positively with children, enhancing the child's involvement and enjoyment of the sporting activity and promoting the welfare of the participant. The Code assists in the achievement of these aims and can also help to protect Sports Leaders in their various roles by providing a framework for the promotion of good practice.

Sports Leaders 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. The Sports Leaders' success should not be evaluated by performance or results of competition. They should enjoy a sense of achievement and pleasure through their work with young people. After undertaking appropriate education and training within the club, Sports Leaders will be well prepared to operate in a safe sporting environment with a knowledge and understanding of their role and responsibilities. They should be supported in their work by the club and parents/guardians.

Sports Leaders are responsible for setting and monitoring the boundaries between a working relationship and friendship with young participants. Sports Leaders should operate to the club's agreed code of conduct, which emphasises enjoyment, equality, fair play and the general well- being of young people. This model of good practice should help children to demonstrate an awareness of equality, fair play and respect for Sports Leaders, other members of their group and the rules of the sport. The club and parents/guardians should afford Sports Leaders the respect they deserve and make them aware of any special needs of the child.

Club procedures should support the Sports Leaders' model of good practice, thus ensuring protection for both the Leader and the participant. In so doing, Sports Leaders should feel able to make a complaint in an appropriate manner and have it dealt with through an effective complaints procedure. They should be able to appeal any decision through an effective appeals procedure.

In order to act as a role model and to promote their safety and the safety of young people Sports Leaders should:

• Be positive, praise and encourage effort as well as results
• Put the welfare of young people first, strike a balance between this and winning
• Encourage fair play and treat participants equally
• Have the relevant knowledge and experience to work with young people
• Understand developmental needs of young people

Where possible, and for their own safety, Sports Leaders should avoid:

• spending excessive amounts of time with children away from others
• taking sessions alone
• taking children on journeys alone in their car
• the use of alcohol before coaching, during events and on trips with young people

Sports Leaders should not:

• use any form of corporal punishment or physical force on a child
• take children to the their home
• exert undue influence over a participant in order to obtain personal benefit or reward

• 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 child

- take measurements or engage in certain types of fitness testing without the presence of another adult
- undertake any form of therapy (hypnosis etc.) in the training of children

Guidelines for Parents and Guardians

Parents/guardians should encourage their children to participate in sport for fun and enjoyment and should ensure that their child's experience of sport is a positive one. Lessons learned in children's sport will shape values and attitudes in adult life. They should always remember that children play sport for their own enjoyment not that of the parents/guardians. Parents/guardians have a duty to ensure that the context in which their child is participating is appropriate.

Parents/guardians and Sports Leaders will ideally work in partnership to promote good practice in children's sport and to support all efforts to protect against neglect, emotional, physical or sexual abuse in sporting activities

Parents/guardians should remember that children learn best by example. To assist in the promotion of good practice with the club or organisation they should:

• be aware of the relevant Sports Leaders and their role within the club
• show appreciation of and respect for Sports Leaders and their decisions
• encourage their child to play by the rules
• behave responsibly on the side-line
• focus on their child's efforts rather than performance
• focus on the fun and participation of the child in the activity

Parents/guardians should not:

• ignore or dismiss complaints or concerns expressed by a child which relate to his/her involvement in sport
• ridicule or yell at a child for making a mistake or losing a race
• put undue pressure on their child to please or perform well, including forcing a child to participate when ill
• take safety for granted
• treat the club as a child-minding service

Guidelines for Children

Children must be encouraged to realise that they also have responsibilities to treat other children and Sports Leaders with fairness and respect.
Children in sport are entitled to:
• be listened to, be safe and feel safe and be believed
• be believed
• participate in sporting activities on an equal basis, appropriate to their ability and stage of development
• be treated with dignity, sensitivity and respect
• be happy, have fun and enjoy sport
• experience competition at a level at which they feel comfortable and the desire to win as a positive and healthy outcome for striving for best performance
• comment and make suggestions in a constructive manner
• make a complaint in an appropriate way and have it dealt with through an effective complaints procedure
• be afforded appropriate confidentiality
• have a voice in the club
• approach the Children's Officer/Designated Person with any questions or concerns they may have

Children should undertake to:
• play fairly, do their best and have fun
• shake hands before and after the event, whoever wins - and mean it
• respect officials and accept their decisions with grace, not a grudge
• respect fellow team members; give them full support both when they do well and when things go wrong
• respect opponents, they are not enemies, they are partners in a sporting event
• give opponents a hand if they are injured or have problems with equipment
• accept apologies from opponents when they are offered
• exercise self-control and tolerance for others, even if others do not
• be modest in victory and be gracious in defeat
• show appropriate loyalty to their sport and all its participants
• make high standards of fair play the example others want to follow

Children should not:
• use violence, using physical contact only when it is allowed within the rules
• cheat, shout at, or argue with, the referee, officials, team mates or opponents
• take banned substances to improve performance
• bully or use bullying tactics to isolate another player
• use unfair or bullying tactics to gain advantage
• harm team mates, opponents or their property
• tell lies about adults or other children
• spread rumours
• keep secrets about any person who may have caused them harm

Supervision and General Guidelines

Transport

There is an extra responsibility on adults and leaders when they transport young people to events. Adults should:

- Ensure there is adequate insurance on their car and that they follow the rules of the road, including the legal use of seat belts
- Ensure they do not carry more than the permitted number of passengers
- Avoid being alone with one passenger, put passengers in the back seat, have central drop off locations or seek parental permission when transporting on a regular basis. Parents should check with young people about the plans, listen to what the young people are saying, be sure they are happy with the transport arrangements.
- Clearly state pick up and drop off times

When using boats:

- Ensure the coxswains are qualified and competent
- Ensure everyone wears an appropriate, properly fitted personal flotation device
- Ensure all passengers are secure
- Ensure that the boat is fit for purpose and properly equipped

General Supervision

Probably the most critical element to ensuring children's wellbeing both on and off the water is the provision of appropriate adult supervision. The number of adults required and the skill or competencies they should have, will depend on the nature of the activity, the age of the participants and any special needs of the group.

