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### 1. Purpose

Scottish Rowing is committed to a sport where everyone can participate, compete, volunteer and work in a safe, inclusive and welcoming environment. Bullying is not tolerated in Scottish rowing and will be taken seriously and addressed.

This policy sets out what we mean by bullying, what we expect of everyone involved in Scottish rowing, and how concerns will be prevented, reported and responded to. It supports the delivery of Scottish Rowing: Strategic Plan 2026 and Beyond.

**Preventing bullying is essential to creating a safe, welcoming and high-performing rowing environment.**

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### 2. Policy Context

This policy is informed by Scotland's national approach to anti-bullying for children and young people (Respect for All), the work of respectme (Scotland's Anti-Bullying Service), and relevant UK guidance on preventing bullying in sport. It also reflects the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), recognising children and young people's right to protection from harm and to be heard in decisions that affect them.

It should be read alongside Scottish Rowing's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy and our wellbeing and protection procedures.

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### 3. Scope

This policy applies to all individuals and organisations involved in, or connected to, Scottish Rowing, including:

- Board members, employees and volunteers
- members, participants, athletes, coaches and officials
- affiliated clubs, event organisers and committees
- parents/carers and spectators at Scottish Rowing activity
- partners, contractors and suppliers

It applies to all Scottish Rowing activity, including training, competition, events, meetings, trips and tours, communications and digital spaces (including social media and messaging platforms).

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## 4. Principles

Our approach to preventing and responding to bullying is guided by these principles:

- We will put people's safety, wellbeing and rights at the heart of our decisions.
- We will promote inclusion, dignity and respect in all rowing environments.
- We will take concerns seriously and respond promptly and proportionately.
- We will handle information sensitively, respecting confidentiality and sharing it only where necessary to keep people safe or to take appropriate action.
- We will challenge harmful behaviour early and support positive relationships.
- We will not tolerate retaliation against anyone who raises a concern in good faith.

**Everyone involved in Scottish rowing shares responsibility for creating an environment where bullying is challenged and respect is the norm.**

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## 5. What we mean by bullying

Bullying is behaviour (face-to-face and/or online) that impacts a person's physical or emotional safety, their sense of control, and their ability to respond effectively to the situation. The behaviour does not need to be repeated or intended to cause harm to have an impact.

Bullying can take many forms, including:

- **Physical:** hitting, pushing, tripping, damaging belongings or equipment.
- **Verbal:** name-calling, threats, insults, teasing, humiliating comments, spreading rumours.
- **Social/relational:** excluding someone, isolating them, undermining relationships or reputation, coercion or manipulation.
- **Online/digital:** harmful behaviour via text, email, messaging apps, social media, gaming or other online platforms.
- **Prejudice-based bullying:** bullying related to a protected characteristic or other perceived differences (for example appearance, background, ability or social status), including attitudes or behaviours that are discriminatory even where they do not meet the legal definition of a protected characteristic.
- **Abuse or misuse of power:** behaviour that intimidates, undermines or humiliates someone, including where there is a power imbalance (for example coach/athlete, senior/junior, staff/volunteer).

Bullying may be a wellbeing and protection concern. Where behaviour suggests abuse, coercive control, hate crime, harassment or other serious harm, it will be managed under the relevant wellbeing and protection or disciplinary procedures and may require referral to statutory agencies.

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## 6. What bullying is not

It is important to respond proportionately. Not every unpleasant interaction is bullying. The following are not usually bullying (though they may still need to be addressed):

- a disagreement or conflict between people of similar power where no one is targeted
- a one-off mistake or accidental harm, where it is acknowledged and put right
- appropriate, constructive feedback delivered respectfully
- firm coaching or officiating decisions that are fair and within the rules

‘Banter’ is not an excuse. If behaviour is unwelcome or has a negative impact, we will treat it seriously.

