

# **Irish Water Safety**

## **NATIONAL CODE OF ETHICS & GOOD PRACTICE FOR CHILDREN\***

### **Involved in Water Safety Activities**

**Irish Water Safety (IWS) is the statutory voluntary body established to promote water safety in Ireland. We educate people in water safety best practices. We develop public awareness campaigns to promote necessary attitudes, rescue skills and behaviour to prevent drowning and water related accidents. We teach swimming and lifesaving.**

The guidelines in this document are based on, and draw from the national guidelines as outlined in the following documents: -

- Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport, Irish Sports Council, 2000.
- Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children, Dept. of Health & Children 1999
- Our Duty to Care, Dept. of Health & Children 2002
- Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998
- Child Trafficking and Pornography Acts 1998 - 2004

*\* The Child Care Act, 1991, defines "child " as "a person under the age of 18 years other than a person who is or has been married".*

*In these guidelines the terms 'child' and 'young person' are used interchangeably and refer to a person of less than 18 years of age.*

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## FOREWORD AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This publication contains the current procedure and approach of Irish Water Safety in dealing with a code of ethics and good practice for children involved in water safety activities. It also emphasises in detail the volunteer policies for members of Irish Water Safety.

Irish Water Safety's "**National Code of Ethics & Good Practice for Children**" is a very important component of the curriculum when teaching children. It is important that such codes of practice are clearly outlined so that procedures are followed and immediately implemented if and when ever required. I wish to emphasise the importance of this element of teaching under the auspices of Irish Water Safety. There is no room for complacency in this matter and it is incumbent upon all members dealing with young people under instruction or otherwise to ensure that the Code is fully adhered. Therefore it is of prime importance that members of Irish Water Safety receive adequate time and training in the detail of the code to protect the young and those who have responsibility for them within instructional classes or within lifesaving sport in Irish Water Safety

In dealing with Members of Irish Water Safety it was found that there was not in place a defined code for volunteers. This void, left a certain gray area between the commitment of the volunteer towards Irish Water Safety, and indeed, from the organisation to the volunteer. It was therefore decided by Council that such a code should be put in place and this is now covered within the "**Volunteer Policies for Members**". The policies outline the expected commitment of respect of both parties to one another and while it does not form a contract it is a memorandum of understanding, which should be respected within the structure of Irish Water Safety.

As a Lifesaving Organisation, Irish Water Safety has taken a leading role in developing these codes in line with best practice. The Council has approved these Codes and they must be read, understood and accepted by each and every member of Irish Water Safety. I am confident that they reflect the positive contribution that Irish Water Safety makes to best practice in the area of child protection and volunteerism.

I wish to thank the Education Commission and the Finance Commission and Members of Council for working so diligently to bringing these publications to fruition and dealing with and advising on the many aspects concerning correct procedures to be followed. I would also like to thank the Royal National Lifeboat Institution for allowing us to extrapolate and use various sections of their volunteer policy documentation, which has been most helpful to Irish Water Safety. In conclusion, I thank all the voluntary members and staff of Irish Water Safety who have contributed and assisted in compiling this publication in an effort to protect children and ensure that Volunteer Policies are in place.



Frank Nolan  
Chairman  
Irish Water Safety  
2007

## PREFACE

This document is intended to guide IWS personnel on how to avoid allegations of child abuse arising in the course of our normal activities. It is not the intention of the Association to create or foster a perception that children taking part in our activities are at risk, rather it is our intention to deliver our programme of instruction in swimming and water safety in a manner that ensures that our volunteers and participating children are fully protected so that their experience of dealing with our organisation will be entirely proper, competent, positive and beneficial.

## POLICY STATEMENT

**Irish Water Safety (IWS)** is fully committed to safeguarding the well being of its members. Every individual member in **Irish Water Safety** should at all times, show respect and understanding for fellow-members' rights, safety and welfare and conduct themselves in a way that reflects the principles of the organisation's *Code of Ethics* and the guidelines contained in *Children First* and the *Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport*. *To this end training in child protection is mandatory for all members of IWS*. This Code will, following adoption by the Association's Council, apply to all registered members of IWS.

In **Irish Water Safety** our first priority is the welfare of the young people and we are committed to providing an environment that will allow participants to perform to the best of their ability, free from bullying, intimidation or abuse.

In drawing up this Code, **Irish Water Safety** makes explicit the essential values, beliefs, attitudes and responsibilities which underpin all the activities of IWS members. The Code also illustrates the complexity of the tasks which members undertake in collaboration with colleagues, participants, parents and other agencies.

## Mission Statement

**Irish Water Safety** is the statutory and voluntary body established ( by Statutory Instrument No 389 of 2006) to promote public awareness of water safety in Ireland. Through Water safety education and training, Irish Water safety strives to promote a stronger water safety ethos and culture in order that everybody will have the water safety attitude, skills and necessary behaviour to safely use and enjoy our aquatic environment<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> For the definitive statement of the Association's legal responsibilities, please refer to Statutory Instrument No 389 of 2006.

## **Vision**

*Every person a swimmer*

*Every swimmer a lifesaver*

## **Core Values for Irish Water Safety Members**

A young persons' experience of water safety should be guided by what is best for that young person. The stages of development and the commensurate ability and potential of the young person should guide the types of activity provided within the organisation. Adults will therefore need to have a basic understanding of the needs of young people, including physical, emotional and personal needs.

### ***Quality of Instruction***

Members promote and maintain the highest quality of educational experiences for participants. Members facilitate participant progression in their learning and development and their effective engagement in all areas of water safety.

### ***Commitment***

Members are committed to the highest standards of service to participants and understand that the safety of participants is their primary obligation.

### ***Responding to Change***

Members acknowledge the changing nature of society and recognise their role in providing appropriate educational responses to cater for the identified needs of participants and society in general.

### ***Continual Professional Development***

Members reflect upon and continue to improve their own practice and are provided by Irish Water safety with opportunities to engage in continuous professional development by attendance at seminars and conferences.

### ***Social Justice, Equality and Inclusion***

Members in their various roles show commitment to democracy, social justice, equality and inclusion. They encourage active citizenship in all aspects of water safety.

### ***Collegiality***

Members work in collegiality with colleagues in the interests of sharing, promoting, developing and supporting best safety practice.

### ***Collaboration***

Members work collaboratively with participants, parents, the public and other agencies in developing shared goals towards the promotion of water safety the eradication of water-based accidents.

### ***Respect***

Members respect participants, parents, colleagues and all in the community and work to establish and maintain an attitude of mutual respect.

### ***Care***

As well as the legal duty of care which members exercise, their role as carer is central to their membership value system. Their practice is motivated by the best interests of the participants entrusted to their care.

### ***Co-Operation***

Members engage in a professional manner with participants, the wider community and other agencies.

## **A Charter for Volunteers in Ireland**

### **VOLUNTEERS' RIGHTS**

A volunteer shall have the right:

1. To know if, and how, they are being selected
2. To be given meaningful work to do
3. To know what is expected from them
4. To be offered appropriate training
5. To be thanked and have their voluntary contribution recognised
6. To receive supervision and support
7. To get something out of the work for themselves
8. To know who to go to if there is a problem
9. To be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses incurred when volunteering
10. To make mistakes and learn from them
11. To be made aware of any disciplinary and grievance procedures
12. To be treated fairly and not to experience discrimination
13. To have safe working conditions, including insurance cover
14. To be informed about, and given the opportunity to play an active part in, the organisation as a whole
15. To be able to say 'no' and to leave without feeling guilty

### **VOLUNTEERS' RESPONSIBILITIES**

A Volunteer shall be held responsible

1. To respect the values and aims of the organisation
2. To be committed
3. To be reliable and give the organisation sufficient warning if unable to turn up
4. To be punctual
5. To attend essential training and support sessions
6. To undertake the work to a high standard
7. To be honest if there are problems
8. To respect confidentiality
9. To leave when asked and/or when no longer enjoying the volunteering experience



## **ORGANISATIONS' RESPONSIBILITIES**

Irish Water Safety commits itself:

1. To ensure the volunteering experience is a rewarding one
2. To ensure equal access and not to discriminate
3. To define clear, meaningful roles for volunteers
4. To have policies and procedures for volunteers
5. To provide all necessary information to volunteers
6. To be available for volunteers
7. To provide training where necessary
8. To thank and value volunteers
9. To provide insurance cover
10. To inform volunteers of any legal liabilities
11. To supervise and to provide support
12. To reimburse out of pocket expenses
13. To provide a safe working environment

## **ORGANISATIONS' RIGHTS**

Irish Water Safety has the right:

1. To look for certain qualities and skills in volunteers
2. To select only volunteers who are suitable for the work
3. To draw up a volunteer agreement or "contract"
4. To ask for tasks to be done in a particular way
5. To ask for commitment
6. To ask for reliability
7. To ask for punctuality
8. To deal with disciplinary and grievance matters
9. To ask volunteers to leave if their involvement hinders the organisation achieving its goals

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF SOURCE MATERIAL:

This charter has been produced by Volunteering Ireland, Carmichael centre for Voluntary Groups, with input from VOLT: the Irish Network of Volunteer coordinators, based on a model from the Volunteer Development Agency in Northern Ireland

## Guiding Principles for IWS Activities

The work of **Irish Water Safety** is based on the following principles that will guide the development of young people in this organisation, (as outlined in page 9, *Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport*).

### ***Integrity in relationships***

Adults interacting with young people in lifesaving should do so with integrity and respect for the child. There is a danger that some contexts can be used to exploit or undermine children. All adult actions in IWS should be guided by what is best for the child and in the context of quality, open working relationships. Verbal, physical, emotional or sexual abuse of any kind is unacceptable within IWS.

### ***Quality atmosphere and ethos***

Water Safety activities for young people should be conducted in a safe, positive and encouraging atmosphere. A child-centred ethos will help to ensure that competition and specialisation are kept in their appropriate place. Too often competitive demands are placed on children too early, resulting in excessive levels of pressure on them and a consequential high level of dropout.

### ***Equality***

All children should be treated in an equitable and fair manner regardless of age, ability, sex, religion, social and ethnic background or political persuasion. Children with disability should be involved in water safety activities in an integrated way, thus allowing them to participate to their potential alongside other children.

### ***Fair Play***

Fair play is the guiding principle of the *IWS Code of Ethics*. All children's activities should be conducted in an atmosphere of fair play. Ireland has contributed and is committed to the European Code of Sports Ethics, which defines fair play as: "much more than playing within the rules". It incorporates the concepts of friendship, respect for others and always playing with the right spirit. Fair play is defined as a way of thinking, not just behaving. It incorporates issues concerned with the elimination of opportunities, excessive commercialisation and corruption.

### ***Competition***

A balanced approach to competition can make a significant contribution to the development of young people, while at the same time providing fun, enjoyment and satisfaction. Members should aim to put the welfare of the child first. A child-centred approach will help to ensure that competition and specialisation are kept in their appropriate place.

## **Code of Conduct for Young People**

**Irish Water Safety** wishes to provide the best possible environment for all young people involved in our activities. Young people deserve to be given enjoyable, safe opportunities, free of abuse of any kind. These participants have rights, which must be respected, and responsibilities that they must accept. Young people should be encouraged to realise that they have responsibilities to treat other participants and IWS personnel with fairness and respect.

### ***Young participants are entitled to: -***

- Be safe and to feel safe
- Be listened to
- Be believed
- Be treated with dignity, sensitivity and respect
- Have a voice in the club/organisation
- Participate on an equal basis
- Have fun and enjoy sport
- Experience competition at a level at which they feel comfortable
- Make complaints and have them dealt with
- Get help against bullies
- Say No
- Protection for their own bodies
- Confidentiality

### ***Young participants should always: -***

- Treat IWS personnel with respect –trainee instructors, instructors, teachers and examiners.
- Play fairly at all times, do their best
- Respect team members, even when things go wrong
- Respect opponents, be gracious in defeat
- Abide by the rules set down by team managers when travelling to away events.
- Behave in a manner that avoids bringing the sport of lifesaving into disrepute
- Talk to children's officer if they have any problems – deck manager, designated liaison person.

