



Rowing South Africa Safeguarding Policy

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1. Definitions

In this Policy, unless the context otherwise requires,

“Abuse” or “harm” is any significant unfavourable or detrimental effect on personal holistic (mental, physical or emotional) well-being. This can include physical, sexual, emotional, psychological or spiritual abuse, or by way of neglect, bullying or child labour.

“Allegation” is an assertion that someone has caused harm or done something wrong.

“Associate” means any persons interacting with any of Rowing South Africa programs in any capacity; including but not limited to visitors, contractors, sub-contractors, consultants, interns.

“Child” means a person between the ages of 0 and 18, and for purposes of this Policy, shall be used in reference to a child under the care or protection of Rowing South Africa.

“Discipline” is orderly or prescribed conduct or pattern of behaviour but in the absence of this, discipline also refers to training that corrects, moulds or perfects the moral character.

“Employee” means an employee of Rowing South Africa.

“Mental/Emotional Abuse” is any action (gestures, words, behaviour) that deliberately affects a person’s mental or emotional well-being causing them to be afraid, anxious or discouraged.

“Neglect/Negligence” within the meaning of this document means the failure of a coach or another person with a duty of care towards the athlete to provide a minimum level of care to the athlete, which is causing harm, allowing harm to be caused, or creating an imminent danger of harm.

“Psychological Abuse” means any unwelcome act, including confinement, isolation, verbal assault, humiliation, intimidation, infantilization, or any other treatment which may diminish the sense of identity, dignity, and self-worth.

“Physical Abuse” means any deliberate and unwelcome acts such as for example punching, beating, kicking, biting and burning – that cause physical trauma or injury. Such acts can also consist of forced or inappropriate physical activity (e.g., age, or physique-inappropriate training loads; when injured or in pain), forced alcohol consumption, or forced doping practices. Physical Abuse is characterised by injuries that have occurred without a satisfactory explanation as to their cause.

“RowSA” is Rowing South Africa.

“Safeguarding” means actions, policies and procedures that create and maintain protective environments to protect people, including children from exploitation, harm and abuse of all kinds.

“Safeguarding Officer” means the appointed focal person to oversee and respond to any allegations of abuse or wrongdoing under this policy.

“Sexual Abuse” means the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions. All sexual activity with someone under the age of consent is considered to be sexual abuse.

“Sexual Exploitation” means any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes. It includes profiting monetarily, socially or politically from sexual exploitation of another.

“Sexual Harassment” means unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature that can include indecent remarks or sexual demands.



“Volunteer” means a person who offers volunteer services under specified terms to Rowing South Africa. This include local as well as international volunteers, and both short and long-term visitors.

“Vulnerable Person” means those who may be either unable to take care of themselves – due to their age, an illness, trauma, disability, or some other disadvantage – or unable to protect themselves against harm or exploitation. The vulnerability may be permanent (for example, an aged related vulnerability) or temporary (for example, a woman forced to move to a shelter due to personal circumstances). An organisations own workers and volunteers may be vulnerable, particularly if living and working in remote communities or countries experiencing conflict or disaster.

2. Purpose

Rowing South Africa’s Safeguarding Policy is designed to:

- 2.1. put measures and procedures in place to protect all participants of the sport from harm and prevent abuse;
- 2.2. comply with statutory requirements of South African legislation;
- 2.3. comply with safeguarding policies of the following organisations:
 - 2.3.1. Department of Sports, Arts and Culture of South Africa;
 - 2.3.2. South African Sports Confederation and Olympic Committee (SASCOC);
 - 2.3.3. African Rowing Federation (FASA);
 - 2.3.4. World Rowing (FISA).
- 2.4. Establish reporting and response procedures to suspected acts of abuse and harm;
- 2.5. Ensure accountability for the implementation of this policy

3. Scope and Application

The Safeguarding Policy applies to the following persons:

- 3.1. Employees, volunteers, and associates of Rowing South Africa
- 3.2. employees, volunteers, administrators, athletes, coaches, contractors, consultants, and associates of constituent member organisations of Rowing South Africa, such as rowing clubs, school clubs, provincial organisations, and interclub associations and federations;
- 3.3. all visitors to rowing events, regattas, and other fixtures organized under the umbrella of Rowing South Africa.

