



code of ethics &  
**Good Practice**  
for Children's Sport





**Joint Foreword by Ossie Kilkenny, Chairman of Irish Sports Council and Professor Eric Saunders, Chairman of Sports Council for Northern Ireland**

**Introduction by Dr. Breda McLeavey, Chairperson, Code of Ethics and Good Practice Committee**

**Members of the Original Committee**

**Glossary**

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## FOREWORD

The Irish Sports Council and the Sports Council for Northern Ireland published a joint Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport in 2000. This major joint publication recognised the commitment of both Councils to ensure that young people are safeguarded in their participation in sport in the island of Ireland.

The Code has been adopted and implemented by governing bodies of sports, clubs, local sports partnerships and community/voluntary groups on an on-going basis since 2000. It has been encouraging to see the common sense approach to the adoption of the code at grass roots level, which has resulted in protection for young people and leaders.

If young people are to stay involved in sport throughout their adult life, they need to be equipped with the fundamentals to remain involved with sport and physical activity. Equally we need to ensure that their early experiences are positive and enjoyable, irrespective of their ability, gender, social class, race, etc. It is encouraging to see adults, both volunteers and professionals, contribute to these positive experiences by acting as role models in all dealings with young people. In particular the work of Children's Officers at club and national level is instrumental in implementing the Code. We need to build on this valuable work to ensure that all young people see sport and physical activity as an important and valuable aspect of their lives that they will sustain throughout their adulthood.

The review of the Code in 2005 ensures that the policies and procedures that we implement at all levels in sport are up-to-date and in line with relevant documents, current best practice and legislation throughout the island of Ireland. We thank the committee for its work throughout 2005 and we hope that this will help all sporting organisations to protect and maintain the welfare of all young people through sport.

**Mr Ossie Kilkenny**  
**Chairman**  
**Irish Sports Council**

**Professor Eric Saunders**  
**Chairman**  
**Sports Council for Northern Ireland**



## INTRODUCTION

The *Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport* is for the benefit of everyone involved in children's sport - children, parents/guardians and Sports Leaders etc. By following the principles, policy and practice guidelines contained in the Code, adult sport leaders are playing their part in providing an enjoyable and safe environment in which children can learn and thrive.

As citizens, adults have a responsibility to protect children from harm and to abide by government guidelines in responding to and reporting child protection concerns. This responsibility exists wherever such concerns might arise, whether inside or outside sport. Guidelines contained in the *Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport* took account of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and are in accordance with government guidelines in the documents *Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children* (R.O.I.) and *Our Duty to Care* (N.I.). The guidelines contained in the Code are complimentary to, and do not substitute for the government guidelines, which should be available within sports clubs/organisations.

The *Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport* is built upon a number of core principles relating to the importance of childhood, the needs of the child, integrity and fair play, and relationships and safety in children's sport. It addresses issues relating to the roles and responsibilities of all involved in children's sport, and underpins the importance of policies and procedures in providing quality leadership for children in sport. It outlines principles of good practice and child protection policy and procedures.

The full application of the *Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport* by everyone in sport will help to ensure the promotion of happy, healthy and successful experiences for children and their Sports Leaders.

**Dr Breda McLeavey**

Committee Chairperson

**Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport in Ireland**





### Members of the Committee

In 1995, the Minister for Sport and Youth Affairs at the Department of Education (IRL) appointed an expert committee to prepare a Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport. The Code was first published in 1996.

In 1998, the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Recreation (IRL) reconvened the committee to revise the Code in line with current best practice in children's sport. The Minister appointed an additional number of members to represent the Irish Sports Council and the Sports Council for Northern Ireland in light of the decision to publish the Code on an all-island basis.

### The committee then was:

- Dr Breda McLeavey, **Chairperson**  
Senior Clinical Psychologist, Health Services Executive. Lecturer, Department of Psychiatry, University College, Cork
- Mr John Treacy, Chief Executive, Irish Sports Council
- Ms Miriam McAtackney, Development Officer, Child Protection/Education, Sports Council for Northern Ireland
- Ms Nuala Curley, Fellow of the Institute of Swimming Coaches
- Michael Darmody, Physical Education Inspector, Department of Education and Science
- Dr Pat Duffy, Director, National Coaching and Training Centre
- Mr Paul Gilligan, Chief Executive, Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
- Ms Patricia Gosch, Parent Representative
- Dr Deirdre McIntyre, Director of Child Abuse Prevention Programme, Eastern Health Board
- Ms Gina Menzies, Former International Squash Player
- Mr Jim O'Leary, Senior Social Worker, Family Centre, St Finbarr's Hospital, Cork
- Mr Tom Potts, Member of GAA and Underage Team Mentor
- Ms Helen Raftery, Irish Sports Council
- Mr Marc Howard, Secretary
- Irish Sports Council

The Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport was published in November 2000 by the Irish Sports Council and the Sports Council for Northern Ireland.

**In 2005** a small committee was convened to review the Code on behalf of the Sports Councils. This committee comprised of professional staff and volunteers representing the Councils, NSPCC, HSE as well as Sports Leaders, Child Protection Tutors, Children's Officers, Governing Bodies of Sport and Local Sports Partnerships. The aim of the committee was to ensure that the Code was in line with current legislation, publications, policies and practices with regard to the protection of all those working with young people.

### Acknowledgements

The original committee that prepared the *Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport* wishes to acknowledge the very helpful contribution made by the following:

The Department of Tourism, Sport and Recreation  
The National Coaching and Training Centre  
Northern Ireland Institute of Coaching  
The Governing Bodies of Sport  
The Child Care Unit, Department of Health and Children  
The Domestic Violence Unit, Dublin Metropolitan Area, An Garda Síochána  
Dr Roderick Murphy, SC  
The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform  
The Department of Education and Science  
Beauchamps Solicitors, Dublin  
Dr Helen Buckley, Department of Social Studies, University of Dublin  
Mr Barry Murray, Child Care Manager, Health Services Executive  
Ms Dee Kelly, Northern Ireland Volunteer Development Agency  
Ms Liz Campbell, Department of Health and Social Services  
Ms Kate McKnight, M/s Conn & Fenton, Solicitors, Lisburn

The committee would also like to thank all those who contributed submissions both oral and written during the course of the work of the committee.



## GLOSSARY

- 1. Child:** For the purpose of this Code a child is any person under 18 years of age
- 2. Sports Leaders:** For the purpose of this Code all adults involved in children's sport are referred to as Sports Leaders. All have a role to play in ensuring that procedures as described in the Code are put in place, agreed, followed and reviewed on a regular basis. The principal leadership roles (some of which overlap) include the following:

**Club/Organisation Officers:** President, Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer and Committee members are appointed to oversee club activities and the development of the club/organisation.

**Administrators:** While administrators may not be actively involved in children's sport, they may be involved in organising activities and events.

**Coach/Trainer:** A coach is a person who assists the young participant to develop his or her skills and abilities in a progressive way.

**Instructor/Sports Teacher:** Instructors are involved in the systematic development of the core skills and abilities of an activity, sometimes in a non-competitive context.

**Manager:** A manager is an individual who takes overall responsibility for a team or a group of sports people and who will often have a direct input into the nature and organisation of the activity itself.

**Mentor:** A mentor is an individual who undertakes an overseeing role with a group of participants under 18 years of age, often in co-operation with other mentors.

**Selector:** A selector is an individual who has responsibility for the selection of participants under 18 years of age for teams and events.

**Official:** An official is an individual charged with the responsibility of ensuring that the rules of an activity are adhered to in a formal way. This category includes referees, judges, umpires, etc.

**Assistants:** Assistants are those people who provide back-up to any of the roles outlined in this section and often such assistants are involved on an intermittent basis (e.g. provision of lifts to matches or competitions; checking equipment, etc.).
- 3. Children's Officers:** Children's Officers are appointed within clubs to act as a resource for children and to represent them at Committee level.
- 4. Designated Person:** A person who is responsible for reporting allegations or suspicions of child abuse to the Statutory Authorities. This person will also be responsible for dealing with any concerns about the protection of young people.
- 5. Statutory Authorities:** the authorities who promote the protection and welfare of young people and who have the responsibility for the investigation and/or validation of suspected child abuse, i.e. in the ROI it is An Garda Síochána and the Health Services Executive and in NI it is the PSNI and the Social Services.
- 6. Statutory Authority Guidelines on Child Protection:** *In the Republic of Ireland - Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children, Department of Health and Children 1999 (IRL). Northern Ireland - Co-operating to Safeguard Children (NI) 2003.*







*Chapter 1*  
**Principles**

A young boy is running on a track, wearing a white and blue sports uniform. He has a joyful expression with his mouth open. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The text 'Chapter 1 Principles' is positioned in the upper right area.

*Chapter 1*  
**Principles**

## PRINCIPLES

Children have a lot to gain from sport. Their natural sense of fun and spontaneity can blossom in positive sporting environments. Sport provides an excellent opportunity for children to learn new skills, become more confident and maximise their own unique potential. These benefits will increase through a positive and progressive approach to the involvement of children in sport that places the needs of the child first and winning and competition second. Winning and losing are an important part of sport but they must be kept in a healthy perspective. A child centred approach to children's sport will return many benefits in terms of the health and well being of our future adult population.

The organisation of sport for children should be guided by a set of core values that provide the foundation for all practice:

### 1.1 IMPORTANCE OF CHILDHOOD

The importance of childhood should be understood and valued by everyone involved in sport. The right to happiness within childhood should be recognised and enhanced at all levels of sport.

### 1.2 NEEDS OF THE CHILD

All children's sport experiences should be guided by what is best for children. This means that adults should have a basic understanding of the emotional, physical and personal needs of young people. The stages of development and ability of children should guide the types of activity provided within sport.

### 1.3 INTEGRITY IN RELATIONSHIPS

Adults interacting with children in sport (referred to as Sports Leaders in this Code) are in a position of trust and influence. They should always ensure that children are treated with integrity and respect, and the self-esteem of young people is enhanced. All adult actions in sport should be guided by what is best for the child and carried out in the context of respectful and open relationships. Physical, emotional or sexual abuse and neglect of any kind or threat of such abuse is totally unacceptable within sport, as in society in general.

### 1.4 FAIR PLAY

All children's sport should be conducted in an atmosphere of fair play. Ireland and the UK have adopted and are committed to the European Code of Sports Ethics which defines fair play as:

*much more than playing within the rules. It incorporates the concepts of friendship, respect for others and always playing within the right spirit. Fair play is defined as a way of thinking, not just a way of behaving. It incorporates issues concerned with the elimination of cheating, gamesmanship, doping, violence (both physical and verbal), exploitation, unequal opportunities, excessive commercialisation and corruption.*

*(European Sports Charter and Code of Ethics. Council of Europe, 1993)*

This model of fair play should be incorporated into all sport organisations that have juvenile and child members as participants.

The principles of fair play should always be emphasised, and organisers should give clear guidelines regarding acceptable standards of behaviour. The importance of participation for each child, best effort and enjoyment rather than winning should be stressed.

Children should be encouraged to win in an open and fair way. Behaviour, which constitutes cheating in any form, for example, falling over in football to gain free kicks or penalties, should be discouraged.



## 1.5 QUALITY ATMOSPHERE AND ETHOS

Children's sport should be conducted in a safe, positive and encouraging atmosphere. Standards of behaviour for leaders and children in sports organisations should be as important as the standards set for sports performance. Standards of excellence should extend to personal conduct.

## 1.6 COMPETITION

Competition is an essential element of sport and should be encouraged in an age appropriate manner. A child centred ethos will help to ensure that competition and specialisation are kept in their appropriate place. A balanced approach to competition can make a significant contribution to children's development while at the same time providing fun, enjoyment and satisfaction. Through such competition children learn respect for opponents, officials and rules of the sport.

Too often competitive demands are placed on children too early, which results in excessive levels of pressure on them. This is one of a number of factors, which contribute to high levels of dropout from sport. It should always be kept in mind that the welfare of children comes first and competitive standards come second. While under eight is a very different age group to under eighteen the same general principle should apply.

As adults we need to strike a balance between a young person's desire to win and a young person's right to participate, irrespective of ability. Remember that success is not the same as winning and failure is not the same as losing.

## 1.7 EQUALITY

All children should be valued and treated in an equitable and fair manner regardless of ability, age, gender, religion, social and ethnic background or political persuasion. Children, irrespective of ability or disability should be involved in sports activities in an integrated and inclusive way, whenever possible, thus allowing them to participate to their potential alongside other children. Sports Leaders should be aware of and seek to gain competence in addressing the needs of young people with disabilities or any other additional needs.

## 1.8 LEGISLATIVE BASIS

While the Code of Ethics is not a legal document it is based on the Child Care Act (IRL) 1991 and the Children (NI) Order 1993, as well as subsequent related legislation, such as Children's Act 2001, Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults Act (NI) 2003 and the Protection for Persons Reporting Act (IRL) 1998. Furthermore Ireland is a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which acknowledges the right of the child to protection from all harm. Article 31 of the UN Convention on Rights of the Child recognises the "right of the child to engage in play and to have the chance to join in a wide range of activities". In order to promote this charter and in response to consultation with young people the Office of the Minister for Children (IRL) includes in its strategy the objective that "children will have access to play, sport and recreation and cultural activities to enrich their experience of childhood". The Office of the Minister for Children appointed an Ombudsman for Children in 2004, while Northern Ireland appointed the Commissioner for Children and Young People in 2003.

This Code is intended to provide guidelines for those working with young people in sport. It is not a definite legal interpretation of the legislation. While it is not a legal document, failure to comply may have legal implications or consequences.



*Chapter 2*  
**People**



*Chapter 2*  
**People**

## PEOPLE

*Everyone involved in sport i.e. children, parents/guardians and Sports Leaders should accept the role and responsibilities that they undertake in their commitment to maintaining an enjoyable and safe environment.*

### 2.1 ADULTS INVOLVED IN SPORT

The roles of every adult involved in children's sport should be clearly defined. Many leadership roles contribute to the successful development and organisation of children's sport. These may overlap on occasions, but it is very important that each Sports Leader has a clear idea of his/her role and responsibilities. Each person involved in children's sport should ensure that the *Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport* is agreed, adopted and implemented in the organisation to which they are affiliated.

