



WATER SAFETY IRELAND

POLICIES FOR MEMBERS and VOLUNTEERS

Water Safety Ireland (WSI) 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 behaviours to prevent drowning and water related accidents. We provide instruction in lifesaving, water safety and swimming.

Water Safety Ireland Policies for Members and Volunteers

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Water Safety Ireland Members' Policies

Purpose

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 Authorities and other sources, is because our lifesaving work is largely carried out by volunteers

The purpose of this document is to present the policies necessary to clarify what Water Safety Ireland sets out to do for its volunteers and what Water Safety Ireland asks in return.

Scope

The policies and procedures outlined in this document must be followed by all members of WSI. Effort has been made to make this document available to all members of Water Safety Ireland to ensure clarity of expectations. Efforts have also been made to include all fundamental policies in this document. However, additional policies and procedures may also apply to members. You should note that these policies are subject to change and variation from time to time. The validity, construction and performance of the policies outlined in this document shall be governed by the law in the Republic of Ireland and are underpinned by and subject to any overriding legislation. As such, the terms of these policies may be revised from time to time, in line with both the evolving needs of the organisation and continuous updates in legislation. If any individual policy outlined in this document, (whether a whole clause or a sub-clause) is or becomes invalid, illegal, or unenforceable in any respect under any law, the validity and enforceability of the remaining provisions and policies shall not in any way be affected or impaired. This document will be reviewed and updated periodically by WSI Council, and the most recent version will be made available to all members via the WSI website.

Definitions

Water Safety Ireland Volunteers

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 to express a voluntary two-way commitment where everyone gains satisfaction from being part of our organisation.

Member

While the terms member and volunteer are used interchangeably throughout this document, it is important to note that individuals must comply with the requirements set out in membership application in order to become members of WSI.

Water Safety Area Committees

WSI Council have identified various regions within Ireland, known as Water Safety Areas (WSAs). These WSAs are in turn managed by Water Safety Area Committees. The full details of WSAC formation and governance can be found in the WSI WSAC Rules and Regulations.

Volunteer Manager or Volunteer Liaison

The Volunteer Manager or Volunteer Liaison is a WSI employee who acts as the first point of contact for all WSI members and Water Safety Area Committees. The purpose of their role is to empower the volunteers. This is done by actively engaging and communicating with the volunteers, ensuring that all are informed of WSI initiatives and projects and that they are empowered to comply with the requirements that fall upon each member of WSI.

Water Safety Ireland Members and Volunteers Charter

At the heart of our policies is the 'Volunteer Charter', which is a statement of responsibilities and expectations for both the organisation and the volunteers. This commitment is meant to ensure a respectful and mutually beneficial relationship between volunteer and organisation. We ask volunteers to sign this when they come on board with Water Safety Ireland.

VOLUNTEERS' RIGHTS

A volunteer shall have the right:

- To know if how they are being selected as a volunteer.
- To be offered a volunteer induction and the opportunity for ongoing training.
- To be given meaningful and rewarding tasks that matches their interests and skill set.
- To know what is expected of them and have a clear understanding of their role and assigned tasks.
- To refuse any task that would go against their beliefs and or convictions.
- To be assured that any personal data collected from the volunteer will be handled in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
- To be valued, recognised and thanked for their time.
- To receive ongoing support and feedback from a designated supervisor/ mentor.
- To know the point of contact if there is a concern and to be aware of how it will be handled.
- To be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses incurred when volunteering in accordance with WSI's Travel and Subsistence Policy.

- To make mistakes and to learn from them.
- To be made aware of any disciplinary and grievance procedures that affect them.
- To be treated fairly and respectfully and not be subject to discrimination, bullying or exclusion.
- to be provided with a Appropriate equipment and conditions while engaged in WSI activities.
- To be informed of relevant or necessary organisational updates or changes.
- The opportunity to play an active part in the organisation.
- The right to attend Area Committees AGM.
- AGM voting rights (17 Yrs)
- The right to participate and or give time freely when available and withdraw from activities without guilt.

VOLUNTEERS' RESPONSIBILITIES

- To follow, comply and engage with all policies and procedures as set by WSI.
- To respect the values, aims and integrity of the organisation.
- To adhere to the rules of law and non-discrimination.
- To comply without exception, with WSI Code of Conduct for members.
- To successfully complete and renew Garda Vetting
- To complete and renew TUSLA and WSI "children first" safeguarding training and certification.
- To adhere to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) when encountering any personal data.
- To be committed and carry out duties assigned to them. Within reason.
- To be reliable, punctual and give the organisation sufficient notice if they are unable to attend an assigned course or event.
- To represent the organisation in an appropriate and professional manner at all times.
- To cooperate with other volunteers in a respectful manner.

- To refrain from consuming prohibited drugs and alcohol while carrying out assigned tasks for WSI.
- To attend essential training, CPDs and support sessions, necessary for any assigned role.
- To ask questions when there is uncertainty.
- To undertake the activities to a high standard.
- To keep activities safe and in line with standards set in Water Safety Ireland syllabus.
- To be honest and inform appropriate design persons contact of issues, including any serious incidents or potential dangers.
- To respect confidentiality.
- To step back from activities when requested or no longer enjoying the experience.

