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ETHICS

Safeguarding Guidance for Children & Young People in Sport

FOREWORD

The safeguarding of children in sport is of paramount importance. Sport Ireland will continue to develop and invest in our ethics programme to ensure children and young people's experiences of sport are fun, enjoyable and conducted in the spirit of fair play. Everyone, regardless of age or circumstance should participate in sport in a safe environment.

This document has been developed to specifically support National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs) and clubs to ensure they can meet their child safeguarding and child protection responsibilities. This new guidance document has been prepared in the context of the challenges that National Governing Bodies and their clubs face on a day to day basis, ensuring that current best practice is followed while also complying with today's relevant legislation. This is paramount to the successful protection of children and young people in sport.

Over the past 19 years the Code & Ethics and Good Practice for Children in Sport has been implemented at grassroots level across all sports. The implementation of the Code has been driven by the National Children Officers, Local Sports Partnerships and National Governing Bodies of Sport at national and club level and this valuable work needs to be supported and built upon. The new guidance document brings this support to a new level.

It is necessary that all involved in sport understand their responsibilities in safeguarding children. A working group comprised of professional staff from Sport Ireland, Sport NI & the National Governing Bodies of Sport convened to conduct a comprehensive review of the Code of Ethics & Good Practice for Children's Sport. The aim of the group was to provide support to the sector to ensure alignment with current legislation, policies & procedures and best practice in terms of safeguarding and child protection.

I would like to thank Sport Northern Ireland and the representatives from the National Governing Bodies of Sport for their valuable contributions to the review of the Code.



John Treacy
CEO Sport Ireland

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All appendices are available online at: www.sportireland.ie/Participation/Code_of_Ethics/

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GLOSSARY

Child: For the purpose of this guidance a child is any person under 18 years of age unless they are or have been married.

Club Children's Officers (CCO): Children's Officers are appointed within clubs to act as a resource for children and to represent them at committee level.

Designated Liaison Person (DLP): A person who is responsible for reporting allegations or suspicions of child abuse and welfare issues to the Statutory Authorities. This person will be a resource to anyone in the organisation/club who has a child protection/welfare concern.

Mandated Person: The mandated person is a person named under schedule 2 of Children First Act 2015 (ROI). They have a legal responsibility to report concerns or allegations that reach or exceed the threshold of harm of abuse to the Tusla (refer to NGB/Club for list of mandated persons).

National Children's Officer (NCO): 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 the agenda and influence the decisions of the Governing Body .

Provider of Relevant Service: As defined in the Children First Act 2015 (ROI), this means, in relation to a relevant service, a person-

- (a) who provides a relevant service, and
- (b) who in respect of the provision of such relevant service-
 - (i) employs (whether under contract of employment or otherwise) one or more than one other person to undertake any work or activity that constitutes a relevant Service,
 - (ii) enters into a contract for services with one or more than one other person for the provision by the person of a relevant service, or
 - (iii) permits one or more than one other person (whether or not for commercial or other consideration and whether or not as part of a course of education or training, including an internship scheme) to undertake any work or activity, on behalf of the person, that constitutes a relevant service.

Relevant Service: As defined in the Children First Act 2015 (ROI), this means any work or activity specified in Schedule 1 [of that Act].

Relevant Person: As defined in the Children First Act 2015 (ROI), this means a person who is appointed by a provider of a relevant service to be the first point of contact in respect of the provider's Child Safeguarding Statement.

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 Tusla & An Garda Síochána and in NI it is the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and the Health and Social Care Trusts.

Sports Leaders: For the purpose of this guidance 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 this policy are put in place, agreed, followed and reviewed on a regular basis. The principal leadership roles (some of which overlap) include the following:

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

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.).

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

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

Instructor/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 may 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.

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.

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

Statutory Authority Guidelines on Child Protection: In the Republic of Ireland - Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, Department of Health and Children 2017 (ROI). Northern Ireland - Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People (NI) 2003 (NI).

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Sport Ireland & Sport NI are committed to ensuring that the best interests of children and young people attending our services are of paramount importance.



