

Greystones Sailing Club

Water Confidence / Swimming Ability Policy

1. Purpose

Greystones Sailing Club (GSC) is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for all participants taking part in sailing and water-based activities. In line with Irish Sailing guidelines, this policy outlines how water confidence and swimming ability are identified, recorded, and managed to support participant safety.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all **junior participants** and any **adults participating in training or instructional activities** organised by Greystones Sailing Club.

3. Irish Sailing Guidance

Irish Sailing recommends that sailing centres take reasonable steps to:

- Establish participants' swimming ability and water confidence
- Ensure appropriate supervision and safety controls
- Adapt instruction and safety management based on participants' abilities

Greystones Sailing Club follows this guidance as part of its overall safety and safeguarding framework.

4. Declaration of Swimming Ability

As part of the **membership, course booking, or registration process**, participants (or parents/guardians for juniors) are required to indicate swimming ability on the **Contact Details and Declaration Form**.

Swimming ability must be declared under one of the following categories:

- **Non-swimmer**
- **Beginner swimmer**
- **Competent swimmer**

This information is collected solely for safety planning and supervision purposes.

5. Use of Swimming Ability Information

- Declared swimming ability information is shared with the **Senior Instructor and relevant instructors** responsible for the group.
- Instructors will use this information to:
 - Monitor non-swimmers and beginner swimmers more closely
 - Provide appropriate support and reassurance
 - Ensure suitable safety and rescue arrangements are in place
- All participants must wear a **buoyancy aid / personal flotation device (PFD)** at all times while on the water, in accordance with Irish Sailing and GSC safety policies.

6. Standard Junior Swimming Test (When Required)

Where deemed necessary by the **Senior Instructor**, or for **first-time participants**, Greystones Sailing Club may carry out a **Standard Junior Swimming Test** on the first day of a course to assess water confidence.

The test typically includes:

- Swimming **25 metres/yards** while wearing **full sailing clothing** (wetsuit, booties) and a **buoyancy aid**
- **Treading water for 2 minutes**
- **Submerging the face/head underwater for 10 seconds**

This test is not intended to exclude participants but to:

- Assess water confidence
- Identify any additional support required
- Inform instructors' safety and supervision planning

Participants who do not meet all elements of the test may still take part in sailing activities, subject to additional supervision and safety measures as determined by the Senior Instructor.

7. Safety Measures

Greystones Sailing Club ensures:

- Appropriate rescue and safety cover for all on-water activities
- Instructors are trained to support participants with varying levels of water confidence
- Activities are adapted to conditions, age, experience, and ability
- Participants requiring additional support are included safely wherever possible

8. Review

Swimming ability declarations should be updated:

- At the start of each sailing season
- If a participant's swimming ability changes

This policy will be reviewed annually or in line with updates from Irish Sailing or changes to club practice.

Reviewed By:

Mark Hanley – Centre Principal/ Junior Development Officer

Senior Instructor – Robyn Maguire

Date:

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