



## **Guidelines for Sports Leaders and Officials.**

Leinster Open Sea recognises the key role leaders/coaches/officials play in the lives of children in the club. Club coaches, sports leaders and officials will 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 will have as their priority the children's safety and enjoyment of swimming and will adhere to the guidelines and regulations set out in *The Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport* and the LOS Child Protection Policy.

Leaders will respect the rights, dignity and worth of every child and will treat everyone equally, regardless of gender, age, disability, social class, race, religion, ability etc.

Leaders appointed by the club to engage with children will have the appropriate experience and/or hold the necessary qualifications. Leaders will be expected to go through appropriate recruitment and selection procedures whether paid or unpaid. Garda Vetting procedures must be followed to comply with legislation.

There will be a 'sign-up' procedure, whereby the appointed/reappointed leaders agree to abide by *The Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport* and sign up to the Code of Conduct for Sports Leaders. Coaches and Sports Leaders should know and understand the club's Child Protection Policies and Procedures and undertake to abide by them.

Once appointed the Leader should act as a role model and promote the positive aspects of swimming and maintain the highest standards of personal conduct. Leaders should maintain

an appropriate relationship with young people, based on mutual trust and respect. Their behavior to swimmers, other officials and opponents will influence the swimmers in their care. They should report any concerns they have to the Designated Person in the club.

### **Being a role model**

- You will be required to display high standards of language, manner, punctuality, preparation, and presentation
- Ensure that swimmers in your care respect the rules of events. Insist on fair play and ensure swimmers are aware you will not tolerate cheating or bullying behavior.
- Encourage the development of respect for opponents, officials, selectors, and other leaders and avoid criticism of fellow professionals and coaches. Do not criticise other leaders
- The use of illegal drugs, alcohol and tobacco must be actively discouraged as they are incompatible with a healthy approach to sporting activity. Leaders must avoid the use of alcohol and illegal substances while children are under their supervision

### **Protection for leaders**

- Leaders are responsible for setting and monitoring the boundaries between a working relationship and friendship with swimmers. It is advisable for leaders not to involve young swimmers in their personal life i.e., visits to leaders' homes.
- Avoid working alone and ensure there is adequate supervision for all activities
- Work in an open environment where possible and ensure that physical contact is appropriate and has the permission or understanding of the child and parents.
- Care must be taken not to expose a child intentionally or unintentionally to embarrassment or disparagement by use of sarcastic or flippant remarks.
- Physical punishment or physical force must never be used. Never punish a mistake by physical means or exclusion

### **A positive environment**

- Be generous with praise and never ridicule or shout at swimmers. All young swimmers are entitled to respect.
- Be careful to avoid the "Star system". Each child deserves equal time and attention.
- Remember that young people swim 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 for the participants and do not push young swimmers. Create a safe and enjoyable environment.
- The nature of the relationship between a leader and a participant can often mean that a leader will learn confidential information about a swimmer or swimmer's family. This information must be regarded as confidential and, except where abuse is suspected, must not be divulged to a third party without the express permission of the swimmer/family.