



# **Operational Document**



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## ***Introduction:***

The Sligo Kayak Club was established in April 2009 by network of paddlers in the North-West. The club was initially founded in co-operation with Sligo Borough Council and with the help of grant aid from the Sligo Sport and Recreation Partnership.

The Club is overseen by a democratically elected committee consisting of a Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, Safety Officer, Training Officer, Equipment Officer and Children's Officer.

Sligo Kayak Club is a non-profit organisation. Committee members work on a completely voluntary basis.

## **Aims and Objectives:**

The objectives of the Club are:

- To promote the sport and recreation of kayaking
- To facilitate kayaking activities for its members
- To facilitate relevant education and training in the discipline of Kayaking
- To safeguard the wellbeing of its members

## **Club Activities:**

The Club welcomes new members and provides opportunities for participants of all ages and ability levels.

Sligo Kayak Club has active participants in flat water, river running, freestyle, surf and sea kayaking. The club has an active junior section and runs paddle proficiency courses on a regular basis.

Other activities facilitated by the Club include:

- Proficiency Training and Assessments
- Equipment Rental
- Safety Training
- Rescue Events
- Pool Sessions
- Social Events and Fundraisers



## ***Section 1 - Code of Conduct and Best Practice***

### **1.1 - General**

Sligo Kayak Club is a community oriented club, not a service provider, and as such requires its members to engage with each other in a spirit of unity. Rules and guidelines are put in place to safeguard this ethos.

Members are asked to not engage in sexist, racist, ageist or other discriminatory behaviour in words or actions.

Bullying, harassment, intimidation, peer-pressure, scaremongering and any other forms of violence or maliciousness cannot be tolerated in Sligo Kayak Club.

Members are expected to take full responsibility for their own actions and wellbeing and seek out suitable information to make responsible judgments.

All communication of an official nature within the club and between its members must be done in a recorded medium such as letters, emails or over the forum.

All equipment and facilities belonging to Sligo Kayak Club or used by the club must be respectfully treated and cared for.

All leaders should be fairly treated and respected for the tasks they are doing, and if you are being led you must behave according to their instructions to ensure your own safety and the safety of others.

Participation in club activities are not an automatic right and can be restricted based on relevant skill, experience, health or other mitigating factors.

### **1.2 - Parents and Guardians:**

If you are the parent/ guardian of a junior member of Sligo Kayak Club you are expected to behave as a defacto member of the club, understand and abide by the codes applicable to you and engage with the club in a manner that is conducive to the ethos of the club.



The explicit rights of the parent/guardian are never trumped by any rule or action of the club, and any involvement in a club activity by a junior member is fully at the discretion of the parent/guardian.

Parents/ guardians must understand that Sligo Kayak Club is not a service provider where you can drop off your children for minding and that leaders only have responsibility for junior members while on the water.

Parents/ guardians are responsible for all their junior members' interactions with the Sligo Kayak Club online, such as on the club forums or on social networking sites.

Parents/ guardians are expected to seek out and understand the nature of the activities their junior members are participating in and the inherent risks they are taking.

Parents/ guardians are valued role-players within Sligo Kayak Club. Parents/guardians are encouraged to communicate with other parents, club leaders and club committee members and if they have any question or concerns to please voice them.

The Sligo Kayak Club adheres to the ICU Child Protection Policy which is available from the website [www.canoe.ie](http://www.canoe.ie)

**The relevant loco parentis forms must be signed by a parent/guardian before any junior member can take part in club activities.**

The club has designated Children's Officers trained to deal with enquiries or complaints from parents and juniors.

### **1.3 - Junior Members:**

Junior participation in the sport is subject to the individual's size and physical fitness. As a rule the Club does not accept members below the age of 11 years old.

Disruptive behaviour is not tolerated and participants who do not behave within reason can be asked to leave the water.

Junior members are expected to behave in as responsible and mature manner as possible to ensure everyone's safety and enjoyment.



Any problems junior members have should be brought to the Children's Officers. See contacts section of the club website for contact information.

### **1.4 - Committee Members**

Committee members are democratically elected members who accept their role within the committee structure to do the best possible job based upon the role description presented under their title.

Committee members must be willing to operate in an impartial and transparent manner always putting the welfare of the members of the club at the top of their agenda.

Committee members must be adequately accessible to members of the club and must attend the relevant club activities to be able to perform their duties properly.

