

Irish Football Association



Safeguarding Children and Young People

Policy and Procedures for Affiliated Football



2023



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FOREWORD

The identification, nurturing and development of talent are primary focuses of any sport's governing body and that's most definitely the case with the Irish Football Association.

But increasingly it has become important to take responsibility for the care and welfare of our young footballers, both male and female.

Football, like all sport, should be a fun and exciting experience if we are to retain the interest of our young people.

It has a social function for children and young people, and the quality of the experience will determine whether sport becomes an integral part of their lifestyle.

We also have a duty of care to ensure that parents and guardians are satisfied that the quality of coaching is of the highest calibre.

In addition we appreciate that children and young people within our programmes must always be treated with respect and be professionally managed.

It is a huge responsibility nowadays to provide a safe and secure environment for our young football players, and it is a responsibility that we cannot neglect.

Patrick Nelson

Chief Executive, Irish Football Association



The Irish Football Association regards its Child Welfare Programme as a fundamental part of its work. As the governing body for football in Northern Ireland the Association has a responsibility to lead by example and ensure that all children and young people who participate in Association programmes do so in a positive, secure environment that is free from abuse and harm.

The following policy and procedures, which represent a model of best practice, should be adopted by all staff and volunteers who represent the Irish FA so that everyone involved benefits from the positive aspects of the game.

Youth participation in football across Northern Ireland continues to grow and for us, it is vital that we continue to create a safe, fun, and inclusive environment for those children and young people who take part in our Irish FA programmes. Safeguarding is an integral part of our work, and we continue to lead the way by evolving and developing.

This updated Safeguarding document not only outlines the safeguarding framework for children and young people participating in affiliated football but provides valuable advice and guidance to support all those who volunteer their time to provide opportunities for children and young people to enjoy football.

Conrad Kirkwood

President, Irish Football Association



The rights and welfare of children and young people are not primarily protected in the corridors of power but in the everyday lives of children and young people including their sports clubs.

As a football supporter I know the joy that the game can bring and have seen how important participation in the game can be for the physical and mental health of children and young people. Enjoying their right to play and leisure (Article 31, United Convention on the Rights of the Child) can only be fully realised if they feel and are kept safe. All sports clubs have a responsibility to make sure that they have measures in place to prevent abuse happening through robust recruitment and selection processes but also procedures that prevent the opportunity from harm and abuse ever happening. These of course must be accompanied by ensuring that children, young people and adults know that they can report harm when it happens or if they have suspicions and that such reports will be taken seriously.

As someone who has worked with children and young people in a paid and a voluntary capacity I recognise the importance of clear guidance, standards and procedures. Added to training and support, these procedures should make sure that everyone working in IFA affiliated football clubs is confident in identifying and acting on concerns when a child may be at risk. The IFA Safeguarding Policy and Procedures represents the practical implementation of the rights of children and young people to be protected from harm (Article 19, UNCRC) and to have their voices taken seriously (article 12). I commend the organisation for such a comprehensive document.

I know that the clubs will also make sure that children who participate and play the sport will be made aware of this policy and procedure and the clear message it sends about the importance of their safety. However, to be clear that children are not protected by policies and procedures but by us as adults. I therefore I urge you to ensure that all staff and volunteers in whatever capacity are supported to fully understand their responsibilities and to keep children safe at all times.

Koulla Yiasouma

NI Commissioner for Children and Young People (2015-2023)



The Irish FA would like to extend its gratitude to the FA, who kindly granted permission to adapt their Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures. The Irish FA would also like to thank the following people:

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Jim Gamble, CEO of Ineqe Group and one of the leading authorities in safeguarding, for his invaluable advice, expertise and contribution along with the development of the Irish FA Safeguarding Children and Young People in Football App.

SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

Football can have a very powerful and positive influence on people – particularly children and young people. It provides them with an opportunity to experience fun and achievement.

Football also has the capacity to develop fundamental personal qualities and abilities such as respect, leadership, teamwork and confidence. However, children and young people can only experience the positive effects of football if the environment in which they play and learn is safe, secure and free from abuse and harm.

The protection of children and young people in football has been and remains a priority of the highest order for the Irish FA. In recognising its legal and moral responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people, and to protect them from inappropriate behaviour and abuse, the Irish FA is determined to ensure that all children and young people participating in affiliated football are afforded the highest possible standard of care.

The Irish FA's Safeguarding Children and Young People in Football Policy and Procedures sets out the association's commitment towards safeguarding all children and young people who participate in affiliated Irish FA programmes. Not only does this document guide those working with children, it also clarifies the duty of care every person involved has to protect children and young people from abuse or harm as well as their responsibility to report any harm or any suspected risk or harm that a child or young person may experience.

This policy document is set out to ensure the Irish FA complies with all statutory legal and moral requirements as set out in current legislation. This includes International Guidance set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). The Irish FA remains committed to working alongside statutory safeguarding organisations to ensure that children and young people can benefit from engaging in football in a safe and secure environment.

SAFEGUARDING POLICY STATEMENT

The welfare of children and young people is paramount to the Irish Football Association.

The Irish FA endeavours to provide an environment which values and protects all children and young people in all aspects and at every level of football in Northern Ireland, regardless of religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation. This includes persons with a disability or persons without, and persons with dependents and persons without. It is the policy and commitment of the Irish FA to protect children and young people involved in football from inappropriate behaviour and all types of abuse.

The Children (NI) Order 1995 is based on a clear and consistent set of principles designed with the common aim of promoting the welfare of children and young people. Children and young people have the right to be safe. Irish FA staff and volunteers involved in the delivery of affiliated football have a duty to ensure that this fundamental principle takes precedence over all other considerations.

The Irish FA provides the policy framework for clubs, leagues and all other affiliated bodies to safeguard children and young people in their care. All clubs, leagues and other affiliated bodies involved in the delivery of youth football must adopt the policy and procedures in their entirety and endeavour to safeguard children and young people by:

- Recognising and communicating to all officials and volunteers that children have the right to be protected from all forms of abuse and harm
- Appointing a Designated Child Safeguarding Officer with appropriate authority to oversee the implementation of relevant safeguarding policy and procedures and the development of best practice
- Following carefully the procedures for recruiting and selecting volunteers and providing effective management of volunteers through support and training
- Disseminating the required code of behaviour for everyone involved, and ensuring the code is adhered to at all times
- Sharing information about safeguarding best practice with everyone involved in club/organisation activities
- Educating officials and volunteers about the signs and indicators of abuse and how to respond appropriately
- Ensuring that all allegations of abuse are responded to promptly, in a confidential manner and in line with statutory and association guidelines
- Sharing information about concerns with safeguarding agencies that need to know, and involving children and young people and their parents or guardians if appropriate

SCOPE

This policy applies to all football clubs, leagues and all other bodies affiliated to the Irish FA in the provision of youth football or engagement of children/young people in affiliated football.

The association's Safeguarding Children and Young People in Football Policy Statement is displayed and available within Irish FA premises for all interested parties to read. All clubs, leagues and affiliated bodies should make this available and accessible to all members, parents and carers within their organisation.

POLICY REVIEW

The Irish FA has a responsibility to ensure the implementation of all policies required to govern the organisation, including its safeguarding policy.

The association is committed to reviewing its safeguarding policy and procedures every three years to ensure adherence with all government legislation and best practice guidelines. This timescale may be subject to change and will take cognisance of any change in legislation.

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) (International Treaty)

What is the UN convention?

The convention is a set of minimum standards – the bottom line – in protecting children's rights. It is a binding international treaty which the British government signed at the United Nations, committing itself to give children the rights and protections written in the convention.

Who is a child?

In the convention 'a child' means anyone who is under 18 years of age.

What rights do children have?

There are many rights written into the convention. These include rights relating to:

- Protection of the environment in which children live
- Reasonable standards of living
- Protection from violence, abuse and exploitation
- Protection for children cared for away from home and for children with a disability
- Reasonable standards of health and development.

Each point in the convention is called an article. There are five articles that are especially important for all officials/volunteers involved in the delivery of affiliated football to be aware of:

Article 1: No Discrimination

Article 3: Acting in the Child's Best Interests

Article 4: Making It Happen (the government has promised to make laws and change policies and procedures to give children these rights)

Article 12: The Child's Right to Express an Opinion

Article 19: Protection from Abuse and Neglect

Are these all 'legal' rights?

Since the UK government has signed the convention, no law or administrative action should contradict it. There is a committee at the United Nations which checks on whether governments are keeping their promises. Current legislation does not make all these rights available to children.

More information about children's rights in local law can be obtained from the Children's Law Centre, who can advise you or put you in touch with specialist groups with information relating to any particular issues.

SAFEGUARDING RESPONSIBILITIES IN FOOTBALL

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. The Irish FA provides the framework and safeguarding policy and procedures for the delivery of affiliated football in Northern Ireland.

It is the responsibility of all clubs, leagues and affiliated bodies involved in the delivery of affiliated youth football and is supported within the Irish FA Articles of Association.

It is the responsibility of all clubs, leagues, and affiliated bodies to adopt the relevant areas of policy within their organisation and disseminate this among members, parents/guardians, officials, volunteers, outside agencies/contractors and all other participants.

Clubs/leagues/affiliated bodies must take all reasonable steps to ensure the application of this policy and comply openly with any audit conducted or directed by the Irish FA.

Designated Child Safeguarding Officer

There are specific roles within football that have additional responsibility for safeguarding.

Each club/affiliated body/organisation **must** appoint a **Designated Child Safeguarding Officer**.

This role is to:

- Advise and guide on safeguarding and practice related issues
- Ensure the application of policy and procedures within their organisation/club
- Ensure they are compliant with Irish FA affiliation requirements.

This is often reliant on strong leadership and management within an organisation/club. Boards/management committees should actively support this role and prioritise their opinions and any issues raised. The appointed individual(s) should report to the management committee/board on a regular basis.

The role and responsibilities of the Designated Child Safeguarding Officer include the following:

- Work with others to ensure a positive child centred environment
- Assist the club/organisation to fulfill its responsibilities to safeguard all children involved with the club/organisation
- Assist the club to implement the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Procedures
- Make themselves known to and be the first point of contact for staff, volunteers, parents, children and young people
- Ensure all club members, volunteers, coaches, players and parents are aware of and adhere to the club code of conduct
- Ensure all club volunteers who are responsible for supervising children have completed necessary vetting checks prior to taking up their role and update them within the specified timescale
- Ensure all club volunteers have participated in the Irish FA's Safeguarding Children and Young People training and participate in refresher training when required
- Maintain accurate and up to date records of all club volunteers including coaching qualifications, vetting check outcome, safeguarding training dates and complaints
- Sit on the club/organisation management committee
- Ensure the Irish FA is provided with safeguarding compliance requests. This includes but is not limited to providing contact details of the DCSO and alternative point of contact, preferably a chairperson

SECTION 3

When appointing a Designated Child Safeguarding Officer, clubs/organisations/affiliated bodies **must** ensure that the appropriate person has:

- Completed a satisfactory AccessNI check (prior to taking up the role),
- Completed the Irish FA basic safeguarding course,
- Completed the Irish FA training for Designated Child Safeguarding Officers within 6 months of taking up the role
- Complete refresher training as appropriate

The Irish FA has in place a Safeguarding team who assume a higher level of responsibility and accountability to oversee and support the implementation of safeguarding best practice standards within the Association and for affiliated football. The staff of this unit can provide advice and guidance to clubs, leagues and other affiliated bodies and can be contacted here:

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The Irish FA's Case Management Panel (CMP)

The Irish FA CMP is responsible for considering cases of alleged serious poor practice relating to the conduct of a club official or volunteer engaging in regulated activity within affiliated youth football, and for advising the association on the appropriate action following the disclosure of an investigation undertaken by an external agency. Information disclosed on an AccessNI Disclosure pertaining to a club official or volunteer that is deemed (by the Irish FA Safeguarding Team) to meet the threshold of a joint risk assessment will also be reviewed by the CMP. Serious allegations of inappropriate behaviour that occurs outside affiliated youth football that does not result in a criminal conviction or intervention from statutory services but indicates a transferable risk of harm to children and young people in affiliated football may also be considered by the CMP.

Where alleged child abuse has taken place, the CMP will:

- Advise/decide whether the accused should be temporarily suspended from their role in affiliated youth football pending statutory safeguarding body and/or police investigations;
- Assess all cases in accordance with the Irish FA's disciplinary procedures irrespective of the outcome of investigations carried out by the PSNI and statutory safeguarding organisations;
- Support the person who made the referral;
- Inform the accused that they are subject to a child protection investigation and keep them informed of proceedings (following consultation with statutory authorities);
- Notify the accused of the outcome of the process and consequent sanction in writing. Ultimately, on advice from the CMP, the association is responsible for deciding if the individual will be presented with the opportunity to appeal the decision;
- Advise/decide on communications with the media;
- Advise/decide whether the person who was subject to an investigation can be reinstated and how best to do this. This decision will be made in consultation with statutory safeguarding bodies, the NSPCC and/or the police.

Possible outcomes

The following outcomes are possible because of a CMP review:

- No case to answer
- Advice and warning as to future conduct
- Support or training required
- Supervision and/or monitoring
- Suspension
- Not permitted to act as a club official in affiliated youth football

Appeals

An appeals process can be made available to any individual who is subject to a decision made by the CMP.

All requests must be submitted in writing, by special delivery post, within 14 days after the date the decision was put in writing to the individual concerned.

A fee of £75 must be enclosed with the appeal. The fee shall be returned only where the appeal is upheld or not heard.

The request must clearly identify the decision the individual wishes to appeal and the grounds of appeal. Evidence must also be submitted to support the claim.

The Appeals Panel will exclude any person who sat on the original CMP but will have access to any notes from the original CMP.