- Specific ratios for on the water training and coaching activities are set out in ISA Training Centre Operating Requirements. These are a good guideline for any on the water activities.
- The guideline ratio for safety boat cover at competition events is 1 safety boats : 10 sailing boats
- Otherwise, a ratio of 1:8 for under 12 years of age and 1:10 for participants over 12 years of age would normally be considered adequate.
- Of course all of these are guides or maximums and will change depending on the circumstances, e.g. environment, conditions, participants with special needs or away trips.

Apart from the numbers, organisers should also consider the following when deciding on appropriate supervision;

- Leaders should be competent. For on the water activities this would typically mean they hold an ISA instructor or coaching qualification. Safety boat drivers should hold the appropriate powerboat certificate.
- Leaders should try to have more than one adult present.
- Where there are mixed groups there should be leaders of both genders
- Clearly state time for start and end of training sessions or competitions, leaders should not be left alone with young people at the end of sessions. If there are late collections leaders should remain in pairs until participants have left.
- Keep attendance records and record of any incident s / injuries that arise

- Ask parents to stay and supervise sessions, (for safety and supervision, not necessarily for their 'technical' expertise)

Overnight & Away trips

Children attending away trips and overnights will do so under the supervision of their parents/guardians.

In the event that the club organises an away trip or overnight the following guidelines should be followed:

- Separate permission forms should be signed by parents and participants, containing emergency contact number
- Young participants should sign a behaviour agreement
- Appoint a group leader who will make a report on returning home
- A meeting with parents and participants is useful to communicate travel times, competition details, other activities, gear requirements, medical requirements, special dietary needs and any other necessary details
- Rooming arrangements – adults should not share rooms with children, children share rooms with those of same age and gender and adults should knock before entering rooms
- All group socialisation should take place in communal areas (i.e. no boys in girls' rooms and vice versa).
- Alcoholic drink, smoking or other illegal substances are forbidden to players.

Leaders should act as role **models** in this respect

- There must be at least one adult of each gender with a mixed party, there should be a good adult – child ratio, 1:5/6, and proper access to medical personnel
- Lights out times should be enforced Young players should be under reasonable supervision at all times and should never leave the venue or go unsupervised without permission

Changing Rooms

As Mullingar Sailing Club is seen as a recreational facility, members, visitors and juniors are entitled to the use of the changing rooms, this means that often people of all ages regularly need to change and shower during the same period. Where possible, adults should avoid changing or showering at the same time as juniors, but parents should be aware that with limited changing room space there may be occasions where adults and children may need to share the facility. Where a parent does not consent to their child accessing the changing rooms, it is their responsibility to either supervise the child while in the changing room or ensure they do not use them.

Therefore, the following guidance in relation to adults and juniors using the changing rooms should be followed:

- Adults should exercise care when in the changing rooms at the same time as juniors.
- Parents/guardians should be aware that adults and juniors may need to share the changing facility. The parent/guardian should discuss this with their child ensuring their child is aware of who to talk to if any issues arise in unsupervised areas.

- Parents can choose to supervise their child while they change.
- If juniors are uncomfortable changing or showering in public, no pressure should be placed on them.

Physical Contact

Physical contact during sport should always be intended to meet the child's needs, NOT the adult's. The adult will probably use appropriate contact when the aim is to assist in development of the skill or activity or for safety reasons, e.g. to prevent or treat an injury. This should be in an open environment with the permission and understanding of the participant. In general

- Contact should be determined by the age and developmental stage of the participant - Don't do something that a child can do for themselves
- Never engage in inappropriate touching such as touching of groin, genital areas, buttocks, breasts or any other part of the body that might cause a child distress or embarrassment

Use of Photographic and Mobile Equipment

Organisations should adopt a policy compliant with GDPR in relation to the use of images of participants on their websites and other publications, as there have been concerns about the risks posed directly and indirectly to children and young people. Adults and sports leaders need to work together to prevent those wishing to cause such harm to young people. Remember having photographic and filming guidelines is not about preventing parents from taking pictures, it is to ensure that only those who have a right to take photographs do so. Anyone concerned about photography taking place at events or training sessions can contact the children's officer/ designated person and ask them to deal with the matter.

The purpose is to reduce the risk of inappropriate, unsolicited attention from people within and outside the sport. Group photographs where the organisation is identified rather than individuals are good for publicity without creating a risk to those in the photographs. As a guide try to remember the following: -

- If the participant is named, avoid using their photograph.
- If a photograph is used, avoid naming the participant.
- Ask for the participant's permission to use their image to ensure that they are aware of the way the image is to be used to represent the sport.
- Ask for parental permission to use the participant's image to ensure that parents are aware of the way the image is to be used to represent the sport. A permission form opting in must be used or make an announcement at the start of an event.
- To reduce the risk of inappropriate use, only use images of participant's in suitable dress. The content of the photograph should focus on the activity not on a particular child.
- Talk to children's officer/designated person if you are worried about use of images

Photographers/film/video operators wishing to record an event or practice session should seek accreditation with the organisations children's officer, event organiser or leader of session. Permission forms should be available on site.

