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CHILD SAFETY POLICY

This Child Safety Policy has been formally adopted by Bray Sailing Club and will be provided to all leaders, volunteers, and instructors working with children and young people in the Club. It contains the Club's guidelines to ensure the safety of our younger members and may be amended from time to time to reflect changes in procedures or legislation.

The latest version of this policy will be available to view on the Club website.

Definitions

A 'child' is defined as being a person under 14 years of age and a 'young person' (YP) as being 14 – 18 years of age.

Supervising Adult

An adult other than a parent of a child may assume the care and responsibility of a child/yp in specific circumstances, namely where they act as a leader or instructor. The duty of care owed by an instructor or leader to a child/yp is the same as that owed by a parent to a child/yp because the duty does not arise merely out of the proximity of the relationship between the adult and the child/yp but because the adult has assumed the care and responsibility of the child/yp in a specific circumstance. The relationship of parent and child/yp only serves to evidence the duty of care. A supervising adult is expected to show such care towards a child/yp under its charge as would be exercised by a reasonably careful parent with the same number of children under his control.

Level of Supervision

Children are not assumed at law to need constant supervision. The supervising adult should take into consideration the age and abilities of each child, the activity and the conditions in which the activity is being undertaken in order to determine the level of supervision. For instance, the supervising adult must decide whether a child needs an adult in the dinghy with them or whether the adult can supervise the child's sailing from a RIB or the shore. During an activity, the level of supervision must be reassessed. For instance, where a child has

proved themselves to be irresponsible, or the weather conditions substantially change, then the level of supervision may be increased or the activity ceased.

Duty of Care to Protect from Physical Harm

The supervising adult has a duty of care to protect the child from suffering any foreseeable personal injury, but not to protect the child/yp from the rough and tumble of life. This is especially so where the child is considered to be too young to appreciate danger. Essentially, the adult is required to supervise children with a view to preventing danger arising. For instance, unless the adult specifically has a duty to make a safety check of sports facilities in general use, such as public or hotel swimming pool, the supervising adult is not required to make an independent safety check. A duty to make a safety check will therefore arise when the sports facility is not in general use. Before permitting a child to use the sports facilities, the adult must ensure that the facilities are suitable for the age and ability of that particular child.

In sailing, it is wise to ensure that a child is capable of swimming if it is intended to sail in water deeper than that in which the child can wade. However, the supervising adult should also take into account the type of vessel in which the child will be sailing, such as whether it is a dinghy which readily capsizes or whether the adult should take into account whether the child is wearing suitable clothing and particularly whether the child is wearing an appropriate buoyancy aid, life jacket and life-line for the intended vessel and weather conditions. Where the child has rigged the dinghy himself, then the supervising adult should check that it has been competently rigged.

The duty to protect the physical safety of the young person includes the duty to instruct children as to safety discipline, this being more so with older children who are better able to comprehend instructions and appreciate danger. A safety instruction will include advice as to the best practice and the injury that may be suffered if the best practice is not followed. Often, careful instructions to children and ensuring that they have understood the instruction will be sufficient to allow the children to undertake the activity by themselves. Again the exact circumstances will be taken into account and the child's previous ability to undertake the activity by themselves, thereby implementing previous instructions, will determine whether on each occasion the manner in which the child may undertake that activity. The safety instructions should be repeated on each occasion.

The Club has rules governing the use of its facilities which can be readily enforced by a supervising adult and it will be confirmed that children understand those rules, before they are permitted to use the facilities.

General Guidance for the Supervision of Young People.

At Bray Sailing Club we adhere to the following guidelines dependent on the child/yp's ability and age, to assist in establishing and applying the right level of supervision and safety rules.

Children below the age of 11 – Inexperienced Sailors

Where this age group is concerned, the duty of care is at its highest particularly where the parents or guardians are not in immediate attendance (or in the case of where the parents or guardians are themselves inexperienced). Constant supervision is appropriate and particular care must be shown in not exposing the child to danger. This would apply equally whether afloat, ashore or at the water's edge. Volunteers and instructors are effectively in loco parentis and will be expected to show the same level of care as would reasonably careful and knowledgeable parents in the same circumstances.

Children below the age of 11 – Experienced Sailors

For this group the same principles will apply as to the supervision of those for inexperienced sailors below the age of 11 years, except that the children may be expected to cope with more difficult weather conditions. A balance will be struck between over-protectiveness and permitting children to take foolhardy risks.

Children aged 11 to 13 years – Inexperienced Sailors

The same principles will apply as for younger children while afloat, although a lower level of supervision would be expected while ashore or at the water's edge.