### **1.5 - Voluntary Club Leaders:**

Club leaders are recruited from suitably skilled members of the club.

Club leaders must abide by the agreed leader duties and recommendations as agreed by becoming a Club Leader (see relevant literature)

Club leaders must respect the core principal of all leadership in Sligo Kayak Club is to lead by example, and to always put the welfare of those in their care first and foremost above all else.

Prospective club leaders are encouraged to view the material relevant to the leaders roles on the website. Sligo Kayak Club always needs new people willing and able to help out.

## ***Section 2 - Club Equipment***

Club gear is available to club members on club activities and includes a large number of boats/ buoyancy aids / paddles / cags and helmets. This allows people to take up kayaking with minimal initial investment. Many then obviously go on to purchase their own personal gear over a period of time.

The club container is located in Doorly Park (beside the Rowing Club container.) The container holds a combination of gear owned by the Sligo Kayak Club and boats and gear owned privately by club members.

### **2.1 - Club Gear**

Club boats and gear are available to members for all club activities and approved peer paddling activities. There is a charge for using club equipment set by the committee.



Club gear is clearly marked with the Kayak Club name and number. Members must sign the 'Equipment Checklist' located in the container every time they borrow club gear.

On some occasions club gear can be borrowed for private use. This can only be done through the Club with permission from the designated Equipment Officer.

When taking part in a club session members must make sure all the gear used is put back correctly inside the container. All boats should be emptied of water before being put back in the boathouse.

## **2.2 - Private Gear**

All members are permitted to use the club gear at pool sessions and river trips. Members are not permitted to borrow private boats or kit without the owner's permission.

Private boat owners should make sure their kit is clearly marked with their name and contact details. The Club cannot guarantee personal belongings will be safe in the container. Boats and gear are kept in the container entirely at the owner's own risk.

It is recommended that members keep their gear at home if they do not access the container regularly enough to keep an eye on their belongings.

## ***Section 3 - Insurance Policy***

ICU Public Liability Insurance Policy only protects a Registered Member from claims for injury or damage arising from a negligent act or omission. It does not provide cover due to injury or damage sustained from situations considered to be within the norms of canoeing.

The legal principal *Volenti non fit injuria* ("to a willing person, no injury is done") means that an adult who knowingly and willingly puts themselves in a potentially dangerous situation will generally be unable to sue for injury or damage should an accident occur. It is sometimes described as "consenting to run a risk".

No one, however, consents to damage or injury brought about through an act of negligence. The principle of *Volenti non fit injuria* does not protect anyone against being held liable for an act of legal negligence. This is why insurance is required. The ICU Public Liability Insurance protects Registered Members from claims for injury and/or damage arising from an act of legal negligence.



Volenti non fit injuria is considered an important principle in the context of sporting/recreational activities that have an inherent risk. An adult, for example, undertaking a canoeing trip or competing in a canoeing competition who is considered to have a level of personal proficiency / experience compatible with the degree of difficulty likely to be encountered is unlikely to succeed in a claim against the individual presumed to be the leader / organiser if damage or injury sustained arises from an incident that would be considered to have a high probability of occurrence because of the conditions or circumstances likely to be encountered through participation in the trip / competition.

Children (anyone under 18) are in a very special category in this regard to Volenti non fit injuria. For club policy regarding junior members see the 'Junior Policy' section of this manual.

For more information on kayak safety and insurance, please see the Irish Canoe Union website [www.canoe.ie](http://www.canoe.ie)

### ***Section 4 - Junior Safety Policy***

Sligo Kayak Club welcomes junior members and endeavours to offer the same training and recreational opportunities to juniors as it does to its adult members. Club activities are mixed-age with junior and senior members training together.

Club members must realise that kayaking is a sport with inherent dangers. Each member will undertake any part of a club trip completely at their own risk. Children under 18 however cannot consent to risk, even the normal risks associated with canoeing. Only a child's parent or legal guardian can consent to a child's participation in a canoeing activity. When parental consent is present, the instructor or coach will not be liable to the child in damages for personal injuries unless the instructor or coach was legally negligent.

The following guidelines are for parents/guardians, junior members and Sligo Kayak Club members that take juniors on paddling sessions. The Sligo Kayak Club provides junior paddling sessions on the basis that responsibility for juniors is a joint partnership between the child, parent/guardian and the Sligo Kayak Club.

