



**CODE OF ETHICS
AND GOOD CONDUCT**

FOR

CHILDREN'S SPORT

IN

IRELAND

APRIL 2002

IRISH SQUASH

Code of Ethics and Good Conduct for Children's Sport

Policy Statement

Guiding Principles

Core Values

POLICIES & GUIDELINES

- **Guidelines for Young Players** 1
- **Guidelines for Parents** 2
- **Parents Declaration Form** 3
- **IS Policy: Coaches, Selectors, and Team Managers.** 4
- **Guidelines for Coaches** 5-6
- **IS Recruitment Policy for Volunteers** 7
- **Assessment Forms:**
 - **Coaches/Selectors/Team Managers** 8
 - **General Volunteers** 9
- **Standard Reference Request Letter** 10
- **Travelling with Children & Residential events with Children.**
 - **General Guidelines** 11
 - **Declaration form.** 12
- **Guidelines on use of photographic and filming equipment.** 13
- **Responding to disclosure, suspicions & allegations** 14

- **Reporting Procedures.** 15-16
- **Dealing with Allegations/Confidentiality/Anonymous Complaints and Rumours.** 17-18

Policy Statement

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

CODE OF CONDUCT

The guidance given in this code of conduct is based on the principles set out in the following publications:

- **“Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children’s Sport”, Irish Sports Council.**
- **“Children First” National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children.**
- **“Our Duty to Care” (DHSS) 2000, Child Care NI.**

The aim of this code is to promote good practice by everyone involved in the sport of squash and to provide a safe, healthy, enjoyable environment for young members.

Core Values in Young People's Sport

Integrity in relationships:

Adults interacting with children in sport should do so with integrity and respect for the child. There is a danger that sporting contexts can be used to exploit or undermine children. All adult actions in sport should be guided by what is best for the child and in the context of quality, open working relationships. Verbal, physical, emotional or sexual abuse of any kind is unacceptable within sport.

Fair Play:

All children's sport should be conducted in an atmosphere of fair play. Ireland has contributed, and is 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 with the right spirit. Fair play is defined as a way of thinking, not just behaving. It incorporates issues concerned with the elimination of opportunities, excessive commercialisation and corruption. (European Sports Charter and Code of Ethics, Council of Europe, 1993).

Quality atmosphere and ethos:

Children's sport should be conducted in a safe, positive and encouraging atmosphere. A Child centred ethos will help to ensure that competition and specialisation are kept in their appropriate place. Too often competitive demands are placed on children too early and results in excessive levels of pressure on them and as a consequence, high levels of dropout from sport.

Equality:

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

Leaders in children's sport should strive to create a positive environment for the children in their care. They have an overall responsibility to take the steps necessary to ensure that positive and healthy experiences are provided.

IS Guidelines for Young Players:

Irish Squash wishes to provide the best possible environment for all young people involved in the sport. Young players deserve to be given enjoyable, safe sporting opportunities, free from abuse of any kind. These players have rights, which must be respected, and responsibilities that they must accept.

Young players are entitled:

- To be treated with dignity and respect
- To be safe and to feel safe
- To get help against bullies
- To say No
- To be listened to
- To be believed.
- To protect their own bodies
- To refuse inappropriate touches

Young players should always:

- Treat all coaches, managers, selectors, club and tournament organisers and officials with respect.
- Abide by the rules set down by team managers when travelling to away events.
- Behave in a manner that avoids bringing the game of squash into disrepute.

Young players should never:

- Use unfair or bullying tactics to gain advantage on or off the court.
- Use bullying tactics to isolate another player.
- Pass on gossip about another player or adult.
- Make false allegations against other players or adults.

