



EMERALD[™]
WARRIORS
RFC

Dignity within the Club Policy and Procedures

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Emerald Warriors RFC Dignity within the Club Policy
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1.0 Mission Statement

The Emerald Warriors RFC's vision is to be the leading inclusive rugby club, not only in Ireland, but in the world, leading by example and achieving success as players, coaches and supporters through our pathway development and training.

2.0 Introduction

Central to the success of a fully inclusive rugby club is an environment where individuals feel safe, valued and recognised. The promotion and maintenance of the dignity of all members and potential members plays a key role in ensuring this environment and an appropriate culture.

The Emerald Warriors RFC recognises the rights of all of its members and potential members to be treated with dignity and respect and is committed to ensuring that individuals are provided with a safe environment which is free from all forms of bullying, harassment, sexual harassment and maltreatment. Bullying, harassment and maltreatment adversely affect the members of the club, potential members of the club and the wider community through direct and indirect impacts. Bullying, harassment and maltreatment have a damaging impact on those subjected to inappropriate behaviour, those who witness it, or those who have knowledge of it.

The Emerald Warriors RFC take the position of a zero-tolerance approach to bullying, harassment, sexual harassment and maltreatment of members or potential members by other members of the club. The central objective of this policy is to ensure that the club operates in a manner which all reasonable efforts are made by all members to ensure that the bullying, harassment, sexual harassment and maltreatment of members does not take place. The preventative approach of the policy emphasises that every member and potential member of the club has a duty to maintain an environment and culture in which everyone is respected.

3.0 Scope of Policy

The Emerald Warriors RFC recognises its responsibilities in respect of ensuring that its policies and procedures benefit not only its members but also its stakeholders including the wider community, sponsors, LGBT+ community and other partners. The committee of the club is responsible for the implementation of this policy, however, the success of it depends of the commitment of all members and potential members. In this regard, this policy document applies to all members and potential members of the Emerald Warriors RFC.

For the purpose of the policy, members are defined as individuals who have paid their annual subscriptions to the club and appear on the register of members maintained by the club's Honorary Secretary. Potential members are defined as individuals who have not paid their annual membership subscription but are involved in activities of the club which may include training, club events or outings and either intend on becoming members or are considering becoming members of the club.

4.0 Policy Objectives

- To clearly set out approved club definitions of bullying, harassment, sexual harassment and institutional or organisational maltreatment
- To promote an environment and culture of zero-tolerance of bullying, harassment, sexual harassment and maltreatment
- To outline an approved and standardised procedure for managing allegations or complaints of bullying, harassment, sexual harassment and maltreatment
- To clearly outline the responsibilities of members, coaches and committee members in the management of allegations or complaints of bullying, harassment, sexual harassment or maltreatment within the club

5.0 What is Bullying, Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Maltreatment?

5.1 Bullying

Bullying is defined as the repeated inappropriate behaviour, direct or indirect, whether verbal, physical or otherwise, conducted by one or more individuals against another or others, in the course of club activities which could reasonably be regarded as undermining the individual's right to dignity within the club.

An isolated incident of the behaviour described in the definition may be an affront to dignity within the club but as a once off incident is not considered to be bullying.

A key characteristic of bullying is that it usually takes place over a period of time. It is regular and persistent inappropriate behaviour which is specifically targeted at one member/potential member or a group of members/potential members.

Examples of Bullying:

- Constant humiliation, ridicule, belittling efforts – often in front of others
- Verbal abuse, including shouting, use of obscene language and spreading of malicious rumours
- Showing hostility through sustained unfriendly contact or exclusion
- Persistently and inappropriately finding fault with a member or potential member's performance or actions and using this as an excuse to humiliate the individual
- Constantly picking on a person when things go wrong even when they are not responsible

What Bullying is Not:

- An isolated incident of inappropriate behaviour may be an affront to dignity within the club but, as a once-off incident, is not considered to be bullying, e.g. an occasional bout of anger or a conflict of two views

- Fair and constructive criticism of a member or potential member's playing/training performance, conduct or attendance at training or matches
- Actions taken which can be justified as regards the safety, health and welfare of members or potential members
- Legitimate response to crisis situations which may require immediate actions

5.2 Harassment

The club defines harassment (other than sexual harassment) as any form of unwanted conduct related to the following discriminatory grounds:

- Gender
- Marital Status
- Family Status
- Sexual Orientation
- Religion
- Age
- Disability
- Race
- Member of the traveller community

Harassment is any form of unwanted conduct related to any of these discriminatory grounds which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the member or potential member of the club.

