

## **SG 1.3 the adoption and application of codes of conduct for cycling clubs**

The purpose of this document is to brief cycling clubs on the benefits of adopting codes of conduct to govern behaviour and to promote a fair, open and welcome environment for the membership.

### **What is a code of conduct?**

A code of conduct is a set of rules outlining the expected standards of behaviour and responsibilities of an individual member of an organisation such as a cycling club. British Cycling has developed a sample code for individuals working within and connected to cycling that can be adopted by its member clubs and adapted for their needs. Additionally coaches are required to sign up and to adhere to Sportscoach UK's Code of Practice.

### **What are the aims of a code of conduct?**

The aim of any code of conduct is to provide a framework that a club or organisation may use to maintain satisfactory standards of conduct of its members and/or representatives; to encourage improvement where necessary, and to offer a framework for disciplinary action against a club member who consistently or seriously breaches expected standards of behaviour.

### **Why should our clubs adopt a code of conduct?**

The conduct and behaviour of a club's representatives and membership is an important factor in the public perception of the club locally and of cycling, as a sport, nationally. Misconduct by club members and the consequences of not addressing this may lead to ill-feeling, legal disputes and can be a costly affair, in time and money, for the club and the individuals concerned. Often disputes within a club become extremely complicated because initial complaints regarding misconduct were not dealt with fairly or effectively.

It is essential that all clubs not only adopt but also actively promote adherence to the code of conduct and that any breaches are dealt with in an open, fair and timely manner, in accordance with the laws of natural justice. Clubs must ensure that they have appropriate rules and bye-laws in place to deal with misconduct. Prospective Go-Ride Clubs can formally adopt the British Cycling Sample Code of Conduct and Disciplinary procedures when going through accreditation for Go-Ride status. Adherence to the code of conduct should be a condition of membership and clubs are advised to make this explicit on the club's membership and/or renewal form.

### **What if clubs do not adopt a code of conduct?**

It is bad governance for a club not to have a fair and open system for disciplining members. If natural laws of justice are not followed, a club member may have grounds to take legal action against that club. Clubs may find themselves in an expensive and protracted battle with lawyers; funding and support may be withdrawn and individuals will be dissatisfied with their experience and may leave the club or sport.

### **What does a code of conduct govern?**

A code of conduct might concern the following:

- a) the need for proper and effective relationships between the club committee, officials, club members, anyone representing the club and other cycling clubs, to outside organisations or to members of the general public.
- b) conduct of individual club members carrying out their roles
- c) conduct of individual club members in terms of personal behaviour and appropriate relationships as well as showing respect for others' values and beliefs.

Members should at all times maintain professional and responsible standards of conduct. This should include:

- operating within the framework of the club rules and regulations and, where appropriate, a detailed code of conduct.
- taking reasonable care for the health and safety of other members and third parties.
- complying with reasonable instructions given by club officials and by other officials, for example, race officials.

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- acting at all times with respect for others, in good faith and in the best interests of the club.

Examples of failure to comply with the club code of conduct (normally regarded as misconduct) include:

- minor breach of club policies.
- refusal to follow instructions e.g. from a club or race official.
- obscene language or other offensive behaviour.

Examples of a serious breach of the code of conduct include:

- unlawful discrimination or harassment.
- physical violence or bullying.
- bringing the club into serious disrepute.
- causing loss, damage or injury through serious negligence.
- theft or fraud.
- serious breach of health and safety rules and misuse of safety equipment.
- serious breach of confidence.
- serious breach of club or British Cycling policies and procedures.
- use of banned or illegal substances.
- unauthorised use or disclosure of confidential information.

This list is not exhaustive and is intended as a guide only.

### **How should clubs adopt codes of conduct?**

All cycling clubs should look at which codes of conduct are appropriate to them and their memberships. Where possible the club members should be asked to help draw up the codes. This works particularly well for under 18's who tend to buy into rules more effectively and will often raise issues which adult members may not consider important or relevant.

All club members and parents of junior members should be made aware of both general and particular requirements of conduct that apply to them and must appreciate that it is their personal responsibility to apply them on every relevant occasion. If they have any doubt, they should seek advice from the club's senior officers. Events and other organisations should adapt the codes and disciplinary procedures to suit their needs.

Clubs must ensure that they have appropriate rules and bye-laws in place to deal with misconduct. Adherence to the code of conduct should be a condition of membership and clubs might like to make this explicit by adding a line to that effect on the club's membership and/or renewal form. Further guidance on disciplinary procedures is available from the British Cycling website.

### **Policy Statement**

An example policy statement might be:

*The aim of the Code of Conduct is to provide a framework that ABC Cycling Club may use to maintain satisfactory standards of conduct, to encourage improvement where necessary, and to offer a framework for disciplinary action against a member or the parent of a junior member.*

### **Formal Process**

It is club policy to ensure that any disciplinary matter is dealt with fairly and that steps are taken to establish the facts. Disciplinary action should not be taken against a club member, or parent of a junior member, without being provided with the following:

- written statement of the allegations
- a hearing before any decision is reached
- the right to an appeal hearing

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The formal process should follow the disciplinary rules as set out in the British Cycling Handbook available on the British Cycling website.

Following an investigation, if it is considered that there are grounds for disciplinary action, the individual concerned must be informed in writing of the allegations made against him/her and the basis of the allegation.

This usually includes:

- a summary of the evidence gathered during the investigation
- documents to be used at the hearing
- any witness statements to be used at the hearing, except where the identity of the witness is to be kept confidential in which case the individual will be provided with as much information as possible whilst maintaining confidentiality.

Disciplinary process and sanctions should be used to:

- resolve current or ongoing problems
- maintain the integrity of the club and sport
- include the person who is in breach of the rules in the future successes of the club