





AN CHOMHAIRLE SPÓIRT





Joint Foreword by Mr Pat O'Neill, Chairman of Irish Sports Council and Mr Eric Saunders, Chairman of Sports Council for Northern Ireland

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

### **Members of the Committee**

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### FOREWORD

The Irish Sports Council and the Sports Council for Northern Ireland have worked together on this first major joint publication; to ensure that sport in the island of Ireland is as safe as it can be for children. This code represents the intention of the two Councils to be consistent and proactive in their child centred approach to sport.

It will help to ensure that there is widespread good practice at all levels and that Governing Bodies and their clubs will have a clear direction in the policy and procedures that they will be expected to adopt.

We would like to convey our appreciation to the Chairperson, Dr. Breda McLeavey and the other committee members for their hardwork and expertise in drafting this code. We are confident that it will be a living document used by all involved in children's sport and acted on by those involved in policy decisions.

The code recognises and celebrates the wonderful contribution made by adults both voluntary and professional to the development of sport for young people. It seeks to protect the good name of sport and the well being of participating children.

Pat O'Neill Chairman Irish Sports Council Eric Saunders Chairman Sports Council for Northern Ireland



### **INTRODUCTION**

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

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

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

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

**Dr Breda McLeavey** Committee Chairperson

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





### **Members of the Committee**

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

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

### The Committee comprises:

### Dr Breda McLeavey, Chairperson

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

### Acknowledgements

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

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

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



### **GLOSSARY**

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Selector:** A selector is an individual who has responsibility for the selection of children for teams and events.

**Children's Officers:** Children's Officers are appointed within clubs to act as a resource for children and to represent them at Committee level.

**Instructors:** Instructors are involved in the systematic development of the core skills and abilities of an activity, usually in a non-competitive context.

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

**Assistants:** Assistants are those people who provide back-up to any of the roles outlined in this section and often such assistants are involved on an intermittent basis (e.g. provision of lifts to matches or competitions; checking equipment, etc.).

### 3. Statutory Authority Guidelines on Child Protection

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**Children First:** National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children, Department of Health and Children 1999(IRL).

**Our Duty to Care** – these guidelines are based on The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety.

# Chapter 1 **Principles**





### PRINCIPLES

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

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

### **1.1 IMPORTANCE OF CHILDHOOD**

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

### **1.2 NEEDS OF THE CHILD**

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

### **1.3 INTEGRITY IN RELATIONSHIPS**

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

### 1.4 FAIR PLAY

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

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

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

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

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

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





### **1.5 QUALITY ATMOSPHERE AND ETHOS**

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

### **1.6 COMPETITION**

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

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

### 1.7 EQUALITY

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All children should be valued and treated in an equitable and fair manner regardless of ability, age, sex, religion, social and ethnic background or political persuasion. Children, irrespective of ability or disability should be involved in sports activities in an integrated and inclusive way, whenever possible, thus allowing them to participate to their potential alongside other children.

## Chapter 2 **People**





#### PEOPLE

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

### 2.1 ADULTS INVOLVED IN SPORT

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

### 2.2 ADULT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS IN SPORT

The trust implicit in adult-child relationships in sport places a duty of care on all adults, voluntary or professional, to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of the child while engaged in their sporting activity. Adults have a crucial leadership role to play in sport. Whether they are parents/guardians or Sports Leaders or teachers, they can contribute to the creation of a positive sporting environment for young people.

The unique nature of sport allows Sports Leaders to develop positive and special relationships with children. Such relationships have tremendous potential to help children to develop and express themselves in an open and secure way. Positive adult-child relationships will result in growth, development and fulfilment for all those involved in children's sport.

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

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

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



### 2.3 CHILD TO CHILD RELATIONSHIPS

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

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### 2.4 RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS /GUARDIANS

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

### 2.5 THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF SPORTS LEADERS

Sports Leaders play a vital role in children's sport. Sports clubs/organisations should ensure that the work of Sports Leaders which occurs mainly on a voluntary basis, is guided by this Code of Ethics and Good Practice whilst also recognising that they are entitled to obtain a healthy sense of achievement and satisfaction through their involvement in children's sport. (See 4.2)

### 2.6 CHILDREN'S OFFICERS

The appointment of Children's Officers in Governing Bodies and sports clubs/organisations is an essential element in the creation of a quality atmosphere in sports clubs/organisations. They act as a resource for all members of the sports club/organisation with regard to children's issues. They ensure that the children have a voice in the running of their club and can talk freely about their experiences in their sports activities.

#### 2.6.1 CLUB CHILDREN'S OFFICER

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

Given the need to ensure that children are valued within all sporting contexts a Children's Officer should be appointed by all clubs, subject to appropriate selection and recruitment procedures as recommended within this Code. Appointment of this person should be done in consultation with the juvenile members of the club and their parents/guardians. The Children's Officer should be an ex-officio member of, or have access to, the Club Management Committee. S/he should have as his/her primary aim the establishment of a child centred ethos within the club. S/he should be introduced to the children in an appropriate forum. The Children's Officer should have the following functions:

- to promote awareness of the *Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport in Ireland* within the club and particularly among the children and their parents/guardians. This could be achieved by the production of information leaflets, the establishment of children's/age-group specific notice boards and by regular information meetings for the children and their parents/guardians
- to influence policy and practice within the club in order to prioritise children's needs
- to provide an accessible resource to children through the creation of forums





to see that children know how to make concerns known to appropriate adults or agencies. Information disclosed by a child to the Children's Officer or any other adult within the club should be dealt with in accordance with the Department of Health and Children's Guidelines *Children First* and the Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety's *Our Duty to Care* as outlined at 5.13 in this Code

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- to encourage the involvement of parents/guardians in the club activities and co-operate with parents/guardians in ensuring that each child enjoys his/her involvement in sport
- to act as an advisory resource to Sports Leaders on best practice in children's sport
- to report regularly to the Club Management Committee
- to monitor changes in membership and follow up any unusual dropout, absenteeism or club transfers by children or Sports Leaders

*Children's Officers do not have the responsibility of investigating or validating child protection concerns within the club and have no counselling or therapeutic role. These roles are filled by the Statutory Authorities as outlined in Children First and Our Duty to Care. It is, however, possible that child protection concerns will be brought to the attention of the Children's Officer. In this event, it is essential that the correct procedures are followed, i.e. that reports are passed on immediately to the designated person with responsibility within the club for reporting to the Statutory Authorities. (See 5.13).* 