Children aged 11 – 13 years – Experienced Sailors

Children in this age group vary considerably in having sufficient maturity to make decisions about risk taking particularly when peer pressure is involved. While a degree of supervision is still expected, they can reasonably expect to be self-reliant both afloat and ashore. However, some will underestimate the risks involved.

Young people aged 14 – 18 years – Inexperienced Sailors

The same principles apply as for younger sailors while afloat, although a very much lower level of supervision would be expected while ashore or at the water's edge. The level of care is more similar to that owed to a young adult who has no knowledge or past experience of sailing.

Young people aged 14 – 18 years – Experienced Sailors

Once over the age of 14 years, depending on the mental maturity of the individual, young people can be expected to make sensible decisions about their exposure to risk. By the age of 16 or so they would be considered by the courts to

be adults, and special consideration as to the supervision of young persons will probably not apply. It should be noted however that the age of legal maturity is 18 years, so any contractual documents including exclusion of liability clauses would probably be of no effect in law and should not be relied on.

Organised Racing or Other Group Events (Including Junior Training)

A special standard of care will be shown in the following matters:

- Acceptance of entries, having regard to:
 1. Age and experience of competitors
 2. Expected numbers of competitors
 3. Available rescue facilities
 4. Anticipated weather and tidal conditions
- The decision to cancel, postpone or continue with racing or a group activity will be made in the light of the foregoing factors
- The level of provision of safety cover will be made in the light of the foregoing factors
- Enforcement of appropriate safety regulations

As it is impossible to lay down criteria or guidelines for general application due to variations such as weather conditions, age, experience and competence of sailors the sailing committee and organisers of each event will decide which safety regulations will be imposed or waived. In making these decisions, the committee need not attempt to forestall or remove every single area of risk; rather they must take a common-sense approach to practical safety rules that they will not be so onerous as to stifle the interest of young people or prevent them sailing in adverse conditions but will cover the most obvious areas of risk. As seen, the standard will vary accordingly to the age and experience of the child/yp.

Parental/Guardian consent is required on all entry forms for any young person (under 18) before entering in a race or organised event.

Non-Organised Sailing and Use of Club Facilities

Parents and guardians are warned that the club only provides rescue facilities during the hours of club-organised events such as training courses, Pico club and racing. Outside these hours, parents and guardians have sole responsibility for their children and wards and must appreciate that the club cannot accept responsibility for children or any other persons, not engaged in club organised events.

Parents and guardians are also warned that an adult will only supervise the club and its facilities during club-organised activities such as Pico, Junior Training and Racing. Outside these hours, parents and guardians have sole responsibility for their children and wards and must appreciate that the club cannot accept responsibility for children or any other persons.

Reporting Obligations

The Club's Designated Liaison Person (DLP) has received training in the steps to be taken in the event of receiving a report of child protection concerns.

In summary, these are as follows:

The DLP will establish, in consultation with the individual who has raised the concern, if reasonable grounds for concern exist.

The information provided will then be forwarded to the HSE Children and Family Services' Duty Social Worker if reasonable grounds for concern exist, regardless of whether the source of the information wishes to be identified or not. The source will be made aware that the Club's DLP will be reporting the information. If the Club's DLP is unsure whether the concern constitutes reasonable grounds for concern, they may initially consult informally with either the HSE Duty Social Worker or the Irish Sailing Association's Designated Child Officer. Where the Club's DLP decides not to pass on the concern brought to their attention, they will inform the source of this decision and also tell them that they may report directly to Children and Family Services and that the provisions of the Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act will pertain.

In the event of an emergency, when the DLP thinks that a child or Young Person may be in immediate danger, and where they cannot get in contact with the HSE Children and Family Services' Duty Social Worker, they will contact the Gardai.

Social Media Usage Policy

In all their contacts and communications with the members of their organisation, leaders must be seen to be open and transparent. This is the case whether communications are by traditional means or by electronic means.

Leaders must not communicate with children or young people via leader's personal social networking profiles, email accounts, or chat rooms.

Bray Sailing Club's Social Media Pages will adhere to the following guidelines:

1. The page/profile is password-protected, and the password must be held by at least three leaders of the organisation.
2. The site is monitored by a designated supervisor and Child Safety Officer. This person has access to the login details of the site. The Designated Person/Safeguarding Panel in Charge of Child Protection will appoint this supervisor.
3. The designated supervisor should remove any inappropriate posts by children/young people or leaders. Reasons should then be explained to the person who posted the content.
4. The site should be kept 'Private' i.e. only permitted members or 'friends' can see what is posted on the site.

