



Galway Walking Club

Code of Conduct Policy and Procedure

<i>Responsibility for developing of policy</i>	Sub-committee of the Committee of Galway Walking Club.
<i>Responsibility for approval of policy</i>	Committee members
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1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 Galway Walking Club (thereafter referred to as **GWC**) has developed a unified Code of Conduct (thereafter referred to as the **Code**) that applies to all members of GWC.
- 1.2 The Code defines the standards of behaviour expected of individual members in order to ensure that GWC is effective, open, and accountable; that individual members have supportive relationships with each other and other persons whom they interact with on behalf of GWC.
- 1.3 GWC is committed to providing the highest possible standard of behaviour and quality of care to all individuals within GWC.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of the Code is to set out standards of behaviour expected from all individual who are members of the GWC.

3. Scope

- 3.1 Paid up club members of GWC will be expected to comply with the Code. It is the responsibility of each club member to carefully read this Code.

4. Principles of the Code

- 4.1 **Kindness, Dignity and Respect:** GWC will operate in an environment where individual members will be kind, respectful and courteous in their dealings with each other and other persons whom we interact with.
- 4.2 **Openness Honesty and Transparency in our Communication:** GWC will operate in an environment where we will communicate openly, honestly **and** with transparency. Issues may arise in the future, which GWC may learn from, and deal with appropriately.
- 4.3 **An environment free from Bullying and Harassment and Sexual Harassment:** GWC will operate in an environment which is free from any form of bullying, harassment, or sexual harassment, (refer to definitions below). These unacceptable forms of behaviour are a violation of an individual's right to dignity, are illegal under Irish Law, and will not be tolerated.

5. Definitions

- 5.1 **Bullying** is defined as '**repeated inappropriate behaviour**', direct or indirect, whether verbal, physical or otherwise, conducted by one or more member against another or others in the course of their interactions at **any** activities arranged by the GWC, (*i.e.*

walks, social events, etc., this is not an exhaustive list, other similar interactions can be included).

- 5.2 An isolated incident of the behaviour described in this definition may be an affront to an individual's dignity, but a once off incident is not considered to be bullying.
- 5.3 Bullying activities involves actions and behavioural patterns, directly or indirectly, spoken, written or through digital/social media.
- 5.4 Examples of bullying behaviour may include the following (*this is not an exhaustive list*).
- *Exclusion with negative consequences.*
 - *Verbal abuse/insults.*
 - *Treating some individuals less favourably than others.*
 - *Belittling an individual's opinion.*
 - *Disseminating malicious rumours, gossip, or innuendo.*
 - *Socially excluding or isolating an individual within GWC.*
 - *Intrusion – pestering, spying, or stalking.*
 - *Intimidation/aggressive interactions.*
 - *Use of aggressive and obscene language.*
 - *Other menacing behaviour.*
- 5.5 **Harassment** is defined as any form of 'unwanted conduct' relating to any of the 9 grounds of discrimination which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity and creating an intimidating, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the individual. (*The 9 grounds relate to gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, membership of the traveller community*).
- 5.6 **Harassment** may consist of a single incident, or repeated inappropriate behaviour. Examples of Harassment can include (this is not an exhaustive list).
- *Verbal Harassment, such as making offensive jokes or comments.*
 - *Written Harassment, such as text messages, emails, or social media posts.*
 - *Physical harassment, such as jostling, shoving or any form of assault.*
 - *Intimidating behaviour such as gestures or threatening poses.*
- 5.7 **Sexual Harassment** is defined as 'unwanted **verbal, non-verbal or physical** conduct of a sexual nature' which has the purpose of violating a person's dignity, creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.
- 5.8 Sexual or gender-based harassment may consist of a single incident or repeated inappropriate behaviour. Examples are:
- *Physical, verbal, written or other conduct of a sexual nature*
 - *Other gender-based misconduct.*

6. Roles & Responsibilities

- 6.1 The GWC **Chairperson** will be responsible for the overall implementation of the Code.
- 6.2 All members of GWC are expected to always behave in a manner consistent with the Code.
- 6.3 Breaches of the Code can be reported to the Chairperson or to any member of the Committee.

7. General Procedures for individuals who are members of The Club.

A member of GWC should always maintain the highest standards of behaviour as follows:

- 7.1 Follow the Code.
- 7.2 Act honestly, responsibly and with integrity.
- 7.3 Treat others with fairness, equality, dignity, and respect always.
- 7.4 Show consideration for another person's physical and emotional well-being and possessions, to ensure no damage or deprivation is caused to either.
- 7.5 Respect the privacy of any confidential information of others and keep confidential matters strictly confidential.
- 7.6 Act in a manner that is in line with the principles of GWC and that enhances the work of GWC.
- 7.7 Always communicate respectfully and honestly with transparency with other members of GWC and/or others whom they interact with on behalf of GWC.
- 7.8 Observe safety procedures including obligations concerning the safety, health, and welfare of others on GWC walks and attitudes towards other walkers and property owners, in line with guidance provided to them and guided by GWC leaders walk co-ordinators. Members should refer to "**Guidelines for Walkers**" and "**Equipment Guidelines for Walkers**", which can be found on the GWC website.
- 7.9 Members should ensure that their fitness level is suitable for the walk they are participating in.
- 7.10 Whats App groups are in place for all walk levels and administered by the walk co-ordinators to give details of walks, a poll system for booking / cancelling participation in a walk. Please respect the Whats App system by refraining from the posting of videos, unnecessary chat and swamping with excessive content.
- 7.11 Report any health and safety concerns even when it is not within their area of responsibility.
- 7.12 Raise concerns about possible wrongdoing in GWC to the Chairperson.
- 7.13 Exercise caution and care with any documents relating to GWC.
- 7.14 Seek authorisation from the Chairperson before communicating externally on behalf of GWC