### 2.6.2 CHILDREN'S OFFICER FOR GOVERNING BODY OF SPORT

Each Governing Body of Sport should appoint a Children's Officer. The Children's Officer should be a member of the Executive Committee to ensure that children's interests are kept on the agenda of the Governing Body. The role of the Governing Body Children's Officer involves:

- the promotion of the values, attitudes and structures which make sport enjoyable for children
- circulation of all relevant information and resource materials on children's sport to clubs and affiliates of the sports organisations
- communication with Club Children's Officers to ensure the widespread dissemination of the *Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport in Ireland* and the publicising of related education programmes, materials and events
- liaison with clubs, to ensure drop-out rates and transfers are monitored so that unusual developments or trends can be addressed
- familiarisation with *Children First* and *Our Duty to Care* to ensure they can act as an information source to other members of the organisation
- commitment to attendance at training as required in order to act as a resource to members in relation to children's needs
- co-ordination of training for others, as appropriate

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

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





### 2.7 SPORTS CLUBS

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

- adopt and implement the *Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport in Ireland* as an integral part of its policy on children in the club
- have its constitution approved and adopted by club's members at an AGM or EGM
- permit all members over 16 years of age to vote, where possible. One parent/guardian should have one vote for all their children under 16 years of age, where relevant
- ensure that the Club Management Committee is elected or endorsed by registered club members at each AGM
- adopt and consistently apply a safe and clearly defined method of recruiting and selecting Sports Leaders (See 3.5)
- clearly define the role of committee members, all Sports Leaders and parents/guardians
- appoint at least one Children's Officer as outlined at 2.6.1 in this Code. In the event that a club caters for both boys and girls, one Children's Officer of each gender would ideally be appointed
- designate the Club Chairperson to act as liaison with the Statutory Authorities in relation to the reporting of allegations or suspicions of child abuse. (See 5.13.2) Any such reports should be made according to the procedures outlined in this Code/*Children First /Our Duty to Care*
- ensure best practice throughout the club by disseminating its code of conduct, including the disciplinary, complaints and appeals procedures in operation within the club to all its members. The club's code of conduct should also be posted in all facilities used by the club
- have in place procedures for dealing with a concern or complaint made to the Statutory Authorities against a committee member or Sports Leader or other members of the club. Regulations should stipulate that a Sports Leader who is the subject of an allegation, which has been reported to the Statutory Authorities, should stand aside, while the matter is being examined. S/he should be invited to resume full duties immediately if s/he is vindicated
- ensure that relevant Sports Leaders report to the Club Management Committee on a regular basis
- encourage regular turnover of committee membership while ensuring continuity and experience
- develop effective procedures for responding to and recording accidents
- ensure that any unusual activity (high rate of drop-out, transfers, etc.) is checked out and reported by the Club Chairperson to the Governing Body of Sport
- ensure that all club members are given adequate notice of AGMs and other meetings
- ensure that all minutes of all meetings (AGMs/EGMs/,Committee) are recorded and safely filed



### 2.8 GOVERNING BODIES OF SPORT

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

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- ensure that the *Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport in Ireland* is adopted, agreed to, implemented and signed up to by all members
- amend, as necessary, its Constitution to reflect a safe and clearly defined method of recruiting, selecting and managing (For further guidance see p23, 3.5)
- appoint a National Children's Officer and a Regional/Branch Children's Officer in Northern Ireland (See 2.6.2). S/he should be a member of the Executive Committee
- ensure that effective disciplinary, complaints and appeals procedures are in place
- have in place procedures for dealing with a concern or complaint made to the Statutory Authorities against a committee member or a Sports Leader. Regulations should stipulate that a Sports Leader who is the subject of an allegation, which has been reported to the Statutory Authorities, should stand aside while the matter is being examined. S/he should be invited to resume full duties immediately if s/he is vindicated
- ensure that all sports clubs with child members are fully affiliated and signed up to the Governing Body's constitution
- be represented by appropriate personnel at all education/training workshops dealing with the Code
- where children are involved in representative teams, designate an appropriate senior officer in the Governing Body as the person with responsibility for following the guidelines of the Code
- review its child protection procedures regularly through open discussion with its members, Sports Councils and Statutory Authorities
- establish contact with representatives of the Statutory Authorities in their areas. The building of these
  relationships will contribute to the creation of an environment in which education and knowledge of
  child protection issues and procedures are widely known
- examine and take appropriate action in response to any reports of unusual incidents (high rate of transfers, dropouts) received from clubs



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

The Irish Sports Council and the Sports Council for Northern Ireland have jointly agreed that a common approach is essential in promoting good practice in children's sport. Therefore, the Councils are working together to ensure that the *Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport in Ireland* is promulgated to all those involved in sport in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

This approach is based on the need for All-Island consistency in advice offered to clubs, Sports Leaders, parents/guardians, children and in particular, Governing Bodies of Sport who are responsible for the administration of their sports.

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

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

*This Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport in Ireland* should be made available to and used by all those involved in children's sport. The Sports Councils will ensure the widest possible dissemination of the Code and ask that this Code is adopted and implemented by all sports clubs/organisations.

Both Councils will support the work of each Governing Body in the adoption and implementation of the Code. The positive impact of these guidelines for clubs, leaders and parents/guardians can only be achieved by the Governing Bodies with the support and co-operation of their affiliated clubs.

It is intended that information contained in the Code can provide a yardstick by which sports clubs/ organisations can measure themselves against the best advice available on policies, procedures and practices that characterise good organisations. It can provide a framework for Sports Leaders who want to protect themselves and the children they encourage to participate.

## Chapter 3 Policy & Procedures





### **POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

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

### 3.1 CONSTITUTION

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

### 3.2 STRUCTURE

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

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







### 3.3 REGULATIONS

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

### 3.4 DISCIPLINARY, COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS PROCEDURES

Each club/organisation should ensure that it has adequate disciplinary, complaints and appeals procedures in place. It is important to note that the investigation of suspected child abuse is the responsibility of the Statutory Authorities and should not be undertaken by Children's Officers or other club/organisation Sports Leaders. The standard reporting procedure outlined in the Statutory Authorities guidelines should be followed by each sports club/organisation and adhered to by its members (See 5.13).