ORGANISATIONS' RESPONSIBILITIES

Water Safety Ireland commits itself:

- To ensure the volunteering experience is a rewarding.
- To listen to volunteer needs and try to find the right fit for their interests and skill set
- To ensure inclusion, accessibility and equal opportunity.
- To identify any barriers to volunteering and develop a strategy to retain diverse groups.
- To ensure support and reasonable accommodation is in place for any potential volunteer with additional needs.
- To define clear, meaningful roles for volunteers.
- To provide policies and procedures for volunteers that are relevant, including induction guidance and training.
- To handle any personal data collected from volunteers in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
- To ensure that all volunteers who have direct contact with children or vulnerable adults are Garda Vetted and comply with WSI's Safeguarding requirements and training .
- To comply with and be familiar with any legal requirements regarding volunteering.

- To provide all necessary information to volunteers.
- To be available for volunteers.
- To provide training where necessary for assigned roles
- To value and thank volunteers.
- To inform volunteers of any legal liabilities and obligations that they may have when volunteering for WSI.
- To supervise and provide ongoing support for volunteers.
- To reimburse out of pocket expenses in accordance with WSI's Travel and Subsistence Policy.
- To not utilise volunteers in place of paid staff.
- To provide flexibility when possible.
- To encourage volunteers to contribute to the development of volunteering policies and procedures.
- To understand that volunteering is the individual's choice and not attempt to influence or coerce them to continue or take part if unable too.

ORGANISATION'S RIGHTS

- Water Safety Ireland has the right:
- To look for certain qualities and skills in volunteers.
- To select only volunteers who are suitable for the task
- To request that tasks are performed in a specific way.
- To ask for commitment, reliability and punctuality.
- To deal with disciplinary and grievance matters.
- To enforce Rules and Regulations and or Code of Conduct when necessary/ needed
- To revoke membership where a breach of rules or code of conduct has occurred, or any action that brings the organisation into disrepute.

Frequently Asked Questions

Frequently Asked Question	Answers
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 seeking 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

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is 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

This policy applies to all persons engaged in volunteering for Water Safety Ireland, including those who may manage or organise other volunteers.

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.

For full details, see the Volunteer Registration Policy.

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 be based on the volunteer's merits, abilities and needs, as well as 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.

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.

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 and 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.

Volunteer Registration Policy

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

This policy applies to all persons engaged in volunteering for Water Safety Ireland.

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 GDPR.

Where appropriate and possible, volunteers will have their skills matched to Water Safety Ireland needs in order to best utilise individual 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, in turn, help us by participating with and adhere to current policies, standards and procedures.

Enquiries

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 new roles and opportunities as they occur. Registration 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 support 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.

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.

Volunteering in Action

Volunteering roles will vary depending on many factors, but all roles will share the following basic tenets and expectations.

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 endeavour 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, following our Social Media Policy.

Expenses

Where appropriate and verifiable, volunteers will be entitled to reimbursement of their travel and subsistence expenses. We will provide clear guidance on expenses claims to volunteers to ensure compliance with Revenue guidelines and relevant government regulations. 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

All volunteers working with children should read and comply with all policies and practices contained within the Water Safety Ireland CODE OF ETHICS & GOOD PRACTICE FOR CHILDREN INVOLVED IN WATER SAFETY ACTIVITIES. 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. All volunteers working with children must become familiar with and adhere to the Water Safety Ireland CODE OF ETHICS & GOOD PRACTICE FOR CHILDREN INVOLVED IN WATER SAFETY ACTIVITIES. **All volunteers who work with children are required to be Garda Vetted, attend WSI Child Safeguarding Training and TUSLA Child Safeguarding Training. Vetting and Training must be within date** and renewed periodically. It is the responsibility of each volunteer to ensure that their vetting and training is in date and valid.

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 their local WSAC. 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, but when an issue cannot be resolved locally, we leave it to the discretion of the area committee Chair to decide if a volunteer will be asked to step down. However, we do recognise that sometimes problems may need airing at a higher level, and we have systems to manage these as well, including the right of a volunteer to appeal their removal. Please refer to the Problem Solving Policy in this document for full details.

Recognition

Water Safety Ireland recognises the valuable contribution made by all its volunteers. In our communications and marketing, we will promote volunteering and our volunteer ethos.

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

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 Honorary 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 or the role is not appropriate for the volunteer. When this happens Water Safety Ireland will endeavour 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.

Code of Conduct

WSI Council, Commission Members and Employees are all required to adhere to the WSI Code of Conduct. WSI Council has agreed that this same standard applies to all WSI members, regardless of their role in the organisation.

Introduction

Water Safety Ireland (WSI) is a statutory body established by Statutory Instrument (S.I. 56 of 2019). This clearly outlines how the Body should operate and be managed. In addition, Water Safety Ireland adheres to the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies, issued by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform and is overseen by the Department of Rural and Community Development.

The Code of Business Conduct for WSI Members, Council Members, Committee and Commission Members and Staff ensures that the business of WSI aligns with WSI's Statutory Instrument, the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies the DRCD's priorities.