1.1 Context

Sport Ireland & Sport NI are committed to ensuring that the best interests of children and young people attending our services are of paramount importance. Our guiding principles and this guidance document are underpinned by national policy and legislation in ROI Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017, and the requirements under The Children First Act 2015, and in Northern Ireland – the Children (NI) Order and Cooperating to Safeguarding Children and Young People 2017.

This guidance is also informed by Tusla's Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, The Child Care Act 1991, The Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998 and the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012-2016. In Northern Ireland guidance is also from Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007 and Protection of Freedoms Act 2012.

For more information on Legislation and Policy please see [Appendix 1](#)



1.2 What is the Purpose of this Guidance Document?

The aim of this guidance document is to help sporting bodies to create a culture of safety that promotes the welfare of children and young people engaged in sporting activities. This guidance document supports National Governing Bodies to meet their child safeguarding and child protection responsibilities which are cognisant of, and in line with, requirements under policy/legislation and with best practice. It does this through the provision of guidance and information in relation to the carrying out of a risk assessment, the development of a Child Safeguarding Statement and the development and implementation of policies and procedures for safeguarding and protection of children and young people.

1.3 Who is the Target Audience of this Guidance Document?

This guidance is for the benefit for everyone involved in children and young people's sport. It has been developed to support National Governing Bodies for Sport in the ROI, and in NI, to meet their child safeguarding and child protection responsibilities.

1.4 Values & Principles

Participation in sport plays a crucial role in the development of children and young people. The range of skills learned through being involved in sport contribute towards the holistic development of children. We want a safe, positive and nurturing environment where all children can learn important values. These can include honesty, teamwork and fair play. Children can learn to respect themselves and others, adhere to rules, and develop a healthy relationship with competition. We believe that this desired outcome is possible with the support of this guidance document. We acknowledge that the values are relevant throughout sport but identify them as being particularly essential when we talk about children's sport.

1. Fun and Healthy

Sport must be a fun and healthy experience for all.

2. Inclusion

Sport is welcoming and inclusive, offering appropriate opportunities for participation and development for all children.

3. Fair Play

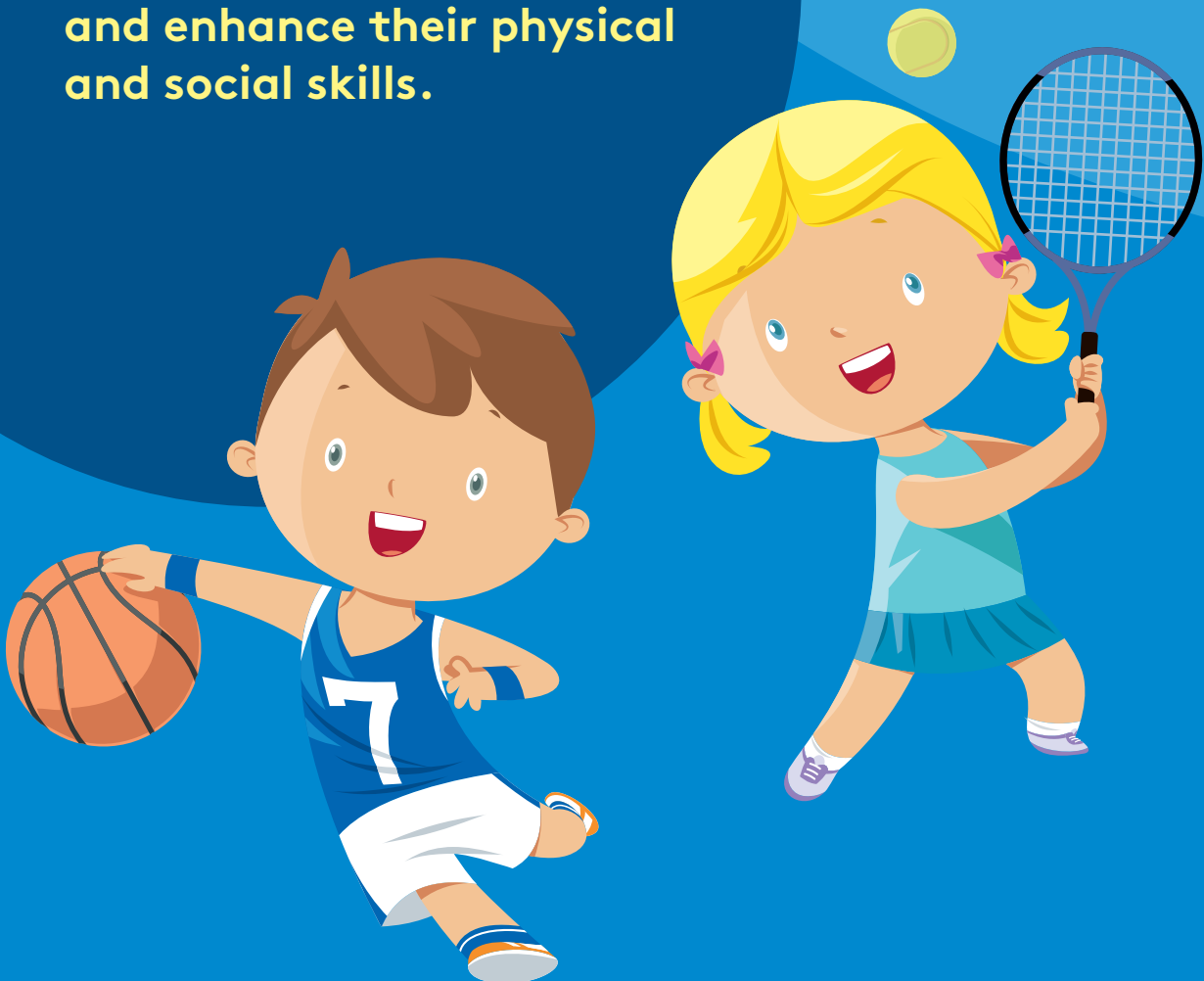
We will promote fair play, respect, ethics, integrity and safety throughout the sports system when it comes to dealing with children's sport.