### ***Young participants should never: -***

- Cheat
- Use violence or physical contact that is not allowed within the rules
- Shout or argue with officials, team mates or opponents
- Harm team members, opponents or their property
- Bully or use bullying tactics to isolate another player
- Use unfair or bullying tactics to gain advantage
- Take banned substances
- Keep secrets, especially if they have been caused harm
- Tell lies about adults/young people
- Spread rumours

For more information on Guidelines for Children see Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport, pages 29/30 section 4.4

## **Guidelines for Parents**

**Irish Water Safety** expects that parents should: -

- Be a role model for your child and maintain the highest standards of conduct when interacting with children, other parents, with officials and organisers
- Always behave responsibly and do not seek to unfairly affect the performance of others.
- Never intentionally expose any young participant to embarrassment or disparagement by the use of flippant or sarcastic remarks
- Always recognise the value and importance of the volunteers who provide sporting/recreational opportunities for your child. Do not publicly question the judgement or honesty of referees, coaches or organisers. Respect all IWS personnel.
- Encourage your child to play by the rules. Teach your child that honest endeavour is as important as winning and do all you can to encourage good sportsmanship.
- Set a good example by applauding good play on both sides. Encourage mutual respect for teammates and opponents in lifesaving sport competitions.
- Parents should support all efforts to remove abusive behaviour and bullying behaviour in all its forms and read bullying policy contained in these guidelines.

***Parents Code of Conduct: -***

1. I will respect the rules and procedures set down in **Irish Water Safety Code** of Ethics.
2. I will respect my child's teammates, leaders, coaches, officials, as well as competitors, parents and coaches from opposing teams and referees/judges in lifesaving sport competition. I will encourage my child to treat other participants, coaches, selectors, managers and referees/judges with respect.
3. I will give encouragement and applaud only positive accomplishments whether from my child, his/her teammates, their opponents or the officials in lifesaving sport.
4. I will respect my child and support his/her efforts
5. I will respect the officials and their authority during sessions and events.
6. I will never demonstrate threatening or abusive behaviour or use foul language.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Child(ren) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

For more information on Guidelines for Parents see Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport, pages 28/29 section 4.3

## **Guidelines for IWS Members involved in Sport**

IWS members should strive to create a positive environment for the children in their care. They have an overall responsibility to take the necessary steps to ensure that positive and healthy experiences are provided.

**Irish Water Safety** recognises the key role leaders – coaches, selectors and team managers, etc. – play in the lives of children in sport. These roles include: -

1. All IWS members should have as their first priority the children's safety and enjoyment of the sport and should adhere to the guidelines and regulations set out in the club's Code of Ethics.
2. All IWS members must respect the rights, dignity and worth of every child and must treat everyone equally, regardless of sex, ethnic origin, religion or ability.
3. All IWS members working with young people in water safety should be suitable and appropriately qualified. All IWS personnel will be expected to go through appropriate recruitment and selection procedures that apply to all persons with substantial access to young people, whether paid or unpaid. References will be needed and will be followed up.
4. There will be a 'sign-up' procedure, whereby the appointed/reappointed leaders agree to abide by the *Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children in Sport* and to the policies and code of the club/organisation.
5. All IWS members will be given a copy of the club/organisation's code of ethics and they should be made aware of the procedures contained within the club/organisation's code.
6. Once appointed all IWS personnel must act as a role model and promote the positive aspects of sport and of Irish Water Safety and maintain the highest standards of personal conduct.
7. The use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco must be actively discouraged as being incompatible with a healthy approach to sporting activity.
8. Remember your behaviour to others will have an effect on the children in your care.
9. Be generous with praise and never ridicule or shout at participants for making mistakes. All participants are entitled to respect.
10. Be careful to avoid the "star system". Each child deserves equal time and attention.
11. Care must be taken not to expose a child intentionally or unintentionally to embarrassment or disparagement by use of sarcastic or flippant remarks about the child or his/her family.

12. Physical punishment or physical force must never be used. Never punish a mistake - by verbal means, physical means, or exclusion.
13. Insist that participants in your care respect the rules of the game. Insist on fair play and ensure participants are aware you will not tolerate cheating or bullying behaviour.
14. Remember that young participants play for fun and enjoyment and that skill development and personal satisfaction have priority over highly structured competition. Never make winning the only objective.
15. Encourage the development of respect for all involved in water safety activities.
16. When travel/overnight travel is involved, the IWS members travelling with children must sign a separate agreement. Parents and participants will also be asked to sign permission forms in these instances.
17. Members are responsible for setting and monitoring the boundaries between a working relationship and friendship with participants. It is advisable for IWS personnel not to involve young participants in their personal life i.e. visits to homes or overnight stays.
18. Avoid working alone and ensure there is adequate supervision for all activities.
19. It is important to realise that certain situations or friendly actions could be misinterpreted by the participant or by outsiders.
20. When young participants are invited into adult groups, it is recommended to get agreement from a parent/carer. Boundaries of behaviour in adult groups are normally different from the boundaries that apply to junior group.
21. All IWS members who become aware of a conflict between their obligation to their participants and their obligation to the organisation must make explicit the nature of the conflict and the loyalties and responsibilities involved, to all parties concerned.
22. All IWS members should communicate and co-operate with medical and ancillary practitioners in the diagnosis, treatment and management of their participants' medical or related problems. Avoid giving advice of a personal or medical nature if you are not qualified to do so. Any information of a personal or medical nature must be kept strictly confidential unless the welfare of the child requires the passing on of this information.
23. The nature of the relationship between members and a participant can often mean that an IWS member will learn confidential information about a participant or participant's family. This information must be regarded as confidential and except where abuse is suspected, must not be divulged to a third party without the express permission of the participant/family

24. Set realistic goals and do not push young participants. Create a safe and enjoyable environment
25. Do not criticise other IWS members. You are the role model for the children in your care
26. All IWS members should avoid the inappropriate use of alcohol, before coaching and during events

For more information on Guidelines for Sports' Leaders see Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport, see pages 27/28 section 4.2

### **Code of Conduct for IWS Members**

All IWS members should familiarise themselves with the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport and with the **Irish Water Safety** Code of Conduct and follow the procedures if they suspect or receive complaints of abuse of any sort.

#### **All IWS members should: -**

- Be positive during session, praise and encourage effort as well as results
- Plan and prepare appropriately
- Put welfare of young person first.
- Encourage fair play, treat participants equally
- Recognise developmental needs
- Be qualified and up-to-date with knowledge and skills of sport for instruction and examination.
- Involve parents where possible and inform parents when problems arise
- Keep records of class attendance and training
- Keep a brief record of injury(s) and action taken
- Keep a brief record of problem/action/outcomes, if behavioural problems arise

#### **Where possible All IWS members should avoid: -**

- Spending excessive amounts of time with children away from others
- Taking sessions alone



- Taking children to your home
- Taking children alone in their car

**IWS members should not: -**

- Use any form of punishment or physical force on a child
- Exert undue influence over a participant in order to obtain personal benefit or reward
- Engage in rough physical games, sexually provocative games or allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any kind, and /or make sexually suggestive comments about, or to a child
- Take measurements or engage in certain types of fitness testing without the presence of another adults

I have read and agree to abide by the above guidelines

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Qualification(s)/role(s) within IWS \_\_\_\_\_

## **Disciplinary, Complaints and Appeals Procedure**

Irish Water Safety has a complaints procedure in place that allows all members who are dissatisfied to register their complaint in a formal way and put an open process of investigation into action.

- Any member of IWS may lodge complaints.
- The secretary of the local Water Safety Area Committee should receive them in writing.
- The complaint should outline all relevant details about other parties involved.
- The complaint should be brought to the attention of the WSAC Chairperson who will convene a disciplinary committee.
- If the complaint involves a criminal offence the chairperson should disband the disciplinary committee and refer the issue to the CEO. The statutory authorities will then be informed.
- The disciplinary committee should hear the case of all parties involved and decide if a rule or regulation has been infringed.
- They should, in writing, inform those involved of the sanctions to be imposed. Written notification should be given to parents if the complaint is against a junior member.
- Keep all records on file.
- If any party does not agree with the disciplinary committee they can appeal the decision in writing within 10-day period.
- The appeals committee is convened, whose chairperson should be taken from the executive committee and those who have not been on the original disciplinary committee.
- The appeals committee should confirm or set aside or change any sanction imposed by the disciplinary committee.

For more information on Disciplinary, Complaints and Appeals Procedures see Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport, page 22 section 3.4

## **Recruitment and Selection Policy**

**Irish Water Safety** will take reasonable steps, including the measures set out at 1-7 hereunder, 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 young people, whether paid or unpaid.

1. All adults taking responsibility for children in water safety activities should undergo a recruitment process. The responsibilities of the role and the level of experience/qualifications required should be drawn up and clearly stated beforehand.
2. Volunteers should fill in an application form – see sample – giving names of two referees that can be contacted.
3. Where possible there should be an interview, which may be conducted informally.
4. A probationary period is advisable
5. There will be an enrolment procedure, whereby the newly recruited volunteers, agree to abide by the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children in Sport and to IWS's Code and policies.
6. Every effort should be made to manage and support appointed members. Adequate supervision should always be provided; a member should not have to work alone.
7. A decision to accept a member is the responsibility of the organisation and not of any one individual within it. The organisation's committee should ratify all recommendations for appointment.

For more information on Recruitment and Selection Policies see Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport, page 23 section 3.5

## Application Form for Membership

Position applied for: \_\_\_\_\_

Full name:

Maiden name  
(if applicable):

Current  
address:

Telephone no:

Date of birth:

Place of birth:

PPS no:

Previous experience/involvement in this organisation or any other club or similar:

Do you agree to abide by the guidelines contained in IWS's Code of Ethics and the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport?

Yes

No

Do you agree to abide by the rules of the Irish Water Safety Association?

Yes

No

Have you ever been asked to leave a sporting organisation in the past?  
If you answer yes, we will need to contact you, in confidence.

Yes

No

Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence or been the subject of a caution, a Bound Over Order, or are you at present the subject of a criminal investigation?

Yes

No

If so, please state the nature and date(s) of the offence(s) or alleged offence(s):

**References:** Please supply the name and address of two people who we can contact and who, from personal knowledge, are willing to endorse your application. One of these names should be, where possible, the name of an administrator/leader in your last club/place of involvement

Name and Address of Referee 1:

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Name and Address of Referee 2:

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I agree to abide by the *Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport* and the IWS's Code of Ethics. I expressly consent to contact being made by Irish Water Safety with the persons nominated as referees for purposes of reasonable enquiry and I consent to the outcome of such enquiries being held confidentially by Irish Water Safety.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY:

Date application received:

Date of interview:

Interviewed by:

Interviewed by:

Recommendation:

Approved

☐

Not Approved

☐

Reasons:

## IRISH WATER SAFETY

### Confidential Reference Form

This form can be used as a telephone reference or used as a written reference

The following person, \_\_\_\_\_ has expressed an interest in working with

**Irish Water Safety** as \_\_\_\_\_ (*name position*).

The person has nominated you to provide this reference and authorised Irish Water Safety to seek it – copy of authorisation attached.

If you are happy to complete this reference, any information will be treated with due confidentiality and in accordance with relevant legislation and guidance documents. Information will only be shared with the person conducting the assessment of the candidate's suitability for the post, if he/she is offered the position. We appreciate you being extremely candid, open and honest in your evaluation.

How long have you known this person? \_\_\_\_\_

In what capacity?

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What attributes does this person have that would make them suited to this work?

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Please rate this person on the following (tick one box for each statement)

	Poor	Average	Good	V Good	Excellent
Responsibility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maturity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Self motivation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can motivate others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trustworthiness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reliability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

This post involves substantial access to children. As an organisation committed to the welfare and protection of children, we are anxious to know if you have any reason at all to be concerned about this applicant being in contact with children and young people. If you have answered yes, we may contact you in confidence.

Yes

No

Signed:

Date:

Print name:

Position:

Organisation:

Address;

Contact No.

## **Anti-Bullying Policy**

### ***What is Bullying?***

Bullying can be defined as repeated aggression, be it verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against others. It is behaviour that is intentionally aggravating and intimidating and occurs mainly in social environments such as schools, clubs and other organisations working with children and young people. It includes behaviours such as teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting and extortion by one or more children against a victim.