IS Policy Guidelines for Parents:

Irish Squash is committed to providing a safe and fair environment for all juvenile players. Our first priority is the welfare of young players and we are committed to providing an environment, that will allow participants to perform to their best ability, free from bullying and intimidation. Irish Squash also has a duty of care for volunteers working with juveniles on behalf of the organisation. Irish Squash asks parents to:-

- Be a role model for your child and maintain the highest standards of conduct when interacting with children, other parents, with officials and organisers.
- Encourage your child to play by the rules.
- Always behave responsibly on the sidelines and do not seek to unfairly affect the game on court or the player on court.
- Take care not to expose any junior player, intentionally or unintentionally, to embarrassment or disparagement by the use of flippant or sarcastic remarks.
- Always recognise the value and importance of the volunteers who provide sporting/recreational opportunities for your child.
- Respect referees, coaches, organisers and other players.
- Do not publicly question the judgement or honesty of referees, coaches or organisers.
- Teach your child that honest endeavour is as important as winning and do all you can to encourage good sportsmanship.
- Set a good example by applauding good play on both sides
- Encourage mutual respect for team-mates and opponents

Parents should support all efforts to remove abusive and bullying behaviour in all its forms:

Child to Child – includes physical aggression, verbal bullying, intimidation, or 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.

Adult to Adult – includes verbal aggression towards other adults in order to achieve a beneficial outcome for own self or own child.

Child to Adult - includes repeated gestures or expressions of a threatening or intimidatory nature by an individual child or a group of children.

Parents' Declaration Form:

1. I will respect the rules and procedures set down in the Code of Conduct for Children in Sport.
2. I will respect my child's team-mates, coaches, other parents as well as players, parents and coaches from opposing teams.
3. I will give encouragement and applaud only positive accomplishments whether from my child, his/her team-mates, their opponents or the officials.
4. I will respect my child's coach and support his/her efforts
5. I will respect the officials and their authority during games
6. I will never demonstrate threatening or abusive behaviour or use foul language.
7. I will encourage my child to treat other participants, coaches, selectors, and managers with respect.

Name: _____ Signature_____

Date_____

IS Policy: Coaches/Selectors/Team Managers:

Irish Squash recognises the key role coaches, selectors and team managers play in the lives of children in sport. Irish Squash has adopted the principles in the Irish Sports Council's "Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport".

All Coaches/Selectors/Team Managers should have as their first priority the children's safety and enjoyment of the sport and should adhere to the guidelines and regulations set out in Code of Conduct developed by Irish Squash.

Coaches must respect the rights, dignity and worth of every child and must treat everyone equally, regardless of sex, ethnic origin, religion or ability.

Irish Squash will take all reasonable steps to ensure that people working with young people in squash are suitable and appropriately qualified. Assessment procedures are therefore necessary and these procedures apply to all persons, paid or unpaid, with substantial access to young people.

There must be a "sign-up" procedure, whereby the appointed/reappointed coach/selector/team manager, agrees to abide by the "Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport" and to the policies and code of Irish Squash.

When travel/overnight travel is involved, the Coach/Selector/Manager/Volunteer travelling with children must sign a separate agreement. Parents will also be asked to sign permission forms in these instances.

All adults taking responsibility for children in sport should undergo a recruitment process. Before recruitment, terms of reference should be drawn up and these should clearly state:

- a. The responsibilities of the role,
- b. The level of experience/qualifications required.
- c. Irish Squash's commitment to the ISC Code.

Potential coaches/selectors/team managers must complete an Application/Assessment form. – See samples attached.

References will be needed and will be followed up.

Potential appointees should be given a copy of:

- a) Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport;
- b) The Irish Squash Code of Conduct; and
- c) Be made aware of the following publications, which will be available in the Irish Squash office.
 - Children First – Irish Gov. Publication
 - Duty to Care – N.I Gov Publication

Guidelines for Coaches:

A coach of juvenile teams has a duty of care, which is more onerous than that of a coach to an adult team.

A Coach must act as a role model and promote the positive aspects of sport and of squash and maintain the highest standards of personal conduct.

The use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco must be actively discouraged as being incompatible with a healthy approach to sporting activity.

Remember your behaviour to players, other officials, and opponents will have an effect on the players in your care.

