



GYC Safeguarding Policy

1. Application

This Policy applies to all club activities and environments, whether on the water, ashore, online, at the clubhouse/boat park/slipway, and at away events.

For the avoidance of doubt, at all club events other than training events targeted at children, parents remain responsible for supervising their child at all GYC premises and events and they may not leave their children in the care of a Club volunteer other than in emergency situations where volunteers may take short term action necessary to keep a child safe until the parent or emergency services take over.

2. Our safeguarding commitment

GYC is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people (anyone under 18) and adults at risk. We will take all reasonable steps to ensure that participants can enjoy boating and club activities in a safe, inclusive, respectful and supportive environment, protected from harm including physical, sexual or emotional harm, neglect, bullying, harassment, discrimination, and inappropriate conduct.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, not only those who work directly with children or adults at risk.

3. Scope: when this policy applies

This policy applies to all members, volunteers, instructors, coaches, race officials, event organisers, Council members, and anyone acting on behalf of GYC in any activity, including (but not limited to):

- Club racing, cruising, cadet/youth participation at events, regattas
- Training (adult or youth)
- Social events where children may be present
- Volunteer duties (e.g., safety boat, race management, pontoon/slipway support)
- Online communications connected with club activities

4. Key roles and responsibilities

Club Welfare Officers (CWO) / Safeguarding Leads

GYC has two Welfare Officers, in line with RYA good practice. They are the first point of contact for safeguarding concerns and for advice on safeguarding arrangements for events. GYC will

publish Welfare Officer contact details prominently (club website, noticeboards, joining information, and event briefings). Welfare Officers' responsibilities include:

- Maintaining and reviewing safeguarding procedures
- Advising the Council and event organisers
- Receiving concerns, ensuring appropriate recording and reporting
- Liaising with the RYA safeguarding team and/or statutory agencies where required
- Supporting a culture where concerns can be raised early

If a welfare officer is involved in running an event, concerns about any incident at that event should be raised with the other welfare officer, except where there are immediate concerns which need to be handled at the time.

The GYC Council of Management

Council is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented and resourced appropriately; appointing Welfare Officers and ensuring they can operate independently; ensuring safer recruitment and training expectations are met for relevant roles; and ensuring disciplinary/complaints processes can be used where safeguarding concerns relate to conduct or poor practice.

Instructors, coaches, and volunteer duty holders

All instructors/coaches/volunteers must follow GYC codes of conduct and safeguarding procedures; maintain professional boundaries; report any concerns promptly (including low-level concerns); and prioritise participant welfare and safety.

5. Safer recruitment and training

GYC is entirely volunteer run. We will apply proportionate safer recruitment to roles that involve responsibility, trust, and contact with children or adults at risk.

GYC has a number of RYA qualified instructors who are DBS checked. GYC will maintain a confidential record of checks/training status for relevant roles; ensure safeguarding awareness training is in place and refreshed periodically; and ensure roles are clearly defined and supervised where needed.

It is a mandatory requirement that any instructor involved in a youth course is Enhanced DBS checked and in-date.

6. Good practice standards

Culture and behaviour

GYC expects all members and volunteers to treat children and adults at risk with respect and avoid intimidation, humiliation, bullying, discrimination, or inappropriate language/behaviour. Members and volunteers must follow instructions from event organisers and duty officers relating to safeguarding arrangements.

Training

Any RYA course involving children / adults at risk without an adult present must have at least two DBS checked instructors/volunteers present on site at all times for the duration of the course.

Appropriate boundaries and one-to-one situations

To protect participants and volunteers avoid being alone 1:1 with a child in an enclosed/private space where possible.

Where 1:1 interaction is unavoidable (e.g., welfare conversation, first aid, urgent operational need), use an observable environment (open door/visible area), inform another responsible adult where appropriate, keep interaction focused on the welfare/operational issue, and make a brief written record where the interaction involves a safeguarding concern, injury, or incident.

Transport (lifts in cars)

GYC discourages volunteers from giving children lifts in their cars unless the parent has given explicit written consent and is fully informed, and where possible another adult or additional young person is present. Lifts may be provided with verbal consent in an emergency, where this is necessary to prevent harm (in which case, the Welfare Officers should be informed as soon as possible and a written record of events retained).

First aid and emergencies

Physical contact is appropriate when necessary to prevent harm or provide first aid/rescue, and must be proportionate and respectful. Where possible, explain what you are going to do and why. Make a written record of the incident as soon as practicable.

7. Children at events

GYC recognises that even if it runs limited youth training due to local conditions, children may attend some events (racing, regattas, cruising events, open days, social events). For any event where children are expected, the event organiser (or nominated responsible volunteer) must

consider safeguarding as part of event planning and ensure Welfare Officer contact details are available to participants and volunteers.

Parental responsibility and supervision

Unless explicitly agreed otherwise in writing for a particular structured activity, parents remain responsible for supervising their child at GYC premises and events.

Where GYC is running a structured activity involving children, GYC will communicate drop-off/collection arrangements, specify when responsibility transfers to GYC and when it returns to parents, and where appropriate collect consent/medical information.

8. Changing rooms and showering arrangements

GYC has limited changing room facilities and, without special arrangements, cannot provide separate changing facilities for children. GYC will manage this through clear rules and practical safeguards.