### ***How would you know if a child is being bullied?***

All bullies operate using furtiveness, threats and fear. Bullying can therefore only survive in an environment where the victim does not feel empowered to tell someone who can help or in which it is not safe to do so. The following indicators are warning signs that a young person might be getting bullied: -

- Reluctance to come to a venue or take part in activities
- Physical signs – unexplained bruises, scratches, or damage to belongings
- Stress-caused illness – headaches, and stomach aches which seem unexplained
- Fearful behaviour – fear of walking to a meeting, going different routes, asking to be driven
- Frequent loss of, or shortage of, money with vague explanations
- Having few friends
- Changes in behaviour –withdrawn, stammering, moody, irritable, upset, distressed
- Not eating
- Attempting suicide or hinting at suicide
- Anxiety – shown by nail-biting, fearfulness, tics

But remember there may be other possible reasons for many of the above.

### ***Who should deal with bullying?***

While the more extreme forms of bullying would be regarded as physical or emotional abuse and are reported to the health board and An Garda Síochana, dealing with bullying behaviour is normally the responsibility of the senior personnel within this organisation. Within each Health Services Executive area, there is a duty social worker available at all times who also will give appropriate advice if required. This advice is available on a 'hypothetical scenario' basis if necessary.



### ***How can it be prevented?***

- Ensure that all members follow the code of conduct, which promotes the rights and dignity of each member.
- Deal with any incidents as they arise.
- Use a whole group policy or ‘no-blame approach’, i.e., not ‘bullying the bully’ but working with bullies and the group of young people, helping them to understand the hurt they are causing, and so make the problem a ‘shared concern’ of the group, (see below)
- Reinforce that there is ‘a permission to tell’ culture rather than a ‘might is right’
- Encourage young people to negotiate, co-operate and help others, particularly new or children who may be perceived by their peers as ‘different’
- Offer the victim immediate support and put the ‘no blame approach’ into operation
- Never tell a young person to ignore bullying, they can’t ignore it, it hurts too much
- Never encourage a young person to take the law into their own hands and beat the bully at their own game
- Tell the victim there is nothing wrong with them and it is not their fault

### **What is the ‘No Blame’ Approach?**

#### ***Step 1 – Interview with the alleged victim, to be conducted by the Designated Liaison Person***

If you find that there has been an incident of bullying, first talk to the victim. At this stage find out who was involved and what the victim is now feeling. Try asking the following questions:

- Was it verbal or physical intimidation?
- How hurt is the victim?
- Was it within his/her own peer group?
- Assure the victim that his/her name will not come out in the investigation
- Actively listen

### ***Step 2 – Meet with all involved***

Arrange to meet with all those involved; this should include some bystanders, those who may have colluded, those who joined in and those who initiated the bullying.

- ❑ Have a maximum of six to eight in the group – keep the number controllable
- ❑ Make a point of calling a ‘special’ meeting
- ❑ Ensure the severity of the topic is understood by all
- ❑ Speak only of the hurt caused in general terms with no reference to the victim
- ❑ Play on the conscience of all – ask questions like: How would you feel? Would you like it done to you?

### ***Step 3 – Explain the problem***

The distress being suffered as a result of the bullying incident is explained. At this stage the details of the incident or the allocation of the blame is not discussed. Explain the feelings of loneliness, feeling left out, rejected, laughed at. Try asking questions:

- ❖ Would they like it if it happened to them?
- ❖ “Someone here in this group was bullied by someone within the group, what could we do to see it does not happen again?”
- ❖ Listen, watch out for reactions, and pick up on any without isolating anyone

### ***Step 4 – Share the responsibility***

Explain what steps / controls may have to be introduced to prevent further incidents and how everyone will lose out as a result.

### ***Step 5 – Ask the group for their ideas***

At this stage the group is encouraged to suggest ways that would make the victim feel happier. All positive responses are noted. Use phrases “if it were you” to encourage a response. Listen to all suggestions and note them.

### ***Step 6 – Leave it to them***

Now the problem has been identified, solutions suggested, the problem is now handed over to the group to solve. Arrange to meet again in a week’s time. Pass responsibility over to the group and give a time frame within which something must be done.

### ***Step 7 – Meet them again***

Each member of the group, including the bully, discuss how things are going, who is doing what and have there been other incidents. This allows for continual monitoring and also keeps all involved in the process.

Again enforce the idea of the ‘team’ looking after each other at regular intervals to ensure it is known that bullying or intimidating behaviour will not be tolerated.

For more information on Bullying see Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport, page 37 section 5.4

## **Guidelines on Supervision**

### ***Travelling with children in private motor cars for IWS purposes***

There is extra responsibility taken on by IWS personnel when they travel with children to events. When travelling with young people you should:

- Ensure that there is adequate insurance cover
- Not carry more than the permitted number of passengers
- Ensure use of safety belts
- Avoid being alone with one participant, put passenger in the back seat, drop off at central locations or seek parental permission to transport an individual participant on a regular basis and clearly state times of pick-up and drop off
- Maintain a current list of parents' or guardians' contact information and give them your contact details.

### ***Supervision***

- Make sure there is an adequate adult: child ratio. This will depend on the nature of the activity, the age of the participants and any special needs of the group. As a guide a ratio of 1:8 for under 12 years of age and 1:10 for participants over 12 years of age. This is only a guide and will change depending on the circumstances, e.g. participants with special needs or away trips
- Where there are mixed groups there should be supervisors of both genders
- Avoid being alone with one participant, if you need to talk separately do so in an open environment, in view of others
- All due and possible regard should be had to the policies of the owners and operators of the pool or other facility.
- In changing rooms, ask parents to take responsibility and supervise in pairs of appropriate gender
- Members should not have to enter the changing rooms unless children are very young or need special assistance, where supervision should be in pairs of appropriate gender
- Clearly state time for start and end of classes or competitions
- Members should remain in pairs until all participants have been collected
- Keep attendance records and record of any incidents / injuries that arise
- Welcome and encourage parents to stay and watch sessions, (for safety and supervision, not necessarily for their 'technical' expertise)

### ***Away trips/Overnight stays***

- Separate permission forms should be signed by parents and participants, containing an emergency contact number to which there will be a person responding – this includes maintaining mobile telephones in credit, maintaining mobile telephones ‘on’ and fully charged, avoiding long blocking conversations on the emergency telephone and not utilising any call diversion system.
- Young participants should sign a detailed behaviour agreement
- Appoint a member as manager who will make a report on returning home
- A meeting with parents and participants is useful to communicate travel times, competition details, other activities, gear requirements, medical requirements, special dietary needs and any other necessary details
- Rooming arrangements – adults should not share rooms with children, children share rooms with those of same age and gender and adults should knock before entering rooms, and refrain from entering for a reasonable period if it appears to be inappropriate to do so.
- Any group socialisation should take place in communal areas (i.e. no boys in girls’ rooms and vice-versa) as may be defined by the team officials.
- Alcoholic drink, smoking, unlawful or illegal substances are forbidden to children.
- There must be at least one adult of each gender with a mixed party, there should be a good adult – child ratio, 1:6, and proper access to medical personnel
- Lights out times should be enforced
- Young participants should be under reasonable supervision at all times and should never leave the venue or go unsupervised without prior permission

### ***Safety***

Irish Water Safety has a safety statement as required by law, which includes specific and potential risks attached to swimming and lifesaving. IWS has procedures in place for safeguarding against such risks. In addition all WSAC’s should:

- Ensure activities are suitable for age and stage of development of participants
- Keep a record of any specific medical conditions of the participants
- Keep a record of emergency contact numbers for parents/guardians
- Ensure any necessary protective equipment is used

- ❑ Ensure First Aid kit is close at hand with access to qualified first-aiders and check/maintain/restock the kit regularly
- ❑ Know the contact numbers of emergency services
- ❑ Ensure easy access to medical personnel if needed and have a emergency plan
- ❑ If an incident occurs, make a brief record of injury and action taken. Make a brief record of the problem/action/outcome. Contact the participants parents and keep them informed of all details
- ❑ Participants should know and keep the rules, keeping in mind that many rules are there for safety
- ❑ Members should hold appropriate qualifications required by the governing body
- ❑ Ensure there is adequate insurance cover for all activities
- ❑ Ensure parents/guardians are present at finishing time of sessions or events

### ***Touching***

Some aspects of lifesaving classes require a 'hands on approach', especially in a teaching situation/scenario, e.g., it may be necessary to give demonstrations as a child learns a new skill but the following should be taken into consideration

- ❖ Avoid unnecessary physical contact
- ❖ Any necessary contact should be in response to the needs of the child and not the adult
- ❖ Demonstrations should be done on another instructor or consenting adult rather than on a participant
- ❖ It should be in an open environment with the permission and understanding of the participant
- ❖ It should be determined by the age and developmental stage of the participant e.g. Don't do something that a child can do for themselves
- ❖ Never engage in inappropriate touching

For more information on Supervision Guidelines see Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport, page 30 section 4.5

## Permission Form

### Travelling with Underage Participants

To be retained by Area Committee

**EVENT:** \_\_\_\_\_

**VENUE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATES:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Travelling Volunteer

I hereby agree to abide by the guidelines and regulations contained in the **Irish Water Safety's** Code of Conduct

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Role: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Parent/Guardian of Participant

I have read and accept the conditions and rules set down by **Irish Water Safety** for children travelling to competitions and events. I have been advised that the guidelines are available to me on [www.iws.ie](http://www.iws.ie) .

Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact Number(s): \_\_\_\_\_

### Young Participant

I have read and accept the conditions and rules set down by Irish Water Safety for children travelling to competitions and events. I agree to abide by the rules

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Use of Photographic and Filming Equipment

**Irish Water Safety** has adopted a policy in relation to the use of images of participants on their websites and in other publications, as there have been concerns about the risks posed directly and indirectly to children and young people through the use of photographs on sports websites and other publications. Where possible we will try to use models or illustrations when promoting an activity and avoid the use of the first name and surname of individuals in a photograph. This reduces the risk of inappropriate, unsolicited attention from people within and outside the sport.

### **Rules to guide the use of photography: -**

- If the participant is named, avoid using their photograph.
- If a photograph is used, avoid naming the participant.
- Ask for the participant's permission to use their image. This ensures that they are aware of the way the image is to be used to represent the sport. A participant's permission form is one way of achieving this.
- Ask for parental permission to use their image. This ensures that they are aware of the way the image is to be used to represent the sport. A parental permission form is one way of achieving this.
- Only use images of participants in suitable dress to reduce the risk of inappropriate use. The content of the photograph should focus on the activity not on a particular child.
- Create recognised procedures for reporting the use of inappropriate images to reduce the risks to participants. Follow the child protection procedures, ensuring either the designated person or, if necessary, the social services and/or gardaí are informed.

Amateur photographers/film/video operators wishing to record an event or practice session should seek accreditation with the National DLP and event organiser of session. Irish Water Safety will display the following information prior to the start of an event to inform spectators of the policy: -

***“In line with the recommendation in the Irish Water Safety’s Code of Conduct, the promoters of this event request that any person wishing to engage in any video, zoom or close range photography should register their details with the organisers. Children and young people should only be photographed or filmed with their permission and/or the permission of their parents/guardian”.***

When commissioning professional photographers or inviting the press to an activity or event we will aim to ensure they are clear about our expectations of them in relation to child protection. Professional photographers/film/video operators wishing to record an event or practice session should seek accreditation with the children's officer or event organiser by producing their professional identification for the details to be recorded. IWS will then: -



- Provide a clear brief about what is considered appropriate in terms of content and behaviour
- Issue the photographer with identification which must be worn at all times
- Keep a record of accreditations
- Inform participants and parents that a photographer will be in attendance at an event and ensure they consent to both the taking and publication of films or photographs
- Not allow unsupervised access to participants or one- to- one photo sessions at events
- Not approve/allow photo sessions in private
- Not allow camera phones in dressing rooms

### **Using Video as coaching aid**

Video equipment can be used as a legitimate coaching aid. However, permission should first be obtained from the participant's parent/guardian.

