

## IRISH RED CROSS

### VOLUNTEER HEALTH AND SAFETY HANDBOOK

This Volunteer Health & Safety Handbook has been produced to provide volunteers with Health and Safety information. It also includes information about your duties as a volunteer and will help you to understand Health and Safety issues which affect you.

It contains the following:

- General Policy
- Volunteers' responsibilities, rules and procedures

#### WHAT THE LAW REQUIRES

Our organisation, under current legislation, must have a written Health and Safety General Policy statement for the protection of our volunteers and others who may be affected by our work activities. Our Health and Safety Policy and Arrangements reflect our commitment to the provision of a safe working environment. We are legally required to identify the duties and responsibilities for volunteers who have a specific role in managing health and safety in our workplace.

We also have a responsibility and duty to ensure that you are:

- Aware of and understand the Health and Safety General Policy.
- Aware of and understand the health and safety rules that relate to you while volunteering.
- Provided with adequate information, instruction, training and supervision.
- Made aware of the significant risks associated with your activities and how they may affect others.
- Provided with Safe Systems of Work.
- Provided with a safe and healthy working environment.

The policy is reviewed at regular intervals.

# HEALTH AND SAFETY GENERAL POLICY STATEMENT

## IRISH RED CROSS

At Irish Red Cross we recognise our duties under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, the Safety, Health & Welfare at Work (General Applications) Regulations 2007-2016 and current health and safety legislation and we will endeavour to meet the requirements of this legislation and maintain a safe and healthy working environment. The Leaders, Managers, Staff and Volunteers of Irish Red Cross are informed of their responsibilities to ensure they take all reasonable precautions, to ensure the safety, health and welfare of those that are likely to be affected by the operation of our business.

Irish Red Cross recognises its duty to make regular assessment of the hazards and risks created in the course of our business.

We also recognise our duty, so far as is reasonably practicable:

- to meet our legal obligations to maintain safe and healthy working conditions;
- to provide adequate control of the health and safety risks so identified;
- to consult with our volunteers on matters affecting their health and safety;
- to provide and maintain safe plant and equipment;
- to ensure the safe handling and use of substances;
- to provide information, instruction, training where necessary for our workforce and volunteers, taking account of any who do not have English as a first language;
- to ensure that all volunteers are competent to do their work, and to give them appropriate training;
- to prevent accidents and cases of work related ill health;
- to actively manage and supervise health and safety at work;
- to have access to competent advice;
- to seek continuous improvement in our health and safety performance and management through regular (at least annual) review and revision of this policy; and
- to provide the resource required to make this policy and our Health and Safety arrangements effective.

We also recognise;

- our duty to co-operate and work with other employers when we work at premises or sites under their control to ensure the continued health and safety of all those at work; and
- our duty to co-operate and work with other employers and their workers, when their workers come onto our premises or sites to do work for us, to ensure the health and safety of everyone at work.

To help achieve our objectives and ensure our volunteers recognise their duties under health and safety legislation whilst at work, we will also inform them of their duty to take reasonable care for themselves and for others who might be affected

by their activities. We achieve this by explaining their duty and setting out our company health and safety rules in a Volunteer Safety Handbook which is made available to every volunteer.

In support of this policy a responsibility chart and more detailed arrangements have been prepared.

*Note: A signed and dated copy is available upon request.*

# IRISH RED CROSS

## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

### **Purpose**

As part of our commitment to the fairness, dignity and respect of each volunteer, any form of bullying will not be tolerated by this Society. The aim of this Policy is to indicate what constitutes bullying and what action the Society will take if it becomes necessary to deal with an offence of this nature.

### **Scope**

This Policy is applicable to all volunteers irrespective of length of service and includes clients and service personnel both inside and outside the work environment.

### **Policy**

The Society acknowledges the right of all volunteers to an environment free from any form of bullying. Every volunteer has an obligation to be aware of the effects of their own behaviour on others.

Any instances of bullying will be dealt with in an effective and efficient manner. In cases where the behaviour is proved to be repeated and consistent, causing unnecessary stress and anxiety, this will be considered gross misconduct. It is also possible that a single incident of bullying may constitute gross misconduct. The Society reserves the right to use the disciplinary procedure up to and including summary dismissal.

