



**IRISH SQUASH**

# **SAFEGUARDING POLICY FOR CHILDREN'S SQUASH**

## **December 2017**

Original: 2002  
Revised: November 2004  
Revised: February 2010  
Revised: June 2010  
Review: December 2017

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## **POLICY STATEMENT**

Irish Squash is fully committed to safeguarding the wellbeing 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 Irish Squash 'Safeguarding Policy in Children's Squash'.

## LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY BASIS FOR THIS CODE

The guidance given in our Safeguarding Policy in Children’s Squash is based on the principles set out in the following publications:

- Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children’s Sport, Sport Ireland and Sport NI.
- Children First Act 2015.
- National Vetting Bureau Act 2012 & 2016
- Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People (2016) DHSSPS.
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Children (NI) Order 1995

### Useful Links

- Tusla – [www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie)
- Safe Sport APP (Sport Ireland) – Search for the app on the Play Store
- Child Protection in Sport – [www.thecpus.org.uk](http://www.thecpus.org.uk)

The aim of this code is to promote good practice by everyone involved in the sport of squash and to provide a safe, healthy and enjoyable environment for young members. Additional information is available in the **“Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children’s Sport”** issued by the **Sport Ireland and Sport NI**.

Ireland is a signatory to the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child**, which acknowledges the right of the child to protection from all harm.

Article 31 of the UN Convention on Rights of the Child recognises the “right of the child to engage in play and to have the chance to join in a wide range of activities”. In order to promote this charter and in response to consultation with young people the Office of the Minister for Children (ROI) includes in its strategy the objective that **“children will have access to play, sport and recreation and cultural activities to enrich their experience of childhood”**.

The Office of the Minister for Children appointed an Ombudsman for Children in 2004, while Northern Ireland appointed the Commissioner for Children and Young People in 2003. This Code is intended to provide guidelines for those working with young people in Squash. It is not a definite legal interpretation of the legislation. While it is not a legal document, failure to comply may have legal implications or consequences.

### Glossary of Terms

**Children-** The terms “children and young people” and “children” will be used interchangeably in the text to refer to those under 18 years of age. The law in both Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland ensure protection for children under 18.

**Harm-** harm means in relation to a child–

- (a) assault, ill-treatment or neglect of the child in a manner that seriously affects, or is likely to seriously affect the child's health, development or welfare, or,
- (b) sexual abuse of the child.’

This may result from sexual abuse, exploitation, physical abuse or emotional abuse or neglect, harm from bad practice or undue pressure that effects the child/young person’s health and development.

**Designated Liaison Person** - is used as a generic all-Ireland term to cover Safeguarding officer, welfare officer, child protection officer, children’s officer etc, but is the person who will liaise with the statutory agencies in relation to a child protection concern. Irish Squash will have one person in this position at different levels.

**Mandated Person** - Person employed in any of the following capacities as a safeguarding officer, child protection officer or other person (howsoever described) who is employed for the purpose of performing the

child welfare and protection function of religious, sporting, recreational, cultural, educational and other bodies and organisations offering services to children.

## **PRINCIPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE'S SPORT**

### **BACKGROUND**

*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 wellbeing of our future adult population. The organisation of squash for children should be guided by a set of core values that provide the foundation for all practice:*

#### **PRINCIPLE 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.

#### **PRINCIPLE 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.

#### **PRINCIPLE 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 children are treated with integrity and respect, and the self-esteem of young people 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. Physical, emotional or sexual abuse and neglect of any kind or threat of such abuse is totally unacceptable within sport, as in society in general.

#### **PRINCIPLE 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.

#### **PRINCIPLE 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 set for sports performance. Standards of excellence should extend to personal conduct.

#### **PRINCIPLE 6: COMPETITION**

Competition is an essential element of sport and should be encouraged in an age appropriate manner. 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. As adults we need to strike a balance between a young person's desire to win and a young person's right to participate, irrespective of ability. Remember that success is not the same as winning and failure is not the same as losing.

#### **PRINCIPLE 7: EQUALITY**

All children should be valued and treated in an equitable and fair manner regardless of ability, age, gender, 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. Sports Leaders should be aware of and seek to gain competence in addressing the needs of young people with disabilities or any other additional needs.

Irish Squash is committed to providing a safe and fair environment for all young players and our first priority is their welfare. We are committed to providing an environment that will allow participants to perform to their best ability, free from bullying and intimidation *and supported to achieve their full potential*. Irish Squash also has a duty of care for volunteers working with young players on behalf of the organisation and therefore we ask that everybody involved adhere to the guidance that follows.

