

RINKA Active LTD

PROCEDURES AND POLICIES

JANUARY 2025

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3. Supervision
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5. Child Welfare and Protection
6. Allegations Against Leaders
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8. Photography and Use of Imagery
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RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

- Application form is completed to highlight relevant work experience and qualifications
- Any gaps in history employment are explained and verified
- An interview process is carried out with two members of RINKA Active LTD present
- We obtain two references for lead instructors
- We ensure the individual completes their garda vetting with the National Vetting Bureau
- A probation period is used to assess the leader's commitment to promoting good practice in relation to young people
- All RINKA Leaders are trained in all RINKA policies and procedures
- All RINKA leaders complete the necessary safeguarding training and first aid training

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COACH EDUCATION AND TRAINING POLICY

- All lead instructors with RINKA have (or are completing) either:
 1. A fitness/health/exercise qualification
 2. A childcare qualification
 3. A coaching or teaching qualification
 4. A social work/ sna qualification
- Each lead instructor then completes the online RINKA Instructor training process
- Each instructor also completes Child First Policy and First Aid Training
- Each instructor is familiar with Fitness Ireland's Safeguarding Guidance and Code of Ethics
- Each lead instructor is given a teaching appraisal bi-annually
- Regular training calls are attended online
- In-person workshops are attended once a year
- Additional training is provided as required

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SUPERVISION POLICY

RINKA adheres to the following best practices to ensure the safety and well-being of all participants:

Adult Supervision: RINKA aims to have more than one adult present during classes to help ensure the safety of the children and to protect both the children and the supervising adults.

Gender Balance: We recognise the importance of a gender balance and, where possible, endeavor to have both male and female assistants available.

Assistant Training and Vetting: All assistants are familiar with RINKA's policies and procedures, attend RINKA's online training sessions, and are Garda vetted where applicable.

Alternative Supervision Arrangements: If an assistant is unavailable, RINKA will communicate with parents to arrange for a volunteer parent to remain on-site when possible.

Adult-to-Child Ratios: For children under 5 years of age, RINKA follows a ratio of 1 lead to 14 children. For children over 5 years of age, a ratio of 1 lead to 18 children is maintained. These ratios may vary based on the specific activity, the age group involved, and any additional needs of the children in the group.

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CODE OF CONDUCT

Code for Young People attending RINKA

Children have a great deal to gain from fitness in terms of their personal development and enjoyment. The promotion of good practice in fitness will depend on the co-operation of all involved, including child members of fitness organisation/clubs. Children must be encouraged to realise that they also have responsibilities to treat other children and Fitness Leaders with fairness and respect.

In your class you should:

- Be happy, have fun and enjoy taking part and being involved in your fitness.
- Be treated fairly by everyone, adults and other athletes.
- Feel safe and secure when you are taking part in your fitness .
- Be listened to and allowed to reply.
- Be treated with dignity, sensitivity and respect.
- Say no to something which makes you feel uncomfortable.
- Take part at a level that is suitable for your age, development and ability.
- Know that any details that are about you are treated with confidentiality but if you are at risk of harm or we are worried about your safety we may need to pass this information on.
- Know who to go to if you feel unsafe.

Your responsibilities are to:

- Treat all fitness leaders/coaches with respect.
- Be fair at all times, do your best to achieve your goals; be gracious if you do not achieved your goals.
- Respect other kids
- Never bully or use bullying actions against another person;
- You should never hurt other team members, athletes or your opponent, this includes never taking/damaging their property,
- You should never spreading rumours or telling lies about other young people or adults.

RINKA Active LTD

CODE OF CONDUCT

Code for Parents/Carers of children attending RINKA

Parents/Carers play a key role in the promotion of an ethical approach to fitness and young people's enjoyment in fitness. Parents/guardians therefore need to be aware, informed and involved in promoting the safest possible environment for children to enjoy their participation in fitness. Fitness Leaders need the support of parents/guardians in conveying the Safe, Fun and Fair Play message. You should help and support the implementation of best practice policies in RINKA by following the guidance below.