As part of this Society's code of conduct, it is imperative that all volunteers and suppliers respect the dignity of every colleague. Please consider the multi-cultural beliefs of all of your colleagues regarding your code of conduct, with particular reference to remarks, dress code, posters, e-mails and anything which may cause offence on the grounds of a person's gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race (includes race, colour, nationality, or ethnic or national origins), membership of the travelling community.

### **Definition**

Bullying is defined as:

"Repeated inappropriate behaviour, direct or indirect, whether verbal, physical or otherwise, conducted by one or more persons against another or others, at the place of volunteering or work and / or in the course of volunteering or employment, which could reasonably be regarded as undermining the individual's right to dignity while at work or volunteering. An isolated incident of the behaviour described in this definition may be an affront to dignity at work but, as a one off is not considered to be bullying".

The following are examples of the types of behaviour considered as bullying and are prohibited by the Society:

### **Verbal Abuse**

- Shouting or using aggressive or obscene language, in public or in private, to humiliate or intimidate.
- Making offensive comments about the same person regularly.
- Unfair and excessive criticism.
- Ridiculing the volunteer in front of other volunteers and individuals.
- Spreading false or malicious information about the individual around the organisation etc.
- Personal insults, name calling
- Threatening job loss for trivial errors.

### **Non Verbal Abuse**

- Setting up a person to fail by overloading them with work or setting impossible deadlines.
- Withholding information and blaming the person for being ignorant.
- Ignoring, excluding and isolating a person.
- Blocking promotion.
- Threatening body language.
- Damaging personal belongings.
- Excessive monitoring.
- Social Media / Texts / Text Groups.

### **Physical Abuse**

- Hitting.
- Bodily contact that is abusive in nature.

The above list is not exhaustive and only serves as a guideline to volunteers. Each case will be taken in isolation and dealt with in the appropriate manner.

## **Procedures for Dealing with Bullying**

### **Informal Procedure**

An informal approach can often resolve difficult situations with the minimum of conflict and stress for the individuals involved. This in no way diminishes the issue of the effects on the individual.

If you feel you are being bullied you should attempt to explain to the bully that their behaviour is unacceptable. If you find it difficult to approach the bully alone then seek help and advice from the nominated contact person (i.e. Chairperson of

Branch or relevant manager). He / she will listen, be supportive and explain the various options open to you.

You may ask the contact person to assist you with raising the issue with the alleged bully. The contact person will approach the alleged bully in a confidential, non-confrontational discussion to try to resolve the matter in a low-key manner.

If you decide to bypass the informal procedure, for whatever reason, and choose to go down the formal route then this will not reflect negatively on you in any way

