



Blessington



Sailing Club

Child Welfare Policy

Rev: A

Date: 12th June 2012

Child Welfare Policy

for

Blessington



Sailing Club

at

Baltyboys, Blessington,
Co. Wicklow

Revision A



Blessington



Sailing Club

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Date: 12th June 2012

Blessington Sailing Club Approval:

| | Name | Position | Signature | Date |
|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|-----------|------|
| Reviewed By: | Amy-Jayne Lawrence | Child Welfare Officer | | |
| Approved By: | Peter Dolan | Youth Sailing Coordinator | | |
| Approved By: | Feargal O Neill | Hon. Secretary | | |
| Approved By: | Peter Smyth | Commodore | | |

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| Prepared by | 20 th April, 2010 | M. Cunniffe | Issued for Internal Review |
| Revised | 15 th July | Peter Dolan | Issued for Internal Review |

Reference Documents:

| Ref. No | Document Name |
|---------|---|
| 1 | Blessington Sailing Club Rules – Membership Booklet |
| 2 | Blessington Sailing Club Safety Policy |
| 3 | The Irish Sports Council and the Sports Council for Northern Ireland Code of Ethics & Good Practice for Children's Sport |
| 4 | No. 17/1991: CHILD CARE ACT, 1991 |

Definitions:

Blessington Sailing Club

Blessington Sailing Club
Baltyboys
Blessington
Co. Wicklow



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• **Introduction**

This document is the official Child Welfare Policy of Blessington Sailing Club (hereafter referred to as “the club”). It is complimentary to, and in addition to, the club’s constitution (Reference 1). As such it must be read, understood and adhered to by all club members.

• **General**

1. Overall aim of the club

The overall aims of the club are to follow the ISA standard of sailing, to enter and host racing events and to promote the sport of sailing to anyone wishing to learn. In doing this, we are expressing intent to provide a safe environment in which to carry out these activities.

2. The Committee

Whilst the whole committee is in part responsible for the safety of the clubs’ members. It shall fall upon the following officials to decide upon, implement and enforce the Child Welfare Policy. They shall hereafter be called the Child Welfare sub-committee:

- Commodore
- Children’s Officer
- Hon Secretary / Safety Officer
- Youth Sailing Coordinator

3. Child Welfare Declaration

The overall aim of this child Welfare statement is to make sure that all members of the club can enjoy the sport of sailing in the safest possible environment. Blessington Sailing Club accepts that organisations, which include young people among its members, are vulnerable to the occurrence of child abuse. Child welfare and protection is the concern of all adults at all times irrespective of their role within the club.

If there are grounds for concern about the safety or welfare of a junior member you should react to the concern. If unsure as to whether certain behaviours are abusive and therefore reportable, contact should be made with the duty social worker in the local health board or social services where advice will be given. 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.

A report can be made by any member of the club but should be passed on to the Children's Officer who may in turn have to pass the concern to the Statutory Authorities. It is not the responsibility of any member within the club to investigate or decide if child abuse is taking place. That is the job of the Statutory Authorities.



4. Equality Statement

Blessington Sailing Club is committed to a policy of equal treatment of all members and requires all members of whatever level of authority to abide and adhere to this general principle and the requirements of the Codes of Practice issued by the Equal Opportunities Commission and Commission for Racial Equality.

All children should be valued and treated in a fair and equitable manner, regardless of ability, age, sex, religion, social or ethnic background. Children, irrespective of ability or disability should be involved where possible, in sports activities in an integrated and inclusive way.

5. Confidentiality Statement

At Blessington Sailing Club a guarantee of confidentiality or undertakings regarding secrecy cannot be given, as the welfare of the child will supersede all other considerations. However, information of a confidential nature will only be communicated on a “need to know” basis, with the welfare of the child paramount.

6. Anti-bullying Policy

Bullying is defined as repeated aggression, be it verbal, psychological or physical, which is conducted by an individual or group against others. It is behaviour, which is intentionally aggravating and intimidating that includes teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting or extortion by one or more children against the victim.

Understanding and preventing bullying during childhood has important implications for the immediate health of children, as well as long term societal health.