- Understand and ensure your child/children abide by the Code.
- Be available for specified duties if and when required; some duties are mandatory and form part of the procedures for safeguarding your children; some will be at the request of RINKA.
- Have an awareness of and respect for Leaders and other adults and their roles within RINKA.
- If you wish to raise an issue with a Leader this should be addressed with the Leader in an appropriate manner and not in front of children and young people
- Respect and abide by the decisions made by the Committee and other Leaders, these should be made in the best interests of the children in RINKA.
- Understand the complaints process and follow the proper procedure if you feel unjustly treated, with the knowledge that any complaint will be dealt with effectively and confidentially.
- Know your child's programme, and accept it is your responsibility for delivering and collecting your child/children. Parents/carers should ensure they do not leave their child/children waiting unsupervised at any time.
- Ensure the environment is safe and enjoyable for your child/children.
- Promote fair play and the positive aspects of fitness.
- Be a role model for your children and young people by maintaining the highest standards of personal conduct and respectful behaviour in any activity related to the fitness club/organisation.
- Promote participation for children that is fun, safe and in the spirit of fair play
- Ensure appropriate leaders are informed regarding any absenteeism, medical conditions or other relevant matters concerning your child.
- Arrange an appropriate time and place for discussing any matter with leaders and coaches; communication should not take place whilst leaders and coaches are in a position of supervision or responsible for other young people.
- You should have the opportunity to put forward suggestions and comments.
- Provide RINKA with appropriate information in relation to your child to ensure their safe inclusion in RINKA and with emergency contact information and to be reasonably available in case of emergency.
- Abide by the procedures and policies in this document especially with regard to the use of smart phones, any type of camera and videoing equipment.
- Be aware and abide by the safeguarding policy, the rules and constitution of your organisation and the rules and constitution of RINKA.

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CODE OF CONDUCT

In order to act as a role model and to promote their safety and the safety of young people RINKA Leaders should:

- Create a safe and enjoyable environment for children by:
- Planning and preparing appropriately and be positive during sessions.
- Making sure all levels of participation should be enjoyable and fun.
- Prioritising skill development and personal satisfaction over highly structured competition.
- Setting age appropriate and realistic goals.
- Avoiding favouritism – each child will need attention according to their fitnessing needs.
- Praising and encouraging effort as well as results.
- Showing respect for all involved, children and adults.

Recognise and ensure the welfare of children by:

- Keeping attendance records.
- Not exposing a child to criticism, hostility or sarcasm.
- Never swearing at, ridiculing, shouting unnecessarily or arguing with a child.
- Working in an open environment.
- Ensuring there is adequate supervision.
- Involving and updating parents, especially if a problem has arisen.
- Respecting a child's sensitivity.
- Never using physical punishment or force.
- Not using verbal or physical punishments or exclusion for mistakes.

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CHILD WELFARE AND PROTECTION PROCEDURES

It is not the responsibility of anyone working within RINKA, in a paid or voluntary capacity, to take responsibility or decide whether child abuse is taking place - that is the role of the Statutory Authorities.

The guiding principles regarding reporting child abuse or neglect may be summarised as follows:

1. The safety and well-being of the child must take priority;
2. Reports should be made without delay to Tusla – The Child and Family Agency (CFA).

Recognising Child Protection & Welfare Concerns

- All staff and volunteers have a responsibility to safeguard children and to report child protection and welfare concerns in line with the policy outlined below.
- Any reasonable concern or suspicion of abuse or neglect must elicit a response. Ignoring the signals or failing to intervene may result in ongoing or further harm to the child. Anyone who has a concern about a child in their club but are not sure what to do, should discuss the concern with RINKA's Designated Liaison Person or contact your local Child and Family Agency social work department/ Social Care Trusts (HSCT) for advice
- All staff should be familiar with the definitions of abuse as outlined in Children First, National Guidance, 2017 – (Chapter 2).
http://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Children_First_National_Guidance_2017.pdf
- Under the Children First Act 2015 Mandated Persons have a statutory obligation to report concerns which reach a particular threshold (as defined in section 2 of the Children First Act 2015) to Tusla.

Reporting Procedure - Staff

- All staff and volunteers (included Mandated Persons – see below) should follow the procedures outlined in this section when they have a concern that a child has been, is being, or is at risk of being abused, harmed or neglected.

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CHILD WELFARE AND PROTECTION PROCEDURES

Reporting Concerns about a Child

- Each affiliated club to RINKA has appointed a Designated Liaison Person.
- When a staff member or volunteer has a child protection or welfare concern they should speak to the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) as soon as possible.
- If the DLP is unsure if a child protection concern meets the reasonable grounds (see next section) for concern they should contact Tusla Social Work duty service for advice and guidance using the informal consultation process.
- The DLP can formally report child protection and welfare concerns using the Child Protection and Welfare Report Form (available on www.tusla.ie) to Tusla on the following basis:
 - Child protection and welfare concerns that meet reasonable grounds for concern but do not meet the threshold for mandated reporting (see below)
 - Child protection and welfare concerns that meet reasonable grounds for concern and have been passed to them by persons who are not Mandated Persons.
 - Under no circumstances should a child be left in a situation that exposes him or her to harm or risk pending intervention from Tusla.

