

Anti-Bullying Guidelines

Why These Guidelines Exist

These guidelines are here to help people across Scottish rowing recognise, prevent and respond to bullying in a practical and supportive way.

They sit alongside the Scottish Rowing Anti-Bullying Policy and are intended to support clubs, coaches, volunteers, officials and members to create environments where people feel safe, respected and able to take part.

They are not about adding process. They are about helping people use good judgement, act early and support each other, whether that's in the boathouse, on the water, during training, or when travelling to events.

Understanding Bullying

Bullying is behaviour that affects someone's physical or emotional safety, their sense of control, or their confidence to take part.

It can happen face-to-face or online. It can happen between people of a similar age or role, or where there is a difference in power or influence.

In rowing environments, this might happen within crews, training groups, squad settings, or social spaces around the club.

Bullying can take many forms, including:

- physical behaviour, such as pushing, tripping or damaging belongings or equipment
- verbal behaviour, such as insults, name-calling or spreading rumours
- social exclusion, such as isolating someone from a group, crew or training group
- online behaviour through messages, posts or group chats
- behaviour linked to prejudice or perceived difference
- misuse of authority or position
-

What matters most is the impact the behaviour has on the person experiencing it.

For the full definition, refer to the Anti-Bullying Policy.

Online and Digital Behaviour

Bullying that happens online should be taken just as seriously as behaviour that happens in person.

It might take place through:

- messaging apps or crew/squad group chats
- social media
- email or text messages
- online forums or gaming platforms
- sharing images or videos
-

This kind of behaviour can feel particularly difficult to deal with because it may continue outside the club environment and can be hard to step away from.

Examples might include:

- posting negative or humiliating comments about someone
- excluding someone from squad or crew group chats
- sharing rumours, images or personal information
- sending threatening or upsetting messages
- repeated or coordinated negative messages, including behaviour within group chats that targets or isolates an individual

If something online is having a negative impact on someone involved in rowing, including around training, selection or team environments, it should be treated as a concern and responded to in the same way as any other bullying behaviour.

When It Might Not Be Bullying

Not every difficult situation is bullying. It's important to take a calm and proportionate approach.

Examples that are not usually bullying (though they may still need addressed) include:

- a disagreement between people of similar influence
- a one-off mistake that is recognised and put right
- constructive feedback delivered respectfully
- fair coaching, selection or officiating decisions
-

Even where something is not bullying, it may still be inappropriate and should be addressed early.

Adult behaviour towards children and young people

Where an adult's behaviour causes distress or harm to a child or young person, this should be considered under Wellbeing & Protection procedures rather than being treated as peer-to-peer bullying.

When behaviour crosses a more serious line

Some situations may go beyond bullying and become a safeguarding or criminal matter. These must be dealt with through Wellbeing & Protection procedures.

Signs Someone May Be Experiencing Bullying

People don't always say when something is wrong. Sometimes there are small changes in behaviour that suggest someone may be struggling.

Things to be aware of might include:

- becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet
- reluctance to attend training, sessions or club activities
- loss of confidence
- avoiding certain people, crews or training groups
- possessions or equipment going missing or being damaged
- changes in mood or behaviour
- not wanting to travel to events or take part in squad activities

These signs don't always mean bullying is happening, but they are a reason to check in and offer support.

It's not your role to investigate. But it is your responsibility to take concerns seriously and act on them.

If Someone Tells You They Are Being Bullied

When someone opens up, your response matters.

LISTEN

Give them time to talk. Stay calm and take what they say seriously.

REASSURE

Thank them for speaking up. Let them know they've done the right thing.

RECORD

Write down what has been shared as soon as you can, using their words where possible.

REPORT

Share the concern with the Club Welfare & Protection Officer (CWPO) or follow the usual reporting routes.

Do not promise to keep secrets or try to deal with everything on your own.

If the concern involves a child, young person or adult at risk, it must be managed through Wellbeing & Protection procedures.

If someone is in immediate danger, contact the emergency services.

Responding in a Helpful Way

Bullying happens in the context of relationships. The aim is to stop the harm, support the person affected and help create a safer environment going forward.

Sometimes behaviour is influenced by wider factors, such as personal challenges, experiences or pressures. Understanding this can help shape a more effective response. However, it does not make harmful behaviour acceptable, and clear boundaries and accountability must be maintained.

Responses should be calm, fair and proportionate. Depending on the situation, this might include:

- reminding people of expectations and standards of behaviour
- having a conversation to address what has happened
- helping people understand the impact of their actions
- using restorative approaches where appropriate
- putting support or boundaries in place
- using formal processes where necessary
-

Some situations may arise from tensions within crews, squad dynamics, selection pressures or social environments. It is important to deal with behaviour early before it escalates.

The person affected should be listened to and, where appropriate, involved in deciding what happens next.

Avoiding Labels

It can be unhelpful to label people as “bullies” or “victims”.

It is usually more effective to focus on the behaviour, explain why it is not acceptable and support people to change.

Bullying behaviour must be challenged, but everyone should still be treated with dignity and respect. The aim is to stop the harm and improve the situation, not to stigmatise people.

Supporting and Managing Situations

Someone who has been bullied may feel they have lost control of what is happening. Giving them a voice in what happens next can help rebuild confidence and a sense of safety.

Different situations may call for different responses, such as:

- early conversations and boundary-setting
- restorative or solution-focused approaches
- mentoring, peer support or buddy systems
- adjustments to training groups or crew environments
- formal action where needed

People whose behaviour has caused harm may also need support to understand the impact of their actions and find better ways to respond in future.

Keeping a Record

Keeping a simple record helps ensure concerns are taken seriously and patterns can be spotted early.