ALL participants have to complete a Sligo Kayak Club membership form and a loco parentis form (see appendix) which MUST be signed by a parent or guardian before they can be allowed on the water.



Junior participation in the sport is subject to the individual's size and physical fitness. The Sligo Kayak Club reserves the right to postpone membership until the child has grown. As a rule the Club does not accept members below the age of 11 years old.

Parents/Guardians should be aware that club sessions are not activities where you can drop off your children and come back for them later. To meet both safety and Child Protection\* guidelines we can only be responsible for a child while on the water. This means that we cannot come with them if they are cold and want to leave the water and we cannot assist them with drying and dressing themselves. This is the responsibility of the parent/guardian. \*Note: The Sligo Kayak Club adheres to the ICU Child Protection Policy which is available from the website [www.canoe.ie](http://www.canoe.ie)

Sligo Kayak Club is fully committed to safeguarding the well being of its junior members. Club policy reflects current best practice as contained in the Irish Sports Council's and Irish Canoe Union's Child Protection Policy. The club also has designated Sports Council approved Children's Officers trained to deal with enquiries or complaints from parents and juniors (see contacts section of website.)

### ***Section 5 - Medical and Injury Risks:***

Although kayaking enjoys a good safety record compared to most other adventure sports, there are some risks of medical illness or injury that have increased risk for the kayaker. Below are some of the more common of them. People should take part in kayaking in full knowledge of the risks they are taking.

#### **5.1 - Weil's Disease**

Leptospirosis is an animal infection. After recovery the animal excretes the organisms in its urine. The bacteria survive for days even weeks in moist conditions but only for a few hours in salt water. The infection is caught by direct contact with infected urine or a polluted water environment. Bacteria can enter through skin abrasions or via eyes, nose or mouth.

#### **The Illness:**

The usual incubation is 2 to 12 days. Usually a "flu" like illness occurs which resolves in 2-3 weeks. There may be fever, severe headache, pains in the back and calves, and prostration. A few cases develop jaundice, when the condition is known as Weil's Disease. Although death may occur in about 15% of jaundiced patients, death without jaundice is virtually unknown. Antibiotics during the first few days help in limiting infection. Many cases recover without specific treatment.



### **What to do:**

If you think you may have an infection, go to your doctor and tell him/her that there may be a risk of leptospirosis. The diagnosis is by clinical suspicion. Blood tests can rarely confirm the illness in time to affect treatment. They may subsequently confirm it.

### **Prevention:**

Cover all cuts and abrasions with waterproof plasters.

Always wear footwear to avoid cutting feet.

Avoid capsizing drill or rolling practise in suspect waters.

Where possible, shower soon after canoeing.

If in doubt, contact your doctor early.

Leptospirosis is rare, and its deterioration into Weil's Disease even more rare. Weil's Disease is, however, a very serious illness, and must be swiftly diagnosed and treated.

The Department of Public Health, Dr. Steeven's Hospital, Dublin 8 (Tel. 01 6790700) issued a Public Health Warning in August 1996 for circulation to all clubs involved in water based activities. The details circulated are similar to the above and are available from the Department.

<http://www.leptospirosis.org/>

<http://www.kayakhelp.com/kayaking-safety/weils-disease.php>

## **5.2 - Repetitive Strain Injury**

Usually of the wrists but other joints can be affected. Thorough and correct warm-ups can prevent this occurring. Relaxing of the grip on the paddles in rest periods helps the wrist, as does having a paddle the correct size and feather for the paddler.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Repetitive\\_strain\\_injury](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Repetitive_strain_injury)

## **5.3 - Dislocated Shoulder**

Caused due to incorrect paddling technique (bad bracing and rolling etc.) Usually there is never a full recovery of joint solidity and a high likelihood of repeat occurrence.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dislocated\\_shoulder](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dislocated_shoulder)

[http://www.chrisj.winisp.net/articles/shoulder\\_info.htm](http://www.chrisj.winisp.net/articles/shoulder_info.htm)



## 5.4 - Hypothermia

Loss of the body's core temperature, which affects coordination and judgement. Everyone has different tolerances to the cold, so care has to be taken that everyone is warm enough. People who end up swimming more than others, or people who spend too long parked in an eddy are especially vulnerable. Usually the people suffering from hypothermia will not know it or realise the severity of their condition.