The principal leadership roles in sport are outlined in the Glossary.

### 2.2 ADULT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS IN SPORT

The trust implicit in adult-child relationships in sport places a duty of care on all adults, voluntary or professional, to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of the child while engaged in their sporting activity. Adults have a crucial leadership role to play in sport. Whether they are parents/guardians or Sports Leaders or teachers, they can contribute to the creation of a positive sporting environment for young people. The unique nature of sport allows Sports Leaders to develop positive and special relationships with children. Such relationships have tremendous potential to help children to develop and express themselves in an open and secure way. Positive adult-child relationships will result in growth, development and fulfilment for all those involved in children's sport.

Most adults who become involved in children's sport do so in their own free time. There may, therefore, be a reluctance to make impositions upon them with regard to either conditions of training, or reproaches for any misdemeanours. However, given the important and responsible roles which adults play at many different levels in sport, it is essential that their competence and ability to deal with children in a fair, empathic and ethical way is supported, guided and maintained. A consistent method of recruiting and selecting Sports Leaders should be in place, including seeking references, confirming identity and checking adequacy of qualifications. Effective management of Sports Leaders is also equally central to the promotion of good practice in the club/organisation. This should include support, supervision, access to training and effective communication between members of the club/organisation.

#### **Adult-child relationships in sport should be:**

- open, positive and encouraging
- entered into by choice
- defined by a mutually agreed set of goals and commitments
- respectful of the creativity and autonomy of children
- carried out in a context where children are protected and where their rights are promoted
- free from physical, emotional or sexual abuse and neglect or any threat of such harm
- respectful of the needs and developmental stage of the child
- aimed at the promotion of enjoyment and individual progress
- governed by a code of ethics and good practice in sport that is agreed and adhered to by all members of the sports club/organisation
- respectful, but not unquestioning of authority
- mindful of the fact that children with disabilities may be more vulnerable

### 2.3 CHILD TO CHILD RELATIONSHIPS

Interaction between children should be conducted in a spirit of mutual respect and fair play. Adults including parents/guardians, who create an environment in which quality, open relationships are valued and where the integrity of each individual is respected, can promote such interaction.

### 2.4 RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS /GUARDIANS

Parents/guardians play a key role in the promotion of an ethical approach to sport and young people's enjoyment in sport. Parents/guardians therefore need to be aware, informed and involved in promoting the safest possible environment for children to enjoy their participation in sport. Sports Leaders need the support of parents/guardians in conveying the fair play message.

### 2.5 THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF SPORTS LEADERS

Sports Leaders play a vital role in children's sport. Sports organisations and sports groups should ensure that the work of Sports Leaders which occurs mainly on a voluntary basis, is guided by this Code of Ethics and Good Practice whilst also recognising that they are entitled to obtain a healthy sense of achievement and satisfaction through their involvement in children's sport. (See 4.1)

### 2.6 GOVERNING BODIES OF SPORT

*A Governing Body of Sport is the organisation recognised by the respective international federation as being responsible for the administration of a particular sport on a countrywide basis or the national body responsible for national games. The Governing Body is responsible for overseeing the adoption and implementation of this Code by all its affiliated members.*

To maximise compliance with the Code, each Governing Body of Sport should:

- ensure that the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport is adopted, agreed to, implemented and signed up to by all members
- amend, as necessary, its Constitution to reflect a safe and clearly defined method of recruiting, selecting and managing
- appoint a National Children's Officer/Designated Person (See 2.8/9). S/he should be a member of the Executive Committee
- ensure that effective disciplinary, complaints and appeals procedures are in place
- have in place procedures for dealing with a concern or complaint made to the Statutory Authorities against a committee member or a Sports Leader. Regulations should stipulate that a Sports Leader who is the subject of an allegation, which has been reported to the Statutory Authorities, should stand aside while the matter is being examined. *s/he should be invited to resume full duties when and if appropriate internal disciplinary procedures are completed*
- ensure that all sports clubs with child members are fully affiliated and signed up to the Governing Body's constitution
- be represented by appropriate personnel at all education/training workshops dealing with the Code
- where children are involved in representative teams, designate an appropriate senior officer in the Governing Body as the person with responsibility for following the guidelines of the Code
- review its child protection procedures regularly through open discussion with its members, Sports Councils and Statutory Authorities
- promote contact with representatives of the Statutory Authorities. The building of these relationships will contribute to the creation of an environment in which education and knowledge of child protection issues and procedures are widely known
- examine and take appropriate action in response to any reports or observations of unusual incidents (high rate of transfers, dropouts) received from clubs



## 2.7 SPORTS CLUBS

To ensure that best practice is being followed, all sports clubs should work closely with their Governing Body of Sport. In promoting best practice in children's sport and in implementing this Code at club level each club should:

- adopt and implement the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport as an integral part of its policy on children in the club
- have its constitution approved and adopted by club's members at an AGM or EGM
- promote the voice of the child, in particular through meetings and the AGM. One parent/guardian should have one vote for all their children under 18 years of age, where relevant
- ensure that the Club Management Committee is elected or endorsed by registered club members at each AGM
- adopt and consistently apply a safe and clearly defined method of recruiting and selecting Sports Leaders (See 3.5)
- clearly define the role of committee members, all Sports Leaders and parents/guardians
- appoint at least one Children's Officer as outlined at 2.8.1 in this Code. In the event that a club caters for both boys and girls, one Children's Officer of each gender would ideally be appointed
- have a Designated Person to act as liaison with the Statutory Authorities in relation to the reporting of allegations or suspicions of child abuse. (See 5.12) Any such reports should be made according to the procedures outlined in this Code
- ensure best practice throughout the club by disseminating its code of conduct, including the disciplinary, complaints and appeals procedures in operation within the club to all its members. The club's code of conduct should also be posted in all facilities used by the club
- have in place procedures for dealing with a concern or complaint made to the Statutory Authorities against a committee member or Sports Leader or other members of the club. Regulations should stipulate that a Sports Leader who is the subject of an allegation, which has been reported to the Statutory Authorities, should stand aside, while the matter is being examined. *s/he should be invited to resume full duties when and if appropriate internal disciplinary procedures are completed*
- ensure that relevant Sports Leaders report to the Club Management Committee on a regular basis
- encourage regular turnover of committee membership while ensuring continuity and experience
- develop effective procedures for responding to and recording accidents
- ensure that any unusual activity (high rate of drop-out, transfers, etc.) is checked out and reported by the Club Chairperson to the Governing Body of Sport
- ensure that all club members are given adequate notice of AGMs and other meetings
- ensure that all minutes of all meetings (AGMs/EGMs/, Committee) are recorded and safely filed.

## 2.8 CHILDREN'S OFFICERS

The appointment of Children's Officers in Governing Bodies and sports clubs/organisations is an essential element in the creation of a quality atmosphere. They act as a resource with regard to children's issues.

In summary Children's Officers should review current policies in relation to young people, check that all activities are safe and fun, and inform adults of how to deal with any concerns that may arise in relation to the protection of young people.

## 2.8.1 NATIONAL CHILDREN'S OFFICER FOR GOVERNING BODY OF SPORT

Each Governing Body of Sport should appoint a National Children's Officer. The National Children's Officer should be a member of the Executive Committee, or have access to the committee and its accompanying documents, to ensure that children's interests are kept on, and influence the decisions of, the agenda of the Governing Body.

The role of the National Children's Officer involves:

- Familiarisation with *Children First and Our Duty to Care* to ensure they can act as an information source to other members of the organisation
- Commitment to attendance at appropriate training as required in order to act as a resource to members in relation to children's needs
- Co-ordination of training for others
- The promotion of the values, attitudes and structures which make sport enjoyable for children – see general statement on children's sport, see section 2.8.3
- Circulation of all relevant information and resource materials, on children's sport to clubs and affiliates of the sports organisations
- Communication with Club Children's Officers to ensure the distribution of the Code and the promotion of related education programmes, materials events and governing body related codes
- Liaison with all clubs to examine the rules, regulations and structures to ensure that they are child centred, e.g., equal playing time, appropriate competition structures, modified equipment to allow sense of achievement and success, use of protective gear, bullying policy etc.
- Liaison with clubs, to ensure drop-out rates and transfers are monitored so that unusual developments or trends can be addressed, including transfer of sports leaders
- Assisting in the development of a system of record keeping which maintains confidentiality while allowing for appropriate information to be passed to relevant authorities where necessary
- Ensuring that the Governing Body develops an appropriate sport specific code, which includes a policy statement, codes of conduct, disciplinary procedures, bullying policy, safety statement, recruitment and selection policy and reporting procedures.

Sports Council for Northern Ireland recommend that in Northern Ireland the Governing Body appoint a person, dependent on the structure, to one of the following 3 posts:

- The Governing Body Children's Officer is an executive member in a Northern Ireland stand-alone organisation
- The Governing Body Children's Officer representing the Ulster Branch/Council/Region of an All-Ireland Governing Body
- The Governing Body Children's Officer of a Northern Ireland Sporting Organisation with regional affiliation to a UK parent body

## 2.8.2 CLUB CHILDREN'S OFFICER

Club Children's Officers should be child centred in focus and have as the primary aim the establishment of a child centred ethos within the club. S/he is the link between the children and the adults in the club. S/he also takes responsibility for monitoring and reporting to the Club Management Committee on how club policy impacts on young people and Sports Leaders.

The Children's Officer should be a member of or have access to, the Club Management Committee and should be introduced to the young people in an appropriate forum. The Children's Officer should have the following role:

- To promote awareness of the code within the club, among young members and their parents/guardians. This could be achieved by:- the production / distribution of information leaflets, the establishment of children's/age-group specific notice boards, regular information meetings for the young people and their parents/guardians
- To influence policy and practice within the club in order to prioritise children's needs
- Establish contact with the National Children's Officer at governing body level.
- To ensure that children know how to make concerns known to appropriate adults or agencies. Further information is outlined in Section 5.12 in this Code
- To encourage the appropriate involvement of parents/guardians in the club activities
- To act as an advisory resource to Sports Leaders on best practice in children's sport
- To report regularly to the Club Management Committee
- To monitor changes in membership and follow up any unusual dropout, absenteeism or club transfers by children or Sports Leaders
- To ensure that the children have a voice in the running of their club and ensure that there are steps young people can take to express concerns about their sports activities / experiences.
- Establish communication with other branches of the club, e.g. facilitate parent's information sessions at the start of the season
- Keep records on each member on file, including junior members, their contact numbers and any special needs of the child that should be known to leaders
- Ensure each member signs an annual membership form that includes signing up to the code of conduct
- Ensure that the club rules and regulations include:-
  - \* complaints, disciplinary and appeals procedures
  - \* an anti-bullying policy
  - \* safety statement
  - \* rules in relation to traveling with children
  - \* supervision and recruitment of leaders

*(Note: This may simply mean adopting the regulations set out in the governing body's code for children's sport)*

### 2.8.3 General Statement on Sport for Young People

Each organisation will have their own specific rules to their own sport but these are often taken from the adult section and may not be suitable for young people. Below are some suggestions that are related to younger members of the organisation.

- Ensure the equipment and facilities that children use are suited to their age and stage of development
- List competitive structures that will be used with all age groups, e.g. Blitzes, jamborees, skills awards, mini-games etc. Outline competitions that will allow participation and skill development for very young participants
- Set out appropriate adult:child ratios, e.g. 2 leaders to every 16 children (1:8), but no leader works alone (review this with insurance company)
- Members U18 years of age must wear protective gear - NGB should list all necessary gear. Notify parents at the start of the season
- Members U16 should not play on 2 teams. They may play on a team above their own age category but should not play on more than one team in any one season.
- List any criteria for selection to squads, regional, national etc.
- List means by which Sports Leaders will be recruited into the club / organisation and decide who will check references
- Outline a development pathway for your sport, i.e. what skills (technical, tactical, physical, etc.) should the participant have at 8 years, 12 years, 16 years, etc. How many hours of practice and/or competition will each age group participate in? How is it intended to develop a positive attitude for all young people to sport and physical activity?

### 2.9 DESIGNATED PERSON

Every club/organisation should designate a person to be responsible for dealing with any concerns about the protection of children. The designated person is responsible for reporting allegations or suspicions of child abuse to Health Services Executive or Social Services (NI) and/or An Garda Síochán / PSNI. It is recommended that this person is a senior club person. However, if there is difficulty identifying a separate individual to take this role, the Children's Officer can be appointed as designated person once the club/organisation is clear about the responsibilities of the each role.

The organisation's child protection policy and procedures should include the name and contact details of the designated person and the responsibilities attached to the role.

#### 2.9.1 The National Designated Person should:-

- Have knowledge of the Code of Ethics and statutory guidelines
- Have a knowledge of categories and indicators of abuse
- Undertake training in relation to child protection
- Assist with the ongoing development and implementation of the organisation's child protection training needs
- Provide information and advice on child protection within the organisation
- Together with the National Children's Officer advise the organisation of child protection training needs
- Be familiar with and able to carry out reporting procedures as outlined in Section 5.12 - 5.19 of this Code
- Communicate with parents and/or agencies as appropriate
- Be aware of national and local services responsible for child protection, i.e. principal and duty social workers, etc.
- To inform Health Services Executive / Social services and/or An Garda Síochána/PSNI of relevant concerns about individual children, using the Standard Reporting Form, (see Appendix 6 for sample used in ROI). Keep a copy of this form and ensure acknowledgement of receipt of this form

- Ensure appropriate information is available at the time of referral and that the referral is confirmed in writing, kept under confidential cover
- Liaise with Statutory Authorities and other agencies as appropriate
- Organise the implementation of procedures designed to deal with concerns regarding poor practice within the sport
- Ensure Sports Leader(s) are aware of allegations against them
- Ensure that an individual case record is maintained of the action taken by the organisation, the liaison with other agencies and the outcome
- Ensure records are kept in confidence in a secure location and access is on a 'need to know' basis
- Affiliated clubs and groups should report suspected abuse in relation to Sports Leaders or persistent poor practice to the national governing body's designated person who will then have the responsibility of advising the organisation of ways to ensure that other clubs are protected from re-occurrence of situations of abuse
- The designated person/children's officer will assist the administration on issues of confidentiality, record keeping and data protection.