Failure to comply with the policy and related procedures may result in dismissal, exclusion, expulsion from the organization and/ or reporting to the necessary statutory agencies.

4. Types of Harassment and abuse

RowSA recognizes that harassment and abuse can be expressed in six forms which may occur in combination or in isolation. These include Psychological Abuse, Physical Abuse, Sexual Harassment, Sexual Abuse, Neglect, and/or Discriminatory Abuse.

4.1. Psychological Abuse, sometimes referred to as Emotional Abuse, can include the following:

- 4.1.1. Prevention of making choices or expressing their opinions;
- 4.1.2. Forced social isolation; not allowed to see friends, access education;
- 4.1.3. Denying access to mobility or communication aids;
- 4.1.4. Use of threats, fear or bribes;
- 4.1.5. Prevention of accessing services;
- 4.1.6. Cyber-bullying;
- 4.1.7. Intimidation, humiliation, bullying, threats, harassment, or verbal abuse.

Indicators of Psychological Abuse is taking place may include:

- 4.1.8. Low self-esteem
- 4.1.9. Change in behaviour around their abuser
- 4.1.10. Change in behaviour: becomes uncooperative, aggressive, tearful, angry, withdrawn
- 4.1.11. Change in appetite; unusual weight loss or gain.

4.2. Physical Abuse can include the following:

- 4.2.1. Assault; hitting, slapping, kicking, pinching, punching
- 4.2.2. Physical punishments
- 4.2.3. Force feeding or lack of feeding
- 4.2.4. Inappropriate use of restraint or restricting movement
- 4.2.5. Misuse of medication
- 4.2.6. Involuntary isolation
- 4.2.7. Purposefully making conditions uncomfortable, such as lack of warm bedding.

Indicators that physical abuse is taking place may include:

- 4.2.8. Unexplained bruising, burns, cuts/ marks, especially in well protected areas of the body;
- 4.2.9. Weight loss due to malnutrition
- 4.2.10. Subdued or behavioural changes, especially around the abuser;
- 4.2.11. Frequent injuries
- 4.2.12. Failure to seek medical treatment

4.3. Sexual Harassment and Abuse can include the following:

- 4.3.1. Inappropriate touching, sexual teasing, or innuendos;
- 4.3.2. Indecent exposure
- 4.3.3. Sexual photography or forced use of or exposure to pornography
- 4.3.4. Any sexual activity that is not consensual;
- 4.3.5. Rape, attempted rape or sexual assault.

Indicators of Sexual Harassment and Abuse can include:

- 4.3.6. Change in usual behaviour;
- 4.3.7. Bruising, particularly to the thighs, upper arms, neck and buttocks;
- 4.3.8. Bleeding, pain or itching in the genital area;
- 4.3.9. Difficulty walking;
- 4.3.10. Sudden onset of confusion, incontinence or soiling;
- 4.3.11. Overt sexual behaviour/ language which is out of character;
- 4.3.12. Sexually transmitted disease or infections;
- 4.3.13. Torn or stained underwear;
- 4.3.14. Agitation when being bathed;
- 4.3.15. Pregnancy in a person unable to consent.

4.4. Neglect can include the following

- 4.4.1. Absence of emotional, physical or medical health care;
- 4.4.2. Withholding of basic necessities such as; nutrition, heating and medication;
- 4.4.3. Isolation.

Indicators of Neglect can include:

- 4.4.4. Malnutrition;
- 4.4.5. Lack of basic necessities such as; food, heating, lighting and adequate clothing;
- 4.4.6. Isolation;
- 4.4.7. Poor physical condition or personal hygiene;
- 4.4.8. Pressure sores or ulcers;
- 4.4.9. Untaken medication.
- 4.4.10.

