

# MRC Whistleblower Policy - May 2023



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## Introduction

Monmouth Rowing Club is committed to conducting our business with honesty and integrity and we expect all members, volunteers and employees to maintain the same high standards. It is always possible, however, for things to go wrong or for organisations to unknowingly harbour illegal or unethical conduct. This Club has a culture of openness and accountability and this policy is intended to encourage staff to report any concerns or suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible, to provide guidance as to how to raise those concerns and to reassure staff that they are able to raise genuine concerns in good faith without fear of reprisals.

Although disclosure may be made to certain public authorities, the Club's policy is that disclosures should be made in the first instance to the Club. We strongly recommend that you seek advice from the Club before reporting a concern to anyone external.

Individuals are entitled to blow the whistle to a prescribed person rather than their employer or with the organisation in which the concern exists. The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy produce a list of the prescribed persons and bodies who you can make a disclosure to which can be found on their website at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/blowing-the-whistle-list-of-prescribed-people-and-bodies--2>. In addition you can also blow the whistle to your legal adviser or to your MP

## Purpose

This policy sets out how individuals can raise concerns about the safety and welfare of children, young people or Adults at Risk who participate or engage in any services and activities conducted under the name of Monmouth Rowing Club. It will provide a method of raising concerns and will detail how feedback may be received in relation to any action(s) taken.

Monmouth Rowing Club will aim to ensure that individuals:

- Get a response to their concerns.
- Are made aware of how to pursue the concern further if they are not satisfied with the response.
- Are reassured that individuals will be protected from reprisals or victimisation for whistle blowing in good faith.

## Scope

Everyone involved in activity carried out under the jurisdiction of Monmouth Rowing Club is covered by this policy.

# MRC Whistleblower Policy - May 2023



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## Policy Statement

Members, coaches, other employees, volunteers, officials, parents and / or team followers are often the first to recognise concerns which potentially compromise the welfare or safety of those engaged in our activities of any age and those employed by the Club including members. However, they may not express their concerns because they feel that speaking up would be too difficult to handle. It may also be that they fear harassment or victimisation.

In these circumstances it may be easier for them to ignore the concern rather than report what may just be a suspicion of poor practice. Monmouth Rowing Club would urge anyone to come forward and voice those concerns. If you have safeguarding or welfare concerns, doing nothing is never an option.

This policy details how individuals can raise a matter of concern without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage. The policy is intended to encourage and enable individuals to raise serious concerns within Monmouth Rowing Club rather than overlooking a problem or blowing the whistle outside. It is in the interests of all concerned that disclosures of potential abuse or concerns are responded to and managed appropriately and without delay.

## Safeguarding

Monmouth Rowing Club realise that raising a concern and reporting allegations is often difficult to do through fear of reprisals from those responsible for the alleged poor practice. This policy is designed to offer protection to anyone who raises a concern provided the disclosure is made:

- In good faith
- If the individual believes what they say to be true, and are not intending / attempting to be malicious, even if the concerns subsequently are proven unfounded

In these circumstances, Monmouth Rowing Club will fully support the whistle-blower and will not tolerate any bullying, harassment or victimisation whatsoever. If this does occur any perpetrators will be dealt with under Monmouth Rowing Club's disciplinary policy and procedures (and as a result may face expulsion from the Club).

## Confidentiality

Monmouth Rowing Club will do its utmost best to keep confidential the identity of a whistle-blower. Should any allegations be made through whistle-blowing it should be noted that a statement may be needed to form part of the evidence.

# MRC Whistleblower Policy - May 2023



Should the whistle-blower need to be identified for any reason or it becomes apparent that the whistle-blower will be identified because of any subsequent investigation, notice will be given to the whistle-blower, by a representative of Monmouth Rowing Club (usually the Club's Designated Safeguarding Officer) so that an opportunity is provided to discuss any likely consequences and support required.

## **Anonymous Allegations**

This policy encourages individuals to put their name to any disclosures they make. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less credible and more difficult to investigate effectively, but they may be considered at the discretion of the Club. In exercising this discretion, the factors to be taken into account will include:

- The seriousness of the issues raised and any potential safeguarding risks indicated
  - The credibility of the concern
  - The likelihood of confirming or clarifying the allegation from attributable sources
  - Statutory agency advice e.g. LADO, Children's Social Care or the Police

If anybody feels unable to disclose their identity, this policy seeks to encourage them to report any safeguarding concern in good faith and through external agencies such as the NSPCC Helpline (0808 800 5000) if necessary.

## **Raising a Concern or Making an Allegation**

Anyone wishing to raise a concern should do so either verbally or in writing to Monmouth Rowing Club's Designated Safeguarding Officer. The concern needs to be as specific as possible including any names, dates and locations (where possible).

The Club's Designated Safeguarding Officer can be contacted either in person at the rowing club or through email [welfare@monmouthrc.org.uk](mailto:welfare@monmouthrc.org.uk).

Any anonymous concerns / allegations are much less powerful and are therefore much harder to investigate as outlined above but all concerns shared will be taken seriously and investigated where possible.

If, after the course of an investigation, it has been found that the concerns or allegations are untrue or have not been substantiated then no action will be taken against the whistle-blower. If, however, it is established that they have made malicious allegations disciplinary action may be taken against them. In such cases, Monmouth Rowing Club's **Disciplinary Policy** will apply.

# MRC Whistleblower Policy - May 2023

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All investigations will initially be undertaken by the Club's Designated Safeguarding Officer with support where appropriate from another designated safeguarding officer and/or external statutory or safeguarding expertise. However, should you feel that you have not received a satisfactory response to your concern you can approach the following people or organisations:

- Welsh Rowing at <https://www.welshrowing.com/en/about-us/contact-us>.
- The FA / NSPCC Child Protection 24-Hour Helpline 0808 800 5000.
- Or by going directly to the Police and/or Social Services