## 2.9.2 Club Designated Person

- Have knowledge of the Code of Ethics and statutory guidelines
- Have a knowledge of categories and indicators of abuse
- Undertake training in relation to child protection
- Be familiar with and able to carry out reporting procedures as outlined in Section 5.12 - 5.19 of this Code
- Communicate with parents and/or agencies as appropriate
- Assist with the ongoing development and implementation of the organisation's child protection training needs
- Liaise with the national children's officer in relation to child protection training needs
- Be aware of local contacts and services in relation to child protection, i.e. principal and duty social workers and their contacts
- To inform local duty social worker in the Health Services Executive Local Area Board / local Social Services and/or An Garda Síochána/PSNI of relevant concerns about individual children, using the Standard Reporting Form, (see Appendix 6). Keep a copy of this form and ensure acknowledgement of receipt of this form
- Report persistent poor practice to the National Designated Person
- Advise club administrators on issues of confidentiality, record keeping and data protection

*Children's Officers/Designated Persons do not have the responsibility of investigating or validating child protection concerns within the club/organisation and have no counseling or therapeutic role. These roles are filled by the Statutory Authorities as outlined in Children First and Our Duty to Care. It is, however, possible that child protection concerns will be brought to the attention of the Children's Officer. In this event, it is essential that the correct procedure is followed, (See 5.12)*

## 2.10 ROLE OF THE IRISH SPORTS COUNCIL AND SPORTS COUNCIL FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

The Irish Sports Council and the Sports Council for Northern Ireland have jointly agreed that a common approach is essential in promoting good practice in children's sport.

### **This approach is based on the following underpinning principles:**

- children's involvement in sport should be an enjoyable experience
- the safety of children should always be the paramount concern of those adults responsible for providing sporting opportunities at whatever level an individual adult is involved
- the appropriateness of the experience provided for children should be determined by and based on a child-centred ethos which place the needs of the child at the centre of activities taken
- all adults have a responsibility to be aware of child protection as an issue
- Sports Leaders should be properly recruited and managed and that appropriate training should be made available to them
- the provision of support by the Councils will be subject to the adoption and implementation of the Code by Governing Bodies of Sport

The Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport should be made available to and used by all those involved in children's sport in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. The Sports Councils will ensure the widest possible dissemination of the Code and ask that this Code is adopted and implemented by all sports clubs/organisations. This approach is based on the need for All-Island consistency in advice offered to clubs, Sports Leaders, parents/guardians, children, and in particular, Governing Bodies of Sport who are responsible for the administration of their sports.

It is intended that information contained in the Code can provide a yardstick by which sports clubs/organisations can measure themselves against the best advice available on policies, procedures and practices that characterise good organisations. It can provide a framework for Sports Leaders who want to protect both themselves and the children they encourage to participate. The positive impact of these guidelines for clubs, leaders and parents/guardians can only be achieved by the Governing Bodies with the support and co-operation of their affiliated clubs.

A young woman in a blue and white athletic uniform is captured mid-air, jumping over a hurdle. She is smiling and looking towards the camera. The background is a bright, clear sky with some trees visible in the distance. The entire image has a blue color overlay.

*Chapter 3*

# ***Policy & Procedures***

A young woman in a blue and white athletic uniform is captured mid-air, jumping over a hurdle. She is smiling and looking down. The background is a bright, clear sky with some trees visible in the distance. The entire image has a blue color overlay.

*Chapter 3*

# *Policy & Procedures*



## POLICY AND PROCEDURES

*Everyone taking part in sport, irrespective of his or her role, should be able to do so in a safe environment. The purpose of creating and adhering to policies and procedures is to facilitate and encourage best practice.*

### 3.1 CONSTITUTION

A quality sports club/organisation will operate on the basis of a Constitution, which directs its ethical approach and promotes good practice. The Constitution should include a policy statement, which reflects good practice and relates to the divisional structure of the sports club/organisation. The Constitution should also reflect a commitment to providing quality leadership for children in the sports club/organisation by having a safe and clearly defined method of recruiting, selecting and managing Sports Leaders. See Sample Policy Statement in Appendix 1. It should make provision for regulations in respect of effective disciplinary, complaints and appeals procedures. The convening and conduct of an AGM should also have a constitutional basis.

### 3.2 STRUCTURE

Membership of the Management Committee of sports clubs/organisations should be for a fixed period to encourage regular turnover of committee membership. Each organisation should work out its own system of rotation to ensure that continuity and a level of experience are maintained. Effective methods of communication within the organisation are vital to the successful implementation of the *Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport*. Within each sports club/organisation a system of record keeping should be established and adhered to in the interests of confidentiality and good practice. A current mailing list and a schedule of meetings, including the AGM, are the two most basic requirements. Any organisation unable to reach its membership will struggle to implement good practice.

All sports clubs with child members should be fully affiliated to the Governing Body and therefore bound by the guidelines enshrined in the constitution of the Governing Body. Each member of a club/organisation should sign up to the Constitution. They should also sign an agreement to adhere to the rules and regulations of the club/organisation which includes a commitment to upholding the Code and all of the agreed complaints, disciplinary and appeals procedures within the club/organisation. This commitment should form part of the annual membership / affiliation process to avoid adding to the administrative burden of officials in organisations.

### 3.3 REGULATIONS

The regulations adopted by a Sports Club/ Organisation should clearly define the tasks to be undertaken by Sports Leaders and parents/guardians. The regulations should define the roles and responsibilities of elected officials. This information should be widely disseminated within the club/organisation. Regulations, based on the constitution, should legislate for effective disciplinary, complaints and appeals procedures. Guidance on the use of sanctions could also be outlined in the regulations.

### 3.4 DISCIPLINARY, COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS PROCEDURES

Each club/organisation should ensure that it has adequate disciplinary, complaints and appeals procedures in place. **It is important to note that the investigation of suspected child abuse is the responsibility of the Statutory Authorities and should not be undertaken by Children's Officers/Designated Persons or other club/organisation Sports Leaders.** The standard reporting procedure outlined in the Statutory Authorities guidelines should be followed by each sports club/organisation and adhered to by its members (See 5.12).

### 3.4.1 Recommended procedures

A quality sports club/organisation will operate on the basis of good practice to include a complaints/appeals procedures similar to the following:

- a code of conduct reflecting a child centred ethos should be drawn-up, widely disseminated and returned from and applied to all Sports Leaders and members
- each club/organisation, on receiving a complaint, should appoint a disciplinary committee to resolve problems relating to the conduct of its members. This should include bullying. The complaint should be in writing to the secretary or Children's Officer and should be responded to within 5 working days. The committee should consist of a representative from the Management Committee, the Children's Officer and ordinary registered members of the club.
- If the complaint involves suspected abuse or a criminal offence the children's officer/designated person should be consulted and the disciplinary committee disbanded. The statutory authorities will then be informed
- the disciplinary committee should review any relevant paper work and hold any necessary meetings with all parties to proceed with complaints into any incident of suspected misconduct that does not relate to child abuse. It should, as soon as possible, inform the Management Committee of the progress of the disciplinary process. This should be done within 10 working days
- the disciplinary committee should furnish the individual with the nature of the complaint being made against him/her and afford him/her the opportunity of providing a response either verbally or in writing, but usually at a meeting with the disciplinary committee
- written confidential records of all complaints should be safely and confidentially kept and club procedures should be defined for the possession of such records in the event of election of new officers
- where it is established that an incident of misconduct has taken place, the disciplinary committee should notify the member of any sanction being imposed. The notification should be made in writing, setting out the reasons for the sanction. If the member is under 18 years of age, correspondence should be addressed to the parents/guardians
- if the member against whom the complaint was made is unhappy with the decision of the disciplinary committee s/he should have the right to appeal the decision to an appeals committee (independent of a disciplinary committee). Any appeal should be made in writing within an agreed period after issue, usually 10 days of the decision of the disciplinary committee. The chairperson of the appeals committee should be a member of the Management Committee. The appeals committee should consult with the Children's Officer in relation to issues of child welfare and codes of conduct
- the appeals committee should have the power to confirm, set aside or change any sanction imposed by the disciplinary committee
- if any party is not satisfied with the outcome the matter can be referred to the Governing Body. However efforts to resolve the issue at local level should be exhausted before the Governing Body is engaged in attempts to resolve the matter

### 3.5 RECRUITMENT OF SPORTS LEADERS

Sport relies heavily on the time and commitment freely given by volunteers and without this the opportunities for children and young people to participate in sport may not exist. In order to make these opportunities a positive experience it is recommended that all adults taking responsibility for young people in sport should undergo a recruitment process. The following recruitment steps will help to protect young people and assist in placing leaders in the position to which they are suited and supported.

- List tasks that Sports Leaders need to perform and the skills needed for those tasks
- Make all vacancies openly available to interested and qualified applicants
- Each applicant should complete an application form. This should include a self-declaration section/ form. (See Appendices 2-5)
- In Northern Ireland coaches who work with under 18's are deemed to be 'regulated positions' regardless of whether they are paid or not. SCNI recommend that coaches should be checked by the Protection of Children (NI) Service, formally known as the Pre-Employment Consultancy Service (PECS). See Appendix 4
- In the Republic of Ireland the ISC recommend that coaches who work with young people should be checked by the Garda vetting service **when** this becomes available to sports organisations.
- It is not the responsibility of any one person to recruit a leader. References should be verified by the club/organisation Management Committee and should be kept on file as a matter of record. See Sample Form and/or Appendix 10
- All recommendations for appointment should be ratified by the sports club's/organisation's management committee. The decision to appoint a Sports Leader is the responsibility of a sports club/organisation, and not of any one individual within it
- Once recruited into the sports club/organisation, all Sports Leaders should be adequately managed and supported and any statutory guidelines should be adhered to
- A probationary period is advisable and should be established, ideally through an informal interview, which can be used to assess the leader's commitment to promoting good practice in relation to young people
- Verify qualifications, experience and gaps in employment history
- Confirm identity of leader by checking formal identification
- When storing information in relation to applicants information should be treated as highly sensitive and confidential. It should be kept in a locked cupboard that is accessible only to a nominated officer and a deputy nominated officer.
- After making a final decision about the applicant, the original information sent to vetting authorities must be destroyed immediately by shredding or burning. Organisations may, however, include a note on any personnel file stating that a check was carried out and that the person's conditional offer of appointment was confirmed/withdrawn as a result.
- For further information on how to use the vetting service in Northern Ireland see Appendix 4.

### 3.6 EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Sports clubs/organisations that take responsibility for children in sport should ensure that Sports Leaders are competent to provide safe and rewarding experiences for those in their care and that Sport Leaders are provided with the appropriate training for their activity. Training and education opportunities should also be made available to parents/guardians as appropriate.

Both sports councils have established support to assist sports organisations in implementing the Code and child protection training.

The ISC have appointed a project leader to assist and liaise with governing bodies and local sports partnerships and to implement the code at national and local level through workshops and training sessions. Some training is delivered in conjunction with the local health services executive area boards.

It is important that National Children's Officers/Designated Persons and Club Children's Officers/Designated Persons receive appropriate training for their role. In addition all leaders working with young people should be updated with the code by attending the 'Child Protection in Sport' Awareness training, which includes information on codes of conduct, recruitment and selection and awareness of the appropriate club response to allegations of child abuse. Club Children's Officers/Designated Persons can then complete the 6-hour Children's Officer training.

In Northern Ireland The Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU) has been created through a partnership between the Sports Council and the NSPCC to promote the rights of children along with ensuring their protection and continued enjoyment of sport.

In Northern Ireland Child Protection training is available by contacting Coaching Northern Ireland, (028 90 686940) who offer the following workshops:

- Children's/Designated Officer Workshop
- Child Protection Awareness Workshop for Coaches/Leaders/Volunteers



*Chapter 4*  
**Practice**



*Chapter 4*  
**Practice**

## PRACTICE

*Leaders in children's sport should always strive to interact positively with children, enhancing the child's involvement and enjoyment of the sporting activity and promoting the welfare of the participant. The Code assists in the achievement of these aims and can also help to protect Sports Leaders in their various roles by providing a framework for the promotion of good practice.*

### 4.1 GUIDELINES FOR SPORTS LEADERS

Sports Leaders have an important role to play in promoting good practice in children's sport. They should have as their first priority the children's safety and enjoyment of the sport. The Sports Leaders' success should not be evaluated by performance or results of competition. They should enjoy a sense of achievement and pleasure through their work with young people. After undertaking appropriate education and training within the club or organisation, Sports Leaders will be well prepared to operate in a safe sporting environment with a knowledge and understanding of their role and responsibilities. They should be supported in their work by the sports club/organisation and parents/guardians.

Sports Leaders are responsible for setting and monitoring the boundaries between a working relationship and friendship with young participants. Sports Leaders should operate to the club's agreed code of conduct, which emphasises enjoyment, equality, fair play and the general well being of young people. This model of good practice should help children to demonstrate an awareness of equality, fair play and respect for Sports Leaders, other members of their group and the rules of the sport. The club/organisation and parents/guardians should afford Sports Leaders the respect they deserve and make them aware of any special needs of the child.

Club / Organisational procedures should support the Sports Leaders' model of good practice, thus ensuring protection for both the Leader and the participant. In so doing, Sports Leaders should feel able to make a complaint in an appropriate manner and have it dealt with through an effective complaints procedure. They should be able to appeal any decision through an effective appeals procedure (See 3.4).