Where an appeal has been rejected or not heard, the initial decision made by the CMP will stand.

The Appeals Panel will notify the individual, in writing, of the outcome of the appeals process.

Should an individual wish to withdraw their appeal prior to the hearing taking place, they must notify the Irish FA's Safeguarding Team in writing. In such cases the original decision made by the CMP will be upheld. The individual may also be subject to a cancellation fee.

The Irish FA currently records information relating to allegations of poor practice, abuse and AccessNI disclosures using an online recording system 'My Concern' provided by The Safeguarding Company.



SAFE RECRUITMENT

All clubs, leagues and other affiliated bodies should ensure all staff/volunteers providing football opportunities for children and young people are appropriately selected, supported and have the necessary safeguarding knowledge to help them in their roles.

This recruitment and selection process should include:

- Request an application or declaration of interest form for any potential role
- Provide a role and responsibilities description
- Implement an induction process relevant to the role
- Take up references from previous experience in a similar role or regulated activity
- Confirm coaching/sporting qualifications
- Implement a process of managing and supporting volunteers
- Confirm all appointments with the management committee

When satisfied with the applicant/volunteer, all volunteers engaging in Regulated Activity on behalf of the club/organisation must complete an Enhanced Disclosure Vetting Check prior to acting in an official capacity in affiliated Irish FA programmes.

The application process is as follows:

- When satisfied with the applicant, the club/organisation will issue a hard copy of the AccessNI application form to each applicant
- Each applicant must complete the application in full, including the online registration for an Enhanced Disclosure Check (against the barred list if the work is unsupervised)
- Each applicant must return the application form to the DCSSO or chairperson along with three forms of identification for identity checking
- Each applicant should, if necessary, submit the self declaration form outlining any relevant cautions and/or convictions to the Irish FA Safeguarding Team, NFS at Windsor Park, Donegall Avenue, Belfast, BT12 6LU
- The DCSSO or chairperson should record the name, date of birth and AccessNI reference number and forward the application form and copies of identification to the Irish FA Safeguarding Team, NFS at Windsor Park, Donegall Avenue, Belfast, BT12 6LU. All information should be included on the relevant online club registration system

This application process is determined by AccessNI.



On receipt of the completed application the Irish FA will:

- Progress the application to AccessNI
- Receive notification from AccessNI outlining:
 - (i) **Nothing to disclose** – The Irish FA will inform the DCSO or chairperson that the individual could be considered for appointment
 - (ii) **Certificate Issued** – The Irish FA will request from the applicant the original disclosure certificate and an explanation of any disclosures outlined within. The applicant may provide or be required to provide relevant additional information allowing the Irish FA to assess the individual's suitability to fulfil their proposed role. This may include but is not limited to written references and/or additional reports relating to any convictions. The applicant may be required to attend an interview as part of the assessment process. The Irish FA will inform the club, league or affiliated body if the applicant has been deemed suitable and any measures that should be put in place to manage any identified risk. The club/league/affiliated body may be required to engage in this assessment process.
 - (iii) **Further information required** – the Irish FA may be required to request additional information from the applicant for the purposes of progressing the application.
 - (iv) Some cases may be referred to the Irish FA Case Management Panel for review depending on the nature of the disclosures.

The Irish FA is committed to equal opportunities for all and does not preclude applicants with criminal convictions. The Irish FA will risk assess any disclosures or additional information identified through the vetting check. Convictions will only be considered when deemed relevant to the position that the applicant has applied for and will be judged on a case-by-case basis.

The assessment of suitability will depend on several factors. This includes but is not limited to:

- The nature of the position
- The self-disclosure of any prosecutions or convictions
- The seriousness, timing and any possible pattern that emerges of any information disclosed
- The potential of reoffending to cause harm to young people/vulnerable adults

The following information will be considered:

- Age of applicant now and at the time of the offence
- Type and nature of the offence
- Number of offences on record
- Pattern of offending or date since last offence
- Contact with young people and/or vulnerable adults
- Any mitigating factors
- Any aggravating factors
- Disclosure by applicant
- Co-operation with case management process and the provision of any other information that may be relevant to the assessment

SECTION 4

Disclosure of certain types of convictions/prosecutions may preclude the applicant from a position working with children. Examples of offences that may prohibit an applicant are:

- Any offence of a sexual nature
- Any offence against a child
- An offence that causes gross bodily harm
- Supply of drugs
- An offence of kidnapping
- Continuous offending that might cause concern for the wellbeing of children

Any applicant who submits inaccurate information (at any stage of the process), omits relevant information or does not engage meaningfully in the assessment process may not be permitted to participate in Regulated Activity in football affiliated to the Irish FA.

The outcome of the risk assessment on the Enhanced Disclosure Certificate will be:

- Suitable
- Unsuitable
- Suitable, subject to additional measures

All documentation will be returned to the applicant on completion of the process. The Irish FA will retain confirmation of the decision and may retain additional notes.

Clubs, leagues and affiliated bodies must ensure they maintain accurate and up to date records of all club officials including confirmation of vetting checks and safeguarding training, both of which should be updated every 3 years.

Appeals

An appeals process can be made available to any individual who is subject to a decision made by the Case Management Panel (CMP).



SAFEGUARDING TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Education and training in the basics of safeguarding is necessary for all volunteers and management committee members within affiliated youth football.

All clubs, associations and affiliated bodies should ensure appropriate attendance on the Irish FA Safeguarding Children and Young People in Football training course within three months of taking up their role. This will cover:

- Basic awareness and understanding of safeguarding issues
- Recognising a child protection or poor practice concern - including guidance on how to respond to, record and report concerns in line with Irish FA guidelines
- Volunteers' role and responsibilities to safeguard children and young people who participate in Irish FA programmes
- Awareness of the Irish FA Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Procedures – including its codes of conduct

The Irish FA online Safeguarding Children and Young People in Football course is suitable for refresher training and is available at <https://www.irishfacoaching.com/>. Participants should provide their club/organisation with their certificate on completion of the course for verification.

All DCSO's must attend the Irish FA Safeguarding Children and Young People in Football course for DCSO's which outlines their specific role and responsibility within their organisation. This should be completed within six months of taking up their role.

Participants must attend a tutor-led session in the first instance and refresher training every three years.

Parents/guardians/carers

To encourage children and young people to participate in and enjoy the benefits of football, it is important that parents/guardians/carers are informed about the ethos of our club/organisation.

Clubs/organisations need to educate parents/guardians/carers about how they can best support their child throughout their football journey regardless of the level at which they play. They need to raise awareness among parents/guardians/carers about how they can enjoy football without any additional pressure about performance.

Children and young people learn from those around them. Parents/guardians/carers act as role models for young footballers, so it is important for them to be positive and respectful towards players, coaches, opponents, and match officials.

There may be occasions where a child voices a concern or a parent/guardian/carer becomes aware of poor practice. Poor practice is behaviour that breaches the code of conduct and, when not addressed, risks becoming harmful and/or abusive. Clubs need to ensure parents/guardians/carers can raise any issues or concerns they have, appropriately and at the earliest opportunity.

They should endeavour to do this in the following ways:

- Make the code of conduct (for players, parents, coaches) available to everyone
- Host parents/guardians' meetings/information sessions to raise awareness about the ethos of the club
- Appoint a DCSO and communicate their contact details appropriately

Further information about how parents/guardians can keep children safe in their chosen sport can be found at www.thecpsu.org.

Children and young people

For children and young people to have a positive experience, and to promote physical and mental health aspects of football, we must ensure the environment they play in is safe, fun and inclusive.

As enjoyable as football can be, there are times it can be stressful and challenging. This may be due to increased pressure and expectation in higher performance football, relationships with peers and/or coaches, poor side-line behaviour or personal difficulties experienced outside football.

A club should seek to create a positive experience by:

- Engaging with players in agreeing the standard of behaviour and conduct expected of all players. This should then be reinforced by parents/guardians/carers
- Informing players of the standard of behaviour and conduct they should expect from coaches and club officials
- Ensuring coaches and volunteers participate in safeguarding training
- Inform all young people of how they can raise concerns safely within our organisation and give them the confidence the club will listen to their views, take on board their concerns and act on those concerns. The club should also promote relevant external independent helpline and support services to enable young people to reach out to others for support and advice if required

Each club should strive to create a positive and child friendly ethos throughout their organisation through the implementation of this policy and procedures document.

Further information for children and young people can be found on the Irish FA Safeguarding Children and Young People app or at <https://www.childline.org.uk>.



APPROPRIATE ADULT - CHILD RELATIONSHIPS

Understanding grooming within sport

Most adults involved in the delivery of affiliated football for children and young people participate with the main aim of providing a fun, positive experience for those with whom they work, however there is a small minority that may use football as a way of gaining access to children and young people for inappropriate reasons such as sexual abuse.

To gain access to children and young people, those who commit offences often first earn the trust of people surrounding the young person. This may include representatives of the organisations involved in the delivery of football activity, the club, coaches and volunteers, parents and guardians and other children and young people. This process is referred to as 'grooming'. Those who want to abuse children also use social media sites, instant messaging apps (including teen dating apps) or online gaming platforms to connect with a child or a young person.

Those who commit offences often portray themselves as caring and trustworthy individuals so they are freely entrusted with the care of children and young people. Once they have gained access to children and young people, they befriend them in order to break down any pre-existing barriers. As soon as a trusting friendship has been established, they manipulate and control children and young people into gratifying their sexual needs.

The Sexual Offences (NI) Order 2008 brings Northern Ireland into line with legislation in England and Wales and means grooming is deemed to be an offence. Urgent cases must be reported to the PSNI with the Irish FA informed at the earliest opportunity. The Safeguarding Team will provide appropriate advice and guidance and may assume responsibility for referring the information on to the statutory authorities.

Relationships of trust

The Irish FA recognises the influence which a person can have over a child or young person in a coaching or leadership capacity, and that they have the potential to influence their personal, social and sporting development.

Any person engaging in regulated activity in affiliated football must remember that they are in a position of trust and must never abuse their power and authority for self-gain (eg forming inappropriate relationships with children and young people, including those over the age of consent [which is 16 in Northern Ireland]). A healthy, positive relationship must always be maintained.

The Irish FA had previously set standards for those in "Positions of Trust" within football, ensuring that anyone in a coaching or any other position of trust would be banned from football if they breached their trust and engaged in sexual activity with a person under 18 years of age in their care. The law in Northern Ireland has now changed to make it a crime, thereby strengthening the Irish FA good practice requirement. With the passing of the Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims Bill in March 2022 it is now illegal for sports coaches and faith leaders to have a sexual relationship with young people under 18 in their care.

The Irish FA will take disciplinary action in situations where any person engaging in regulated activity in football affiliated to the Irish FA has abused their position of trust and authority by having sexual contact with a minor and report the matter to the police.

Under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order, the association has a legal duty to refer an individual to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) if it considers the individual to have harmed, or to be a risk to, a child or young person while working in a regulated position. That individual may ultimately be barred by the DBS from working with children and young people. For further information, refer to the Reporting Procedures outlined in Section 8.



POOR PRACTICE AND ABUSE

Poor practice refers to inappropriate behaviour towards any child or young person in a football setting. Poor practice is a breach of the Irish FA Code of Conduct and will be taken seriously and responded to through the reporting procedures outlined in Section 8 of this document. Appropriate sanctions will be imposed when necessary.

Most poor practice cases can be dealt with within affiliated clubs/organisations by either a DCSO or other appropriate person appointed by the club/organisation through prompt communication, cooperation from all parties involved and a commonsense approach.

All cases should be recorded using the Child Protection and Poor Practice Referral Form contained within this document (see Appendix 10); in every instance a copy of the form must be forwarded to the DCSO.

Clubs/organisations should refer cases of **serious** poor practice or abuse that occur within affiliated youth football to the Irish FA Safeguarding Team. The Safeguarding Team will assume responsibility for assessing and providing advice for each case and will take the appropriate course of action to ensure the safety of children.

Behaviour by an individual that occurs outside affiliated football, that may or may not have resulted in a criminal conviction, can be considered by the Irish FA's Case Management Panel if there is deemed to be a transferable risk of harm to children and young people engaged in affiliated football. Such cases may be reviewed by the Irish FA's Case Management Panel to determine the suitability of an individual to engage in Regulated Activity within affiliated football.

Poor practice refers to behaviour that disregards the needs of children and young people, thus compromising their welfare. Some examples include:

- Taking insufficient care to avoid injuries, e.G. Exposing children and young people to intensive or inappropriate training methods
- Either showing favouritism towards or ignoring certain children and young people
- Placing children or young people in compromising or embarrassing situations ie young referees or players sharing a changing room with adults
- Not adhering to the agreed Code of Conduct and Health and Safety procedures
- failing to report behaviour which compromises the welfare of a child or young person eg abuse or bullying
- using aggressive or abusive language towards a young person, or in their presence

Irish FA codes of conduct can be found in Appendix 2 and should be applied across all clubs, organisations and affiliated bodies in the delivery of youth football.

What is child abuse?

"Harm can be suffered by a child or young person by acts of abuse perpetrated upon them by others. Abuse can happen in any family, but children may be more at risk if their parents have problems with drugs, alcohol and mental health, or if they live in a home where domestic abuse happens. Abuse can also occur outside of the family environment. Evidence shows that babies and children with disabilities can be more vulnerable to suffering abuse."

(Ref: Department of Health, Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland 2017)

Child abuse occurs when a person in a position of greater authority or power causes significant harm to a child or young person. Research indicates that this harm can take place in many settings, including sport, and that the perpetrator is more often a person known to the young person whom they know and place their trust in, rather than a stranger. Abuse can be committed by anyone, male, female and by another young person as well.