Intent and Scope

The Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2016), issued by the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, sets out the principles of corporate governance which State bodies are required to adopt. It puts the onus on WSI to put in place and adhere to a Code of Business Conduct for

members of the Council and employees. This policy also applies to all WSI members, committees, commissions and working groups appointed by the Council.

This Code of Conduct considers the implications of the Ethics in Public Office Act, 1995, the Standards in Public Office Act, 2001, the Charities Act (2009) and associated guidance

Objectives

The Code is designed to assist WSI in the conduct of its business by:

1. stating an agreed set of ethical principles.
2. promoting and maintaining confidence and trust.
3. preventing the development or acceptance of unethical practices.
4. promoting the highest management and public service standards in all WSI activities.
5. protecting the reputation of WSI.

Integrity and Conflicts of Interest

Members of WSI, Members of the Council, Committees, Commissions and Working Groups should always seek to act in the best interests of WSI.

Members of WSI, Members of the Council, Committees, Commissions and Working Groups should always adhere to the WSI Conflicts of Interest Policy.

Members of the Council, Committees, Commissions and Working Groups should disclose details of outside employment/business/personal interests in actual, potential, or perceived conflict with the business of WSI. In this regard, “conflict of interest” means any situation in which a person’s personal interests or loyalties could, or could be seen to, prevent that person from deciding in the best interests of WSI. This interest may be direct or indirect and can include interests of a person connected to that person. “A conflict of interest exists in any situation where the personal or other interest of a director or a connected party might in any way affect the discharge by a director of his/her duties or his/her deliberations in a situation where a director or a connected party could benefit. It makes no difference that the Company does not suffer by the conflict of interest. A director or his/her relatives, friends or associates must not under any circumstances obtain any such benefit.”

WSI will manage conflicts of interest by requiring Council and Committees, Commissions and Working Groups members to:

- avoid conflicts of interest where possible.
- identify and record any conflicts of interest.
- carefully manage any conflicts of interest; and
- follow this Code and respond to any breaches.

Procedure

The following procedures should be followed at any Council or Committees, Commissions and Working Groups meeting at which a conflict of interest arises:

A declaration of any conflict of interest should be made to the Chair of the meeting and Council Committees, Commissions and Working Groups Secretary, in advance of the meeting whenever possible, or, where that is not practicable, at the meeting by the relevant Council or Committees, Commissions and Working Groups member. Declaration of Conflicts of Interest shall be a standing item on the agenda of every Council Committees, Commissions and Working Groups meeting.

Once the conflict of interest has been appropriately disclosed, the Council or Committees, Commissions and Working Groups member (as applicable) should not:

- vote on the matter; or
- participate in any related discussions.

In exceptional circumstances, such as where a conflict is very significant or likely to prevent the relevant member from regularly participating in discussions, the Council should consider whether it is appropriate for the person concerned to resign from the Council or Committees, Commissions and Working Groups (as applicable).

The action taken will be recorded in the minutes.

The relevant member must also furnish a written statement of interest to the Council Committees, Commission's and Working Group's Secretary outlining the conflict either prior to, at, or as soon as possible after the meeting. This should include details of whether he/she, or a "connected person" has a material interest in the matter at hand. The Council Committees, Commissions and Working Groups Secretary will then record this in the confidential Conflicts Register.

Where a matter relating to the interests of the Chairperson arises, the other members in attendance shall choose one of the members present to chair the meeting. The Chairperson should absent himself/herself when the Council Committees, Commissions and Working Groups is deliberating or deciding on a matter in which the Chairperson or his/her connected person has an interest.

Where possible, documents on any deliberations regarding any matter in which the Council Committees, Commissions and Working Groups member has disclosed a material interest should not be made available to the member concerned. Consideration should be given as to whether a separate record (to which that member would not have access) should be maintained. If the Council Committees, Commissions and Working Groups has reason to believe that a Council Committees, Commissions and Working Groups member has failed to comply with the above requirements, it will investigate the circumstances. If it is found that the relevant person failed to disclose a conflict of interest, the Council Committees, Commissions and Working Groups may take action against the person, including seeking the person's resignation from Council (Committees, Commissions and Working Groups as applicable).

Management and employees are not permitted to be involved in outside employment/business interests in actual, potential, or perceived conflict with the business of WSI, or which would or might impede the satisfactory discharge of their duties as WSI employees. Where an actual, potential, or perceived conflict arises, the relevant person should furnish a written statement of interest to the Council Committees, Commissions and Working Groups Secretary outlining the conflict as soon as possible. This should include details of whether he/she, or a "connected person" has a material interest in the matter at hand. The Council Committees, Commissions and Working Groups Secretary will then record this in the

confidential Conflicts Register and, in consultation with the CEO, advise as to whether further action is required.