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## 7. Preventing bullying

We will take active steps to reduce the likelihood of bullying and to create positive rowing environments. This includes:

- Clear standards of behaviour through Codes of Conduct and role-specific expectations (including coaches, officials, parents/carers and athletes).
- Visible, accessible reporting routes at club and Scottish Rowing level.
- Training and support for coaches, volunteers and welfare/ safeguarding leads.
- Attention to higher-risk settings (for example changing areas, travel, online groups, unstructured time and ‘hotspots’ at venues).
- Proportionate action to address patterns, cultures or structures that contribute to harmful behaviour.
- Promoting active bystanding, supporting individuals to safely challenge or report behaviour that is not acceptable. We recognise that ignoring or enabling harmful behaviour can contribute to bullying.

We will address patterns of low-level behaviour early, before they escalate into more serious harm.

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## 8. Reporting bullying concerns

If you believe someone is at immediate risk of harm, call the emergency services.

Otherwise, concerns can be reported in confidence as early as possible. You can raise a concern for yourself or for someone else. Where appropriate, concerns should first be raised with the relevant club welfare / safeguarding contact or event organiser.

You can also report directly to Scottish Rowing via [safesport@scottish-rowing.org.uk](mailto:safesport@scottish-rowing.org.uk)

If the concern involves a child or young person, or an adult at risk, it must be reported and managed through the appropriate wellbeing and protection procedure.

Anonymous reports can be harder to act on but will be considered and recorded. Wherever possible, we encourage people to share their name so that appropriate support and follow-up can be provided. We will handle information sensitively and in line with data protection requirements.

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## **9. How we will respond**

When a concern is raised, Scottish Rowing (and/or the relevant club/event organiser) will:

- Listen carefully, take the concern seriously and agree next steps.
- Record the concern and assess which procedure is appropriate (for example: wellbeing & protection; complaints; disciplinary; grievance).
- Take early action to stop harmful behaviour and reduce further risk, where possible.
- Investigate promptly and fairly where a formal process is required, giving people an opportunity to be heard.
- Agree proportionate outcomes and actions, which may include mediation or restorative approaches (where appropriate), education, warnings, restrictions, suspension or disciplinary action.

Where the person displaying bullying behaviour is a child or young person, responses will reflect their stage of development and the need for learning and support. We will:

- help them understand the impact of their behaviour
- set clear expectations and boundaries
- involve parents/carers where appropriate
- consider restorative or educational approaches alongside any formal action

The wellbeing and rights of the person who has experienced bullying will be prioritised. We will also consider the needs and responsibilities of the person whose behaviour is being challenged, including learning and support, while maintaining clear boundaries and accountability.

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## **10. Support**

Further practical guidance on responding to bullying situations, including approaches with children and young people, is set out in the Scottish Rowing Anti-Bullying Guidelines.

We will support those affected by bullying, which may include welfare support within the club or Scottish Rowing, adjustments to training/competition arrangements, and signposting to external support services.

We will not tolerate victimisation or retaliation against anyone who reports a concern or participates in a process in good faith.

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## 11. Roles and Responsibilities

### Scottish Rowing Board

- Holds ultimate responsibility for this policy and for organisational culture, and receives assurance on its effectiveness.
- Receives updates on learning and themes arising from cases (appropriately anonymised).

### Chief Executive Officer

- Is responsible for implementation and ensuring appropriate procedures are followed.
- Ensures staff and volunteers have access to training and support.

### Affiliated clubs and event organisers

- Are expected to promote positive culture and implement this policy within their environments.
- Should have clear welfare/ safeguarding contacts and codes of conduct, and know how to escalate concerns.

### Everyone involved in Scottish rowing

- Must treat others with dignity and respect.
- Should challenge inappropriate behaviour where safe to do so and report concerns early.

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## 12. Related Policies and Guidance

This policy should be read alongside (but not limited to):

- Scottish Rowing Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Wellbeing & Protection policies and procedures (Child Wellbeing & Protection; Adult Wellbeing & Protection)
- Complaints Procedure and Disciplinary Procedure
- Codes of Conduct (including coaches, officials, athletes and parents/carers)
- Data Protection Policy

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## 13. Review

This policy will be reviewed at least every three years, or sooner in response to changes in law, national guidance or learning from practice.

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#### **14. Approval**

This policy was approved by the Scottish Rowing Board in:

**March 2026**

Next review due:

**March 2029**

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