4. Safe

With the best interests of children in mind, we will foster best practice in safeguarding procedures and policies throughout the sports sector.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF SPORTING BODIES

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.



2.1 Overview of Responsibilities of Sporting Bodies in Child Safeguarding and Child Protection

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 practice that impact negatively on safe and enjoyable participation in children's sport.

In order to create a culture of safety which promotes the welfare and protection of children, organisations working with children and young people are required to:



2.2 Risk Assessments & Child Safeguarding Statements

Children First National Guidance 2017 (ROI) states clearly that organisations that provide services to children must ensure that they prevent, as far as practicable, deliberate harm or abuse to the children while availing of their services.

Risk Assessment

The risk assessment considers the potential for harm to come to children whilst they are in the relevant organisation's care. This risk assessment precedes the Child Safeguarding Statement (Section 11 (1b) Children First Act 2015 (ROI)) and informs the development of safeguarding policies and procedures to manage the risk identified. In accordance with Children First the risk is of abuse and not general health and safety.

Under the Children First Act 2015 (ROI), if your organisation is providing a relevant service, you must:

- Keep children safe from harm while they are using your service.
- Carry out a risk assessment to identify whether a child or young person could be harmed while receiving your services.
- Develop a Child Safeguarding Statement that outlines the policies and procedures which are in place to manage the risks that have been identified.
- Appoint a relevant person to be the first point of contact in respect of the organisation's Child Safeguarding Statement.

The above responsibilities rest with the provider of the relevant service. Organisations and clubs should identify who the provider of the relevant service is – e.g. the chairperson of the club/head of the National Governing Body.

A risk assessment is an exercise where your organisation examines all aspects of your service from a safeguarding perspective to establish whether there are any practices or features of your service that have the potential to put children at risk of harm.

The risk assessment process is intended to enable your organisation to:

- Identify potential risk.
- Develop policies and procedures to minimise risk by responding in a timely manner to potential risks.
- Review whether adequate precautions have been taken to eliminate or reduce these risks.

Sport Ireland and Sport NI in consultation with the Children in Sport Group have designed a sport specific risk assessment template which is available to the National Governing Bodies of Sport, Local Sports Partnerships and other sporting organisations. As stated in the Children First Act 2015 (ROI) the risk assessment is a legal requirement that must be undertaken by the providers of relevant services who engage in sporting activities with children and young people in Ireland. In Northern Ireland there is an expectation that all regulated activities have robust safeguarding procedures in place and this requirement though not a legal requirement is often linked to public funding.