To ensure spectators and participants are informed of the policy, the club/event/organisation should display appropriate information prior to the start of an event or activity. Typically, this might be included in the activity booking form or Notice of Race.

Working in Partnership to protect young people

Photographs, when used with personal information, can be used as a means of identifying children. This practice can make a child vulnerable to an individual who may wish to "groom" that child for abuse. Furthermore, the content of the photo can be used or adapted for inappropriate use. There is evidence of this adapted material finding its way onto child pornography sites. Adults and sports leaders need to work together to prevent those wishing to cause such harm to young people.

Mobile Phones

Mobile phones are often given to children for security, enabling parents to keep in touch and make sure they are safe. Young people value their phones highly as it offers them a sense of independence. In addition, mobile phones allow quick and easy contact, which can make a safe and efficient way to carry out club business. 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 to young people. Within clubs there is a need to encourage responsible and secure use of mobile phones by adults and young people.

As a young person remember

- If you receive an offensive photo, email or message, do not reply, save it, make a note of times and dates and tell a parent or children's officer/designated person within the club.
- Be careful about who you give your phone number to and don't respond to unfamiliar numbers
- Change your phone number in cases of bullying or harassment
- 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
- Treat your phone as you would any other valuable item so that you guard against theft

As a Leader remember

- Use group texts for communication among participants and teams and inform parents of this at the start of the season
- It is not appropriate to have constant communication with individual participants.
- Be aware that inappropriate use of your camera phone may cause upset or offence to another person.
- Avoid using a mobile phone in certain locations e.g. changing rooms
- Avoid taking, retaining or disseminating pictures / videos of individual children without appropriate permissions & precautions. (Parents & child)

Websites and Social Media

When promoting the organisation and encouraging members to interact through a website or social network such as Facebook or Snapchat, there are a few issues to bear in mind in relation to children and young people:

- follow Mullingar Sailing Club guidance on the use of images of children (see Photography section above)
- ensure that the content and language on your site or page, including contributions to blogs, forums etc, is not inappropriate for younger visitors and does not link directly to unsuitable material on other sites
- provide a clear process for parents and others to report inappropriate content or online bullying and to request that content is removed
- have a robust procedure for handling and assessing such a report or request and acting promptly to remove the offending content.

Disciplinary, Complaints and Appeals Procedures

Mullingar Sailing Club has a complaints procedure in place that allows all members or participants who are dissatisfied to register their complaint in a formal way.

On receiving a complaint, the Club should appoint a disciplinary committee to resolve problems relating to the conduct of its members. This should include bullying. The complaint should be in writing to the secretary or Children's Officer and should be responded to within 5 working days. The committee should consist of a representative from the Management Committee, the Children's Officer and ordinary registered members of the club.

If the complaint involves suspected abuse or a criminal offence the children's officer/designated person should be consulted, and the disciplinary committee disbanded. The statutory authorities must then be informed and a report of the offence sent to Irish Sailing's Mandated Person / National Children's Officer.

The disciplinary committee should review any relevant paper work and hold any necessary meetings with all parties to proceed with complaints into any incident of suspected misconduct that does not relate to child abuse. It should, as soon as possible, inform the Management Committee of the progress of the disciplinary process. This should be done within 10 working days

The disciplinary committee should furnish the individual with the nature of the complaint being made against him/her and afford him/her the opportunity of providing a response either verbally or in writing, but usually at a meeting with the disciplinary committee

Written confidential records of all complaints should be safely and confidentially kept in accordance with GDPR Guidelines and club compliance procedures should be defined for the possession of such records in the event that the data must be stored indefinitely. Some data will be exempt from GDPR compliance with regards to the period of time data is stored and may be exempt from Subject Access Request (SAR) as outlined in the Restrictions on Data Requests on the Data Commissioner's website www.dataprotection.ie . For further information on this please contact the National Children's Officer or info@dataprotection.ie

Where it is established that an incident of misconduct has taken place, the disciplinary committee should notify the member of any sanction being imposed. The notification should be made in writing, setting out the reasons for the sanction. If the member is under 18 years of age, correspondence should be addressed to the parents/guardians

If the person against whom the complaint was made is unhappy with the decision of the disciplinary committee s/he should have the right to appeal the decision to an appeals committee (independent of a disciplinary committee). Any appeal should be made in writing within an agreed period after issue, usually 10 days of the decision of the disciplinary committee. The chairperson of the appeals committee should be a member of the Management Committee.

If any party is not satisfied with the outcome the matter can be referred to Irish Sailing for mediation or arbitration. However, efforts to resolve the issue at local level should be exhausted before Irish Sailing is engaged in attempts to resolve the matter

Recruitment and Selection of Leaders

Organisations recruiting leaders to work with young people should take all reasonable steps to ensure that leaders are appropriately qualified and suitable to work with young people. These procedures apply to all persons with substantial access to young people, whether paid or unpaid.

The responsibilities of the role and the level of experience/qualifications required should be drawn up and clearly stated beforehand.

Applicants should complete an application form which should include a self-declaration section / form.

Copies of all relevant qualifications should be requested and if necessary validated with Mullingar Sailing Club.

References should be verified and reports recorded by the club/organisation.