### **3.4.1 Recommended procedures**

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

- a code of conduct reflecting a child centred ethos should be drawn-up, widely disseminated and applied to all Sports Leaders and members
- each club/organisation should appoint a disciplinary committee with clearly defined procedures to resolve problems relating to the conduct of its members. This should include bullying. The committee should consist of a representative from the Management Committee and ordinary registered members of the club. Regular turnover of this committee should be encouraged
- the disciplinary committee should initiate an investigation following a complaint into any incident of suspected misconduct that does not relate to child abuse. It should, as soon as possible, inform the Management Committee of the progress of the disciplinary process
- written confidential records of all complaints should be safely and confidentially kept and club procedures should be defined for the possession of such records in the event of election of new officers
- the disciplinary committee should furnish the individual with details of the complaint being made against him/her and afford him/her the opportunity of providing a response either verbally or in writing
- where it is established that an incident of misconduct has taken place, the disciplinary committee should notify the member of any sanction being imposed. The notification should be made in writing, setting out the reasons for the sanction. If the member is under 18 years of age, correspondence should be addressed to the parents/guardians





- if the member against whom the complaint was made is unhappy with the decision of the disciplinary committee s/he should have the right to appeal the decision to an appeals committee (independent of a disciplinary committee). Any appeal should be made in writing within an agreed period after issue of the decision of the disciplinary committee. The chairperson of the appeals committee should be a member of the Management Committee or elected by the members at AGM
- the appeals committee should have the power to confirm, set aside or change any sanction imposed by the disciplinary committee
- if any party is not satisfied with the outcome the matter can be referred to the Governing Body. However efforts to resolve the issue at local level should be exhausted before the Governing Body is engaged in attempts to resolve the matter

### 3.5 RECRUITMENT OF SPORTS LEADERS

It is recommended that all adults taking responsibility for children in sport should undergo a recruitment process. The following procedures for recruitment of Sports Leaders will assist in placing them in the position to which they are suited and help in the protection of children and Sports Leaders alike.

- list tasks that Sports Leaders need to perform and the skills needed for those tasks
- make all vacancies openly available to interested and qualified applicants
- an application form should be completed by each applicant. This should include a self-declaration form. See Sample Form in Appendix 2
- in Northern Ireland new coaches who have "substantial access" to children regardless of whether they are paid or not must be checked by the Pre-Employment Consultancy Service (PECS). See Appendix 4
- references should be verified by the Club Management Committee and should be kept on file as a matter of record. See Sample Form in Appendix 3
- all recommendations for appointment should be ratified by the sports club's/organisation's management committee. The decision to appoint a Sports Leader is the responsibility of a sports club/organisation, and not of any one individual within it
- once recruited into the sport/organisation, all Sports Leaders should be adequately managed, supported and offered child protection awareness training
- any statutory guidelines should be adhered to
- a probationary period should be established
- verify qualifications and check any gaps in employment history



## Policy & Procedures

### 3.6 EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Sport exposes children to new challenges, some of which occur in environments with certain risks. Sport Leaders should be provided with the appropriate training for their activity. Sports clubs/organisations that take responsibility for children in sport should ensure that Sports Leaders are competent to provide safe and rewarding experiences for those in their care and that appropriate training and educational opportunities are developed. Training and education opportunities should also be made available to parents/guardians as appropriate. Training for the following should be made available and updated on a regular basis:

- Governing Body Children's Officer
- Club Children's Officer
- Other Sports Leaders

### Governing Bodies and clubs should ensure that all Children's Officers and all other relevant Sports Leaders have access to training in the following areas:

- The Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport in Ireland
- Communication skills
- Basic understanding of child development as it relates to sport
- Education or Information Dissemination
- Awareness of the appropriate club response to suspicions or reports of child abuse

## To assist sports organisations implement the Code and promote Child Protection training both Sports Councils have established support for this specific purpose.

The ISC have appointed a project leader to assist and liaise with governing bodies and local sports patnerships, and to implement the Code at national and local level through workshops and training days. Some training will be delivered in conjunction with local health boards.

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

In Northern Ireland Child Protection training is available by contacting Coaching Northern Ireland (see appendix 8 for details) who offer the following workshops

- Governing Body Children's Officers
- Club Children's Officer Workshop

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- Child Protection Implementation Workshop
- Child Protection Awareness Workshop

# Chapter 4 **Practice**

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### PRACTICE

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

Practice

### 4.1 CONTEXT FOR THE CONDUCTING OF A SPORTING ACTIVITY

- the activity undertaken should be suitable for the ability, age and experience of the participants
- children with disabilities should be involved in sporting activities in an inclusive way, whenever possible. Sports Leaders should be aware of and seek to gain competence in addressing the special needs of children with disabilities
- adult/child ratios should reflect the duration, nature and location of the activities, the ages and characteristics of the young people and any other safety issues related to the activity. It is the responsibility of clubs and sports organisations to determine what are appropriate adult/child ratios and ensure that they are adhered to. It is recommended that more than one adult at a time should be present at sporting activities. This will help to ensure the safety of the children and protect adults against false allegations
- quality leadership in sport programmes is necessary to enable young people to accept responsibilities, accept others and accept themselves. The environment should help participants to feel and believe that they all have an equally important contribution to make to the activity
- standards of behaviour of both children and Sports Leaders should be considered as important as sports performance
- parents/guardians have a duty to ensure that the context in which their child is participating is appropriate, as indicated at the five points above

#### **4.2 GUIDELINES FOR SPORTS LEADERS**

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

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

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

In a sporting context, certain types of coaching require a "hands on approach" i.e. it may be necessary to support a child in order to physically demonstrate a particular technique. This should only occur when necessary and in an open and appropriate way with the knowledge, permission and full understanding of the child concerned and his/her parents/guardians.



