



British Rowing

Regulatory Framework

Frequently asked questions

June 2026

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

This document consolidates implementation guidance, transitional arrangements and consultation clarifications relating to the new British Rowing Regulatory Framework. It aims to provide:

- a single reference point for clubs, participants and volunteers;
- clearer explanation of the practical changes taking effect from 1 June 2026;
- clarification regarding reporting routes and responsibilities;
- guidance on the distinction between safeguarding, disciplinary and Club-Level Matters;
- explanation of new affiliation and governance requirements;
- clarification of the roles of clubs, Welfare Officers, Regional Rowing Councils and British Rowing.

This document should be read alongside the framework documents themselves.

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1. Overview of the New Framework

What is changing on 1 June 2026?

British Rowing is introducing a new Regulatory Framework which separates key rules and procedures into clearer standalone documents.

This replaces the previous model where many obligations and processes sat within a single overarching regulations document.

The new framework is designed to:

- a) make responsibilities clearer;
- b) ensure concerns are directed to the right process;
- c) improve safeguarding oversight;
- d) create more consistent handling of disputes;
- e) strengthen accountability through affiliation requirements;
- f) improve visibility of concerns arising across the sport.

What is the overall aim of the new framework?

The overall aim is to create a framework that is clearer, more consistent and better aligned to safeguarding needs. The framework is also designed to support more proportionate handling of concerns by creating clearer distinctions between:

- safeguarding matters;
- misconduct matters;
- complaints;
- club-level disputes;
- affiliation and governance obligations.

Does this change the standards expected of Participants?

No. The expected standards of behaviour remain broadly unchanged. The principal change is the restructuring of rules and procedures into clearer standalone documents, with clearer reporting routes and clearer identification of responsibilities.

What is the biggest practical change for Participants and British Rowing affiliated clubs?

The biggest practical change is that concerns are now routed through clearer reporting and resolution pathways. Instead of relying on interpretation of one general regulations document, the new framework identifies whether a matter should be managed as:

- safeguarding concern;
- disciplinary matter;
- Club-Level Matter;
- complaint.

The framework also introduces:

- centralised reporting routes for safeguarding and misconduct concerns;

- a standardised Club Dispute Resolution Procedure;
- clearer club affiliation obligations;
- club record-keeping requirements for Club-Level Matters;
- Mandatory coach declaration requirements through affiliation renewal (2027)

2. Why the Framework Is Changing

Why is British Rowing changing the framework?

The previous framework brought multiple topics together in one document, which made it difficult to identify:

- what standards applied;
- which process should be used;
- who was responsible for handling concerns.

The new framework has been developed to address those issues and provide clearer minimum standards across the sport.

Will British Rowing be taking over management of routine club issues?

No. Routine Club-Level Matters remain the responsibility of clubs.

The framework is designed to:

- preserve club responsibility for day-to-day matters;
- provide a consistent minimum framework for fair handling of disputes;
- ensure safeguarding and serious misconduct concerns are appropriately overseen centrally.

British Rowing's primary role under the framework is focused on:

- a) safeguarding matters involving Children and Adults at Risk;
- b) Misconduct matters falling within the Disciplinary Rules;
- c) oversight and intervention where necessary;
- d) ensuring consistency and safeguarding visibility across the sport.

Does the framework establish minimum standards, or dictate every operational detail?

The framework establishes **core minimum standards and procedural expectations** intended to support consistency, safeguarding and fairness.

Clubs retain flexibility regarding how they operationally implement those standards, provided their approach remains consistent with the framework requirements.

The framework is not designed to remove appropriate local decision-making or proportionate informal resolution.

3. The Core Framework Documents

What are the main documents in the new framework?

The framework now consists of separate documents covering:

- a) British Rowing Regulations – general regulatory provisions;
- b) Code of Conduct – expected behaviours;
- c) Safeguarding Regulations – safeguarding responsibilities and procedures;
- d) Disciplinary Rules – misconduct procedures;
- e) Club Dispute Resolution Procedure – internal club dispute handling;
- f) Complaints Policy – complaints handling;
- g) Affiliation Terms and Conditions – club obligations;

Why have the documents been separated?

The previous structure combined multiple different processes and obligations into one overarching regulations document.

Separating the documents aims to:

- improve clarity;
- make responsibilities easier to identify;
- reduce confusion between different processes;
- make procedures easier to follow in practice;
- support more consistent implementation.

Does the Safeguarding Regulations document replace the previous safeguarding framework?