A probationary period is advisable and should be established through an informal interview, which can be used to assess the leader's commitment and interest to the club

Every effort should be made to manage and support appointed Leaders, including awareness of the code of conduct. Adequate supervision should be provided; a leader should not have to work alone.

A decision to appoint a Leader is the responsibility of the club / organisation and not of any one individual within it. The club / organisations management / committee should ratify all recommendations for appointment.

Information in relation to applicant's information should be treated as sensitive and confidential. It should be kept in a secure place that is only accessible to nominated officers.

Bullying Policy

What is Bullying?

Bullying can be defined as repeated aggression be it verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against others.
It is behaviour that is intentionally aggravating and intimidating and occurs mainly in social environments such as schools, clubs and other organisations working with children and young people. It includes behaviours such as teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting and extortion behaviour by one or more children against a victim.

How would you know if a child is being bullied?
All bullies operate using furtiveness, threats and fear . Bullying can therefore only survive in an environment where the victim does not feel empowered to tell someone who can help or in which it is not safe to do so.
The following indicators are warning signs that a young person might be getting bullied.
Reluctance to come to a venue or take part in activities
Physical signs (unexplained bruises, scratches, or damage to belongings)

- Stress-caused illness – headaches, and stomach aches which seem unexplained
- Fearful behaviour (fear of walking to a meeting, going different routes , asking to be driven)
- Frequent loss of, or shortage of, money with vague explanations
- Having few friends
- Changes in behaviour (withdrawn, stammering, moody, irritable, upset, distressed)
- Not eating
- Attempting suicide or hinting at suicide
- Anxiety (shown by nail-biting, fearfulness, tics)

There are other possible reasons for many of the above

Who should deal with bullying?

While the more extreme forms of bullying would be regarded as physical or emotional abuse and are reported to the health board or An Garda Síochana, dealing with bullying
behaviour is normally the responsibility of all Leaders within this club / organisation.

How can it be prevented?

- Ensure that all members follow the code of conduct, which promotes the rights and dignity of each member.
- Deal with any incidents as they arise.
- Use a whole group policy or ‘no-blame approach’, ie., not ‘bullying the bully’ but working with bullies and the group of young people, helping them to understand the hurt they are causing, and

- Causing and so make the problem a ‘shared concern’ of the group, (see below)
- Reinforce that there is ‘a permission to tell’ culture rather than a ‘might is right’

- Encourage young people to negotiate , co-operate and help others, particularly new or different children
- Offer the victim immediate support and put the ‘no blame approach’ into operation
- Never tell a young person to ignore bullying, they can’t ignore it, it hurts too much
- Never encourage a young person to take the law into their own hands and beat the bully at their own game
- Tell the victim there is nothing wrong with them and it is not their fault

What is the ‘No Blame’ Approach?

Step 1 – Interview with the victim

If you find that there has been an incident of bullying, first talk to the victim. At this stage find out who was involved and what the victim is now feeling. Try asking the following questions:

- Was it verbal or physical intimidation?
- How hurt is the victim
- Was it within his/her own peer group?
- Ensure the victim that his/her name will not come out in the investigation
- Actively listen

Step 2 – Meet with all involved

Arrange to meet with all those involved; this should include some bystanders, those who may have colluded, those who joined in and those who initiated the bullying.

- Have a maximum of six to eight in the group – keep the number controllable
- Make a point of calling a ‘special’ meeting
- Ensure the severity of the topic is understood by all
- Speak only of the hurt caused in general terms with no reference to the victim
- Play on the conscience of all – ask questions like : How would you feel? Would you like it done to you?

Step 3 – Explain the problem

The distress being suffered as a result of the bullying incident is explained. At th is stage the details of the incident or the allocation of the blame is not discussed. Explain the feelings of loneliness, feeling left out, rejected, laughed at. Try asking questions:

- Would they like it if it happened to them
- “Someone here in this group was bullied by someone within the group, what could we do to see it does not happen again?”
- Listen, watch out for reactions, and pick up on any without isolating anyone

Step 4 – Share the responsibility

- Explain what steps / controls may have to be introduced to prevent further incidents and how everyone will lose out as a result

Step 5 – Ask the group for their ideas

At this stage the group is encouraged to suggest ways that would make the victim feel happier. All positive responses are noted. Use phrases “if it were you” to encourage a response. Listen to all suggestions and note them

Step 6 – Leave it to them

Now the problem has been identified, solutions suggested, the problem is now handed over to the group to solve. Arrange to meet again in a week’s time. Pass responsibility over to the group and give a time frame within which something must be done

Step 7 – Meet them again

Each member of the group, including the bully, discuss how things are going, who is doing what and have there been other incidents. This allows for continual monitoring and also keeps all involved in the process.

Again enforce the idea of the ‘team’ looking after each other at regular intervals to ensure it is know that bullying or intimidating behaviour will not be

Child Welfare and Protection Procedures

If there are grounds for concern, about the safety or welfare of a young person you should react to the concern. Persons unsure about whether or not certain behaviours are abusive and therefore reportable, should contact the duty social worker in the local health service executive or social services department where they will receive advice. Grounds for concern include a specific indication from a child, a statement from a person who witnessed abuse or an illness, injury or behaviour consistent with abuse.

Any report made by any member, participant or employee of the Club should be passed on to the Designated Person. They may in turn have to pass the concern to the local Statutory Authorities. It is not the responsibility of anyone working within the Club, in a paid or voluntary capacity, or those working in affiliated organisations, to take responsibility or decide whether or not child abuse is taking place. That is the job of the local statutory authorities. However, there is a responsibility to protect children by assisting the appropriate agencies so that they can then make enquiries and take any necessary action to protect the young person.
Everyone should follow both procedures outlined below, firstly the procedure for responding to a child in distress and secondly the procedure for reporting the concern.

