IRISH FA SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN FOOTBALL

POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR ALL AFFILIATED LEAGUES, CLUBS AND MEMBERS



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Section 1 Introduction

Safeguarding Policy Statement

The welfare of children and young people is paramount to our club. We endeavour to provide an environment which values and protects all children and young people. It is our policy promote good practice and ensure each young person is protected from inappropriate behaviour and all types of abuse while having a positive experience at our club.

Our club endeavours to safeguard children and young people by adopting the standards set out by the Irish Football Association. To achieve this, we will:

- 1) Appoint a Child Welfare Officer and communicate their contact details to all club members.
- 2) Adopt the Irish FA Safeguarding Children and Young People in Football Policy and Procedures in their entirety.
- 3) Ensure our coaches/volunteers engaged in Regulated Activity have completed appropriate vetting checks through the Irish FA as part of the club's safe recruitment process before commencing their role. Vetting checks will be updated every 3 years.
- 4) Ensure all coaches/volunteers working with or responsible for under 18's have attended the Irish FA Safeguarding Children and Young People in Football Workshop within 6 months of taking up their role. This should be updated every 3 years.
- 5) Have procedures for dealing with complaints or concerns regarding poor practice, abuse or neglect consistent with the Irish FA safeguarding policy.
- 6) Adhere to Irish FA Codes of Conduct and ensure these are communicated to all club coaches, players and parents.

Scope

This policy document covers all functions of our club and applies to all staff and/or volunteers, particularly those who engage in regulated activity with children and young people, club members and representatives.

Equality statement

Our club is committed to ensuring a fun and safe environment for all, regardless of religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status, sexual orientation, men and women generally, persons with a disability or persons without, and persons with dependents and persons without.



Section 2 Childrens 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 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:

Article 1: No Discrimination

Article 3: Acting in The Child's Best Interests

Article 6: 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

The Children (NI) Order 1995 is based on a clear and consistent set of five principles designed with the common aim of promoting the welfare of children and young people, they are;

- Paramountcy the welfare of the child and young person is paramount to this club
- **Parental / Guardian Responsibility** parents / guardians have responsibility for ensuring their child is safe and the young person's rights are protected rather than rights over them
- Prevention the club will put all good practice measures in place to reduce any potential risks of harm
- Partnership parents / guardians and statutory agencies will work together to prevent abuse and harm
- **Protection** the statutory agencies have a legal duty to investigate when a child or young person is at risk from harm or abuse. This club is committed to working in partnership with any statutory intervention to protect a child.

Children and young people have the right to be safe. Our staff and/or volunteers have a duty to ensure that this fundamental principle takes precedence over all other considerations.



Section 3 Responsibility for Safeguarding

Safeguarding Children and Young People in Football is a shared responsibility. Our club fully endorse the Irish FA's Safeguarding Children and Young People in Football Policy and Procedures found under the Foundation section at www.irishfa.com. We have appointed a Club Child Welfare Officer(s) who has been ratified by our club committee.

The club child welfare officer plays a fundamental role in the creation of a child-centred ethos that promotes the positive aspects of football. This can be achieved by communicating to every adult in the club that they have a duty of care to safeguard the welfare of children and young people and protect them from inappropriate behaviour and promote a culture of fun.

The role and responsibilities of the child welfare officer includes the following:

- Work with others in the club to create a positive child centred environment.
- Adopt the safe recruitment procedures outlined by the Irish FA to ensure all volunteers in Regulated Activity have completed appropriate vetting checks, administered by the Irish FA prior to taking up their role.
- Ensure all club volunteers have attended Irish FA Safeguarding Children and Young People in Football training in line with NIBFA, NIWFA, GDC, SSG affiliation requirements within 6 months of taking up their role.
- Be the first point of contact for any complaints relating to poor practice and/or safeguarding issues and maintain appropriate records of any complaints, actions or decisions taken.
- Disseminate relevant information throughout the club as and when necessary.
- Liaise with the Irish FA, clubs, leagues and any other relevant affiliated bodies to ensure any concerns are dealt with at the earliest opportunity.