Chocolate bars, skullcaps, spare fleeces, hot drinks, and even a few space blankets should accompany the group to prevent incidence of Hypothermia.

<http://www.kayakhelp.com/kayaking-safety/hypothermia.php>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hypothermia>

## 5.5 - Surfer's Ear

Surfer's Ear is the common name for an exostosis or abnormal bone growth within the ear canal. Surfer's ear is not the same as swimmer's ear, although infection can result as a side-effect. Irritation from cold wind and water exposure causes the bone surrounding the ear canal to develop lumps of new bony growth which constrict the ear canal. The condition is so named due to its prevalence among cold water surfers. Cold water surfers experience surfer's ear at about six times the rate of warm water surfers.

The condition is not limited to surfing and can occur in any activity with cold, wet, windy conditions such as kayaking, sailing, jet skiing, and diving. Most avid surfers have at least some mild bone growths (exostoses), causing little to no problems. The condition is progressive, making it important to take preventative measures early, preferably whenever surfing.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Surfer%27s\\_ear](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Surfer%27s_ear)

<http://ezinearticles.com/?Solving-Surfers-Ear&id=2310447>

<http://www.irishfreestyle.com/node/5489>

## 5.6 - Strainers

Without a doubt, strainers are the No.1 potentially lethal hazard on whitewater rivers. They pose risk on all grades of whitewater. If there is moving water, there is a potential for strainers.

### **What are strainers?**

Strainers are formed when an object blocks the passage of larger objects but allows the flow of water to continue - like a big food strainer or colander. These objects can be very dangerous, because the force of the water will pin an object or body against the strainer and then pile up,



pushing it down under water. Strainers are formed by many different objects, like storm grates over tunnels, trees that have fallen into a river ("log jam"), bushes by the side of the river that are flooded during high water, or rebar from broken concrete structures in the water. In an emergency it is often best to try and climb on top of a strainer so as not to be pinned against the object under the water. If you are in a river, swimming aggressively away from the strainer and into the main channel is your best bet. If you cannot avoid the strainer, you should swim hard towards it and try to get as much of your body up and over it as possible.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Whitewater>

<http://www.paddling.net/sameboat/archives/sameboat128.html>

## ***Section 6 - Event Classification***

### **6.1 - Private Paddle**

A private paddle is organised between any individual on a private basis. Sligo Kayak Club has no involvement in these, but recommends paddlers take every care possible while paddling to ensure their own safety and the safety of others. Club equipment cannot be provided for use on private paddling sessions except with express permission from the Equipment Officer.

All paddles provided under the Sligo Kayak Club banner must be organised over the Sligo Kayak Club forum in public view. This is so there is a clear published record of club events. Anything organised outside of the club forum will be considered a private paddle and treated accordingly.

### **6.2 - Peer Paddle**

Peer paddling session is a paddle with one's peers within the club. There are a few simple rules that must be adhered to for a peer paddle. There must be 3 or more people on the water and they must stick together as a group.

For a peer paddle on flat water all members must be of a level 2 standard of paddling or above. For a peer paddle on Grade 2 whitewater and small surf all paddlers must be of a level 3 or higher standard.

### **6.3 - Led Flatwater Paddle**

A led flatwater paddle is a flatwater session where a club leader takes on the responsibility to lead a trip on flatwater. All people attending must be of a level 2 paddling standard or higher. U18's



must be approved by the leader and their respective parents to attend and the parents must remain on site at all times.

## **6.4 - Led River Paddle**

A led river paddle is a session where a club river leader takes on the responsibility to lead a moving water trip. All people attending must be of a level 2 standard or higher and understand the risks of the paddling they are undertaking. U18's must be approved by the Leader and their parents, and their parents must understand the risks and the responsibilities they must undertake for their child to attend a river paddle.

## **6.5 - Multiday Trip Away**

A Multi-day trip away may be organised by members of Sligo Kayak Club. The only aspects which are performed under the heading of the Sligo Kayak Club are those which happen on the water, everything else is considered of a private nature.

## **6.6 - Non-paddling Events**

These can include events such as table quizzes, film nights, BBQ or any other non-water based activities organised or attended by Sligo Kayak Club. These should fall under the same rules and behaviour codes as any other trip where practical.

## ***Section 7 - Different Water Types***

### **7.1 - Flat Water Kayaking**

Flat water kayaking includes lakeshore conditions within swimming reach of the bank with no currents and in moderate weather conditions. Even in these comparatively safe conditions utmost care must be taken, as there is always a risk of injury or death on or around water.