Anyone concerned about any photography taking place at events or training sessions can contact the DLP and ask them to deal with the matter.

## **Child Welfare and Protection Procedures**

**Irish Water Safety** accepts that organisations, which include young people among its members, are vulnerable to the occurrence of child abuse. Below are the procedures for dealing with any welfare or protection issue that may arise. Child welfare and the protection of young people is the concern of all adults at all times, irrespective of their role within the organisation.

If there are grounds for concern – see IWS Code of Ethics and Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children’s Sport, page 41 – about the safety or welfare of a young person you should react to the concern. Persons unsure about whether or not certain behaviours are abusive and therefore reportable should contact the duty social worker in the local health board or social services department where they will receive advice. 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 may be made by any member at the class but should be passed on to the Designated Liaison Person who may in turn have to pass the concern to the local Statutory Authorities. It is not the responsibility of anyone working within Irish Water Safety, in a paid or voluntary capacity, or those working in affiliated organisations, to take responsibility or decide whether or not child abuse is taking place. That is the job of the local statutory authorities. However, there is a responsibility to protect children by assisting the appropriate agencies so that they can then make enquiries and take any necessary action to protect the young person.

Everyone should follow both procedures outlined in the *IWS Code of Ethics*.

### ***Allegations Against Irish Water Safety Members:***

Irish Water Safety has agreed procedures to be followed in cases of alleged child abuse against its members. If such an allegation is made against a member working within the organisation the reporting procedure in respect of suspected child abuse as laid down in *I.W.S. Code of Ethics* should be followed.

The issue of confidentiality is important. Information is on a need to know basis and the member should be treated with respect and fairness.

### ***The Reporting Procedure***

If the designated person has reasonable grounds for concern – see *IWS Code of Ethics* – the matter should be reported to the local health board/social services, following the standard reporting procedure as laid down in *I.W.S. Code of Ethics*.

# **Irish Water Safety Code of Ethics and Good Practice**

## **Guidelines for Irish Water Safety members**

### **Regarding Child Abuse**

**The principle, which should inform best practice in child protection, is that the welfare of the child is of paramount importance.**

" All organisations, whether statutory or voluntary, have an overall corporate responsibility to safeguard children, and should pay particular attention to:

1. Safe and clearly defined methods of selecting staff and volunteers
2. Developing effective procedures for the reporting and management of child protection concerns
3. Identifying a designated staff member/volunteer to act as a liaison with outside agencies and a resource person to any staff member or volunteer who has child protection concerns. The designated person will be responsible for reporting allegations or suspicions of child abuse to the Health Boards or An Garda Síochána.

(Children First - National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children - 1999)

### **1. Purpose of Guidelines**

- 1.1 These guidelines are for use by all members of the Irish Water Safety in their dealings with the public.
- 1.2 The purpose of the guidelines is to:
  - Provide members with basic information on the nature of child abuse
  - Inform members on the procedures they should follow if they are informed a case of child abuse is occurring or they themselves are suspicious that it is occurring
  - Raise members' awareness of the necessity for good practice so as to help to ensure the protection of young people from abuse and the protection of members against false accusations of abuse.
- 1.3 A member could encounter a situation regarding child abuse in a number of ways, including the following:

- A young person discloses to a member that he/she is being abused.
- A young person discloses to a third party who, in turn, tells the member.
- A member may overhear other young people discussing their concerns about a particular young person.
- A member witnesses abuse.
- An allegation or report is made to a member.
- A third party informs the member of his/her suspicions or concerns that a young person is being abused.

## 2. The Nature of Child Abuse

2.1 Child abuse occurs when a child is ill treated in some manner and requires protection.

2.2 Child abuse is the abuse of power over a young person by an adult or another person in a way which disadvantages the young person and to which the young person cannot give informed consent.

2.3 Child abuse can be categorised into four different types:

- Neglect
- Emotional Abuse
- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse

A child may be subjected to more than one form of abuse at any given time.

2.4 *The National Guidelines have adopted the following definitions of child abuse.*

- **Neglect**

Neglect is normally defined in terms of *omission*, where a child suffers *significant harm* or impairment of development by being deprived of food, warmth, clothing, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults or medical care.

*Harm* is defined as the ill treatment or the impairment of the health or development of a child. Whether it is *significant* is determined by his/her health and development as to that which could reasonably be expected of a similar child.

- **Emotional Abuse**

The severe adverse effect on the behaviour and emotional development of a young person caused by persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming, over harsh disciplinary measures or exposure to violence.

The threshold of *significant harm* is reached when abusive interactions become **typical** of the relationship.

- **Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse is any form of non-accidental injury that causes significant harm to a child, which results from wilful or neglectful failure to protect a child. It occurs by allowing or creating a substantial risk of significant harm to a child.

- **Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or sexual arousal or for that of others. In essence it is the abuse of children through sexual activity that they do not fully understand and to which they are unable to give informed consent. The sexual exploitation of children is an abuse.

### **3. Reporting Suspected or Disclosed Child Abuse**

*The following steps should be taken in reporting child abuse to the statutory authorities: -*

- (a) Observe and note dates, times, locations and contexts in which the incident occurred or suspicion was aroused, together with any other relevant information
- (b) Report the matter as soon as possible to the Designated Liaison Person with responsibility for reporting abuse. If the Designated Person has reasonable grounds for believing that the child has been abused or is at risk of abuse, s/he will make a report to the health board/social services who have statutory responsibility to investigate and assess suspected or actual child abuse
- (c) In cases of emergency, where a child appears to be at immediate and serious risk and the Designated Person is unable to contact a duty social worker, the police authorities should be contacted. Under no circumstances should a child be left in a dangerous situation pending intervention by the Statutory Authorities
- (d) If the Designated Person is unsure whether reasonable grounds for concern exist s/he can informally consult with the local health board/social services. S/he will be advised whether or not the matter requires a formal report.

A Designated Person reporting suspected or actual child abuse to the Statutory Authorities will first inform the family of their intention to make such a report, unless doing so would endanger the child or undermine an investigation.

## **Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998**

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 the Gardaí (See 5.13.1 – ISC Code). The act also covers the offence of ‘false reporting’. The main provisions of the Act are: -

1. The provision of immunity from civil liability to any person who reports child abuse “reasonably and in good faith” to designated officers of Health Boards or any member of An Garda Síochána;
2. The provision of significant protections for employees who report child abuse. These protections cover all employees and all forms of discrimination up to and including, dismissal. A person shall not be liable in damages in respect of the communication, whether in writing or otherwise, by him or her to an appropriate person of his or her opinion that
  - (a) a child has been or is being assaulted, ill-treated, neglected or sexually abused, or
  - (b) a child's health, development or welfare has been or is being avoidably impaired or neglected,unless it is proved that he or she has not acted reasonably and in good faith in forming that opinion and communicating it to the appropriate person
3. The creation of a new offence of false reporting of child abuse where a person makes a report of child abuse to the appropriate authorities “knowing that statement to be false”. This is a new criminal offence designed to protect innocent persons from malicious reports.

For more information on Responding and Reporting to Child Abuse see Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport, page 42 section 5.13

## **The Procedures**

**If there is indisputable evidence that an individual has abused a child the matter must be reported directly, and immediately, to the Gardaí.**

1. If a member of Irish Water Safety, receives an allegation, or has a suspicion, that a child is being abused by member of the class, Irish Water Safety personnel or family member, the instructor or trainee instructor should, in the first instance, report the matter to another senior colleague. In this instance the report will be verbal.
2. If the instructor and senior colleague are satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for the suspicion they should advise Designated Liaison Person. In future a D.L.P. should be an officer of the WSAC.
3. It is important that the suspicions or allegations be recorded carefully by the D.L.P.
4. This type of discussion would most likely happen in cases where no specific allegation of child abuse has been made but the concern is based on emotional, behavioural and/or physical indications of a particular child.
5. In cases where an allegation has been made the matter has to be reported immediately to the relevant authorities i.e. the designated officer of the Health Board or An Garda Síochána.
6. It is essential that at all times, the matter be treated in the strictest confidence and not discussed except among the parties mentioned above.
7. It is not the responsibility of anyone mentioned in No. 2 above to make enquiries of parents and in some cases it could be counter-productive to do so. The role of personnel mentioned in No.2 above is limited and does not include taking over the role of the Health Board.
8. The Chief Executive of Irish Water Safety should be informed and briefed by the members of the WSAC and consulted at all times.
9. Suspension should not be the responsibility of a single person; rather an emergency meeting of the officers of the WSAC should be convened to suspend the individual.
10. In the case of a suspension, the officers of the WSAC should formally notify the person being suspended, in writing.

11. The person against whom allegations have been made should, in the same letter, be invited to meet the officers of the WSAC as soon as possible. The timing of this discussion may be a matter to be decided upon in consultation with the Statutory Authorities.
12. The person against whom the allegation has been made should be informed that this is not an accusation, and the procedures being undertaken are in accordance with statutory guidelines. The person should be assured that within the organisation all information will be dealt with in a sensitive and confidential manner.
13. The person should be made aware generally of the nature of any allegation made against them and of any allegation being made known to the Statutory Authorities.
14. The person should be afforded the opportunity to present a formal response to the allegations to senior personnel in the organisation and the response should be reported to the Health Board if the person so desires.
15. In the case of an allegation of child sexual abuse, in the interest of confidentiality and child protection, it will be necessary to withhold the name of the child and precise details of the allegation.

**From this point on, only the Statutory Authorities should deal with the matter**



## **Immediate Response to a Child Disclosing Abuse**

*When a young person discloses information of suspected abuse you should: -*

- (a) be honest with the child and tell them that it is not possible to keep information a secret
- (b) deal with any allegation of abuse in a sensitive and competent way through listening to and facilitating the child to tell about the problem, rather than interviewing the child about details of what happened
- (c) stay calm and not show any extreme reaction to what the child is saying. Listen compassionately, and take what the child is saying seriously
- (d) understand that the child has decided to tell something very important and has taken a risk to do so. The experience of telling should be a positive one so that the child will not mind talking to those involved in the investigation
- (e) make no judgmental statements against the person whom the allegation is made
- (f) not question the child unless the nature of what s/he 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"
- (g) check out the concerns with the parents/guardians before making a report unless doing so would endanger the child
- (h) give the child some indication of what would happen next, such as informing parents/guardians, health board or social services. It should be kept in mind that the child may have been threatened and may feel vulnerable at this stage.
- (i) carefully record the details
- (j) pass on this information to the Designated Liaison Person
- (k) reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you

### **Common Difficulties in dealing with child abuse**

Dealing with child abuse is rarely straightforward. Many complications can arise including the following:

- Disclosure is made then withdrawn
- A disclosure is made and secrecy is expected
- A young person may threaten suicide if the report is to be passed on
- The young person will often seek to protect his/her abuser

Despite these and other complications that may arise, the member should always follow the procedures and the following code of good practice.

### **Code of Good Practice For Irish Water Safety Members**

- Maintain the highest standard of personal behaviour.
- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every human being.
- Be responsible for setting and monitoring the boundaries between a working relationship and friendship with participants.
- Realise that certain situations or friendly actions could be misinterpreted by the participant or others.
- Another instructor or adult should be involved in any demonstrations that require physical contact.
- Members should never allow themselves to be in a one to one situation with a participant nor should a member run a class on their own.
- Ideally male and female members should be present at classes.
- Members should be discouraged from being alone in their cars with participants.
- **In the case of overnight stays:**
  1. written permission should be received from parents/guardians
  2. adults should not share rooms with children
  3. prescribed adult: child ratios should be observed
  4. members are in loco parentis and supervision of the participants is vitally important.
  5. Procedures outlined earlier in this document should be strictly adhered to.