Be generous with praise and never ridicule or shout at players for making mistakes or for losing a game. All young players are entitled to respect.

Be careful to avoid the "star system". Each child deserves equal time and attention.

Care must be taken not to expose a child intentionally or unintentionally to embarrassment or disparagement by use of sarcastic or flippant remarks about the child or his/her family.

Physical punishment or physical force must never be used. Never punish a mistake - by verbal means, physical means, or exclusion.

Insist that players in your care respect the rules of the game. Insist on fair play and ensure that your players know that you will not tolerate cheating or bullying behaviour.

Remember that young players play for fun and enjoyment and that skill and playing for fun have priority over highly structured competition.

Never make winning the only objective.

Encourage the development of respect for opponents, officials, selectors and other coaches and avoid criticism of fellow coaches.

It is important to realise that certain situations or friendly actions could be misinterpreted by the participant or by outsiders.

Squash coaches are responsible for setting and monitoring the boundaries between a **working** relationship and **friendship** with players. It is inadvisable for coaches to involve young players in their personal life i.e. visits to coaches home or overnight stays.

When approached to take on a new player, ensure that any previous coach-student relationship has been ended by the student/others in a professional manner.

When young players are invited into adult groups/squads, it is advisable to get agreement from a parent/carer. Boundaries of behaviour in adult groups are normally different from the boundaries that apply to junior groups/squads.

Squash coaches who become aware of a conflict between their obligation to their players and their obligation to their governing body must make explicit the nature of the conflict and the loyalties and responsibilities involved, to all parties concerned.

Squash coaches should communicate and co-operate with medical and ancillary practitioners in the diagnosis, treatment and management of their players' medical and psychological problems.

Set realistic goals for the team and for the individual players and do not push young players. Create a safe and enjoyable environment.

Do not criticise other officials, coaches, and selectors. You are the role model for the children in your care.

Avoid giving advice of a personal or medical nature – if you are not qualified to do so. Any information of a personal or medical nature must be kept strictly confidential unless the welfare of the child requires the passing on of this information.

It is advisable to:

Record attendance at training.

Keep a brief record of injury(s) and action taken.

If behavioural problems arise and a young player has to be disciplined, keep a brief record of problem/action/outcomes.

The nature of the relationship between coach and player can often mean that a coach will learn confidential information about a player or player's family. This information must be regarded as confidential and except where abuse is suspected, must not be divulged to a third party without the express permission of the player/family.

Coaches must be particularly careful about their use of alcohol, before coaching, during events, on trips with young players.

Coaches should familiarise themselves with the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport and with the Irish Squash Code of Conduct and follow the procedures if they suspect or receive complaints of abuse of any sort.

Irish Squash Policy: Recruitment/Appointment: Volunteers/Sports Leaders.

(Sports Leaders : all adults involved in children's sport)

IS will take reasonable steps to ensure that suitable people work with young players. Procedures will be adopted for all persons with substantial access to young people.

There will be a "sign-up" procedure, whereby the newly recruited volunteer, agrees to abide by the "Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport" and to Irish Squash Policies and Code of Conduct.

All adults taking responsibility for children in sport should undergo a recruitment process and adults taking on a temporary coaching role should be aware of the IS guidelines for coaches as set out on the previous page.

- Potential sports leaders must complete an Application/Assessment form. – See samples attached.
- Checks with referees will be followed up.
- It is recommended that terms of reference, clearly outlining the tasks to be performed and the skills required, be drawn up before recruiting and appointing a sports leader.
- A decision to appoint a Sports Leader is the responsibility of the Club or Organisation and not of any one individual within it.
- The club management/organisations executive should ratify all recommendations for appointment.
- Every effort will be made to manage and support appointed Sport Leaders.