### **7.2 - Whitewater Kayaking**

Whitewater kayaking is a high risk application of kayaking. Whitewater rivers are hazardous locations and as such every precaution needs to be taken to ensure people's safety. The first step to safe kayaking on whitewater is a clear knowledge of the risks involved so people can make their own informed decision whether or not whitewater is suitable for them. Followed by structured training on flat water of the fundamental skills needed to traverse whitewater.



At Sligo Kayak Club, we endeavour to provide whitewater experiences for those suitable and interested in it. All practical precautions to ensure club members safe involvement are taken by the club. The vetting of a member's ability to take part in this aspect of the Kayak Club's activities has to be made taking in a few extra factors for reasons of security. These include:

- Over-all health and fitness
- Age and physical size (see section for parents of U18 members)
- Parental permission, assistance and involvement (see section for parents of U18 members)
- Suitable paddling proficiency
- Availability of equipment and services at the time

The decision to disallow a person from taking part in club whitewater trips can be made by the Club Committee or by the Club leader who is leading the trip. Any disallowances must be recorded and explained to the people involved and can be contested to the committee in writing.

### 7.3 - Grade System

Whitewater is paddling on a river of turbulent moving waters called rapids. The rapids are formed by gradient changes, width, depth and direction changes, and rocks and other obstructions in the river.

River difficulty/ danger is broadly categorised into a grading system. This system is known as the International Grading System.

**Grade 1.** Moving water, unobstructed and without technical difficulties. There may be small waves and ripples to challenge the paddler.

**Grade 2.** Waves, small stoppers and other minor obstructions to avoid. Eddies and cushion waves may be strong.

**Grade 3.** Waves, stoppers and technical difficulties are more severe. There may be drops and powerful constrictions. The main distinguishing factor of Grade three water is that the paddler will have to follow a recognisable route to avoid obstacles and hazards.

**Grade 4.** Severe waves, drops, stoppers and other obstructions. The route is not easily recognisable and will usually require careful inspection from the boat or bank.



**Grade 5.** Extremely difficult rapids with precise and technically demanding routes to be followed. Stoppers, currents and waves will be powerful and inspection is essential.

**Grade 6.** All of the above carried to extremes. Grade 6 usually means unrunnable rapids, which may just be possible in certain conditions.

## 7.4 - Kayak Surfing

Kayaks can be taken into surf and ride waves in ways similar to other surf-craft. We in Sligo are very lucky to have some of the world's best surf right on our doorstep and we like to take every advantage of this we can.

Kayaking in surf is similar to whitewater in many of its hazards. Surf in a kayak receives a grading of Class 3 as standard. Although this has less accurate reference than it does on rivers, until you are knowledgeable enough to grade the danger and difficulty of moving water yourself, always treat surf with caution and care.

There are a few rules that apply to all surfing craft. These are known as **Surf Etiquette**.

1. The surfer (no matter what craft) nearest the shoulder has priority and should not be inhibited on their wave.
2. Incoming surfers have right of way. It is up to outgoing surfers to take evasive action, even capsizing if necessary.
3. Do not surf casually within any Surf Competition area.
4. If collision is imminent you should capsize.
5. Know your limits.

### *Three Golden Rules of Kayaking*

These three golden rules of kayaking apply at all times to all kayaking.

1. Never paddle alone (Less than 3 should never be)
2. Always wear a Buoyancy Aid and helmet
3. You must be able to swim (with buoyancy aid)



## ***Section 8 - Volunteer Club Leader Information***

Sligo Kayak Club needs to have its own internal structure to select suitable leaders and to guide them in their duties to ensure the club runs in the most safe, yet most progressive manner possible. This is not a replacement for ICU/BCU qualifications.

1. Static Flatwater Leader.
2. River Leader.

### **8.1 - Receiving Leader Status**

To become a leader within Sligo Kayak Club you must lead 2 trips on suitable water (lake for static leader, river for river leader) under supervision of a River Leader already established within the club. On these 2 trips you must show you are able to execute all of the leader's responsibilities and suggested behaviours for the water you are leading on. Once the 2 trips are concluded, the supervising river leader submits a recommendation (in writing) to the committee and the prospective leader. From this recommendation they can approve or deny a leader status. A denial must be supplied with reasons for denial clearly stated, showing areas of the responsibilities and behaviours that the prospective leader was not able to meet.

