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 for Youth Members, 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 Cycle 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 be a Youth (Road) member and have completed Parental Consent Form Addendum for Youth (Road) Membership (see: https://www.verulamcc.org.uk/membership/club-policies).
4. This Club Road Riding Policy integrates with the VCC Safeguarding 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 (Road) 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.

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

These rides are aimed at riders who have progressed their riding skills and want to develop these 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:

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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 (Road) 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.
4. Must have a bike whose specification and equipment adhere to the 'VCC Group Road Riding' rules.
5. Complete a road journey (endurance over 40 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.
12. Be self sufficient and not require their parent or guardian to be with them.

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 (unless they are club members who have completed the Introductory ride).

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. 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 have a Youth (Road) Membership and have personal membership with a recognised cycling organisation providing third party insurance on the road.
4. Have a history of riding with the youth rides (described above) or have gained appropriate experience and expertise.
5. Have the ability to ride the distance and pace as described on the rides calendar.
6. Have the consent of the Run Leader to join the ride. Preferably agreed in advance if the rider is new to the group.
7. Have agreed to ride with a chaperone (who is not the Run Leader) who will take responsibility for the youth during the Group Ride.

VCC Chain-gangs

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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 (unless they are club members). 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 (above).
3. Ride out alone or with peers on similar roads regularly.
4. Have the ability to ride at 17 mph and above for a prolonged period or the pace described in the published information.
5. Have the consent of the chain gang leader to join the ride. Preferably agreed in advance if the rider is new to the group.
6. Be able to self-rescue in the event of a puncture or other minor mechanical issue.

VCC Time Trials

Time Trials (TTs) 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 Club 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 (unless they are club members or the event is an Open event). 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. Must have completed an additional CTT parental consent form and lodged this with the VCC TT Secretary.
3. Have a history of riding with the youth rides (see above) or has gained appropriate experience and expertise.
4. Have the ability and competence to ride the distance and pace as described for the time trial.
5. Have 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 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

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It is part of the British Cycling Code of Conduct which VCC respects 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. Youth riders are expected to remain in the group from beginning to end; for club runs 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 the youth's bike is in a safe condition to ride.
4. All riders must wear a cycle 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 which includes Third Party Insurance cover.
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 youth is on a club ride without a parent, the chaperone on the ride should take responsibility to ensure that the youth remain safe and gets back to the start place in St Albans (or meet up location as arranged if different) 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 youth rider(s), who agrees to ensure that the youth(s) remain safe on the ride. This role includes:

1. Being DBS checked, completing the VCC Volunteer Agreement Form and attending a briefing with a Youth Coach and/or the Club Runs Secretary.
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 the 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.

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The chaperone should not be the Runs Leader. If a youth is new to a group, the chaperone should be arranged in advance to ensure adequate support for the young person.

Youth Group Leaders

Sunday Youth Group rides are different in several ways to the typical 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 a Club Youth Coach.

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. 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 our safeguarding requirements.

Exeptions

Under 18's Road Riding Policy

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 Verulam 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 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
Welfare Officer: welfareofficer@verulamcc.org.uk