Where possible, record:

- who was involved
- what happened
- where and when it happened
- the impact on the person affected
- any action taken

Information should only be shared on a need-to-know basis and handled sensitively.

The Role of Clubs

Clubs play an important part in setting the tone and creating positive environments.

Good practice includes:

- promoting clear expectations through Codes of Conduct
- making sure members understand what to expect from coaches, officials and volunteers, including where behaviour falls below expected standards and how to report concerns
- making sure people know how to raise concerns
- ensuring members know who the Club Welfare & Protection Officer (CWPO) is and how to contact them
- taking concerns seriously and acting early
- supporting coaches and volunteers to lead by example
- creating positive environments in the boathouse, on the water, during travel and at events
- challenging behaviour linked to prejudice or difference
- noticing patterns or tensions within squads or crews and addressing them early
- listening to the experiences of members and participants

Creating a respectful, supportive culture helps reduce the likelihood of bullying in the first place.

Related Policies

Clubs may wish to use a simple incident form. Key details might include:

- date of report
- who raised the concern
- who was involved
- what happened
- what action was taken
- any support provided
- who the concern was reported to
- outcome (if known)
-

Confidentiality must be maintained at all times. Information should only be shared where necessary to protect someone's wellbeing.

Further Support and Guidance

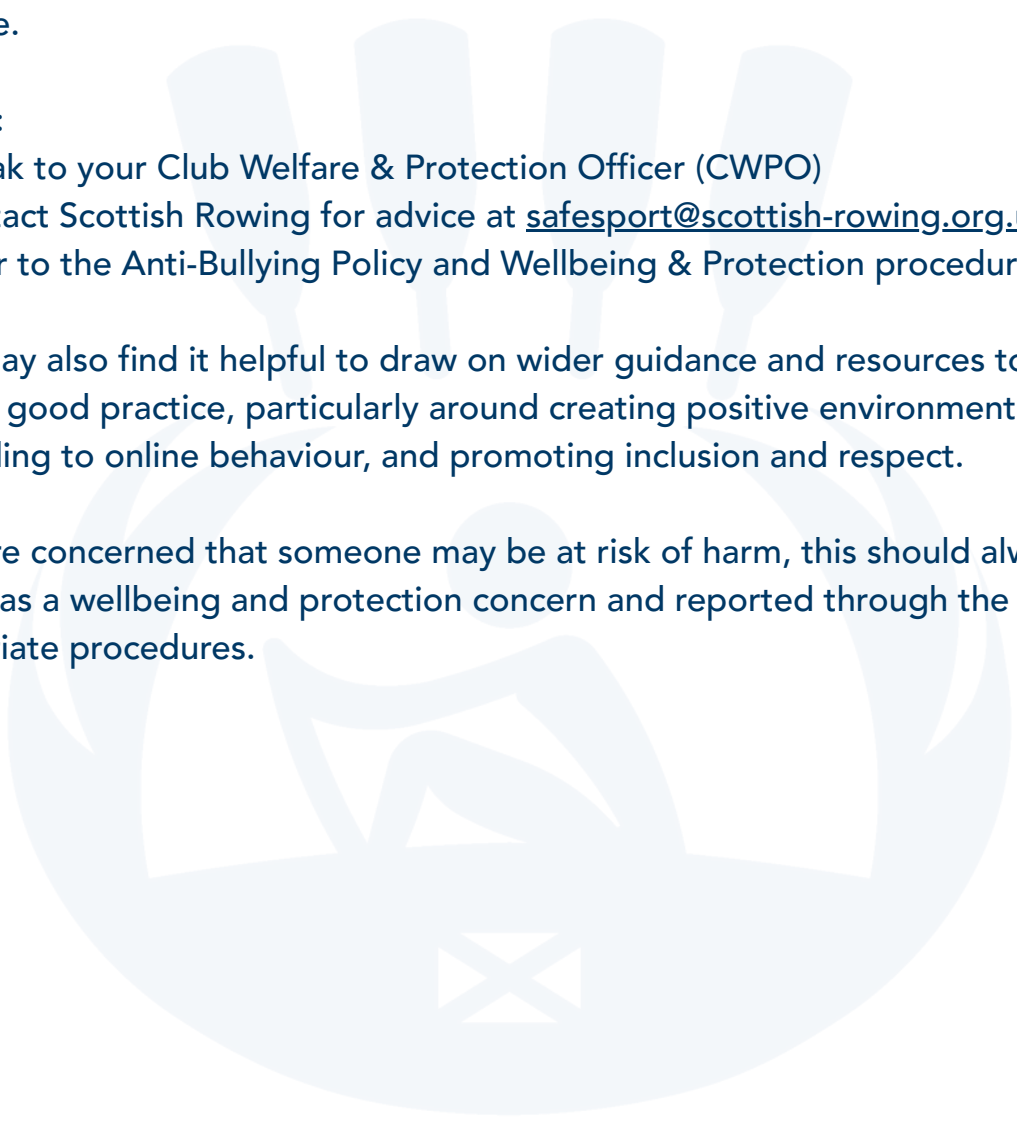
If you are worried about bullying, unsure what to do, or need advice, support is available.

You can:

- speak to your Club Welfare & Protection Officer (CWPO)
- contact Scottish Rowing for advice at safesport@scottish-rowing.org.uk
- refer to the Anti-Bullying Policy and Wellbeing & Protection procedures

Clubs may also find it helpful to draw on wider guidance and resources to support good practice, particularly around creating positive environments, responding to online behaviour, and promoting inclusion and respect.

If you are concerned that someone may be at risk of harm, this should always be treated as a wellbeing and protection concern and reported through the appropriate procedures.



SCOTTISH
ROWING