Council members, Council committee members and employees should:

- avoid giving or receiving corporate gifts, hospitality, preferential treatment, or benefits which might affect or appear to affect the ability of the donor or the recipient to make independent judgements on WSI-related business transactions.
- commit to compete vigorously and energetically, but also ethically and honestly.
- ensure that the conduct of purchasing activities of goods/services are conducted in accordance with best business practice.
- ensure a culture of claiming expenses only as appropriate to business needs and in accordance with good practice in the public sector, adhering to the current WSI T&S Policies and Procedures.
- ensure that the financial statements and reports accurately reflect business performance and are not misleading or designed to be misleading.
- never use WSI resources, property or time for personal gain or for the benefit of persons/organisations unconnected with WSI or its activities
- commit not to acquire information or business secrets by improper means.

Information

Council, Committees, Commissions and Working Groups members, and employees should:

Support the provision of access to general information relating to WSI's activities in a way that is open and enhances its accountability to the general public.

Respect the confidentiality of sensitive information held by WSI, including but not limited to: commercially sensitive information.

personal data. Special care should be taken to ensure confidentiality in relation to the personal data of children is maintained.

Information received in confidence

Observe appropriate prior consultation procedures with third parties where, exceptionally, it is proposed to release sensitive information in the public interest. Comply with relevant statutory provisions, including but not limited to legislation related to health & safety, freedom of information and data protection.

Obligations

Council, Committees, Commissions and Working Groups members, members and employees should:

- fulfil all regulatory and statutory obligations. If a Council member finds evidence that there is non-compliance with any statutory obligations that apply to WSI, he/she should immediately bring this to the attention of their fellow Council members, with a view to having the matter rectified.
- comply with detailed tendering and purchasing procedures, as well as complying with prescribed levels of authority for sanctioning any relevant expenditure; and

- ensure that there are adequate controls in place to prevent fraud, including controls to ensure compliance with prescribed procedures in relation to claiming of expenses for business travel.

Council members and Council committee members should:

- use their reasonable endeavours to ensure that they can have 100% attendance at Council Committees, Commissions and Working Groups.
- conform with the procedures laid down by the Council herein in relation to conflict-of-interest situations, including regarding acceptance of positions following employment and/or engagement by WSI that may give rise to the potential for conflicts of interest and to confidentiality concerns.
- acknowledge the duty of all to conform to the highest standards of business ethics.

Confidentiality

Council, Committees, Commissions and Working Groups members should ensure that:

- they maintain confidentiality of all information obtained by virtue of their position on the Council, Committees, Commissions and Working Groups.
- there is no disclosure of privileged or confidential information when such membership ceases. In addition, Council members should ensure that acceptance of further employment, where the potential for conflict arises, should be avoided during a reasonable time period after the Council membership ceases. Any issues or clarifications, arising from this, should be addressed to the Council Secretary; and
- they do not retain any documentation obtained during their term as a Council, Committees, Commissions and Working Groups member and should return such documentation to the Council, Committees, Commissions and Working Groups Secretary, or otherwise indicate to the Council, Committees, Commissions and Working Groups Secretary, that all such documentation has been disposed of in an appropriate manner.

Loyalty

Council, Committees, Commissions and Working Groups members, members and employees should be loyal to WSI and fully committed to its objectives.

Fairness

Council, Committees, Commissions and Working Groups members, members and employees should:

- ensure compliance with employment equality and equal status legislation.
- commit to fairness in all business dealings; and
- ensure compliance with WSI's Customer Charter.

Work/External Environment

Council, Committees, Commissions and Working Groups members, members and employees should:

- place highest priority on promoting and preserving the health and safety of employees/members.
- Minimise any detrimental impact of operations on the environment.

Responsibility

It is not possible for a set of rules or guidelines to provide for all situations that may arise. Council, Committees, Commissions and Working Groups members, members, and employees of WSI should take responsibility to ensure that all of their activities, whether covered specifically or otherwise in this Code, are governed by the ethical considerations implicit in these procedures.

The Council Secretary will ensure that copies of this Code are circulated to all Council, Committees, Commissions and Working Groups members.

The CEO will ensure that copies of this Code are circulated to all employees.

The Water Safety Area Chair will ensure that copies of this Code are circulated to all WSAC members.

All recipients of this Code must complete the Declaration of Understanding as set out in Appendix 1 and return the completed declaration to the Council Secretary, as appropriate.

Each Council member is considered to hold a “Designated Council Membership” under the Ethics in Public Office Acts 1995 and Standards in Public Office Act 2001 (**SIPO**). In addition, the CEO is considered to hold a “Designated Position of Employment” under SIPO. Procedures for disclosure of interests by such individuals under SIPO are summarised in Appendix 2.

Any Council, Committees, Commissions and Working Groups member, or employee who is in doubt as to the application to him/her of this Code or requires guidance on any matter relating to this Code should seek clarification, from the Council Secretary or the CEO, as appropriate.

This Code should be read in conjunction with the Civil Service Code of Standards and Behaviour and WSI’s Employee Guidelines, both of which apply to all employees.

Appendix 1: Declaration of Understanding (Please see Appendices at end of this document)

Disclosure of Interests under SIPO

Periodic Disclosure of Interests: On appointment and annually thereafter, each Council member and person holding a “Designated Position of Employment” should furnish to the Council Secretary a statement in writing in the prescribed form of:

- their interests; and
- the interests, of which that person has actual knowledge, of his or her spouse or civil partner, child, or child of his/her spouse or civil partner,

which could materially influence him/her in, or in relation to, the performance of his/her official functions by reason of the fact that such performance could so affect those interests as to confer on, or withhold from, him or her, or the spouse or civil partner or child, a substantial benefit.