## ADULT CHILD RELATIONSHIPS

**Adult-child relationships in Squash 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 physical, emotional or sexual abuse and neglect 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 this CODE OF ETHICS AND GOOD PRACTICE FOR CHILDREN'S SQUASH that is agreed and adhered to by all members of Squash Clubs and Irish Squash
- Respectful, but not unquestioning of authority
- Non- exploitive adults must not abuse their position of trust i.e. not have a sexual relationship with an under 18-year-old they are responsible for

- Mindful of the fact that children with disabilities may be more vulnerable

# GUIDELINES FOR YOUNG PLAYERS

## **Children and young people involved in squash are entitled to:**

- be listened to
- be believed
- be safe and to feel 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 at a level at which they feel comfortable and the desire to win as a positive and healthy outcome for 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
- approach the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) with any questions or concerns they may have

## **Young players should undertake to:**

- Treat Sports Leaders (Coaches, Managers, Selectors, Administrators and other helpers) with respect
- 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
- 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
- exercise self-control and tolerance for others, even if others do not
- 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
- have fun and enjoy the sport and help others also enjoy squash

## **Young players should not:**

- cheat to gain an advantage
- use violence, using 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 or use bullying tactics to isolate another player
- use unfair or bullying tactics to gain advantage
- harm team mates, opponents or their property
- tell lies about adults or other children
- spread rumours
- keep secrets about any person who may have caused them harm

# 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 have a duty to ensure that the context in which their child is participating is appropriate.

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 neglect, emotional, 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 affect 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 Squash* has been adopted and implemented 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 parents/guardians 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 side-line
- focus on their child's efforts rather than performance
- Only challenge officials or coaches via club official complaints process- never in public and try to be as constructive in your criticism;
- 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 or assist in the running of the club
- informed of the training and/or competitive programmes and be satisfied with the general environment that is created for their children
- 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

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, including forcing a child to participate when ill
- take safety for granted
- treat the club as a child-minding service

**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 See Irish Squash Anti - bullying guidelines – Appendix 1

Sports Clubs

**See Squash Anti-Bullying guidelines – Appendix 1**

# IRISH SQUASH CODE OF ETHICS FORM FOR PARENTS

Irish Squash recognises the significance of parental behaviour and how it can influence young players. Parents/Guardians have the primary responsibility for the safety, care and wellbeing of their children. Parents/guardians should promote participation in squash in a positive way that is enjoyable for their child. Parents/guardians are expected, along with all officials involved in the game, to lead by example by emphasising fair play, respect, equality, safety and no discrimination.

Irish Squash requests that parents explicitly agree to the following:

## **Parents of young members are required to:**

- Be a role model for their child and maintain the highest standards of conduct when interacting with children, other parents, leaders, officials and organisers.
- Always behave responsibly and not seek to unfairly affect other players or the game on court.
- Never intentionally expose any young participant 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 their child. In particular parents are required to avoid publicly questioning the judgement or honesty of referees, coaches or organisers.
- Encourage their child to play by the rules and do all they can to encourage good sportsmanship.
- Ensure that their child is equipped with the appropriate attire, racket and protective eye wear when playing squash
- Not sit beside the referee during their individual child's match and should not criticise, abuse or ridicule decisions made by the referee
- Set a good example by applauding good play on both sides. Encourage mutual respect for team-mates and opponents.
- Support all efforts to remove abusive behaviour and bullying behaviour in all its forms (*Anti-bullying Appendix 1*).
- Parents have a duty to ensure that their children punctually attend tournament matches/coaching sessions and that they are picked up at the appointed time.
- Parents should check with young people about transport plans and be happy with the transport arrangements (see transport guidelines).
- Provide the coach and/or appropriate official with any relevant medical information about their child and also provide contact details and be reasonably available in the event of an emergency

**Parents/Guardians are required to sign the Parental Code of Ethics (Appendix 2) when enrolling their child.**

# IRISH SQUASH POLICY FOR LEADERS (E.G COACHES, SELECTORS AND TEAM MANAGERS)

## GUIDELINES FOR SPORTS LEADERS

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 Sport Ireland and Sport NI's "Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport".

All Leaders (e.g. 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 the 'Irish Squash Code of Ethics Form for Coaches/Leaders' (Appendix 3).

Leaders 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 Leader agrees to abide by the Irish Sports Council's "Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport" and by the "Safeguarding Policy for Children's Squash" of Irish Squash.

When travel/overnight travel is involved, the Leaders 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 Irish Sports Council Code of ethics and good practice for children's sport
- d. Safe recruitment procedures including vetting via NVB or AccessNI.

Potential Leaders must complete an Application/Assessment form. – See appendix 5.

References will be needed and will be followed up.

Potential appointees should be provided with access to Sport Ireland's [safeguarding app](#) and Irish Squash's "Safeguarding Policy for Children's Squash."

Leaders should also:

Attend a safeguarding workshop and ensure their knowledge remains up to date

Sign Irish Squash's Code of Ethics

Agree to be vetted via National Vetting Bureau or AccessNI

A leader of a junior team has a duty of care, which is more onerous than that of a coach to an adult team. A leader must act as a role model and promote the positive aspects of sport and of squash and maintain the highest standards of personal conduct.