5. The use of personal addresses and telephone numbers etc. should be avoided so as to reduce the risk for these details/items to be copied and shared.
6. Content of any postings should be consistent with the aims of the organisation. In cases of doubt leaders should seek advice from the Junior Training Team.
7. Parents/guardians are asked to give their approval for leaders to communicate with their children/young people via social networking sites, text, mobile phone, phone or by any other means of internet communications (e.g. email).
8. Parental permission is required before pictures or videos of children or young people are posted online.
9. Any disclosures of abuses reported through a social networking site must be dealt with according to your reporting procedures.

For Leaders Using a Social Networking Site:

1. Leaders should not 'friend' or 'follow' children or young people on social media. (Children or young people may 'follow' leaders on social media so leaders should make sure any content they post is appropriate.)
2. Messages left to or from children or young people on social network sites should be written on an open page (e.g. A Facebook 'Wall') and not in a private message or by using 'chat' [one-on-one].
3. Leaders should not network with junior members of Bray Sailing Club via closed [one-on-one] chats e.g. Facebook messenger, WhatsApp, etc.. This should be done only through 'Group Chat.'
4. Any events or activities run by the organisation that are organised or publicised on the site should be a closed event so as non-members cannot access the event without suitable permission by the site administrators.
5. Any emails sent to children or young people via the site must be sent to at least one other leader and or the child's parent/guardian. (This can be done by 'bcc' if necessary.)
6. Leaders should avoid communicating with children or young people in Bray Sailing Club via email late at night.
7. In signing off a post or email leaders should not do so in a way that could be misconstrued or misinterpreted by the recipient, e.g. "Luv X"; "xoxoxo". Instead, names/titles will be used on all occasions.

Use of Mobile Phones

Leaders at Bray Sailing Club are aware of the opportunities for abuse through the misuse of mobile phones and text messaging. While good use of such media can be beneficial we must be vigilant and alert to the possibilities of misuse and consequent harm that can result to young people.

As a result of this Bray Sailing Club advises parents and young people that the use of mobile phones by Juniors is not permitted throughout Pico Club or Junior Training unless at specified times (such as lunch breaks) or in an emergency situation.

Texting – Communication not Conversation!

1. Texts from Bray Sailing Club leaders will be used for the purposes of reminding children or young people about events and activities which are forthcoming.
2. Texts can also be used as a means to encourage children or young people if it is appropriate it, e.g., 'Hope exam goes ok.'
3. If it turns into a conversation, communications should be ended. A leader can suggest discussing the subject further at the next event or, if they are concerned about the child/young person, arrange to meet up to talk further (within the usual child protection parameters).

Camera Phones

Bray Sailing Club recognises that camera phones should be used safely and responsibly. Camera phone users should respect the private lives of others and not take or distribute pictures of other people if it could invade their privacy.

Leaders and children/young people should not send pictures that are obscene, indecent, or menacing and should be sensitive about other people's gender identity, sexual identity, racial heritage, religion, or personal background.

Both leaders and children/young people will be made aware that it is a criminal offence to take, make, permit to be taken, distribute, show, or possess an indecent or sexually explicit image of a child under 18.

Camera phones can be used to make children/young people safer. Older children, for example, using a taxi can send a picture of the car's registration to a friend before they begin the trip, or can simply use the phone to show parents where they are.

- Children/young people can only be included in photography when permission has been provided in writing from their parent/guardian.
- The scope of the use of photographs must also be stated as part of the parental permission.

- Children/young people should not be named individually in photographs unless necessary, for example, if the child/young person concerned was winning a prize worthy of publication.
- When posting photographs on social media settings should be such that children/young people cannot be individually tagged.
- All photographs must be stored in a secure place either electronically in a password-protected file or physically in a locked cabinet.
- If any electronic device/memory which contains photographs is disposed of or passed on, then the device must be wiped of all photographs in such a way that they cannot be recovered on that device.

Use of Mobile phones during activities

- When on activities parents will be advised of a named leader who shall be the primary point of communication and is to be contacted if there is an emergency or a change to previously agreed arrangements.
- The usage of mobile phones including text messaging or playing games cannot be allowed to be a distraction from a safe awareness of the environment or be allowed to interfere with full participation in the activity. Therefore the use of mobile phones will be restricted during Pico Club, Camps and Junior Training with the exceptions in the case of an emergency or at stated times (lunch time).
- When on overnights a timeframe of mobile availability will be given to parents in advance of activities, therefore there will be a stated preferred time period when parents may make contact, if they wish. Parents will be advised that contact outside of this time may not be possible due to activities.