Irish Squash:

Assessment/Application Form: Coaches/Selectors/Team Managers:

Confidential:

Position applied for:
Name
Any surname previously known by
Date of Birth
Present address
Current occupation:
Name of organisation
Previous experience of working with young children in a voluntary or Professional capacity.
Sporting/Squash Qualifications:
Reason for Applying:
Have you ever been asked to leave a sporting organisation: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If you have answered yes, we will contact you in confidence.
Name and address of two people who know you (but who are not related to you) and who would have experience of you working with children, whom we could contact and who would provide you with a reference. Name and Address of Referee 1: _____ _____ Name and Address of Referee 2: _____ _____
I agree to abide by the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport and the Irish Squash Code of Conduct. Signed _____ Date: _____



Assessment/Application form for volunteers, newly recruited to work with Children:

Role:	Club: County/Branch: OR NGB Group:
-------	--

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone No(s): _____

Previous Experience/or involvement in Sport: give details:

Reason for applying:

Have you ever been asked to leave a sporting organisation in the past:
Yes: No:
If you have answered yes, we will contact you in confidence.

Do you agree to abide by the guidelines contained in the Code of Ethics & Good Practice for Children's' Sport in Ireland and by the Irish Squash Code of Conduct. Yes____
No_____

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

1.Name_____ Address_____

2.Name_____ address_____

SIGNED_____ DATE_____



Irish Squash

Sample Letter to person giving reference:

Name: _____

Position: _____

Dear

The above has expressed an interest in becoming a coach/volunteer and has given your name as a referee. This post involves substantial access to children. As an organisation committed to the welfare and happiness of children, we are anxious to know if you are satisfied that this person is suitable to work with children in a sporting capacity.

How long have you known this person?

In what capacity?

Are you satisfied that: (name of applicant _____) is suitable to work with children in a sporting capacity? Yes No

SIGNED: _____ DATE: _____



Irish Squash:

Assessment/Application Form: Coaches/Selectors/Team Managers:

Confidential:

Position applied for:
Name
Any surname previously known by
Date of Birth
Present address
Current occupation:
Name of organisation
Previous experience of working with young children in a voluntary or Professional capacity.
Sporting/Squash Qualifications:
Reason for Applying:
Have you ever been asked to leave a sporting organisation: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If you have answered yes, we will contact you in confidence.
Name and address of two people who know you (but who are not related to you) and who would have experience of you working with children, whom we could contact and who would provide you with a reference. Name and Address of Referee 1: _____ _____
Name and Address of Referee 2: _____ _____
I agree to abide by the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport and the Irish Squash Code of Conduct. Signed _____ Date: _____

Irish Squash

Assessment/Application form for volunteers, newly recruited to work with Children:

Role:	Club: County/Branch: OR NGB Group:
-------	--

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone No(s): _____

Previous Experience/or involvement in Sport: give details:

Reason for applying:

Have you ever been asked to leave a sporting organisation in the past:
Yes: No:

If you have answered yes, we will contact you in confidence.

Do you agree to abide by the guidelines contained in the Code of Ethics & Good Practice for Children's' Sport in Ireland and by the Irish Squash Code of Conduct. Yes____
No_____

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

1.Name_____ Address_____

2.Name_____ Address_____

SIGNED_____ DATE_____

Irish Squash

Sample Letter to person giving reference:

Name: _____

Position: _____

Dear

The above has expressed an interest in becoming a coach/volunteer and has given your name as a referee. This post involves substantial access to children. As an organisation committed to the welfare and happiness of children, we are anxious to know if you are satisfied that this person is suitable to work with children in a sporting capacity.

How long have you known this person?

In what capacity?

Are you satisfied that: (name of applicant _____) is suitable to work with children in a sporting capacity? Yes No

SIGNED: _____ DATE: _____

Irish Squash Policy – Travelling with children

Guidelines/regulations for Coaches/selectors/managers/authorised volunteers.

Irish Squash recognises the extra responsibilities taken on by coaches/selectors/managers and authorised volunteers when they travel with children to events. This responsibility is even more onerous when overnight stays are involved.

