

An Coimisiún le Rincí Gaelacha



Code of Conduct

(including Confidential Reporting Policy)

Implemented 11th December 2016

Introduction

Stakeholders in Irish Dancing have a right to expect the highest standards of conduct from all those involved in it. An Coimisiún le Rincí Gaelacha is fully committed to attaining and maintaining such standards. For the purposes of this Code of Conduct, hereby referred to as “the Code”, stakeholders are defined as any person or group of individuals that can affect or be affected by the actions, objectives or policies of An Coimisiún le Rincí Gaelacha.

The paramount objective of the Code of Conduct is to lay down guidelines for everyone involved in Irish Dancing to assist them in maintaining and improving ethical standards, whilst still reassuring everyone about the integrity of An Coimisiún le Rincí Gaelacha and all associated personnel. It also will provide protection from any misunderstandings or undue criticisms arising.

The Code has been prepared to provide clear and helpful advice to anyone involved in An Coimisiún le Rincí Gaelacha directly or at any of its associated events. It applies not only to actual members of the organisation but to all stakeholders.

All such individuals or groups should ensure that they are familiar with the provisions contained in the Code of Conduct since a **breach of the Code may give rise to disciplinary action.** Ignorance of the Code of Conduct is no excuse for unethical behaviour.

The Code of Conduct

- **Integrity**
You should not place yourself under any obligation to an individual or group that may influence you in any way. Neither should you exert pressure on an individual which influences their decisions or actions.
- **Honesty**
You have a duty to declare any private interests that could be seen to influence your decisions, actions and/or behaviour. Where an individual has attempted to influence your honesty, this must be reported to an appropriate officer of An Coimisiún le Rincí Gaelacha.
- **Objectivity**
Any decisions that you make in the course of your involvement in Irish Dancing must be based solely on merit.
- **Equality**
You should treat everyone equally, fairly and with dignity.
- **Selflessness**
You should not make/take decisions which will result in any unfair financial or other benefit to yourself, partner, family, friends or dancers.
- **Accountability**
You are accountable to your peers and An Coimisiún le Rincí Gaelacha. They in turn are accountable to the general dancing public.
- **Leadership**
If you are a member of An Coimisiún le Rincí Gaelacha or hold a position of influence in any associated body, you must promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

Political Neutrality

An Coimisiún is a non-political organisation and shall seek to achieve its objectives and carry out its functions in a completely apolitical manner. Its sole objective is to preserve and promote Irish Dancing, including step dancing, céili dancing and other team dancing, and also to promote the use of the Irish language.

All individuals must implement the policies of the organisation. Personal political opinions should not impinge in any way on the work and decisions of others involved in the organisation or affiliated bodies or events.

Personal or Private Interests

Individuals must not allow any personal or private interest to conflict with or influence decisions that are taken in a dance capacity. The measure for this is any interest that a member of the dancing public believes is likely to influence that person's judgement. Moreover, this extends to conflicts that could arise from association with close family members, friends and work colleagues. Where there is a possibility of a perceived conflict of interest, the relevant individuals must recuse themselves from any further involvement in the matter.

Anyone corruptly receiving or giving any gift, loan, reward or advantage for doing or not doing anything, or for showing favour or disfavour to any other individual, will be subject to Disciplinary Procedures being invoked.

Use of CLRG Equipment or Resources

Individuals are responsible for the safe keeping and proper operation of any equipment issued to them to undertake their duties. Anyone wishing to use CLRG resources for any private use, for example flooring or technical equipment for a Feis, must seek prior permission from the Council of Management. In such circumstances, individuals should take care to ensure the security and condition of the equipment whilst in their care. The use of CLRG office resources including the official website, intellectual property and databases, should not be used for private or personal gain.

Relationships

- **Fellow Colleagues**

It is important that registered individuals fully respect each other whilst working to promote the prime objectives of the organisation. All such individuals are entitled to expect fair and reasonable treatment from colleagues, officers and other stakeholders.

- **Dancers and their Extended Families**

Registered individuals should treat all dancers and their family members with respect and dignity, and should expect to receive the same in return. They should act as role models to which dancers should aspire. Registered individuals should not attempt to influence or unduly communicate or socialise with dancers (and their extended families) who are not members of their own dance class or normal sphere of operation.

- **External Contractors**

All agreements with external parties should be made in the best interest of the organisation as a whole. No individual or family member should benefit personally or privately from being party to such an agreement. All external contractors are required to fully comply with this Code of Conduct.

- **Other Stakeholders**

All dealings with other stakeholders should be handled in a dignified, timely and professional manner.

Media Relations

The Media Policy as adopted by An Coimisiún le Rincí Gaelacha is an integral part of this Code of Conduct. All individuals must fully comply with that Policy.

Child Protection Policy

An Coimisiún le Rincí Gaelacha fully endorses and encourages the provision of safe and stimulating learning environments to promote its prime objective. The Child Protection Policy clearly sets out the ethos to attain this and therefore is another integral part of this Code of Conduct.