The unwanted conduct may include acts, requests, spoken words, gestures or the production, display or circulation or written words, pictures or other material. Harassment is inappropriate behaviour based on the relevant characteristics of a member or potential member such as race, religion, age or any of the other aforementioned grounds. Inappropriate behaviour that is not linked to one of the nine discriminatory grounds is not covered by this definition.

Harassment may be targeted at one member/potential member or a group of members/potential members. It may consist of a single incident or repeated inappropriate behaviour.

The following are examples of inappropriate behaviour which may constitute harassment. These examples of harassment are illustrative but not exhaustive:

- Verbal harassment e.g. jokes, derogatory comments, ridicule or song
- Written harassment e.g. text messages, social media comments, emails, notices
- Physical harassment e.g. jostling or shoving
- Intimidatory harassment e.g. gestures or threatening poses
- Visual displays e.g. posters, emblems or badges
- Persistent negative body language
- Ostracising an individual

An act of harassment may occur outside of the environment of an official club event or activity provided that the action of the perpetrator(s) was related to a member or potential member of the club.

5.3 Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature which has the purpose or effect of violating a member or potential member's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the individual.

The unwanted conduct may include acts, requests, spoken words, gestures or the production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other material.

Sexual harassment may consist of a single incident or repeated inappropriate behaviour. It may be targeted at one member/potential member or a group of members/potential members.

The following are some examples of inappropriate behaviour which may constitute sexual harassment. These examples are illustrative but not exhaustive:

- Physical conduct of a sexual nature e.g. unwanted physical conduct such as unnecessary touching, patting or pinching or brushing against another member/potential member's body
- Verbal conduct of a sexual nature e.g. propositions or pressure for sexual activity, continued suggestions for social activity after it has been made clear that such suggestions are unwelcome, suggestive remarks/innuendos/lewd comments
- Non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature e.g. the display or electronic communication of pornography or sexually suggestive images, written materials, emails, text messages or social media content
- Unwanted or derogatory comments about personal dress or appearance
- Leering and suggestive gestures

An act of sexual harassment may occur outside of the environment of an official club event or activity provided that the action of the perpetrator(s) was related to a member or potential member of the club.

How does Harassment and Sexual Harassment differ from friendly banter?

It is the unwarranted nature of the conduct which distinguishes harassment and sexual harassment from friendly behaviour which is mutual and welcome. It is up to each member or potential member to decide what behaviour is unwelcome, irrespective of the attitude of others, and from whom such behaviour is unwelcome.

Is Motive relevant?

The intention of the person engaging in the unwelcome behaviour is irrelevant – the effect of the behaviour on the member or potential member concerned is what is important.

5.3 Institutional or Organisational Maltreatment

Institutional or organisational maltreatment is defined as abusive or neglectful behaviours experienced by individual(s) where the serving institution or organisation maintains responsibility for the behaviour. Examples of institutional maltreatment may include incidents such as an organisation failing to meet appropriate standards of care or when the fundamental core practices of an organisation could be classed as abusive. Other examples may include a member or potential member of the club being disenfranchised of opportunity to participate in certain activities or roles of the club.

6.0 Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 Club Responsibilities

The Emerald Warriors RFC has a collective responsibility to ensure that an environment and culture of respect and dignity is developed and sustained within the club.

6.2 Committee Members' Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the committee of the club to disseminate this policy amongst the members of the club and to lead by example in developing and sustaining an environment and culture of respect and dignity.

The committee also have the responsibility for the implementation of the policy in practice and to make every effort to ensure that bullying, harassment and sexual harassment does not occur within the club.

Committee members have the responsibility to deal promptly and effectively with any incidents of bullying, harassment or sexual harassment that is reported to the committee.

6.3 Coaching Team Members' Responsibilities

Members of the coaching team are responsible for promoting an environment and culture of respect and dignity through their leadership roles within the club.

The coaching team are responsible for reporting any incidents of bullying, harassment or sexual harassment and for communicating a zero-tolerance approach to the management of this matter.