Cars used to transport players/teams: Those who use their own vehicles to transport players must ensure that they have adequate insurance cover and be careful not to carry more than the permitted number of passengers.

- Avoid being alone with one player (e.g. travelling to a venue or consulting/ advising in closed off room – If necessary leave the door open and be in earshot of others.
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact outside the normal coaching, technical area.
- Remember casual comment can be open to misconstruction.

At residential events the following rules should apply:

- Adults should not enter a player's room without first knocking
- All group socialisation should take place in communal areas (i.e. no boys in girls' rooms and vice versa).
- Alcoholic drink, smoking or other illegal substances are forbidden to players.
- The behaviour of the group should at all times be such that the good name of Irish Squash is upheld
- There must be at least one authorised adult of each gender with a mixed party.
- Lights out times should be enforced.
- Young players should be under reasonable supervision at all times and should never be allowed to leave the accommodation or sports hall without prior permission.

Injury(s): Make a brief record of injury and action taken.

Behavioural Problems: Make a brief record of the problem/action/outcome.

Submit report on return home.

Coaches/Selectors/Managers/ Authorised Volunteer asked to travel with the group in a supervisory capacity must sign up for each trip – parents of children on the team should not be asked to accept group responsibilities.

Parents: Must sign an agreement that their children will abide by the rules laid down.

Young Players: Must sign a behaviour agreement.

**Irish Squash
Travelling with Underage Players:**

EVENT: _____

VENUE: _____

DATES: _____

COACHES/SELECTORS/ MANAGERS

I hereby agree to abide by the guidelines and regulations contained in the Irish Squash Code of Conduct.

Name: _____ Role _____ Date _____

Name: _____ Role _____ Date _____

Name: _____ Role _____ Date _____

AUTHORISED VOLUNTEER

I hereby agree to abide by the guidelines and regulations contained in the Irish Squash Union Code of Conduct.

Name: _____

Date: _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN OF TRAVELLING CHILD

I have read and accept the conditions and rules set down by Irish Squash for children travelling to matches and events.

Parents/Carers Name: _____ Date: _____

YOUNG PLAYER TRAVELLING

I have read and accept the conditions and rules set down by Irish Squash for children travelling to matches and events and I agree to abide by those rules.

Name _____ Date _____

IRISH SQUASH

Guidelines on use of Photographic and Filming Equipment at Competitions & Practice Sessions

Amateur photographers/film/video operators wishing to record an event or practice session should seek accreditation with the event organiser or leader of the practice session.

During competitions or practice sessions, children must not be photographed or filmed without their permission and the express permission of one of their parents or person acting for the parent. A record should be kept of any permission granted.

Professional photographers/film/video operators wishing to record an event or practice session should seek accreditation with the event organiser by producing their professional identification for the details to be recorded.

A record should be kept of accreditations.

This information should be published prominently in event programmes and should be announced over the public address system prior to the start of an event.

Recommended wording:

“In line with the recommendation in the Irish Squash Code of Conduct, the promoters of this event request that any person wishing to engage in any video, zoom or close range photography should register their details with the organisers. On no account should children be photographed or filmed without their permission and the permission of their parents”.

Videoing as a coaching aid: Video equipment can be used as a legitimate coaching aid. However, permission should first be obtained from the player and the player’s parent/carer.

Anyone concerned about any photography-taking place at events or training sessions can contact the organisers and ask them to deal with the matter.

Responding to Disclosure, Suspicions & Allegations

Irish Squash accepts that organisations, which include children as members, are vulnerable to the occurrence of child abuse and therefore there is a need for policies and procedures to deal with this issue. The safety of young people is everyone's responsibility.

False allegations of abuse can occur. However, if a young person says or indicates that he/she is being abused, or information is obtained which gives concern that a young person is being abused, you should react immediately.