Response to a Child Disclosing Abuse

When a young person discloses information of suspected abuse you should:
(a) deal with any allegation of abuse in a sensitive and competent way through listening to and facilitating and facilitating the child to tell about he and facilitating the child to tell about the problem, rather than interviewing the child about details of what happened
(b) stay calm and not show any extreme reaction to what the child is saying. Listen compassionately, and take what the child is saying seriously
(c) understand that the child has decided to tell something very important and has taken a risk to do so. The experience of telling should be a positive one so that the child will not mind talking to those in the investigation
(d) be honest with the child and tell them that it is not possible to keep information a secret
(e) make no judgmental statements against the person whom the allegation is made
(f) not question the child unless the nature of what s/he is saying is unclear. Leading questions should be avoided. Open, non-specific questions should be used such as “Can you explain to me what you mean by that”
(g) check out the concerns with the parents/guardians before making a report unless during so would endanger the child or compromise an investigation
(h) give the child some indication of what would happen next, such as informing parents/guardians, health service executive or social services. It should be kept in mind that the child may have been threatened and may feel vulnerable at this stage.
(i) Carefully record the details
(j) Pass on this information to the organisations Designated Person

(k) Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you
See appendix

Code of Reporting Suspected or Disclosed Child Abuse

The following steps should be taken in reporting child abuse to the statutory authorities:
(a) Observe and note dates, times, locations and contexts in which the incident occurred or suspicion was aroused, together with any other relevant information
(b) Report the matter as soon as possible to the designated person with responsibility for reporting abuse. If the Designated Person has reasonable grounds for believing that the child has been abused or is at risk of abuse, they will make a report to the health service executive/social who have statutory responsibility to investigate and assess suspected or actual child abuse
(c) In cases of emergency, where a child appears to be at immediate and serious risk and the Designated Person is unable to contact a duty social worker, the police authorities should be contacted. Under no circumstances should a child be left in a dangerous situation pending intervention by the Statutory Authorities
(d) If the Designated Person is unsure whether reasonable grounds for concern exist they can formally consult with the local health board/social services, They will be advised whether or not the matter requires a formal report.

A Designated Person reporting suspected or actual child abuse to the Statutory Authorities will first inform the family of their intention to make such a report, unless doing so would endanger the child or undermine an investigation

The Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998 provides immunity from civil liability to persons who report child abuse 'reasonably and in good faith' to the Health Service Executive or the Gardai (The act also covers the offence of 'false reporting'. The main provisions of the Act are:
1) The provision of immunity from civil liability to any person who reports child abuse "reasonably and in good faith" to designated
officers of Health Service Executive or any member of An Garda Siochána;
2) The provision of significant protections for employees who report child abuse. These protections cover all employees and all forms of discrimination up to and including, dismissal;
3) The creation of a new offence of false reporting of child abuse where a person makes a report of child abuse to the appropriate authorities "knowing that statement to be false". This is a new criminal offence designed to protect innocent persons from malicious reports.

Allegations Against Sports Leaders

The Club has agreed procedures to be followed in cases of alleged child abuse against Leaders (Instructors, coaches, team managers, activity organisers or managers. If such an allegation is made against Leader working within the organisation, two procedures should be followed:
1) The reporting procedure in respect of suspected child abuse (reported by
the designated person / children's officer), see Appendix 1.

2) The procedure for dealing with the Leader (carried by out by the club Chair or senior officer, or a person not already involved with the child protection concern). See Appendix 2.

The safety of the child making the allegation should be considered and the safety of any other children who may be at risk. The club should take any necessary steps that may be necessary to protect children in its care.

The issue of confidentiality is important. Information is on a need to know basis and the Sports Leader should be treated with respect and fairness.

Reporting Procedure

If the designated person has reasonable grounds for concern, the matter should be reported to the local health board / social services, following the standard reporting procedure.

The Leader

While the designated officer makes the report to the local health board, the Senior person within the club, (commodore) should deal with the Leader in question.
The leader should be privately informed that
(a) an allegation has been made against him / her and
(b) the nature of the allegation.

They should be afforded an opportunity to respond. His / her response should be noted and passed on to the health board / social services.

The leader should be asked to step aside pending the outcome of the investigation. When a person is asked to step aside it should be made clear that it is only a precautionary measure and will not prejudice any later disciplinary proceedings.

The ISA should be informed by the Designated Person that the leader has been asked to stand aside
(The ISA may consider disciplinary action on the leader but will ensure that this does not interfere with the investigation of the Statutory Authorities. In doing so the ISA will consider the outcome of the investigation and any implications it might have. The fact that the alleged abuser has not been prosecuted or been found guilty does not mean that they are appropriate to work with young people in the future.)

Confidentiality

Confidentiality should be maintained in respect of all issues and people involved in cases of abuse, welfare or bad practice. It is important that the rights of both the child and the person about whom the complaint has been made are protected.
The following points should be kept in mind:

- A guarantee of confidentiality or undertakings regarding secrecy cannot be given, as the welfare of the child will supersede a child will supersede all other considerations.