Whilst bullying is not formally recognised as a type of abuse under the Children (NI) Order, the Irish FA considers it to be a form of abuse which must be taken seriously and responded to. Further concerns may include the supervision and provision of appropriate care during activities such as overnight trips/residentials, age-appropriate levels of training and communication.

Recognising abuse

Child abuse can be a very difficult and emotive subject. However, it is a subject which requires education and open discussion so that everyone involved in affiliated youth football feels confident in recognising the potential signs and symptoms of abuse and knows how to respond to concerns in line with association and statutory guidelines.

By creating a better understanding of the issue, and by facilitating open discussion about abuse, the Irish FA also endeavours to deter those who may wish to use football as a means of gaining access to children and young people for inappropriate reasons.

Child abuse inquiries indicate that abuse is rarely a one-off occurrence. Therefore, it is imperative that all allegations and suspicions of abuse are taken seriously and acted upon immediately to prevent further harm to children and young people.

Grounds for concern

The possibility of child abuse should be considered if there are reasonable grounds for concern. Reasonable grounds for concern exist when there is:

- A specific indication from a child or young person that they have been abused
- An account by a person who saw the child or young person 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

If you are worried about the safety or welfare of a child, it is important that you report it. Even if you're not sure, it's always best to tell someone in a position to respond appropriately about your concerns. Social Services and the police can investigate concerns about a child's safety if the concern meets their threshold.

Categories of abuse

The Department of Health guidance Co-operating to Safeguard Children (2017) formally recognises five types of abuse:

Physical abuse - occurs when a person deliberately hurts a child or young person or gives a child or young person access to alcohol, drugs or other dangerous substances.

Emotional abuse - occurs when a person persistently shouts, taunts or threatens a child or young person. They may also convey to them that they are worthless or inadequate.

Neglect - occurs when a person persistently fails to provide a child or young person with basic needs such as food, water and clothing. The child or young person may also be left unsupervised and not cared for.

Sexual abuse - occurs when a person takes advantage of a child or young person to gratify their own sexual needs.

Exploitation - occurs when a person manipulates or abuses their power and control over a child or young person for their own personal gain.

Facts about abuse

- Most perpetrators are persons whom the child or young person who is abused knows and trusts
- The reported cases of child abuse are just the tip of the iceberg of the cruelty, exploitation and neglect to which children in our society are subjected
- Children with a disability are more vulnerable to abuse. They are more dependent on intimate care and sometimes less able to tell anyone or run away from abusive situations
- Children very seldom make false accusations that they have been abused and may in fact deny actual abuse or retract an accusation due to not feeling safe enough to make a disclosure for fear of the consequences
- Children who talk about the abuse fear the consequences of telling: if things are bad, perhaps they may get worse
- Children and young people who are abused can hide their unhappiness and distress
- Abuse can have serious long-term effects on children and young people. If untreated, the effects of abuse on children can be devastating and could continue into adulthood

One third of children who are sexually abused are abused by other young people under 18 years of age. This is often known as harmful sexual behaviour

Increased vulnerability to abuse

Children and young people who have additional care needs or who come from a minority ethnic group may face a range of additional challenges. Officials and volunteers should be made aware of this and encouraged to challenge any behaviour that compromises the welfare or acts as a deterrent to the participation of such children and young people.

Safeguards for children and young people with a disability should be the same as those for other children and young people; however, special input may be required if the child or young person has severe or multiple disabilities.

Disabled children and young people have the same needs as other children and young people, but they may have additional needs associated with their disability that may increase their vulnerability to abuse. For example:

- Children and young people with disabilities are often more dependent on adults, e.g., in intimate care situations, and may be cared for by a number of different adults. Such children and young people often spend a lot of time away from home, family and friends, and may therefore have a harder time recognising improper or abusive behaviour
- Children and young people with disabilities may be unable to recognise abusive behaviour, because they may have learning difficulties or a lack of awareness or information, and because they may have reduced exposure to the norm of adult-children interactions. For example, a child or young person with disabilities may have difficulty in differentiating between appropriate and inappropriate touching
- Many children and young people, particularly those with physical disabilities, have a poor and / or incomplete body image and therefore may not recognise inappropriate behaviour

Children and young people from minority ethnic groups

Children and young people from minority ethnic groups may also be more vulnerable, as they may be subjected to racial taunts and abuse from their peers or from those in positions of authority. Language and cultural barriers may also increase the potential of abuse or poor practice. The Irish FA takes the prevention of racially and culturally motivated abuse seriously, as all people deserve to take part in football without discrimination.

Children and young people who engage in leadership roles

Children and young people who take on positions of responsibility (eg as coaches and match officials) are often susceptible to verbal, physical and emotional abuse from adult coaches, parents or guardians and match spectators. This behaviour is unacceptable, and the harm which it can cause must not be underestimated. **Children and young people** who take on such roles **are the future of the game**; they need to be **encouraged and commended** rather than subjected to abuse.

Every person involved in the delivery of youth football has a responsibility to ensure that **children and young people** who engage in such roles are **respected and protected**. Any form of inappropriate behaviour or abuse must be recorded and reported to the appropriate department within the association. The Safeguarding Team must be notified about all cases of serious poor practice and abuse.

Bullying

The Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum defines bullying as “behaviour, that is usually repeated, by one or more persons intentionally to hurt, harm or adversely affect the rights and needs of another or others”.

Bullying can be:

- **Physical** - pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching, unwanted physical contact etc.
- **Verbal** - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing, racist / homophobic taunts, gestures
- **Emotional** - torment through ridicule, humiliation and the continual ignoring of individuals
- **Sexual** - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive remarks
- **Homophobic** - focuses on a person’s actual or alleged sexuality
- **Racist** - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is an increasingly common form of bullying behaviour which happens on social networks, games and mobile phones. Cyberbullying can include spreading rumours about someone, or posting nasty or embarrassing messages, images or videos.

Children may know who's bullying them online – it can be an extension of offline peer bullying – or they may be targeted by someone using a fake or anonymous account. It's easy to be anonymous online and this may increase the likelihood of engaging in bullying behaviour.

Cyberbullying can happen at any time or anywhere – a child can be bullied when they are alone in their bedroom – so it can feel like there's no escape.



RESPONDING TO DISCLOSURES ABOUT CHILD ABUSE

What is a disclosure?

The term 'disclosure' in this context refers to information shared by individuals, rather than just the content of an AccessNI Disclosure vetting check.

A disclosure may occur when:

- A child or young person directly voices concerns about the behaviour of another person towards them
- The potentially harmful behaviour of a person towards a child or young person is brought to your attention through your own observations or through a third party

The Irish Football Association's Safeguarding team must be made aware of all allegations of abuse to ensure consistency of approach and to offer support to those affected.

What to do if a child or young person discloses to you

Research and statistics indicate that children and young people are more likely to disclose safeguarding concerns to an adult whom they trust and can rely on. In a football context, this person is more likely to be a coach or volunteer with whom the child or young person has built a relationship. Children and young people who are being subjected to harm just want an ear to listen to them, to be believed and for the abuse to stop.

Should a child or young person voice concerns about the behaviour of another person towards them, the person receiving the disclosure should:

- 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
- Stay calm and not show any extreme reaction to what the child is saying;
- Listen compassionately, and take what the child is saying seriously
- Understand that the child has decided to tell something very important and has taken a risk to do so. The experience of telling should be as positive as possible so that the child may be less concerned if talking to those involved in any further investigation
- Be honest with the child and tell them that it is not possible that keep information a secret
- Make no judgmental statements about the person against whom the allegation is made
- Not question the child unless the nature of what s/he is saying is unclear. Leading questions should be avoided. Open, non-specific questions should be used such as "Can you explain to me what you mean by that?"
- Check out the concerns with the parents/guardians before making a report unless doing so would endanger the child or compromise any further investigation
- Give the child some indication of what would happen next, such as informing the club DCSC or Health and Social Care Trusts (HSCT). It should be kept in mind that the child may have been threatened and may feel vulnerable at this stage
- Carefully record the details

Never:

- Question unless for clarification
- Make promises you cannot keep
- Promise confidentiality
- Rush into actions that may be inappropriate
- Make/pass a judgment on alleged abuser
- Take sole responsibility. Consult the DCSO so you can begin to protect the child and gain support for yourself

(Ref: Sport Ireland and SportNI's Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport, 2011)

The Recording Process

You should record any disclosure using the Child Protection and Poor Practice Referral Form which can be found at www.irishfa.com. Record-keeping is of critical importance and should be:

- Factual, accurate and legible
- Written in the best interests of the child – rather than in a way which protects the reputation of the association, club/organisation or the individual who the concern relates to
- Recorded using the child's exact words, where possible
- Inclusive of dates, times, locations and contexts in which the disclosure occurred together with any other relevant information
- Signed and dated by the person writing the report

When recording, you should avoid:

- Use of judgmental language
- Giving your personal opinion, unless it is backed up by substantial evidence

(Ref: Sport Ireland and SportNI's Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport, 2011)

The Irish FA's reporting procedures

All disclosures of child abuse must be reported to the Safeguarding Team immediately with a written copy of the recorded disclosure also submitted to the Safeguarding Team.

The records may be used as part of any external investigative or legal proceedings that may follow, or during an internal disciplinary process following advice from statutory agencies about what action to take.

If there is a possibility that a child or young person has been abused, or is at risk of abuse, the Safeguarding Team will report the concerns to the relevant statutory organisations who will assume responsibility for investigating the referral.

If the Safeguarding Team are unsure whether reasonable grounds for concern exist, they will consult informally with the local statutory agencies, who will advise whether or not the matter requires a formal report.

All allegations of abuse will be responded to after consultation with the relevant statutory organisations.

SECTION 8

In the event the allegation relates to a person acting on behalf of a club/organisation, this response **may** include:

- Informing the person of the allegation made against them and affording them the opportunity to respond
- Informing the club/organisation responsible for the individual(s)
- Informing senior management within the Irish FA
- Contacting the victim and their family, if advised to do so, to inform them that the allegations have been forwarded on to the relevant statutory organisations
- Removing the official/volunteer from their duties while the investigation process takes place

The Irish FA will always work in consultation with the statutory organisations and will act on their advice. Any further action taken by the association will be determined by the outcome of the statutory organisation(s) investigation.

In cases of emergency, where a child appears to be at immediate and serious risk, and the Safeguarding Team is unable to contact a duty social worker, the PSNI should be contacted. Under no circumstances will a child or young person be left in a dangerous situation pending intervention by the Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT).

If the Safeguarding Team is not available, report any concerns immediately to your local HSCT, the PSNI or the NSPCC. These statutory/safeguarding agencies will advise you on what steps to take next.

Current safeguarding legislation places a legal and moral duty on the Irish FA to refer any concerns about the behaviour of an adult towards a child or young person to statutory safeguarding organisations. It is imperative that any disclosures are reported to the Safeguarding Team immediately so that the appropriate course of action can be taken.

Disclosures from officials or volunteers

Voicing concerns, suspicions or allegations of abuse can cause great concern and stress – particularly if it relates to a colleague or volunteer who engages in affiliated youth football. However, sharing information about the welfare of a child or young person is paramount to prevent the child or young person from suffering further harm.

Any person who, in good faith, discloses possible wrongdoing towards a child or young person involved in affiliated football will receive full support from the Safeguarding Team.

The Irish FA will not take disciplinary action against any person who, in good faith, discloses their concerns to the Safeguarding Team – even if the disclosure's contents proves to be unsubstantiated.

Should any disclosure scenario arise, the Irish FA's Safeguarding Team will offer all available advice, guidance and support – even if the concern is proved to be unsubstantiated.

Remember:

It is **not** your responsibility to decide if abuse has occurred.

It **is** your responsibility to act if you have concerns.

Dealing with disclosures outside Irish FA programmes

If your concern relates to the behaviour of a person engaged in regulated activity in affiliated youth football outside the context of their role, towards a child or young person that may present a transferable risk of harm to a child or young person involved in Irish FA programmes, you should report your concerns immediately to the Irish FA's Safeguarding Team – in line with the reporting procedures outlined in this policy document.

Confidentiality

When dealing with concerns relating to possible abuse, staff and volunteers are required to apply discretion and maintain confidentiality. This places an obligation on officials and volunteers to share information on a 'need to know' basis to safeguard the welfare of the child or young person whom the concern relates to. Information can, and must, be shared with statutory organisations to assist them with the referral/investigation process.

Everyone involved in the safeguarding process is entitled to confidentiality. Information pertaining to each case will be stored in a secure place in accordance with data protection requirements. The association will take any breach of confidentiality seriously and respond to it in accordance with disciplinary procedures.

Referrals to the disclosure and barring service (DBS)

The Irish FA is legally required, under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order, to refer information to the DBS in certain circumstances. In all cases there are two conditions, both of which must be met, to trigger a referral to the DBS by a regulated activity provider.

A referral will be made to the DBS if the Irish FA:

- a. Withdraws permission for an individual to engage in regulated activity, or would have done so had that individual not resigned, retired, been made redundant or been transferred to a position which is not regulated activity; because
- b. they think that the individual has:
 - Engaged in relevant conduct
 - Satisfied the criteria set out in the Harm Test
 - **Received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence**

If both conditions have been met, the Irish FA must refer the information on to the DBS.

The referral must be made to the DBS when the association has (in following with good practice) gathered sufficient evidence as part of its investigations to support its reasons for withdrawing permission for the person in question to engage in regulated activity, and consulted with the relevant Health and Social Care Trust if appropriate.

The Irish FA's Safeguarding Team **must** be informed if any club removes an individual from engaging in regulated activity for reasons outlined above.

Remember:

It is not your duty to decide if abuse has occurred.

It is your responsibility to report any concerns and suspicions.