In order to act as a role model and to promote their safety and the safety of young people Sports Leaders should:

- Be positive, praise and encourage effort as well as results
- Put the welfare of young people first, strike a balance between this and winning
- Encourage fair play and treat participants equally
- Have the relevant knowledge and experience to work with young people
- Understand developmental needs of young people

Where possible, and for their own safety, Sports Leaders should avoid:

- spending excessive amounts of time with children away from others
- taking sessions alone
- taking children on journeys alone in their car
- the use of alcohol before coaching, during events and on trips with young people

Sports Leaders should not:

- use any form of corporal punishment or physical force on a child
- take children to their home
- exert undue influence over a participant in order to obtain personal benefit or reward
- engage in rough physical games, sexually provocative games or allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any kind, and/or make sexually suggestive comments about, or to, a child
- take measurements or engage in certain types of fitness testing without the presence of another adult
- undertake any form of therapy (hypnosis etc.) in the training of children

For further information and sample codes for leaders see [www.irishsportsCouncil.ie](http://www.irishsportsCouncil.ie) and [www.sportni.net](http://www.sportni.net)



## 4.2 PHYSICAL CONTACT

Physical contact during sport should always be intended to meet the child's needs, NOT the adult's. The adult will probably use appropriate contact when the aim is to assist in development of the skill or activity or for safety reasons, e.g. to prevent or treat an injury. This should be in an open environment with the permission and understanding of the participant. In general

- Contact should be determined by the age and developmental stage of the participant - Don't do something that a child can do for themselves
- Never engage in inappropriate touching such as touching of groin, genital areas, buttocks, breasts or any other part of the body that might cause a child distress or embarrassment

## 4.3 GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Parents/guardians have the primary responsibility for the care and welfare of their children within sport. Parents/guardians should encourage their children to participate in sport for fun and enjoyment and should ensure that their child's experience of sport is a positive one. Lessons learned in children's sport will shape values and attitudes in adult life. They should always remember that children play sport for their own enjoyment not that of the parents/guardians. Parents/guardians have a duty to ensure that the context in which their child is participating is appropriate.

Parents/guardians and Sports Leaders will ideally work in partnership to promote good practice in children's sport and to support all efforts to protect against neglect, emotional, physical or sexual abuse in sporting activities. To do so, parents/guardians should ensure that sports clubs treat their children with fairness, respect and understanding, and that the club is fulfilling its responsibility to safeguard children. They should encourage their children to tell them about anyone causing them harm. They should become aware of club procedures and policies, in particular where changes are made that effect them or their children, and be informed of all matters relating to ethics and good practice. They should check that the *Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport* has been adopted and implemented in the club/organisation.

Parents/guardians should remember that children learn best by example. To assist in the promotion of good practice with the club or organisation they should:

- be aware of the relevant Sports Leaders and their role within the club
- show appreciation of and respect for Sports Leaders and their decisions
- encourage their child to play by the rules
- behave responsibly on the sideline
- focus on their child's efforts rather than performance
- focus on the fun and participation of the child in the activity
- liaise with the Sports Leaders in relation to the times/locations of training sessions, medical conditions of their children and any requirement for their child's safety



To promote the procedures of good practice parents/guardians should be:

- encouraged to become members of the club, where feasible, and take an active interest in the running of the club or any sporting activities in which their children take part
- willing to become the Club Children's Officer or assist in the running of the club
- informed of the training and/or competitive programmes and be satisfied with the general environment that is created for their children
- informed if their child sustained an injury during sporting activities
- informed of problems or concerns relating to their children.
- informed in advance and have their consent sought in relation to matters regarding away trips, camps or specially organised activities (see also 4.6)

Comments and suggestions by parents/guardians should always be considered and their complaints acknowledged and dealt with as they arise through an effective and confidential complaints procedure.

Parents/guardians should not:

- ignore or dismiss complaints or concerns expressed by a child which relate to his/her involvement in sport
- ridicule or yell at a child for making a mistake or losing a game
- put undue pressure on their child to please or perform well, including forcing a child to participate when ill
- take safety for granted
- treat the club as a child-minding service

#### 4.4 GUIDELINES FOR CHILDREN

*Children have a great deal to gain from sport in terms of their personal development and enjoyment. The promotion of good practice in sport will depend on the co-operation of all involved, including child members of sports clubs/organisations. Children must be encouraged to realise that they also have responsibilities to treat other children and Sports Leaders with fairness and respect.*

##### 4.4.1 Children in sport are entitled to:

- be listened to
- be believed
- be safe and to feel safe
- participate in sporting activities on an equal basis, appropriate to their ability and stage of development
- be treated with dignity, sensitivity and respect
- be happy, have fun and enjoy sport
- experience competition at a level at which they feel comfortable and the desire to win as a positive and healthy outcome for striving for best performance
- comment and make suggestions in a constructive manner
- make a complaint in an appropriate way and have it dealt with through an effective complaints procedure
- be afforded appropriate confidentiality
- be represented at decision making bodies/meetings within their sports club/organisation
- have a voice in the running of their club
- approach the Children's Officer/Designated Person with any questions or concerns they may have

#### 4.4.2 Children should undertake to:

- play fairly, do their best and have fun
- shake hands before and after the event, whoever wins - and mean it
- respect officials and accept their decisions with grace, not a grudge
- respect fellow team members; give them full support both when they do well and when things go wrong
- respect opponents, they are not enemies, they are partners in a sporting event
- give opponents a hand if they are injured or have problems with equipment
- accept apologies from opponents when they are offered
- exercise self-control and tolerance for others, even if others do not
- be modest in victory and be gracious in defeat
- show appropriate loyalty to their sport and all its participants
- make high standards of fair play the example others want to follow

#### 4.4.3 Children should not:

- cheat
- use violence, using physical contact only when it is allowed within the rules
- shout at, or argue with, the referee, officials, team mates or opponents
- take banned substances to improve performance
- bully or use bullying tactics to isolate another player
- use unfair or bullying tactics to gain advantage
- harm team mates, opponents or their property
- tell lies about adults or other children
- spread rumours
- keep secrets about any person who may have caused them harm

### 4.5 SUPERVISION AND GENERAL GUIDELINES

#### 4.5.1 Transport

There is an extra responsibility on adults and leaders when they transport young people to events. Adults should

- Ensure there is adequate insurance on their car and that they follow the rules of the road, including the legal use of seat belts
- Ensure they do not carry more than the permitted number of passengers
- Avoid being alone with one passenger, put passengers in the back seat, have central drop off locations or seek parental permission when transporting on a regular basis. Parents should check with young people about the plans, listen to what the young people are saying, be sure they are happy with the transport arrangements.

#### 4.5.2 General Supervision

- Ensure adequate Adult: Child ratios. Good practice dictates that a leader should try to ensure that more than one adult is present. This will help to ensure the safety of the children as well as protect adults
- Adult:Child ratios will depend on the nature of the activity, the age of the participants and any special needs of the group, a general guide might be 1:8 for under 12 years of age and 1:10 for over 12 years of age
- There should be at least one adult of each gender with mixed parties

- Away trips will need higher rates of supervision and these should be checked out with the governing body or organiser, children and young people should be supervised at all times.
- Avoid adults being left alone with young participants, if a leader needs to talk separately to a participant this should be done in an open environment, in view of others
- Respect the privacy of young people while changing, leaders may only need to enter changing rooms where the participants are very young or require special assistance. When necessary, leaders should supervise in pairs or seek assistance, it is the safety and welfare of the participants that is of paramount importance
- Leaders should not be left alone with young people at the end of a training session. Clearly state times for start and finish of training and/or competitions. If late collections occur leaders should remain in pairs until participants have left. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to make arrangements for collection of young people, it should be made clear that the club is responsible for only club activities
- If a child suffers an injury or accident the parents/guardians should be informed. See sample accident form on [www.irishsportsCouncil.ie](http://www.irishsportsCouncil.ie)

#### 4.5.3 Overnight & Away trips

- Written permission of parents/guardians should be obtained for all overnight away trips, this should include permission to travel, behaviour agreement and any medical/special needs of the group, (including permission to treat the participant)
- The agreement should be signed by both parents and participants
- A meeting with parents and participants is useful to communicate travel times, competition details, other activities, gear requirements, special needs (medical or dietary), and any other necessary details, contact details, codes of conduct, etc.
- The governing body should share any appropriate information with leaders of the group
- All adults who travel on away trips should be carefully chosen, using the recruitment and selection procedure in section 3.5 of this code
- The roles and responsibilities of adults participating in away trips should be clearly defined
- The Governing Body of Sport/Sports Club should appoint a Team Manager/Head of Delegation for away trips. S/he should have overall responsibility for the children's well-being, behaviour and sleeping arrangements. S/he should be appointed as an official of the club for the duration of the trip
- The Team Manager should submit a written report to the organisers as soon as possible after the end of the trip
- On away trips, coaches should be accountable to the Team Manager in all non-performance related matters
- Where there are mixed teams there should be leaders of both genders (at least one female and/or male in the management/coaching structure)
- Adults should not share a room with a child. Where the presence of an adult is needed there should be more than one child in the room with the adult. If children are sharing a room, it should be with those of the same groupings, age and gender
- Managers should check out the venue beforehand, so that separate and appropriate sleeping arrangements can be made in advance
- Alcoholic drink, smoking and other illegal substances / activities are forbidden to participants. Leaders should act as role models in this respect.

#### 4.5.4 Hosting

Being a host family or being hosted is an integral part of many sports and, if handled appropriately, can add to a child's enjoyment and experience at a competition. Hosting can be a challenging role but also very rewarding. Special care should be taken in the selection of homes for overnight stays. A host should be provided with as much information about the child/children staying with them and details of the competition. Where practicable more than one child should be placed with each host family. The family in turn should agree to provide references and be vetted when and if this is available. In addition clubs should follow the recruitment and selection procedures outlined in Section 3.5 of this Code.

When arranging for events/trips abroad, the club or Governing Body will be dependent on the ability of the host organisation to access vetting services and obtain appropriate references. It is the responsibility of the trip organiser to provide the hosts with the relevant information on the child and details of what is expected.

Host families should

- Agree to abide by the Governing Bodies Code of Conduct
- Consent to appropriate checks and references
- Attend host family meetings before competitions or events
- Provide a safe and supportive environment for young people

Governing Bodies / Clubs should

- Provide a travel pack to hosting families
- Check out references with hosting families
- Provide an itinerary of the trip
- Gather information on destination and venue

Young People

- Should sign a behaviour agreement
- Should not be asked to share a bed or a room with an adult
- Should be happy with the arrangements
- Should show respect to the host families

#### 4.6 SAFETY

All Governing Bodies of Sport and sports clubs should ensure that a clear statement of specific and potential risks attached to their particular sport is widely publicised to all members. They should also have specific procedures in place for safeguarding against such risks. The following practices should apply in order to promote safety:

- activities being undertaken should be suitable for the ability, age, and experience of the participants
- equipment and facilities should meet the highest possible standards and be appropriate to the maturity of the participants
- where protective equipment is deemed necessary it should be used
- First Aid should be available for all-training sessions and events. There should be a proper First Aid Kit. First Aid information should be a basic element of a coaching leadership course
- injuries should be recorded, with a note of the action taken in relation to each one. It is recommended that each club maintain an accident book with a specific incident form for completion by Sports Leaders, with due regard for confidentiality. If you have concerns in relation to the welfare of the child see section 5.12
- parents/guardians should be notified, by the Sports Leader, of injuries/illness which children incur while participating in a sporting activity
- all clubs should have a simple and widely known emergency plan to ensure safety procedures
- umpires and referees should ensure that the conduct of the games conform to the standards set by the Governing Body of Sport
- children should be taught the rules of the game at club level and be encouraged to abide by them, keeping in mind that many rules are there for safety

- it is important that before children participate in a sporting activity, they have learned and agreed personal safety rules. If Sports Leaders take children into potentially dangerous situations they should hold the appropriate qualification required by the Governing Body concerned
- parents/guardians should know, and abide by, the starting and finishing times of sessions and events

#### 4.7 INSURANCE

All clubs and organisations should ensure that appropriate insurance cover is in place to cover the activities of the club, Sports Leaders and participants. Away trips should be included in such cover. For away trips parents/guardians should be made aware of the need for comprehensive insurance to cover their child, e.g. health /medical insurance etc.

Adults transporting children in their cars should be aware of the extent and limits of their motor insurance cover, particularly in relation to acceptable numbers and liability.

#### 4.8 REGISTRATION, DROPOUT AND CLUB TRANSFERS

Loss of club members, including adult transfers, should be monitored. Any unusual or unexpected dropout or club transfer of children or Sports Leaders should be checked out by the Club Children's Officer and/or the governing body. If any concerns regarding a child or children's welfare are raised the matter should be handled in accordance with procedures outlined in section 5.12 of this Code.

#### 4.9 DISCIPLINE IN CHILDREN'S SPORT

Discipline in sport should always be positive in focus, providing the structure and rules that allow participants to learn to set their own goals and strive for them. It should encourage young people to become more responsible for themselves and therefore more independent.

Children should be helped to become responsible about the decisions and choices they make within sport, particularly when they are likely to make a difference between playing fairly and unfairly. There should be no place for fighting, over-aggressive or dangerous behaviour in sport.

##### 4.9.1 THE USE OF SANCTIONS

The use of sanctions is an important element in the maintenance of discipline. The age and developmental stage of the child should be taken into consideration when using sanctions. Sanctions should be fair and consistent and in the case of persistent offence, should be progressively applied. They should never be used to retaliate or to make a Sports Leader feel better. The following steps are suggested and should always be used in conjunction with the code of conduct for young people:

- rules should be stated clearly and agreed
- a warning should be given if a rule is broken
- a sanction (for example, use of time out) should be applied if a rule is broken for a second time. The use of green, yellow and red cards are encouraged, irrespective of the sport
- if a rule is broken for the third time the child should be spoken to, and if necessary, the parents/guardians may be involved
- sanctions should not be applied if a Sports Leader is not comfortable with them. If an appropriate action cannot be devised right away, the child should be told that the matter will be dealt with later, at a specified time and as soon as possible
- a child should not be sanctioned for making errors when s/he is playing
- physical activity (e.g. running laps or doing push-ups) should not be used as a sanction. To do so only causes a child to resent physical activity, something that s/he should learn to enjoy throughout his/her life
- sanctions should be used sparingly. Constant sanctioning and criticism can cause a child to turn away from sport
- once sanctions have been imposed, it is important to make the young person feel s/he is a valued member of the group again
- where relevant some sanctions may need to be recorded and parents informed

##### 4.10 USE OF PHOTOGRAPHIC AND MOBILE EQUIPMENT

Each club should adopt a policy in relation to the use of images of athletes on their websites and other publications, as there have been concerns about the risks posed directly and indirectly to children and young people. Adults and sports leaders need to work together to prevent those wishing to cause such harm to young people. Remember having photographic and filming guidelines is not about preventing parents from taking pictures, it is to ensure that only those who have a right to take photographs do so. Anyone concerned about photography taking place at events or training sessions can contact the children's officer/ designated person and ask them to deal with the matter.