To prevent bullying at the Club the following measures will be taken:

- Raising awareness of bullying as an unacceptable form of behavior
- Creating a club ethos which encourages children, Sports Leaders and parents/guardians to report bullying and to use the procedures of the complaints mechanism of the club to address the problem
- Providing comprehensive supervision of children at all sporting activities
- Providing a supportive environment for victims of bullying
- Obtaining the co-operation of parents/guardians to counter bullying.

The Children’s Officer shall be made known to young members, instructors, and parents as the designated person to whom concerns will be addressed. If the concern is about the designated person the complaint should be addressed to the Club Commodore.

7. Child Welfare Policy and the Members

The sub-committee has a duty to consult the rest of the committee on all child welfare matters on a regular basis. In addition the sub-committee will distribute appropriate information

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regarding child welfare to the rest of the members of the club. There will also be provision for members of the club to raise child welfare issues with the sub-committee.

The Child Welfare sub-committee shall organise training to further enhance the welfare of children in the club for those who require it.

In writing this Child Welfare Policy and requiring the acknowledgement of it the club expects its members to adhere not just to the letter of the policy but also to the spirit in which it is written.

8. Duties of Care

The sub-committee acknowledges the duties under which they have placed themselves. In particular, the duty owed to those who are attempting to learn sailing and those less experienced in the local conditions.

• Child Protection Policies

1. Guidelines for Responding to a Child Reporting an Incident:

- Deal with any allegation of abuse in a sensitive and competent way by listening to and allowing the child to tell about the problem, rather than interviewing the child about details of what happened
- Stay calm and do not show any extreme reaction to what the child is saying
- Understand that the child has decided to tell something very important and has taken a risk to do so
- Reassure the child that he/she has done the right thing in telling
- Tell the child that it is not possible to keep any information a secret
- No judgmental statements should be made against the person against whom the allegation is made
- Do not question the child unless the nature of what he/she 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". Let the child tell their story
- Check out the concerns with the parents/guardians before making a report unless doing so would endanger the child
- Give the child some indication of what would happen next, such as informing the parents/guardians , health board or social services
- Carefully record all details
- Report to the Children's Officer

2. Guidelines for Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

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- Observe and note dates, times, locations and contexts in which the incident occurred or suspicion was aroused, together with any other relevant information.
- Report the matter as soon as possible to the Children's Officer with responsibility for reporting abuse.
- If there are reasonable grounds for believing that child abuse has taken place, a report should be made to the Statutory Authorities who have the statutory responsibility to investigate, access and validate suspected or actual abuse
- In cases of emergency, where a child is at immediate and serious risk and the Children's Officer is unable to contact a duty social worker, the Gardaí should be contacted. Under no circumstances should a child be left in a dangerous situation pending intervention by the Statutory Authorities
- If the Children's Officer is unsure whether reasonable grounds for concern exist he/she can informally consult with local social services and will be advised whether the matter requires a formal report
- The Children's Officer reporting suspected or actual abuse to the Statutory Authorities should first inform the parent/ guardian of their intention unless doing so would endanger a child or undermine the investigation
- A report should be given by the Children's Officer to the Statutory Authorities by phone and in writing. The standard reporting form can be used.

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 Board or Garda

3. Allegations against Sports Leaders/Coaches

The club has agreed procedures to be followed in cases of alleged child abuse against Sports Leaders

If an allegation is made against a Sport Leader working within the club, two procedures should be followed:

- Firstly, the reporting procedure in respect of suspected child abuse should be followed in accordance with guidelines discussed under section 3.2 Reporting Suspected Child abuse and is reported by the Designated Person/Children's Officer.
- Secondly, the club's procedure for dealing with a Sports Leader (section 3.4) should be implemented. This should be carried out by the club Commodore or senior officer or a person not already involved with child protection concerns.

4. The procedure for dealing with a Sports Leader

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

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- 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.
- While the Children's Officer makes the report if there are reasonable grounds for concern to the Statutory Authorities, the Commodore of the club should deal with the Sports Leader.
- The Commodore should privately inform the leader that an allegation has been made against him/her and the nature of the allegation.
- The Sport Leader should be afforded the opportunity to respond.
- The Sport Leader's response should be noted and passed on to the Social Services.
- The Sport Leader should be asked to step down 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.
- ISA should be informed by the Children's Officer that the leader has been asked to step aside.