4.5. There is no place in rowing for Discrimination in any form. Discriminatory Abuse may occur based on:

- 4.5.1.Race or religion;
- 4.5.2.Gender or gender identity;
- 4.5.3.Age;
- 4.5.4.Disability;
- 4.5.5.Sexual orientation.

Indicators of Discriminatory Abuse may include:

- 4.5.6.Change in behaviour – anger, fear, frustration, anxiety and loss of self-esteem;
 - 4.5.7.Become withdrawn or isolated;
 - 4.5.8.Criminal damage to property;
 - 4.5.9.Derogatory comments, verbal or physical abuse in public places;
 - 4.5.10. Harassment;
 - 4.5.11. Hate mail, trolling on social media.
- 4.6. Harassment and abuse can be based on any grounds including race, religion, colour, creed,ethnic origin, physical attributes, gender, sexual orientation, age disability, socio-economic status and athletic ability. It can include a one-off incident or a series of incidents. It may be in person or online (or by other means). Harassment may be deliberate, unsolicited and coercive.
- 4.7. Harassment and abuse often result from an abuse of authority, meaning the improper use of a position of influence, power, or authority by an individual against another person.

5. Policy Implementation

RowSA Executive Committee is required to appoint a Designated Safeguarding Officer. If Safeguarding Officer position is vacant, the duties and responsibilities of Safeguarding Officer will be fulfilled by Chair of Athletes Commission of RowSA.

- 5.1. The Safeguarding Officer is responsible for:
- 5.1.1.Implementing this Policy;
 - 5.1.2.Raising awareness of this Policy and the procedure for reporting an incident of harassment and abuse, across all Participants of RowSA activities;
 - 5.1.3.Ensuring that reports of harassment and abuse that are brought to its attention are managed in a timely manner, fairly and responsibly;
 - 5.1.4.Providing appropriate support to concerned Participants of an alleged incident of harassment or abuse;



- 5.1.5. Imposing appropriate disciplinary or corrective measures when there has been a violation of this Policy;
- 5.1.6. Ensuring that there is a safeguarding plan and reporting procedure in place at all RowSA events;
- 5.1.7. Providing and raising awareness of suitable educational resources and training opportunities for Participants;
- 5.1.8. Updating the Policy and related procedures from time to time.
- 5.2. Constituent Members and Associate Members are responsible for:
 - 5.2.1. Defining and implementing their own policies and procedures to protect their athletes, staff and volunteers from harassment and abuse, adapted to the national legal framework and consistent with the RowSA Policy.
 - 5.2.2. Managing reports of alleged incidents of harassment and abuse relating to persons that are members of their Constituent and Associate Associations, through their regional bodies or clubs, including athletes, staff and volunteers.
 - 5.2.3. Ensuring all Participants representing RowSA in a RowSA activity, are aware of and understand the RowSA Policy on Safeguarding Participants in Rowing from Harassment and Abuse.
 - 5.2.4. Reporting to the RowSA Safeguarding Officer any formal disciplinary sanctions relating to harassment and abuse imposed by the member federation, and of any suspensions where the individual may present a risk to RowSA Participants at that time or in the future.

6. Awareness

- 6.1. RowSA will actively promote Safeguarding within the rowing community by implementing awareness programs for all members, including athletes, coaches, volunteers, and parents. These programs will focus on recognizing signs of abuse and harassment, understanding Safeguarding responsibilities, and knowing the proper procedures for reporting concerns.
- 6.2. To ensure accessibility and visibility, RowSA will distribute Safeguarding materials such as brochures, posters, and online resources. Regular communication through newsletters, social media, and events will keep the community informed about Safeguarding initiatives and updates.



- 6.3. RowSA will collaborate with its constituent members to deliver consistent Safeguarding messaging and training. Safeguarding awareness will also be integrated into events, with briefings and resources available to participants and attendees.
- 6.4. RowSA will establish feedback mechanisms, such as anonymous surveys, to gather input from the community and evaluate the effectiveness of its Safeguarding initiatives. Regular reviews will be conducted to ensure that all programs remain relevant and effective in addressing the needs of the South African rowing community.