For more information on Risk Assessments please see [Appendix 2](#)



Child Safeguarding Statement

The Children First Act 2015 (ROI) requires organisations in Ireland that are providers of relevant services to prepare a Child Safeguarding Statement. This is good practice and funding requirement for all sporting organisations throughout Ireland. The Child Safeguarding Statement is a written statement that specifies the service being provided and the principles, that a child availing of the service is safe from harm. Your service should ensure that your Child Safeguarding Statement has due regard to the Children First Guidance or equivalent and any other child protection guidelines issued by the relevant government departments or any guidelines issued by statutory authorities concerning Child Safeguarding Statements.

What the Child Safeguarding Statement should contain

As outlined above, the Children First Act 2015 (ROI) places obligations on organisations that provide relevant services to children. These obligations are:

1. To keep children safe from harm while they are using the service (section 10) and promote the paramountcy principle that the welfare of the child is core
2. To carry out a risk assessment to identify whether a child or young person could be harmed while using the service (section 11.3)
3. To develop a Child Safeguarding Statement (section 11.3) which must include both the written risk assessment and the procedures that are in place to appoint a relevant person to be the first point of contact in respect of the organisation's Child Safeguarding Statement

Manage any risk identified

- Investigate an allegation against any staff/volunteer member about any act, omission or circumstance in respect of a child availing of the service.
- Select and recruit staff/volunteer members who are suitable to work with children.
- Provide information and training to staff/volunteer members on child protection and safeguarding issues.
- Enabling staff/volunteer members in ROI, whether mandated persons or otherwise, to make a report to Tusla in accordance with the Act or any guidelines issued by the statutory authorities. In NI reports are made to the Health and Social Care Trust in accordance with their guidance.
- Maintain a list of persons in the organisation who are mandated persons under the Act.
- Appoint a relevant person in the organisation for the purposes of the Act.

Sport Ireland and Sport NI in consultation with the Children in Sport Group have designed a sport specific Child Safeguarding Statement template which is available to the National Governing Bodies of Sport, Local Sports Partnerships and other sporting organisations. As stated in the Children First Act 2015 (ROI), on completion of the risk assessment all relevant organisations should draw up a Child Safeguarding Statement for their clubs.

For more information on Child Safeguarding Statements please see [Appendix 2](#)

2.3 Sport Ireland's Safeguarding Audit Framework

What is Sport Ireland's Safeguarding Audit Framework?

The Sport Ireland Safeguarding Audit framework will support National Governing Bodies to strengthen their adherence to safeguarding policies and procedures thereby ensuring that children and young people are protected in sport. It has been designed to help sporting organisations safeguard children from harm, meet their legal obligations and adopt best practice.

The framework is comprehensive and sets out expectations beyond those referenced in existing statutory guidance.

The framework provides the structure for risk assessments as required by section 11(1) (a) of the Children First Act 2015 (ROI) and as such, will complement the development of effective Child Safeguarding Statements. It also provides a robust reassurance process that benchmarks the quality of safeguarding practice and delivers a mechanism for ensuring ongoing compliance.

The framework is:

- Fundamentally child focused.
- Easy to access and simple to understand.
- Designed to support the whole sporting community.
- Configured to reflect the voices of children, parents, carers, staff and volunteers.
- Fully compliant with legislation and statutory guidance.

Who is the Framework for?

The framework has been developed for use by all sports organisations that work with children, from grass-roots to the national level. It is applicable across the island of Ireland and covers individual sport clubs, and the National Governing Bodies of Sport.

Principles

In sport, whilst practice might not make you perfect it will always make you better. This key principle should be applied when using the framework. Regular and consistent implementation of the framework will help us all make children safer.