Governing bodies can consider disciplinary action on the leader but should ensure this does not interfere with the investigation of the Statutory Authorities. It is important that governing bodies 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.

5. Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints can be difficult to deal with but should not be ignored. Any such complaints relating to inappropriate behaviour should be brought to the attention of the Children's Officer. The information should be checked out and handled in a confidential and fair manner.

6. Rumours

Rumours should not be allowed to hang in the air. Any rumours relating to inappropriate behaviour should be checked out by the Children's Officer without delay. Any ensuing information should be handled confidentially and with sensitivity. If there is any doubt about the requirement to report the substance of a rumour, advice should be sought from the duty social worker in the local health board or social services department.

• Use of mobile phones at the Club

Mobile phones are often given to children for security, enabling parents to keep in touch and make sure they are safe. 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.



As a young member use the following guidelines

- If you receive an offensive photo, e-mail or message ,do not reply, save it, make a note of times and dates and tell a parent or children's officer/designated person at the club
- Change your number in cases of harassment or bullying
- Don't use your phone in certain locations e.g. changing rooms and showers; inappropriate use of your camera phone may cause upset or offence to another person
- Treat your phone as a valuable item. The club does not accept responsibility for lost or stolen items

- **Use of Photographs and Images of Juniors**

Blessington Sailing Club has adopted a policy in relation to the use of images of young people on its website and other publications to reduce the risk of inappropriate, unsolicited attention from people within and outside the sport. Where possible use of names will be avoided, and group photos where the Club is identified rather than individuals used for publicity purposes. Parental permission will be sought for use of such images and permission from the participant. Such a policy is not about preventing parents from taking pictures-it is to ensure that only those who have a right to take photographs do so.

Amateur photographers/film/video operators wishing to record an event or practice session should seek accreditation with the children's officer or committee.

- **Disciplinary, Complaints and Appeals Procedure**

Discipline in sport should always be positive in focus, providing the structure and rules that allow participants to learn to set their own goals and strive for them. It should encourage young people to become responsible about decisions and choices they make within sport. Participants should treat others in a respectful manner and not interfere with, bully or take unfair advantage of others.

The use of sanctions is an important element in the maintenance of discipline. Sports Leaders or Instructors have the authority to apply sanctions where deemed necessary; however they should have clear understanding of where and when particular sanctions are appropriate.

The following steps are suggested:

- Rules should be clearly stated and agreed
- A warning should be given if a rule is broken
- A formal verbal warning to be given if misconduct continues and parents/guardians informed

An instructor may request that a sailor be suspended from coaching or racing for a defined period, indefinitely or permanently.



The head instructor should inform the Children's Officer and Junior Sailing Coordinator of the misconduct and the sanction requested.

Where very serious misbehaviour or incidents occurs, the Committee of the club should be informed and a meeting should be convened by the Commodore. The Committee should investigate the incident and decide if a rule or regulation has been infringed as per Rule 20 in reference 1.

They should, in writing, inform those involved of the sanctions to be imposed. Written notification should be given to parents or guardians if the complaint is about a junior member.

Write a report outlining the procedure followed, findings, conclusions and disciplinary actions taken. All parties should be given a copy of this report.

The report should be kept on record.

If any party does not agree with the action taken, they can appeal the decision in writing within a 14 day period to the Committee as per Rule 20 in reference 1.

• **Recruitment and Selection Policy**

Blessington Sailing Club will take all reasonable steps to ensure that people working with young people are suitable and appropriately qualified. Recruitment and selection procedures are therefore necessary and these procedures apply to all persons with substantial access to juniors, whether paid or unpaid.

- All adults taking responsibility for children in sport must undergo a formalized recruitment process
- All instructors should be provided with pre-employment training

Recruitment Procedure;

- The responsibilities of the role and the level of experience and qualifications required should be drawn up and clearly stated beforehand.
- All vacancies openly available to interested and qualified applicants.
- An application form should be completed by each applicant. This should include a self-declaration form and giving the names of two referees that should be contacted.
- Where possible there should be an interview.
- Qualifications should be verified and gaps in employment history checked.
- References should be verified by the Recruitment Committee and kept on file as matter of record.
- All recommendations for appointments should be ratified by the Recruitment Committee. The decision to appoint a Sports Leader is the responsibility of the Club and not of anyone individual in it.