Additional information on the DBS and the referral process can be found on the DBS website:

www.homeoffice.gov.uk/dba

Allegations of previous abuse

Allegations of child abuse may be reported some time after the incident occurred – for example, an adult may have been abused as a child by a coach or volunteer who is still working in football. Any person who discloses a non-recent case of abuse in good faith will receive full support from the Safeguarding Team. This includes referring the information on to the appropriate statutory safeguarding authorities.

If the allegation relates to abuse outside association programmes, officials and volunteers have a legal and moral duty to refer the information on to the appropriate authorities as outlined in this document. The Irish FA's Safeguarding Team should also be informed, as other children and young people involved in football may be at risk from this person.

The Irish FA's Safeguarding Team will take appropriate action following consultation with the CMP.

Providing support

Reporting abuse can be an emotionally stressful procedure which can result in a person feeling worried and upset. The Irish FA will support and guide any person who, in good faith, reports a concern about a child or young person or voices concerns about the conduct of another person towards a child or young person, even if it is proved to be unfounded.

Every effort will be made to ensure that any child or young person who has been subjected to abuse, as well as their parents or guardians, will receive help and support from the Irish FA and appropriate safeguarding agencies. A list of independent support groups and helplines is outlined in Appendix 14.

The Irish FA will also consider what level of support may be appropriate for any staff member or volunteer against whom a complaint has been made.

APPENDIX 1

LEGAL AND POLICY REQUIREMENTS PERTAINING TO SAFEGUARDING

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) (International Treaty)

What is it?

The convention is a set of minimum standards – the bottom line – in protecting children’s rights. It is a binding international treaty which the British government signed at the United Nations, committing itself to give children the rights and protections written in the convention.

Who is a child?

In the convention ‘a child’ means anyone who is under 18 years of age.

What rights do children have?

There are many rights written into the convention which include, for example, rights relating to:

- Children having a say in their education
- Protection of the environment in which children live
- Reasonable standards of living
- Protection from violence, abuse and exploitation
- Protection for children cared for away from home and for children with a disability
- Children being able to use their own language, enjoy their own culture and practice their own religion
- Reasonable standards of health and development
- Children suspected of committing a crime and children convicted of crimes

Each point in the convention is called an ‘article’. There are five articles that are especially important for Irish FA staff and volunteers to be aware of.

Section 2:

Article 1: No Discrimination

Article 3: Acting in the Child’s Best Interests

Article 4: Making it Happen (the government has promised to make laws and change policies and procedures to give children these rights)

Article 12: The Child’s Right to Express an Opinion

Article 19: Protection from Abuse and Neglect

Are these all 'legal' rights?

Since the UK government has signed the convention, no law or administrative action should contradict it. There is a committee at the United Nations which checks on whether governments are keeping their promises. Current legislation does not make all these rights available to children.

More information about children's rights in local law can be obtained from the Children's Law Centre, who can advise you or put you in touch with specialist groups with information relating to any particular issues.

The Children (NI) Order 1995

What is it?

The Children (NI) Order 1995 deals with the care, upbringing and protection of children, and with most of the public and private law about children.

Definition of child:

A person under the age of 18.

Main AIMS:

- Providing a comprehensive framework for the law relating to children in Northern Ireland
- Ensuring that the child's best interests are the paramount consideration in all decisions
- ensuring that the child's views are considered in public law proceedings
- Balancing parental responsibilities with the duty of the state to protect and provide services for children

Key Principles

Paramountcy

In decisions about a child's upbringing, the child's welfare must be the court's paramount consideration. The court must take into account the child's wishes and feelings, and their physical, emotional and educational needs. It must also consider whether the child is at risk of harm from witnessing domestic violence.

Parental responsibility

Parents have responsibility to their children rather than rights over them. Issues of parental responsibility include, for example, decisions about education, health and religious upbringing. A mother always has parental responsibility (except where an adoption order is made), as do parents who were married at the time of a child's birth.

Prevention

This principle is about preventing children from being abused. It is about the state's obligations to provide support services to keep children safely within their families and to promote their health and welfare.

Partnership

The most effective way of ensuring that a child's needs are met is by working in partnership with their parents and carers wherever this is possible. This means that all agencies working with children should consult with parents and children throughout the decision-making process concerning their children, and give full information about the types of services provided.

Protection

Trusts have a duty to investigate when a child is at risk of significant harm due to a lack of care or actual abuse.

Co-operating to Safeguard Children (2017)

This document provides the overarching policy framework for safeguarding children and young people in the statutory, private, independent, community, voluntary and faith sectors. It outlines how communities, organisations and individuals must work both individually and in partnership to ensure children and young people are safeguarded as effectively as possible. This policy was originally issued in March 2016.

Criminal Law Act (NI) 1967

This legislation states that anyone with direct knowledge or information about an arrestable offence is required to inform the police within a reasonable time. An arrestable offence may include the non-disclosure of serious cases of child abuse.

General Data Protection Regulation 2018

The regulation applies to the EU and UK and stipulates the manner in which personal information is processed.

Consideration about special category information must be given to the following areas:

- How and where it is stored along with access permissions to the information
- The purpose for which the information is held
- The retention of information in compliance with GDPR but also in consideration of legislation pertaining to criminal convictions, safeguarding, child protection and player welfare

Disability Discrimination Act (1995)

Currently the Disability Discrimination Act (adopted in 1995, amended in 2005) protects the rights of disabled people in the United Kingdom. The DDA has the following effect on the sporting context:

- It is unlawful for sports organisations/clubs to treat disabled people less favourably for a reason related to their disability
- Sports organisations/clubs are required to make 'reasonable adjustments' for disabled people, such as providing extra help or making changes to the way in which they provide services
- Sports organisations/clubs will also have to make 'reasonable adjustments' to the physical features of their premises in order to overcome physical barriers to access
- It is a legal requirement for sports organisations/clubs to comply with their responsibilities under the DDA

The Human Rights Act 1998

The Human Rights Act 1998, operational since January 2000, means that the following rights are incorporated into our law and must be upheld by all public authorities, including our courts. The rights enumerated in the Act apply to children as well as to adults.

- Article 2** The right to life
- Article 3** Freedom from torture
- Article 4** Freedom from slavery
- Article 5** Freedom from arbitrary arrest and detention
- Article 6** The right to a fair trial
- Article 7** Freedom from retrospective penalties
- Article 8** Right to respect for privacy and family life
- Article 9** Freedom of thought, conscience and religion
- Article 10** Right to free speech
- Article 11** Right to marry and found a family
- Article 14** Freedom from discrimination
- Article 17** Prohibition of abuse of rights
- Article 18** Limitation on the use of restrictions on rights
- Protocol 1, Article 2** The right to education
- Protocol 1, Article 2** The right to peaceful enjoyment of property

(Ref: Our Duty to Care (2000): Principles of good practice for the protection of children and young people, published by Volunteer Now)

Guidance on promoting safeguarding

Our Duty to Care

This guidance document, created by Volunteer Now, promotes the ethos that safeguarding is everyone's business and provides guidelines for the establishment of best practice. Three key points are contained within the document:

- The safety of the child is paramount
- Creating the right atmosphere will contribute to rewarding and enjoyable experiences for children
- Safeguarding best practice will increase peace of mind for all

Getting it Right

This document, published by the DHSSPS, offers organisations guidance on how to meet the recognised and agreed minimum standards, they are:

- Recruitment
- Effective Management
- Reporting Concerns
- Code of Behaviour
- Sharing Information
- General Safety and Management of Activities

Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport

Joint document produced by SportNI and Sport Ireland which advises sporting organisations on how to implement and achieve best practice standards when working with children and young people. The document references five specific areas including:

- Principles
- People
- Policy and Procedure
- Practice
- Protection

Sexual offences legislation

Sexual Offences (NI) Order 2008

- Brings Northern Ireland in line with legislation in England and Wales
- Includes additional offences and increased tariffs for those who harm children
- Part 2 of the legislation focuses on convicted individuals and their management
- Reduces the age of consent for Northern Ireland to 16 years of age, in line with the rest of the UK

The Sexual Offences Act 2003

This legislation means that people who have been cautioned or convicted for sexual offences on or after 1 September 1997; or who have been released from prison on or after that date, having been convicted for sexual offences; must notify the police of certain personal details including name(s), address(es), date of birth, National Insurance Number etc. This process is sometimes referred to as 'signing the sex offender's register'. The period of time over which offenders are required to notify is determined by the sentence handed down by the courts.

The Criminal Justice (NI) Order 2008

This legislation has created public-protection sentences within an overall new sentencing framework for Northern Ireland. It removes the right to automatic 50% remission for prisoners who receive a custodial sentence. Arguably the most significant of the public-protection sentences is the new Indeterminate Sentence, which effectively means that the offenders who receive this sentence will have to satisfy new Parole Commissioners that their risk of causing serious harm has been reduced before they are released from prison to return to the community.

The new legislation also places the Public Protection Arrangements on a statutory footing and provides for the courts to order the use of electronic tagging for offenders.

Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 covers the Abuse of Trust making it illegal for a person who coaches, teaches, trains, supervises or instructs a person under 18, on a regular basis, in a sport to have a sexual relationship with any of those children.

Legislation and organisations pertaining to vetting

Rehabilitation of Offenders (Exceptions) Order (NI) 1979

Ordinarily, due to the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Northern Ireland) Order 1978, an employer is only entitled to request an individual's unspent record. However, exceptions are made under this legislation, listing the circumstances in which an employer may apply for a full criminal record disclosure.

Part 5 of the Police Act 1996

This was not initially implemented in Northern Ireland, but the Northern Ireland Office has now enacted this piece of the legislation. It permits the PSNI to disclose what is termed 'soft intelligence', ie non-conviction information, when they deem it appropriate. This enactment coincided with the establishment of AccessNI, which is the equivalent to the Criminal Records Bureau in England and Wales.

AccessNI

This organisation was established by a joint programme between the Northern Ireland Office, DHSSPS, the Department of Education and the PSNI. It provides organisations registered with them with a central means of checking the suitability of an individual seeking work with children and young people by providing access to any information which might have a bearing on an individual's suitability. Its role is to complement each organisation's own safeguarding measures, and all organisations entrusted with the care or training of children and young people need to have robust recruitment and staff/volunteer selection procedures.

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007

Organisations have a legal duty to refer information to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) in certain circumstances. In all cases two conditions must be met to trigger a referral to the DBS by a regulated activity provider. A referral must be made to the DBS when an organisation/club:

- Withdraws permission for an individual to engage in regulated activity, or would have done so had that individual not resigned, retired, been made redundant or been transferred to a position which is not regulated activity; because the organisation thinks that the individual has
- Engaged in relevant conduct
- Satisfied the criteria set out in the Harm Test
- **Received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence**

If both conditions have been met, the case must be referred to the DBS.

The referral should be made to the DBS when the regulated activity provider has (in following with good practice) gathered sufficient evidence as part of their investigations to support their reasons for withdrawing permission to engage in regulated activity and "consulted with their Health and Social Care Trust if appropriate".

Protection of Freedoms Act 2012

From September 2012 there have been some changes to safeguarding arrangements in relation to vetting in England, Wales and Northern Ireland; these have arisen from the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, which amends the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order. The Act includes a new and more limited definition of regulated activity. This new definition is intended to reduce the number and scope of positions that are eligible for a criminal record check with Barred List information.

(Ref: NSPCC Training Resources)

APPENDIX 2

THE IRISH FA CODE OF CONDUCT

Code of conduct for coaches

Volunteers and Coaches will create a positive football environment by displaying exemplary behaviour and implementing practices that make football a safe, fun and positive experience for all children and young people who participate in affiliated football. Football is a very passionate game that can evoke different emotions and reactions and sometimes these emotions and reactions can be negative and can spill onto the pitch.

Volunteers and coaches have a responsibility to ensure their conduct does not compromise the welfare of a child or young person or bring their club/organisation or the Irish FA into disrepute. Any behaviour which compromises this ethos may result in disciplinary action.

As a volunteer/coach (club representative) I will:

- Show respect to everyone involved in the game (i.E. Coaches, players, match officials and spectators)
- Be an excellent role model and display exemplary behaviour at all times (this includes not smoking, drinking alcohol, taking drugs or using foul, racial, sectarian or discriminatory language in the presence of children and young people)
- Only develop open, honest, professional and respectful relationships with children and young people
- Promote the positive aspects of football and never condone rule violations or the use of prohibited substances
- Not equate success purely with results/winning, or equate losing with failure
- Respect decisions made by match officials and never publicly criticise their decisions
- Never enter the field of play without permission from the referee
- Never use offensive, insulting, abusive or inappropriate language

When coaching children and young people you will:

- Always put the welfare of children and young people before winning or achieving goals
- Work in an open environment and avoid spending time alone with children and young people away from others
- Ensure that the activities that i direct or advocate are appropriate for the age, maturity, experience and ability of the child or young person
- Only partake in one-to-one coaching with a child or young person if it is necessary, part of the overall team training session and is done with the child or young person's consent and in an open environment
- Make them feel safe and ensure that staff and volunteer ratios are appropriate
- Maintain an appropriate distance with players (eg i understand that it is not appropriate to have an intimate relationship with a child or young person)
- Make football a fun experience
- Communicate in a constructive, effective and age-appropriate manner
- Be positive by giving constructive feedback, praising effort and encouraging achievements

APPENDICES

- Ensure that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it is provided openly and according to agreed guidelines. If physical support is needed then talk aloud to the child or young person, explaining what you are doing and why, as it is difficult to maintain hand positions when a child is constantly moving. Children and young people should always be consulted before they are touched and their agreement gained. Parental/guardian views about manual support will always be carefully considered.
- Recognise the developmental needs and capacity of children and young people, including those with a disability, avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will
- Familiarise yourself with any medical condition a player has or medication they have to take
- Carry out a risk assessment and ensure that the equipment and environment used for every regulated activity is safe
- Never engage in bullying behaviour
- Challenge any form of bullying behaviour and report it within your club/organisation
- Avoid spending any time alone with children or young people away from others

You should never:

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- Share a changing room, bath or shower with a child or young person
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- Allow children or young people to use foul, abusive, racial or discriminatory language unchallenged
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child or young person – even in fun
- Engage in sexual relationships with any player under 18 years of age while that unequal power relationship exists, and will challenge any problematic relationships where there is a potential or actual abuse of trust
- Engage in inappropriate use of social media – this includes never posting comments on social media sites that compromise the welfare of a child or young person, cause them harm or bring the association into disrepute
- Reduce a child or young person to tears as a form of control
- Encourage or bully a child or young person into playing while injured
- Show favouritism
- Allow allegations made by a child or young person to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- Undertake personal care for children or young people
- Remain in the changing room while players are showering or changing (this applies to all staff and volunteers who are working with children and young people that are the opposite gender to themselves)
- Invite or allow children or young people to stay with you at your home

Code of conduct for children and young people

Clubs strive to contribute to the sporting and social development of children and young people by presenting them with an opportunity to engage in affiliated football. For football to be a positive experience for all children and young people clubs expect high standards of behaviour to be demonstrated by all players so that everyone can benefit from the positive aspects of the game.