As a club, we will ensure that the club welfare officer has:

- Completed the Irish FA Safeguarding Children and Young People in Football Course
- Completed the Irish FA Child Welfare Officer Course (within 6 months of being appointed)
- Completed a satisfactory Enhanced Disclosure Check through the Irish FA
- Agreed to take responsibility for their own development to maintain their knowledge and skills to fulfil the role

For additional information on the roles and responsibilities of the club child welfare officer see the Irish FA Safeguarding Policy and Procedures or the Irish FA Safeguarding Children and Young People in Football App currently available at Google Play and iTunes.



Section 4 Safe Recruitment Procedures

Our club recognises its responsibility to ensure that 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. Our selection process includes but is not limited to:

- An application process
- Confirmation of any experience working with children
- Previous coaching experience
- A commitment to engage in additional training as required by the club
- Reference checking

Vetting Checks

Our club is required to ensure that any volunteer who is engaged in regulated activity (welfare role, first aider, coach, transporting children, overnight stays) completes an AccessNI Enhanced Disclosure Check.

Once we are satisfied that the volunteer is suitable to represent our club we will ensure that an appropriate AccessNI application is completed prior to them taking up their role and at 3 yearly intervals thereafter. The process is as follows:

- We will issue a hard copy of the AccessNI application form (available at www.irishfa.com) 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 our club welfare officer or chairperson along with 3 pieces of identification for identity checking.
- Each applicant should consider submitting a self-declaration form outlining any relevant cautions and/or convictions to Kevin Doyle, Irish FA Safeguarding Manager, NFS Windsor Park, Belfast, BT12 5LU.
- The club welfare officer/chairperson should record the name, dob and AccessNI reference number and forward the application form and copies of identification to Kevin Doyle, Irish FA Safeguarding Manager, NFS Windsor Park, Belfast, BT12 5LU.

On receipt of the completed application the Irish FA will:

- Process the application to AccessNI
- Receive notification from AccessNI outlining:
 - (i) Nothing to disclose
 - (ii) Certificate Issued (previous cautions and/or convictions)
 - (iii) Further information required from the applicant

The Irish FA will conduct a thorough risk assessment on any disclosures. Our club volunteers will provide the Irish FA with the original disclosure certificate and a detailed explanation of any disclosures identified by the AccessNI check. The Irish FA may be required to obtain third party information and/or share information with our club. This will only be done with the consent of the volunteer.

Our club will engage fully in this process and comply with any decision taken by the Irish FA Case Management Panel.

Safeguarding Training

All our staff and volunteers will attend the Irish FA Safeguarding Children and Young People in Football training course within 6 months of taking up their role. This will cover:

- Basic awareness and understanding of safeguarding issues
- Recognising a child protection concern including guidance on how to respond to, record and report concerns in line with Irish FA guidelines
- Volunteers responsibility 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 codes of conduct

Volunteers will be required to attend refresher training in safeguarding on a 3-yearly basis either via face to face training or online learning. Face to face training must be completed after 9 years.

Section 5 Responding to concerns, complaints or allegations

We will take any complaint or concern about the safety and welfare of a child seriously. This includes but is not limited to the following:

- The conduct of a club volunteer towards any other club member child, parent/guardian, spectator, Irish FA and/or other match officials.
- The conduct of any club representative towards any member of another football club, league, Irish FA and/or match official.
- Any concern, raised by a child or adult, that indicates they (or another person) have been harmed or are at risk of being harmed by another individual.
- The conduct of any club member that may cause reputational damage to the club.
- Any concerning behaviour that is observed by a club representative.

Any concerns you may have should initially be directed to our club Child Welfare Officer. If the complaint is about that individual, you should raise the issue with the club Chairperson or another senior official as necessary.

We will consider if your concern relates to poor practice and is a breach of our Code of Conduct. This matter may be addressed internally. Serious cases of poor practice may be referred to the Irish FA/NIBFA. All concerns will be fully investigated.

The outcome of any investigation may be:

- No case to answer
- Advice and warning as to future conduct
- Supervision/monitoring
- Support/additional training
- Suspension from the club
- Club membership rescinded

We will also consider if your concern is potentially child abuse or criminal behaviour. We will record the nature of the concern and immediately share this information with statutory authorities and the Irish FA/NIBFA. Our club will be guided by the advice from relevant authorities.

We may have to make a referal to the DBS. If this is the case we will liase with the Irish FA and any other appropriate body.