Yes. The Safeguarding Regulations replace the safeguarding framework currently contained within the British Rowing Regulations. Accompanying safeguarding policies and guidance documents will continue to support the Regulations which are currently under review and will be published in due course.

Will separate safeguarding policies still exist?

Yes. The Safeguarding Regulations are the core regulatory document. Supporting safeguarding policies and guidance documents will accompany the Regulations and provide practical implementation guidance.

Why are Children and Adults at Risk dealt with separately from other adult misconduct matters?

The framework distinguishes between:

- a) safeguarding matters involving Children and Adults at Risk; and
- b) misconduct matters involving adults who do not fall within safeguarding definitions.

This aligns with approaches increasingly adopted across sport and is intended to provide:

- clearer safeguarding oversight;
- more appropriate procedures;
- clearer investigative routes;
- greater consistency.

4. Reporting Concerns and Central Reporting

How do I know where to report a concern?

Safeguarding concerns, misconduct concerns, and matters where there is uncertainty regarding the correct process should be submitted through the British Rowing central reporting system.

This includes situations where a club is unsure whether a matter should be dealt with under the Safeguarding Regulations, the Disciplinary Rules, or the Club Dispute Resolution Procedure. British Rowing will then determine the appropriate process and route the matter accordingly.

Complaints relating to British Rowing services, administration, operational matters or governance concerns should be raised under the Complaints Policy using the complaints process set out on the British Rowing website.

Why is central reporting being introduced?

Central reporting has been introduced to improve:

- a) safeguarding oversight;
- b) consistency in approach;
- c) visibility of concerns arising across the sport;
- d) identification of patterns or repeated concerns; and
- e) appropriate routing of matters into the correct process.

The purpose is not to remove club responsibility for day-to-day matters, but to ensure serious concerns are identified and managed appropriately.

Does every issue now have to go directly to British Rowing?

No. Routine Club-Level Matters remain the responsibility of clubs.

Where a club is confident a matter falls within the Club Dispute Resolution Procedure, it should generally continue to manage that matter locally.

Where there is uncertainty regarding safeguarding, misconduct or jurisdiction, the matter should be referred through the British Rowing reporting route for triage.

What happens if a club is unsure whether a matter is safeguarding, misconduct or a Club-Level Matter?

Where there is uncertainty, the matter should be reported through the British Rowing reporting

route.

British Rowing will then determine:

- whether the matter falls within safeguarding;
- whether it should proceed under the Disciplinary Rules;
- whether it remains a Club-Level Matter to be handled locally.

This aims to reduce uncertainty and support consistent decision-making.

Can clubs still resolve matters informally?

Yes. The framework encourages proportionate and practical resolution where appropriate.

Many routine disagreements can still be resolved through:

- discussion;
- mediation;
- facilitated conversations;
- informal club processes.

Formal procedures are intended for situations where informal resolution is unsuccessful, inappropriate or insufficient.

5. Safeguarding

What is changing for safeguarding?

Safeguarding matters involving:

- a) **Children; or**
- b) **Adults at Risk**

must now be managed under the Safeguarding Regulations.

This strengthens safeguarding oversight and ensures concerns are assessed consistently through central reporting and oversight arrangements.

Why has safeguarding been separated into its own process?

British Rowing identified safeguarding as an area requiring clearer structure, oversight and procedural consistency.

The new structure is intended to:

- strengthen safeguarding oversight;
- improve information visibility;
- ensure safeguarding concerns are centrally assessed;
- provide clearer safeguarding procedures;
- align with broader safeguarding approaches across sport.

What is meant by confidentiality within safeguarding matters?

Confidentiality provisions are designed to protect individuals, safeguarding processes, sensitive information, witness evidence and participant welfare.

This does not prevent appropriate information sharing where necessary for:

- a) Safeguarding;
- b) participant safety;
- c) implementation of outcomes;
- d) operational management.

Outcome communication and safeguarding management will remain case specific.

Can clubs still take practical action locally where safeguarding concerns arise?

British Rowing will manage safeguarding investigations and safeguarding processes involving Children and Adults at Risk.

However, clubs remain responsible for maintaining safe environments and complying with any interim measures or safeguarding directions issued.

Where safeguarding concerns arise, clubs should report the matter and cooperate with British Rowing processes.

Are safeguarding matters involving adults who are not Adults at Risk still safeguarding?

Concerns involving adults who do not fall within safeguarding definitions will generally fall under the Disciplinary Rules rather than the Safeguarding Regulations. Only matters involving children or Adults at Risk will be subject to the BR Safeguarding Procedures.