Reasonable grounds for concern

Children First: National Guidance, 2017 states that: 'Tusla should always be informed when a person has reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been, is being, or is at risk of being abused or neglected.'

Reasonable grounds for a child protection or welfare concern include:

- Evidence, for example an injury or behaviour, that is consistent with abuse and is unlikely to have been caused in any other way
- Any concern about possible sexual abuse
- Consistent signs that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect
- A child saying or indicating by other means that he or she has been abused
- Admission or indication by an adult or a child of an alleged abuse they committed
- An account from a person who saw the child being abused

All staff and volunteers are expected to bring any child protection concern which meets reasonable grounds for concern to the attention of the DLP and to seek their advice and guidance if unsure.

In the event of an emergency and the unavailability of a Tusla Social Worker, the DLP should contact An Garda Síochána. Depending on advice received from the CFA the Child Protection and Welfare Report Form (CPWRF) may be required to be submitted to CFA.

If a report is made by telephone, this form should be completed and forwarded subsequently to the Child and Family Agency. Under The Protection of Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998, so long as you report what you believe is true and it is done in good faith you cannot be sued.

Everyone involved in the promotion of youth fitness should be familiar with the signs and behaviours that may prompt a concern for the safety of the young person.

There are four categories of abuse types, neglect, emotional, physical and sexual.

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CHILD WELFARE AND PROTECTION PROCEDURES

Role of DLP

The designated liaison person (club or national) is responsible for ensuring that reporting procedures within your organisation are followed, so that child welfare and protection concerns are referred promptly to Tusla. The designated liaison person should record all concerns or allegations of child abuse brought to his or her attention, and the actions taken in relation to a concern or allegation of child abuse. If, as a designated liaison person, you decide not to report a concern to Tusla, the following steps should be taken:

- The reasons for not reporting should be recorded
- Any actions taken as a result of the concern should be recorded
- The employee or volunteer who raised the concern should be given a clear written explanation of the reasons why the concern is not being reported to Tusla
- The employee or volunteer should be advised that if they remain concerned about the situation, they are free to make a report to Tusla or An Garda Síochána

Designated Liason Person – Sarah Gillespie

Email sarah@rinka.ie

Types of child abuse and how they may be recognised

As stated earlier child abuse can be categorised into four different types: neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse. A child may be subjected to one or more forms of abuse at any given time. Abuse and neglect can occur within the family, in the community or in an institutional setting. The abuser may be someone known to the child or a stranger, and can be an adult or another child. In a situation where abuse is alleged to have been carried out by another child, you should consider it a child welfare and protection issue for both children and you should follow child protection procedures for both the victim and the alleged abuser.

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CHILD WELFARE AND PROTECTION PROCEDURES

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Designated Liaison Person – Sarah Gillespie

Email sarah@rinka.ie

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Recording Child Protection Concerns

- Written records should be kept of all child protection concerns (including those not reported to Tusla) and these will be managed by the Designated Liaison Person. (Information will include: details of the concern, who raised it, who was contacted, details regarding an informal consultation if it happened, any action taken, details regarding informing parents.
- If a child has made a disclosure of abuse, a written record will be made. If there are other grounds for concern that the child has been abused or neglected, a written record will be made.
- Records relating to child protection and welfare issues will be kept confidentially and held for as long as is appropriate

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ALLEGATIONS AGAINST LEADERS

RINKA has agreed procedures to be followed in cases of alleged child abuse against leaders and assistants. If such an allegation is made against those named working within RINKA, two procedures should be followed:

1. The reporting procedure in respect of suspected child abuse (reported by the DLP)
2. The procedure for dealing with the RINKA Leader (carried out by a board member)

The safety of the child making the allegation should be considered and the safety of any other children who may be at risk. RINKA should take any necessary steps to protect children in its care. The issue of confidentiality is important. Information should only be shared on a need to know basis and the Leader should be treated with respect and fairness.

The Reporting Procedure

If the Designated Person has reasonable grounds for concern, the matter should be reported to the local HSE/HSCT, following the standard reporting procedure. While the Designated Person makes the report to the HSE/HSCT, the CEO of RINKA should deal with the leader in question.