7. Employee and Volunteer Recruitment

RowSA is committed to safe recruitment and screening practices. These practices aim to recruit the safest and most suitable people to work in our programmes.

- 7.1. Applicants for positions working directly with children and/or vulnerable people will be required by RowSA to provide evidence of good conduct, or evidence of no criminal record, with particular mention of offences related to child abuse or sexual misconduct.
- 7.2. Applicants shall be selected on the basis of their suitability for the activity requirements and responsibilities.
- 7.3. Rowing South Africa reserves the right to refuse employment or terminate any person's employment that may pose a risk to children or vulnerable people

8. Safeguarding Training

RowSA is committed to educating employees, volunteers and associates in Safeguarding and how to reduce risks and create safe environments.

- 8.1. RowSA will promote safe practices which keep children and vulnerable people safe within the organisation and in the community.
- 8.2. RowSA will provide employees, volunteers, associates and beneficiaries with information on their rights and how they can expect to be treated. This information will include reporting poor behaviour, child abuse or sexual misconduct if they have concerns about a RowSA member of staff or other representative in the organisation or in the community.
- 8.3. RowSA employees, short and long-term volunteers and associates might be required to participate in Safeguarding training as part of their induction, as well as ongoing refresher trainings at regular intervals set by management.

- 8.4. Where applicable, relevant staff will be supported to attend training delivered by internal or external specialists to stay informed of current practice relating to Safeguarding.

9. RowSA Communication and Use of Images

- 9.1. RowSA will protect the privacy of children and vulnerable people and prevent opportunities where children can be identified and contacted by potentially harmful people.
- 9.2. Children and vulnerable people are always portrayed in a dignified and respectful way.
- 9.3. Children and vulnerable people are adequately dressed and never portrayed in poses that could be seen as sexually suggestive or shown in isolation, rather they should be portrayed as part of their community and as resilient human beings and as partners in the development process.
- 9.4. Informed consent is always sought and documented from the vulnerable person or child (and/or parent or guardian of the child) before photographing or filming a child or vulnerable person or the use of their story. As part of this, the use of the photograph or film is explained.
- 9.5. There should be no identifying information of the child or vulnerable person used in the publication of images. This includes the family name, community or other identifying information.
- 9.6. RowSA will monitor the taking of photographs and reserve the right to curtail any sessions where it is felt that it is intrusive, or detrimental to the welfare of the child or vulnerable person. Similarly, RowSA reserves the right to ask photographers to refrain from taking photographs should there be any concerns as to their purpose, reasoning, or application.

10. Reporting and Investigating Allegations of Abuse or Misconduct

- 10.1. RowSA has put in place mechanisms to encourage everyone to report or speak against acts of abuse, harassment, and misconduct of any form.
- 10.2. Whenever such allegations are reported, RowSA shall ensure that the allegations are appropriately investigated and reported to the authorities or relevant agencies, and that during the investigation of such allegations, the person reporting any abuse is accorded utmost or appropriate protection from the person against whom the allegations are made.
- 10.3. It is mandatory for all RowSA employees and associates to report any witnessed, suspected or alleged incidents of abuse, misconduct or any breach of this Safeguarding Policy or Code of

Conduct. Concerns should be raised immediately and follow the reporting procedures as outlined in Appendix B.

- 10.4. Confidentiality is a key principle of reporting and managing Safeguarding concerns. All information regarding an incident must only be shared with the Safeguarding Officer or their Line Manager. The names of people involved and the details of the report will remain confidential. Information will only be released on a 'need to know' basis or when required by law or when a report to police or other authorities is made.
- 10.5. RowSA will treat all concerns raised seriously and ensure that all parties will be treated fairly and the principles of natural justice will be a prime consideration. All reports will be handled professionally, confidentially and expediently.
- 10.6. All reports made in good faith will be viewed as being made in the best interests of the victim/survivor regardless of the outcome of any investigation. RowSA will ensure that the interests of anyone reporting an incident in good faith are protected.
- 10.7. The rights and welfare of the victim/survivor is of prime importance. Every effort will be made to protect the rights and safety of the victim/survivor throughout the process.