### Where possible, Sports Leaders should avoid:

- spending excessive amounts of time with children away from others
- taking sessions alone
- taking children to the Sports Leader's home
- taking children on journey's alone in their car

### Sports Leaders should not:

- use any form of corporal punishment or physical force on a child
- exert undue influence over a participant in order to obtain personal benefit or reward
- engage in rough physical games, sexually provocative games or allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any kind, and/or make sexually suggestive comments about, or to, a child

Practice

- take measurements or engage in certain types of fitness testing without the presence of another adult
- undertake any form of therapy (hypnosis etc.) in the training of children

### 4.3 GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

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

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

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

- be aware of the relevant Sports Leaders and their role within the club
- show appreciation of and respect for Sports Leaders and their decisions
- encourage their child to play by the rules
- behave responsibly on the sideline

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- focus on their child's efforts rather than performance
- focus on the fun and participation of the child in the activity
- liaise with the Sports Leaders in relation to the times/locations of training sessions, medical conditions of their children and any requirement for their child's safety



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

- encouraged to become members of the club, where feasible, and take an active interest in the running of the club or any sporting activities in which their children take part
- willing to become the Club Children's Officer
- informed of the training and/or competitive programmes and be satisfied with the general environment that is created for their children

Practice

- informed if their child sustained an injury during sporting activities
- informed of problems or concerns relating to their children.
- informed in advance and have their consent sought in relation to matters regarding away trips, camps or specially organised activities (see also 4.5)

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

### Parents/guardians should not:

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

### 4.4. GUIDELINES FOR CHILDREN

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

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

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



### 4.4.2 Children should undertake to:

- play fairly, do their best and have fun
- shake hands before and after the event, whoever wins and mean it
- respect officials and accept their decisions with grace not a grudge
- respect fellow team members; give them full support both when they do well and when things go wrong

Practice

- respect opponents, they are not enemies, they are partners in a sporting event
- give opponents a hand if they are injured or have problems with equipment
- accept apologies from opponents when they are offered
- be modest in victory and be gracious in defeat
- show appropriate loyalty to their sport and all its participants
- make high standards of fair play the example others want to follow
- approach the Children's Officer with any questions or concerns they may have

### 4.4.3 Children should not:

- cheat
- use violence, use physical contact only when it is allowed within the rules
- shout at, or argue with, the referee, officials, team mates or opponents
- take banned substances to improve performance
- bully

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- tell lies about adults or other children
- spread rumours
- keep secrets about any person who may have caused them harm
- 4.5 SUPERVISION OF AWAY TRIPS: CLUB, REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL TEAMS

Attention to the following factors will help to promote safety:

- written permission of parents/guardians should be obtained for all overnight away trips. Parents/guardians should inform the club/Team Manager at the outset of any medical condition or special needs of their child
- all adults who travel on away trips with children should be carefully chosen
- adults/ Sports Leaders accompanying or participating in an away trip should make known any medical condition/special needs to the Governing Body/Sports Club in advance
- the roles and responsibilities of adults participating in away trips should be clearly defined
- the Governing Body of Sport/Sports Club should appoint a Team Manager/Head of Delegation for away trips. S/he should have overall responsibility for the children's well being, behaviour and sleeping arrangements. S/he should be appointed as an official of the club for the duration of the trip
- on away trips, coaches should be accountable to the Team Manager in all non-performance related matters
- where there are mixed teams there should be at least one female in the management/coaching structure
- the Team Manager should submit a report to the Governing Body/Sports Club as soon as possible after the end of the trip
- as a norm, adults should not share a room with a child. Where the presence of an adult is needed there should be more than one child in the room with the adult. If children are sharing a room, it should be with those of the same age and sex



- adequate adult: child ratios should be observed
- Sports Leaders are discouraged from travelling alone in their cars with children
- special care should be taken by both host and visiting clubs in the selection of homes for overnight stays and where practicable more than one child should be placed with each host family
- if a child suffers a significant injury or an accident the parents/guardians should be informed as soon as possible

Practice

N.B. For further detailed guidance please contact the ISC or the CPSU.

### 4.6 SAFETY

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

- activities being undertaken should be suitable for the ability, age, and experience of the participants
- equipment and facilities should meet the highest possible standards and be appropriate to the maturity of the participants
- where protective equipment is deemed necessary it should be used
- First Aid should be available for all training sessions and events. There should be a proper First Aid Kit. First Aid should be a basic element of a coaching leadership course
- injuries should be recorded, with a note of the action taken in relation to each one. It is recommended that each club maintain an accident/incident book with a specific incident form for completion by Sports Leaders
- parents/guardians should be notified, by the Sports Leader, of injuries/illness which their children incur while participating in a sporting activity
- all clubs should have a simple and widely known emergency plan to ensure safety procedures
- umpires and referees should ensure that the conduct of the games conform to the standards set by the Governing Body of Sport
- children should be taught the rules of the game at club level and be encouraged to abide by them, keeping in mind that many rules are there for safety
- it is important that before children participate in a sporting activity, they have learned and agreed personal safety rules. If Sports Leaders take children into potentially dangerous situations they should hold the appropriate qualification required by the Governing Body concerned
- parents/guardians should know the starting and finishing times of sessions and events

### 4.7 INSURANCE COVER

All clubs and organisations should ensure that appropriate insurance cover is in place to cover the activities of the club, Sports Leaders and participants. Away trips should be included in such cover. For away trips parents/guardians should be made aware of the need for comprehensive insurance to cover their child, e.g. health/medical insurance etc. Adults transporting children in their cars should be aware of the extent and limits of their motor insurance cover, particularly in relation to acceptable numbers and liability.

### 4.8 REGISTRATION, DROPOUT AND CLUB TRANSFERS

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

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### 4.9 DISCIPLINE IN CHILDREN'S SPORT

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

Practice

- the main form of discipline should be positive reinforcement for effort. It should encourage the development of emotional and social skills as well as skills in sport
- children should be helped to become responsible about the decisions and choices they make within sport, particularly when they are likely to make a difference between playing fairly and unfairly
- there should be no place for fighting, over-aggressive or dangerous behaviour in sport
- participants should treat others in a respectful manner. They should not interfere with, bully or take unfair advantage of others

### 4.10 THE USE OF SANCTIONS

The use of sanctions is an important element in the maintenance of discipline. However, Sports Leaders should have a clear understanding of where and when particular sanctions are appropriate. It should be remembered that effectively controlled organisations and successful Sports Leaders are characterised by the sparing use of sanctions. The age and developmental stage of the child should be taken into consideration when using sanctions.