The CEO should privately inform the accused that (a) an allegation has been made against them and (b) the nature of the allegation. They should be afforded an opportunity to respond and their response should be recorded in writing and forwarded to the HSE/HSCT.

The person accused should be asked to refrain from duties/volunteering pending the outcome of the investigation. It should be made clear to the accused that this action is a precautionary measure and will not prejudice any later disciplinary proceedings.

The CEO/Designated Person should maintain links with the Statutory Authorities while any investigation is ongoing. It is important that RINKA consider the outcome of the investigation and any implications it might have. In the event the alleged person is not found guilty or prosecuted, this does NOT mean that they are appropriate to work with young people in the future.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality should be maintained in respect of all issues and people involved in cases of abuse, welfare or bad practice. It is important that the rights of both the child and the person about whom the complaint has been made are protected.

The following points should be kept in mind:

- A guarantee of confidentiality or undertakings regarding secrecy cannot be given, as the welfare of the child will supersede all other considerations
- All information should be treated in a careful and sensitive manner and should be discussed only with those who need to know
- Information should be conveyed to the Parents/Guardians of the child in a sensitive way.
- Discussion with the Statutory Authorities should take place in relation to information sharing with all parties when ongoing investigations are taking place
- Giving information to others on a 'need to know' basis for the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality
- All persons involved in a child protection process (the child, the Parents/Guardians, the alleged offender, their family, Coaches) should be afforded appropriate respect, fairness, support and confidentiality at all stages of the procedure
- Information should be stored in a secure place, with limited access only by designated people.
- The requirements of the Data Protection laws should be adhered to. Breach of confidentiality is a serious matter

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COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

On receiving a complaint, RINKA will appoint a disciplinary committee to resolve problems relating to the conduct of its members. This will include bullying. The complaint should be in writing to the CEO, Sarah Gillespie, and should be responded to within 5 working days. The committee will consist of a representative from the board of directors.

If the complaint involves suspected abuse or a criminal offence the children's officer/designated person should be consulted, and the disciplinary committee disbanded. The statutory authorities will then be informed.

The disciplinary committee will review any relevant paperwork and hold any necessary meetings with all parties to proceed with complaints into any incident of suspected misconduct that does not relate to child abuse. It should, as soon as possible, inform the Management Committee of the progress of the disciplinary process. This should be done within 10 working days.

The disciplinary committee will furnish the individual with the nature of the complaint being made against him/her and afford him/her the opportunity of providing a response either verbally or in writing, but usually at a meeting with the disciplinary committee.

Written confidential records of all complaints should be safely and confidentially stored. Where it is established that an incident of misconduct has taken place, the disciplinary committee should notify the member of any sanction being imposed. The notification should be made in writing, setting out the reasons for the sanction. If the member is under 18 years of age, correspondence should be addressed to the parents/ carers.

If the member against whom the complaint was made is unhappy with the decision of the disciplinary committee s/he has the right to appeal the decision to an appeals committee. Any appeal should be made in writing within an agreed period after issue, usually 10 days of the decision of the disciplinary committee.

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ANTI-BULLYING

The RINKA Anti-Bullying Policy covers all students in attendance.

Any form of bullying, whether verbal, physical or psychological or cyber, and whether one-off, occasional or repeated, is completely unacceptable at RINKA.

Definition:

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or a group, repeated over time (or possibly one serious incident) that intentionally hurts another. Bullying can take many forms and is often motivated by prejudice, for example on grounds of ability, special need, race, religion, culture, gender, sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities.

Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously the school's first priority. Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in Ireland, it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour may in some circumstances be regarded as such.

Bullying can be:

- Emotional – being unfriendly, excluding, and tormenting (e.g. hiding uniform, threatening gestures).
- Physical – pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence.
- Racist – racial taunts, graffiti, gestures.
- Sexual – unwanted physical contact or sexually explicit and/or abusive comments.
- Homophobic – because of, or focusing on, the issue of sexuality.
- Verbal – name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing.
- Disability – because of, or focusing on, a disability.
- Cyber – using electronic means such as social websites, mobile phones, text messages, photographs or e-mail to cause pain and distress to a victim.
- Religious/Cultural – religious or cultural intolerance of any sort.

Bullying can seriously damage a young person's confidence and sense of self-worth. It can lead to serious and prolonged emotional damage for an individual, and, at its most extreme, taking their own life. Those who conduct the bullying or witness the bullying can also experience emotional harm, and the impact on parents and instructors can be significant. RINKA understands that some students, those with disabilities or special educational needs, can be more of a target for bullying, and watch for this.

