

## **Verulam Cycling Club - Under 18's Road Riding Policy**

Verulam Cycling Club (VCC) offers the opportunity for young riders, 12 years and over, to join in with a number of club road rides and activities that are designed to promote safe riding skills and enhance their membership of the club. Dependant on the activity, this will enable young riders to ride with their peers or ride with older cyclists on club rides.

Operating to these guidelines and parameters for youth road riding with reference to the VCC Code of Conduct, we aim to mitigate the risks inherent in this type of riding as far as possible, acknowledging that all riders do so at their own risk, as agreed by their parent or guardian.

### **Guidelines**

All riders must follow the Highway Code at all times when riding with VCC.

This includes but is not limited to:

1. Riding no more than two abreast.
2. Riding in single file to allow traffic to pass on narrow roads and where appropriate to the conditions.
3. Obeying traffic lights and signs.
4. Not riding on pavements.
5. Respecting other road users.

For safety:

1. Always wears a Cycling Helmet when riding with the club.
2. Always have contact details on their person during rides i.e. on mobile phone or noted on paper.
3. Every rider under 18 must have lodged a completed parental consent addendum form (see: <https://www.verulamcc.org.uk/membership/club-policies>) with VCC.
4. This Club Road Riding Policy integrates with the VCC Welfare and Child Protection Policy and the safety of all younger riders sits at the heart of the youth development framework.

### **Road cycling activities available for young riders.**

These are for VCC Youth Members, 12 years and up. NB: Age is only a guide, ability and maturity are the greatest factors. Judgement on suitability is strictly by a VCC Club Coach whose decision is final.

#### **Saturday Youth Group Development Rides** (stepping stone to the VCC Sunday Youth Group Rides)

These are aimed at riders who are starting to ride on the roads independently, and are looking to develop their skills, distance and confidence. Riders will develop their road riding skills as described in this Policy and via our Induction process. Parents are welcome to join these rides. To join these road rides, riders must be able to ride at the level described below:

1. Must have been assessed that these rides are within their ability by a Club Coach.
2. Must be a VCC Youth Member and have completed a VCC parental consent addendum form.

3. Must have personal membership with a recognised cycling organisation providing Third party insurance on the road. VCC recommends 'Silver' British Cycling Membership.
4. Must have a bike whose specification and equipment adhere to the 'VCC Group Road Riding' rules.
5. Complete a road journey (endurance over 20 miles).
6. Observe the environment and factors that may affect their riding.
7. Always signal their intentions to other road users and group club riders.
8. Ride correctly when they are passing side roads, parked or slower moving vehicles.
9. Turn right and left safely on major or minor roads.
10. Take the correct carriageway lane when they need to e.g. at roundabouts.
11. Have mastered group riding skills, understanding how to follow a wheel, avoid half-wheeling etc.

### **Sunday Youth Group Rides** (stepping stone to the main VCC Sunday Club Runs)

These rides are aimed at riders who have progressed from the VCC Development Rides or other appropriate training and want to develop their riding skills in preparation for joining in with more challenging rides e.g. adult training rides and club runs. Young riders will be accompanied by a Club Coach or by an experienced and DBS checked club runs leader. Parents are welcome to join these rides. To join these rides, riders must be able to ride at the level described below:

1. Meet the criteria of the Saturday Youth Group Development rides (see above).
2. Complete a road journey (endurance over 40 miles).
3. Be self-sufficient and don't require their parent or guardian.

### **VCC Sunday Club Runs**

These rides are aimed at riders who have progressed from the Sunday Youth Group Rides (see above) or other appropriate training and want to develop further their riding skills by participating in more challenging rides e.g. adult training rides and club runs. Young riders will be accompanied by experienced club riders, known as chaperones, who are knowledgeable of the local roads and have ability to inspire youth riders by example. There should be a minimum of one chaperone as well as a club run leader on these rides. These rides are not open to parents.

All Youth riders must adhere to the VCC 'Riding Rules'. A Youth rider is approved to join club rides in discussion with the youth coaches, Club runs Secretary and parents. The criteria for joining Sunday Club Runs is the same as that for adults including an induction. To join these rides, riders must be able to ride at the level described below:

1. Meet the criteria of the Sunday Youth Group rides (see above).
2. Must have been assessed that these rides are within their ability by a Club Coach.
3. Must up-grade to Youth (Road) Membership and have personal membership with a recognised cycling organisation providing third party insurance on the road. VCC recommends 'Silver' British Cycling membership.
4. Has a history of riding with the youth rides (described above) or have gained appropriate experience and expertise via other recognised environments.
5. Has the ability to ride the distance and pace as described on the rides calendar.
6. Has the consent of the runs leader to join the ride. Preferably agreed in advance if the rider is new to the group.
7. Has agreed to ride with a chaperone (who is not the runs leader) who will take responsibility for the young person during the Group Ride.