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- There will be a "sign up" procedure, whereby the newly recruited instructor will agree to abide by the rules of the ISA, the Code of Ethics and Good Practice (reference 3) and to this Child Welfare Policy. The coaches signed permission will be sought to enable ISA to request a check on him/her from the Garda vetting service.
- A probationary period will be established
- Once recruited, staff and volunteers should be adequately managed, supported and offered child protection awareness training.

- **Training**

The Children's officer should attend an ISA or equivalent child protection awareness training programme.

- **Revision of the Child Welfare Policy**

1. This Child Welfare Policy will be reviewed and subsequently revised on a regular basis with the aim of reinforcing the safe environment already prescribed.
2. The sub-committee shall meet at least once a year to review the Child Welfare Policy.
3. All members should approach a member of the sub-committee with any proposals for updating and improving this Child Welfare Policy which will then be brought up at that meeting.
4. All revisions shall be implemented on qualified majority voting with a requirement of a four to one majority required.
5. At the end of each year the current sub-committee shall hold a meeting with the succeeding one. At this meeting the new sub-committee should raise any issue contained herein which they need clarifying. Also the overall safety record of the club over the past year shall be reviewed and the results of any incident proceedings summarised.

- **Publicising the Child Welfare Policy**

1. An up-to-date copy of Appendix A shall be displayed at all times in the following places: the club notice boards in the Blessington Sailing Club house.
2. An up-to-date copy of this Child Welfare Policy will be available on the club's website.



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(In the case of some delay before any changes agreed upon are published on the website, the information held by the members of the committee and safety sub-committee will precede any information displayed on the website)

For Review



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Appendix A: Blessington Sailing Child Welfare Policy

We at Blessington Sailing Club are committed to good practice which protects children from harm. Every individual in the club should at all times show respect and understanding for their rights, safety, and welfare, and should conduct themselves in a way that reflects the principles of the Club and the guidelines contained in the Code of Ethics and Good Practice in Children's Sport (Reference 3). Staff and volunteers accept and recognize their responsibility to provide an environment which promotes the safety of the child at all times. The Child Care Act 1991(ROI) (Reference 4) is based on a clear and consistent set of principles designed with the common aim of promoting the welfare of children. To achieve this we will

- Adopt and implement the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport as an integral part of our policy on children in the club
- Develop an awareness of the issues which lead to children being harmed
- Create an open environment by identifying a 'Children's Officer' as a Designated Person' to whom the children can turn to if they need to talk
- Adopt child centered and democratic coaching styles
- Adopt child protection guidelines through codes of conduct for children and all who work at the Club.
- Clearly define the role of committee members, all sports leaders and parents/guardians
- Adopt and consistently apply a safe and clearly defined method of recruiting and selecting sports leaders/instructors
- Ensure best practice throughout the Club by disseminating its code of conduct and displaying it in all facilities used by Club
- Ensure complaints and disciplinary procedures are included in our constitution.
- Keep child protection policies under regular review
- Have a Designated Person to act as liaison with the Statutory Authorities in relation to the reporting of allegations or suspicions of child abuse
- Develop effective procedures for responding to and recording accidents/incidents
- Promote the voice of the child, in particular through meetings and the AGM
- Ensure that all club members are given adequate notice of AGMs and other meetings and that minutes of all meetings(AGMs, SGMs, Committee) are recorded and safely filed

Date____/____/____
Children's Officer

Date____/____/____
Commodore



Appendix B: Incident Form

Refer to reference 2.

Appendix C: Emergency Telephone Number List

Emergency Services – 999 or 112

Tallaght Hospital (Adelaide and Meath Hospital inc. NCH) – (01)4142000

Beaumont Hospital, Dublin 6 – (01)8093000

Poisons Information Service (Beaumont Hospital) – (01)8379964

Eye and Ear Hospital, Dublin 2 – (01)6644600

Our Lady's Hospital for Sick Children, Crumlin – (01)4096100

St. James's Hospital, Dublin 8 – (01)410300



Appendix D: Guidelines for Instructors

Instructors should strive to interact positively with Juniors enhancing their involvement and enjoyment of sailing. Instructors should promote a safe sporting environment with a knowledge and understanding of their role and responsibilities. They should familiarise themselves with the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport (reference 3) and with Blessington Sailing Club's Child Welfare Policy and follow the procedures of the code.