The framework is underpinned by the requirements set out in relevant legislation, statutory guidance and Sport Ireland's Safeguarding Guidance for Children & Young People in Sport. It has a fundamental focus on the context of children in sport and the creation of safe spaces where they can be seen, heard and helped

For more information on the Safeguarding Audit Framework please see [Appendix 3](#)

2.4 Child Safeguarding and Protection - Policies, Procedures and Practice

By carrying out a risk assessment and producing a Child Safeguarding Statement each Sporting Body/ National Governing Body for Sport is required to have in place detailed policies and procedures outlining how the organisation safeguards children and young people and addresses any potential risks identified.

The policies and procedures include the roles and responsibilities of the people within the organisation, safe recruitment and selection of people, and the procedures to follow in relation to identifying and reporting child welfare or child protection concerns, and responding to allegations against someone within the organisation.

...each Sporting Body/National Governing Body for Sport is required to have in place detailed policies and procedures outlining how the organisation safeguards children and young people and addresses any potential risks identified.



2.4.1

Safe Recruitment Procedures for those working with Children & Young People

Please note: A procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of workers and volunteers to work with children is a specified procedure under the Children First Act 2015 (ROI) and Keeping Safe - Our Duty to Care resource pack.

The Risks

The vast majority of volunteers will help out through a genuine desire to see children or their particular organisation develop. Unfortunately we must face the reality that a small minority of people will join an organisation or club as an opportunity to gain access to children. They will create an air of acceptability about their role, justifying their close contact with children. One important factor in deciding whether behaviour is a risk of abuse or neglect is the impact of that behaviour on the child rather than the intention of the adult.

In order to safeguard young people against such risks it is important that organisations should take all reasonable steps to ensure that only suitable people are recruited to work with children and families by adopting and consistently applying a safe and clearly defined method of recruiting staff and volunteers.

Below are steps to help NGBs. If you are dealing with someone new to the club you will need to be rigorous with respect to recruitment procedures, however you need to be sure of all those working with young people, including those who have been members for quite some time. Any existing member who wishes to work with young people will also need to be assessed for their suitability for a role with children.

Easy Rules to Remember

The implementation of thorough recruitment and selection procedures will help to keep children and young people safe within your organisation. Good practice in management and supervision of workers and volunteers after appointment is a further essential safeguard to help keep children/young people safe.

The procedures outlined below are recommended best practice in your organisation. This reduces the risk of someone targeting a club or organisation to gain access to children and/or of 'seasoned' members moving roles.

Sports clubs/organisations should ensure good recruitment procedures for 'all' members by:

- Insisting that a person applying for any post of responsibility within the club complete the relevant sports application form, verify qualifications, experience and gaps in employment history; person should be provided with a role descriptor.
- Obtaining two references in writing, followed up with personal contact with the reference provider (any request for references should only be sought for preferred applicants);
- Ensuring the individual completes their vetting with either the National Vetting Bureau or Access NI through the relevant Sport's Governing Body prior to commencement of working with children or vulnerable people. Contact your own governing body for more information on this process.
- Setting a probationary period (six months for staff or long-term volunteers) which can be used to assess the leader's commitment to promoting good practice in relation to young people.
- Interviewing or meeting the individual either formally or informally. Appoint two club members to meet the applicant who will be able to:
 - assess the individual's experience of working with children or young people and knowledge of safeguarding issues;
 - assess their commitment to promoting good practice; and
 - assess their ability to communicate with children and young people (i.e. be approachable).
- Ensuring the club management committee ratifies appointments.
- Once recruited into the sports club/organisation, all Sports Leaders should be adequately managed and inducted into policies and procedures.
- When storing information in relation to applicants this 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.
- Ensuring they have agreed to and signed up to the relevant Code of Conduct for those working with young people.
- Ensuring they have met with club officials and that they understand the role they are taking on. This is especially important if moving from one role to another among different skill sets, ages, genders, etc. Working with young people will have additional responsibilities attached due to their vulnerability.
- Ensuring they give a commitment to complete the necessary safeguarding training.
- Ensuring they understand that supervision is a vital safeguard for the club so they should avoid working alone.
- Ensuring they know who the Children's Officer/Designated Liaison Person within the club is and understand the youth structures of the club/organisation.