Leader Status must be had for leading any led club activity.

ICU/BCU cert holders must go through same process as everyone else to be a club leader.

Leader status should be under review if the leader has not taken part in a club event in over 3 months. If this happens they must contact the committee to ask for their leader status to be reinstated. This is to encourage leaders to maintain a level of involvement in the club.

All Club Leaders must have First Aid training.

All Club Leaders must submit themselves for Garda Vetting procedures.

All Club Leaders provide their efforts on a purely voluntary basis only.

Freelance ICU/BCU Instructors:



ICU/BCU qualified instructors are still required to perform official ICU/BCU training and assessments. These roles are provided as freelance employees of Sligo Kayak Club and must follow the rules laid out by their qualification providers.

Where official ICU/BCU instructors are hired, the instructors must provide copies of all their relevant qualifications pertaining to service provided. This includes an in-date instructor cert. child protection cert. and first aid cert.

## **8.2 - Leaders Duties**

On any club activity, the leader's duties start when the boathouse is opened and do not end until the boathouse is closed.

Leaders must ensure that correct gear is used on any trip.

Leaders must ensure that any club gear that is used gets put back in the boathouse in the correct way for drying/storage.

Leaders must know the stretch of water they are to be leading on well, and have thorough knowledge of any potential dangers.

Leaders must outline the permitted paddling areas and ensure that paddlers do not leave the areas.

Leaders must be able to perform all needed rescues relative to the water they are leading on.

Leaders must carry all needed equipment relative to the water they are leading on.

Leaders need to be able to make informed decisions on the suitability of a person to be able to paddle the water upon which they will be leading, and give or deny permission to paddle based upon these choices.

Leaders with any information of issues relating to junior members must bring these issues to the attention of the Children's Officers.

Any payment received to a leader for club activities must be accurately recorded and delivered to the Treasurer in full.



Leaders have the right and responsibility to refuse attendance to a led event for any practical reason. Such reasons could include, leader is not confident in their suitability to paddle at this session, leader is not happy that the club member (or the members parents if member is under 18) will abide by the relevant codes of conduct.

Members can lodge a complaint in writing to the committee if they feel that the decisions made by the Leader were not suitable.

### **8.3 - Leaders Recommended Behaviours**

Leaders should take part in club activities where possible, and should engage with club members to get to know the skill limitation, experience and personal needs of the club members they may be leading.

Leaders should be the first on, and last off the water on any occasion they are leading.

Leaders should be able and willing to delegate assistant duties to club members based on knowledge of their skill experience and suitability.

Leaders should maintain line of sight with all club members under their care whenever possible.

Lead by example. Encourage all participants/ no favouritism.

### ***Section 9 - Committee Members***

Committee members are democratically elected members who accept their role within the committee structure to do the best possible job based upon the role description presented under their title.

Each title within the committee structure must have their duties and responsibilities clearly presented in writing.

Committee members must be willing to operate in an impartial and transparent manner always putting the welfare of the members of the club at the top of their agenda.



Committee members must be adequately accessible to members of the club and must attend the relevant club activities to be able to perform their duties properly.

Committee members must actively seek out adequate education to be able to perform their duties correctly.

Sligo Kayak Club must have three democratically elected positions, to be considered legitimate. These positions are Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer.

Sligo Kayak Club should also have three more positions to operate effectively. These positions are Safety, Training, and Children's Officer.

Other positions should only be created when there is evidence of need for a new position to fulfil a specific role. Any further positions should have clearly outlined duties and responsibilities allocated and any person nominated for these positions must be democratically elected by club members.

### **9.1- Committee Operation:**

Committee meetings must follow a strict format to operate in a fair and transparent manner.

Committee meetings can be called for by any member of committee or any club member.

The meeting must be announced by least five days prior to the event by secretary and presented to Committee members and anyone else who needs to attend in recorded form (email or forum.)

All committee members are expected to reply to the meeting invite in good time stating if they can or cannot attend.

Submissions for discussion are taken by the Secretary in recorded form.

Committee meeting can only take place if there are at least five committee members present.

Meetings must open with an overview reading of the minutes of previous meeting, followed by current meeting agenda.

All meetings must be accurately recorded.



Minutes must be taken and presented to club members in a timely fashion.