Good practice involves:

- Always working in an open environment, ensuring the safety of all players by careful supervision and proper pre-planning of coaching / training sessions treating all children / juniors fairly and equally and with respect and dignity putting the welfare of the juniors first, before winning or achieving goals
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with juniors
- Proper supervision of juniors within the club and satisfactory ratio of instructors to junior sailors in accordance with ISA recommendations.
- Use of proper equipment appropriate to age group
- Having a first aid kit on hand in the event of an accident.
- Two accident forms must be completed following any injury that occurs along with details of any treatment given. All accidents to be reported to parents at collection
- Ensuring that if physical support is needed, when teaching a technique or skill that you explain to the junior sailor what you're doing and why. Any necessary contact should be in response to the needs of the junior sailor and it should be in an open environment with their understanding and permission.
- Maintaining the highest standard of personal conduct
- Avoiding negative put-downs or physical punishment (laps or push-ups) but applying fair consistent sanctions
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback, encouraging achievements rather than negative criticism
- Reporting any accusations made against you
- Keeping knowledge and skills updated through Continuous Professional Development



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To eliminate the incidence for abuse of children and help to protect staff and volunteers from false allegations being made, the following guidelines should be adhered to:

- Do not spend excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others
- Do not take children alone in a car on journeys, however short
- Do not take children to your home
- Where any of these are unavoidable, ensure they only occur with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge in the organisation or the child's parents

You should never

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun
- Let allegations a child makes go unchallenged or unrecorded; always act
- Do things of a personal nature that children can do for themselves.

However, it may be sometimes necessary for staff or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents.

In an emergency situation which requires this type of help, parents and immediate line manager should be fully informed. In such situations, it is important to ensure all staff are sensitive to the child and undertake personal tasks with the utmost discretion.

In addition, medical consent should be obtained in the event where medication or treatment is required to be administered in the absence of the parent/guardian. This includes hospitalisation.

I have read and agree to abide by the Guidelines for Instructors/Racing Coaches/Volunteers

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Parent for Instructors who are Minors. _____



Appendix E: Code of Conduct for Junior Members Code of Conduct for Junior Members

Blessington Sailing Club aims to provide the best possible environment for all young people involved in the sport. Junior members have rights which must be respected and responsibilities they must accept.

Children / Young people have the right to:

- Be safe.
- Be listened to.
- Be respected.
- Privacy.
- Enjoy your sport in a protective environment.
- Have a voice in the club.
- Be protected from abuse by other members or outside sources.
- Participate on an equal basis, appropriate to their ability.
- Experience competition and the desire to win.
- Be believed.
- Ask for help.

Children are expected to:

- Keep within the defined boundary of the club.
- Take care of equipment owned by the club.
- Refrain from the use of bad language or racial references.
- Refrain from bullying, physical or emotional, or use of rough or dangerous play.
- Show respect to other youth members and instructors.
- Keep themselves safe.
- Report inappropriate behavior or dangerous situations for youth members.
- Respect officials and accept decisions.
- Show appropriate loyalty and be gracious in defeat.
- Respect opponents.

Young members should never

- Cheat
- Use violence or physical contact that is not allowed within the rules
- Shout or argue with instructors, race officials or other sailors
- Bully or use bullying tactics to isolate another sailor
- Take banned substances
- Keep secrets ,especially if they have been caused harm
- Spread rumours or tell lies about other young people/adults
- Use mobile phones in a manner that may cause offence to others



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I have read the above and agree to abide by the Blessington Sailing Club Code of Conduct.

Junior member's signature _____ Date _____

Parent/Guardian signature _____ Date _____

Any misdemeanours and general misbehavior will be addressed by the course director and reported verbally to the designated person. Persistent misbehavior will result in dismissal from the club. Parents will be informed.

Dismissals can be appealed by the child/parent with final decisions taken by the club committee.

Safety Officer

Date _____

Commodore

Date _____