Where it is determined by the relevant person that no such interests are held, he/she should either complete a statement of nil interests in the prescribed form or else (i) in the case of Council members or the CEO, email the Chairman of the Council.

“Interests” are defined in the Ethics in Public Office Act 1995.

Problem Solving Policy

Introduction

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 and is not a relationship that is 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.

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. Water Safety Ireland can only address issues that relate closely to Water Safety Ireland businesses and activities. Volunteers and members must put aside personal differences when attending Water Safety Ireland events such as meetings, conferences, courses, pool hire sessions, competitions, presentations and other WSI functions.

The policy also clarifies what will happen if an employee of Water Safety Ireland or a member of a Water Safety Area Committee 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.

Precedence

Any complaint that falls under the guidelines relating to Child Protection (Water Safety Ireland CODE OF ETHICS & GOOD PRACTICE FOR CHILDREN INVOLVED IN WATER SAFETY ACTIVITIES) will be dealt with in accordance with the Guidelines mentioned herein. Any complaint or concern raised that is a violation or suspected violation of any law or regulation shall be immediately reported to the relevant authority. Current legislation shall supersede any and all WSI policies and procedures.

Please note that should the following issues arising while participating in lifesaving sport, they will fall within the Sports Grievance Procedure, as opposed to this policy. **Squad and Team Selection Appeals:** Any appeals related to National or Regional Squad or Team selection will be addressed exclusively through the WSI Sports Grievance Procedure, as outlined in the relevant selection documents. **Conduct and Disciplinary Actions:** Any breaches of the WSI Code of Conduct or the WSI Traveling Teams Code of Conduct during National/Regional Squad Camps, or while traveling to or attending competitions as a National/Regional squad/team member or accompanying WSI member, may be subject to disciplinary action by the WSI Sports Commission. Appeals against any disciplinary action taken by the WSI Sports Commission in these matters will follow the *WSI Sports Grievance Procedure*.

Should a complaint arise concerning the members of two different WSACs, the Chairs of the respective WSACs shall address the concern or complaint, following the principles of the procedures herein.

Guiding Principles

All members shall comply with the Code of Business Conduct and all policies. In circumstances where a concern arises about the conduct or performance of an individual it may be necessary to raise a concern. Where such circumstances arise, all members must be treated in a fair and equitable manner in accordance with the principles of natural justice which will normally include:

- The right of a member to be informed of any concern about his or her conduct.
- The right to reply to any such concern.
- The right to be accompanied by a colleague when attending any meetings in relation to the concern raised.
- The right to a fair and impartial determination of the matter after all relevant facts have been considered.
- The right to resolution in a timely manner.

At each stage of the process, all parties should receive an update/response on the status of the process within 2 weeks (10 working days) of their most recent correspondence or meeting.

How a volunteer should raise a problem with Water Safety Ireland

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 an 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 meetings, conferences, courses, pool hire sessions, competitions, presentations or other such functions.

Should a volunteer raise an issue that is 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 than using this, WSI's problem solving policy.

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.

Stage 1 – Informal

Members should first raise the problem informally with the Honorary Secretary or Chair of the Water Safety Area Committee. They should contact the Chair or Secretary and outline their concerns. They should take the time to clearly explain in detail their concerns in writing, so that the Chair or Secretary has a full understanding of the issue at hand.

The Chair or Secretary will try to resolve the problem informally, involving other people as needed. The first step they will take is to ask if the member has made the person with whom they have an issue or concern aware of such concern. They will encourage both parties to meet in person and discuss the matter with a view to reaching a mutually agreeable resolution. The Chair or Secretary may act as a mediator between the two parties, or may ask the Volunteer Manager or a neutral member of the WSAC to act as a mediator in this informal meeting.

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.

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 WSAC Chair. The Honorary Secretary of the Water Safety Area Committee should be copied in any such letter, unless the complaint is about the Honorary Secretary, in which case the CEO will be copied. Should both the Secretary and Chair be subjects of a complaint, or should extraordinary

circumstances or a conflict of interest arise, the Chief Executive Officer will appoint a WSAC Chair from another region to consider the complaint/concern and follow this problem solving process.

The complaint needs to be specific as to what the problem is and the member raising the complaint should be prepared to give examples. The WSAC Chair will listen to the problem, either in a pre-arranged telephone call, or by inviting the volunteer to a meeting.

After receiving the complaint or concern, the WSAC Chair will then contact the individual that is the subject of the complaint or concern and share the complaint that has been raised. The subject will then be asked to address the concern/complaint and provide their perspective and/or explanation of the matter. This may take place via a variety of mediums, but face-to-face meetings would always be preferred. The subject will be given reasonable notice of the meeting and will be offered the chance to bring a companion to the meeting with them.