## **VCC Chain-gangs**

The chain-gang is a fast and challenging environment and only riders who have established riding and road skills should join. Parents should understand the concept of a chain-gang and be familiar with the roads and the associated risks of riding as part of a chain-gang prior to consenting for their child to join. The Youth rider is approved to join chain gangs in discussion with the youth coaches, chain-gang co-coordinator and parents. These rides are not open to parents. To join these rides riders must be able to ride at the level described below:

1. Must be aged 16 and over.
2. Meet the criteria of the Sunday Club runs.
3. Ride out alone or with peers on similar roads regularly.
4. Has the ability to ride at 17 mph and above for a prolonged period or the pace described in the published information.
5. Has the consent of the chain gang leader to join the ride. Preferably agreed in advance if the rider is new to the group.
6. Able to self-rescue in the event of a puncture or other minor mechanical issue.

## **VCC Time Trials**

Time Trials (TT) are run under Cycling Time Trials (CTT) regulations and as such riders 12 years and above are allowed to ride, with parental consent. The club runs TT's regularly throughout the year (normally between May and September) on several predefined circuits - see VCC Time Trialling Activities on website. A Youth rider is approved to join club time trials in discussion with the youth coaches, Time Trial Secretary and parents. These rides are not open to parents. To join these rides riders must be able to ride at the level described below:

1. Meet the criteria for Sunday Youth Group rides (see above).
2. Meet the VCC time trial criteria and adhere to the VCC time trial rules (see here: <https://www.verulamcc.org.uk/images/PDFs/TT-rota-2018.pdf>)
3. Must have completed an additional CTT parental consent form.
4. Has a history of riding with the youth rides (see above) or has gained appropriate experience via other recognised environments.
5. Has the ability and competence to ride the distance and pace as described for the time trial.
6. Has the consent of the Time Trials Secretary to participate. Preferably agreed in advance if the rider is new to time trials.

The club has a number of very experienced Time Trialists' who are happy to advise, provide support and may be willing to ride as a 2UP for first attempt.

Under 12's can ride the rear of a tandem with an adult subject to being assessed that these rides are within their ability by a Club Coach.

## **Additional Information**

### **Parents and Youth Riders**

It is part of the British Cycling Code of Conduct to ensure that reasonable steps are taken to establish a safe environment where young riders can enjoy developing their cycling skills.

1. In case of emergencies parents/guardians must be available and contactable during the ride.
2. Young riders are expected to remain in the group from beginning to end; they will either return to the start of the ride at the Alban Arena or will have informed the lead rider if they plan to leave the ride at an earlier stage upon return.
3. It is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to ensure that his/her child's bike is in a safe condition to ride.
4. All riders must wear a cycling helmet and carry a drink, snack, money, mobile phone, spare inner tube, puncture repair kit and small pump. They must be dressed appropriately for the conditions and any expected changes in weather.
5. The club recommends that all youth riders at this level have British Cycling Membership and have Silver Level Insurance. They must have Third Party Insurance cover as part of a cycling insurance policy.
6. Continued participation in the rides is subject to review based on ability and behaviour on previous rides.
7. Any inappropriate behaviour from Youths will not be tolerated and dealt with accordingly. If required their parent will be contacted.
8. Any accidents will be managed in accordance with the club Road incident guidelines and logged via the VCC incident report process.

### **Chaperones and Run Leaders**

If a young person is on a club ride without a parent, the chaperone on the ride should take responsibility to ensure that the young rider remains safe and gets back to St Albans at the end of the ride. This will involve additional adult riders if there is only one youth involved. This is in keeping with the ethos of the club ride.