- All information should be treated in a careful and sensitive manner and should be discussed only with those who need to know
- Information should be conveyed to the parents / guardians of the child in a sensitive way
- Giving information to others on a 'need to know' basis for the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality
- All persons involved in a child protection process (the child, his/her parents/guardians, the alleged offender, his/her family, Sports Leaders) should be afforded appropriate respect, fairness, support and confidentiality at all stages of the procedure.
- Information should be stored in a secure place, with limited access only to designated people.
- The requirements of the Data Protection laws should be adhered to.
- Breach of confidentiality is a serious manner.

Anonymous Complaints

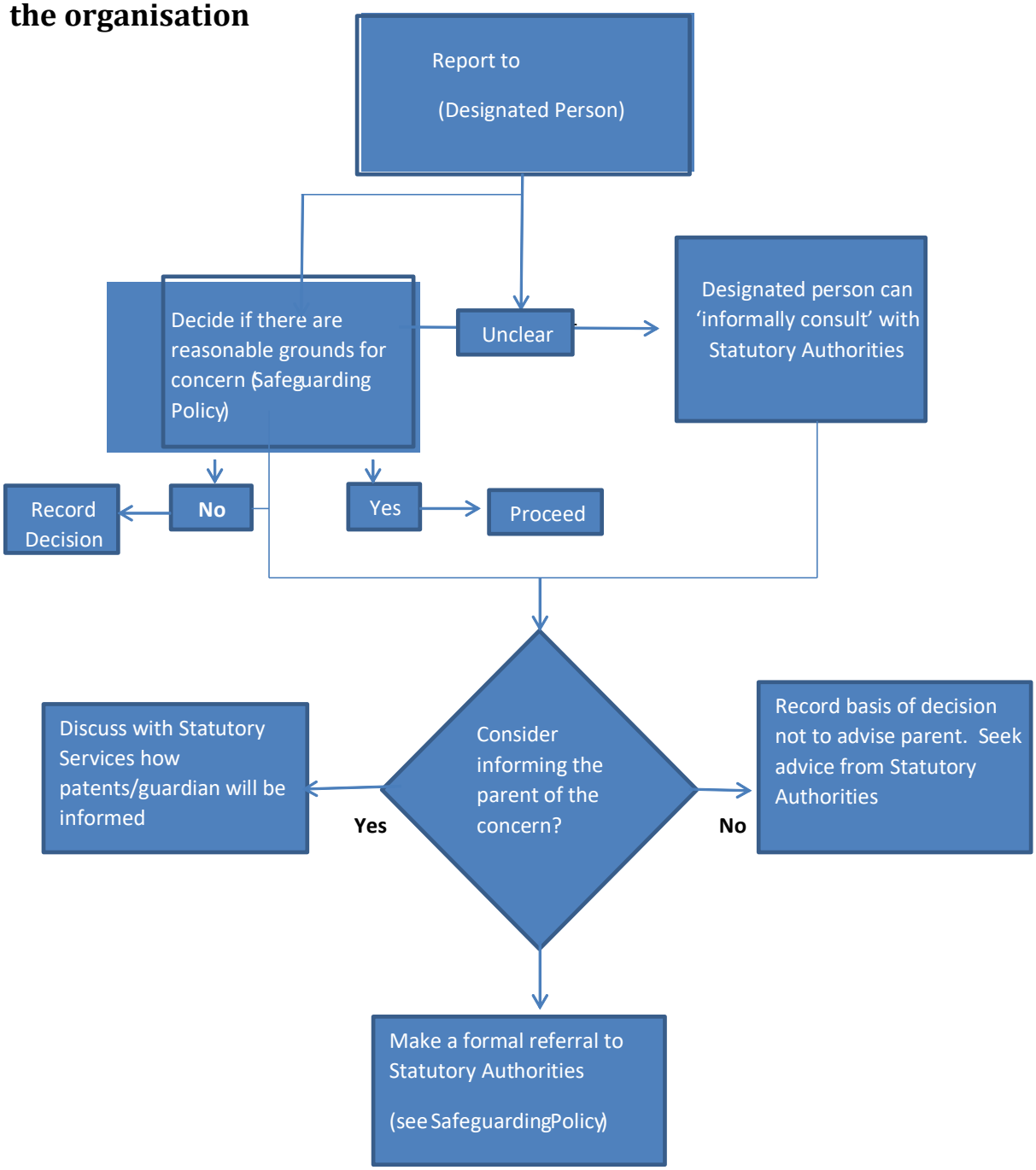
Anonymous complaints can be difficult to deal with but should not be ignored. In all cases the safety and welfare of the child/children is paramount. Any such complaints relating to inappropriate behaviour should be brought to the attention of the Designated Person/ Chief Executive Officer. The information should be
Information should be checked out and handled in a confidential manner.

