

The adoption and application of codes of conduct for rowing clubs

The conduct and behaviour of a club's representatives and membership is an important factor in the public perception of that organisation locally and of rowing, as a sport, nationally.

Misconduct by members and the consequences of not addressing this may lead to ill-feeling, legal disputes and can be a costly affair, in time and money, for the club and the individuals concerned as well as potentially bringing the sport into disrepute. It is essential that all clubs not only adopt but also actively promote adherence to the codes of conduct and that any breaches are dealt with in an open, fair and timely manner, in accordance with the laws of natural justice.

Particular codes of conduct might concern the following:

- the need for proper and effective relationships between the club committee and officers and club members; between club members; anyone representing the club and other rowing clubs, to outside organisations or to members of the general public
- conduct of individual club members carrying out their roles
- conduct of individual club members in terms of personal behaviour and appropriate relationships as well as showing respect for others' values and beliefs.

All club members and parents of junior club members should be made aware of both the general and particular requirements of conduct that apply to them and must appreciate that it is their personal responsibility to apply them on every relevant occasion. If there is any doubt, they should seek advice from the club's senior officers.

Clubs must ensure that they have appropriate rules and bye-laws in place to deal with misconduct. Adherence to the codes of conduct should be a condition of membership and clubs might like to make this explicit by adding a line to that effect on the club's membership and/or renewal form.

A template for a rule regarding conduct might be:

The aim of the Rules of Conduct is to provide a framework that ABC Rowing Club may use to maintain satisfactory standards of conduct, to encourage improvement where necessary, and to offer a framework for disciplinary action against a member or the parent of a junior member.

Members should at all times maintain professional and responsible standards of conduct.

This should include:

- operating within the framework of the club rules and regulations and, where appropriate, a detailed code of conduct.
- taking reasonable care of health and safety of other members and third parties
- complying with reasonable instructions given by club officials and by other officials, for example, race officials
- acting at all times with respect for others, in good faith and in the best interests of the club.

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Examples of failure to comply with the club code of conduct (normally regarded as misconduct) include:

- minor breach of club policies
- refusal to follow instructions e.g. from a club or race official
- obscene language or other offensive behaviour.

Examples of a serious breach of the code of conduct include:

- unlawful discrimination or harassment
- physical violence or bullying
- bringing the club into serious disrepute
- causing loss or damage or injury through serious negligence
- theft or fraud
- serious breach of health and safety rules and misuse of safety equipment
- serious breach of confidence
- serious breach of club or British Rowing policies and procedures
- use of banned or illegal substances
- unauthorised use or disclosure of confidential information.

This list is not exhaustive, but is intended as a guide.

Disciplinary Procedure

Policy Statement

The aim of the Disciplinary Procedure is to provide a framework within which the club can work with its members to maintain satisfactory standards of conduct and to encourage improvement where necessary:

It is club policy to ensure that any disciplinary matter is dealt with fairly and that steps are taken to establish the facts. Disciplinary action should not be taken against a club member, or parent of a junior member, without being provided with the following:

- written statement of the allegations
- a hearing before any decision is reached
- the right to an appeal hearing.

Formal Process

The formal process should follow the 'British Rowing Guidelines on Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures in Rowing' as set out in the Almanack and is available on the British Rowing website.

Following an investigation, if it is considered that there are grounds for disciplinary action, the individual concerned must be informed in writing of the allegations made against him/her and the basis of the allegation.

This usually includes:

- a summary of the evidence gathered during the investigation
- documents to be used at the hearing
- any witness statements to be used at the hearing, except where the witness identity is to be kept confidential in which case the individual will be provided with as much information as possible whilst maintaining confidentiality.