## **Designated Liaison Person**

### **1: Functions:**

- To promote awareness of the Code of Ethics and Good Practice within the organisation and particularly among the young people involved. This would be best done by the production of information leaflets etc. and by the facilitation of regular information meetings.
- To influence the policy and practice within the organisation to ensure that all policy and decisions take account of the young people's needs.
- To facilitate communication within the organisation.
- To provide an accessible resource for young people to express their concerns, views or worries regarding their involvement in the organisation.
- To act as an advisory resource to the adults involved in the organisation on child protection issues ensuring that statutory guidelines and procedures are followed.
- To communicate to members the Procedures for Reports or Accusations of Child Abuse drawn up by the organisation.
- To accurately, and immediately, complete the appropriate DLP form recording the report or suspicion following the reporting of same to him/her and as soon as is practicable notify the officers of the WSAC and the CEO.
- To attend the meeting of the officers and make his/her report.
  - To be confidential regarding any reports received and to discuss the matter with no one apart from those laid down in the procedures.
- To be a member of the committee.
- To return the Designated Liaison Person's Book to headquarters if there is a change of personnel in the D.L.P. position. This occurs when there are entries in the book.

### **2. Training**

The Designated Liaison Person should receive training in the following areas:

- The Code of Ethics and Good Practice
- Child protection procedures.
- Basic understanding of children's development.
- Communicating effectively with children and young people.

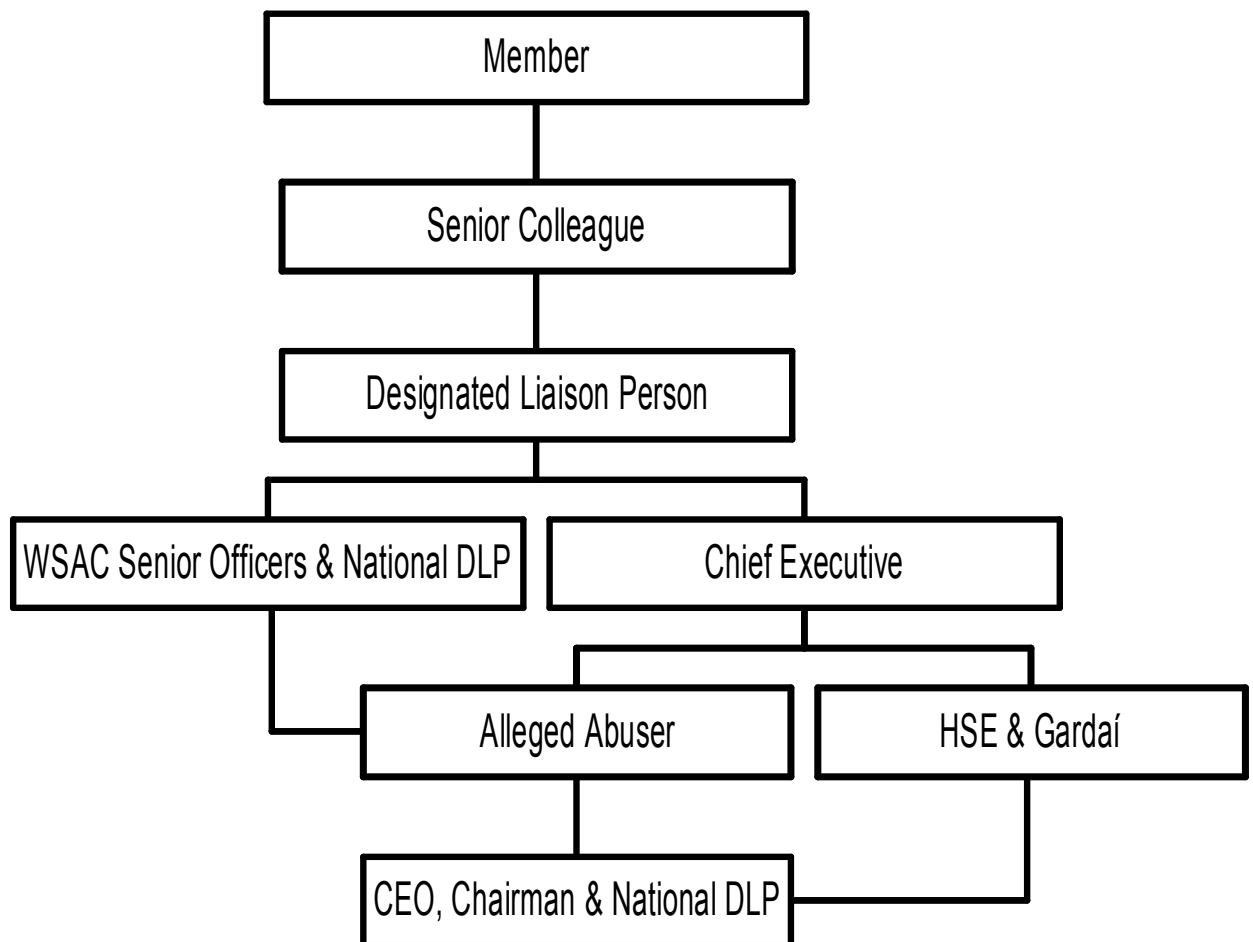
- Being accessible to, and approachable by, children.

This training should be available to the person through relevant agencies ensuring a quality input and a measure of effectiveness. This training should involve an assessment and evaluative component ensuring that only those suitable to be Children's Liaison Officers would be asked to undertake this function.

*IWS has in place a National Designated Liaison Person who is available to all other DLP's for consultation, direction and training.*

**The Designated Liaison Person has no role in the investigation or validation of child protection concerns within the organisation and would have no counselling or therapeutic role.**

## Reporting Chain



## Designated Liaison Person Report Form

*Date of Report*

1. Name of person reporting:
2. Address of person reporting:
3. Relationship of reporting person with the child concerned
4. Method of Report (telephone call, personal call to office):
5. FAMILY DETAILS

*Details of child concerned*

**Surname**

**Forename**

**D.O.B.**

**Male/female**

**Alias (known as)**

**Address**

**Correspondence address (if different)**

**Telephone number**

6. State whether you consider your report to indicate (a) suspected or actual child abuse or (b) need for family support, giving reasons

**Physical  
Abuse**

**Sexual  
Abuse**

**Emotional  
Abuse**

**Neglect  
Abuse**

Suspected

Actual

7. Details of other family members/household members

NAME	AGE	RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD	EMPLOYMENT/ SCHOOL	LOCATION

In cases of emergency, or outside health board hours, reports should be made to An Garda Síochána.

8. NAME OF OTHER PROFESSIONALS INVOLVED WITH CHILD/REN AND/OR PARENTS/CARERS

Public health nurse:

School:

General Practitioner:

Any other agency or professional involved (please describe the nature of any involvement):

9. REPORT DETAILS

Describe, as fully as possible the nature of the problem or incident being reported, giving details of times and dates of individual incidents, the circumstances in which they occurred, any other persons who were present at the time, and their involvement:

10. Has any explanation been offered by the child, and/or parents/carers, which would account for the current problem or incident? (Details)

11. As far as possible, describe the state of the child/ren's physical, mental and emotional well-being.

12. If child abuse is being alleged, who is believed to be responsible for causing it?

Include (if known)

Name:

Address:

Degree of contact with child:

Degree of contact with other children:

13. Describe (in detail) any risks to which the child/ren in this situation are believed to be exposed

14. How did this information come to your attention?

15. What has prompted you to report your concern at this time?

16. What evidence of harm exists at present?

17. Are there any factors in the child and/or parents/carers' present situation, which may have relevance to the current concern? (for example, recent illness, bereavement, separation, addiction, mental health problem or other difficulty)

18. Are there any factors in the child and/or parents/carers' situation that could be considered protective or helpful (for example, extended family or community support).

19. Has any action been taken in response to the current concern or incident/  
(Details)

20. Are the child's parents/carers aware that this concern is being reported to the health board?

21. Is there a need for urgent protective action at this point?

22. Any other comments

SIGNED \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



## **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality should be maintained in respect of all issues and people involved in cases of abuse, welfare or bad practice. It is important that the rights of both the child and the person about whom the complaint has been made are protected.

The following points should be kept in mind: -

- A guarantee of confidentiality or undertakings regarding secrecy cannot be given, as the welfare of the child will supersede all other considerations
- All information should be treated in a careful and sensitive manner and should be discussed only with those who need to know
- Information should be conveyed to the parents / guardians of the child in a sensitive way
- Giving information to others on a 'need to know' basis for the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality
- All persons involved in a child protection process (the child, his/her parents/guardians, the alleged offender, his/her family, Irish Water Safety members) should be afforded appropriate respect, fairness, support and confidentiality at all stages of the procedure
- Information should be stored in a secure place, with limited access only to designated people
- The requirements of the Data Protection laws should be adhered to
- Breach of confidentiality is a serious manner

For more information on Confidentiality see Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport, page 42 section 5.13

## **Anonymous Complaints**

Anonymous complaints can be difficult to deal with but should not be ignored. In all cases the safety and welfare of the child/children is paramount. Any such complaints relating to inappropriate behaviour should be brought to the attention of the Designated Person. The information should be checked out and handled in a confidential manner.

For more information on Anonymous Complaints see Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport, page 44 section 5.17

## **Rumours**

Rumours should **not** be allowed to hang in the air. Any rumours relating to inappropriate behaviour should be brought to the attention of the Designated Person and checked out without delay.

For more information on Rumours see Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport, page 44 section 5.18



**IRISH WATER SAFETY**

**NATIONAL VOLUNTEER POLICIES  
FOR MEMBERS**

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## **Irish Water Safety Volunteer Policy**

### **Why we have Volunteers**

Irish Water Safety believes that volunteers have been, and remain, fundamental to the service delivery and reputation of the organisation. It is no exaggeration to say that the high public esteem in which Irish Water Safety is held, and the generous public support we enjoy, particularly from Government, Local Authorities and other sources, is because our lifesaving work is largely carried out by volunteers.

However, societal attitudes are changing, and volunteers' attitudes to volunteering are inevitably changing too. Equally, there has perhaps been a decline in the implicit understanding of volunteer relationship. This has led to some concerns about the place of volunteers within Irish Water Safety.

This policy clarifies what Irish Water Safety sets out to do for its volunteers and what Irish Water Safety asks in return.

At the heart of our policies, is the 'Volunteer Commitment', which is a statement of hopes and expectations, owed both ways?

This commitment applies equally to all our volunteers.

### **Irish Water Safety Volunteer**

Irish Water Safety volunteers are people whom are unpaid and of their own free will, contribute their time, energy and skills to support the purposes of Irish Water Safety.

The volunteers may perform a variety of tasks and duties, under direction and guidance, using their skills, knowledge and time to help Irish Water Safety best achieve its objectives.

We respect and honour our volunteers by building trust and understanding. Such a partnership is not intended to be a legally binding contract or to have mutuality of obligation, but instead express a voluntary two-way commitment where everyone gains satisfaction from being part of our organisation.

### **Irish Water Safety's Aspirations for Volunteers**

**We aspire to**

1. Welcome and encourage volunteers.
2. Foster an environment where volunteers can contribute fully to Irish Water Safety's purpose of saving lives.
3. Be clear on Irish Water Safety's expectations of volunteers and look for these to be met.
4. Create volunteering opportunities that where possible can be tailored to the needs of individuals.
5. Support all Irish Water Safety's volunteers to achieve the organisation's objectives, and, where possible, for volunteers to achieve theirs.
6. Base volunteering opportunities on the community approach and local contacts.
7. Listen to volunteers and give them a role, and a voice, in the running of the organisation.

### **Principles behind Volunteering**

**Irish Water Safety will:**

- Communicate with and listen to volunteers.
- Be clear on what it means to be a volunteer and our expectations of volunteers.
- Endeavour to understand and meet the needs of volunteers in order to optimise their contribution.
- Provide training, support and development for volunteers and for staff about volunteering.
- Evaluate all volunteer activities to build on what we do well.
- Value volunteers and recognise their contribution.

### **Irish Water Safety 'Volunteer Commitment'**

**Irish Water Safety will:**

- Welcome you, as a volunteer and provide appropriate opportunities to those who can help us achieve Irish Water Safety's purposes.

- Provide you with appropriate training and the right equipment for the task.
- Give guidance and support your development in your volunteer role.
- Treat you and all volunteers equally and fairly.
- Ensure you have a safe working environment.
- Listen to your concerns if things are not going right.
- Recognise that you are a volunteer and have other commitments.