Sport relies heavily on the time and commitment given by volunteers and paid staff. Without this, the opportunities for children and young people to participate and learn new skills would not exist. Below are a number of sample forms to aid your club:

- [Sample Volunteer/Coach Application Form](#)
- [Sample Confidential Reference Form](#)
- [Sample Application Form for new Junior Members](#)
- [Sample Existing Leaders Information Form](#)

For more information contact your own governing body or employer for specific advice or visit [safe recruitment and vetting procedures](#)

For more information on Safe Recruitment please see [Appendix 4](#)



2.4.2

Safeguarding Training

Sport Ireland's remit is to develop and disseminate guidelines and training standards that promote best practice for the protection of children in sport consistent with child welfare and protection guidance and legislation. Sport Ireland's Safeguarding 1, 2 & 3 workshops must be recognised across all sporting organisations.

Who is Safeguarding Training for?

All staff and volunteers should receive safeguarding training appropriate for their role. Basic face to face awareness courses or workshops are appropriate for those working in sport with regular responsibility for children and young people. Training should be updated and reviewed regularly for staff and volunteers, and in line with national guidance and changing legislation.

What this training should include:

- A basic awareness and understanding of safeguarding issues and roles within organisation/club.
- Establishing minimum standards of best practice and codes of conduct.
- Exercises to identify, respond and report concerns.
- Signposting for further information and sources of support.

Training Guidance:

Every sport should have a procedure in place for the provision of information and training that ensures compliance with the Children First Act 2015 (ROI) Section 11(3) and can be used as part of the training plan required as a good practice in Northern Ireland.

Who provides Safeguarding training?

- The Local Sports Partnership network deliver safeguarding training as well as a number of National Governing Bodies of sport.
- Sport Ireland offers three different levels of safeguarding workshops, each are 3 hours long.
- Sport NI offer two different levels of safeguarding workshops, each are 3 hours long.

Basic courses or workshops are appropriate for those working in sport with regular responsibility for children and young people.



Importance of face-to-face training

Face-to-face training allows individuals to ask questions in a safe environment facilitated by a safeguarding tutor and can benefit from the experience of other participants. For someone who is attending safeguarding training in sport for the first time it is important that they have an opportunity to discuss specific safeguarding issues that arise during the training an opportunity they would not have if merely doing online training. Face to face training also means you are using a greater range of your senses to learn than sitting in front of a screen alone.

Online training does not challenge negative opinions and there is no discussion/debate, preventing the participant from getting a detailed explanation of questions.

There will also be the need for a sport leader working across several National Governing Bodies to be inducted to each National Governing Bodies' policies, procedures and good practice guidance.

For more information on Safeguarding Training please see [Appendix 5](#)



2.4.3 Roles and Responsibilities

Everyone in sport i.e. children, parents/carers and Sports Leaders should accept the role and responsibilities that they undertake in their commitment to maintaining an enjoyable and safe environment. 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 Safeguarding Guidance. Interaction between children and their peers and adults should be conducted in a spirit of mutual respect, equality and non-discriminatory with a spirit of fair play. Adults including parents/carers, who create an environment in which meaningful, open relationships are valued and where the integrity of everyone is respected, can promote such interaction.

National Governing Bodies of Sport

A National Governing Body of Sport is the organisation recognised by the respective international federation as being responsible for the administration of a sport on a countrywide basis or the national body responsible for national games. The National Governing Body is responsible for overseeing the adoption and implementation of this guidance, the legal requirements set out by and Children First (ROI) and the good practice guidelines and standards in NI by all its affiliated members.

Roles within safeguarding (please see links)

- [National Children's Officer](#)
- [Club Children's Officer](#)
- [Relevant Person](#)
- [Designated Liaison Person](#)
- [Mandated Person](#)
- [Role of Sport Ireland & Sport Northern Ireland](#)

Sports Clubs

To ensure that best practice is being followed, all sports clubs should work closely with their Governing Body of Sport.

- [Adult to child relationships in sport](#)
- [Child to child relationships](#)

For more information on Roles, Responsibilities & Relationships in Sport please see [Appendix 6](#)



2.4.4 Reporting & Protection

All those involved in sport have a moral duty to report concerns about help create a safer environment for children. The procedure in ROI for reporting child protection or welfare concerns to Tusla is a specified procedure under the Children First Act 2015 (ROI) and should be done online following a discussion with Tusla staff. In Northern Ireland there is a standard UNIOCN form for statutory agencies, however voluntary sports can complete their own proforma. It is recommended best practice that any telephone referral is followed up in writing.