Are parents, volunteers and non-members covered by safeguarding processes?

Potentially, yes. The framework applies broadly to Participants involved in rowing activities. Depending on the circumstances, this may include:

- coaches;
- volunteers;
- officials;
- parents involved in rowing activities;
- individuals participating within rowing environments.

Jurisdiction will depend on the individual's connection to rowing activity and the relevant circumstances.

6. Misconduct and Disciplinary Matters

What is changing for misconduct matters involving adults?

Misconduct matters involving adults that do not raise safeguarding concerns will now generally be handled under the Disciplinary Rules. This separates safeguarding processes from adult conduct matters and creates clearer procedures for both.

Will every behavioural issue now become a formal disciplinary case?

No. Although certain conduct may technically fall within the scope of the Disciplinary Rules, British Rowing retains discretion regarding how matters are managed. Lower-level matters may still be addressed proportionately through:

- guidance;
- warnings;
- informal resolution;
- local management where appropriate.

The framework does not require every issue to proceed to a formal disciplinary hearing.

Does British Rowing have jurisdiction over conduct outside rowing activity?

In some circumstances, yes. The Disciplinary Rules may apply to conduct outside rowing where British Rowing considers the matter relevant to:

- participant safety;
- the integrity of the sport;
- confidence in rowing environments.

This reflects approaches adopted across many sporting governing bodies and facilitates safer sport.

Can safeguarding and disciplinary powers apply retrospectively?

The Safeguarding Regulations and Disciplinary Rules include powers capable of applying retrospectively in certain circumstances.

This is intended to ensure serious historical concerns can still be addressed where necessary for participant safety and protection of the sport. Whether retrospective action is appropriate will depend on the individual circumstances of a matter.

Can disciplinary sanctions still include long suspensions?

Yes. The Case Management Group may impose suspensions within the powers set out in the Rules. More serious or complex matters may proceed to a Disciplinary Panel, which retains broader sanctioning powers.

7. Club-Level Matters and the Club Dispute Resolution Procedure

What is the Club Dispute Resolution Procedure?

The Club Dispute Resolution Procedure is the formal process for handling routine internal disputes

within clubs.

Examples may include:

- crew selection disputes;
- membership disagreements;
- equipment allocation issues;
- club administration concerns;
- minor interpersonal disputes;
- routine conduct matters appropriate for local resolution.

The Procedure is intended to establish a **consistent minimum framework** across affiliated clubs, while still allowing clubs flexibility in how they operationally manage matters and seek informal resolution.

Are clubs still responsible for managing internal disputes?

Yes. Clubs remain responsible for resolving routine Club-Level Matters. The framework is intended to support consistency and fairness, not remove club responsibility for ordinary operational matters.

Can clubs continue using informal resolution and mediation?

Yes. The Club Dispute Resolution Procedure encourages informal resolution and mediation where appropriate.

Many concerns can still be resolved proportionately without requiring formal processes.

Can clubs still have their own internal procedures?

Yes. Clubs may continue to operate their own governance arrangements and supplementary procedures provided they remain consistent with the minimum requirements established by the framework.

What types of matters should clubs report centrally instead of handling internally?

Clubs should report:

- safeguarding concerns involving Children or Adults at Risk;
- serious misconduct concerns;
- matters requiring British Rowing oversight;
- matters where jurisdiction or process is uncertain.

If a club is unsure, it should report the matter for triage.

Can clubs still impose sanctions locally?

Yes. Clubs may continue managing Club-Level Matters and applying outcomes permitted under the Club Dispute Resolution Procedure.

Why has the Club Dispute Resolution Procedure been standardised?

British Rowing identified significant inconsistency across clubs in how disputes were managed. The standardised procedure aims to make the process simpler for clubs to apply and:

- establish minimum fairness standards;
- improve consistency;
- support proportionate handling of disputes;
- reduce uncertainty;
- provide clearer escalation routes where required.

Will British Rowing routinely intervene in club disputes?

No. The expectation remains that clubs manage routine Club-Level Matters locally. British Rowing intervention powers are intended primarily for situations where:

- safeguarding concerns arise;
- serious misconduct is alleged;
- a process cannot appropriately continue locally;
- intervention is necessary to ensure fairness or participant safety.

This also supports safeguarding by ensuring concerns are not handled informally without records.

8. Complaints

What is the purpose of the Complaints Policy?

The Complaints Policy provides a process for raising concerns relating to British Rowing services, administration, governance or operational matters that do not fall within safeguarding, disciplinary or Club-Level dispute processes.