**In return, we ask you to:**

- Be of good character.
- Commit to necessary training and give us your time.
- Comply with agreed standards.
- Be professional and loyal to Irish Water Safety.
- Be fair to those around you.
- Talk to your Irish Water Safety colleagues (volunteers or staff) first if you have a problem related to Water Safety.

**Our Volunteer Policies**

**Registration**

Volunteer opportunities will be actively promoted and made widely accessible in accordance with the methods developed for finding new volunteers. We will be clear on the opportunity each role brings, its benefits and what task(s) need to be undertaken.

Irish Water Safety will ensure that, where practical and appropriate, all potential, active and past volunteers' details, and any other relevant information, are recorded accurately, securely and used in line with our Data Protection Policy. Where appropriate and possible, volunteers will have their skills matched to IRISH WATER SAFETY needs in order to harness available talent. We will ensure that we do not waste potential volunteers' time, by making sure we only register those volunteers who we need and who can help us meet our objectives. We will aim to process every request to volunteer as promptly and professionally as possible.

Volunteers will on joining, receive general information and guidance and this will be further developed with appropriate training and development. We ask that all volunteers then help us by participating within our current policies, standards and procedures.

**Communication and feedback**



Irish Water Safety will ensure all volunteers have the opportunity to give and receive information relevant to their role. The methods of communication and feedback will be appropriate in style, frequency, tone and source to individuals and groups of volunteers.

Through good communications, we will encourage volunteers to stay with us, recognise their efforts and maximise their contribution. We welcome feedback on how things could be done better and how to improve our systems.

Irish Water Safety will report annually within the Annual Report about volunteer involvement, and our volunteer ethos. We will endeavor to ensure that the views of our volunteers in their various involvements are represented to the Council regularly.

### **Training and development**

For each formal volunteer role, the skills required and major tasks that need to be performed will be defined. Each part of Irish Water Safety will then develop appropriate systems to ensure that our volunteers can gain the skills and development required to achieve the role.

In some cases, this will be through formal training, in others it may be through coaching and support from others.

All our development and training processes will be clearly documented and recorded, so that we can ensure that all volunteers are helping Irish Water Safety achieve its objectives.

### **IT access and usage**

Irish Water Safety is a modern and progressive organisation, and increasingly we rely on IT systems to carry out our work.

In return, we will ask our volunteers to treat such systems and information in confidence and with sensitivity.

### **Expenses**

Where appropriate and verifiable, volunteers will be entitled to reimbursement of their traveling and subsistence expenses. We will provide clear guidance on expenses claims to volunteers. Volunteers may opt not to claim.

Irish Water Safety asks that volunteers submit their claims within six weeks.

### **Working in partnership with other groups**

We recognise the need for a strategic approach to the development of volunteering throughout Ireland and support the work of those organisations trying to achieve this either on a national or local basis.

### **Equal opportunities, diversity and social responsibility**

Irish Water Safety aims to provide a fair and open environment in which all volunteers can contribute and participate. We encourage people from all walks of life to fill our volunteer roles.

Where practical, we will make volunteering available to everyone.

### **Health and Safety, insurance and risk assessment**

Irish Water Safety has a Public Liability Insurance policy that provides cover against claims from third parties for death, bodily injury or physical damage to property caused as a result of negligence by Irish Water Safety, our staff or volunteers.

### **Child protection**

Irish Water Safety will take all practicable steps to safeguard the safety and welfare of young people while they are in contact with Irish Water Safety, observing any legislation and best practice.

In selecting volunteers who are to work with children, young people and other vulnerable groups, we will follow and use specific procedures and standards.

Where necessary we will take up references, or complete the Garda Central Vetting Unit checks, for any volunteer role.

### **Confidentiality, data protection, and information property rights**

Volunteers will have access to their records and all data will be kept in line with the Data Protection Act, Irish Water Safety's Data Protection Policy and all other relevant legislation.

Irish Water Safety requests that all volunteers respect and treat in confidence the information that they may be party to as part of their volunteer involvement. This includes written, oral or electronic information.

### **When things are not right**

Sometimes things do not go well and a volunteer may wish to raise an issue or problem with a member of staff or another volunteer. There may also be times where Irish Water Safety needs to resolve an issue that we believe to exist. Irish Water Safety will endeavour to ensure that all parties have full, fair and open hearing.

We aim to solve problems early and within the confines of the local area. However, we do recognise that sometimes problems may need airing at a higher level and we have systems to manage these as well.

### **Commitment**

Irish Water Safety will seek to ensure the contribution made by our volunteers is optimised. As such, we will invest appropriate resources into the planning and development of volunteers and volunteering.

This policy is part of a clear and consistent approach to making best use of our valuable volunteer resource.

The roles allocated to volunteers in Irish Water Safety will allow the organisation to increase its capability and will complement the work carried out by staff.

### **Recognition**

Irish Water Safety recognises the valuable contribution made by all its volunteers.

Irish Water Safety volunteers who have made a substantial difference or commitment to Irish Water Safety in any way will be recognised for their particular effort. This may take a variety of forms, and will be dependant on the role, level of involvement, and the activity undertaken.

In our communications and marketing we will promote volunteering and our volunteer ethos.

### **Awards**

Irish Water Safety respects all its volunteers and the extraordinary effort that they make. For those volunteers involved in active lifesaving work, a number of awards are in place. These are granted at the discretion of Irish Water Safety on the volunteer meeting certain criteria.

### **Saying farewell**

We ask that any volunteer who no longer wishes to actively be part of Irish Water Safety to let us know directly by speaking with their Hon. Secretary and informing us in writing, if appropriate.

On occasions, it may be necessary for Irish Water Safety to end a volunteer's involvement. This may be because the role undertaken is no longer needed, or because the volunteer is no longer able to satisfactorily carry out a particular role. When this happens Irish Water Safety will endeavor to give due notice to the volunteer, try to find an acceptable alternative role, and, in all cases, will treat the volunteer fairly, and with dignity and respect.

### **Further information**

Further information on any aspect of the Irish Water Safety "Volunteer Policy" can be had from the Irish Water Safety Headquarters.

## **Volunteer Registration Policy**

### **1. Purpose**

To provide Irish Water Safety with a set of volunteer registration and selection practices for the effective re-sourcing of volunteers in an efficient and fair manner. This policy takes into account legislation and should be used in conjunction with our Volunteer Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy and our Volunteer Data Protection Policy.

To ensure that all volunteers are provided with a meaningful introduction to Irish Water Safety to help them to contribute effectively to Irish Water Safety at the earliest opportunity.

### **2. Scope**

#### **2.1 Who does this policy apply to?**

All persons engaged in volunteering for Irish Water Safety.

#### **2.2. Who uses this policy?**

Any Volunteers or Staff who manages other volunteers.

#### **2.3 Policies linked to this policy**

This policy should be read in conjunction with and relevant regulations and codes of conduct of Irish Water Safety and other supplementary publications dealing with codes of conduct.

### **3. Policy Statement**

Volunteer opportunities will be actively promoted and made widely accessible in accordance with the methods developed for finding new volunteers. We will be clear on the opportunity each role brings, its benefits and what task(s) need to be undertaken.

Irish Water Safety will ensure that, where practical, all potential, active and past volunteers' details, and any other relevant information, are recorded accurately, securely and used in line with our Data Protection Policy. Where appropriate and possible, volunteers will have their skills matched

to Irish Water Safety needs in order to harness the available talent. We will aim to process every request to volunteer as promptly and professionally as possible.

Volunteers, no matter what their role is, will on joining receive appropriate general information and guidance. This will be further developed with appropriate training and development. We ask that all volunteers then help us by participating within our current policies, standards and procedures.

#### **4. Enquiries**

Sources of volunteers and some guidance on registering them can be found in Volunteer Sources and Guidance.

Where an interested person has contacted Irish Water Safety, the relevant information will be captured. The contact information will be distributed to the relevant Water Safety Area Committee for action.

#### **5. Registration**

Volunteers may be asked to register for current volunteer roles, or may offer themselves for new roles and opportunities as they occur. Normally this is handled by the Secretary of the local Water Safety Area Committee.

#### **6. The Selection Process**

Any potential volunteer should be matched to the volunteering opportunity that exists, or that Irish Water Safety has a need for their skill/knowledge for a role that will help it achieve its objectives.

##### **6.1 Face to face meetings by the designated person of the WSAC**

- Explore the potential volunteer's interests/motivations and skills they have to offer.
- Explain the potential volunteering opportunities available and how they help/work towards Irish Water Safety achieving its objectives.
- Discuss the potential volunteers' availability and next steps.

At the end of any meeting

- Ensure both parties understand the information discussed.
- Both parties are clear on the next steps and the process.

The selection process will be dependent on the volunteer role and will be tailored to meet this.

## **7. Administration**

All completed membership forms should be kept confidential.

All successful registration forms should be retained as long as the volunteer is active within Irish Water Safety and then retained for a period of 2 years after leaving Irish Water Safety.

Administration forms and the procedures used will be tailored to the volunteer role.

## **8. Induction**

When a volunteer first starts with Irish Water Safety, the support member is responsible for ensuring that an induction programme is prepared for use during the initial period, and must include all codes of discipline including that with reference to Child Protection.

In preparing an individual volunteer's induction programme it is recognised that certain categories of volunteers will have particular/special needs and areas to be covered. The programme will be prepared to reflect this.

## **9. Responsibility**

All volunteers referred to within the scope of this policy are required to be familiar with the terms of this policy.

Individual volunteers, staff members and managers are required to keep within the spirit and intent of the policy, as far as possible in their own area. Any queries on the application or interpretation of this policy must be discussed first with the supporting staff member or other senior responsible member in the area concerned.

### **9.1 Who can change or adapt this policy?**

The Finance Commission is responsible for ensuring the maintenance, regular review and updating of this policy. Revisions, amendments or alterations to the policy and supporting appendices can only be implemented following consideration and approval by the Council.

### **Volunteer Policy – Source and Guidance**

Understanding motivations and any initial barriers that individual may have to volunteering can aid the finding of volunteers.

#### **Motivation**

Understanding an individuals reason for volunteering can help match potential volunteers to the volunteer roles available. People interested in volunteering can be motivated by:

- A desire to help others.
- An interest in the work of Irish Water Safety.
- A desire to gain a new experience and enhance personal development.
- The fact they have free time.
- Their commitment to Irish Water Safety's mission.
- A personal experience they have had with Irish Water Safety.
- A family connection.
- A commitment to helping a charity.
- 

#### **Sourcing**

Volunteers can be found by 3 main methods:

1. Word of Mouth – a cost effective and simple method to implement, making the most of opportunities to talk to individuals or groups about the volunteering opportunities available.
2. Targeted Opportunities – via direct approaches to potential volunteers with a talk, event, publication, advertisement or printed materials. These may be direct campaigns aimed at specific areas or groups.
3. Warm Opportunities – via the dissemination of printed materials - touching on Irish Water Safety - in places where potential volunteers may be found.



## **Barriers to Volunteering**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>
<b>Am I allowed to volunteer?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• People in paid employment are free to volunteer outside of their normal working hours without compromise to their regular job, but should inform their employer of the voluntary activity they plan to undertake.</li><li>• People receiving unemployment benefits, income support or disability benefits can volunteer without jeopardising their benefit payments, but should inform their local job centre or benefits agency about volunteering prior to starting to volunteer.</li><li>• Job seekers should inform their job centres that they are volunteering and they should continue to be available for and actively seek work.</li><li>• Recipients of income support or disability benefits should let their social security office know that they are undertaking voluntary work.</li><li>• There is no limit on the number of hours a person can spend volunteering.</li></ul>
<b>How much time will I be expected to give?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The time commitment expected of Irish Water Safety volunteers is flexible and varies depending on each volunteer role.</li></ul>
<b>Will I feel like part of Irish Water Safety or an outsider?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Part of Irish Water Safety's Volunteer Commitment to its volunteer is to provide a thorough induction to Irish Water Safety, with any appropriate training for the volunteer role to carry out the role effectively identified and planned.</li><li>• Each volunteer role has an identified support staff member.</li></ul>

## **Volunteer Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy**

### **1. Purpose**

To promote equal treatment for all volunteers or potential volunteers in line with the policy statement.