11. Administration of Discipline

- 11.1. Disciplinary action will be taken against any personnel or associate found to:
 - 11.1.1. Have failed to report a concern they are aware of;
 - 11.1.2. Have intentionally made a false allegation;
 - 11.1.3. Have made a breach of the Safeguarding Policy.
- 11.2. Disciplinary action may include any or all of the following:
 - 11.2.1. Refresher training or increased supervision;
 - 11.2.2. Dismissal;
 - 11.2.3. Termination of all relationships including contractual and partnership agreements
 - 11.2.4. Reporting to authorities/police
 - 11.2.5. Ban to participating in all sporting activities up to 2 (two) full calendar years

APPENDIX A: Safeguarding Code of Conduct

RowSA has developed this Safeguarding Code of Conduct to protect athletes, staff and the organisation by providing clear behavioural guidelines and expectations. Every employee, volunteer, consultant and contractor that acts on behalf of Rowing South Africa must pledge that:

I will:

- Act in a manner which upholds the values and reputation of RowSA at all times
- Provide a welcoming, inclusive and safe environment for all
- Respect everyone and treat them equally regardless of gender, race, religious or political beliefs, age, physical or mental health, family and social background and culture, economic status or criminal background
- Report any concerns of harassment, abuse, misconduct, or breach of the Safeguarding Policy
- Take responsibility for ensuring that I am accountable and do not place myself in positions where there is a risk of allegations being made
- Be aware that sexual behaviour is an area of particular sensitivity, where conduct may more easily be seen as offensive or be misinterpreted.
- Comply with all relevant legislation
- Consult with the Safeguarding Officer if I have any questions regarding safeguarding and how it relates to my work/relationship with RowSA
- Comply with the RowSA Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

I Will Not

- Engage in behaviour that is intended to shame, humiliate, belittle, degrade or exploit others
- Use inappropriate, offensive or discriminatory language
- Do things of a personal nature that a child or vulnerable person can do for him/herself, such as assistance with toileting or changing clothes.
- Take children to my home or other private location or sleep in the same room or bed as a child
- Intimidate, humiliate, bully, threaten, harass, or verbally abuse anyone
- Smack, hit or physically assault others
- Sexually exploit, sexually abuse or sexually harass anyone.
- Engage in sexual relationships with children or vulnerable people, or any other such relationships that based on unequal power dynamics. There is a potential for abuse of power.



- Engage in sexual activity with a child under any circumstances. Even in a country where the age of consent is lower than 18 years. A mistaken belief that the child is over 18 is not a defense.
- Exchange or withhold money, employment, goods or services, protection or assistance for sex, including sexual favours or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitive behaviour. Develop relationships with children or vulnerable people that may be deemed exploitative or abusive
- Condone or participate behaviour of children or vulnerable people that is illegal, unsafe or abusive
- Act in a way that shows unfair and differential treatment of children or vulnerable people
- Photograph, video or interview a child or vulnerable person without the informed and documented consent of the vulnerable person or child (and his/her parents or guardians).
- Hold, kiss, cuddle or touch a child or vulnerable person in an inappropriate, unnecessary or culturally insensitive way.
- Seek to make contact and spend time with any child or vulnerable person outside of my work responsibilities
- Use RowSA computers, mobile phones, video and digital cameras inappropriately, nor use them for the purpose of exploiting or harassing children or vulnerable people.

All employees and volunteers of RowSA shall be required to know and comply with this Policy, failing which disciplinary action will be taken and may result in loss of employment and criminal charges.



APPENDIX B: Reporting Procedure for Harassment and Abuse

Who should report?

All Rowing South Africa staff, volunteers, beneficiaries, children and associates including people in the community and partner organisations.