Hospitality and Gifts

The acceptance or provision of gifts and/or hospitality must be transparent and only permissible if they:

- are of a de minimis or token value;
- are within the normal standards of courtesy, hospitality or protocol; and
- do not compromise or appear to compromise in any way the integrity of the individual or An Coimisiún le Rincí Gaelacha.

In no circumstances whatsoever should gifts or hospitality be solicited.

Summary

To fully comply with the Code of Conduct, all Stakeholders must:

- perform duties with care, diligence, professionalism and integrity;
- strive for the highest ethical standards;
- behave at all times in a manner that enhances the reputation of An Coimisiún le Rincí Gaelacha;
- behave in a manner consistent with the Code of Conduct;
- support and encourage others to comply with the Code of Conduct; and
- report any behaviour that is inconsistent with the Code of Conduct

Confidential Reporting Policy

An Coimisiún le Rincí Gaelacha is committed to the highest standards of conduct, openness and accountability. In accordance with that commitment, the organisation encourages any individual with any serious concern about any aspect of the organisation or other individuals to come forward and voice those concerns.

It is possible that individuals may have to deal with a situation where they have been asked by a colleague, other person or organisation to act in a manner which could be considered to be illegal, improper or unethical or which is otherwise in conflict with the spirit and content of the Code of Conduct. In such situations, use should be made of the Confidential reporting procedures which follow below.

It is recognised that certain cases may have to proceed to a certain degree on a totally confidential basis. The procedures set out in this policy make it clear that any individual can make reports without fear of reprisals. The object of the Code is to encourage and enable individuals to raise serious concerns within the organisation rather than overlooking the problem or raising them elsewhere. Obviously, issues of a criminal nature should automatically be raised with the relevant authorities.

Aims and scope of this policy

This policy aims to:-

- provide a procedure for individuals to raise concerns, report perceived departures from the Code of Conduct or any other policy or rule of the organisation and receive feedback on any action taken;
- allow the individual to take the matter further if they are dissatisfied with the organisation's response; and
- reassure individuals that they will be protected from reprisals or victimisation for reporting in good faith, any perceived transgressions. No such reassurances can be afforded when reports are deemed to be vexatious.

Safeguards

An Coimisiún le Rincí Gaelacha recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make, not least because of the fear of reprisal from those responsible for the malpractice. This policy aims to make it clear that the organisation will not tolerate under any circumstances, harassment or victimisation and will take action to protect individuals when concerns have been raised in good faith.

The organisation will do its best to protect an individual's identity when they raise concerns and do not wish their names to be initially disclosed. It must be appreciated, however, that any investigation process may have to reveal the source of information and a statement may be required as evidence particularly where the allegations may lead to Disciplinary Procedures being instigated.

Concerns expressed anonymously or without an initial written statement will be considered at the discretion of An Coimisiún le Rincí Gaelacha. In exercising this discretion, the factors taken into account would include:-

- the seriousness of the issues raised;
- the credibility of the concerns; and
- the likelihood of securing corroborative evidence from attributable sources.

If an individual makes a verbal allegation in good faith but these are not corroborated or lack credibility, then no action will be taken against whom the allegation has been made. It is stressed, however, that the organisation will protect itself and relevant individuals from false and malicious expressions of concern by taking disciplinary action where appropriate. In addition, steps will be taken to ensure that the negative impact of either a malicious or unfounded allegation is minimised. The organisation does acknowledge that it will not be possible to prevent all of the repercussions potentially involved.

How to raise a concern

As a first step, concerns should be raised by contacting a member of Coiste Faire. However, where an individual feels that there could be a conflict of interest with any member of that committee then the Chairperson of An Coimisiún le Rincí Gaelacha should be approached for guidance.

If an individual does not feel able to put their concerns in writing they can telephone or arrange to meet an appropriate representative of An Coiste Faire. The earlier concerns are expressed the easier it is to take action.

Although individuals are not expected to prove the truth of allegations they will need to demonstrate to the person contacted that there are sufficient grounds for concern to warrant an investigation. It should be noted that in most cases a written complaint will be required to enable a full investigation to proceed.

How An Coimisiún le Rincí Gaelacha will respond

The action to be taken will depend on the nature of the concerns. The matters raised may be:-

- investigated internally
- transferred to another internal investigation body (e.g. Ethics Board in North America)
- referred to the police
- dismissed without foundation but given in good faith
- dismissed, but recommendation that it was a vexatious report

In order to protect all parties, initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. Concerns or allegations which fall within the scope of specific procedures (for example, Child protection) will normally be referred for consideration under those procedures. Some concerns may be resolved by mediation or agreed action without the need for investigation.

Within two weeks of a concern being received, An Coiste Faire will write to the individual who raised the concern:-

- acknowledging that the concern has been received;
- indicating how it proposes to deal with the matter; and
- giving an estimate of how long the envisioned process might take

An Coimisiún le Rincí Gaelacha accepts that any person raising a concern needs to be assured that matters have been properly addressed and will endeavour to provide them with information about the outcome of any investigations.

How the matter can be taken further

This policy is intended to provide individuals with an avenue to raise concerns within the Organisation, but if they are dissatisfied with the response received then they can raise the matter with their solicitor, police or other regulatory body.