Children and young people have a responsibility to conduct themselves in a manner which does not bring the club/organisation into disrepute. Any behaviour in breach of the code of conduct may result in disciplinary action.

As a player participating in affiliated football, you should:

- Behave and listen to all instructions from staff and volunteers
- Take care of and respect equipment owned by the club/organisation
- Refrain from behaviour that will bring the club/organisation into disrepute
- Refrain from the use of foul, abusive, racial, discriminatory and sectarian references
- Refrain from bullying behaviour or the persistent use of rough and dangerous play
- Refrain from engaging in inappropriate use of social media – this includes posting comments or images on social media sites that may cause harm to others or bring the club/organisation into disrepute
- Report inappropriate behaviour and never tell lies about other adults, children or young people
- Respect your coach and teammates, other players, opponents and volunteers
- Respect officials and accept their decisions
- Play fairly, do not cheat, dive, complain or waste time
- Be gracious in defeat and shake hands with the other team and the referee at the end of a match
- Not use violence
- Keep within the defined boundary of the playing/coaching area unless instructed otherwise
- Ensure you are punctual for training, matches and any other club/organisation activity
- Advise team manager/coach of any injury or medical condition sustained before or during club/organisation activities
- Advise the team manager/coach if you are unavailable to play or participate in club/organisation activities
- Be responsible for your own kit, footwear, shin pads, water bottles etc

Children and young people participating in affiliated football have the right to:

- Feel safe and enjoy football in a protective environment
- Be respected and listened to
- Contribute by offering constructive comments/feedback
- Privacy
- Be referred to professional help if needed
- Be protected from inappropriate behaviour / abuse from staff and volunteers
- Appropriate levels of confidentiality
- Participate on an equal basis, appropriate to their ability
- Experience competition and the desire to win
- Be believed when they ask for help

Code of conduct for parents and guardians

As primary carers for their children, parents and guardians assume overall responsibility for the positive development of their child and therefore have a responsibility to conduct themselves in a manner which supports this process. All parents and guardians are expected to promote the positive aspects of football by always demonstrating exemplary behaviour. This includes encouraging their child's participation in the game, demonstrating respect for coaches and officials and behaving responsibly on the sidelines. Persistent breaches of the code will result in the parent or guardian being asked to stay away from activities and may also result in their child being removed from our programme.

As a parent/guardian you will:

- Encourage your child to play by the rules and teach them that they can only do their best
- Show appreciation and respect for officials, coaches, volunteers and other players
- Be realistic and never exert undue pressure or expectations on any child
- Praise effort and participation rather than focusing on performance and results
- Accept decisions made by match officials
- Behave responsibly on the sidelines (this includes not screaming or shouting)
- Encourage children to show respect to their coach, team-mates, opponents and match officials by demonstrating exemplary behaviour yourself
- Promote your child's participation in playing football for fun
- Encourage their child to play by the rules and teach them that they can only do their best
- Refrain from engaging in inappropriate use of social media. This includes posting comments on social media sites that may cause harm to others or bring the club/organisation into disrepute
- Complete and return the registration/consent form pertaining to your child's participation
- Deliver and collect your child to and from coaching sessions and matches punctually if required – depending on the age of the young person, venue and arrangements with coaches, volunteers or officials
- Ensure your child is properly and adequately attired and equipped – particularly for seasonal weather conditions
- Ensure that proper footwear and protective equipment are worn at ALL times
- Detail any health concerns relating to your child on the consent form, in particular breathing or chest conditions. You should inform the coach of any changes to your child's health.
- Inform the coach/co-ordinator if your child has been ill or hurt recently
- Inform the coach prior to departure from the field of play if your child is to be collected early from a coaching session
- Ensure your child's hygiene and nutritional needs are met
- Never attempt to fulfil your own ambitions and aspirations through your child's involvement in football

Parents / guardians have the right to:

- Know their child is safe
- Be informed of problems or concerns relating to their child
- Be informed if their child is injured
- Speak to staff and voice any concerns about their child

Code of conduct for spectators

While spectators can show support for their team and bring atmosphere to a football match, they sometimes display abusive and intimidating behaviour. This type of behaviour is unacceptable and needs to be eradicated from the game so that football can be an enjoyable experience for everyone involved. Spectators have a role to play in promoting high standards of behaviour in the game so that everyone benefits from the positive aspects of football.

As a spectator you will:

- Never enter the field of play unless permitted to do so by the referee
- Refrain from the use of offensive, insulting or abusive language or behaviour
- Not condone violent behaviour from coaches, players, match officials, opponents or spectators
- Respect decisions made by match officials
- Praise effort and achievements and never criticise mistakes
- Let the coaches do the coaching
- Encourage young players to respect their opponents and the match officials
- Promote the importance of respect and fair play

Code of conduct for match officials

Match officials are responsible for officiating in a manner that not only upholds the rules of football but promotes values to young people involved in affiliated football. Officials should always adhere to the rules of the game to ensure that safety, respect and fair play prevail throughout a match. Quite often match officials' decisions can evoke strong emotions both on and off the field of play. As a result, match officials are also bound by codes of behaviour, to which they are required to adhere at all times

When officiating a match you will:

- Put the welfare of children and young people first
- Remain impartial
- Officiate fairly and consistently
- Officiate the game in a positive manner
- Respond appropriately to inappropriate behaviour (eg violent, aggressive and unsporting behaviour and foul play) in a fair but firm manner
- Challenge offensive and abusive language from players and managers
- Support your colleagues
- Be a positive role model by promoting good behaviour and showing respect to everyone involved in the game
- Encourage fair play
- Submit accurate match reports including any behavioural concerns that may put a child at risk
- Remain calm and maintain composure

The Irish FA requires adherence to all codes of conduct and will take appropriate action if any person is deemed to be in breach of a code as set out in this policy document.

APPENDIX 3

IRISH FA'S HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDANCE

All those who provide football activities for children and young people have a duty to undertake a risk assessment of the environment in which they are operating to ensure that all health and safety requirements have been met.

If using a local authority facility (eg a council or school) a pre-existing Health and Safety Policy should be in place at this venue. It is your responsibility to familiarise everyone involved with the relevant aspects of the policy and to adhere to the guidelines outlined in the document.

Creating a Safe Playing/Working Environment

- Consider the nature of the activity.
- Consider the experience and qualifications of the coaches/volunteers.
- Officials/coaches/volunteers should be made aware of their role and responsibilities.
- Children and young people should be properly supervised at all times, with a satisfactory ratio of coaches and volunteers to children and young people.

The Irish FA recommends the following guidelines for supervision ratios:

- No person should work in total isolation and must always ensure there is additional appropriate supervision available in case of emergencies
 - When working with children between five and eight years of age a coach-child ratio of 1:16 children should be followed. This may be adjusted depending on the knowledge, skills, experience of the coaching team and the nature of the group
 - When coaching children aged nine to 16 years of age a coach-child ratio of 1:20 should be followed. This may be adjusted depending on the knowledge, skills, experience of the coaching team and the nature of the group
 - The level of supervision required will also depend on the experience and qualifications of staff and volunteers.
- Consider if there are special needs within the group
 - Only use proper, recommended equipment
 - Is the playing area within safe boundaries and away from vehicular traffic?
 - Are there sufficient sanitation and changing facilities?
 - Is the playing surface free from ice, debris, glass, dog excrement etc.?
 - Is Public Liability Insurance in place and does it cover everyone involved?
 - Will the group be mixed? If so, will there be both male and female supervision?
 - What will the age range be (children and young people should participate in similar or equal age bands)?
 - Do you have access to mobile telephones and emergency contact numbers?
 - Will the area have mobile phone coverage in the event of an emergency? Do you know what the fire procedures are and where the emergency exits are located?
 - A qualified First Aider with a First Aid kit should always be present

- Accident and incident report forms should be completed after an accident or incident has occurred. All accidents and incidents must be reported to parents and guardians upon collection or immediately depending on the seriousness of the injury. Serious incidents should be reported to senior management/committees within the club/organisation
- Assess the toilet and changing facilities
- If the activity is taking place in a sports centre, community or council venue, familiarise the group with the venue's safeguarding procedures and guidelines
- In the event of transport being required, this should be provided and supervised by officials in possession of a current valid driving licence, with appropriate insurance in place and in road-worthy vehicles only. Permission must be sought from parents and guardians prior to any transport being facilitated
- Ensure the establishment and maintenance of a coaching register together with up-to-date contact details
- Parents and guardians must be kept fully informed. This includes giving them access to the Irish FA's Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Procedures

APPENDIX 4

PHYSICAL CONTACT GUIDANCE

Physical contact during football activities should always be intended to meet the child's or young person's needs, NOT the adult's. Coaches/volunteers must always use appropriate contact with the aim of assisting in the development of the skill/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 child or young person.

In general:

- Contact should be determined by the age and developmental stage of the child or young person – don't do something that a child or young person 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 or young person distress or embarrassment

There are several principles we must follow when an activity with children or young people involves physical contact:

Only use physical contact if the aim is to:

- Develop skills or techniques
- Treat an injury
- Prevent an injury or accident from occurring
- Meet the requirements of football

Explain the nature and reason for the physical contact to the child or young person, reinforcing the teaching or coaching skill or ensuring they understand the treatment for an injury. Unless the situation is an emergency, you must ask the child or young person for permission before touching them.

Any form of physical punishment of children or young people is unlawful, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour, unless it is by way of physical intervention to prevent a child or young person from:

- Harming themselves
- Harming others
- Damaging property

It is imperative that we understand and abide by these principles to ensure the safety of children and young people in our care and to protect our own position as well as the overall reputation of the club/organisation and Irish FA.

APPENDIX 5

INDICATORS AND FORMS OF ABUSE

There are different types of abuse and a child or young person may suffer more than one of them. Co-operating to Safeguard Children (2016) formally recognises five types of abuse:

Physical Abuse

Emotional Abuse

Sexual Abuse

Neglect

Exploitation

Although bullying is not formally recognised as a type of abuse, the Irish FA deems it to be a form of abuse that must be taken seriously and responded to.

Physical Abuse is deliberately physically hurting a child. It might take a variety of different forms, including hitting, biting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating a child.

In football this may occur when the nature or intensity of the training disregards the capacity of the child's or young person's growing and maturing body; the child or young person is predisposed to injury resulting from fatigue or overuse (excessive and inappropriate training methods); the child or young person is given drugs to enhance their performance.

Emotional is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. It is also sometimes called psychological abuse and it can have severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development.

Emotional abuse may involve deliberately telling a child that they are worthless, or unloved and inadequate. It may include not giving a child opportunity to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or "making fun" of what they say or how they communicate. Emotional abuse may involve bullying – including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones – by a child's peers.

APPENDICES

In football this may occur when a coach or volunteer uses his or her position of power to bully the child or young person into something he or she is uncomfortable with; a child or young person is valued only in so far as they meet the demands of the coach or volunteer; a coach or volunteer never gives a child or young player the chance to play or feel valued as part of the squad; a coach or volunteer constantly shouts at a child or young person in front of others, causing embarrassment; parents/guardians/supporters on the touchline verbally harass children or young people on the pitch.

Neglect is the failure to provide for a child's basic needs, whether it be adequate food, clothing, hygiene, supervision or shelter, that is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child's health or development. Children who are neglected often also suffer from other types of abuse.

In football this may occur when a coach or volunteer continuously leaves a child or young person out of the team; a coach or volunteer constantly ignores a child or young person; a coach or volunteer makes a child or young person play in extreme cold conditions while inadequately dressed; a coach or volunteer makes a child or young person play in extreme heat without sufficient fluid intake, or adequate protection from the sun; a coach or volunteer continuously shows favouritism towards certain children or young people while excluding others.

Sexual abuse occurs when others use and exploit children sexually for their own gratification or gain or the gratification of others. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (eg rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via e-technology). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

In football this may occur when the coach or volunteer becomes involved in horseplay or sexually provocative games with the children or young people; the coach or volunteer uses or lets children or young people use sexually explicit language; the coach or volunteer inappropriately touches children or young people.

Exploitation is the intentional ill-treatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over a child or young person; to take selfish or unfair advantage of a child or young person or situation, for personal gain. It may manifest itself in many forms such as child labour, slavery, servitude, engagement in criminal activity, begging, benefit or other financial fraud or child trafficking. It extends to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation can be sexual in nature.