- 7.15 Not use their position while serving on the committee to benefit themselves or others with whom they have personal or business connections or engage in activities where it could be a conflict of interest.
- 7.16 Uphold the standing and reputation of GWC and not bring GWC into disrepute (i.e. using email, social media, and other internet sites, engaging with media etc.).
- 7.17 Not engage in any activity which may cause physical or mental distress to another member(s).
- 7.18 Not be affected by alcohol or drugs when involved in club walks.
- 7.19 Not take unauthorised possession of property that does not belong to them.

8. Acceptable Behaviour

Examples of behaviour deemed to be suitable and in the best interests of GWC

- 8.1 Proper clothing and equipment must be worn and used as set out in GWC guidelines. This is in the interests of safety. Failure to do so, may lead to the walk leader refusing to allow a member to participate in a walk.
- 8.2 An appointed GWC leader will take charge of organised club walks. They will coordinate the walks in such a manner as they see appropriate to accommodate all levels of walkers, i.e., walk speed, keeping the group together, route, etc. The instructions of the walk leader must be obeyed in the interests of Health and Safety.
- 8.3 On road walks do not walk more than two abreast. On narrow roads, walk in single file. Walk on the right side of the road facing oncoming traffic in groups less than 20. Wear Hi-Viz jackets on all road walks.
- 8.4 GWC endorses the “Leave no Trace” programme during all events and members are expected to observe this.
- 8.5 Members are expected to be courteous on meeting landowners and residents.

9. Breach of Code of Conduct Policy and Procedure /Complaints Process

- 9.1 The ethos of the GWC is to be inclusive, cooperative, and friendly.
- 9.2 If it is brought to the attention of GWC either by a complaint and/or that there has been an alleged breach of the Code by a member, the principles of natural justice will be applied. This ensures that everyone is treated with respect, dealt with fairly and that the main requirements of natural justice are met in every case, adequate notice and information provided, a fair hearing with the right to have a friend or colleague present, the right to reply, no bias by the decision maker and the right to appeal.
- 9.3 Complaints will be dealt with in an informal process as quickly as possible. In the first instance an informal communication may be arranged with the member. If there is a complaint from one member against another the Chairperson or other designated person from the committee will seek to resolve the issue by discussion with both parties.

- 9.4 If necessary, the parties may seek the support of a mediator to assist in this process. If a mutually acceptable outcome is achieved as a result of this discussion or mediation a brief written record, signed by both parties may prepared. If a mutually acceptable resolution cannot be reached either party may invoke the formal complaint procedures. A formal complaint must be in writing and signed. Formal complaints will in every case be copied to the member complained of (the respondent). The formal complaint must identify the respondent and give comprehensive details of the complaint.
- 9.5 On receipt of a formal complaint the Chairperson may appoint an internal person (Member of the committee) who has no interest in the matter under dispute nor has any close relationship with the complainant or respondent or an external independent person (the **Investigator**). The Investigator will try by all appropriate means to determine the facts behind the complaint. He/she/they will make a judgement on the circumstances and the behaviour which is appropriate for members of a sporting community in their dealings with one another. During the investigation, the Investigator may interview both parties to the dispute and any third party who may be able to assist in the investigation. At any such interview, the parties may be accompanied. On completion of the investigation, the Investigator will prepare a written report for the Chairperson. This report should determine all essential detail and include recommendations on measures to be taken to resolve the complaint. The Chairperson shall forward a copy of the report to the parties to determine whether both parties accept the report and its recommendations as a fair outcome of the proceedings. If either party is dissatisfied with the report of the Investigator or with the remedial actions taken arising from the report, they may appeal to the Chairperson.
- 9.6 Appeals to the Chairperson shall consist of a statement of the reasons why the report of the Investigator is not accepted. They can apply for a review to assess if Policy and Procedures have been followed correctly. The Chairperson may appoint an external independent qualified person to conduct the review and whether the conclusions reached by the Investigator(s) can be validly drawn from the evidence on the balance of probability. Their decision is final.
- 9.7 Where a member is found to be in breach of the standards outlined in the Code, this can result in a warning, suspension or the membership of the individual being withdrawn.
- 9.8 Any complaint relating to misuse if drugs or sexual misconduct or any other matter(s) considered to be of a serious nature must be reported to the appropriate authorities.