Sport organisations have a duty to promote the welfare and safety of children. Staff and volunteers should be alert to the possibility that children with whom they are in contact may be being abused or at risk of being abused. They should know how to recognise and respond to the possibility of abuse or neglect, so as to ensure that the most effective steps are taken to protect a child and to contribute to the ongoing safety of children.

The guiding principles on reporting child abuse or neglect may be summarised as follows:

1. The safety and wellbeing of the child must take priority over concerns about adults against whom an allegation may be made.
2. Reports of concerns should be made without delay to Tusla¹/HSCT².

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in a paid or voluntary capacity, or those working in affiliated organisations, to take responsibility or to decide whether or not child abuse is taking place. However there is a responsibility to protect children in order that appropriate agencies can then make enquiries and take any necessary action to protect the young person.

- [Responding to child abuse.](#)
- [Recording.](#)
- [Reasonable grounds for concern.](#)
- [Responding to a child/young person who discloses abuse.](#)
- [Confidentially.](#)
- [Reporting concerns about a child.](#)
- [Reporting to Statutory Authorities.](#)
- [Procedure for the management of allegation of abuse against a coach/volunteer.](#)
- [Categories of abuse.](#)
- [Signs of abuse.](#)
- [Statutory Contacts Republic of Ireland.](#)
- [Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Trusts.](#)

1 Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017

2 Children (NI) Order 1995/Criminal Law Act 1967

Under no circumstances should any individual be left with a worry or concern about a child and feel they are unable to discuss it with their club/organisation's Designated Liaison Person (DLP).

Any individual can contact TUSLA to discuss or report a child protection/welfare concern. Please see link to Tusla website below.

If you think the child is in immediate danger and you cannot contact Tusla, you should contact the Gardaí without delay.

In Northern Ireland the NSPCC helpline is available at any time to discuss any worry.



Tusla (ROI):

www.tusla.ie/children-first/contact-a-social-worker3

An Garda Síochána: 999/112

In Northern Ireland it is the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and the Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT) Gateway Team. Alternatively you can contact the NSPCC helpline to discuss any concern about a child: Telephone: 0808 800 5000

Text: 88858

Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Visit gateway contacts:

www.nidirect.gov.uk/publications/gateway-service-teams-contact-details

For more information on Reporting and Protection please see [Appendix 7](#)



2.4.5

Disciplinary, Complaints & Appeals of Code of Behaviour Breaches

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 Liaison 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.

Only following advice from statutory agencies about suspected child abuse cases should NGB's begin their own internal disciplinary procedures to ensure they do not impact on any statutory investigation.

For more information on Disciplinary, Complaints and Appeals, please see [Appendix 8](#)



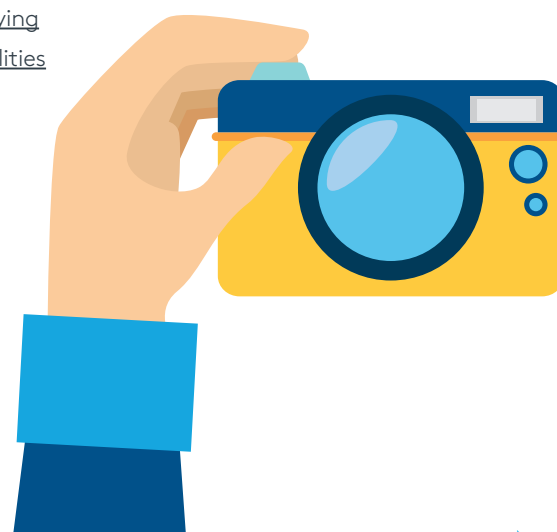
2.5 Safeguarding Guidance

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 practice that impacts negatively on safe and enjoyable participation in children's sport.