### **4.10.1** Recommended use of Sanctions

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Sanctions should be fair and consistent and in the case of persistent offence, should be progressively applied. The following steps are suggested:

- rules should be stated clearly and agreed
- a warning should be given if a rule is broken
- a sanction (for example, use of time out) should be applied if a rule is broken for a second time
- if a rule is broken three or more times, the child should be spoken to, and if necessary, the parents/guardians may be involved
- sanctions should be used in a corrective way that is intended to help children improve now and in the future. They should never be used to retaliate or to make a Sports Leader feel better
- when violations of team rules or other misbehaviours occur, sanctions should be applied in an impartial way
- sanctions should not be used as threats. If rules are broken sanctions should be implemented consistently, fairly and firmly
- sanctions should not be applied if a Sports Leader is not comfortable with them. If an appropriate action cannot be devised right away, the child should be told that the matter will be dealt with later, at a specified time and as soon as possible
- once sanctions have been imposed, it is important to make the child feel s/he is a valued member of the group again
- a child should be helped, if necessary, to understand why sanctions are imposed
- a child should not be sanctioned for making errors when s/he is playing
- physical activity (e.g. running laps or doing push-ups) should not be used as a sanction. To do so only causes a child to resent physical activity, something that s/he should learn to enjoy throughout his/her life
- sanctions should be used sparingly. Constant sanctioning and criticism can cause a child to turn away from sport





### PROTECTION

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

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

Protection

### 5.1 AREAS OF RISK FOR CHILDREN IN SPORT

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

- children suffering significant harm by being deprived of proper supervision and safety
- Sports Leaders, parents/guardians subjecting children to constant criticism, sarcasm, rejection, threatening behaviour or pressure to perform at unrealistic levels
- the infliction of any form of non-accidental injury or other forms of child abuse (See 5.9)

### 5.2 SUBSTANCE ABUSE IN SPORT

- the use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco should be actively discouraged as being incompatible with a healthy approach to sporting activity
- a Sports Leader should not smoke when taking a session or drink alcohol before taking a session
- under-age clubs and teams should be encouraged to organise receptions and celebrations in a nonalcoholic environment and in a manner that is suitable for the age group concerned. Adults should act as role models for appropriate behaviour and refrain from drinking alcohol at such functions
- Sports Leaders should promote fair competition through the development of sound training practice and should actively discourage the use of any substance that is perceived to offer short cuts to improved performances or to by-pass the commitment and hard work required to achieve success
- it is the responsibility of all Sports Leaders to educate and inform those in their care as to the short and long-term effects of substances taken to enhance performances. Officials should also ensure that those in their charge are aware of the harmful side effects or the illegality of proscribed drugs or other banned performance-enhancing substances
- Sports Leaders in children's sport should refrain from seeking sponsorship from the alcohol and tobacco industries

Children and parents/guardians involved in sport should be aware of the Sports Councils' Anti-Doping Programmes.

For further details see www.uksport.gov.uk/did and www.irishsportscouncil.ie

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

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



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

Protection

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

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

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

### 5.3.1 Signs of psychological stress and burnout

- sleep disturbance
- irritability
- tension

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

### 5.3.2 Combating psychological stress and burnout

Children who show an early aptitude for sport are very often asked to participate in a range of team sports or across a range of age groups. This can put them at risk of stress and burnout. Stress and burnout can be prevented and dropout rates reduced by measures such as:

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



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

### 5.4 BULLYING

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

Protection

### **5.4.1** What is Bullying?

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

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

### 5.4.2 Types of Bullying

Bullying can occur:

- child to child includes physical aggression, verbal bullying, intimidation, damage to property and isolation
- adult to child includes the use of repeated gestures or expressions of a threatening or intimidatory nature, or any comment intended to degrade the child
- child to adult includes the use of repeated gestures or expressions of a threatening or intimidatory nature by an individual child or a group of children

### 5.4.3 Combating Bullying

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

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



### 5. 5 CHILD ABUSE

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

Protection

### 5. 6 CHILD PROTECTION IN SPORT

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

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

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

The Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998 provides immunity from civil liability to persons who report child abuse "reasonably and in good faith" to the Health Board or the Gardai (See 5.13.1). This means that, even if a reported suspicion of child abuse proves unfounded, a plaintiff who took an action would have to prove that the reporter had not acted reasonably and in good faith in making the report. This Act came into operation on 23rd January, 1999. The main provisions of the Act are:

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

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

'duty of every other person, who knows or believes,

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



### 5.8 SOURCES OF CHILD ABUSE

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

Protection

### 5.9 CATEGORIES OF ABUSE

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

### **1. Child Neglect**

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

Neglect generally becomes apparent in different ways over a period of time rather than at one specific point. For instance, a child who suffers a series of minor injuries is not having his or her needs for supervision and safety met. The threshold of significant harm is reached when the child's needs are neglected to the extent that his or her well being and/or development is severely affected.

### 2. Emotional Abuse

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

Examples of emotional abuse include:

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

Children show signs of emotional abuse by their behaviour for example, excessive clinginess to or avoidance of the parent/guardian, their emotional state (low self- esteem, unhappiness), or their development (non-organic failure to thrive). The threshold of significant harm is reached when abusive interactions dominate and become typical of the relationship between the child and the parent/guardian.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone



#### 3. Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is any form of non-accidental injury that causes significant harm to a child, including: (a) Shaking, hitting or throwing;

Protection

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

#### 4. Sexual Abuse

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

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

#### 5.10 SIGNS OF CHILD ABUSE

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Signs of abuse can be physical, behavioural or developmental. A cluster or pattern of signs is the most reliable indicator of abuse. The following indicators should be noted. It is important, however, to realise that all of these indicators can occur in other situations where abuse has not been a factor and that the list is not exhaustive.

#### **Physical Indicators**

Unexplained bruising in soft tissue areas Repeated injury Black eye(s)

Injuries to mouth Torn or bloodstained clothing Burns and scalds Bites Fractures Marks from implements Inconsistent stories, excuses relating to injuries

#### **Behavioural Indicators**

Unexplained changes in behaviour- becoming withdrawn or aggressive Regressive behaviour Difficulty in making friends Distrustful of adults or excessive attachment to adults Sudden drop in performance Change in attendance pattern Inappropriate sexual awareness, behaviour or language Unusual reluctance to remove clothing Reluctance to go home



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

Children in certain situations may be especially vulnerable to abuse. These include children who, for short or long periods, are separated from parents or other family members and depend on other adults for their care and protection. Children with disabilities may also be more at risk as the nature of their disability sometimes limits communication between themselves and others and they may depend more than most children on a variety of adults to meet their needs, for example, for care and transport.

