



THE IRISH PONY CLUB VOLUNTEER POLICY

Equestrian Sport in Ireland at every level from grassroots to international level is reliant on volunteers, were it not for their input equestrian sports simply would not function. This statement is arguably more relevant to the Irish Pony Club (IPC) than to any other equestrian organisation in the country.

The Irish Pony Club is a not for profit voluntary organisation that encourages young people to ride safely and correctly. Members are taught to care for their animals properly and should be given the opportunity to enjoy all kinds of sport connected with horses and ponies.

In order to achieve this we have an army of hard working dedicated volunteers whose input is critical to the success of the organization. It is hoped, and indeed assumed, that volunteers enjoy the activity in which they get involved and look on it as a hobby.

A volunteer is someone who gives of their time to the IPC on a voluntary basis and can broadly be divided into three categories.

An occasional volunteer is one who may judge a cross country fence or write for a dressage judge or act as a ring steward, perhaps twice or three times a year.

A regular volunteer is likely to be an active working member of one of the elected committees, who takes on a specific task or who may be responsible for a particular activity within a Branch, and so has an ongoing commitment to the IPC for a limited time.

A constant volunteer is one whose responsibility is considerably greater and more time consuming than that of a regular volunteer. By virtue of their knowledge and ability they will have been elected by their peers for a limited time. They will probably be involved in operational matters and will work as a team in partnership with the IPC staff and the Chairman of the Executive e.g. DC, Sec. Treas. Area Rep. Chairman of Discipline.

Volunteers may, in some circumstances, receive a contribution towards travel expenses or for out of pocket expenses for the functions they carry out on behalf of IPC, subject to the particular terms of reference and with prior approval by the appropriate committee.

Once a person receives any remuneration from IPC they cease to be classified as a volunteer and become a contractor or employee as appropriate.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPEMENT

The Irish Pony Club seeks to ensure that all volunteers feel welcome and appreciated and are supported in whatever role they undertake in the organisation. Apart from any training provided by the IPC, the Sport Ireland Volunteer Support Programme is available to everyone and details can be found on the Horse Sport Ireland website in the Volunteer Training Section as well as on the IPC website.

All volunteers working closely with our members are asked to:

1. Undergo Garda vetting and Safeguarding training (where the work or activity which is carried out by a person, a necessary part of which consists mainly of the person having access to, or contact with children.
2. Sign up to the IPC code of conduct
3. Attend induction training specific to the voluntary role if applicable
4. Comply with any terms of reference agreed by the board

Safeguarding Policies

The Irish Pony Club has policies on Safeguarding, which includes guidelines on good practice in working with young people, Tobacco Alcohol and Drugs, Integration and other topics which all adult volunteers must implement when volunteering with children or vulnerable adults. This policy is available on the safeguarding section of our website or from the IPC Office.

Health and Safety

IPC volunteers must take care to ensure their own safety and the safety of the people with whom they work in the equestrian sector. There is a Safety Officer in each Branch committee and one appointed for each competition run by the IPC.

Confidentiality

The organization advises volunteers of the need for confidentiality where they have access to sensitive information which is not public knowledge, particularly so in child protection, governance matters, donations and personal information about members and their families.

Representing the Irish Pony Club

Volunteers must act in the best interest of the Pony Club at all times. Volunteers should not purport to represent or speak for the IPC on any matter unless specifically designated to do so by either of the Chairmen or at private or public meetings, or in the media.

All volunteers have a responsibility to uphold the good name and reputation of the IPC and may not make statements which would significantly affect or obligate the organization.

SETTLING DIFFICULTIES

The Irish Pony Club aims to treat all volunteers fairly, objectively and consistently. They will seek to ensure those volunteers' views are heard, noted, acted upon promptly, and aim for a positive and amicable solution.

Complaints Procedure

In the event of a volunteer needing to complain about a staff person or another volunteer or the behaviour of a member concerning something which cannot be resolved, they should refer to the IPC's complaints procedure, which is available on our website in the Safeguarding section.

Corrective Action and Removal from Office

Volunteers who do not perform their volunteer role satisfactorily will be supported to do so correctly. If the problem has not been resolved after a number of attempts to support the volunteer, their role with the IPC may be ended. Grounds for terminating a volunteer's involvement include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Abuse or mistreatment of others including young people, volunteers, staff or parents.

- Recklessly ignoring policies and procedures
- Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs while in your role
- Theft or misuse of the organization's resources, including those of a club affiliated to/registered with Horse Sport Ireland

POLICY REVIEW

The Irish Pony Club will update this document on a continuous basis in line with the organizational and sector trends to ensure it remains up to date and meets the needs of the volunteers and the organization.