Changing room principles

- Children must be able to participate without being put at unnecessary risk.
- Adults must avoid situations that could be misinterpreted.
- Privacy and dignity should be maximised within the constraints of the venue.

Changing room rules (baseline)

- Adults are requested not to use changing/shower areas at times when children are changing, where reasonably possible.
- If adult use is unavoidable during times when children are changing: adults should avoid being the only adult present and should keep time in the area to a minimum and behave appropriately.
- No photography or filming is permitted in changing areas.

Event-specific arrangements (where children are expected)

For planned events where children are likely to need to change, GYC will consider allocated time windows for youth changing, temporary signage, using alternative facilities (if available) by prior arrangement, and communicating expectations to all members in advance. If GYC cannot provide a safe and workable changing arrangement for an event, GYC may require children to arrive changed, change at home, or remain under parental supervision for changing.

Photography, video, and use of images

GYC recognises the benefits of club photos (promoting the sport, celebrating achievements) but will manage risks carefully;

- GYC will seek appropriate consent from parents before taking and using images of children for club communications where required.
- Parents/spectators photographing/filming at events involving children must respect privacy and cooperate if asked by organisers.
- Any concerns about inappropriate or intrusive photography, or misuse of images, should be reported promptly to the Welfare Officers.
- Strict rule: No photography/filming in changing rooms or toilets.

9. Online safety and communications (including messaging apps)

- GYC will maintain clear boundaries for digital communications involving children and young people.
- GYC volunteers/instructors should not communicate directly 1:1 with children under 16 via messaging apps.
- Communications about activities should, where possible, be sent to parents (for under-16s) and/or use group channels with appropriate oversight.
- Volunteers should not create private social media connections with children in a way that enables private 1:1 contact.
- Any concerns about online behaviour, bullying, grooming, or inappropriate messaging should be reported to the Welfare Officers and may also be reported under the Complaints Policy.

10. Recognising and responding to safeguarding concerns

What might a concern look like?

A concern may relate to behaviour of an adult towards either a child at the club or toward an adults at risk; including bullying or harassment, inappropriate online contact, emotional manipulation, sexualized touching, financial exploitation, coercive control or a disclosure of abuse occurring outside the club.

What to do if a child or adult at risk discloses something

If someone tells you something worrying:

- Listen calmly.
- Do not promise confidentiality (you may need to share it to keep them safe).
- Do not ask leading questions or investigate.

- Reassure them they have done the right thing by telling you.
- Report immediately to a Welfare Officer.
- If an allegation involves a Welfare Officer, or a Welfare Officer is not available, report to the Rear Commodore or Vice Commodore instead.
- Make a written record as soon as possible (date/time, what was said/observed, who was present).

Immediate danger

- If you believe someone is at immediate risk of harm, call 999 (Police/Ambulance) immediately and then inform a Welfare Officer and / or Flag Officer as soon as possible.
- Flag Officers have the authority to exclude people from the premises or cease their involvement in events if they reasonably believe this is necessary to ensure safeguarding.

11. Recording, confidentiality, and information sharing

GYC will keep safeguarding records secure and only share information on a need-to-know basis. Welfare Officers will manage records and liaise with relevant bodies where required. GYC will cooperate with statutory agencies and the RYA where appropriate.

12. Managing concerns about volunteers, instructors, or members

GYC will respond promptly and proportionately to concerns, which may include immediate steps to reduce risk (e.g., removing someone from a role while concerns are assessed), referral to statutory agencies if required, consultation with the RYA safeguarding team.

Where allegations are raised about a member or visitor to the Club these may be investigated by following the procedures set out in the Complaints and Resolution Policy and the Disciplinary Policy. For the avoidance of doubt, a Welfare Officer can initiate an investigation under the Club Disciplinary Policy by writing to the Hon. Sec. requesting that this take place.

On the advice of a Welfare Officer, a Flag Officer may remove any club volunteer accused of breaches of this policy from their duties, and under the provisions of the Disciplinary Policy may exclude (or provide conditions on access) to club premises whilst investigations are underway.

13. Publishing and communicating the policy

GYC will publish this policy on the club website and/or provide it to members; display Welfare Officer contact details on noticeboards and in event materials; and provide short safeguarding briefings to volunteers for events where children are present.

14. Review and continuous improvement

This policy will be reviewed annually by Council in consultation with the Welfare Officers and updated in line with learning from incidents/near-misses, changes in club activity profile, and updates to RYA guidance and expectations.

15. Language and meaning

References to 'parents' in this document includes legal guardians, or other adults in a position of loco parentis who have enhanced DBS checks, such as school teachers or Scout Leaders.

References to a 'child' in this document means any person under the age of 18.

References to an 'adult at risk' in this document means a person 18 or older who may be at increased risk of harm due to age, infirmity, physical disability, learning disability, mental illness or other circumstances that put them at elevated risk of harm.

Appendix A – Welfare Officers and Contacts

The Welfare Officers are Beverly Scott and Simon Powell

They can be contacted by emailing: welfare@greenwichyachtclub.co.uk

If the Welfare Officers are not available, contact:

vice@greenwichyachtclub.co.uk

rear@greenwichyachtclub.co.uk

Appendix B - Change Control

As of 2026, This Policy is subject to biannual review.

Approval Date / Version	Reason for Revision	Change Made
21/02/2026	Replace prior version	Complete rewrite