The Protection 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 – ISC. Code). The act also covers the offence of "**false reporting**". 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 Síochána;
2. The provision of significant protections for employees who report child abuse. These protections cover all employees and all forms of discrimination up to and including, dismissal;
3. The creation of a new offence of false reporting of child abuse where a person makes a report of child abuse to the appropriate authorities "knowing that statement to be false". This is a new criminal offence designed to protect innocent persons from malicious reports.

This Law does not exist in Northern Ireland where any person wrongly accused can seek recourse under the laws of slander, libel or malicious prosecution

Each Junior Squash club affiliated to Irish Squash should have clear procedures for responding to reports or concerns relating to the welfare and safety of children. All involved adults, children and parents/guardians should be aware of how to report, and to whom concerns should be reported, within the club/organisation. Copies of the Statutory Authority guidelines should be available in each club and copies are held at the Irish Squash office.. Everyone involved in child protection matters should be aware of their responsibility to work in co-operation with the statutory child protection authorities.

The term "**Sports Leader**" means all adults, in a paid or voluntary capacity e.g. club helpers, tournament officials, coaches, team managers, camp managers.

REPORTING OF SUSPECTED OR ACTUAL CHILD ABUSE

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:

RESPONSE TO A CHILD REPORTING ANY FORM OF ABUSE

The following Actions should be taken:

- React calmly.
- Listen compassionately and carefully –keep the questions to an absolute minimum, facilitating the child to tell about the problem.
- Take what the child is saying seriously.
- Remember the child has decided to tell about something very important and has taken a risk to do so.
- Reassure the child.
- If the nature of what the child is saying is unclear, use open, non-specific questions such as "Can you explain to me what you mean by that";
- The child should be given some indication of what happens next - 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.
- Carefully record the details.

The following actions should be avoided:

- Do not make promises of confidentiality – it may not be possible to keep that promise.
- Do not make a judgement or make negative comments about the alleged abuser
- Do not speculate or make assumptions
- Do not interview the child – do not probe for more information than is offered
- Do not approach the alleged abuser
- Do not allow your shock or distaste to show.

Reporting Child Abuse

It is not the responsibility of anyone working under the auspices of Irish Squash, in a paid or voluntary capacity, or those working in affiliated organisations, to take responsibility or decide whether or not child abuse is taking place.

However, there is a responsibility to protect children in order that appropriate agencies can then make enquiries and take any necessary action to protect the young person.

Actions to Take:

- Observe and note dates, times, locations and contexts in which the incident occurred or suspicion was aroused, together with any other relevant information;
- 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 of ISC code) 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.
- In cases of emergency, where a child appears to be at immediate and serious risk and the designated person is unable to contact a duty social worker, the police authorities should be contacted. **Under no circumstances should a child be left in a dangerous situation pending intervention by the Statutory Authorities.** Make a record of the report.
- If the designated person 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;
- A designated person reporting suspected or actual child abuse to the Statutory Authorities should first inform the family of their intention to make such a report, **unless doing so would endanger the child or undermine an investigation;**
- A report should be given by the designated person to the Statutory Authorities in person or by phone, and in writing;
- It is best to report child abuse concerns by making personal contact with the relevant personnel in the Statutory Authorities.

ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST SPORTS LEADERS

Each club/group affiliated to Irish Squash 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:

- The reporting procedure as outlined in “Reporting Child Abuse”.
- The procedure for dealing with the Sports Leader (below)

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 that 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

Steps to be taken within the Sports Organisation

Where reasonable grounds for concern exist 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. *It is advisable that an appointed committee member other than the Chairperson, who takes the responsibility for reporting, undertakes this task.*

The Sports Leader should be informed, in private,

- That an allegation has been made against him/her,
- 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.

Confidentiality.

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned.

Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only.

Information should be stored in a secure place, with limited access to designated people.

The requirements of the Data Protection laws should be adhered to.

Breach of confidentiality is a serious manner.

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. The information should be checked out and handled in a confidential manner.

Rumours

Rumours should not be allowed to hang in the air. Any rumours relating to inappropriate behaviour should be brought to the attention of the Chairperson and checked out without delay.