The Complaints Policy does not apply to safeguarding concerns, misconduct allegations, regulatory breaches, or matters falling within the Safeguarding Regulations, Disciplinary Rules or Club Dispute Resolution Procedure. Those matters should instead be reported through the appropriate reporting or regulatory process.

9. Club Responsibilities and Affiliation Requirements

What new responsibilities do clubs have under the framework

Clubs must now:

- adopt and use the Club Dispute Resolution Procedure;
- maintain records of Club-Level Matters handled and outcomes reached;
- provide those records during affiliation renewal and/or upon request;
- submit coach details during affiliation renewal;
- maintain safeguarding and conduct compliance obligations.

Clubs should also ensure relevant officers, committee members and Welfare Officers understand the new reporting routes and Club Dispute Resolution Procedure.

Why do clubs now need to keep records of Club-Level Matters?

The new requirement is intended to:

- support consistency;
- ensure fair process;
- improve safeguarding visibility;
- reduce informal handling of serious concerns without records;
- assist affiliation oversight.

A template log has been provided to support clubs.

What information will clubs need to provide regarding coaches?

As part of affiliation renewal from 2027, clubs will be **required** to ensure all coaches hold a British Rowing COACH membership. Details of all coaches should be provided upon renewal application.

This supports:

- safeguarding oversight;
- coaching visibility;
- safer recruitment and compliance monitoring;
- understanding of coaching activity across affiliated clubs.

Further guidance and templates will accompany the renewal process.

Are these affiliation requirements entirely new?

Most underlying obligations already existed in practice. The principal changes are:

- clearer articulation of obligations;
- audit and record-keeping requirements;
- coach declaration requirements;
- clearer enforcement mechanisms where serious non-compliance occurs.

Does this mean clubs are being monitored more closely?

The purpose is not additional bureaucracy, but greater clarity, consistency and safeguarding oversight.

The framework aims to ensure clubs have clear procedures, ensure safeguarding concerns are visible and that affiliation standards are applied consistently.

What happens if a club does not meet the new requirements?

Failure to meet affiliation requirements may result in follow-up action permitted under the Affiliation Terms and Conditions and/or the Disciplinary Rules.

10. Roles and Responsibilities

What is the role of Club Welfare Officers under the new framework?

Club Welfare Officers remain a vital first point of support within clubs. Their role includes:

- a) supporting welfare and wellbeing concerns within the club environment;
- b) helping individuals understand available reporting options;
- c) supporting safeguarding awareness within the club;
- d) escalating safeguarding concerns involving Children or Adults at Risk within 48 hours;
- e) helping ensure appropriate records are maintained where concerns are handled at club level.

Club Welfare Officers do not determine safeguarding outcomes or conduct formal safeguarding investigations. Those matters sit with British Rowing under the Safeguarding Regulations.

What is the role of Regional Rowing Councils under the new framework?

Regional Rowing Councils continue to play an important role within the dispute resolution structure.

Their role includes:

- a) hearing appeals arising from Club-Level Matters;
- b) supporting consistency across clubs within the region;
- c) assisting where a matter cannot appropriately be managed solely at club level;
- d) referring matters to British Rowing where concerns fall outside regional remit or require national intervention.

Regional Rowing Councils are not replacing clubs in the handling of routine club matters.

11. Schools and Universities

How does the framework apply to schools and universities?

Schools and universities continue to operate their own institutional procedures and responsibilities. However:

- a) safeguarding concerns involving rowing activities must still be reported to British Rowing;
- b) British Rowing may share information or exercise jurisdiction where appropriate;
- c) affiliated educational institutions remain subject to relevant affiliation obligations.

School or university procedures may therefore operate alongside British Rowing processes where necessary.

Reports of safeguarding concerns within schools and universities should be reported to British Rowing within **48 hours**, via the centralised reporting system.

Schools and universities are expected to notify British Rowing of the outcome of any safeguarding matters dealt with internally.

Are those that do not hold active British Rowing Membership covered by the framework?

The framework applies broadly to Participants involved in rowing activities. Depending on the circumstances, this may include:

- coaches;
- volunteers;
- officials;
- parents involved in rowing activities;
- individuals participating within rowing environments.

Jurisdiction will depend on the individual's connection to rowing activity and the relevant circumstances.

What is meant by “Participant” under the framework?

The framework applies broadly to Participants involved in specified rowing activities.

This ensures the framework can apply appropriately to individuals involved in rowing activity, including those who may not hold formal British Rowing membership. The exact definition is set out within the relevant Regulations and Disciplinary Rules.