After meeting with both parties, the Chair may ask for additional information or clarification, or statements from others present. After considering all information, The Chair will suggest a resolution. Resolution possibilities include additional training, reassignment or removal of volunteers from certain tasks or activities. Should a member breach the code of conduct or if the Chair determines that a member has not acted in the best interests of the organisation, the resolution may be suspension or removal of a volunteer from WSI Committees, activities or even full membership of the organisation.

Both the WSI member who made the complaint, and the subject of the complaint will be informed of the resolution (outcome) presented by the Chair in writing. The subject may appeal the outcome.

Stage 3 – Appeal

If the subject decides to appeal the outcome, they need to do so in writing, to the CEO 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. Individuals that may act as Referees include current Council Members, WSAC or Committee members, and the Volunteer Manager/Liaison.

The Referees' decision is final and binding with no other avenue of appeal within the organisation. Water Safety Ireland will notify the subject in writing of the decision of the appeal.

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 Honorary 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.

How Water Safety Ireland will raise an issue with a volunteer

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. Problems should always be addressed as promptly as possible and solved as locally as possible.

Stage 1 – Informal (Can we please talk about this problem?)

Issues will normally be raised with the volunteer through the Honorary, 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. The first step they will take will be to make the person with whom there is an issue or concern aware of such concern. This will be given to the member in writing, clearly outlining what behaviour or action is of concern and why it is a concern. They will also ask the member to meet with them at a mutually agreeable time to discuss the concern, with a view to finding a mutually agreeable solution.

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.

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. The Chief Executive Officer may appoint a Referee or Referees to review the matter. Individuals that may act as Referees include current Council Members, WSAC or Committee members, and the Volunteer Manager/Liaison.

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, as well as possible outcomes of the situation, and will be offered the chance to bring a companion.

Water Safety Ireland will notify the volunteer of the outcome of the meeting in writing, 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.

Additional Information

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.

Volunteer Data Protection Policy

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

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Water Safety Area Committee Rules and Regulations and the WSI Data Retention and Erasure Policy. This policy applies to all Water Safety Ireland volunteers and Staff.

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).

Retention of personal data

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 may be necessary to retain volunteer information for a defined period even after they have ceased being a volunteer for Water Safety Ireland. For further information, see the WSI Data Retention and Erasure Policy.

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. (see appendix for request form)

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 and 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.

Media Engagement Policy

Introduction

WSI communicates with all stakeholders at various levels and by using many communications tools. As a result of executing its communications strategy and because WSI is the statutory body tasked with education and promotion of water safety, and partners with various organisations to do so, members will from time to time be called upon by press, media or newsagents to comment on water safety related matters.

Purpose

This policy is designed to heighten awareness of the expectations of WSI members and staff when engaging with media or newsagents. This policy also sets out the correct procedure to follow to ensure that the opportunity presented by being asked to speak with the press is utilized effectively and a consistent message from WSI is shared by all stakeholders.

Scope

This policy applies to all forms of engagement with press, media, and news agencies, including but not limited to television, printed magazines or newspapers, online magazines or news journals, radio, and social media journalists.

The WSI Media Engagement Policy applies to all:

- WSI staff
- WSI Water Safety Area Committee Members
- Water Safety Development Officers
- to WSI members when operating on behalf of WSI
- to WSI members when operating as franchisees
- Vat exempted Community Rescue Boats
- All other volunteers, members or parties subject to oversight by WSI

This policy is applicable when they are engaging in any form of media activities on behalf of WSI and when personally referring to their role in the organisation.

Communication Chain

In order to ensure consistency in messaging, all national campaigns and initiatives are available on the WSI Website: WaterSafety.ie.

For clarity and consistency, all members should be aware of the chain of communication. If you are unsure of WSI's position on a matter, you should not comment until you've sought clarification from the next person up in the chain.

Media Engagement Communication Chain



What to do If Asked to Comment by Press Agencies

From time to time, WSI members may be called upon to make a public comment on a current event. WSI recognises and often partners with news agencies and appreciates the valuable contributions they can make in assisting WSI in educating the public and increasing awareness of water safety.

However, it is vital that any message shared with the public via the press or social media is consistent with the official policy and views of the organisation. In order to ensure this, if a member of WSI is contacted by a press agency and asked to comment, they must liaise with the local Water Safety Area Committee Public Relations Officer first to ensure that they are clear on the organisation's view and any statement they make is agreed upon beforehand.

Should an occasion arise whereby the member does not agree with the official position of the organisation, they are reminded of the requirements of the Code of Conduct as well as this policy and instructed and requested to refrain from commenting. This would apply to all social media as well as press agencies.

Things to Remember

Any information published online can be accessed around the world within seconds and will be publicly available for all to see. You may be held legally liable for anything you write or present online. (For anything written or presented on official WSI web space, WSI is legally liable.)

Compliance

The terms and conditions of this policy must be adhered to at all times and failure to comply could result in withdrawal of access to social media networks and to disciplinary action.

Interpretation

If unsure of any aspects of this Policy, staff should consult with reporting manager and members should consult with their local management team.

Appendix to Media Engagement Policy

Additional Guidelines for the Safe and Correct Engagement with Press and Media

All activity on social media tools should complement and/or support your role in WSI.