Section 6 What is Child Abuse?

"Child abuse occurs when a child is neglected, harmed or not provided with proper care. Children may be abused in many settings: in a family, in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them, or more rarely, by a stranger. There are different types of abuse and a child may suffer more than one of them."

(Ref: Department Of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) NI Area Child Protection Committee's Regional Child Protection Policy and Procedures, 2005)

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 an adult whom children and young people know and place their trust in, rather than a stranger.

Child abuse is a very difficult and emotive subject which requires education and open discussion so that everyone feels confident in recognising the potential signs and symptoms of abuse and knows how to respond to concerns in line with Association and statutory quidelines.

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 which takes place in a public setting 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

The Department of Health Co-operating to Safeguard Children (2017) Report 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.

Although 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 harm which must be taken seriously and responded to.

For more detailed information regarding the categories of abuse, refer to www.irishfa.com/foundation/youth-and-grassroots-football/safeguarding.



Section 7 Code of Conduct

Football should be a positive experience for all participants. Our club expects high standards of behaviour from all our representatives – players, coaches, volunteers and supporters. Football is passionate and naturally competitive and can evoke different emotions and reactions. These, at times can be both positive and negative and can spill onto the pitch. We have a shared responsibility to ensure poor conduct does not compromise the safety and welfare of children and young people. Any behaviour which compromises this ethos may result in disciplinary action.

Players - Children and young people at our club are expected to:

- Show respect to players, coaches/volunteers and spectators
- Play fairly, respect officials and accept their decisions
- Respect opponents and not cheat
- Not use violence
- Remain within the defined boundary of the playing area/coaching area
- Behave and listen to all instructions from the coach/supervising adult
- Take care of all equipment owned by the club/league/SSG centre
- Refrain from bad language or racial /sectarian references
- Refrain from bullying or persistent use of rough and dangerous play
- Report abuse and/or inappropriate behaviour
- Be gracious in defeat
- Refrain from any inappropriate use of social media that may be critical of any club member or bring our club into disrepute

Children and Young People have the right to:

- Be safe and be listened to
- Be respected
- Privacy
- Enjoy football in a protective environment
- Be referred for professional help if needed
- Be protected from abuse/inappropriate behaviour from any other person
- Participate on an equal basis, based on their ability
- A positive experience of competition
- Have their concerns taken seriously

Any behaviour deemed to be in breach of the code of conduct will initially be addressed by the appropriate coach and the Club Welfare Officer informed. Should the inappropriate behaviour persist or become more serious the matter will be escalated within the club and the following actions may be considered (this list is not exhaustive):

- Behavioural contract
- Suspension from training/matches
- Expulsion from the club

Your parents/guardians will be informed of any action taken by the club or concerns about your behaviour.

Code of Conduct for Parents/Guardians

Parents/Guardians involve with our club are expected to:

- Show respect, appreciation and support for the club coaches and volunteers
- Complete and return club registration forms along with consent forms pertaining to your child's participation with the club
- Inform the club of any health concerns pertaining to your child particularly breathing, chest conditions or allergies. This may include any other condition including ADHD and/or Autism prior to football related activity.

- Be punctual when delivering and collecting your child to and from football training or matches. Inform the coach of any change of circumstance or collection arrangements
- Ensure your child is prepared for football appropriate attire depending on weather conditions, appropriate footwear, shin guards and if required, prescription safety glasses, fluids and snacks if needed
- Behave in a manner that reflects the good name of the club, make yourself aware of and adhere to rules of particular games centres
- Encourage your child to play by the rules and to do their best
- Be realistic and promote your child's participation in football for fun and enjoyment
- Accept officials and referee's decisions
- Behave responsibly on the side-lines and engage positively with other parents and coaches
- Refrain from any inappropriate use of social media that may be critical of any club member or bring our club into disrepute
- Never enter the field of play unless invited by an official

Parents/Guardians have a right to:

- Know their child is safe and supervised during training and matches (unless prior arrangements re supervision agreed)
- Be informed about any problems or concerns relating to their child(ren)
- Be informed if their child is injured
- Make a positive contribution to decisions made by the club
- Raise any complaints or concerns they may have relating their children's involvement with the club