Protection

Those from a racial minority background may also be especially vulnerable. This could be due to our difficulty in recognising that racism is inherent in our society. This impacts on a child's confidence to seek help from those in authority positions, as they may already feel marginalised.

#### 5.12 NEED FOR INTERNAL PROCEDURES IN SPORTS CLUBS

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

#### 5.13 RECOGNISING AND REPORTING OF SUSPECTED OR ACTUAL CHILD ABUSE

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

#### 5.13.1 Grounds for Concern

Consider the possibility of child abuse if there are reasonable grounds for concern. Examples of reasonable grounds are:

- a specific indication from a child that s/he has been abused
- a statement from a person who witnessed abuse
- an illness, injury or behaviour consistent with abuse
- a symptom which may not itself be totally consistent with abuse, but which is supported by corroborative evidence of deliberate harm or negligence
- consistent signs of neglect over a period of time

In some cases of child abuse the alleged perpetrator will also be a child and it is important that behaviour of this nature is not ignored *(Research in 1989 into sexual abuse in Northern Ireland found that 36% of abusers were children themselves)*. Grounds for concern will exist in cases where there is an age difference and/or difference in power, status or intellect between the children involved. However, it is also important to distinguish between normal sexual behaviour and abusive behaviour. Persons unsure about whether or not certain behaviours are abusive and therefore reportable, should contact the duty social worker in the local health board or social services department where they will receive advice.



#### 5.13.2 Reporting Child Abuse

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

- (a) Observe and note dates, times, locations and contexts in which the incident occurred or suspicion was aroused, together with any other relevant information;
- (b) Report the matter as soon as possible to the person designated for reporting abuse (the senior office holder, normally the Chairperson). If the Chairperson has reasonable grounds (See 5.13.1) for believing that the child has been abused or is at risk of abuse, s/he will make a report to the health board/social services who have statutory responsibility to investigate and assess suspected or actual child abuse;

Protection

- (c) In cases of emergency, where a child appears to be at immediate and serious risk and the Chairperson is unable to contact a duty social worker, the police authorities should be contacted.
   Under no circumstances should a child be left in a dangerous situation pending intervention by the Statutory Authorities;
- (d) If the Chairperson is unsure whether reasonable grounds for concern exist or not, s/he should informally consult with the local health board/social services. S/he will be advised whether or not the matter requires a formal report;
- (e) A Chairperson reporting suspected or actual child abuse to the Statutory Authorities should first inform the family of their intention to make such a report, **unless doing so would endanger the child or undermine an investigation;**
- (f) A report should be given by the Chairperson to the Statutory Authorities in person or by phone, and in writing;
- (g) It is best to report child abuse concerns by making personal contact with the relevant personnel in the Statutory Authorities.

#### 5.14 RESPONSE TO A CHILD REPORTING ANY FORM OF ABUSE

The following points should be taken into consideration:

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



#### 5.15 ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST SPORTS LEADERS

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

Protection

- (i) The reporting procedure in respect of the child (See 5.13)
- (ii) The procedure for dealing with the Sports Leader (See 5.15.2)

#### 5.15.1 Special Considerations

The following points should be considered

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

#### 5.15.2 Steps to be taken within the Sports Organisation

Where reasonable grounds for concern exist (See 5.13.1) the following steps should be taken by the club/organisation:

- advice should be sought from the local health board/social services with regard to any action by the club deemed necessary to protect the child/children who may be at risk
- the matter should be reported to the local health board/social services following the standard reporting procedure outlined above
- in the event that the concern is connected to the actions of a Sports Leader in the club, the Sports Leader involved in the concern should be asked to stand aside pending the outcome of any investigation by the Statutory Authorities. When a person is asked to stand aside it should be made clear that it is only a precautionary measure and will not prejudice any later disciplinary proceedings. The person responsible for reporting should also inform the sports governing body that an individual has been asked to stand aside. This is for monitoring purposes and to reduce the risk of the individual coaching/volunteering in another junior club while the investigation continues. National Governing Bodies have a responsibility to consider any possible disciplinary implications of a case but it is important that they should not conduct an investigation to gather evidence that could prejudice the criminal investigation. When the Sports Leader is being privately informed by the Chairperson of a) the fact that an allegation has been made against him/her and b) the nature of the allegation, s/he should be afforded an opportunity to respond. His/her response should be noted and passed on to the health board/social services personnel.

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

#### Co-operating to Safeguard Children (DHSS&PS) advises that

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



#### 5.16 CONFIDENTIALITY

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

Protection

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

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

#### 5.17 DEALING WITH ANONYMOUS COMPLAINTS

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

#### 5.18 RUMOURS

Rumours should not be allowed to hang in the air. Any rumours relating to inappropriate behaviour circulating in sports organisations should be brought to the attention of the Chairperson and checked out without delay. Any ensuing information should be handled confidentially and with sensitivity. If the Chairperson has reasonable grounds for concern that a child has been abused s/he should refer the matter to the Statutory Authorities, using the standard reporting procedure. (See 5.13) If there is any doubt about the requirement to report the substance of a rumour, advice should be sought from the duty social worker in the local health board or social services department.

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

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

#### 5.19 DISCLOSING INFORMATION TO OTHERS (IN NORTHERN IRELAND)

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





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

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

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

The sample policy statement above should be written into the Constitution of the club / organisation (Governing Body)

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

#### Sample Child Protection Policy for a Club

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

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

"As the organisation recognised by the international federation, as being responsible for the administration of our sport, we are responsible for overseeing the adoption and the implementation of the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport, by our members. To maximise compliance with the Code, as set out in Section 2.8 we shall:" (each organisation/governing body should insert the eleven bullet points which are set out in Section 2.8 of the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport).





## **Sample Application Form**

Full Name:					
Maiden Name (if a	applicable):				
Current Address:					
Telephone No:	Date of birth:				
Place of birth:					
National Insurance	e No.				
Previous experience/involvement in this or any other club.					