Business Principles: Understand and follow the WSI's business principles as you would outside the media arena. Interact with people as you would use conventional methods (by phone, email, letters, and fax), but in a less formal style. Remember: think before you write, comment, or reply.

Confidentiality - WSI staff and members have a 'duty of confidentiality' and must not disclose any information which is considered confidential, and which is not already in the public domain.

Confidential WSI information includes details of upcoming press releases, water safety alerts, draft reports/publications, members or employee details and any other information that has not been publicly released by WSI.

These are given as examples only and do not cover the range of what WSI considers confidential. If you have any questions about whether information has been released publicly or doubts of any kind, speak with your manager before releasing the information.

Defamation - If a defamatory statement is written down (in print or online) it is known as 'libel'. If it is spoken, it is known as 'slander'. Making a defamatory statement or recording it on a broadcast or podcast would both be examples of libel. Action can also be taken for repeating libelous information from another source.

WSI may be held responsible for something an employee or member has written and/or said if it is on behalf of the WSI or is on a dedicated WSI web space (even if the content is subsequently deleted). It should be remembered that deleted content is still stored and accessible.

Discretion: Never discuss other staff members, official agency staff, Council Members, Commission members, Working Group members, customers, associates, water safety businesses or other stakeholders without their prior approval.

Competence: You should, in this area as in others, be aware of the limitations of your professional competence, and should therefore only engage in social media comments or posts for which you are suitably skilled and experienced.

Copyright: Ensure you are not infringing copyright rules.

Identification: When discussing WSI or water safety issues, always identify clearly who you are, what your role in WSI is and publish in the first person. Use a disclaimer where appropriate.

Personal Responsibility: You are personally responsible for content you publish into social media tools – be mindful that what you publish will be public for many years.

Authenticity: Always be honest and open but be mindful of the impact your contribution might make to people's perceptions of WSI. If you make a mistake in a contribution, be the first to come clean and admit it – honesty of this type quickly builds respect.

Respect the Right to Give an Opinion: Some people might be hostile towards WSI. Respect their right to have an opinion and to share it. You may dislike their viewpoint or disagree with it but adopting an open mind when it comes to differing opinions makes you a better communicator. You can disagree and still be respectful. Always remember you are not just replying to someone but replying to someone in front of dozens or hundreds of others.

Keep Calm: Don't escalate heated discussions but be conciliatory, respectful and quote facts to ameliorate tensions and correct misrepresentations. Never contribute to a discussion if you are angry - leave it, calm down, and return to it later, when you can contribute in a calm and rational manner.

Personal Judgement: If you feel even slightly uneasy about something you are about to publish, then you shouldn't do it. Remember, the information you publish will be visible to other web users for a long time. If in doubt, discuss it with your manager/director/supervisor/volunteer coordinator.

Respect: Don't use ethnic or racial slurs, personal insults, obscenity, or engage in any conduct that would be unacceptable to WSI. Always consider others' privacy and avoid discussing topics that may be inflammatory (e.g. politics and religion). Do not engage in name calling or any such behavior that will reflect negatively on WSI's reputation.

Be Helpful: Try and provide as much information as you and the WSI are able to give. If there is information

you can't provide, say so. Support all points by linking to the WSI website as an information source.

Be Positive: Joining discussions or adding to a thread that is not constructive does not help WSI or the community in general. Try and make every interaction one that provides value. It should appropriately represent WSI. Being positive is also infectious and is reciprocated.

Be Concise: This might sound like the opposite of providing as much information as possible, but it is not. Depending on the interaction, it might be a case of correcting information or giving the opinion of WSI. In hostile environments, detractors will examine every word you use.

Found and Missing Children Policy

Found Child(ren)

If a lost child is found during an event, the following procedure will apply:

1. Report the incident to the Event Director and/or Designated Safety Officer/Liaison Person.
2. Children under the age of 16 years will be kept in a Safe Area until collected by a parent, guardian or a member of an Garda Síochána. Children will be supervised at all times by two responsible adults who have been Garda vetted by Water Safety Ireland. "Safe Areas should be designated at the start of the event"
3. Children over the age of 16 years will be free to leave or remain at the Safe Area if they wish after a Found Child form has been completed.

4. A responsible adult is one over the age of 18 years who the lost child or vulnerable person is comfortable with, and who demonstrates responsibility for the person/child and is not considered to pose an obvious threat to the person/child.
5. A Found Child form will be completed for each child, including those over 16 who chose not to remain in the Safe Area.
6. Proof of identity may be requested by the Safe Area steward if they consider it necessary.
7. Children not collected by the end of the event will be passed over to the protection of the Gardaí. Stewards should not escort a child or vulnerable person away from the scene alone. There should be two stewards or a steward and another responsible adult with a child at all times. At all times the comfort and wellbeing of the child must be paramount importance.
8. If a child or vulnerable person appears unwilling to go with the other member of their group, the Gardaí may be contacted for further advice.