The purpose is to reduce the risk of inappropriate, unsolicited attention from people within and outside the sport. Group photographs where the club is identified rather than individuals are good for publicity without creating a risk to those in the photographs. As a guide try to remember the following:-

- If the athlete is named, avoid using their photograph.
- If a photograph is used, avoid naming the athlete.
- Ask for the athlete's permission to use their image to ensure that they are aware of the way the image is to be used to represent the sport.
- Ask for parental permission to use the athlete's image to ensure that parents are aware of the way the image is to be used to represent the sport. A permission form could be used or make an announcement at the start of an event.
- To reduce the risk of inappropriate use, only use images of athletes in suitable dress. The content of the photograph should focus on the activity not on a particular child
- Talk to children's officer/designated person if you are worried about use of images

Amateur photographers/film/video operators wishing to record an event or practice session should seek accreditation with the children's officer, event organiser or leader of session. Permission forms should be available on site.

To ensure spectators and participants are informed of the policy, the club/event/organisation should display the following information prior to the start of an event and where possible make an announcement over a tannoy.

*"In line with the recommendation in the \_\_\_\_\_ (name of club /association's) Code of Conduct, the promoters of this event request that any person wishing to engage in any video, zoom or close range photography should register their details with the organisers. It is not advisable that children are photographed or filmed without their permission and/or the permission of their parent/guardian".*

### **Working in Partnership to protect young people**

Photographs, when used with personal information, can be used as a means of identifying children. This practice can make a child vulnerable to an individual who may wish to "groom" that child for abuse. Furthermore the content of the photo can be used or adapted for inappropriate use. There is evidence of this adapted material finding its way onto child pornography sites. Adults and sports leaders need to work together to prevent those wishing to cause such harm to young people.

### **Mobile Phones**

Mobile phones are often given to children for security, enabling parents to keep in touch and make sure they are safe. Young people value their phones highly as it offers them a sense of independence. In addition mobile phones allow quick and easy contact, which can make a safe and efficient way to carry out club business. However such technology has also allowed an increase in direct personal contact with young people, in some cases used to cross personal boundaries and cause harm to young people. Within clubs there is a need to encourage responsible and secure use of mobile phones by adults and young people.

As a young person remember

- If you receive an offensive photo, email or message, do not reply, save it, make a note of times and dates and tell a parent or children's officer/designated person within the club.
- Be careful about who you give your phone number to and don't respond to unfamiliar numbers
- Change your phone number in cases of bullying or harassment
- Don't use the phone in certain locations; inappropriate use of your camera phone may cause upset or offence to another person, e.g. changing rooms
- Treat your phone as you would any other valuable item so that you guard against theft

As a Leader remember

- Use group texts for communication among athletes and teams and inform parents of this at the start of the season
- It is not appropriate to have constant communication with individual athletes
- Don't use the phone in certain locations; inappropriate use of your camera phone may cause upset or offence to another person, e.g. changing rooms

For further information see [www.irishsportsCouncil.ie/code](http://www.irishsportsCouncil.ie/code)



*Chapter 5*  
**Protection**



*Chapter 5*  
**Protection**



## PROTECTION

*Child protection policies and procedures should be adopted by all Governing Bodies/Sports Clubs and supported by their constitutions.*

*A central goal for all involved in children's sport is to provide a safe, positive and nurturing environment where children can develop and enhance their physical and social skills. Promoting a child-centred ethos should go hand in hand with identifying and eliminating practices that impact negatively on safe and enjoyable participation in children's sport.*

### 5.1 AREAS OF RISK FOR CHILDREN IN SPORT

Awareness of risk to children's happiness and welfare in sport should be seen as central to protection against harm. Such risk could include the following:

- children suffering significant harm by being deprived of proper supervision and safety
- Sports Leaders, parents/guardians subjecting children to constant criticism, sarcasm, rejection, threatening behaviour or pressure to perform at unrealistic levels
- the infliction of any form of non-accidental injury or other forms of child abuse (See 5.8)

### 5.2 SUBSTANCE ABUSE IN SPORT

- the use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco should be actively discouraged as being incompatible with a healthy approach to sporting activity
- the use of alcohol before coaching, during sessions and events and on away trips should be avoided
- under-age clubs and teams should be encouraged to organise receptions and celebrations in a non-alcoholic environment and in a manner that is suitable for the age group concerned. Adults should act as role models for appropriate behaviour and refrain from drinking alcohol at such functions
- Sports Leaders should promote fair competition through the development of sound training practice and should actively discourage the use of any substance that is perceived to offer short cuts to improved performances or to by-pass the commitment and hard work required to achieve success
- it is the responsibility of all Sports Leaders to educate and inform those in their care as to the short and long-term effects of substances taken to enhance performances. Officials should also ensure that those in their charge are aware of the harmful side effects or the illegality of proscribed drugs or other banned performance-enhancing substances
- Sports Leaders in children's sport should refrain from seeking sponsorship from the alcohol and tobacco industries

Children and parents/guardians involved in sport should be aware of the Sports Councils' Anti-Doping Programmes, see [www.irishsportsCouncil.ie](http://www.irishsportsCouncil.ie) / [www.ukSport.gov.uk/did](http://www.ukSport.gov.uk/did)

### 5.3 PSYCHOLOGICAL STRESS, BURNOUT AND DROPOUT OF CHILDREN IN SPORT

Burnout may be defined as a process resulting from an activity that was once a source of fun and personal satisfaction, but later becomes associated with progressive physical and psychological distress. There is a range of factors, which may cause this change, some of which are not associated with the child's sporting activities. Burnout itself may result from a combination of the number of hours involved in physical training with high expectations and pressure from Sports Leaders and parents/guardians. It represents a loss of energy and enthusiasm for sport and is characterised by anxiety and stress. The child no longer has fun and becomes overwhelmed by the demands of competition and training. S/he may wish to drop out of sport.

Within a sporting context the following practices are harmful to children's health and welfare:

- pressuring a child to perform at a level which is beyond his/her capacity based on age or maturation level
- over-training or the making of demands on a child that lead to burnout
- knowingly permitting an injured child to participate in a sporting activity
- failure to take adequate precautions to protect a child from environmental hazards
- failure to take account of known ailments or relevant weaknesses of a child

**Psychological stress within the sporting context can be caused by:**

- over-emphasis on winning
- age-inappropriate expectations
- excessive criticism
- inappropriate use of sanctions/discipline
- rejection
- disapproval of skill/performance ability
- failure to provide support and encouragement for effort and achievement
- failure to involve a child/children as fully as possible in the activity
- the use of coarse, inappropriate language

#### **5.3.1 Signs of psychological stress and burnout**

- sleep disturbance
- irritability
- tension
- lack of energy
- sadness/depression
- frequent illness
- loss of interest and enthusiasm
- absenteeism, arriving late, leaving early
- no pleasurable anticipation of participation in sporting events

#### **5.3.2 Combating psychological stress and burnout**

Children who show an early aptitude for sport are very often asked to participate in a range of team sports or across a range of age groups. This can put them at risk of stress and burnout.

Stress and burnout can be prevented and dropout rates reduced by measures such as:

- listening to and respecting children's views about participation
- parents/guardians and Sports Leaders de-emphasising the importance of winning and encouraging the development of individual skills and effort instead
- attaining an appropriate match between the individual child's ability and the activity in which s/he is participating
- ensuring that the physical or sporting abilities of the child are not viewed by the child as indications of his/her self worth
- ensuring that children have fun and enjoy activities in which they are involved

- encouraging younger children to play a variety of different sports both at individual and at team level. This promotes variety and encourages a range of different sport skills in participants
- using modified games
- maximising the involvement of children by using substitutions
- ensuring that children are not participating in adverse climatic conditions

#### 5.4 BULLYING

The risk of bullying and harassment by adults and by children should be anticipated by taking active steps to prevent it occurring. A prompt and decisive response should be made to any indications that it is taking place.

##### 5.4.1 What is Bullying?

Bullying is *repeated* aggression be it verbal, psychological or physical, which is conducted by an individual or group against others. It is behaviour, which is intentionally aggravating and intimidating and occurs mainly among children in social environments such as schools, sports clubs and other organisations working with children. It includes behaviours such as teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting or extortion by one or more children against a victim. It is the responsibility of Sports Leaders to deal with bullying that may take place in the organisation. Each club/organisation should have a clear policy on bullying which is known to members and implemented by Sports Leaders. Incidents of bullying should be dealt with immediately and not tolerated under any circumstances.

Many children are reluctant to tell adults that they are being bullied. Older children are even more reluctant. This underlines the need for constant vigilance and encouragement to report bullying.

##### 5.4.2 Combating Bullying

All clubs/organisations should have an anti-bullying policy, which includes the following measures:

- raising awareness of bullying as an unacceptable form of behaviour
- creating a club ethos which encourages children, Sports Leaders and parents/guardians to report bullying and to use the procedures of the complaints mechanism of the organisation to address this problem
- providing comprehensive supervision of children at all sporting activities
- providing a supportive environment for victims of bullying
- obtaining the co-operation of parents/guardians to counter bullying

For further information see [www.irishsportsCouncil.ie/code](http://www.irishsportsCouncil.ie/code)  
and [www.sportni.net/childprotection](http://www.sportni.net/childprotection)

## 5.5 CHILD ABUSE

A sports club/organisation, like any other organisation that includes children among its members, is vulnerable to the occurrence of child abuse. This possibility should be openly acknowledged and addressed in its formal policies and procedures. An environment, in which awareness of what constitutes abusive behaviour and a willingness to tackle the issue head on, is the most likely to contribute to the implementation of effective child protection measures. It is only by discussing and agreeing procedures and best practice that all Sports Leaders can be assured that they are providing the safest and most enjoyable experiences in sport for the children and for themselves.

## 5.6 CHILD PROTECTION IN SPORT

The prevention and detection of child abuse depends on the collaborative effort of everyone concerned. The following factors are central to effective child protection in sport:

- acceptance by all involved with children that abuse, whether physical, emotional, neglect or sexual is wrong, severely damages children and must be confronted
- awareness of the behavioural and physical indicators of various forms of abuse
- knowledge of the appropriate response and action to be taken where abuse is revealed or suspected
- vigilance, and avoidance of all situations conducive to risk
- open, trusting and co-operative relationships within the club/organisation, and with parents/guardians and others concerned with children's progress or welfare
- willingness to co-operate with the Statutory Authorities (police authorities, health services executives or social services), in relation to sharing information about child protection concerns at any time

## 5.7 HARM

Harm can be defined as the ill-treatment or the impairment of the health or development of a child. Whether it is significant is determined by his/her health and the development as compared to that which could reasonably be expected of a child of similar age, (Children First or Children (NI) Order Article 66 3.2.2).

## 5.8 CATEGORIES OF ABUSE

All Sports Leaders should be familiar with signs and behaviours that may be indicative of child abuse. Though a child may be subjected to more than one type of harm, abuse is normally categorised into four different types: neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse. For detailed definitions of abuse, refer to Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children (R.O.I.) and Co-operating (N.I.) to Safeguard Children. The categories of abuse may be briefly summarised as follows:

### 1. Child Neglect

Neglect is normally defined in terms of an omission, where a child suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults, or medical care. It may also include neglect of a child's basic emotional needs.

Neglect generally becomes apparent in different ways over a period of time rather than at one specific point. For instance, a child who suffers a series of minor injuries is not having his or her needs for supervision and safety met. The threshold of significant harm is reached when abusive interactions dominate and become typical of the relationship between the child and the parent/guardian.

## 2. Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is normally to be found in the relationship between an adult and a child rather than in a specific event or pattern of events. It occurs when a child's need for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met. It is rarely manifested in terms of physical symptoms. For children with disabilities it may include over-protection or conversely failure to acknowledge or understand a child's disability.

Examples of emotional abuse include:

- (a) Persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming;
- (b) Where the level of care is conditional on his or her behaviour;
- (c) Unresponsiveness, inconsistent or unrealistic expectations of a child;
- (d) Premature imposition of responsibility on the child;
- (e) Over or under protection of the child;
- (f) Failure to provide opportunities for the child's education and development;
- (g) Use of unrealistic or over-harsh disciplinary measures;
- (h) Exposure to domestic violence.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone. The threshold of significant harm is reached when abusive interactions dominate and become typical of the relationship between the child and the parent/guardian.

## 3. Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is any form of non-accidental injury that causes significant harm to a child, including:

- (a) Shaking, hitting or throwing
- (b) Use of excessive force in handling;
- (c) Deliberate poisoning;
- (d) Suffocation or drowning
- (e) Munchausen's syndrome by proxy (where parents/guardians fabricate stories of illness about their child or cause physical signs of illness);
- (f) Allowing or creating a substantial risk of significant harm to a child;
- (g) For children with disabilities it may include confinement to a room or cot, or incorrectly given drugs to control behaviour
- (h) Burning or scalding

## 4. Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or sexual arousal, or for that of others, For example:

- (a) Exposure of the sexual organs or any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of a child;
- (b) Intentional touching or molesting of the body of a child whether by a person or object for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification;
- (c) Masturbation in the presence of a child or involvement of the child in the act of masturbation;
- (d) Sexual intercourse with the child, whether oral, vaginal or anal;
- (e) Sexual exploitation of a child;
- (f) It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

## 5.9 SIGNS OF CHILD ABUSE

Signs of abuse can be physical, behavioural or developmental. A cluster or pattern of signs is the most reliable indicator of abuse. Indicators should be noted. It is important, however, to realise that all of these indicators can occur in other situations where abuse has not been a factor, and that the list is not exhaustive. For further information see Appendix 1, Children First (R.O.I.) or Appendix 2, ACPC Regional Policy & Procedures (NI). Some examples include:-

CATEGORY	Indicators	
<b>ABUSE</b>	<b>Physical</b>	<b>Behavioural</b>
PHYSICAL	Unexplained bruising in soft tissue areas Bites, burns and scalds	Becoming withdrawn or aggressive Reluctance to change clothing
EMOTIONAL	Drop in performance Crying	Regressive behaviour Excessive clinginess
NEGLECT	Weight loss Untreated fractures	Changes in attendance Reluctance to go home
SEXUAL	Torn or bloodstained clothing Inappropriate sexual awareness, behaviour or language	Distrustful of adults Sudden drop in performance

## 5.10 GROUNDS FOR CONCERN

Consider the possibility of child abuse if there are reasonable grounds for concern. Reasonable grounds for concern (page 38, Children First 4.3.2, ACPC Regional Policy and Procedures Appendix 2), exist when there is:

- a specific indication from a child that s/he has been abused
- an account by a person who saw the child being abused
- evidence, *such as an injury or behaviour* which is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused another way
- an injury or behaviour which is consistent both with abuse and with an innocent explanation but where there are corroborative indicators supporting the concern that it may be a case of abuse. An example of this would be a pattern of injuries, an implausible explanation, other indications of abuse, dysfunctional behaviour;
- consistent indication, over a period of time, that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect

## 5.11 PROTECTIONS FOR PERSONS REPORTING CHILD ABUSE ACT, 1998 (IRL)

The Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998 provides immunity from civil liability to persons who report child abuse “reasonably and in good faith” to the Health Board (*now Health Services Executives*) or the Gardai. This means that, even if a reported suspicion of child abuse proves unfounded, a plaintiff who took an action would have to prove that the reporter had not acted reasonably and in good faith in making the report.