## **9.2 - Exceptional Circumstances Committee Operations**

In exceptional circumstances, the committee may enact some temporary policies to enable it to act in a way suitable to deal with the situation effectively.

Under exceptional circumstances an emergency committee meeting may be called with minimum notice, and be considered a valid meeting if five or more members (51%) attend. Decisions made in such a meeting can only stand as long as it takes to ratify them through the correct method at a ordinary committee meeting.

Under exceptional circumstances the committee may elect to temporarily suspend a member's right to attend or be involved with Club activities if they deem it necessary for the safety of the club and/ or its members. Such a suspension can only last as long as is needed to put correct procedures in place as defined in the codes of conduct and the complaints/ grievances procedures.

## ***Section 10 - Complaints Procedure***

For the protection and fair treatment of all members, Sligo Kayak Club enforces a robust and transparent system of processing issues of complaints and grievances within and involving Sligo Kayak Club and its members.

### **10.1 - Defining Grounds for Complaint**

Complaint can be filed by any member of Sligo Kayak Club, or any person outside of the club who has been affected by actions of the Sligo Kayak Club.

Grounds for complaint would be defined as:

Any behaviour that is against the codes of conduct agreed to upon entering the club.

Any behaviour that puts themselves or others at risk or causes harm to others within the club, or involving the club.

Any behaviour that is damaging to the Club entity, or that hinders the obliged duties of its members and committee.



## **10.2 - Method of Filing a Complaint**

All complaints and grievances must be filed in writing to the Committee, with complete listing of persons involved, evidence available to substantiate, and any other relevant information for consideration.

No other form of registering a complaint is acceptable.

## **10.3 - Method for handling Complaints**

Any evidence relating to a legal abuse must be brought to the Garda Siochana for consideration of legal action. This includes matters of fraud, embezzlement, and physical abuse, etc.

The registration of a complaint against a member of the club must be presented to the person whom the complaint is registered against, along with copies of all information relating to the complaint. The only exception to this is if it is otherwise advised against by the Garda Siochana as part of any ongoing investigation by them.

The person who has the complaint lodged against them is obliged to file in writing a response to the complaint, citing any and all evidence they deem relevant to their response.

As part of the processing of the complaint, the Committee should request written responses from all named individuals involved.

Once all information relevant to the complaint is gathered, the complaint must be brought up in a sitting of the committee, and all information within the complaint must be given fair consideration.

## **10.4 - Possible Outcomes of a Complaint**

The committee may deem that a “mediating meeting” should be called for the persons involved in the complaint. This will take the form of a special sitting of the committee, the person lodging the complaint, and the person whom against the complaint has been lodged. From this meeting the participants may agree to a suitable solution to the complaint, or they may call for a “general meeting in pursuit of eviction”. Any member of the committee, the person lodging the complaint, or the person whom the complaint against may call a “general meeting in pursuit of eviction”.



## **10.5 - General Meeting in Pursuit of Eviction**

A “General meeting in Pursuit of Eviction” is a special form of general meeting of club members which can be called in extreme circumstances. This is a final safeguard of the Club as a democratic community and ensures the most fair and transparent operation of the club. This form of general meeting is the only way in which a member of Sligo Kayak Club can be removed from the club.

This form of general meeting must follow some strict rules to be functional. These rules are as follows:

The meeting must be called with 1 weeks notice.

The meeting can only deal with a pursuit of eviction.

All documented information involving the complaint must be furnished to the club members.

Only information already discussed within the documents may be discussed.

All members must vote in a ballot on the person whom the complaint is lodged against. The options of the ballot are fixed and simple, “Stay” or “Go.” No other options are available.

The result of the ballot is a democratic reflection of the will of the club and must be the final word on the subject. No further pursuit of the issue is allowed within the club.

## **10.6 - Confidentiality**

As any complaint is club business, all information should be made public upon request in a timely manner and in an appropriate recorded way. The only exceptions to this are covered in the exceptional circumstances section below.

## **10.7 - Exceptional Circumstances**

There are three exceptional circumstances to the procedure for complaints and grievances:

Any complaint relating to or involving minors must be immediately forwarded to the Children’s Officers, and they will advise on further actions based on their training and qualification.



Any action on a complaint that is deemed to have a legal consideration must be first approved by the investigating Garda involved.

No part of the procedure for complaints and grievances are to impinge or interfere with a person's legal rights under law.