Issues regarding the volunteering of disabled persons and harassment are also referred to in the policies specifically designed to cover these issues.

### **2. Scope**

#### **2.1 Who does this policy apply to?**

All persons engaged in volunteering for Irish Water Safety.

#### **2.2. Who uses this policy?**

Any volunteers or staff who manages other volunteers.

#### **2.3 Policies linked to this policy**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Regulations of Irish Water Safety and other supplementary publications.

### **3. Policy Statement**

Irish Water Safety aims to provide a fair and open environment in which all volunteers can contribute and participate. We encourage people from all walks of life to fill our volunteer roles.

Where practical, we will make volunteering available to everyone.

### **4. Role design**

A broad range of volunteers within Irish Water Safety has the following advantages:

- A good representation of the diverse face of society.
- The ability to present Irish Water Safety to a wide audience.
- A fresh perspective by having volunteers from diverse backgrounds.

Volunteer roles will be designed to best meet the needs and objectives of Irish Water Safety, and wherever practicable will be designed to ensure the broadest possible catchment of potential volunteers of suitable calibre.

## **5. Registration**

Potential volunteers will be encouraged from all suitably qualified or experienced individuals, and where appropriate, particular emphasis may be placed upon encouraging interest from those who may be currently under-represented in the volunteer mix.

The Volunteer Registration Policy and procedures detail volunteer registration with Irish Water Safety.

The registration form has been designed in order to obtain all the necessary information so as to provide the basis of an equitable volunteer placement process. Personal details which are not necessary for a decision to be made, such as marital status, number of children, next of kin, gender, race or creed are therefore not specified.

It is Irish Water Safety's aim that all those concerned with finding and registering volunteers will receive training in how to best do this.

All volunteer positions will be made solely on merit and in compliance with the individual's ability to best help Irish Water Safety meet its objectives.

## **6. Training and Development**

The criteria for selecting volunteers for training opportunities will be based on the volunteer's merits, abilities and needs, business needs and the availability of the appropriate role-related courses.

Training and development is about meeting both the needs of the individual and Irish Water Safety.

Volunteer members can be assured that Irish Water Safety makes a serious training commitment to those who give generously of their time. This is to ensure everyone receives the training necessary to perform his or her role competently and effectively.

## **7. Other Policies**

At the heart of our policies is the 'Volunteer Commitment', which is a statement of hopes and expectations owed both ways? This statement

outlines the spirit in which Irish Water Safety and volunteers will act together to achieve Irish Water Safety's objectives.

This commitment applies equally to all our members

The Volunteer Commitment is designed to promote equal opportunity and protection for all volunteers.

## **8. Adherence to policy**

It is the responsibility of Members to:

- Ensure that the standards established within this policy are adhered to within their area of responsibility.

All volunteers and staff at every level must:

- Co-operate with any measures introduced to ensure equal opportunity.
- Report any suspected unlawfully discriminatory acts or practices.
- Not induce or attempt to induce others to practice unlawful discrimination.
- Not victimise anyone as a result of them having reported or provided evidence of unlawful discrimination.
- Not harass, abuse or intimidate others on account of their race, nationality, ethnic origin, religion or similar belief, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, family connections, membership or non membership of a trade union, or disability.

Any breach of the Equal Opportunities policy will be dealt with through the Volunteer Problem Solving Policy.

## **9. Problem Solving**

Any volunteer who has a concern regarding the application of this policy should normally make use of Irish Water Safety's Volunteer Problem Solving Policy.

## **10. Responsibility**

All volunteers and staff referred to within the scope of this policy are required to be familiar with the terms of this policy.

Individual volunteers, staff members are required to keep within the spirit and intent of the policy, as far as possible in their own area. Any queries on the application or interpretation of this policy must be discussed with the Chief Executive Officer of Irish Water Safety.

#### **10.1 Who can change or adapt this policy?**

The Chief Executive Officer has the responsibility for ensuring the maintenance, regular review and updating of this policy. Revisions, amendments or alterations to the policy and supporting appendices can only be implemented following consideration and approval by Council.

## **Volunteer Data Protection Policy**

### **1. Purpose**

To provide a procedure and a set of principles regarding the processing and protection of volunteer personal data within manual records and upon computer databases. It is aimed at ensuring compliance with the Data Protection Act (as amended)

### **2. Scope**

#### **2.1 Who does this policy apply to?**

Irish Water Safety volunteers and Staff.

#### **2.2. Who uses this policy?**

Volunteers and Staff of Irish Water Safety.

#### **2.3 Policies linked to this policy**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Regulations of Irish Water Safety and other supplementary publications.

### **3. Policy Statement**

Volunteers will have access to their records and all data will be kept in line with the Data Protection Act (as amended).

Irish Water Safety requests that all volunteers respect and treat in confidence the information that they may be party to as part of their volunteer involvement. This includes written, oral or electronic information.

### **4. Definitions**

The following terms are used throughout this policy and its application. These definitions comply with those used within the Data Protection Act (as amended). Each term is therefore defined as follows:

‘Data’ is information which:

- is processed by equipment operating automatically in response to instructions given for that purpose.

or

- is recorded with the intention that it should be so processed.

or

- is recorded as part of a relevant filing system.

**‘Data subject’** is an individual who is the subject of personal data.

**‘Personal data’** is data consisting of information which relates to an individual who can be identified from that information.

**‘Processing’** is obtaining, recording, holding or carrying out any operation on data; such as the organisation, adaptation, alteration, retrieval, disclosure, dissemination, rearranging or destruction of the information or the data.

**‘Relevant filing system’** means any set of information, which is not processed by means of equipment, but is structured in such a way that specific information relating to a particular individual is readily accessible.

**‘Sensitive personal data’** means personal data consisting of information as to racial or ethnic origins; political, religious or other sensitive personal information.

## **5. Exemptions**

Specific sets of information are exempt from the Data Protection Act (as amended) and are therefore excluded from the detailed provision of this policy but in certain instances the spirit of the policy will be maintained, so far as is reasonably possible.

With the exception of the above no personal data, whether held on computer or in hard copy, will be released to any individual or organisation outside of Irish Water Safety. Within Irish Water Safety the data will only be released as appropriate and in accordance with this policy.

## **6. Consent to Process Data**

Irish Water Safety will only collect personal data about volunteers that is required for a legitimate business or legal reason. Under normal circumstances personal data will only be obtained from the volunteer with their consent. Where it is appropriate to consult sources other than the volunteer (such as for references) then they will be informed of that fact.

Personal data may only be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act (as amended).

## **7. Retention of personal data**

### **7.1 Storage**

Documentation relating to volunteering may be held in hard copy, as an individual file for a volunteer, within headquarters.

Hard copy records may not be removed from file store in which they are kept without the prior authorisation of the responsible person and in headquarters without the permission of the Chief Executive Office or the Chairman.

Irish Water Safety will take due care with regard to the storage and the protection of data.

### **7.2 Retention period**

To meet legal requirements, it is necessary to retain volunteer information for a defined period even after they have ceased being a volunteer for Irish Water Safety.

### **7.3 Accuracy of information**

Irish Water Safety will take such reasonable action as is necessary to ensure the accuracy of information.

## **8. Access to personal data**

All volunteers may request to see and have a copy of the sensitive and other personal data held by Irish Water Safety other than as defined by the Data Protection Act (as amended).

## **9. Personal Data Usage**

Sensitive and other personal data collected will only be used for the purpose for which collected.

## **10. References**

Confidential references provided by Irish Water Safety are exempt from the access provisions of the Data Protection Act (as amended) prior to their issue. This includes references supplied for the following purposes:



- Education.
- Training.
- Employment.
- Appointment to office.
- Provision of any service.

All references relating to past and current volunteers must be written by the Chief Executive Officer or the Chairman of Irish Water Safety in certain circumstances, who will discuss the detail with the appropriate persons when necessary. Factual references will be supplied by Irish Water Safety, which confirms such details as length of service and position(s) held. Subjective statements will not be included within references supplied by Irish Water Safety nor will telephone references be given.

Should a member wish to provide a 'character reference' for a past or current volunteer it must be explicitly stated that the reference is a personal reference for the individual concerned; it must not be sent on Irish Water Safety letter-head stationery and should not in any circumstances be considered to be the views or opinion of Irish Water Safety.

## **11. Responsibility**

It is the responsibility of the Chief Executive Officer to submit applications for notification to the Information Commissioner and to keep that notification up to date as required by the Data Protection Act (as amended). It must be noted that it is a criminal offence, to knowingly or recklessly hold personal data of any description other than that specified in the notification entry, or to process the data in breach of the entry. Misuse, unauthorised access to personal data, or lack of notification is therefore a disciplinary offence which may be subject to the terms of Irish Water Safety's disciplinary procedure.

All staff and volunteers referred to within the scope of this policy are required to be familiar with the terms of this policy.

Individual volunteers, staff members are required to keep within the spirit and intent of the policy, as far as possible in their own area. Any queries on the application or interpretation of this policy must be discussed with the Chief Executive Officer of Irish Water Safety

### **11.1 Who can change or adapt this policy?**

The Chief Executive Officer has the responsibility for ensuring the maintenance, regular review and updating of this policy. Revisions, amendments or alterations to the policy and supporting appendices can only be implemented following consideration and approval by Council.

## **Code of Conduct for Voluntary Members**

### **1. Purpose**

To provide a code of conduct this must be followed wherever possible by the IWS and its voluntary members. It is not an exhaustive list, but sets out the general principles expected by IWS.

### **2. Scope**

This policy applies to all voluntary members of Irish Water Safety and will be used by all.

This is a detailed code of conduct designed specifically for voluntary members at IWS venues such as functions, competitions, conferences, courses, presentations meetings, etc. A more general Code of Conduct for Members sets out the IWS's generic code of conduct which follows the same principles.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Regulations for Water Safety Area Committees and other codes of conduct dealing with various issues.

### **3. Code of Conduct**

At the heart of our policies is the 'Volunteer Commitment'. This statement outlines the spirit in which IWS and members will act together to achieve the IWS's objectives.

Staff have their own detailed and separate Code of Conduct Policy.

**Voluntary members at IWS venues must:**

- Carry out their volunteer role activities with due care and diligence
- Comply with all reasonable requests of persons in charge who support and manage their volunteer activities
- Act within the law at all times.
- Maintain the trust and confidence and uphold the reputation of the organisation at all times
- Maintain the trust and confidence of others at Water Safety venues

- Be aware of health and safety notices and their meaning, seeking clarification if necessary
- Immediately report all injuries and accidents occurring whilst volunteering for the organisation
- Report any loss or damage to personal or organisation property
- Wear any clothing/equipment provided to them for their volunteer role and comply with any health and safety rules in force
- Respect, maintain and care for any property belonging to or paid for by the organisation
- Return all property belonging to the IWS on or before the last date of their volunteering
- Act with respect and courtesy towards others
- Accept both IWS policy and the authority of those entrusted by the IWS to manage IWS venues
- Set a positive example to other members
- Discuss any problems or issues in a reasonable, constructive manner without aggression
- Make themselves aware of the content of all relevant regulations and/or codes of conduct.
- Participate in any necessary training relevant to their role

**Voluntary members engaged in Water Safety activities must not;**

- Act outside the spirit of the Volunteer Commitment
- Participate in any form of inappropriate behaviour or activity when volunteering or act in any way that brings the organisation into disrepute
- Bully, harass or unlawfully discriminate against anyone

- Falsify records, expenses or defraud or attempt to defraud the organisation in any manner
- Carry out volunteer duties when in an unfit state due to the influence of alcohol, or other drugs or substances
- Be in possession of any offensive weapon whilst undertaking volunteer activities
- Use the IWS 'brand' or equipment to promote private trading
- Damage or misuse IWS property

#### **4. Serious Breach**

Serious breaches of the Code of Conduct and the Volunteer Commitment will be handled using the Volunteer Problem Solving policy.

#### **5. Responsibility**

All members and staff (where applicable) referred to within the scope of this policy are required to be familiar with the terms of this policy.

Individual members are required to keep within the spirit and intent of the policy, as far as possible in their own area. Any queries on the application or interpretation of this policy must be discussed firstly with the Chief Executive Officer.