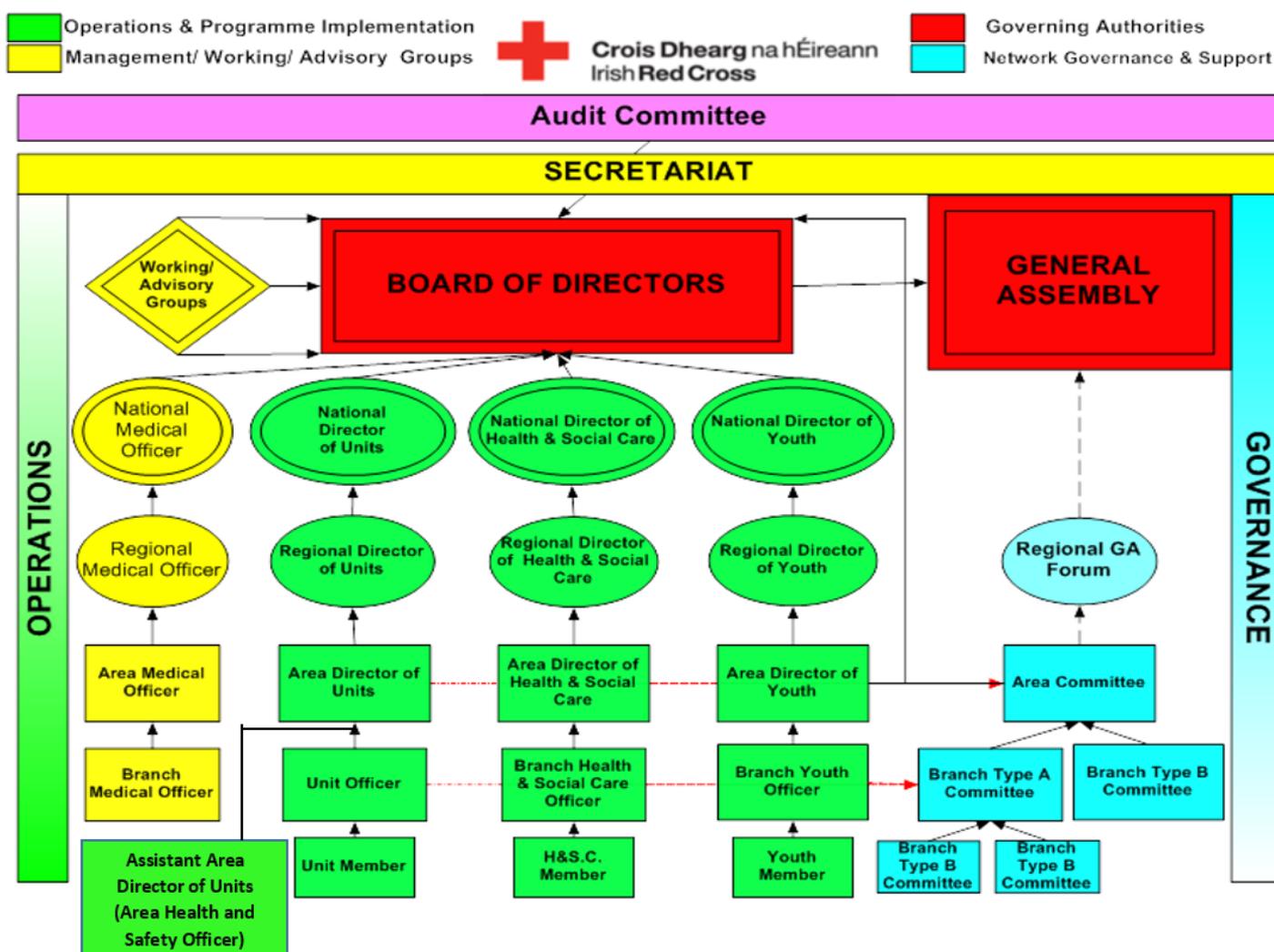
## Formal Procedure

If the informal approach is not appropriate, or if after using the informal procedure, the bullying continues, then the formal procedure will be invoked, please refer to the \*Irish Red Cross – Respect and Dignity Policy for further details.

The Irish Red Cross has overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy.

\*The Irish Red Cross – Respect and Dignity Policy can be found on the resource page of our website <https://www.redcross.ie/resources/page/21/>

## HEALTH AND SAFETY ORGANISATION



## **VOLUNTEER LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

As a volunteer you have a legal duty to take reasonable care of yourself and others and to co-operate with management on all aspects of health and safety.

You must co-operate with and follow all emergency arrangements.

You must ensure that you report all accidents, near misses or damage to equipment and property as soon as possible. You must co-operate and assist with any accident/ incident investigations when asked.

You must refrain from deliberate acts or interference with anything provided in the interests of health, safety and welfare. This includes alteration, removal or deliberate disablement of guards and other safety devices and unauthorised alteration or repair of equipment.

You must carry out your tasks in a safe manner and follow any instructions or Safe Systems of Work provided to you. Should you identify any hazard or hazardous situation, you must report it to the person in charge immediately or as soon as possible.

You have a duty to ensure that all personal protective equipment provided for you is worn as directed, kept clean, maintained and stored in the correct manner.

It should be remembered that a breach of health and safety legislation by you may constitute a criminal offence and action may be taken against you by the Enforcing Authority, which can result in heavy penalties, i.e. fines and / or imprisonment.

### **SAFETY RULES**

This section of the Volunteer Safety Handbook outlines some of the general health and safety rules. There may be other more specific procedures about how you carry out your tasks for which training / instruction will be provided or specific working practice adopted.

#### **Accident Procedures**

You must report all injuries suffered whilst volunteering for the Irish Red Cross (however minor) to your immediate superior and enter details in the Branch Accident Book.

You must report all accidents, incidents, near misses and dangerous occurrences to your immediate superior immediately.

You must report all instances of damage to any property or articles to your immediate superior immediately.

### **Working Practices**

You must not operate any equipment or use hazardous substances unless you have been trained and authorised to do so.

You must use all work equipment in accordance with your training and instructions.

You must report any fault, damage, defect or malfunction in any equipment to management immediately or if this is not possible as soon as reasonably practicable.

You must not make repairs to any work equipment unless you have been trained and authorised to do so.