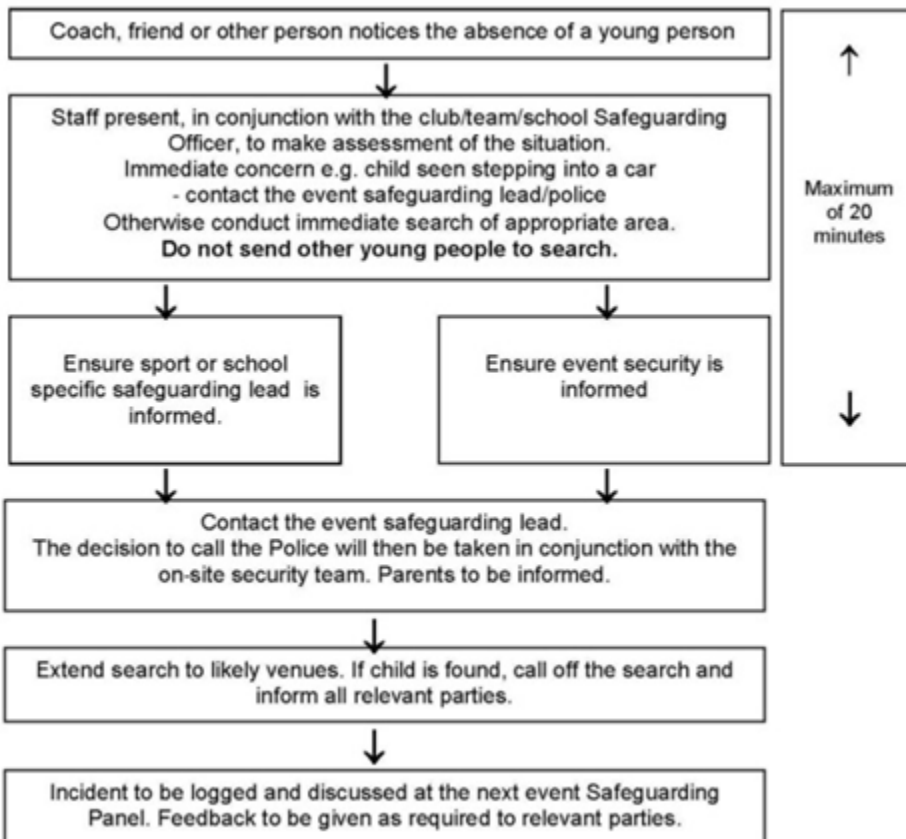
WSI Event Director should retain and dispose of the Found Child Form for their records in accord with GDPR procedures.

Missing Child(ren)

If a child goes missing during an event, the following procedure will apply:

1. Report the incident to the Event Director and/or Designated Safety Officer
2. Ensure that all other children continue to be supervised appropriately (if applicable), while a search for the child concerned is carried out. Get as much information as possible about the missing child, such as appearance, clothing, etc to share with all involved in searching.
3. Organise the remaining available responsible adults to conduct a search of the surrounding area allocating each individual to a specific area.
4. Request all those searching report back within a short, specified time, dependent on the size of the area being searched. If the child cannot be found after an initial search of the immediate surroundings, contact the child's parents to advise them of the concern and reassure them that everything is being done to locate the child. Record (missing child form) on the Missing Child Form the circumstances in which the child has gone missing and where they were last seen and prepare a detailed physical description of the child, to include their hair and eye colour, approximate height and build and clothing he/she was wearing, as this will be required by the Gardaí and other searchers. Report the concern to the Gardaí if the search is unsuccessful and no later than 20 minutes after the initial missing person report if the search is ongoing. Follow Gardaí guidance if further action is recommended and maintain close contact with the Gardaí. Ensure that you inform all adults involved including the parents, searchers and Gardaí when the child is located.
5. WSI Event Director should retain and dispose of the Missing Child Form for their records in accord with GDPR procedures.

Searching for a missing child



Appendix 1: Declaration of Understanding of Code of Conduct

I have read and understood the Code of Business Conduct and agree to be bound by the principles set out in any dealing for or on behalf of Water Safety Ireland.

Name in block capitals: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Members of the Council, Committees, Commissions and Working Groups should return the completed declaration to the Council Secretary.

Staff members should return the completed declaration to the CEO.

Volunteer members should return the completed declaration to the WSAC Chair.

Appendix 2: Request for Personal Data

This form to be used In conjunction with the Volunteer Data Protection Policy

Request for Personal Data, to be submitted to the CEO of 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. I understand that I may be required to pay a fee for the supply of copy information

Signed

Date

For official use only

Received _____
Name

Date

Supplied _____
Name

Date

Further action required



Appendix 3: Membership Application Form

WATER SAFETY IRELAND

CUMANN SÁBHÁILTEACHT UISCE

Membership Application Form

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	▪ 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 revoke membership where a breach of rules or code of conduct has occurred, or any action that brings the organisation into disrepute.	▪ 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

Document History

	Name	Date	Revision
Reviewed By:	Membership Development Commission and Compliance Unit	January 2025	Inserted Volunteer Charter, as approved by Council in December 2024, added detail to Problem Solving Policy, updated formatting
Reviewed By:	Council	February 2025	
Approved By:	Council	February 2025	