WATER SAFETY IRELAND

VOLUNTEER POLICIES FOR MEMBERS

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# Water Safety Ireland Volunteer Policy

# Why We have Volunteers.

Water Safety Ireland 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 Water Safety Ireland is held, and the generous public support we enjoy, particularly from Government, Local Authorises 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 relationships. This has led to some concerns about the place of volunteers within Water Safety Ireland.

This policy clarifies what Water Safety Ireland sets out to do for its volunteers and what Water Safety Ireland 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.

# Water Safety Ireland Volunteer

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

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

# Water Safety Ireland’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.

1. Be clear on Water Safety Ireland’s expectations of volunteers and look

for these to be met.

1. Create volunteering opportunities that where possible can be tailored to the needs of individuals.
2. Support all Water Safety Ireland’s volunteers to achieve the organisation’s objectives, and, where possible, for volunteers to achieve theirs.
3. Base volunteering opportunities on the community approach and local contacts.
4. Listen to volunteers and give them a role, and a voice, in the running of the organisation.

**Principles behind Volunteering** Water Safety Ireland 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.

# Water Safety Ireland ‘Volunteer Commitment’

**Water Safety Ireland will:**

* + Welcome you, as a volunteer and provide appropriate opportunities to those who can help us achieve Water Safety Ireland’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 Water Safety Ireland.
  + Be fair to those around you.
  + Talk to your Water Safety Ireland 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.

Water Safety Ireland 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 WATER SAFETY IRELAND 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

Water Safety Ireland 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.

Water Safety Ireland 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 Water Safety Ireland 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 Water Safety Ireland achieve its objectives.

# IT access and usage

Water Safety Ireland 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.

Water Safety Ireland 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

Water Safety Ireland 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

Water Safety Ireland 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 Water Safety Ireland, our staff or volunteers.

# Child protection

Water Safety Ireland will take all practicable steps to safeguard the safety and welfare of young people while they are in contact with Water Safety Ireland, 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, Water Safety Ireland’s Data Protection Policy and all other relevant legislation.

Water Safety Ireland 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 Water Safety Ireland needs to resolve an issue that we believe to exist. Water Safety Ireland 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

Water Safety Ireland 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 Water Safety Ireland will allow the organisation to increase its capability and will complement the work carried out by staff.

# Recognition

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

Water Safety Ireland volunteers who have made a substantial difference or commitment to Water Safety Ireland 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

Water Safety Ireland 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 Water Safety Ireland on the volunteer meeting certain criteria.

# Saying farewell

We ask that any volunteer who no longer wishes to actively be part of Water Safety Ireland 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 Water Safety Ireland 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 Water Safety Ireland 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 Water Safety Ireland “Volunteer Policy” can be had from the Water Safety Ireland Headquarters.

# Volunteer Registration Policy

1. **Purpose**

To provide Water Safety Ireland 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 Water Safety Ireland to help them to contribute effectively to Water Safety Ireland at the earliest opportunity.

# Scope

* 1. Who does this policy apply to?

All persons engaged in volunteering for Water Safety Ireland.

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 Water Safety Ireland and other supplementary publications dealing with codes of conduct.

# 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.

Water Safety Ireland 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 Water Safety Ireland 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.

# Enquiries

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

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

# 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.

# The Selection Process

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

# 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 Water Safety Ireland 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.

# Administration

All completed membership forms should be kept confidential.

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

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

# Induction

When a volunteer first starts with Water Safety Ireland, 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.

# 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.

# Who can change or adapt this policy?

The Finance Commission is 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 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 Water Safety Ireland.
    - A desire to gain a new experience and enhance personal development.
    - The fact they have free time.
    - Their commitment to Water Safety Ireland’s mission.
    - A personal experience they have had with Water Safety Ireland.
    - 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 Water Safety Ireland - in places where potential volunteers may be found.

**Barriers to Volunteering**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Question | Answer |
| Am I allowed to volunteer? | * 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. * 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. * Job seekers should inform their job centres that they are volunteering and they should continue to be available for and actively seek work. * Recipients of income support or disability benefits should let their social security office know that they are undertaking voluntary work. * There is no limit on the number of hours a person can spend volunteering. |
| How much time will I be expected to give? | * The time commitment expected of Water Safety Ireland volunteers is flexible and varies depending on each volunteer role. |
| Will I feel like part of Water Safety Ireland or an outsider? | * Part of Water Safety Ireland’s Volunteer Commitment to its volunteer is to provide a thorough induction to Water Safety Ireland, with any appropriate training for the volunteer role to carry out the role effectively identified and planned. * Each volunteer role has an identified support staff member. |

**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.

# Scope

* 1. **Who does this policy apply to?**

All persons engaged in volunteering for Water Safety Ireland.

# 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 Water Safety Ireland and other supplementary publications.

# Policy Statement

Water Safety Ireland 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.

# Role design

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

* A good representation of the diverse face of society.
* The ability to present Water Safety Ireland 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 Water Safety Ireland, and wherever practicable will be designed to ensure the broadest possible catchment of potential volunteers of suitable calibre.

# 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 Water Safety Ireland.

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 Water Safety Ireland’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 Water Safety Ireland meet its objectives.

# Training and Development

The criteria for selecting volunteers for training opportunities will 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 Water Safety Ireland.

Volunteer members can be assured that Water Safety Ireland 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.

# 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 Water Safety Ireland and volunteers will act

together to achieve Water Safety Ireland’s objectives.

This commitment applies equally to all our members

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

# 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.

# Problem Solving

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

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# 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 Water Safety Ireland.

# 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)

# Scope

* 1. Who does this policy apply to?

Water Safety Ireland volunteers and Staff.