When cleaning work equipment you must use the correct procedure as instructed.

Work equipment must not be left switched on without someone in control of it.

You must use all hazardous substances in accordance with written assessments and instructions.

You must carry out manual handling tasks as instructed.

You must comply with all safe working procedures as detailed by the organisation.

You must wear suitable foot wear at all times.

### **Working Conditions / Environment**

You must use the correct tools provided.

You must clear up any spillage within the work area as soon as possible and report any hazardous conditions that exist.

Waste hazardous substances must be disposed of in a safe and approved manner.

You must keep all areas clean and tidy.

You must dispose of all rubbish and waste materials as instructed.

You must report any hazardous conditions to your immediate superior.

### **Fire Precautions**

You must report any use of firefighting equipment to your immediate superior.

Do not attempt to fight fires unless you have been trained how to do so.

You must comply with all established emergency procedures.

You must not obstruct any fire escape route, fire equipment or fire doors at any time. Locked or obstructed fire escape routes must be reported immediately to management.

You must not interfere with or misuse any fire equipment provided.

Fire doors should be kept closed at all times, unless fitted with an automatic release device.

### **Health**

You must report to your immediate superior any medical condition or use of medication which could affect your safety or the safety of others. (such as a needle stick injury)

You must cooperate with the organisation's health surveillance provisions.

You must inform your immediate superior, as soon as possible, if you are pregnant.

You must inform your immediate superior of any infections or illness immediately. Decisions to keep you away from volunteering, due to illness, will only be taken after careful consideration.

You must not volunteer or work under the influence of either alcohol or illegal drugs. Or use tobacco while on duty.

### **Hygiene**

You must maintain high standards of personal hygiene at all times when volunteering.

You must protect all open wounds with a suitable dressing, whilst volunteering.

You must not consume food or drinks in a place where it may become contaminated.

## **Hazard / Warning Signs, Signals and Notices**

You must comply with all workplace warning signs, signals and notices displayed.

## **Vehicles**

Regular safety checks must be carried out on all Irish Red Cross vehicles.

Do not drive or operate any IRC vehicles without approval.

You must not allow unauthorised passengers in IRC vehicles.

You must not use IRC vehicles for unauthorised purposes.

You must not overload IRC vehicles.

You must promptly report to your immediate superior any medical condition that could affect your ability to drive.

You must promptly report to your immediate superior any endorsements or changes to your driving licence.

You must not use a hand held mobile phone whilst driving.

Smoking is not permitted in IRC vehicles.

## **Protective Clothing and Equipment**

You are required to use all personal protective equipment as instructed.

You must not damage or misuse personal protective equipment.

You must inform your immediate superior of any personal protective equipment defects or loss.

## **Gross Misconduct**

You will be liable to summary dismissal if you are found to have acted in either of the following ways:

- Serious breaches of the preceding health and safety rules, which endanger the lives of or may cause serious injury to volunteers or any other person.
- Interference with or misuse of any equipment for use while volunteering, such that it may cause harm.

## **HAZARD REPORTING**

We have implemented arrangements to encourage you to report, to the person in charge, hazards, unsafe conditions and practices that may affect you or others in order to reduce the possibility of injury / illness while volunteering.

Hazards should be reported using the branch Hazard Log. We encourage participation, so that defects or hazards can be quickly identified and remedied.

## **RISK ASSESSMENTS**

Each Branch or Area will designate a member to be responsible for carrying out risk assessments.

We carry out the process of risk assessment to reduce the risk of injury and ill health, and identify:

- The significant hazards that volunteers may be exposed to.
- Who could be harmed and how.
- Identifying existing control measures.
- The likelihood of someone being harmed by the hazard.
- What (if any) further actions are required.
- Appropriate Safe Systems of Work and necessary training.

For further information on the completion of risk assessments and to view those relevant to your specific role you should speak to your chairperson or manager.

**General Safety Rules**  
**Applicable to all Volunteers,**

- 1. You must obey all rules, signs and instructions**
- 2. You must attend relevant health and safety training**
- 3. Only undertake tasks for which you have been trained**
- 4. Ensure that all equipment used is in a safe condition**
- 5. Wear Personal Protective Equipment as specified**
- 6. Do not enter unauthorised areas**
- 7. All accidents, incidents, hazards and near misses must be reported to the person in charge as soon as possible after the incident**
- 8. Smoking or use of alcohol or illegal drugs is not permitted while volunteering or working**