Bullying has been recognised and defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, from which it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. It can take many forms, but the three main types are physical (eg hitting, kicking, theft), verbal (eg racist, sectarian or homophobic remarks, threats, name-calling) and emotional (eg isolating an individual from the activities and social acceptance of his or her peer group). The damage inflicted by bullying can frequently be underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to children, to the extent that it affects their health and development or, at the extreme, causes them significant harm (including self-harm).

In football this may occur when the coach places undue pressure on a child or young person to win a match; parents or spectators shout at children and young people from the sidelines; a child or young person intimidates a team mate whom they perceive to be 'different' or to have less ability.

Officials and volunteers must realise the significant position they represent in the child's or young person's life; they must make sure never to abuse their position of trust, and to always behave as an appropriate role model.

Indicators of abuse

Child abuse can be difficult to identify and the signs and indicators synonymous with abuse are varied and can be presented in many forms. The signs of abuse can be physical, behavioural or developmental. A cluster or pattern of signs is the most reliable indicator of abuse; however, it is important to realise that all these indicators can occur in other situations where abuse has not been a factor. Nonetheless staff and volunteers should record and monitor all potential indicators, in the interest of protecting the wellbeing of children and young people in their care.

The following is a list of some indicators of abuse, but it is not definitive. No one sign or symptom indicates that a child or young person is suffering from abuse, and each must therefore be examined in relation to the child's or young person's overall development and context.

Physical abuse

Physical indicators

- Scratches
- Bite marks or welts
- Bruises in places difficult to identify eg behind ears, groin area
- Burns, especially cigarette burns
- Untreated injuries

Behavioural indicators

- Self-mutilation tendencies
- Chronic runaway
- Aggressive or withdrawn
- Fear of returning home
- Undue fear of adults
- Fearful watchfulness

Emotional abuse

Physical indicators

- Sudden speech disorders
- Wetting and soiling
- Signs of self-harm
- Frequent vomiting
- Poor peer relationships

Behavioural indicators

- Attention-seeking behaviour
- Rocking, thumb sucking
- Fear of change
- Chronic runaway

Neglect

Physical indicators

- Constant hunger
- Exposed to danger, lack of supervision
- Inadequate/inappropriate clothing
- Poor hygiene
- Untreated illnesses

Behavioural indicators

- Tiredness, listlessness
- Poor peer relationships
- Low self-esteem
- Compulsive stealing, begging

Sexual abuse

Physical indicators

Soreness, bleeding in genital or anal areas
Itching in genital area
Stained or bloody underwear
Stomach pains or headaches
Pain on urination
Difficulty in walking or sitting
Bruises on inner thighs or buttocks
Anorexic/bulimic
Substance/drug abuse

Behavioural indicators

Depression
Inappropriate language and/or sexual knowledge for age group
Making sexual advances to adults or other children
Low self-esteem
Afraid of the dark
Wariness of being approached

Bullying

Physical indicators

Cuts or bruises
Starts to stammer
Loss of appetite and subsequent weight loss
Aching body
Bed wetting

Behavioural indicators

Reluctant to attend training and matches
Becomes introverted and anxious
Leaves the activity with damaged clothes/equipment
Frequently 'loses' money or continuously asks for/steals money
Cries himself/herself to sleep at night or has nightmares during away trips
Displays aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable behaviour

Children and young people are more inclined to hide symptoms of abuse than to disclose them. This can make it difficult for an adult to gauge whether the welfare of a child or young person is being compromised. If a child or young person presents any of the symptoms outlined above, it is important that you report your concerns to the Safeguarding Team. It is not your responsibility to decide whether abuse has occurred. It is, however, your responsibility to report any concerns via the proper channels outlined in this document.

APPENDIX 6

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Bullying is hurtful behaviour which no child or young person should have to experience. The impact that bullying can have on a child's or young person's life should never be underestimated. In extreme cases bullying can lead to a child or young person self-harming or taking their own life. The Irish FA is committed to providing an environment which promotes fun, respect, inclusivity and equality for everyone involved in affiliated football.

Bullying is deemed to be unacceptable behaviour that compromises this ethos and will therefore be challenged and responded to. Any person who witnesses bullying behaviour, whether it's child-to-child or adult to child, must respond immediately and report it to the DCSO.

Anti-bullying policy

- Officials and coaches must respect every child's and young person's need for, and right to, an environment where safety, security, praise, recognition, opportunity and equality are available
- Bullying behaviour should not be accepted or condoned in any club/organisation
- Any form of bullying will be taken seriously, be investigated and be promptly and appropriately responded to
- Everyone involved in affiliated football must understand what bullying is and how it affects those involved
- Everybody has a responsibility to work together to stop bullying
- Anti-bullying policy and reporting procedures should be made known to everyone involved in club/organisation programmes so they know how to respond to bullying, should it occur
- Clubs should support children and young people, and their parents/guardians, should they be subjected to bullying during our activities

Responding to bullying

- All cases of bullying must be reported to our DCSO in writing
- Parents and guardians should be made aware that their child is being bullied, or is bullying others, and should be invited to meet with relevant officials to discuss the problem
- If appropriate, the PSNI should be contacted
- Mediation should be used to help achieve a resolution if there is agreement from all parties.
- The bullying behaviour should be promptly addressed and stopped
- Should the bullying behaviour continue, clubs should act in accordance with our disciplinary procedures

In the event of an official or volunteer bullying a child or young person:

- A report should be written by the DCSO who is responsible for investigating the claim and, where appropriate, implementing appropriate sanctions
- Cases of serious bullying should be referred, in writing, to the Irish FA Safeguarding Team
- A club/organisation ultimately assumes responsibility for implementing sanctions relating to serious cases of bullying towards children and young people

APPENDIX 7

WHISTLE BLOWING GUIDANCE

Blowing the whistle on practice or behaviour which compromises the safety and welfare of children and young people who participate in affiliated football can be daunting. Officials and volunteers who whistle-blow about concerning practice or behaviour in affiliated football should be reassured that they will be believed and supported.

Officials and volunteers, where appropriate, can refer their concerns onto the DCSO.

Children and young people should be encouraged to disclose information to a trusted adult, either internal or external to the club/organisation.

Parents and guardians should be informed that they can voice their concerns, where appropriate, to the head coach /DCSO.

Concerns relating to serious poor practice and abuse must be referred to the Irish FA Safeguarding team.

Why whistle-blow?

- Everyone involved in affiliated football has a duty to protect the welfare of children and young people. This includes disclosing any harmful or potentially harmful practice
- Some children and young people are more vulnerable than others, and therefore may rely on a trusted adult to voice their concerns
- Early intervention will prevent the child or young person from being subjected to further harm or misconduct
- Whistle-blowing can protect other children and young people in the same environment.
- You have a moral obligation (and a legal obligation if a criminal offence has occurred) to voice any concerns to the proper authorities

APPENDIX 8

EQUALITY STATEMENT

The policy is based on the recognition that all children and young people have the right to protection from abuse regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, religious belief, nationality, sexual orientation or disability. This policy recognises the needs of children with disabilities, who may be particularly vulnerable, must be taken into account.

- The club will ensure that every child and young person who engages in club/organisation activities will be treated fairly and with respect
- The club is committed to creating and developing a culture that promotes inclusivity and equitable practice, so that every child and young person can participate in an environment free from intimidation, harassment and abuse
- All officials, coaches and volunteers have a responsibility to promote and implement equitable practice and to report any discriminatory behaviour towards a child and young people
- In pursuance of this policy, the club will not tolerate any form of discriminatory behaviour towards children and young people. Such behaviour will be taken seriously and responded to in accordance with disciplinary procedures
- The club supports equal treatment of all children and young people. This requires adherence to these policies and the requirements of the relevant equalities legislation – in particular the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)

Exemptions

The club reserve the right to limit access to certain activities – such as situations involving heated competition – to persons of a specific age, gender or disability. This will only occur in circumstances where necessary to ensure the child's or young person's safety.

APPENDIX 9

COMMUNICATIONS/SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDANCE

The use of social media allows a club/organisation to disseminate information and good news stories while sharing their passion for football in Northern Ireland.

Social networking policy

Officials and volunteers who use social media as part of a club's programme development are required to familiarise themselves with the potential risks which social media can bring to children and young people and take all possible steps to minimise risks to children and young people.

Those administering a club's social media must fully adhere to the code of conduct pertaining to social media use. Any breaches of the code may result in disciplinary action being taken.

Potential risks to children and young people

As with all emerging technologies, there is also the potential for misuse of social media. Risks associated with user interactive services include cyberbullying, grooming and potential abuse by online predators, identity theft and exposure to inappropriate content, eg adult pornography, racist or violent content and self-harm/pro-ana (pro anorexia) sites.

Most children and young people use the internet positively but sometimes behave in ways that may place themselves at risk. Some risks do not necessarily arise from the technology itself but result from offline behaviours that are extended into the online world, and vice versa.

Potential risks can include but are not limited to:

- Bullying by peers and people they consider 'friends'
- Posting personal information that could allow others to identify and/or locate a child offline
- Sexual grooming, luring, exploitation and abuse through contact with strangers
- Exposure to inappropriate content
- Involvement in making or distributing illegal or inappropriate content
- Theft of personal information
- Exposure to information about and interaction with others who encourage self-harm
- Exposure to racist or hate material
- Encouragement of violent behaviour
- Exposure to content glorifying activities such as drug-taking, excessive drinking or fighting
- Physical harm to young people in making video content, such as enacting and imitating stunts and risky activities
- Leaving or running away from home because of contacts made online.

Potential indicators of online grooming and sexual exploitation of children and young people

There is also concern that the capabilities of social networking services may increase the potential for sexual exploitation of children and young people. Exploitation can include exposure to harmful content, including adult pornography and illegal child abuse images. There have also been cases where adults have used social networking and user-interactive services as a means of grooming children and young people for sexual abuse.

Online grooming techniques include:

- Gathering personal details – name, address, mobile number, name of school and photographs
- Promising meetings with sports idols or celebrities, or offering merchandise
- Offering cheap tickets to sporting or music events
- Offering material gifts, including electronic games, music or software
- Paying young people to appear naked and perform sexual acts
- Bullying and intimidating behaviour, such as threatening to expose the child by informing their parents about their child's communications or postings on a social networking site, and/or saying they know where the child lives, plays sport or goes to school
- Asking sexually themed questions, such as 'Do you have a boyfriend?' or 'Are you a virgin?'
- Asking to meet children and young people offline
- Sending sexually themed images to a child depicting adult content or the abuse of other children

- Masquerading as a minor or assuming a false identity on a social networking site to deceive a child
- Using school or hobby sites (including sports-related ones) to gather information about a child's interests plus likes and dislikes. Most social networking sites set a child's webpage/profile to private by default to reduce the risk of personal information being shared in a public area of the site.

Code of conduct for volunteers using social media within a club/organisation

The following guidance applies to all forms of social media platforms:

- All social media accounts must be set up using an official club/organisation profile, and never a personal one, to reduce the risk of the establishment of impostor or fake profiles
- Volunteers who use social media assume overall responsibility for managing and moderating their accounts
- Volunteers should familiarise themselves with safety aspects pertaining to social media use. This includes awareness of what is considered acceptable and unacceptable behaviour as a volunteer on a social networking service
- Volunteers must be aware of how this policy feeds into other policies outlined in this document, including the Equality and Anti-Bullying Policies and the Reporting Procedures
- Volunteers have a legal and moral duty to respond to any indications that illegal activity (eg grooming for abuse) is taking place by informing the DCSO who may seek advice from the Irish FA or refer serious cases to the Irish FA and/or statutory services
- The social networking page should be used as a communications platform only – mainly to communicate on a generic basis with parents and guardians and children and young people, eg., 'training has been cancelled tonight due to adverse weather conditions'
- Ensure that the highest privacy and security settings remain activated at all times
- Where possible activate all swear filters to block any foul language from being disseminated to users
- Where possible monitor and view all written and visual content before accepting and posting it live
- Delete and remove any inappropriate written content or images that would compromise the welfare of children and young people and/or the ethos of the club/organisation
- Be safety conscious when adding content to our webpage/profile
- Obtain written parental/guardian consent before posting pictures of children and young people who engage in activities
- Communicate to third parties (ie spectators or venues) that it is their responsibility to obtain parental/guardian consent before posting on social networking sites.
- Ensure that they only communicate with children in line with network provider guidelines
- Not accept children or young people, who they are in a position of responsibility for, as friends on their personal social networking site
- Respond to online bullying and report it to DCSO - what is said online should be treated as if said in real time
- Never post any written or visual material that compromises the ethos and values of the club/organisation
- Post factual comments only. Do not enter a debate regarding a match result etc.
- Promote safe and responsible use of social media
- Adhere to all best practice guidelines, as outlined in this document.

Club volunteers should be aware of this policy and behave in accordance with it seeking the advice of the designated safeguarding lead if they have any concerns about the use of the internet or social media. The communication of messages to children should be shared with the designated person responsible for the club's online presence. Volunteers should not communicate with children via personal accounts.