# 2.2. Who uses this policy?

Volunteers and Staff of Water Safety Ireland.

# 2.3 Policies linked to this policy

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

# Policy Statement

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

Water Safety Ireland 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.

# 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.

# 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 Water Safety Ireland. Within Water Safety Ireland the data will only be released as appropriate and in accordance with this policy.

# Consent to Process Data

Water Safety Ireland 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).

1. Retention of personal data
   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.

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

# 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 Water Safety Ireland.

# Accuracy of information

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

# Access to personal data

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

# Personal Data Usage

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

# References

Confidential references provided by Water Safety Ireland 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 Water Safety Ireland in certain circumstances, who will discuss the detail with the appropriate persons when necessary. Factual references will be supplied by Water Safety Ireland, which confirms such details as length of service and position(s) held.

Subjective statements will not be included within references supplied by Water Safety Ireland 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 Water Safety Ireland letter-head stationery and should not in any circumstances be considered to be the views or opinion of Water Safety Ireland.

# 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 Water Safety Ireland’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 Water Safety Ireland

# 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 WSI and its voluntary members. It is not an exhaustive list, but sets out the general principles expected by WSI.

# Scope

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

This is a detailed code of conduct designed specifically for voluntary members at WSI venues such as functions, competitions, conferences, courses, presentations meetings, etc. A more general Code of Conduct for Members sets out the WSI’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.

# Code of Conduct

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

Staff have their own detailed and separate Code of Conduct Policy. **Voluntary members at WSI 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 WSI on or before the last date of their volunteering
  + Act with respect and courtesy towards others
  + Accept both WSI policy and the authority of those entrusted by the WSI to manage WSI 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 WSI ‘brand’ or equipment to promote private trading
  + Damage or misuse WSI property

# Serious Breach

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

# Responsibility

All members and staff (were 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. **Scope**

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

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

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

This policy should be read in conjunction with Water Safety Ireland’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.

# Background

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

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

Water Safety Ireland 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, Water Safety Ireland 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 Water Safety Ireland 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 Water Safety Ireland can decide to end the volunteer arrangement at any stage. Equally, either the volunteer or Water Safety Ireland may decide to end the volunteer arrangement at any time for any other reason.

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

* 1. **Three stage process for raising problems**

Sometimes issues that are not directly involved with Water Safety Ireland 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, Water Safety Ireland can only help volunteers tackle issues that relate closely to Water Safety Ireland 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 WSI.

Should a volunteer raise an issue that is felt to be either outside Water Safety Ireland’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 Water Safety Ireland, 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. Water Safety Ireland 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. Water Safety Ireland will notify the volunteer in writing of the decision.

# Bullying, harassment or discrimination

Water Safety Ireland 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 WSI, whichever they feel is most appropriate.

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

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

* 1. **Three stage process for tackling problems**

Occasionally Water Safety Ireland 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 Water Safety Ireland which is a Statutory Body. Water Safety Ireland 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 Water Safety Ireland 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.

Water Safety Ireland 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.

Water Safety Ireland 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. Water Safety Ireland will notify the volunteer of the decision, which will be final.

# 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

* 1. **Facilitated meetings**

Once a problem has been raised, by either Water Safety Ireland 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 Water Safety Ireland may ask volunteers to participate in a facilitated meeting as a potential solution and way of moving forward.

# Stand down

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

# Resolution

Water Safety Ireland 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 Water Safety Ireland’s goal to ensure that volunteers feel fulfilled during their involvement with Water Safety Ireland, but the organisation will ultimately take decisions that they believe to be in the best interests of Water Safety Ireland and will ask volunteers to accept such decisions in the spirit they are made.

# 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 – Water Safety Ireland 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 Water Safety Ireland raises a problem with a volunteer, it will be discreet and only involve those who are necessary. In return, Water Safety Ireland 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 – Water Safety Ireland** 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:

# Logo Description automatically generatedAppendix 2

***WATER SAFETY IRELAND***

***CUMANN SÁBHÁILTEACHT UISCE***

**Membership Application Form**

The Long Walk

Galway

Tel: 353+91 56 44 00

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

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Forename: |  |
| Surname: |  |
| Address: |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
| Telephone: | HOME: WORK:    MOBILE: |
| Email: |  |

# I apply for membership of the Water Safety Ireland Association commencing (year) , I declare that I will abide by the Rules and Regulations of the Association and the guidelines on child protection in Water Safety Ireland.

* + 1. **I have read a copy of the “Volunteer Policies” and “Code of Ethics & Good Practice” in relation to dealing with Children and agree to abide by these policies and code.**
    2. **I have completed Child Safety Training and enclose certificate of completion.**
    3. **I have been successfully garda vetted and am eligible for membership.**

Signed: Date:

**MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES (Please tick):**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Examiner |  | Trainee Examiner |  | Risk Assessor |  | W.S.D.O. |  | Council |  |
| Instructor |  | Trainee Instructor |  | National Referee |  | Organiser /Helper |  | Club |  |
| Honorary |  |  |  | Swimming Teacher |  | C.P.R. Instructor |  | Corporate |  |
| Persons/Group Appointees | | | | |  | International Referee | | |  |

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

## ~

## WSAC Verification:

***…………………………………***

## I certify that the above applicant is in good standing with this area committee of Water Safety Ireland 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

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * To draw up a volunteer agreement or “contract” | * To ask for commitment |
| * To ask for tasks to be done in a particular   way | * To ask for reliability |
| * To deal with disciplinary and grievance matters | * To ask for punctuality |
| * To ask volunteers to leave if their involvement hinders the organisation achieving its goals | * To select only those suitable for the work |
| * To look for certain qualities and skills |

Water Safety Ireland 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.

***WSI reserves the right to accept or decline applications for members.***