For the main Sunday Club runs a 'Chaperone' is required to accompany the young rider(s), who agrees to ensure that the young person remains safe on the ride. This role includes:

1. Being DBS checked, completing the VCC Volunteer Agreement Form and attending a briefing with the Youth Coach(es).
2. Being aware of the ability assessment for the rider(s) (previously done by a Club Coach), that determines which group they should ride in.
3. Notify parents where they are going i.e. following a pre-planned route.
4. Staying with them if they get dropped or have a mechanical problem, ensuring there is always more than one adult if there is only one youth rider.
5. Conducting Risk Assessments (not necessarily documented), with well-known hazards and risks observed during the ride being called out to Youth riders.
6. Carry Parents' contact details.
7. Assisting with any mechanical problems.
8. Making sure youths have sufficient food and drink.
9. Making sure youths get back to the agreed ride finish point.

The chaperone should not be the runs leader. If a young person is new to the group, it is preferable to have chaperone arranged in advance to support the young person until they become more confident and stronger and develop the appropriate skills for riding in the group. At that time, it may be appropriate for the group to take collective responsibility and this would be at the discretion of the runs leader.

### **Youth Group Leaders**

Saturday and Sunday Youth Group rides are different in several ways to the VCC Sunday Club runs:

- 1) Shorter distance (approximately 30-40 miles) with a coffee stop.
- 2) More dynamic, intense and considered a training ride, not a leisure ride.
- 3) Wide range of age and abilities.

Any Youth Group run leader should have been DBS checked and be an experienced road cyclist. Ideally they would have completed a cycle coaching course and be able to deal with Youths considerately but appropriately. All Youth Group leaders must attend a briefing with the Youth Coach(es).

### **Chain-gang Rationales**

The club has an additional duty of care for club members under 18 especially when riding on the road, consequently any chain-gang ride route involving youth members' needs to be risk assessed. Also under 16's cannot race on the open road and the chain-gang is as near to racing as club activities get but without the benefit of traffic management, lead cars, following cars, warning signs, marshals etc. Instead we therefore recommend alternative options for u16s:

1. Circuit training sessions currently held at closed road circuits
2. Youth specific faster rides

### **DBS check**

Any chaperone or Youth group ride leader is required to complete a British Cycling DBS certification-check. The first step is to complete the BC on-line survey (via this link: <https://r1.dotmailer-surveys.com/85480kc6-012l2q9f>)

The link will take you through to a BC questionnaire that when completed and submitted BC will use to determine whether or not you need a DBS. Please be clear when you complete this that you will be working directly with youth members of the Club. This will almost certainly prompt BC to decide you do need a DBS check and to send you DBS application forms. This is relatively straightforward to complete but in addition to the application you will need to make a visit to a Post Office with key identity documents to have your ID verified. You then post the whole lot off to BC. Hopefully, in a couple of weeks, you will get a letter saying your DBS application has been successful and that a DBS certificate will follow. As you will be working directly with the youth members you will need the DBS certificate as part of the safeguarding requirements of BC.

### **Exceptions**

Dispensation from the above joining criteria may be granted to riders who have gained exceptional experience.

Such exceptions may be made for younger riders i.e. below 12, if some of the following criteria are met:

- 1) Has regularly participated in faster youth rides
- 2) Races for the club and/or is planning to participate in road races
- 3) Takes part in VRM Racing Team training rides successfully
- 4) Has been deemed by ride leaders, VCC Coaches and/or regional BC coaches to be too advanced for the youth rides.

- 5) Could be included in the first / second chain-gang group by special arrangement with the chain-gang co-ordinator, chain-gang leader and chain gang cyclists and the parent/guardian.

### **Parents who ride with their children on club activities**

Parents who ride with their children who fit any of the above criteria must, nonetheless also complete the applicable parental consent form.

### **Managing any irregularities on rides**

In the event of any irregular behaviour on rides from fellow riders or the public it is essential that young riders feel confident to discuss this with their parents and report this to the club Welfare Officer.

### **Conduct, Equality, Safeguarding, Health & Safety, Privacy**

This, Under 18's Road Riding Policy, must be read in conjunction with VCC's other Policy documents:

- VCC Code of Conduct
- VCC Code of Conduct for Youth Members
- VCC Equality Policy
- VCC Health & Safety Policy
- VCC Privacy Policy
- VCC Volunteer Agreement

And the Verulam Cycling Club Constitution. All these are available here:

<https://www.verulamcc.org.uk/membership/club-policies>.

### **Useful resources/contacts for advice:**

Youth Development Secretary: [youth.sec@verulamcc.org.uk](mailto:youth.sec@verulamcc.org.uk)

Welfare Officer: [welfareofficer@verulamcc.org.uk](mailto:welfareofficer@verulamcc.org.uk)