RINKA accepts that as well as pupils bullying pupils, instructors can be bullies, or the victims of bullying, as can parents. The school sees all incidents of bullying as unacceptable, and all known incidents are addressed with equal importance.

All members of the RINKA community (parents, pupils, and instructors) have a responsibility to ensure that, in so far as it is reasonably practicable, bullying is prevented, and when it does occur, it is dealt with effectively and in accordance with this policy.

Who to Contact:

Sarah Gillespie

RINKA Active LTD

ANTI-BULLYING

Aims:

- To promote a consistent approach to managing behaviour with the emphasis on preventing bullying throughout RINKA
- For instructors to take the lead in ensuring policies are implemented effectively.
- To create an atmosphere of trust and openness.
- To promote strongly positive behaviour of all types.
- To ensure that concerns of all types are raised at an early stage and dealt with swiftly, fairly and with consistency.
- To ensure both bullies and those being bullied are supported appropriately and systems put into place to monitor progress.
- To ensure all concerns and reports of bullying of all kinds are recorded fully.

Objectives:

To communicate the contents clearly to all so that;

- All staff, pupils and parents have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All staff know what the school policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All pupils and parents know what the school policy is on bullying and what they should do if bullying arises.
- Everyone takes bullying seriously at all times, so that pupils and parents are assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

RINKA will deal quickly and effectively with incidents. All staff and pupils have a vital role in preventing bullying within the school.

Recording of incidents

A record of all incidents of bullying (register) is kept by Sarah Gillespie, CEO. All relevant incidents occurring at any time are recorded.

Cyber Bullying

The school considers online safety a part of both safeguarding, anti-bullying and mobile devices. This includes the use of cyber technology to bully, including social media, websites, mobile telephones, text messages, photographs and emails

Procedures

What can Instructors do if bullying is suspected? Signs to look for include withdrawal, low self-esteem, poor attendance, children flying into tempers (usually at home) weight loss, bursting into tears at the slightest criticism. Instructors should develop positive relationships with pupils so that they feel confident enough to report bullying. When bullying is reported, it is important to act quickly and to get the facts right noting times, names, places, witnesses, theft, damage, injuries. It may be advisable to ask the victim to keep a diary of events. All reports of bullying must be taken seriously. Any meetings with parents, copies of letters and the action agreed upon will also be recorded. It is important to fully investigate and hear 'both sides of the story'.

If complaints of bullying are the result of normal, albeit distressing, changes in friendships, they may be best resolved in a low-key manner, with a minimum of disruption to pupil's progress. In such situations, parents may not be automatically informed.

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ANTI-BULLYING

When a bullying incident is witnessed the instructor should remove both parties from the situation and hear both sides of the story. As soon as possible a written record of the incident should be made. Very minor incidents may be dealt with swiftly and verbally, and may require no further action – nonetheless positive action by instructors is necessary and a record made of the conversation. When a pupil complains of being bullied, he or she will be taken seriously and listened to. Any specific incidents will be noted down in writing, as well as a record of the pupil's general feelings. When a parent raises an initial concern, the same process applies.

At all times a calm, unbiased and reflective investigation is carried out of any allegations made, in consultation with all parties involved. The school will remain impartial, and make any decision regarding further action based on the evidence. If possible both parties should be reintegrated into the group/classroom as soon as possible. If not the parties should be taken to a safe place where a suitable adult can stay with them until an instructor attends.

In cases of cyber-bullying, any evidence in the form of text messages or other postings should be retained. The CEO should be involved in all such instances.

All parties will meet at the earliest possible opportunity to try to find a solution, and agree a plan of action to prevent such incidents happening again. It is often helpful to have an impartial witness at such meetings, such as another instructor. All incidents of bullying should be reported to the instructors concerned, via a written report. In addition a copy will be sent to the CEO for the bullying central file.

More severe cases of bullying will be reported to the CEO who will inform the parents and hold an investigation. If decided necessary, the CEO will decide whether to inform the Police or other agencies as needed.

Parents

Parents will be involved early in the process, and their support requested and desired. All incidents of bullying will be reported to parents/guardians. Parents' support will be asked for, to help to prevent further incidents of bullying or anti-social behaviour. Regular communication will play a key part in resolving an incident. In low key issues as highlighted above parents may not be informed unless it becomes clear that the situation remains an issue.