This Act came into operation on 23rd January, 1999. The main provisions of the Act are:

- (1) the provision of immunity from civil liability to any person who reports child abuse “reasonably and in good faith” to designated officers of Health Boards (*now HSE*) or any member of An Garda Síochána;
- (2) the provision of significant protections for employees who report child abuse. These protections cover all employees and all forms of discrimination up to and including, dismissal;
- (3) the creation of a new offence of false reporting of child abuse where a person makes a report of child abuse to the appropriate authorities “knowing that statement to be false”. This is a new criminal offence designed to protect innocent persons from malicious reports.

This law does not exist in Northern Ireland, but an individual who reports a concern in ‘good faith’ is not deliberately attempting to slander another person’s name. In Northern Ireland there is legislation, the Criminal Law Act (NI) 1967 which places the responsibility on everybody to report offences or to forward information to the police by emphasising the,

*‘duty of every other person, who knows or believes,*

- a) that the offence or some other arrestable offences has been committed; and*
- b) that he has information which is likely to secure, or to be material assistance in securing, the apprehension, prosecution or conviction of any person for that offence.’*

## 5.12 RECOGNISING AND REPORTING OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

Each club should have clear procedures for responding to reports or concerns relating to the welfare and safety of children. All Sports Leaders, children and parents/guardians should be aware of how to report and to whom concerns should be reported within the club/organisation. These procedures should be consistent with Statutory Authority guidelines, i.e. Children First (ROI) and Our Duty to Care (NI) and with the procedures outlined in this Code. Copies of the Statutory Authority guidelines should be available in all sports clubs/organisations. Everyone involved in working with young people should be aware of their responsibility to work in co-operation with the statutory child protection authorities.

The ability to recognise child abuse depends as much on a person’s willingness to accept the possibility of its existence as it does on knowledge and information. It is important to note that child abuse is not always readily visible, and may not be clearly observable. If a Sports Leader or a parent/guardian is uneasy or suspicious about a child’s safety or welfare the following response should be made:

### 5.12.1 Reporting Child Abuse

The following steps should be followed in reporting child abuse to the Statutory Authorities:

- (a) Observe and note dates, times, locations and contexts in which the incident occurred or suspicion was aroused, together with any other relevant information;
- (b) Report the matter as soon as possible to the designated person. If there are reasonable grounds (See 5.10) for believing that the child has been abused or is at risk of abuse, s/he will make a report to the statutory authorities who have statutory responsibility to investigate, assess and validate suspected or actual child abuse;
- (c) In cases of emergency, where a child appears to be at immediate and serious risk and the Designated Person is unable to contact a duty social worker the police authorities should be contacted. Under no circumstances should a child be left in a dangerous situation pending intervention by the Statutory Authorities;

- (d) If the Designated Person is unsure whether reasonable grounds for concern exist or not, s/he should informally consult with the local duty social worker. S/he will be advised whether or not the matter requires a formal report;
- (e) A Designated Person reporting suspected or actual child abuse to the Statutory Authorities should first inform the family of their intention to make such a report, **unless doing so would endanger the child or undermine an investigation;**
- (f) A report should be given by the Designated Person to the Statutory Authorities in person or by phone, and in writing; without delay (see appendix 6)
- (g) It is best to report child abuse concerns by making personal contact with the relevant personnel in the Statutory Authorities and follow up in writing
- (h) In those cases where the sports club/organisation finds that it does not have reasonable grounds for reporting a concern to the Statutory Authorities, the member who raised the concern should be given a clear written statement by the designated person of the reasons why the sports club/organisation is not taking action. The member should be advised that, if they remain concerned about the situation, they are free to consult with, or report to, the Statutory Authorities in their area.

#### 5.12.2 Response to a child reporting any form of abuse

The following points should be taken into consideration:

- (a) The child should understand in an age appropriate way that it is not possible that any information will be kept a secret;
- (b) It is important to deal with any allegation of abuse in a sensitive and competent way through listening to and facilitating the child to tell about the problem, rather than interviewing the child about details of what happened;
- (c) It is important to stay calm and not to show any extreme reaction to what the child is saying. Listen compassionately, and take what the child is saying seriously;
- (d) It should be understood that the child has decided to tell about something very important and has taken a risk to do so. The experience of telling should be a positive one so that the child will not mind talking to those involved in the investigation;
- (e) No judgmental statement should be made against the person against whom the allegation is made;
- (f) The child should not be questioned unless the nature of what s/he is saying is unclear. Leading questions should be avoided. Open, non-specific questions can be used if necessary such as “Can you explain to me what you mean by that”. Try to let the child tell their story, use their words
- (g) The child should be given some indication of what would happen next, such as informing parents/guardians, health board or social services. It should be kept in mind that the child may have been threatened and may feel vulnerable at this stage.



### 5.13 INFORMAL CONSULTATION

Persons unsure about whether or not certain behaviours are abusive and therefore reportable, should contact the duty social worker in the local health services executive or social services department where they will receive advice.

### 5.14 SOURCES OF CHILD ABUSE

It is important to realise that children may be subjected to abuse by parents/guardians or other family members, persons outside their family, other children, or those who have responsibility for their care for one reason or another for short or long periods of time.

### 5.15 CHILDREN WHO MAY BE ESPECIALLY VULNERABLE TO ABUSE

Children in certain situations may be especially vulnerable to abuse. These include children who, for short or long periods, are separated from parents or other family members and depend on other adults for their care and protection. Children with disabilities may also be more at risk as the nature of their disability sometimes limits communication between themselves and others and they may depend more than most children on a variety of adults to meet their needs, for example, for care and transport. Those from a minority racial background may also be especially vulnerable. This could be due to the difficulty in recognising that racism is inherent in our society, which impacts on a child's ability to seek help from those in positions of authority.

### 5.16 PEER ABUSE

In some cases of child abuse the alleged perpetrator will also be a child and it is important that behaviour of this nature is not ignored. Grounds for concern will exist in cases where there is an age difference and/or difference in power, status or intellect between the children involved. However, it is also important to distinguish between normal sexual behaviour and abusive behaviour.

### 5.17 ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST SPORTS LEADERS

#### SEE FLOWCHART APPENDIX 12

Each club/sports organisation should have agreed procedures to be followed in cases of alleged child abuse against Sports Leaders. If such an allegation is made, two steps should be taken:

- (i) The reporting procedure (See 5.11)
- (ii) The procedure for dealing with the Sports Leader

## 5.17.1 Special Considerations

The following points should be considered

- the safety of the child making the allegation and any others who are/may be at risk should be ensured and this should take precedence over any other consideration. In this regard, the sports club/organisation should take any necessary steps which may be immediately necessary to protect children
- if a Sports Leader is the subject of the concern s/he should be treated with respect and fairness

## 5.17.2 Steps to be taken within the Sports Organisation

Where reasonable grounds for concern exist (See 5.10) the following steps should be taken by the club/organisation:

- advice should be sought from the local duty social worker with regard to any action by the club deemed necessary to protect the child/children who may be at risk
- the matter should be reported to the local statutory authorities following the standard reporting procedure outlined above
- in the event that the concern is connected to the actions of a Sports Leader in the club, the Sports Leader involved in the concern should be asked to stand aside pending the outcome of any investigation by the Statutory Authorities. It is advisable that this task be undertaken by a senior office holder other than the designated person/children's officer who takes the responsibility for reporting

When the Sports Leader is being privately informed by the senior officer of a) the fact that an allegation has been made against him/her and b) the nature of the allegation, s/he should be afforded an opportunity to respond. His/her response should be noted and passed on to the statutory authorities.

All persons involved in a child protection process (the child, his/her parents/guardians, the alleged offender, his/her family, Sports Leaders) should be afforded appropriate respect, fairness, support and confidentiality at all stages of the procedure.

Once the criminal process is completed, employers should consider the need to examine whether there are grounds for disciplinary proceedings for misconduct. The fact that the alleged abuser has not been prosecuted or has been found not guilty does not mean that such proceedings are not necessary or feasible.

## 5.18 CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality is about managing information in a respectful, professional and purposeful manner. Confidentiality should be maintained in respect of all issues and people involved in concerns about the welfare of a child or bad practice within a club. It is important that the rights of both the child and the person about whom the complaint has been made are protected.

**The following points should be borne in mind:**

- a guarantee of confidentiality or undertakings regarding secrecy cannot be given, as the welfare of the child will supersede all other considerations
- all information should be treated in a careful and sensitive manner and should be discussed only with those who need to know
- information should be conveyed to the parents/guardians of the child about whom there are concerns in a sensitive way
- giving information to others on a “need to know” basis for the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality

**5.19 DEALING WITH ANONYMOUS COMPLAINTS**

Anonymous complaints can be difficult to deal with but should not be ignored. In all cases the safety and welfare of the child/children is paramount. Any such complaints relating to inappropriate behaviour should be brought to the attention of the Designated Person. This information should be checked out and handled in a confidential manner.

Any such complaints relating to child protection concerns should be handled in accordance with procedures outlined in this Code.

**5.20 RUMOURS**

Rumours should not be allowed to hang in the air. Any rumours relating to inappropriate behaviour circulating in sports organisations should be brought to the attention of the Designated Person and checked out without delay. Any ensuing information should be handled confidentially and with sensitivity. If the designated person has reasonable grounds for concern that a child has been abused s/he should refer the matter to the Statutory Authorities, using the standard reporting procedure. (See 5.12) If there is any doubt about the requirement to report the substance of a rumour, advice should be sought from the duty social worker in the local health board or social services department.

Children should be encouraged to report problems or concerns directly to their Children's Officer (See Chapter 2) and/or to their parents/guardians, or any trusted adult, regardless of how minor or serious the problem might be. Parents/guardians should also encourage children to inform them of any such problems or concerns.

Open trusting relationships between adults and children will help to ensure that all-important issues are dealt with in a constructive manner.

## 5.21 DISCLOSING INFORMATION TO OTHERS

### Northern Ireland

If as a sport's organisation/club who have information about an individual, who you are concerned poses a risk to children, joining another organisation/club you should seek advice from the police (Child Abuse Rape Enquiry Unit) before disclosing that information. Northern Ireland Office guidance places the responsibility on the police to co-ordinate and lead the risk assessment and management process. The police have a standardised assessment method to consider the risk an individual may pose. Depending on this risk assessment and what access the individual has to children the police will take the decision about sharing information. Sport's people should not feel that they have the burden of this knowledge alone.

### Republic of Ireland

In the absence of the above guidance and police service, the ISC recommend that best practice is to disclose information requested by a third party which is given in order to provide protection to a young person now or in the future.

# *Appendices*

# *Appendices*

## APPENDIX 1

### **Sample Policy Statement for Sports Clubs/Organisations**

This sports club/organisation is fully committed to safeguarding the well being of its members. Every individual in the club/organisation should, at all times, show respect and understanding for their rights, safety and welfare, and conduct themselves in a way that reflects the principles of the club/organisation and the guidelines contained in the *Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport*.

The sample policy statement above should be written into the Constitution of the club/organisation.

A more detailed policy statement may be drawn up for a particular club/organisation.

The following sample child protection policies should be an appendix to the Constitution.

### **Sample Child Protection Policy for a Club**

“To ensure that the best practice is followed by this club we shall work closely with our Governing Body. In order to promote the best practice in children's sport, we shall comply with the guidelines of the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport; as set out in Section 2.7 which are:” (each club should insert the sixteen bullet points which are set out in Section 2.7 of the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport).

### **Sample Child Protection Policy for an Organisation (Governing Body)**

“As the organisation recognised by the international federation, as being responsible for the administration of our sport, we are responsible for overseeing the adoption and the implementation of the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport, by our members. To maximise compliance with the Code, as set out in Section 2.6 we shall:” (each organisation/governing body should insert the 11 bullet points which are set out in Section 2.6 of the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport).

**VOLUNTEER / COACH APPLICATION FORM  
FOR THOSE WITH SUBSTANTIAL ACCESS TO CHILDREN**  
All information received in this form will be treated confidentially

Name:  Maiden Name (if applicable):

Current Address:

Previous Address over the last 5 years:

How long have you lived at this address?

List any address outside of NI on additional sheet (Northern Ireland only)

Place of birth(Town/City)

Telephone No:  Mobile  DOB:

PPS Number (R.O.I only):  NI Number (N.I only):

Previous work/voluntary experience & relevant qualifications

Do you agree to abide by Sports Governing Body Code of Conduct (copy included with this form)?

Yes  No

Have you ever been asked to leave a sporting organisation in the past?  
*(if you have answered yes we will contact you in confidence)*

Yes  No

Any other relevant information?

Please supply the names of two responsible people whom we can contact and who from personal knowledge are willing to endorse your application. If you have had a previous involvement in a sports club one of these names should be that of an administrator / leader in your last club / place of involvement.

