



Code of Conduct for members and employees of the Scottish Sub-Aqua Club (ScotSAC)

V1.1 (Aug24) – Following feedback from Chairs, BDOs and NDC members

Purpose:

This document describes the standards of conduct expected of any member of the Scottish Sub-Aqua Club

Scope:

ScotSAC is a members' organisation comprised of and run by its members. All members, by accepting membership, agree to abide by the byelaws, rules and policies of the organisation.

Failure to follow this ScotSAC Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary or other appropriate action being taken. The authority for this ScotSAC Code of Conduct is derived from the Articles of Association and the Byelaws of the Scottish Sub-Aqua Club. Specific practices relating to youth member wellbeing and protection are further detailed in the ScotSAC Safeguarding Policies.

Code of Conduct:

The ScotSAC Code of Conduct includes the following and members are bound by this code. The list is not exhaustive and may be amended over time.

- 1. Safety First:** Safety is paramount in all sub-aqua activities. Members must adhere to published ScotSAC diving rules and recommendations, ensure proper equipment maintenance, promote buddy system diving, and follow agreed emergency procedures. Members shall:
 - Act in a manner that is consistent with the mission and vision of ScotSAC, as the Governing Body in Scotland for the sports of SCUBA diving and snorkelling (<https://www.scotsac.com/about>)
 - Act in accordance with the ScotSAC Articles of Association, ScotSAC Byelaws, ScotSAC policies or guidance as published in the ScotSAC membership system, and any locally published Branch byelaws
 - Follow safety guidance provided by the RNLI with regard to the safe operation and maintenance of dive boats (motorboats).

Any concerns regarding safety should be addressed immediately to the Branch BDO, the Regional Coach or to the NDO as appropriate.

- 2. Training and Certification:** Members must obtain appropriate training and certification for their planned level of diving. They shall not engage in unsupervised activities beyond their

skill level or certification and must keep their certifications up-to-date and accurately recorded in the ScotSAC membership system. Members shall:

- Comply with published ScotSAC training schedules when delivering and receiving training within ScotSAC
 - Take care not to involve themselves or ScotSAC in unauthorised training and certification activities, consulting with the ScotSAC NDC or Board (as appropriate) in advance whenever there is any doubt.
3. **Responsibility for Personal Equipment:** Each member is responsible for the maintenance and proper functioning of their own diving equipment. Regular checks should be conducted to ensure equipment is in good condition before each dive.
 4. **Respect for Fellow Divers:** Members shall treat fellow divers with respect, fairness and courtesy at all times. This includes effective communication underwater, mutual assistance, and consideration for personal space and safety. Members shall:
 - Respect the dignity of divers, regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, social, ethnic and cultural origin, world view, religion, political conviction or economic position, and to counteract discrimination of any kind
 - Treat all ScotSAC members and employees with respect, and without discrimination
 - Comply with ScotSAC (Youth and Vulnerable Adult) Wellbeing and Protection Policy and guidance, not to use any physical or psychological violence towards divers, in particular no sexual violence or sexualised assaults in words, gestures, actions or deeds.
 - Fulfil their obligations towards others by compliance with all duty of care requirements
 - Respect other scuba diving and snorkelling agencies and members thereof and avoid derogatory action or behaviour towards these.
 5. **Respect for Marine Environment:** Members shall uphold the highest standards of respect and care for the marine environment. They shall refrain from damaging or disturbing marine life, coral reefs, or underwater ecosystems. (Note *1)
 6. **Environmental Conservation:** Members shall be commended for actively participating in initiatives aimed at conserving marine environments. This may include volunteering for clean-up efforts, supporting marine conservation organisations, and advocating sustainable diving practices.
 7. **Compliance with Laws and Regulations:** Members must comply with all local, national, and international laws and regulations governing diving activities, marine conservation, and underwater exploration. Members shall fully comply with duly authorised authorities outside of ScotSAC.
 8. **Alcohol and Substance Use:** Consumption of alcohol or recreational drugs before or during diving activities is strictly prohibited. Such substances impair judgment and coordination, posing a significant risk to personal safety and the safety of others.
 9. **Cultural Sensitivity:** When diving in areas with cultural significance, members must demonstrate sensitivity and respect towards local customs, traditions, and beliefs. They shall refrain from any behaviour that may be deemed disrespectful or offensive.
 10. **Conflict Resolution:** Any conflicts or disagreements among members should be resolved in a peaceful and constructive manner, following the established procedures outlined by the

club. Disputes should not escalate into confrontations that could compromise the safety and harmony of the Branch or the overall club. Members shall:

- Resolve disciplinary matters at a Branch level, wherever possible. Exceptions include safeguarding issues and criminal matters which have wider implications for ScotSAC and must be escalated to the relevant authority
- Attempt to resolve disputes or complaints by dealing with these promptly, clarifying uncertainties, with use of good communication and record-keeping
- Fully cooperate with ScotSAC disciplinary and any other investigations.

11. Representing the Club: Members shall represent the club in a positive manner, both within the diving community and in broader society. Their actions and behaviours should reflect the values and principles of the club, promoting a positive image of responsible and ethical diving. Members shall:

- Be respectful and supportive of others outside the diving and snorkelling communities and uphold the good name of ScotSAC, this being particularly important on dive sites, in nearby businesses and on social media
- At no time bring ScotSAC into disrepute
- Declare any potential conflict of interest to the ScotSAC Board through contact to HQ (backed up in writing, normally via email).

12. Continuous Learning and Improvement: Members are encouraged to pursue ongoing education and training to enhance their diving skills, knowledge, and safety practices. This may include specialist external agencies who offer training beyond that available from ScotSAC (e.g. Technical, Rebreather, VHF operation). Members are encouraged to utilise this learning and improvement in contributing to the overall development and success of both their Branch, and of ScotSAC overall.

By adhering to this Code of Conduct, members of ScotSAC demonstrate their commitment to diving safety, environmental stewardship, and ethical diving practices, fostering a community of responsible club-based divers dedicated to promoting, exploring and protecting the wonders of the underwater world in Scotland, and beyond.

Notes:

*1 For clarity, this does not prohibit hunter-gathering for personal consumption or sample collection for scientific research. However, this must be done responsibly and in compliance with both legal rules and local conservation guidelines.