Rumours

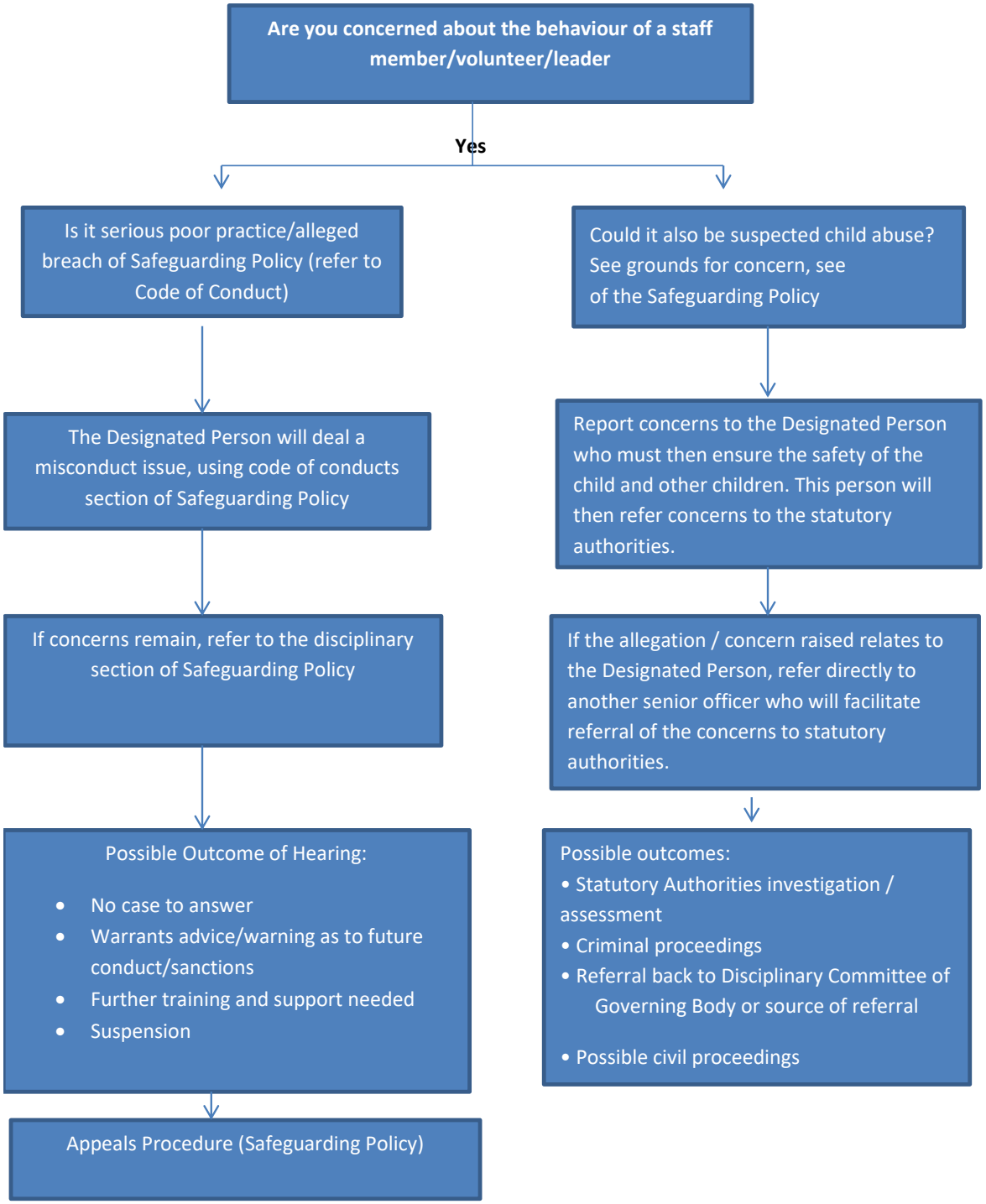
Rumours should not be allowed to hang in the air. Any rumours relating to inappropriate behaviour should be brought to the at
Should be brought to the attention of the Designated, and checked out without delay.

When there is suspected abuse external to the organiation:

Appendix 1 - When there is suspected child abuse internal/external to the organisation



Appendix 2 - Concern about behaviour of leader/instructor/assistant



Adopted from Code of Ethics & Good Practice for Children's Sport, Irish Sports Council, Ireland

Appendix 3 – Instructor Application Form

INSTRUCTOR JOB APPLICATION FORM

Please tick the position you are applying for below.

Senior Instructor		**Advanced Boat Handling**	
Dinghy Instructor		**Assistant Instructor**	

Personal Details

Name		
Address		
Date of birth/Age		
Phone numbers		
Email		
Club Membership		**Yes/No**

Sailing Experience

Instructing Experience and Dates	
Racing Experience and Events	
Sailing Experience	

Please confirm that you have the following valid certificates and enclose a copy with your application.

Safeguarding 1 Certificate	
Garda Vetting Certificate	
Dinghy Instructors Certificate	
Emergency Care Certicate	

Do you agree to abide by the Mullingar Sailing Club's 'Code of Ethics and Good Practise for Children's activities'? (please see website)

Yes	No

Do you agree to abide by the rules of Mullingar Sailing Club and the ISA?

Yes	No

Have you ever been asked to leave a sporting organisation in the past?

(if your answer is yes, we will contact you in confidence)

Yes	No

Referees:

Please supply the names of two responsible people whom we can contact. One can be from a sailing or sports club that you have previously been involvement with.