It is the responsibility of the coaching team to set a good example by treating all members and potential members with respect and dignity.

6.4 Club Member and Potential Members' Responsibilities

All club members and potential members have the responsibility to develop and sustain an environment and culture of dignity and respect within the club.

Members and potential members must comply with this policy and ensure that their behaviour does not cause offence to other individuals who they come into contact with through the club.

Bullying, harassment and sexual harassment must be actively discouraged by members and potential members of the club by objecting to inappropriate behaviour and should inform a member of the club's committee or welfare officer if they are concerned that a member or potential member is being bullied or harassed.

7.0 Procedure for Dealing with Allegations of Bullying, Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Maltreatment

The following sets out the procedures to follow for dealing with allegations of bullying, harassment, sexual harassment and maltreatment within the club.

7.1 Making a Complaint

Any member or potential member of the club who feels that they are being subjected to, or have been subjected to behaviour which undermines their dignity should let their objections be known, otherwise the person engaging in the unwelcome behaviour may be unaware of their actions. The club member or potential member may either approach the individual alleged to be the cause of the unwanted behaviour to make them aware that the behaviour is unwelcome or request another member of the club to approach the individual on their behalf. In some cases, the individual alleged to be the cause of the unwelcome behaviour may not be aware that their behaviour is the cause of distress. An informal discussion is often sufficient to alert the individual concerned to the effects of their behaviour and can lead to greater understanding and agreement that the behaviour will cease.

7.2 Support from the Club Welfare Officer

Club members and potential members may avail of the support of the club's welfare officer when deciding on what course of action to take in response alleged incidents of bullying, harassment, sexual harassment or maltreatment. The club welfare officer can be contacted by emailing welfare@ewrfc.ie. Emerald Warriors RFC Dignity within the Club Policy Page 8 of 9

7.3 Escalation to the Club's Committee

The club committee will assess any allegations of bullying, harassment, sexual harassment or maltreatment which is escalated to them against the definitions outlined in this policy document. The committee will ensure that the individual(s) against whom the allegation is made are approached in a sensitive manner by the club member or potential member raising the concern or another on their behalf in an attempt to resolve the matter in a low-key and non-confrontational manner while making them aware of the impact of their alleged behaviour. Where this does not bring about a satisfactory outcome, the matter may be referred to the club's disciplinary committee for formal investigation.

7.4 Formal Investigation

A formal investigation of the matter may be completed by the club's disciplinary committee at the request of the club committee. The disciplinary committee must declare any conflicts of interest with the matter being investigated and may remove themselves from the process. The club's committee may also request a member of the disciplinary committee to remove themselves from the process should a conflict of interest arise.

The formal investigation will be completed in as short a timeframe as possible and the matter should be reported back to the club committee within six weeks. Both parties involved in the formal investigation (club member or potential member raising the concern and the individual(s) against whom the allegation is made) shall be contacted individually to make a written statement to the disciplinary committee. Both parties will be required to co-operate with the investigation. Additional statements may be requested from other club members or potential club members such as witnesses to incidents which have occurred. If required, follow up interviews may take place with any of the parties involved with the objective of seeking additional information. The formal investigation will be completed within the framework of the club's constitution, the club discipline code of practice, the club members' code of conduct and the code of conduct for committee members.

The disciplinary committee shall share their findings to the club's committee in the format of a brief report and the matter shall be reviewed by the committee with the intention of gathering the committee feedback. The report shall include any sanctions arising if any. The disciplinary committee would review the feedback from the committee and decide if it is relevant. The club member(s) or potential member(s) and the person(s) against whom the concern was raised will be notified of the outcome of the investigation and the implementation of sanctions, if any by the chair of the disciplinary committee.

7.5 Confidentiality and Sensitivity

The committee and disciplinary committee must, at all times, treat any information presented to them through the processes outlined in this policy as sensitively as possible. While it may not be possible to ensure confidentiality in cases such as those which may require referral to An Garda Síochána or other agencies, the matters are to be treated as highly sensitive and private. The committee and disciplinary committee are bound by the club's constitution and policies and particularly the relevant codes of conduct.

8.0 Summary of Procedures for dealing with Allegations of Bullying, Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Maltreatment