12. Transitional Arrangements

When do the changes take effect?

The new framework takes effect on **1 June 2026**. From that date:

new reports should use the new reporting routes;
clubs should begin using the Club Dispute Resolution Procedure;
safeguarding and disciplinary matters should proceed under the new framework;
affiliation obligations begin applying through the next renewal cycle.

What happens to matters already in progress on 1 June 2026?

Matters already in progress before 1 June 2026 will normally continue under the procedure under which they originally started, unless British Rowing notifies the relevant parties otherwise.

Will existing club disputes need to restart under the new Club Dispute Resolution Procedure?

No. Where a matter is already substantially underway before implementation, it will generally continue under the process already in use.

The new Club Dispute Resolution Procedure applies principally to new matters raised on or after 1 June 2026.

When do clubs need to begin keeping records of Club-Level Matters?

It is expected that Clubs will already be maintaining records, however the need to formalise these records in the appropriate format will apply from **1 June 2026**. Formal confirmation or submission requirements will apply through the next affiliation renewal cycle.

When do clubs need to provide coach details?

Clubs are encouraged to ensure all coaches have active British Rowing COACH (which is free to add where a coach meets the requirements and already has an active British Rowing Membership). The requirement to provide names of all coaches and their details applies through the next affiliation renewal following **1 June 2026**.

Clubs do not need to submit coach details immediately unless undertaking renewal.

What if supporting guidance or policies are updated after 1 June 2026?

The core framework documents take effect from 1 June 2026. Supporting guidance and policies may continue to be updated following implementation to support practical operation of the framework. Where supporting documents are updated, the most recent versions should be followed.

Are clubs expected to rewrite all internal policies immediately?

No. Clubs should begin aligning procedures with the framework from 1 June 2026.

Priority areas include:

- use of the Club Dispute Resolution Procedure;
- understanding reporting routes;
- maintenance of records;
- preparation for affiliation renewal obligations.

What should participants or clubs do if uncertainty arises during implementation?

If there is uncertainty regarding how a matter should be handled during transition, the matter should be reported through the British Rowing reporting route. British Rowing will determine the appropriate process.

13. Governance, Oversight and Jurisdiction

Does British Rowing retain powers to intervene in matters?

Yes. British Rowing retains powers to intervene where necessary to:

- protect participant safety;
- ensure procedural fairness;
- manage safeguarding concerns;
- address serious misconduct;
- maintain integrity of the framework.

These powers are intended primarily for situations where intervention is **necessary** and **proportionate**.

Does British Rowing regulate every aspect of club activity?

No. Clubs remain independent organisations responsible for managing their own day-to-day operations and governance. The framework establishes minimum standards and regulatory expectations connected to participation within affiliated rowing environments.

How does the framework interact with employment, school or legal processes?

The framework does not replace:

- employment law obligations;
- school procedures;
- safeguarding duties owed by other organisations;
- statutory rights;
- external legal processes.

Relevant external processes may therefore operate alongside British Rowing procedures where appropriate.

14. Practical Implementation Questions

Will clubs receive implementation guidance?

Yes. The following documents and guidance materials have been produced to assist with implementation:

- guidance documents;
- templates;
- reporting instructions;
- affiliation renewal guidance;
- flowcharts;
- supporting explanatory materials.

Will there be guidance explaining how the Club Dispute Resolution Procedure interacts with central reporting?

Yes. Supporting flowcharts are intended to assist with the understanding of:

- when clubs should manage matters locally;
- when matters should be reported centrally;
- how safeguarding and misconduct concerns are escalated;
- how club-level and British Rowing processes interact.

Will the framework continue to evolve after implementation?

Yes. British Rowing expects the framework to continue developing following implementation. The new structure allows the framework to be refined over time. Practical experience will help inform future refinement and supporting guidance. Guidance and associated policies are undergoing review for alignment with the new framework and may be published at a later date.

What is the key message clubs and participants should take from the new framework?

The new Regulatory Framework documents will take effect from June 2026. The key message is that the framework is designed to provide:

- clearer processes;
- safer systems;
- more consistent handling of concerns;
- stronger safeguarding oversight;
- clearer club responsibilities;
- better support for fair and proportionate resolution of issues across the sport.

The framework is designed to support clubs and participants through clearer responsibilities, reporting routes and resolution processes, while preserving the important role clubs continue to play in managing routine local matters. This will help to ensure the sport of rowing will be a safer space for all.