Referee 1: Name and Phone Number	
Referee 2: Name and Phone Number	

Appendix 4 - Risk Assessment

This Risk Assessment indicates the areas of potential risk of harm, and gives the required policy, guidance or process documents require to manage and mitigate these risks. All of these policies are hosted on Irish Sailing's website: www.sailing.ie/library

Risk Identified	Procedure in place to manage risk identified
Club and Coaching Practices ○ Lack of coaching qualification. ○ Supervision issues. ○ Unauthorised photography & recording activities. ○ Behavioural Issues. ○ No guidance for travelling & away trips ○ Lack of adherence with misc. procedures in Safeguarding policy	○ Recruitment policy. (SG Policy) ○ Supervision policy/Training policy ○ Photography & Use of Images policy ○ Code of Conduct / Safeguarding Training/ Complaints & Disciplinary policy. ○ Travel/Away trip policy / Safeguarding Training. ○ Safeguarding Policy / Complaints & disciplinary policy
Complaints & Discipline ○ Lack of awareness of a Complaints & Disciplinary policy. ○ Difficulty in raising an issue by child & or parent ○ Complaints not being dealt with seriously	○ Complaints & Disciplinary procedure/policy / Communications procedure. Induction session ○ Complaints & Disciplinary procedure policy / Reporting Guidelines ○ Complaints & Disciplinary procedure policy.
Reporting Procedures ○ Lack of knowledge of organisational & statutory reporting procedures ○ No DLP appointed. ○ Concerns of abuse or harm not reported. ○ Not clear who YP should talk to or report to.	○ Reporting procedures policy / Coach Education policy / Code of Conduct. ○ Reporting procedures policy. ○ Reporting procedures policy / Safeguarding Training ○ Poster with key roles, posted on website
Use of Facilities ○ Unauthorised access to designated children's play & practice areas & to changing rooms, showers, toilets etc….. ○ Unauthorised exit from children's areas. ○ Photography, filming or recording in prohibited areas. ○ Children sharing facilities with adults e.g. dressing room, showers etc…	○ Supervision policy / Training Policy ○ Supervision policy / Training Policy ○ Photography & use of images policy ○ Safeguarding policy.
Recruitment ○ Recruitment of inappropriate people. ○ Lack of clarity on roles. ○ Unqualified or untrained people in role.	○ Recruitment policy. Interview and checking of references. ○ Recruitment policy. ○ Recruitment policy.

Communications ○ Lack of awareness of 'risk of harm' with members and visitors. ○ No communication of Child Safeguarding Statement of Code of Behaviour to members of visitors. ○ Unauthorised photography & recording of activities. ○ Inappropriate use of social media & communications by under 18's	○ Child Safeguarding Statement / Safeguarding Training Policy. ○ Child Safeguarding Statement (display)/ Code of Conduct). Induction session for Instructors and Assistant Instructors ○ Photography & Use of Images policy ○ WhatsApp group only for adults. Access to load content to club Facebook and Instagram accounts confined to PRO
General Risk of Harm ○ Harm not being recognised. ○ Harm caused by: ○ Child to Child. ○ Coach to Child. ○ Volunteer to Child. ○ Member to Child. ○ Visitor to Child. ○ General behavioural issues. ○ Issues of Bullying. ○ Vetting of staff/volunteers. ○ Issues of Online Safety	○ Child Safeguarding Training Policy ○ Safeguarding policy / Child Safeguarding Training Policy / Supervision Policy ○ Code of Conduct. ○ Anti-Bullying policy. ○ Recruitment policy / Garda Vetting policy. ○ Social Media policy.

The Risk Assessment was undertaken on June 2026 and will be reviewed within 2 years, on or before June 2028

Signed:

Name:

Club Children's Officer, **Caroline Butler, Mullingar Sailing Club**

Appendix 5 - Contact Details

	Designated Liaison Person (Club Commodore) The designated Liaison Person is responsible for reporting allegations or suspicions of child abuse to TULSA Child and Family and/or An Garda Siochana. The DLP communicates with parents and/or agencies as appropriate and is responsible for carrying out reporting procedures
Name:	Mark Collins
Contact Number:	087 2050920
Email Address:	commodore@mullingarsailingclub.ie

	Junior Organiser & **Deputy Designated Liaison Person** Mullingar Sailing Club is an Irish Sailing recognised training centre and runs ISA affiliated courses for young sailors and has a Junior Organiser to administer this programme The deputy designated Liaison Person is available to take over the role of the DLP in their absence.
Name:	David Maxwell
Contact Number:	086 8201350
Email Address:	junior@mullingarsailingclub.ie

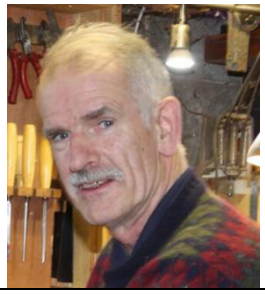
Irish Sailing National Children's Officer: Luke Murphy

Email: safeguarding@sailing.ie

Phone: 01 2710133

	Senior Instructor (ISA) An Irish Sailing Senior Instructor is an experienced Instructor who has been trained to take on the task of leading a team of Irish Sailing Instructors in the safe and effective delivery of Irish Sailing accredited training courses within an Irish Sailing Training Centre. In doing so they will act as: Leader, Manager, Technical Expert, and Instructor.
Name:	Oran Camier
Contact Number:	085 2677876
Email Address:	orancamier@gmail.com

	Children's Officer The Children's Officer should be a member of or have access to, the Club Management Committee, have completed their Safeguarding 1 & 2 Course, cleared Garda Vetting and should be introduced to the young people in an appropriate forum.
Name:	Caroline Butler
Contact Number:	086 8609196
Email Address:	carshaw1519@gmail.com

	**ISA Centre Principal** Mullingar Sailing Club Training Centre must have a nominated "Centre Principal". This should be the person who has overall responsibility for the implementation of Mullingar Sailing Club accredited training and coaching activities within the organisation. The Centre Principal is responsible to Mullingar Sailing Club for the conduct of Mullingar Sailing Club accredited activities within that organisation including the issuing of certificates on behalf of Mullingar Sailing Club.
Name:	Kieran Milner
Contact Number:	086 8342204
Email Address:	kieran.milner@gmail.com