Who to report to?

Directly to the Safeguarding Officer or your line manager. The Safeguarding Officer will complete the reporting form with you to capture the required information.

What should be reported?

Any disclosure, concern or allegation from a child, community member, staff or associate regarding the safety, abuse or exploitation of another person.

NOTE: this includes actual, suspected, or risk of abuse or harm.

Any observation or concerning behaviour exhibited by a RowSA staff member, child, volunteer or other associate that breaches the Safeguarding Policy or Code of Conduct.

When to report?

Concerns should be raised immediately to the Safeguarding Officer.

Under no circumstances should an employee conduct an investigation into the allegation or suspicion of abuse; the role of the employee is to report abuse to the relevant Safeguarding Officer or supervisor

How should it be reported?

Verbally to the Safeguarding Officer and through completing the reporting form with the Safeguarding Officer.

What will happen next?

The Safeguarding Officer will:

- Ensure the immediate safety of the victim/survivor
- Conduct an initial assessment
- Undertake a confidential and respectful process of gathering and documenting information
- May appoint an external investigator or internal Safeguarding Committee
- Conduct an internal investigation by assigned parties in a timely, fair and objective manner
- Maintain confidentiality
- Report to police and relevant governing authorities where appropriate
- Conduct appropriate disciplinary action, including suspension or termination of employment, depending on the circumstance
- Keep records



APPENDIX C: Reporting Form for Incidents of Harassment and Abuse

ROWING SOUTH AFRICA REPORTING FORM FOR INCIDENTS OF HARASSMENT AND ABUSE									
1. Your name:					2. Name of organisation:				
3. Your role:									
4. Your contact information:									
Address:					Email address:				
					Telephone number:				
5. Name of the person you have concerns about					6. The individual's date of birth				
[the individual]:					(dd-mm-yyyy):				
7. Their ethnic origin:					8. Does this person have a disability:				
☐ BLACK	☐ WHITE	☐ COLOURED	☐ INDIAN/ ASIAN	☐ OTHER	☐ YES	☐ NO			
10. The individual's gender:					9. The individual's position/role (athlete/coach/other):				
☐ MALE	☐ FEMALE	☐ NON-BINARY			☐ COACH	☐ ATHLETE	☐ OTHER		
11. If they are under 18 years, full name(s) of their parent(s) / carer(s):									
12. Contact information (parents/carers):									
Address:					Email address:				
					Telephone number:				
13. Have the parents / carers been notified of this incident?									
☐ YES	☐ NO								
If YES please provide details of what was said/action agreed:									
14. Are you reporting your own concerns or responding to concerns raised by someone else:									
☐ RESPONDING TO MY OWN CONCERNS			☐ RESPONDING TO CONCERNS RAISED BY SOMEONE ELSE						



14.1 If responding to concerns raised by someone else, please provide further information below.	
4.1.1 Name of the person who has raised the concern to you:	
4.1.2 Position within the sport or relationship to the individual named above:	
4.1.3 Contact details of the individual named above	
Email address:	Telephone number:
15. Date and times of incident:	
16. Details of the incident or concerns. <i>Include other relevant information, such as description of any injuries and whether you are recording this incident as fact, opinion or hearsay.</i>	

17. The individual's account of the incident (if known):
18. Please provide any witness accounts of the incident:



19. Please provide details of any witnesses to the incident:	
Name:	Position within the club/organisation or relationship to the individual:
Date of birth (if child):	
Address:	Email address:
	Telephone number:
20. Please provide details of any person involved in this incident or alleged to have caused the incident / injury:	
Name:	Position within the club/organisation or relationship to the individual:
Date of birth (if child):	
Address:	Email address:
	Telephone number:
21. Please provide details of action taken to date:	
22. Has the incident been reported to any external agencies?	
☐ YES	☐ NO
22.1 If YES please provide further details:	
Name of organisation / agency:	Contact person:
Telephone numbers:	Email address:
Agreed action or advice given:	
Your Signature:	
Print name:	
Date:	