	)
Yes	No
	Yes Yes

#### **REFEREE:**

Please supply the names of two responsible people whom we can contact and who from personal knowledge are willing to endorse your application. If you have had a previous involvement in a sports club one of these names should be that of an administrator/leader of your last club/place of involvement. **Referees - Name/Addresses/Telephone No./Designation** 

SIGNED:	DATE:	
FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY:		
Date application received:		
Interviewed by: 1.		
2.		
Date of Interview:		
Recommendation:	Approved Not Approved	
Reasons:		



### Confidential

The following person:	
has expressed an interest in working with: (	

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

1.	How long have you known this person?	)
2.	In what capacity?	)
3.	What attributes does this person have that would make them suited to this work?	

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

	Poor	Average	Good	V Good	Excellent
Responsibility					
Maturity					
Self-motivation					
Can motivate others					
Energy					
Trustworthiness					
Reliability					

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

YES (	$\frown$	) NO (	
IES (			

If you have answered YES we will contact you in confidence

Signed:	Date:
Print Name:	
Position:	
Organisation:	



#### Pre-Employment Consultancy Service (PECS) - Northern Ireland only

Organisations which wish to use the Service must make an application to the Child Care Unit in Dundonald House. The Pre-Employment Consultancy Service (PECS) can only be used by those organisations which clearly meet the criterion of having posts involving "substantial access" to children or to adults with a learning disability. It must be stressed that not all organisations, which apply, will be successful.

Organisations should, if possible, "design out" the potential risk by removing the "substantial access" instead of using the Service. This could be done, for example, by changing the supervision or management arrangements for the post. Applications <u>must</u>, therefore, show that this issue has been carefully considered and the reasons given why the "substantial access" cannot be designed-out for posts within the organisation. Advice on "substantial access" and designing out access is given below:

If one wishes to apply to use the Service one must include the following information:

- A description of what the organisation is about
- Details of the organisation itself, that is, structure and constitution, the names and addresses of all office bearers (chairman, treasurer, secretary, committee members)
- Details (including job descriptions) of the posts which involve "substantial access" to children or adults with a learning disability, including the nature of the access, and the reasons why such access cannot be avoided
- Written confirmation that the organisation will conform as far as possible, to the principles contained in "Our Duty to Care"

When the application has been considered, the applicant will be informed of the decision in writing, and, if successful, will be sent guidance on the use of the Service entitled "Making the Right Choice". This guidance covers the principles and operating procedures for the Service along with details of opportunities for training.

#### "Substantial Access"

 There is no precise definition of "substantial access" However, in making a decision, you should ask yourself the following questions in relation to each post. This list is not exhaustive. It is not necessary for all the questions to be answered "yes" for the post to require a check – a positive answer to any one or more of the questions may be sufficient.

#### Does the post involve one-to-one access?

Such contact, especially if it occurs on a regular basis away from the client's home, or separate from other adults or children, is likely to involve substantial access.

#### Is the post supervised or accompanied?

Where no other responsible adult is likely to be present, and the post involves appreciable periods of time with children or people with a learning disability, this suggests that substantial access be involved.

#### Is the situation isolated?

Children or people with a learning disability who are away from home are particularly vulnerable, for example, if they are living in residential care, or on holiday. The further they are from their family home, or the fewer the opportunities for family visits the greater their vulnerability. Most posts in this type of situation will involve substantial access.

#### Is there regular contact?

The more regular the contact which a person has with the same child or person with a learning disability, the greater the opportunity to put them at risk. This is especially so if the contact is unsupervised, or occurs away from other children or people with a learning disability. Intermittent limited contact would not normally be regarded as substantial access.



**2.** To assist you, the following are examples of posts for which checks should/should not normally be requested. It must be stressed that the examples are for illustrative purposes only- you must examine each individual post within your organisation.

#### **Designing out Access**

- 3. Having decided that a post involves "substantial access", you must consider whether such access is unavoidable, or whether the management or supervisory arrangements can be changed to" design out" the access and thus remove the risk.
- 4. Designing out access may not be easy, but you must bear in mind that PECS can never guarantee an applicant's suitability, and the most effective means of safeguarding both your clients and your organisation is to ensure that as few people as possible have substantial access to children or people with a learning disability.
- 5. We recognise, of course, that for many posts, designing out access will not be possible. Many organisations will be involved in activities which simply could not take place without "substantial access", for example, providing residential care, or running holidays schemes for children, or any post involving the provision of personal care. However, we are asking you to look carefully at every post within your organisation, which involves substantial access, and consider whether there are any simple, practical steps, which you could take to eliminate the access. If, having done so, you decide that it is not possible to design out the access, then you may use PECS for the post, provided that you tell us the reasons why a check is necessary.

#### 6. Examples of the types of changes which you may consider are:

#### Posts involving one-to-one access

Is this necessary or could other children or people with a learning disability be involved?

#### Unsupervised or unaccompanied posts

Clearly we do not expect staff to go about in pairs at all times, but can the level of supervision be increased, or can you reorganise activities so that one member of staff is not left alone with your clients? Remember this would also offer protection to staff from false allegations.

#### **Isolated situations**

Where and when does the access take place? Is it an isolated part of the premises? Or away from your premises altogether? Your organisation should have a clear policy on whether contact with clients away from your premises or outside normal working hours is acceptable. The policy should be clearly understood by all staff, all clients and their families or carers.

#### Types of posts for which a particularly careful judgement is required

- Youth organisation leaders
- Posts in community centres, sports clubs etc
- Office bearers in clubs and societies

#### **New Legislation**

The Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults Order will most likely be taken as an 'Order in Council' through Westminster in early 2003.

