

IrishWWF Guidelines for Sports Leaders

The Irish Waterski and Wakeboard Federation recognises the key role leaders (coaches, youth administrators, captains, selectors, officials and team managers, etc.) play in the lives of young people in sport. Leaders in Waterski and Wakeboarding should strive to create a positive environment for the children in their care. They have an overall responsibility to take the necessary steps to ensure that positive and healthy experiences are provided. All Leaders should have as their first priority the children's safety and enjoyment of the sport and should adhere to the guidelines and regulations set out in the IWWF's Code of Ethics.

Leaders should:

- respect the rights, dignity and worth of every child and must treat everyone equally, regardless of gender, disability, ethnic origin, religion, etc.

Leaders working with young people in Waterski and Wakeboard should:

- Be suitable and have the necessary qualifications. Leaders will be expected to go through appropriate recruitment and selection procedures that apply to all persons with substantial access to young people, (known as regulated positions in NI), whether paid or unpaid. References will be needed and will be followed up.
- Comply with a 'sign-up' procedure, whereby the appointed/reappointed leaders agree to abide by the *Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children in Sport* and to the policies and Code of the Conduct of the IWWF.
- Know and understand the child protection policies and procedures in the IWWF.
- Act as a role model and promote the positive aspects of waterski and wakeboard and maintain the highest standards of personal conduct.
- Develop an appropriate relationship with young people, based on mutual trust and respect. Remember your behaviour to athletes, other officials, and opponents will have an effect on the athletes in your care.
- Report any concerns they have to the Designated Officer within the IWWF.

As a role model they:

- Will be required to display high standards of language, manner, punctuality, preparation and presentation.
- Ensure that athletes in their care respect the rules of the game. Insist on fair play and ensure athletes are aware that you will not tolerate cheating or bullying behaviour.
- Encourage the development of respect for opponents, officials, selectors and other leaders and avoid criticism of fellow trainers and coaches. Do not criticise other leaders.
- Must actively discourage the use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco as being incompatible with a healthy approach to sporting activity.
- Must avoid the use of alcohol and banned substances, before coaching and training, during events, while supervising trips with young athletes.

Protection for leaders and young people:

- Leaders are responsible for setting and monitoring the boundaries between a working relationship and friendship with athletes. It is advisable for leaders not to involve young athletes in their personal life i.e. visits to leader's / coach's home or overnight stays. It is important to realise that certain situations or friendly actions could be misinterpreted by the participant or by outsiders.
- Avoid working alone and ensure there is adequate supervision for all activities.
- Where possible work in an open environment and ensure that physical contact is appropriate and has the permission or understanding of the young person
- Care must be taken not to expose a child intentionally or unintentionally to embarrassment or disparagement by use of sarcastic or flippant remarks about the child or his/her family.
- Physical punishment or physical force must never be used. Never punish a mistake - by verbal means, physical means, or exclusion.

A positive environment

- Be generous with praise and never ridicule or shout at athletes for making mistakes. All young athletes are entitled to respect.
- Be careful to avoid the “star system”. Each child deserves equal time and attention.
- Remember that young athletes participate for fun and enjoyment and that skill development and personal satisfaction have priority over highly structured competition. Never make winning the only objective.
- Set realistic goals and appropriate challenges for the participants and do not push young athletes. Create a safe and enjoyable environment.
- When approached to take on or taking on a new athlete, ensure that the relationship with the previous club/coach has been ended in a professional manner.
- When young athletes are invited into adult groups/squads, it is advisable to get agreement from a parent/guardian. Boundaries of behaviour in adult groups are normally different from the boundaries that apply to junior groups/squads.
- Leaders who become aware of a conflict between their obligation to their athletes and their obligation to the club/organisation must make explicit the nature of the conflict and the loyalties and responsibilities involved, to all parties concerned.
- Leaders should communicate and co-operate with medical and ancillary practitioners in the diagnosis, treatment and management of their athletes’ medical or related problems. Avoid giving advice of a personal or medical nature if you are not qualified to do so. Any information of a personal or medical nature must be kept strictly confidential unless the welfare of the child requires the passing on of this information. Any referral to medical and ancillary practitioners requires parental consent.
- The nature of the relationship between leader and a participant can often mean that a leader will hear confidential information about an athlete or their family. This information must be regarded as confidential and must not be divulged to a third party without the express permission of the young person/family, except where abuse or neglect is suspected.

Sports Leaders Code of Conduct

Leaders should familiarise themselves with the **Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport** and in particular with the IWWF Code of Ethics and follow the procedures if they suspect or receive complaints of abuse of any sort. Leaders should read below and agree to abide by these terms.

Leaders should

- Be positive during sessions and competitions, praise and encourage effort as well as results
- Put welfare of young person first, strike a balance between this and winning / results
- Encourage fair play and treat participants equally
- Recognise developmental needs, ensuring activities are appropriate for the individual
- Plan and prepare appropriately
- Anyone working with children should do the child protection awareness course and hold up-to-date qualifications and be committed to the values and guidelines of the IWWF
- Involve parents where possible and inform parents when problems arise
- Keep a record of attendance at training and competitions
- Keep a brief record of injury(s) and action taken
- Keep a brief record of problem/action/outcomes, if behavioural problems arise
- Report any concerns in accordance with this Code's reporting procedures
- Encourage young people to respect one another and to expect respect for their worth as individuals for their worth regardless of their level of achievement
- Be acutely aware of the power that you as a coach develop with your athletes in the coaching relationships and avoid any sexual intimacy with young people that could develop as a result
- Actively discourage the use of performance enhancing drugs, the use of alcohol and tobacco and any illegal substance
- Encourage young people and other coaches to develop and maintain integrity in their relationship with others

Where possible Leaders should avoid:

- Spending excessive amounts of time with children away from others
- Taking sessions alone
- Taking children to their home
- Taking children on journeys alone in their car

Sports Leaders should not:

- Use any form of punishment or physical force on a child
- Exert undue influence over a participant in order to obtain personal benefit or reward
- Engage in rough physical games, sexually provocative games or allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any kind, and /or make sexually suggestive comments about, or to a child. This includes innuendo, flirting or inappropriate gestures and terms
- Take measurements or engage in certain types of fitness testing without the presence of another adult and permission of the parent(s).
- Undertake any form of therapy (hypnosis etc.) in the training of children
- Do not exploit any coaching relationship to further personal, political or business interests at the expense of the best interest of the athletes
- Never communicate or form a "friendship" with children online with the intent of arranging to meet in the "real world"
- Never ask anyone to keep secrets of any kind

I agree to abide by the rules and procedures of the IWWF and in particular the Guidelines and Code of Conduct for Sports Leaders.

Name (in print): _____ **Signature:** _____

Date: ____/____/____