The Finance Commission has the responsibility for ensuring the maintenance, regular review and updating of this policy. Revisions, amendments or alterations to the policy and supporting appendices can only be implemented following consideration and approval by Council.

## **Problem Solving Policy**

### **SECTION 1 – Introduction**

#### **1.1 Scope**

This policy applies to all volunteer members of Irish Water Safety.

It sets out a framework to use if volunteers wish to raise a problem or concern they have with Irish Water Safety, its staff, or other volunteers.

The policy also clarifies what will happen if Irish Water Safety feels the need to raise a problem or concern about a volunteer, their approach, their conduct, or their relationship with Irish Water Safety and its staff and other volunteers.

This policy should be read in conjunction with Irish Water Safety's rules and regulations for Water Safety Area Committees and other regulations as appropriate.

Any complaint that falls under the guidelines relating to Child Protection (Code of Ethics and Goof Practice) will be dealt with in accordance with the Guidelines as mentioned herein.

#### **1.2 Background**

Irish Water Safety wants its volunteers to have access to a policy through which problems can be aired and, similarly, a policy whereby Irish Water Safety can address any problems with volunteers.

Maintaining the volunteer ethos is one of the underlying values of Irish Water Safety and a bond of trust is established between Irish Water Safety and its volunteers. This is based upon a voluntary two-way commitment, a relationship that is not intended to be a legally binding contract.

Irish Water Safety wants this to be a collaborative and mutually positive relationship. Occasionally, however, a volunteer may have a problem or concern which needs to be addressed. Similarly, Irish Water Safety may need to raise concerns and take action with a volunteer over their conduct, approach, suitability or availability for a role or other issue.

Initially, attempts will normally be made to resolve problems informally and volunteers are therefore encouraged to air difficulties locally and promptly as this informal approach usually provides the speediest and most effective solution.

If the relationship between a volunteer and Irish Water Safety starts to break down and ceases to be a collaborative and mutually positive one, this policy should be used as a way of resolving difficulties. However, if those difficulties prove irreconcilable, then either the volunteer or Irish Water Safety can decide to end the volunteer arrangement at any stage. Equally, either the volunteer or Irish Water Safety may decide to end the volunteer arrangement at any time for any other reason.

## **SECTION 2 - How a volunteer should raise a problem with Irish Water Safety**

### **2.1 Three stage process for raising problems**

Sometimes issues that are not directly involved with Irish Water Safety such as business conflict, personal relationships or local history are brought into the water safety sphere of activities and can cause difficulties with the relationship. Whilst the organisation wants to do all it can to promote the atmosphere of teamwork and trust, Irish Water Safety can only help volunteers tackle issues that relate closely to Irish Water Safety business. Volunteers are asked to put aside any other differences whilst attending water safety venues such as, meeting, conference, course, pool hire sessions, competitions, presentations or other such functions run under the auspices of IWS.

Should a volunteer raise an issue that is felt to be either outside Irish Water Safety's remit, or to be minor, this will be explained and the volunteer will be asked to resolve the problem in a different way.

If a volunteer has a problem they wish to air that is linked to Irish Water Safety, there are potentially 3 stages to this process. The first stage is informal, the second is formal and the third and final stage is the opportunity to appeal the decision.

Problems should always be aired as promptly as possible.

#### **Stage 1 – Informal**

Unless the problem is a major one, volunteers should first raise the problem informally with the Hon, Secretary or Chairman of the Water Safety Area

Committee. Either will try to resolve the problem informally, involving other people as needed. It is hoped that all problems of a relatively minor nature will be resolved in this way as it would be unusual for these to be taken forward to the formal stage. If the problem is of a national issue then any member of the Council or the Chief Executive Officer can be asked to intervene or assist in finding a resolution informally.

For more major problems, an informal approach may be sufficient, or it may be the pre-cursor to the formal stage.

### **Stage 2 – Formal**

If the problem is of a serious nature, or if it proves impossible to resolve a more minor problem informally, then a problem or complaint can be aired formally by the volunteer summarising details in writing to the Chief Executive Officer. The Hon. Secretary of the Water Safety Area Committee should be copied in any such letter, unless the complaint is about the Hon Secretary in which case the Chairman will be copied.

The complaint needs to be specific as to what the problem is and the volunteer should be prepared to give examples. The Chief Executive Officer will listen to the problem, either in a pre-arranged telephone call, or by inviting the volunteer to a meeting. If a formal meeting is required, the volunteer will be given reasonable notice of that meeting and will be offered the chance to bring a companion. Should the Chief Executive Officer be subject of the complaint then the National Chairman will be the contacted.

Once the complaint has been considered fully – which may involve investigating further and involving others - the volunteer will be informed of the decision in writing. The volunteer may appeal the outcome.

### **Stage 3 – Appeal**

If the volunteer decides to appeal the outcome, they need to do so in writing, to the Council within 7 working days, explaining their reasons. Irish Water Safety will consider the appeal and may ask the volunteer to attend a further meeting with independent Referees. The Referees decision is final and binding with no other avenue of appeal within the organisation. Irish Water Safety will notify the volunteer in writing of the decision.



## **2.2 Bullying, harassment or discrimination**

Irish Water Safety believes in equality of opportunity and does not tolerate bullying, harassment or discrimination. If a volunteer feels they are the subject of or witness to any sort of bullying, harassment or discrimination they should immediately inform the Hon. Secretary of the WSAC or the Chief Executive Officer of IWS, whichever they feel is most appropriate.

The principles outlined in this policy are applicable, but additional support is also available.

## **SECTION 3 - How Irish Water Safety will raise an issue with a volunteer**

### **3.1 Three stage process for tackling problems**

Occasionally Irish Water Safety needs to raise concerns with a volunteer. This might be about a volunteer's approach, conduct or suitability, which would be incompatible with the ethos of Irish Water Safety which is a Statutory Body. Irish Water Safety will do this in a fair way, making sure the volunteer understands what the concern is, giving the volunteer the opportunity to put across their views, and trying to agree an acceptable resolution.

Nonetheless, if there are very serious concerns where the relationship seems irreconcilable or is no longer a collaborative one, then Irish Water Safety will consider a range of options.

There are potentially 3 stages to this process. The first stage is informal, the second is formal and the third and final stage is the opportunity to appeal the outcome.

#### **Stage 1 – Informal**

Issues will normally be raised with the volunteer through the Hon, Secretary or Chairman of the Water Safety Area Committee. Either will try to resolve the problem informally, involving other people as required. It is hoped that all problems will be resolved through this course of action in the interest of both parties.

## **Stage 2 – Formal**

Should this informal approach prove unsuccessful, or if the concern is either more significant or a series of cumulative concerns, then the Chief Executive Officer will be involved.

Irish Water Safety will make sure the volunteer understands what the concern is and will investigate the concern by asking the volunteer for their views and where necessary will seek the views of others involved.

If a formal meeting is required the volunteer will be given reasonable notice of that meeting, the volunteer will be told what the concerns are and will be offered the chance to bring a companion.

Irish Water Safety will notify the volunteer of the outcome and, if applicable, the volunteer will be given the chance to appeal that outcome.

## **Stage 3 – Appeal**

If the volunteer decides to appeal the outcome, they need to do so in writing, to the Chief Executive Officer within 7 days, explaining their reasons for doing so. The Council will consider the appeal and may ask the volunteer to attend a further meeting. Irish Water Safety will notify the volunteer of the decision, which will be final.

## **3.2 Complaints from the public**

Should a complaint be received about a volunteer from a member of the public, the principles outlined in this policy are broadly applicable.

# **SECTION 4 – Additional Information**

## **4.1 Facilitated meetings**

Once a problem has been raised, by either Irish Water Safety or a volunteer, a facilitated meeting may be set up as a constructive way of tackling difficulties or rebuilding a relationship. At any stage in these

processes Irish Water Safety may ask volunteers to participate in a facilitated meeting as a potential solution and way of moving forward.

#### **4.2 Stand down**

During the airing, investigation or attempted resolution of a problem, Irish Water Safety may ask a volunteer to temporarily stand down for a number of reasons.

#### **4.3 Resolution**

Irish Water Safety will treat the resolution of complaints or problems seriously and fairly but it is not always possible to reach a solution that is to the satisfaction of all the parties involved. It is Irish Water Safety's goal to ensure that volunteers feel fulfilled during their involvement with Irish Water Safety, but the organisation will ultimately take decisions that they believe to be in the best interests of Irish Water Safety and will ask volunteers to accept such decisions in the spirit they are made.

#### **4.4 Confidentiality**

Problems raised by volunteers will be treated with discretion and the organisation will only consult with those who are involved and whose views need to be considered.

Volunteers should be aware, however, that if they make a formal complaint about an individual – whether another volunteer or member of staff – Irish Water Safety will normally make that individual aware of the complaint and who has made it. For this reason, any complaint should be specific and factual.

If Irish Water Safety raises a problem with a volunteer, it will be discreet and only involve those who are necessary. In return, Irish Water Safety asks volunteers to treat the airing and resolution of problems in a discreet and confidential way.

**Appendix 1**

**Volunteer Data Protection Policy**

**Request for Personal Data**

**To: The Chief Executive officer – Irish Water Safety**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

I understand the organisation has my personal data in its possession. I am writing to request that you provide a copy of/give me access to, all information which you hold about me.

The specific information I require is:

I understand that the information will be provided/viewed within 30 days of the above date.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signed** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

I understand that I may be required to pay a fee for the supply of copy information

**For official use only**

Received \_\_\_\_\_  
**Name** **Date**

Supplied \_\_\_\_\_  
**Name** **Date**

Further action required:

## **Appendix 2**



# **IRISH WATER SAFETY**

## **CUMANN SÁBHÁILTEACHT UISCE**

The Long Walk  
Galway  
Ireland  
LoCall: 1890-420.202  
Tel: 353+91 56 44 00  
Fax: 353+91 56 47 00

email: [info@iws.ie](mailto:info@iws.ie)  
website: [www.iws.ie](http://www.iws.ie)

### **Membership Application Form**

Forename: \_\_\_\_\_

Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone:

HOME: \_\_\_\_\_

WORK: \_\_\_\_\_

MOBILE: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

1. I apply for membership of the Irish Water Safety Association commencing (year) \_\_\_\_\_, I declare that I will abide by the Rules and Regulations of the Association and the guidelines on child protection in Irish Water Safety.
2. I have received and read a copy of the "Volunteer Policies", "Rules for Water Safety Area Committees" and "Code of Ethics & Good Practice" in relation to dealing with Children, etc.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES (Please tick):**

Examiner	<input type="checkbox"/>	Trainee Examiner	<input type="checkbox"/>	Risk Assessor	<input type="checkbox"/>	W.S.D.O.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Council	<input type="checkbox"/>
Instructor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Trainee Instructor	<input type="checkbox"/>	National Referee	<input type="checkbox"/>	Organiser /Helper	<input type="checkbox"/>	Club	<input type="checkbox"/>
Honorary	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	Swimming Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>	C.P.R. Instructor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Corporate	<input type="checkbox"/>
Persons/Group Appointees					<input type="checkbox"/>	International Referee		<input type="checkbox"/>	

***Attaching passport size photo (signed on back) for membership I.D. card.***

.....

***I certify that the above applicant is in good standing with this area committee of Irish Water Safety and qualifies for the type of membership indicated above.***

**Area Water Safety Committee:** \_\_\_\_\_ **No:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Secretary**

**ORGANISATIONS' RIGHTS AS IN OUR VOLUNTEER'S CHARTER**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To draw up a volunteer agreement or "contract"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To ask for commitment</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To ask for tasks to be done in a particular way</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To ask for reliability</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To deal with disciplinary and grievance matters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To ask for punctuality</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To ask volunteers to leave if their involvement hinders the organisation achieving its goals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To select only those suitable for the work</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To look for certain qualities and skills</li> </ul>

Irish Water Safety is the statutory and voluntary body established to promote water safety in Ireland.

Tá Cumann Sábháilteacht Uisce ina bhord deonach reachtúil a bunaíodh le sábháilteacht uisce a chotú in Éirinn.

***IWS reserves the right to accept or decline applications for membership***