This legislation will:

- Place the Department's PECS Register on to a statutory basis
- Make it a requirement for childcare organisations to carry out vetting procedures and to report those dismissed for harming children
- Create new procedures to accredit non-childcare and voluntary organisations
- Create a criminal offence of seeking work or working with children while on the Department's Register



#### Permission for a Pre-Employment Consultancy Service check Form – Northern Ireland only

This form is for all staff and volunteers working with Children and should be incorporated into the application form. (Proof of identity should be provided)

Full Name:		
Maiden Name (if a	pplicable):	
Current Address:		
How long have you	I lived at this address?	Years
Previous address(e	s)(if you have lived at current address less	s than 5 years):
Telephone No:		Date of birth:
Place of birth:		National Insurance No.:
check to be carried The purpose of the The Check will tell which might have	e check is to make sure that people are no us whether you have a criminal record, or a bearing on your suitability. Any information	it is our policy to ask for a Services & Public Safety Pre-Employment Consultancy Service. of appointed who might be a risk to vulnerable people. whether the DHSS&PS holds any other information about you ion which we receive will be treated confidentially, and will be at decision is made the information will be destroyed.
the police, or bour conviction, that is, disclosure of a crim <i>Organisation</i> ) cons	nd over. You <b>must</b> include all offences, ever things which happened a long time ago. In ninal record or other information will not d iders that the conviction renders you unsu e of the offence, how long ago it was comm	ave ever been convicted of a criminal offence, or cautioned by n minor matters such as motoring offences, and 'spent' If you leave anything out it may affect your application. The debar you from registration/appointment unless ( <i>Name of</i> uitable. In making this decision the ( <i>Name of Organisation</i> ) will mitted and what age you were at the time and other factors
Have you ever bee	elow to give us this information and return n convicted of a criminal offence or been t t of criminal investigations?	n it with your application the subject of a caution; a Bound Over Order; or are you at
Yes	No	
If so, please state	below the nature and date(s) of the offenc	ce(s)
1		

Please note you are advised that under the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Exceptions) (Amendment) Order (NI) 1987 you should declare all convictions including 'spent' convictions.

I understand that a Pre-Employment Consultancy service check must be carried out before my application for registration/appointment can be confirmed. This has been explained to me and I am aware that spent convictions may be disclosed. I declare that the information I have given is accurate and I consent to the check being made. Please sign the declaration below.

Signed:

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## **Recording Allegations or Suspicions of Abuse Checklist** The following is a checklist of what should be recorded:

•	Name of Child (		
•	Age		
•	Any special factors		
•	Parent's/Guardian's names		
•	Home address and (phone number, if	available)	
•	Is the person making the report expre or passing those of somebody else?		
•	What has prompted these concerns? Include dates and times of any specifi	ic incidents	
•	Any physical signs? Behavioural signs? Indirect signs?		
•	Has the child been spoken to? If so, v	what was said?	
•	Have the parents/guardians been cont	tacted? If so, what has been said?	
•	Has anyone been alleged to be the al	buser? If so, record details	
•	Has anyone else been consulted? If so	o, record details	



#### **References and Source Material**

- The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, HMSO
- Our Duty to Care (DHSS) 2000, Child Care NI
- Pastoral Care in Schools Child Protection, Department of Education, Northern Ireland 1999
- Child Protection in Sport Fact Sheet, Sports Council for Northern Ireland
- Protecting Children from Abuse, the National Coaching Foundation, England
- Code of Ethics and Conduct for Sports Coaches, National Coaching Foundation, England
- "Getting it Right" Developing your Child Protection policies procedures, Northern Ireland Volunteer Development Agency 1999
- Co-Operating to Protect Children, Vol. 6 Guidelines & Regulations Children (NI) Order 1995, HMSO
- "Children First"- National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children, Stationery Office Dublin 1999
- Report of the Independent Inquiry into Matters Relating to Child Sexual Abuse in Swimming, Stationery Office, Dublin 1998
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989
- Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998, Stationery Office, Dublin 1999
- 'Guidance on the Process for the Assessment and Management of Risk of Sex Offenders against Children' (Northern Ireland Office 2001)
- Safer Organisations Safer Children DHSS&PS 2002
- Sportscheck Child Protection in Sport Unit 2002
- In at the Deep End Child Protection in Sport Unit & the Amateur Swimming Association
- Protecting Our Children A guide for parents (NI Sex Offenders Strategic Management Committee)
- Co-operating to Safeguard Children (DHSS&PS)

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- Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults Order (DHSS&PS)
- SafeSport Away NSPCC & the Amateur Swimming Association



#### **Useful Contacts**

**Irish Sports Council** 21 Fitzwilliam Square Dublin 2 Tel No. 01-2407700, Fax No. 01-2407777

The Sports Council for Northern Ireland

House of Sport Upper Malone Road Belfast BT9 5LA Tel No. 02890-381222

#### **Child Protection in Sport Unit**

NSPCC Jennymount Business Park North Derby Street Belfast BT15 3HN Tel No. 02890-351135 Web Site: www.thecpsu.org.uk NSPCC 24 hour helpline Freephone 0808-8005000

#### **Child Care NI**

216 Belmont Road Belfast BT4 2AT Tel No. 02890-652713

#### **Coaching Northern Ireland**

Queens Physical Education Centre Botanic Gardens Belfast BT9 5EX Tel No. 02890-686940

National Coaching and Training Centre University of Limerick Plassey Limerick Tel No. 061- 202895, Fax No. 061-338374

#### **Pre-Employment Consultancy Service**

Child Care Unit Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety Room D1, Castle Buildings, Belfast BT4 3SQ Tel No. 02890-522559 E-mail: pecs@dhsspsni.gov.uk

The Commissioner An Garda Siochána Garda Headquarters Phoenix Park Dublin 8 Tel No. 01- 6660000

#### **Police Service Northern Ireland**

Child Abuse, Rape and Enquiry Unit can be contacted through the PSNI switchboard 02890-650222 and ask for your local C.A.R.E. Unit.

#### Northern Area Health Board

Swords Business Campus Balheary Rd Swords Co Dublin Tel No. 01-8131800

#### East Coast Area Health Board

Southern Cross House Southern Cross Business Park Boghall Rd Bray Co. Wicklow Tel No. 01-2014200

#### South Western Area Health Board

Oak House Millenium Park Naas Co. Kildare Tel No. 045-880400

#### **Eastern Regional Health Authority**

Mill Lane Palmerstown Dublin 20 Tel No. 01-6201600 (ask for principal social worker in your area)

#### Mid-Western Health Board

Regional Director Child Care and Family Support Services 87 O'Connell Street Limerick Tel No. 061-483592, Fax No. 061-317407

#### South-Eastern Health Board

Regional Director Child Care and Family Support Services Dublin Road Lacken Kilkenny Tel No. 056-20400, Fax No. 056-52813

#### North-Western Health Board

Manorhamilton Co Leitrim Tel No. 072-20400, Fax No. 072-20431

## code or ethics s Good Practice for Children's Sport

Midland Health Board Regional Director Child Care and Family Support Services Primary Care Unit, General Hospital Tullamore, Co Offaly Tel No.0506-46283, Fax No. 0506-46266

#### Western Health Board

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