This section of the guidance document provides sample templates to establish a standard that guides how National Governing Bodies, Clubs and Sporting Organisations provide a safe environment for children and young people. The sample templates are in keeping with the values and goals of Sport Ireland and Sport NI (please see links below).

- [Overnight, Staying Away & Hosting](#)
- [Supervision, Ratios & Environment](#)
- [Registration, Dropouts & Club Transfers](#)
- [Incidents & Accidents Template Reporting Form](#)
- [Transport & Travel](#)
- [Filming & Photography](#)
- [Inappropriate Images](#)
- [Social Media](#)
- [Use of Mobile Phones](#)
- [Physical Contact](#)
- [Bullying](#)
- [Facilities](#)



For more information on Safeguarding Guidance, please see [Appendix 9](#)



2.6 Code of Conduct

Codes of conduct are an integral part of any club/sporting organisation. They set a standard of behaviour that help build a club's culture and make it easier to deal with conduct and behaviour issues as they arise. These can be many and varied, from on-field incidents, side-line abuse and mismanagement, to inappropriate social media posts, unfair treatment, poor sportsmanship and more. Codes of conduct set expectations for everyone involved – from the administrators, coaches and officials, to players, parents and spectators. The code of conduct should be informed by the club/sporting organisation's risk assessment and be a tool in the management of specific risks.

A code of conduct should be in place for administrators, coaches, officials, players and parents. They outline the agreed standard of behaviour for everyone.

Sports Leaders are expected to conform to ethical standards in a number of areas. To be part of the coaching team in an organisation or club it is required that all potential coaches will sign an agreement to abide by a code of conduct and return it to the appropriate organisation/club officials.

The following elements should be included in your organisation/clubs Codes of Conduct.

- [Code for Young People](#)
- [Code for Parents/Guardians](#)
- [Code for Sport Leaders](#)
- [Code for Committees](#)

For more information on Codes of Conduct please see [Appendix 10](#)

2.7 Implementation, Monitoring and Review

It is important to remember that National Governing Bodies of Sport must also have a plan in place in order to ensure that all of its policies, procedures and practices are fully implemented, which requires an implementation plan. This plan sets out the tasks required to fully realise all procedures, and to ensure that these are regularly reviewed and updated in line with ongoing risk assessments, developments in best practice and any changes to policy and legislation.



Summary

Sport Ireland and Sport NI greatly appreciates the army of volunteers who give up their time to strive to provide the highest standards of care for children and vulnerable adults within the Island of Ireland.

Children who have positive early experiences of sport are more likely to continue to some degree of lifelong participation. This contributes to their ongoing physical and emotional wellbeing in adulthood. Sport, therefore, has a lot to offer children – provided it takes place in an environment that is safe, promotes enjoyment, and respects the physical and emotional health and wellbeing of each individual athlete.

This guidance is intended to assist people who are involved today with children & young people's sport, ensuring they are equipped with the necessary tools to positively contribute to a young person's overall experience of sport.

2.9 References and Source Material

- Children First Act 2015
- Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017
- Tusla's Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- The Child Care Act 1991
- The Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998
- Criminal Justice Act 2006
- Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences Against Children & Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012
- Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017
- National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012-2016

- Child Protection in Northern Ireland Legislation, policy and guidance
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Access NI Code of Practice (NI)
- Children (NI) Order 1995 (NI) Children's Services Co-operation Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 (NI)
- Club Framework for Safeguarding Standards In Sport
- Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People 2017
- Criminal Law Act (Northern Ireland) 1967 (NI)
- General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR)
- Part V of the Police Act 1997 (NI)
- Rehabilitation of Offenders (Exceptions) (Northern Ireland)
- Order 1979 (as amended 2013) (NI)
- Safeguarding Board Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 (NI)
- Sexual Offences (NI) Order 2008

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In 2017 a working group comprised of professional staff from Sport Ireland, Sport NI & the National Governing Bodies of Sport convened to conduct a comprehensive review of the Code of Ethics & Good Practice for Children's Sport. The aim of the group was to ensure that the existing Code was brought into line with current legislation, policies & procedures and best practice in terms of safeguarding and child protection.

Sport Ireland and Sport NI would again like to thank the representatives from the National Governing Bodies of Sport for their valuable contributions to the review of the Code.



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