- Volunteers should not 'friend' or 'follow' children from personal accounts on social media and maintain the same appropriate boundaries online as they would in person
- Volunteers should make sure any content posted on public personal accounts is accurate and appropriate, as children may 'follow' them on social media
- Volunteers should choose a more formal means of communication, such as face-to-face, in an email or in writing, or use club/organisational account or website
- Volunteers should avoid communicating directly with children. Communication should be through parents/guardians

What the club expects of children

- Children should be aware of this online safety policy and agree to its terms
- The club expects children's behaviour online to be consistent with the guidelines set out in the club's acceptable use statement
- Children should follow the guidelines set out in the acceptable use statement on all digital devices, including smartphones, tablets and consoles

What the club expects of parents

- Parents should be aware of this online safety policy and agree to its terms
- Parents should protect all children's privacy online and think carefully about what content they share about our sport online, where they share it and who they're sharing it with
- The club expects parents' behaviour online to be consistent with the guidelines set out in its acceptable use statement and in its codes of conduct for parents and spectators

Using mobile phones or other digital technology to communicate

When using mobile phones (or other devices) to communicate by voice, video or text (including texting, email and instant messaging such as WhatsApp or Facebook Messenger), the club will take the following precautions to ensure children's safety:

- Avoid having children's personal mobile numbers and will instead seek contact through a parent
- Seek parental permission on each occasion it needs to contact children directly; the purpose for each contact will be clearly identified and agreed upon
- A method of accountability will be arranged, such as copies of texts, messages or emails also being sent to another member of staff or to parents
- Smartphone users should respect the private lives of others and not take or distribute pictures of other people if it could invade their privacy
- Texts, emails or messages will be used for communicating information – such as reminding children or young people about upcoming events, which kit to bring or practice timings – and not to engage in conversation

- If a child misinterprets such communication and tries to engage a club coach/official in conversation, the club coach/official will take the following steps: end the conversation or stop replying, suggest discussing the subject further at the next practice or event, inform the organisation's lead safeguarding officer in the interests of transparency
- If concerned about the child, provide contact details for the organisations designated safeguarding lead or appropriate agencies and report any concerns using the organisations reporting procedures

So that all children can enjoy and actively take part in sports activities, we discourage the use of mobile phones during activities.

As part of this policy the club will:

- Make children aware of how and who to contact if there is an emergency or a change to previously agreed arrangements with the organisation
- Inform parents of appropriate times they can contact children who are away at camps or away trips and discourage them from attempting contact outside of these times
- Advise parents that it may not be possible to contact children during activities and provide a contact within the club or organisation who will be reachable should there be an emergency
- Explain to children how using mobile phones during activities has an impact on their safe awareness of their environment, and their level of participation and achievement

Emailing and texting policy: good practice advice

Where possible volunteers and officials should communicate information regarding programmes, events, training and matches through parents and guardians. When updating children and young people messages should be communicated in bundles and should be one-way. Written parental or guardian consent must be obtained before communicating messages directly to children and young people. Children and young people should only message back to acknowledge receipt of the message or for clarification. Volunteers and officials have a responsibility to advise children and young people of this in advance.

Parents and guardians should be presented with the option of being sent a copy of the message. Messages must never contain inappropriate, abusive or offensive material. Direct communication with children and young people must only take place if necessary; it should be kept minimal and relate to activities only. If a volunteer/official is required to communicate directly with a child or young person it is only appropriate if written parental/guardian consent has been obtained and the parent/guardian is informed in advance of what the conversation will relate to. The parent/guardian should also be sent a copy of the message that is being sent to their child. Where possible, however, direct communication with a player should take the form of a meeting in the presence of a parent or guardian – particularly if in relation to non-selection or behavioural issues. Only volunteers/officials should have access to players' mobile numbers and e-mail addresses. Personal details pertaining to each child or young person must be stored securely. Access to such details should be kept to an absolute minimum. Permission to retain details should be obtained from both parents/guardians and children and young people.

APPENDIX 10

PHOTOGRAPHY AND FILMING GUIDANCE

Photographs and images of children and young people

The club wants to be able to celebrate and record through photographs the participation and achievements of children and young people who take part in affiliated football. The Irish FA does not advocate the banning of photography but encourages clubs/organisations to adhere to the recommended safeguards to support the creation of a safe football environment for children and young people.

The club must take all necessary steps to protect children and young people from the inappropriate use of their images in resources, media publications, on the internet and elsewhere. There have been concerns about the risks posed directly and indirectly to children and young people through the use of photographs on sports websites and other publications. Photographs can be used as a means of identifying children and young people when they are accompanied with personal information eg a caption reading 'this is X who lives at Y, a member of the Z football club, and who likes a certain music group'. Such information can make a child or young person vulnerable to an individual who may wish to start to 'groom' that child or young person for abuse, or otherwise harm them. Secondly, the content of the photo can be used or adapted for inappropriate use. There is evidence of adapted material finding its way onto sites showing child abuse images. By raising awareness of the potential risks, and by taking appropriate steps, the potential for misuse of images can be reduced.

The club will take into consideration the following points when using images of children and young people for publicity purposes:

- When assessing the potential risks in the use of images, the most important factor is the potential for inappropriate use of images of children and young people
- Consider the type of images that are suitable and appropriate without putting children and young people at increased risk
- The safety and welfare of children and young people taking part in club programmes should be paramount at all times
- Children and young people and their parents/guardians have a right to decide whether their photograph is taken, and how those images may be used
- Parents and guardians must provide written consent for images of their child to be taken and used in the creation of communications and publications
- If the child or young person is named, avoid using their photograph
- If a photograph is used, avoid naming the child or young person
- Before taking images of a child or young person, obtain written parental or guardian consent. This consent may be obtained through the completion of registration forms
- The club should ask for the child or young person's permission for use of their image. This ensures that they are aware of the way the image is to be used to represent the football programme. Their consent can be obtained by the inclusion of their signature on registration forms
- Only use images of children and young people in suitable dress to reduce the risk of inappropriate use
- Any concerns regarding the inappropriate use of images should be reported immediately to the DCSO

APPENDIX 11

MANAGING CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

Officials and volunteers may, on occasions, be required to deal with a child or young person's challenging behaviour during football affiliated to the Irish FA.

The following offers best practice guidance on how we can manage such behaviour. It also identifies unacceptable sanctions or interventions, which must never be used.

- The welfare of the child or young person is the paramount consideration
- All those involved in club programmes (coaches/volunteers, children/young people and parents/guardians) must familiarise themselves with the required standard of conduct and the process for responding to behaviour that is deemed to be unacceptable
- Children and young people must never be subject to any form of treatment that is harmful, abusive, humiliating or degrading
- Some children and young people exhibit challenging behaviour as a result of specific circumstances, eg a medical or psychological condition, and officials/volunteers may therefore require specific or additional guidance. These, and any other specific needs the child or young person may have, should be discussed with parents or guardians and the child or young person in planning for the activity to ensure that an appropriate approach is agreed
- Football can make a significant contribution to improving the life experience and outcomes for all children and young people. Every child and young person should be supported to participate and only in exceptional circumstances where the safety of a child or young person cannot be maintained, should a child or young person be excluded from such activities

Planning activities

Best practice entails planning coaching sessions, matches, events and activities around the group as a whole. However, it also involves trying to take into consideration the needs of each individual child or young person within that group. If a child or young person is likely to present any difficulties, officials and volunteers should try and implement a strategy for managing such difficulties, in line with the above guidance, in advance of activities taking place.

The strategy may include ensuring the presence of the appropriate number of volunteers/officials required to safely manage and support the session, match or event – including the full complement required to adequately respond to any challenging behaviour and to safeguard other children and young people and adults involved. When children or young people are identified as having additional needs or behaviours that are likely to require additional supervision or support, this should be discussed with parents and guardians and children and young people where appropriate. Staff should seek to work in partnership with parents and guardians to ensure their child can be supported to participate safely.

Agreed code of behaviour

At the start of each season coaches and volunteers, children and young people and parents and guardians should be reminded that their behaviour should reflect the codes of conduct outlined in this Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Procedures. This is to ensure standards of behaviour are regularly addressed and maintained.

Responding to challenging behaviour

Officials and volunteers are required to respond to challenging behaviour. Their response must always be proportionate to the act carried out and should be fully explained to the child or young person and their parent(s) or guardian(s).

In dealing with children or young people who display negative or challenging behaviours, the following options should be considered:

- Time out – temporary exclusion from the activity, be it group or individual work
- Reparation – the act or process of making amends (ie apologising)
- Restitution – the act of giving something back (eg certain equipment or privileges)
- Behavioural reinforcement – rewards for good behaviour, consequences for negative behaviour
- De-escalation of the situation – through discussion with the child or young person.
- Increased supervision
- Use of individual 'contracts' or agreements for their future or continued participation, in agreement with the child or young person and a parent or guardian.
- Sanctions or consequences, eg missing a match
- Seeking additional/specialist support, working in partnership with other agencies to ensure a child or young person's needs are met appropriately. This should be done in consultation with the child's or young person's parent(s)/guardian(s)
- Temporary or permanent exclusion

The following should never be permitted as a means of managing a child or young person's behaviour:

- Physical punishment or the threat of such
- Refusal to speak to or interact with the child or young person
- A child or young person being deprived of food, water, access to changing facilities or toilets or other essential facilities
- Verbal intimidation, ridicule or humiliation

If a child's or young person's behaviour requires frequent sanctioning their parent(s) or guardian(s) should be informed. As a last resort if the child or young person continues to present a high level of risk or danger to him or herself, or others, you may have to suspend or bar the child or young person from activities until the matter can be resolved.

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

This is a neurological condition – one of several 'hidden disabilities' which may not be immediately obvious to someone in contact with the child or young person. Children or young people with ADHD are characteristically overactive, impulsive and have difficulty paying attention. Although most children demonstrate some of these behaviours some of the time, those with ADHD will display them consistently across all situations and will continue to display them to some extent into adulthood. Children and young people of all levels of ability can have ADHD, and it is diagnosed far more often in boys (though symptoms are often less obvious in girls). Although you can use the same techniques to deal with hyperactivity in most children and young people, it is important to avoid assuming that every hyperactive, inattentive child or young person has ADHD. Some children or young people with ADHD regularly take medication to help them control their impulsive behaviours. The most common of these are Ritalin and Concerta. ADHD manifests itself in many ways and varies from child to child.

Common symptoms may include but are not limited to:

- Difficulty following instructions and completing tasks
- Difficulty 'sticking to' an activity
- Easily distracted and forgetful
- Often doesn't listen when spoken to
- Restless, fidgety, can't sit still
- Interferes with other children's activities
- Can't stop talking, interrupts others
- Runs about when inappropriate
- Difficulty waiting or taking turns
- Acting impulsively without thinking of the consequences
- Daydreaming
- Easily frustrated
- Mood swings
- Sleep problems
- Low self-esteem
- Defensive/blames others

Some coaching tips

- At the outset consult with the child or young person, their parent(s)/guardian(s) and perhaps (with permission) another significant adult, such as a teacher who has experience in communicating with and managing the child or young person
- Identify the most appropriate and effective ways to engage with the child or young person, issues likely to arise in the sports setting, and ways to respond to and manage any challenging behaviour
- Ensure there is sufficient supervision to respond to situations that may arise
- Children or young people with ADHD may perform better in smaller groups, if resources allow it
- Make eye contact when speaking to the child or young person. Use the child's or young person's name when giving instructions
- Keep instructions simple and consistent – use as few sentences as possible
- Respond to the child's or young person's good behaviour and contributions as often as possible; give very specific praise, such as 'good stance, your knees are bent perfectly' rather than 'good work'
- Keep calm – if you get angry the child or young person will mirror this emotion and this may lead to a temper tantrum or more dangerous behaviours
- Ensure the child or young person understands the association's codes of conduct for children and young people – keep them clear and simple, and rehearse them regularly with your team
- Use the same methods of discipline used with the other children and young people, although methods such as a 'time out' may be necessary if behaviour becomes dangerous or the child or young person has a temper tantrum
- Give the child or young person some special responsibilities, such as featuring them in demonstrations, so that others see them in a positive light and the child or young person develops a positive self image

- Use a variety of activities in every session and change activities regularly. The use of physically draining activities such as a thorough warm-up can take the edge off the child's or young person's hyperactive behaviours.
- Remain vigilant, as children and young people with ADHD can display unpredictable behaviour, eg running off.
- Children and young people with ADHD can be some of the most challenging players, however football can provide a structured activity through which a child or young person with ADHD can release their energy and frustration in a safe environment. It also allows them to experience success and improve their self-esteem.

Physical intervention

Officials and volunteers must always avoid the use of physical intervention unless it is necessary to prevent a child or young person injuring themselves or others or causing serious damage to property. Physical intervention by anyone should always be the result of conscious decision-making and not a reaction to their frustration. Should it be required officials and volunteers should ensure that physical contact is made in the least restrictive way possible to prevent a child or young person from getting hurt and is used only after all potential other strategies have been exhausted.

The following should be considered:

- Contact must be avoided with buttocks, genitals and breasts. Officials and volunteers should never behave in a way that could be interpreted as inappropriate
- Any form of physical intervention must achieve an outcome that is in the best interests of the child or young person whose behaviour is of immediate concern
- You should consider the risks associated with employing physical intervention compared with the risks of not employing physical intervention
- The scale and nature of physical intervention should always be proportionate to the behaviour of the child or young person and the nature of harm/damage they might cause
- All forms of physical intervention must employ only a reasonable amount of force – ie the minimum force needed to avert injury to a person or serious damage to property - applied for the shortest period of time
- You must never employ physical interventions which are deemed to present an unreasonable risk to children and young people or any other person
- Physical intervention should never be used as a form of punishment
- Physical intervention must NEVER involve inflicting pain
- Where children and young people are identified as having additional needs or behaviours that are likely to require physical intervention, this should be discussed with their parents or guardians and, where necessary and within resources, additional support may be sourced and provided.

Any physical intervention used should be recorded on an Incident Report Form as soon as possible after the event occurs and the record should be passed on to your DCSO.

APPENDIX 12

TRANSPORT GUIDANCE

The Irish FA recognises that the vast majority of adults involved in football activities have a genuine desire to contribute to the development of children and young people, but a small number of others may use it as a means of gaining access to children and young people for inappropriate reasons.

The issue of transporting children and young people has become one that requires consideration for adults engaging in regulated activity as it has the potential to place both parties in a vulnerable situation.