Name:  Name:

Address:  Address:

Tel:  Tel:

Position:  Position:

**FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY:**

Date application received:  Date of Interview:

Interviewed by: 1.

2.

References received and are satisfactory: Yes  No

Comments:

Statutory check completed & returned (if appropriate): Yes  No  N/A

Proof of applicants identification received: Yes  No

Recommendation:  Approved Reasons  Not Approved Reasons:

Signed:  Dated:



**APPENDIX 3**

**Confidential Reference Form**

*(this form can be used as a telephone reference or used as a written reference)*

The following person: Name:  expressed an interest in working with:  (name club / organisation) as  (list position)

*If you are happy to complete this reference, any information will be treated with due confidentiality and in accordance with relevant legislation and guidance. Information will only be shared with the person conducting the assessment of the candidate's suitability for the post, if he/she is offered the position. We appreciate you being extremely candid, open and honest in your evaluation.*

1. How long have you known this person?

2. In what capacity?

3. What attributes does this person have that would make them suited to this work?

4. Please rate this person on the following-please tick one box for each statement:

	Poor	Average	Good	V Good	Excellent
Responsibility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Maturity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Self-motivation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Can motivate others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Energy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trustworthiness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reliability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**This post involves substantial access to young people. As an organisation committed to the welfare and protection of young people, we are anxious to know if you have any reason at all to be concerned about this applicant being in contact with children and young people**

YES  NO

*If you have answered YES we will contact you in confidence*

Signed:  Date:

Position in organisation:

Name of club / organisation:

## APPENDIX 4

### Protection of Children (NI) Service (Northern Ireland Only)

The Pre-Employment Consultancy Service (PECS) has been operated by the DHSSPS since 1982 to assist agencies in screening out unsuitable people when recruiting to positions with substantial access to children and to adults with learning disabilities. New legislation, the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (NI) Order 2003 (POCVA) has enhanced the arrangements for safeguarding vulnerable members of society.

From April 2005 the system for vetting those who work with children will no longer be known as PECS but the Protection of Children (NI) Service (POC (NI)).

The new Protection Of Children and Vulnerable Adults (NI) Order (POCVA) became law in February 2003 but only became operational (with the exception of Article 46) in April 2005. POCVA aims to improve existing safeguards for children and vulnerable adults by preventing unsuitable people working with them in any capacity whether paid or unpaid. POCVA complements each agency's own child protection measures and all agencies entrusted with the care of children need to have robust recruitment and staff selection procedures, which are enhanced after appointment by appropriate training, supervision and appraisal processes.

POC (NI) should only be used as part of an overall recruitment policy. It provides organisations registered with POC (NI) in Northern Ireland with one means of checking the suitability of an individual seeking work with children. It is designed to be an information service which provides an additional safeguard which complements and strengthens staff recruitment and selection procedures. The use of POC(NI) by organisations has a deterrent effect but should never be relied upon to screen out all abusers. It is not a foolproof guarantee of suitability. POC (NI) provides a means for accessing any information, which might have a bearing on an individual's suitability held by the:

- Police (criminal records);
- the DHSSPS Disqualification from Working with Children List;
- the Department of Education (List 99); **and**
- Protection of Children Act List (POCAL) POCVA creates an offence for an organisation/club to "knowingly" employ (paid or in a voluntary capacity) someone in a 'regulated position' who has been disqualified from working with children.

The definition of 'regulated position' is clarified in POCVA and is much wider than the previous definition of substantial access used by the DHSSPS to determine which posts can be checked. The definition of a regulated position also includes all supervisors/managers of those who work in regulated positions. This will mean carrying out pre-employment checks on staff / volunteers to ensure there is no known reason that they should not be working with children (in a regulated position).

The Department strongly encourages non-regulated organisations to carry out checks on all regulated positions that fall into the definition. Although legal responsibility of POCVA does not extend to all voluntary and community organisations the legislation suggests an implicit responsibility on anyone appointing staff or volunteers to regulated positions to undertake appropriate checks.

All responsible organisations will want to satisfy themselves that the potential employee/volunteer does not have a criminal record for violence, abuse or neglect of children before offering a regulated position. Organisations who do not carry out the appropriate checks may find themselves without any adequate defence against a charge of 'knowingly' employing someone who is disqualified from working with children.

For further information please contact the

#### *Child Care Policy Directorate*

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety  
Room D1.4, Castle Buildings  
Stormont Estate, Belfast BT4 3SQ, Tel: 028 90522559

**APPENDIX 5**

**DISCLOSURE OF CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS & PERMISSION  
FOR STATUTORY CHECKS FOR THOSE WORKING WITH CHILDREN**

*(Please read this information carefully)*

**Statement of non-discrimination:**

Name of Sports Organisation is committed to equal opportunity for all applicants including those with criminal convictions. Information about criminal convictions is requested to assist the selection process and will be taken into account only when the conviction is considered relevant to the post. Any disclosure will be seen in the context of the job criteria, the nature of the offence and the responsibility for the care of existing clients\customers and employees.

**For the purposes of your application for the post of:**

\_\_\_\_\_ it is our policy to ask for a check to be carried out by the statutory organisation responsible for this task in the jurisdiction in which you are working/volunteering

**Advice to Applicants:**

Please complete this form as accurately as possible and return it marked **“Confidential” in the envelope provided**. An arrangement will be made with you to discuss any clarification if required.

Thank you for your co-operation.

You **must** tell us now if you have a case pending or if you have ever been convicted of a criminal offence, or cautioned the police, or bound over. You **must** include all offences, even minor matters such as motoring offences, and ‘spent’ conviction, that is, things which happened a long time ago. If you leave anything out it may effect your application. The disclosure of a criminal record or other information will not debar you from registration / appointment unless (Name of Sports Governing Body) considers that the conviction renders you unsuitable. In making this decision (Name of Sports Governing Body) will consider the nature of the offence, how long ago it was committed and what age you were at the time and other factors which may be relevant.

**Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence or been the subject of a caution; a Bound Over Order; or are you at present the subject of criminal investigations?**

Yes       No

If so, please state below the nature and date(s) of the offence(s)

**Please provide any other information you feel may be of relevance such as:**

- the circumstances of the offence
- a comment on the sentence received
- any relevant developments in your situation since then
- whether or not you feel the conviction has relevance to this post.

**I declare that all answers are complete and correct to the best of my knowledge and I will inform the designated person of any future convictions or charges. I consent to the check being made via the statutory authorities in which I intend to work/volunteer. I am also aware that Name of Sport as the umbrella organisation carrying out the check, may, following discussion with myself, share the information returned with my club chairperson.**

**Signature:**

**Print Name:**

**Date:**

**Please return completed forms to:**



**APPENDIX 6**

**Recording Allegations or Suspicions of Abuse**

*This form is based on 'standard reporting form' used by the Health Services Executive in ROI. The form can be filled out in consultation with the statutory authorities. Complete as many questions as possible.*

**1 Details of Child**

Name of Child:  Male / Female:

Address:

Age:  School:

**1a** Name of the Mother:

Address if different to above:

Telephone Number:

Name of the Father:

Address if different to above:

Telephone Number:

**1b** Care and Custody arrangements regarding child, if known:

**1c** Household Composition

Name:  Relationship:

Date of Birth:  Add. Information:

Sample 'standard reporting form' continued.....

- 2 Details of concern(s), allegation(s) or incident(s), dates, times, who was present, description or any observed injuries, parent's view(s), child's view(s) if known:

- 3 Details of person(s) allegedly causing concern in relation to the child:

Name:

Age:  Male/Female:

Address:

Relationship to child:  Occupation:

- 4 Name and Address of other personnel or agencies involved with this child:

Social workers: <input style="width: 300px; height: 100px;" type="text"/>	School: <input style="width: 300px; height: 100px;" type="text"/>
---	---

Public Health Nurses: <input style="width: 300px; height: 100px;" type="text"/>	Gardai: <input style="width: 300px; height: 100px;" type="text"/>
---	---

G.P.: <input style="width: 300px; height: 100px;" type="text"/>	Pre-school/crèche/youth groups/after school groups <input style="width: 300px; height: 100px;" type="text"/>
---	---

Hospital: <input style="width: 300px; height: 100px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 300px; height: 100px;" type="text"/>
---	---

Sample 'standard reporting form' continued.....

5 Are parents/legal guardians aware of this referral to the social work depart. Yes/no   
If yes, what is their attitude?

6 Details of person reporting concerns (please see guidance notes below)

Name:

Occupation:

Address

Telephone:

Nature and extent of contact with child/family:

7 Details of person completing form:

Name:

Date:

Occupation:

Signed:

**Guidance notes:**

Health Service Executives have a statutory responsibility under the Child Care Act, 1991, to promote the welfare and protection of children in their area. Health Service Executives at local level therefore have an obligation to receive information about any child who is not receiving adequate care and/or protection

The reporting form is for use by:

- Health Service Executive personnel
- Professionals and individuals in the provision of child care services in the community who have service contracts with the health services executives
- Designated persons in a voluntary or community agency
- Any professional, individual or group involved in services to children who become aware of a child protection or welfare concern, or to whom a child protection or welfare concern is reported.

Please fill in as much information and detail as is known to you, (health executive personnel should do this in consultation with their line manager). This will assist the Social Work Department in assessing the level of risk to the child, or support services required. If the information requested is not known to you, please indicate by putting a line through the question. It is likely that a social worker will contact you to discuss your report. Health Service Executives aim to work in partnership with parents. If you are making this report in confidence you should note that the Health Service Executive cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality as (a) a court could order that information be disclosed or (b) under the freedom of information act the commissioner may order that information be disclosed. You should also note that in making a 'bona fide report' you are protected under the Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998

This form should be sent to your local duty social worker in the local Health Service Executive.

## APPENDIX 7

### References and Source Material

- Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children, Department of Health & Children & Stationery Office, Dublin 1999
- Co-operating to Safeguard Children, Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, 2003
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989
- The Child Care Act, 1991
- The Children's Act, 2001
- Co-Operating to Protect Children, Vol. 6 Guidelines & Regulations Children (NI) Order 1995, HMSO
- The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, HMSO
- Our Duty to Care (DHSS) 2000, Child Care NI
- Our Duty to Care (DOHC) ROI, 2002
- Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (NI) Order 2003
- Area Child Protection Committees Regional Policy and Procedures DHSSPS 2005
- Getting it Right: Developing your Child Protection Policies Procedures, Volunteer Development Agency, Northern Ireland: 2005
- Child Protection for the Youth Work Sector, Department of Education & Science, 2003
- Child Protection: Guidelines and Procedures, Department of Education & Science, 2001 (Primary Sector)
- Child Protection Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools, Department of Education & Science, 2004
- SafeSport Away - NSPCC & the Amateur Swimming Association
- Sportscheck - Child Protection in Sport Unit 2002
- [www.irishsportsCouncil.ie](http://www.irishsportsCouncil.ie)
- [www.sportni.net](http://www.sportni.net)
- [www.thecpsu.org.uk](http://www.thecpsu.org.uk)

## APPENDIX 8

### Useful Contacts

#### Eastern Region Health Services Executive East Coast Area

Area 1, Dun Laoghaire, 01 2808403  
Area 2, Clonskeagh, 01 2680320/0333  
Area 10, Wicklow, 0404 60800  
Bray, 01 2744100

Ask for Duty Social Worker

#### Eastern Region Health Services Executive South Western Area

Dublin South City District, D2, 01 6486555  
Dublin South West District, D24, 01 4520666  
Dublin West District,  
Dublin 10, 01 6206387  
Kildare/West Wicklow District  
Naas, 045 882400  
Athy, 059 8633535  
Celbridge, 01 6303155

Ask for Duty Social Worker

#### Health Services Executive - Mid-Western Community Care Area

Limerick East - 061 483711  
Limerick West - 061 483996  
Clare - 065 6863907/08  
North Tipperary, Nenagh - 067 41934  
North Tipperary, Thurles - 0504 23211

Ask for Duty Social Worker

#### Health Service Executive - Western Community Care Area

Galway - 091 546325/546366  
Mayo - 094 9042283 / 9042284  
Roscommon - 090 6637528/29

Ask for Duty Social Worker

#### Health Services Executive - North-Eastern Community Care Area

Cavan - 049 4377305 / 06  
Monaghan, 047 30426 /30427  
Louth - Drogheda, 041 9833163  
Louth - Dundalk, 042 9392220  
Meath - Navan, 046 9078830

Ask for Duty Social Worker

#### Eastern Region Health Services Executive Northern Area

Area 6, Dublin 11, 01 8567704  
Area 7 North, Dublin 1, 01 8014620  
Area 8, Dublin 5, 01 8164200

Ask for Duty Social Worker

#### Health Services Executive - Southern Area Community Care Area

South Lee, Cork - 021 4923001  
North Lee, Cork - 021 4927055  
North Cork, Mallow - 022 30200  
West Cork, Skibbereen - 028 40580  
Kerry, Tralee - 066 7184887

Ask for Duty Social Worker

#### Health Services Executive - South-Eastern Community Care Area

Carlow - 059 9136588/7  
Kilkenny - 056 7784782  
Waterford - 051 842827  
Wexford - 053 23522 Ex 222  
South Tipperary - 052 77306 / 02

Ask for Duty Social Worker

#### Health Services Executive - North-Western Community Care Area

Sligo/Leitrim - 071 9155133  
Donegal - 074 9123739

Ask for Duty Social Worker

#### Health Service Executive - Midland Area Community Care Area

Longford/Westmeath:  
Athlone - 0906483106  
Longford - 043 50584  
Laois/Offaly:  
Offaly - 0506 22488  
Laois - 0502 92567/8

Ask for Duty Social Worker



**EHSSB Belfast** 028 9032 1313  
Out of Hours no: EHSSB 028 90565444  
Down/Lisburn H&ST 028 92665181  
North & West Belfast H&STT 028 90327156  
Ulster Community  
& Hospital Trust 028 91816666  
South & East Belfast H&STT 02890565656