Any behaviour deemed to be in breach of the code of conduct will initially be addressed by the appropriate coach and the Club Welfare Officer informed. Should the inappropriate behaviour persist or become more serious the matter will be escalated within the club and the following actions may be considered (this list is not exhaustive):

- Behavioural contract
- Parent/Guardian may be asked not to attend training sessions and/or matches for an agreed period of time
- If parental poor behaviour continues then ultimately your child may be asked to leave the club as a consequence of your actions

Code of Conduct for Coaches and Volunteers

All coaches and volunteers at our club will:

- show respect to everyone involved in the game (i.e. coaches, players, match officials, parents 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
- agree to complete appropriate vetting checks and engage in any subsequent risk assessment with the Irish FA
- attend appropriate training as and when required in line with Irish FA affiliation requirements safeguarding, first aid etc.

When coaching/volunteering children and young people I 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
- only partake in one-to-one coaching with a child or young person if it is absolutely necessary, part of the overall team training session and is done with the knowledge of the club and agreement with the child/young person and parent
- make them feel safe and ensure that coaching and volunteer ratios are appropriate to the needs of the group
- make football a fun experience

- communicate in a constructive, effective and age-appropriate manner
- be positive by giving constructive feedback, praising efforts and encouraging achievements
- ensure that if any form of manual / physical support is required, it is provided openly and according to agreed club guidelines. If physical support is needed, I will talk openly to the child or young person, explaining what I am doing and why, but I understand that for coaching purposes within football there are limited reasons for physical support. I agree that 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 any child against their will
- carry out a risk assessment and ensure that the equipment and environment used for every club activity is safe
- keep a written record, and inform senior coach and parent of the young person, of any injury that occurs, including details of any treatment given
- never engage in bullying behaviour
- challenge any form of bullying behaviour and report it to club Welfare Officer and parent of the young person
- avoid spending any time alone with children or young people away from others.

The following actions will never be sanctioned. I will 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 notify the Club Welfare Officer of any 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 club or sport 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 unrecorded or not acted upon.
- undertake personal care for children or young people
- enter or remain in the changing room while players are showering or changing if they are of a different gender to myself.
- invite or allow children or young people to stay with me at my home.

Any behaviour deemed to be in breach of the code of conduct will initially be addressed by the head coach or Club Welfare Officer. Should the inappropriate behaviour persist or become more serious the matter will be escalated within the club and the following actions may be considered (this list is not exhaustive):

- Additional training
- Mediation
- Period of supervision
- Suspension
- Expulsion from the club

Section 8 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. Our club is committed to providing an environment which promotes fun, respect, inclusivity and equality for everyone involved.

Bullying is unacceptable behaviour that compromises our club's ethos and will therefore be challenged and responded to. Volunteers who witness bullying behaviour, whether it's child-to-child or adult to child, must respond immediately and report it to our Club Welfare Officer. Cases of serious bullying may be reported to the Irish FA Safeguarding team.

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

RESPONDING TO BULLYING: VOLUNTEERS

- All cases of bullying must be reported to the club welfare officer.
- 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 club volunteers to discuss the problem.
- Where appropriate, the PSNI may be contacted
- Mediation should be used to help achieve a resolution but only if there is informal consent and agreement from all parties.
- The bullying behaviour should be promptly addressed and stopped.



Section 9 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)

Police Service Of Northern Ireland 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 A

NSPCC

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

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 90287836

www.pipsprogrammes.com

Lifeline 24-hour general helpline

0808 808 8000

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)

Summary

We are committed to the good practice guidelines and procedures outlined throughout this policy. As a club, we accept our responsibility to provide an environment which promotes the safety and welfare of children and young people at all times.

In addition to this policy document we are guided by additional policies outlined in the Irish FA Safeguarding Children and Young People in Football Policy and Procedures document found www.irishfa.com/foundation/youth-and-grassroots-football/safeguarding. This includes:

- Whistle Blowing Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Equality Policy
- General Data Protection Regulations
- Communications and Social Media Policy
- Managing Challenging Behaviour
- Transporting Children and Young People
- Travelling to Away Fixtures/Tournaments/Residentials
- Guidelines on Confidentiality
- Organising Events/Festivals/Tournaments

The Irish FA Safeguarding Children and Young People in Football App is available to download here:











www.irishfa.com