Adherence to the guidelines outlined below will reduce the risk of children and young people being harmed and will protect officials and volunteers from others misinterpreting their behaviour or potential false accusations (though these are rare).

When travelling to away fixtures and tournaments, best practice is to ensure that officials, volunteers, children and young people travel together in a shared coach provided by the club/organisation.

Should a scenario arise where an official/volunteer is required to transport children and young people in a private vehicle there are several safety measures that must be adhered to in order to minimise risks:

- Only those who have been subject to an AccessNI Enhanced Disclosure vetting check are permitted to transport children and young people during regulated activities
- Consent must be obtained from parents and guardians before transporting children and young people. Parents and guardians should be informed of the person who will be transporting their child, the reasons why, and how long the journey will take
- You may inform the child or young person about the transport arrangements to ensure they are comfortable with the plans
- The driver must ensure that they have insurance to transport persons for business purposes
- The driver should attempt to transport more than one child or young person in the car at all times
- When collecting children and young people you may wish to travel in pairs or with more than one child or young person in the car. Where possible you should never be left alone with a child or young person in the car. If this is not logistically possible you should ensure that the child or young person sits in the back seat, on the opposite side to the driver's seat
- The person who leaves children or young people home should be alternated; this reduces the risk of any one individual always being alone with the same child or young person
- The driver should have a point of contact and mobile phone in case they break down or encounter any other issues enroute
- Ensure that children and young people are aware of their rights and understand that there are trusted adults to whom they can express any concerns they may have
- Children and young people should wear seatbelts at all times
- Booster seats should be used or provided when appropriate.

Late collections

A club/organisation is within its rights to review any child's or young person's continued participation in our programmes should parents or guardians persistently fail to collect their child on time. The club should inform parents and guardians about the consequences of late collections.

- Late collections from training sessions and away trips can present particular difficulties. The head coach should have contact numbers for parents/guardians and, if possible, be provided with an alternative contact number should this scenario arise.
- The club recognises that, on occasion, unforeseen circumstances arise within a family, affecting timely pick-ups. Parents and guardians should have a contact number for the head coach to inform them of emergencies and possible late collections.

APPENDIX 13

AWAY TRIPS/RESIDENTIALS/ TOURNAMENT GUIDANCE

Travelling to away fixtures, tournaments and residential is a regular activity which may require complicated arrangements involving overnight stays.

Even what may appear as the most straightforward of trips will require some level of planning and coordination. This may include additional care, support and supervision to ensure it is a safe and enjoyable experience for everyone involved.

The following guidance outlines several issues that should be considered when travelling with children and young people.

In preparation for an away match, tournament or residential, you should:

- Inform the child or young person that they have been invited by way of written correspondence (in addition to text message)
- Inform parents/guardians, by way of written correspondence, that their child has been selected
- Prepare and send out consent and medical questionnaire forms to all parents and guardians in advance of the match, tournament or residential
- Obtain written parental/guardian consent before the match, tournament or residential – as part of this parents/guardians and children/young people should sign a declaration agreeing to adhere to the programme and any requirements and procedures relating to it
- Where possible risk assessments on facilities and accommodation should be carried out prior to the match, tournament or residential
- Ensure all volunteers/coaches/officials have completed safeguarding training and an enhanced disclosure vetting check prior to the match, tournament or residential
- Check that staff have the relevant qualifications, experience and insurance pertaining to their role
- Check insurance coverage is fully in place
- Issue children and young people, parents and guardians and volunteers with an itinerary outlining all travel arrangements, meeting points and requirements

- Inform everyone participating of the Irish FA's/club's codes of conduct and ensure they agree to sign, date and return the expected codes of behaviour to the head delegate. Officials, children/young people and parents/guardians must also be made aware that any behaviour bringing the club/organisation into disrepute will result in disciplinary action as we see fit
- At least one club official/volunteer attending a residential has a valid first aid qualification. Officials/volunteers should familiarise themselves with the nearest hospital/a&e department
- Officials/volunteers should be aware of any pre-existing medical conditions/injuries/allergies (food or otherwise) before the match, tournament or residential so that we can prepare in advance
- Print blank safeguarding and poor practice referral and accident forms in advance. Record in writing any accidents or incidents and, if required, report them to the appropriate authorities
- Adhere to the communications policy, as outlined in appendix 9, when communicating with children and young people at and about activities involving travel

Code of conduct for officials and volunteers during away trips

- Ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people and place their welfare before all other considerations at all times
- Provide a safe and fun environment for children and young people
- Do not leave children and young people unsupervised at any stage during the course of the away trip
- Show respect for everyone involved
- Demonstrate equitable practice. Treat everyone involved equally and ensure they feel valued
- Never engage in bullying behaviour. Bullying is unacceptable and must be challenged
- Do not use any form of foul, sectarian, abusive or discriminatory language
- Be a good role model and demonstrate a high standard of behaviour – this includes not drinking alcohol, smoking or taking illegal/performance-enhancing drugs in front of children and young people
- Never take advantage of your position of trust.
- Ensure children and young people are presented with an opportunity to voice any concerns that arise during the course of the tournament or residential.
- Be punctual and arrive at all departing venues well in advance of children and young people so they are not left standing alone.
- Ensure children and young people stay in groups while in the departure area so that no child or young person is left isolated.
- Arrange a group meeting point prior to boarding the mode of transport (eg bus, plan, train).
- Undertake a health and safety risk assessment of the accommodation/facilities upon arrival.
- Ensure, where possible, that everyone is located on the same floor of the accommodation.
- Ensure that children and young people are designated 'age-appropriate' and same-gender rooms, and that each child or young person is designated an individual bed. Volunteers/officials must never share a room/bath/ shower with a child or young person.
- Consider organising a rota to check that players are safely in their rooms at night. No official/volunteer should enter a player's bedroom unless it is deemed necessary and unless they are accompanied by another adult/volunteer.
- Familiarise the group with the emergency exits in the event of a fire, and agree a group meeting point.

- Ensure that children and young people cannot gain access to adult television channels or bar facilities in their designated bedrooms.
- Work in an open environment with children and young people at all times.
- Never exert unnecessary physical or emotional pressure/stress on children and young people.
- Avoid spending time alone with a child or young person and ensure that any medical staff/support are supported by another official/volunteers when treating players.
- Do not engage in any form of inappropriate physical contact.
- Medical staff (ie doctors and physiotherapists) must always treat a child or young person for illness or injury in a manner that reflects the ethos of their profession.
- Officials/volunteers who are the opposite gender to the players must remain outside the changing room while the players are showering and changing.
- Refrain from using mobile phones in changing rooms unless it is an emergency
- Should a child or young person have to remain in the hotel during the tournament or residential due to injury or illness try to ensure appropriate adult supervision remains behind to look after their welfare. You have a duty of care to ensure that the child or young person returns home safely
- Children and young people should be allocated an appropriate amount of recovery time from matches and training
- Parents and guardians and children and young people should be informed of any free time and related supervision arrangements in advance of the trip
- Ensure that all players take part in group excursions so that no child or young person is left alone in accommodation. Arrange a 'meeting point' for players in the event of a player becoming separated from the group
- Be approachable at all times
- Make the match, tournament or residential an enjoyable experience for everyone involved
- Demonstrate good listening skills
- Recognise the different developmental needs and capacities of children and young people
- Be positive by encouraging children and young people, and praising their efforts
- Encourage teamwork
- Promote an ethos of fair play and respect
- Ensure disciplinary procedures are in place should they be required
- Have access to telephones and be contactable 24/7. Officials/volunteers should have contact numbers for parents and guardians, and vice versa, in case of emergency

Code of conduct for children and young people on residential

Children and young people who attend residential have the right to receive the appropriate care, support and supervision required to safeguard their welfare. However, they also have a responsibility to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects the good reputation of our club/organisation and does not bring it into disrepute.

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They should:

- Show respect for everyone involved in the programme
- Demonstrate equitable practice. Treat everyone involved equally and ensure they feel valued
- Never engage in any form of bullying or violent behaviour. Bullying is not acceptable behaviour towards anyone and must be challenged. All instances of bullying (whether experienced directly or witnessed) must be reported
- Do not use any form of foul, sectarian, abusive or discriminatory language
- Be punctual. Arrive at all group meeting points on time
- Stay in groups in the departure area and do not wander off on your own
- Respect the accommodation/facilities/equipment and refrain from engaging in behaviour which will cause damage
- Remain in your designated bedroom at night and do not leave the premises during this period unless instructed to do so by a staff member/official/volunteer
- Refrain from using mobile phones in changing rooms, unless it is an emergency
- Adhere to all health and safety requirements, including emergency exit plans, in the event of a fire
- Be punctual for all training sessions, matches, group meetings etc
- Be a good ambassador for your team
- Behave and listen to all instructions from the staff
- Show respect for staff members, team-mates, match officials and opponents alike
- Do not leave the grounds of the residential/training area without permission
- Be a role model – display good behaviour and be courteous at all times
- Have fun and enjoy the experience
- Adhere to any dress codes
- Promote an ethos of fair play and respect
- Do not engage in rough or dangerous play
- Wear the appropriate kit, including footwear and shin pads
- Do not chew gum or wear jewellery during training or matches
- Show respect for members of the public
- Respect the rules of the game. Do not cheat
- Encourage your team-mates
- Be positive, dedicated, disciplined and committed
- Have pride
- Always do your best and give 100%
- Stay in pairs (at least). Do not go off on your own at any time.

Review of away match/tournament/residential

You should complete a review of each away trip so that any concerns or potential improvements can be reviewed and rectified in the future.

APPENDIX 14

USEFUL CONTACTS

Irish FA Safeguarding Children and Young People in Football app

Health and Social Care Trusts

In Northern Ireland Each trust has a Gateway team to deal with initial reports of abuse, and more local contacts for ongoing professional liaison and advice on concerns.

Northern HSC Trust

Tel 0300 1234 333 (0900-1700)

Out of hours 028 9504 9999 (1700-0900)

South Eastern HSC Trust

Tel 0300 1000 300 (0900-1700)

Out of hours 028 9504 9999 (1700-0900)

Southern HSC Trust

Tel 0800 7837 745 (0900-1700)

Out of hours 028 9504 9999 (1700-0900)

Belfast HSC Trust

Tel 028 9050 7000 (0900-1700)

Out of hours 028 9504 9999 (1700-0900)

Western HSC Trust

Tel 028 7131 4090 (0900-1700)

Out of hours 028 9504 9999 (1700-0900)

The PSNI's Public Protection Units

The following are PSNI Public Protection Units throughout Northern Ireland. Contact them via the police exchange 028 9065 0222 or 101 and the relevant extension below:

North/West Belfast Tennent St PSNI x 28969

South/East Belfast Willowfield PSNI x 23570

Newtownards/Bangor Newtownards PSNI x 31065

Carrickfergus/Newtownabbey/Antrim Antrim PSNI x 36070

Armagh/Newry Lurgan PSNI x 39084

Cookstown/Omagh/Enniskillen Omagh PSNI x 41630

Limavady/Londonderry/Magherafelt Maydown PSNI x 57016

Coleraine/Larne/Ballymena Ballymoney PSNI x 63605

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NSPCC

Adult Helpline 0808 800 5000

www.nspcc.org.uk

Child Protection In Sport Unit

028 9035 1135/011 6234 7278

www.thecpsu.org.uk

ChildLine Freephone 0800 1111

www.childline.org.uk

Access NI 0300 200 7888

www.nidirect.gov.uk/accessni

Disclosure and Barring Service.

Contact DBS for information or queries relating to referrals or barring of adults from working with children and young people

01325 953795

www.homeoffice.gov.uk/dbs

Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP)

028 7238 2391

www.ceop.gov.uk

Kidscape (Anti-Bullying Charity)

0207 730 3300

www.kidscape.org.uk

PIPS (Suicide Prevention Charity)

028 9028 7836

www.pipsprogrammes.com

Lifeline

24-hour general helpline 0808 808 8000

Advocacy VSV

07852 594677

info@advocacyvsv.com

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The Rowan Sexual Assault Referral Centre

0800 3894424

therowan@northerntrust.hscni.net

Women's Aid Federation NI

028 9024 9041

info@womensaidni.org

Nexus

Counselling service for survivors of abuse

www.nexusinstitute.org

Belfast 028 9032 6803

Derry/Londonderry 028 7126 0566

Portadown 028 3835 0588

Enniskillen 028 6632 0046

Sport NI

028 9038 1212

www.sportni.net

Volunteer Now

028 9023 6100

www.volunteernow.co.uk

OTHER USEFUL WEBSITES

www.bullying.co.uk (anti-bullying charity)

www.thinkuknow.co.uk (CEOP's internet safety education programme)

APPENDIX 15

REFERENCES AND SOURCE MATERIAL

Area Child Protection Committees' Regional Child Protection Policy and Procedures, Department Of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, 2005

Children (NI) Order, 1995

Sport Ireland and Sport NI's Code Of Ethics and Good Practice, 2006

Communications Act, 2003

Co-operating To Safeguard Children, Department Of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, 2017

European Sports Charter and Code Of Ethics, Council of Europe, 1993

Malicious Communications Act, 1998

Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum

NSPCC Briefing Papers and Training Resources

Our Duty To Care, Department Of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, 2011

Public Interest Disclosure (NI) Order, 1998

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order, 2007

Sexual Offences Act, 2003

Sport Northern Ireland Sullivan P. M. & Knutson, J. F. (2000) Maltreatment and disabilities: a population-based epidemiological study

United Nations Convention on The Rights Of The Child, 1989 www.nspcc.org.uk www.cpsu.org.uk
www.niabf.org.uk





Irish Football Association Foundation
The National Football Stadium
Donegall Avenue
Belfast BT12 6LU
www.irishfa.com