**SHSSB Armagh** 028 37410041  
Out of Hours no: SHSSB 028 37522381

Craigavon &  
Bandbridge H&SST 028 38831983  
Armagh &  
Dungannon H&SST 028 37522262  
Newry & Mourne H&SST 028 30260505

*Please note there is no central number for our of hours contact as each Board Area has its own contact (outlined above)*

**Child Protection in Sport Unit**  
NSPCC, Jennymount Business Park  
North Derby Street  
Belfast BT 15 3HN  
02890 351135  
www.thecpsu.org.uk  
NSPCC Helpline 0808-8005000 (Freephone)  
Child Line (UK) 0800 1111

**Irish Sports Council**  
Top Floor, Block A  
West End Office Park  
Blanchardstown, Dublin 15  
Tel No. 01-8608800

**Volunteering Ireland**  
Coleraine House  
Coleraine Street  
Dublin 7  
01 8722622 / info@volunteeringireland.com

**Coaching Northern Ireland**  
Queens Physical Education Centre  
Botanic Gardens  
Belfast B79 5EX  
Tel No. 02890-686940  
www.coachingni.net

**Ombudsman for Children**  
millennium house  
52-56 Great Strand Street  
Dublin 1  
1890 654 654 / 01 865 6800  
oco@oco.ie

**NHSSB Ballymena** 028 25311000  
Out of House no: NHSSB 028 94468833

Home First H&SST 028 25633700  
Causeway H&SST 028 27661337

**WHSSB Londonderry** 028 71860086  
Out of Hours no: WHSSB 028 71345171

Foyle H&SST 028 71266111  
Sperrin Lakeland H&SST 028 82835285

**ISPCC**  
20 Molesworth Street  
Dublin 2  
01 6794944 / ispcc@ispcc.ie

ISPCC Childline 1800 666666 (Freephone)

**Sports Council Northern Ireland**  
House of Sport  
Upper Malone Road  
Belfast BT9 5LA  
Tel No. 02890 381222

**Volunteer Development Agency**  
4th Floor, 58 Howard Street  
Belfast BT1 6PG  
Tel No. 02890-236100

**Protection of Children Service  
Child Care Policy Directorate**  
Department of Health, Social Services  
& Public Safety  
Room D1.4, Castle Buildings,  
Stormont Estate  
Belfast BT4 3SQ, Tel No. 028 90-522559

**Northern Ireland Commissioner  
for Children & Young People,**  
Millennium House,  
17-25 Great Victoria Street, Belfast, BT2 7BA.  
Telephone (028) 9031 1616  
www.niccy.org

**APPENDIX 9**

**Sample Application Form for new Junior Members**

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

Name:  Male / Female:

Address:

Telephone - Home:

Telephone - Mobile (in case of emergency):

E-MAIL:

Date of Birth:

**MEDICAL HISTORY INFORMATION (details of any known allergies, conditions, medications)**

In the event of illness, having parental responsibility, I give permission for medical treatment to be administered where considered necessary by a nominated first aider, or by suitably qualified medical practitioners. If I cannot be contacted and my child needs emergency hospital treatment, I authorize a qualified medical practitioner to provide emergency treatment or medication.

**OTHER INFORMATION**

Any other special needs, requirements or directions that would be helpful for leaders to know about:

**PARENTAL/GUARDIAN CONSENT**

I am the Parent/Guardian of

**Photographs**

I understand that photographs will be taken during or at sport related events and may be used in the promotion of sport.

**Drug Testing (for elite players only)**

I give permission for my child(ren) to be tested for prohibited substances in accordance with the Sports Council Anti Doping Rules (where applicable)

I hereby consent to the above child(ren) participating in activities of the organisation in line with the Code of Ethics for Young People. I will inform the leaders of my children's activities of any changes to the information above.

I confirm that all details are correct and I am able to give parental consent for my child(ren) to participate in and travel to all activities.

SIGNATURE

SIGNED NAME

## APPENDIX 10

### Existing Leaders Information Form

Leaders should familiarise themselves with the Governing Bodies Code, in particular the Code of conduct. Leaders should read below and agree to abide by these terms. Leaders should update the self-declaration questions annually.

**As a leader in \_\_\_\_\_ (insert name of sport) I agree that I should**

- Be positive during sessions and competitions, praise and encourage effort as well as results
- Put welfare of young person first, strike a balance between this and winning / results
- Encourage fair play and treat participants equally
- Recognise developmental needs, ensuring activities are appropriate for the individual
- Plan and prepare appropriately
- Have experience relevant to working with young people or hold up-to-date qualifications and be committed to the guidelines in this Code
- Involve parents where possible and inform parents when problems arise
- Keep record of attendance at training and competitions
- Keep a brief record of injury(s) and action taken
- Keep a brief record of problem/action/outcomes, if behavioural problems arise
- Report any concerns in accordance with this Code's reporting procedures

*Where possible I will avoid:*

- Spending excessive amounts of time with children away from others
- Taking sessions alone
- Taking children on journeys alone in the car

*Sports Leaders should not:*

- Use any form of punishment or physical force on a child
- Take children to their home
- Exert undue influence over a participant in order to obtain personal benefit or reward
- Engage in rough physical games, sexually provocative games or allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any kind, and /or make sexually suggestive comments about, or to a child. This includes innuendo, flirting or inappropriate gestures and terms
- Take measurements or engage in certain types of fitness testing without the presence of another adult
- Undertake any form of therapy (hypnosis etc.) in the training of children

### Self-Declaration

Do you agree to abide by the guidelines contained in the Children in  
\_\_\_\_\_ (insert sport) Code of Conduct?

Yes  No

Do you agree to abide by the rules of the governing body / club?

Yes  No

Have you ever been asked to leave a sporting organisation?  
(If you have answered yes, we will contact you in confidence)

Yes  No

Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence or been the subject of a caution; a Bound Over Order; or are you at present the subject of criminal investigations?

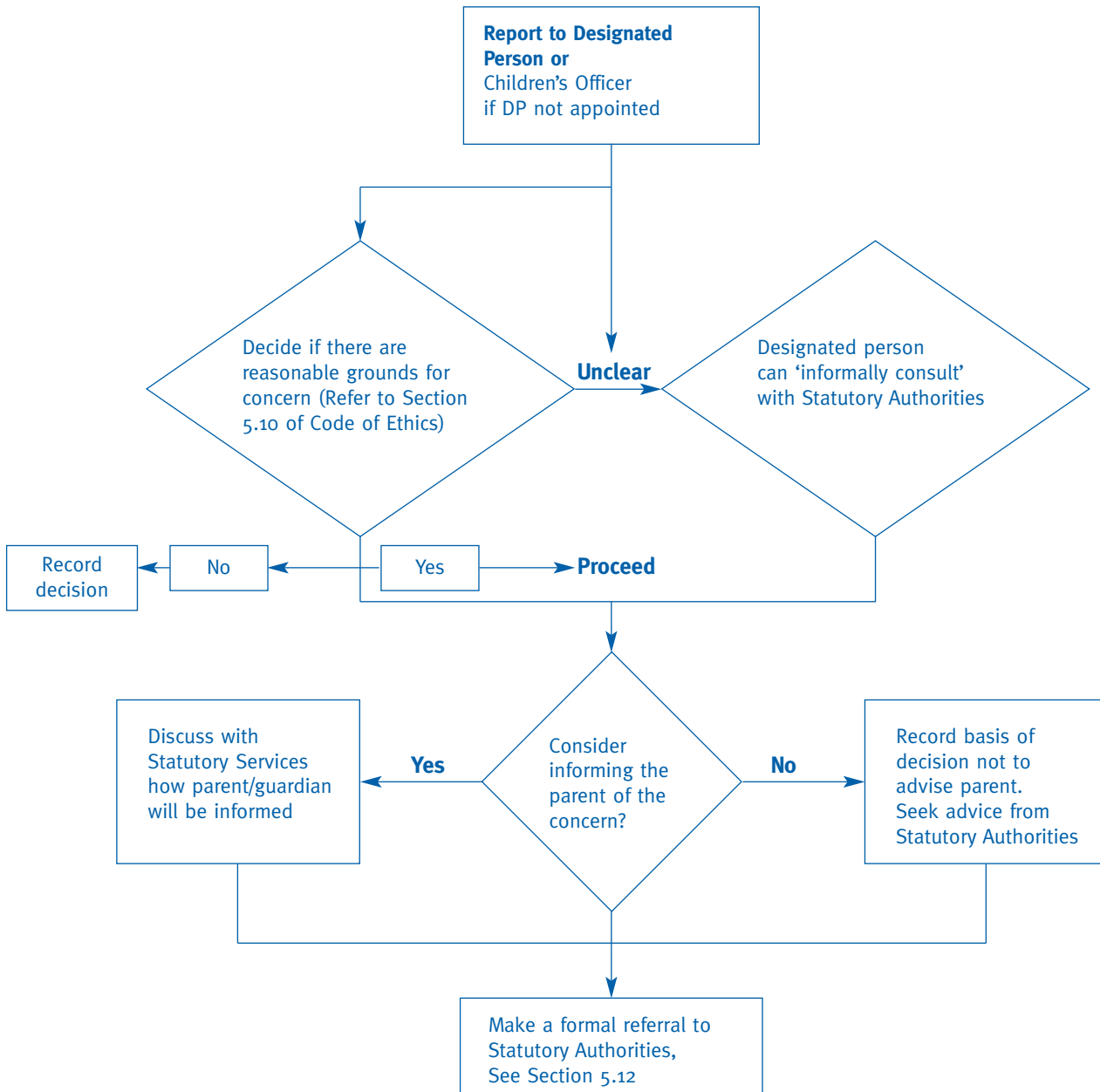
Yes  No

*(If you have answered yes, we will contact you in confidence)*



**APPENDIX 11**

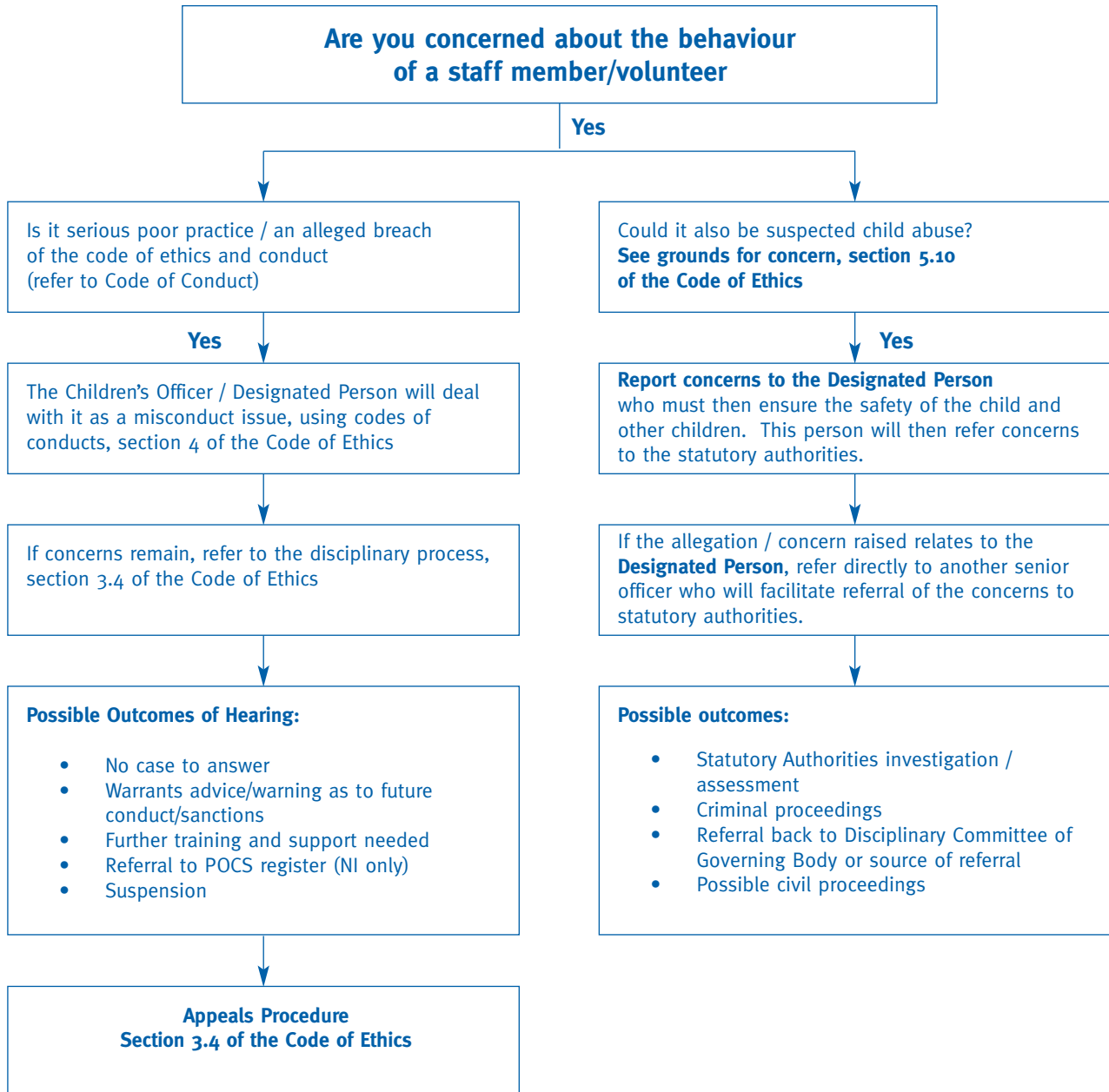
**When there is suspected abuse external to the organisation**



Confidentiality is kept throughout the process.

If you do not know who to turn to for advice or are worried about sharing your concerns, you should contact the Statutory Authorities at any stage, see Section 5.12 of the Code of Ethics. If in doubt, ask

**APPENDIX 12**



If you do not know who to turn to for advice or are worried about sharing your concerns, you should contact the Statutory Authorities, see Section 5.12 of the Code of Ethics.

At any stage during the process in the left hand column the issue can be referred externally either formally or informally for advice. Following the external (right column) outcome the matter may be referred back to the organisation's Disciplinary Committee, see Section 5.17.2 (last paragraph).



Notes







code of ethics &  
**Good Practice**  
for Children's Sport