Health, Safety & Wellbeing Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this Health, Safety & Wellbeing Policy is to ensure that all Northern Phoenix Paddling Club activities are carried out in a manner that protects the physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing of our members.

This policy sets expectations for safe behaviour, outlines responsibilities, and ensures that our training, events, and operations reflect our club values of Respect, Inclusive, Support, and Enjoy.

Northern Phoenix Values

Respect

We uphold the safety and wellbeing of every person by treating each other with care, consideration, and awareness. Respectful behaviour includes following safety instructions, using equipment responsibly, and communicating in ways that protect the dignity of all members.

Inclusive

We create an environment where everyone can participate safely, regardless of experience, background, or ability. But we must ensure safety practices are in place, that information is accessible, risks are clearly explained, and all members feel confident asking questions or raising concerns.

Support

We look out for one another on and off the water. Supportive behaviour includes checking in on teammates, offering guidance, reporting hazards, and responding calmly and constructively in challenging situations. We prioritise the mental, physical, and emotional wellbeing of the whole team.

Enjoy

We foster a safe environment where paddling is fun, rewarding, and something members look forward to. Enjoyment grows when people feel secure, informed, and cared for — and when safety practices enable confident participation.

Applies to

This policy applies to all individuals and groups involved in communicating on behalf of Northern Phoenix Paddling Club. This includes:

- **All Club Members** - and anybody else who conducts direct activity with the club
- **Committee Members** - including those responsible for governance, administration, and official club decisions
- **Coaches, Sweeps and Team Managers** - who have specific responsibilities

Policy information

Safety Standards

All activities must be conducted in accordance with recognised dragon boating safety practices, water safety guidelines, and any requirements set by race organisers or governing bodies.

Risk Management

Risks must be identified, assessed, and managed before and during all club activities. This includes weather checks, equipment inspections, and ensuring paddlers are fit to participate.

Incident Reporting

All incidents, near misses, injuries, or safety concerns must be reported promptly to the Committee and Aoraki as appropriate. Reports to the Committee will be documented and reviewed to prevent recurrence.

Emergency Procedures

Clear emergency procedures must be communicated, including capsize procedure, medical response, and evacuation processes. Sweeps and coaches must ensure members understand their roles in an emergency.

Equipment Safety

Boats, paddles, PFDs, and other equipment must be maintained in safe working condition. Damaged or unsafe equipment must be reported and/or removed from use immediately.

Wellbeing & Mental Health

Members are encouraged to speak up if they feel unwell, overwhelmed, or unsafe. The club promotes a culture where wellbeing is prioritised, and where members feel supported to take breaks, seek help, or adjust participation as needed.

Drug, Alcohol & Fatigue

Members must not participate in training or events under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or when impaired by fatigue. Safety-critical roles (e.g., sweeps) require full alertness and sound judgement. No alcohol consumption is permitted within 12 hours of a racing event. Use of some prescription drugs may impact the ability to participate in club activity, use of prescription drugs must be reported during registration with the club. Any change in use of prescription drugs during the annual registration period must be reported to the Team Manager.

Child & Vulnerable Person Safety

Where juniors or vulnerable individuals are involved, additional safeguarding measures must be followed, including supervision ratios, parental communication, and appropriate conduct standards. Where juniors and their parent(s) (or other official guardian) are both involved in club activity, that parent or guardian accepts full responsibility of their junior by default. In all situations where juniors or vulnerable individuals are involved in overnight club activity, a full risk assessment must be completed by team management and provided to the committee and involved parties. Any risk assessment must be situation specific.

Roles & Responsibilities

Northern Phoenix Committee

Is responsible for approving and maintaining this policy, ensuring it is available to all club members, and that the details within it are upheld.

The committee is responsible for reviewing any health, safety or wellbeing report or near miss and taking any appropriate action to avoid re-accurance. Health, safety and wellbeing discussion must be included as a standard agenda item at committee meetings.

The committee must ensure all relevant information is collected by new and existing members to enable appropriate health, safety and wellbeing decisions.

Team Manager

Is responsible for undertaking all operational health and safety requirements of Aoraki or NZDBA whilst competing and training. Where the Team Manager is to be absent from an event, they are to allocate an appropriately trained delegate. Where this is not possible, a member of the Committee must step in.

Any report made to Aoraki, NZDBA, or any other body in relation to health, safety and wellbeing must be copied to the Committee.

Team Coach

Must ensure all physical activity (on and off water) is conducted with consideration of the physical and mental safety of all people involved. Where necessary, the Team Coach must seek advice from the Committee via the Team Strategy Officer.

Team coaches (in conjunction with sweeps) must make appropriate decisions related to training and weather. No training may occur where any form of red weather warning is in place. Where orange weather warnings are in place, sound judgement must be applied supported by a full risk assessment. Training may occur during a period of yellow weather watches with consideration to any additional safety requirements that may be appropriate.

Sweeps

Sweeps must conduct all safety briefings, and ensure any other health, safety and wellbeing responsibilities as required by their training/qualification are appropriately carried out.

Sweeps may, at any time, request any member exit the boat to dry land during training or competing where they believe safety is a concern.

All Members

Must always take reasonable personal responsibility for their own health, safety and wellbeing. This includes at a minimum warm up prior to physical activity, warm down post activity, maintaining an appropriate level of personal fitness, ensuring the equipment they are assigned is fit for purpose, and generally acting in any way that does not put themselves or others at risk.

All members, when on water, must take personal responsibility for their in water (swimming) ability in consideration of the safety equipment they are using, weather conditions, and lake/river/ocean conditions. Every member is responsible for conducting this self assessment during every on water activity, with a responsibility to request return to dry land if they feel unsafe.

All members must report to the committee or Team Manager any matter that could constitute a health, safety or wellbeing risk to themselves or any other member.

All members must respect any decision made in regard to health, safety and wellbeing.

Other related information

Exclusion on the basis of health, safety and wellbeing

The Club President has final say in any decision around participation in training, competing or any other club activity where he/she determines a risk to the club, the individual involved, other club members, club assets or any other matter to be at an unacceptable level.

All decisions must be of sound rationale.

Where exclusions are made, impacted individuals may request refund of club fees. Any decision to refund will be made by the Committee based on situation specific facts.

Exclusion may include refusal to accept a new member to the club.

Returning following exclusion

Where exclusion decisions are made, the member(s) involved may only return to associated club activity where they have demonstrated the risk no longer applies or has reduced to an acceptable level.

This may require professional evidence (such as from medical experts) and must be appropriate to the reason for exclusion. The Club President will notify the individual involved of any associated requirements.

Dispute process

Any financial member may dispute exclusion decisions as per the Club Constitution.