#### **IN ORDER TO ACT AS A ROLE MODEL AND TO PROMOTE THEIR SAFETY AND THE SAFETY OF YOUNG PEOPLE SQUASH LEADERS SHOULD:**

- Be positive, praise and encourage effort as well as results
- Plan and prepare appropriately
- Put the welfare of young people first, strike a balance between this and winning
- Encourage fair play and treat participants equally
- Have the relevant knowledge and experience to work with young people
- Understand developmental needs of young people
- Be qualified and up-to-date with knowledge and skill of sport for young people
- Involve parents where possible and inform parents when problems arise
- Keep a record of attendance at training
- Keep a brief record of injury(s) and action taken
- Keep a brief record of problem/ action / outcomes, if behavioural problems arise

#### **WHERE POSSIBLE, AND FOR THEIR OWN SAFETY, SQUASH LEADERS SHOULD AVOID:**

- spending excessive amounts of time with children away from others
- taking sessions alone
- taking children on journeys alone in their car

#### **SQUASH LEADERS SHOULD NOT:**

- use any form of corporal punishment or physical force on a child.
- take children to their home.
- exert undue influence over a participant in order to obtain personal benefit or reward.
- abuse their position of trust i.e. coaches/leaders must not develop a sexual relationship with anyone under 18 years of age (This is a crime in ROI)
- 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
- 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
- use alcohol or non-prescribed/recreational drugs before coaching, during events and on trips with young people

#### **PHYSICAL CONTACT.**

Physical contact during sport should always be intended to meet the child's needs – NOT the adult's. Adults should use appropriate contact which is aimed at assisting the development of the skill or activity or for safety

reasons e.g. to prevent or treat an injury. This should be done in an open environment with the permission and understanding of the participant. In general;

- Contact should be determined by the age and development stage of the participant – Don't do something that a child can do for itself.
- Never engage in inappropriate touching such as touching of groin, genital areas, buttocks, breasts or any other part of the body that might cause a child distress or embarrassment.

### **Key points for coaches:**

- Ensure you have consent and emergency contact details for each child that is accessible during your training and matches
- Use attendance registers (sign in sheets)
- Agree drop off / collection arrangements with parents
- Engage positively with parents/carers let them know how they can help and what you expect from parents
- Explain to the children what you plan to cover at each coaching session
- Ensure you have other responsible adults to support you during your sessions
- Keep the sessions fun and engaging
- Treat all children fairly and challenge any bullying behaviour.

# GENERAL GUIDELINES

General guidance is now set out in respect of supervision, transport, overnight and away trips  
Hosting, general safety, mobile phone use and photography

**General Safety Irish Squash and Squash Clubs should ensure that a clear statement of specific and potential risks attached to squash is widely publicised to all members. The following practices should apply in order to promote safety:**

- Activities being undertaken should be suitable for the age, ability and experience of the participants
- Equipment and facilities should meet the highest possible standards and be appropriate to the maturity of the participants
- Eye guards and any other protective equipment deemed necessary should be used
- First Aid should be available for all training sessions and events. There should be a proper First Aid Kit. First Aid information 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 book with a specific incident form for completion by Sports Leaders, with due regard for confidentiality
- Parents / guardians should be notified, by the Sports Leader, of injuries / illness which 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 Irish Squash
- Children should be taught the rules of Squash 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 squash, they have learned and agreed personal safety rules. If Sports Leaders take young players into potentially dangerous situations they should hold the appropriate qualification required by Irish Squash
- Parents/guardians should know, and abide by, the starting and finishing times of sessions and events

## ***Insurance***

- All squash 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, eg 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.

## ***Supervision***

- Make sure there is an adequate adult: child ratio. Leaders should have more than one adult present. The number of adults required will depend on the nature of the activity, the age of the participants and any special needs of the group. As a guide:
  - a ratio of 1:8 for under 12 years of age and
  - A ratio of 1:10 for participants over 12 years of age.
- Leaders of both genders will be required for mixed groups.
- Avoid being alone with one participant; if you need to talk separately do so in an open environment, in view of others.
- Leaders should not normally need to enter the changing rooms unless children are very young or need special assistance and, in this instance, parents could be asked to take responsibility for assisting in the changing room.
- Some form of supervision of changing rooms would be required to ensure that behaviour such as bullying is not taking place. However, this may be done indirectly – someone close to the changing room. If supervision inside a changing room needs to be organised, this should be done in pairs of appropriate gender.
- Clearly state time for start and end of training sessions or competitions - leaders should not be left alone with young people at the end of sessions. If there are late collections leaders should remain in pairs until participants have left.
- Consider asking parents to stay and supervise sessions, (for safety and supervision – be clear about what you are asking them to do – to be another adult pair of eyes to ensure the safety of the children and not for their ‘technical’ expertise).
- When young players are invited into adult groups/squads, it is advisable to get agreement from a parent/carer. The group leader or senior coach should nominate one adult member of the group to take particular responsibility for the underage player. Where necessary two adult members, one of each gender, can be appointed.
- Keep attendance records and record of any incidents / injuries that arise. If a child suffers an injury or accident the parents /guardians should be informed. See sample accident form appendix 7

## ***Registration, Dropouts and Club Transfers***

Loss of club members should be monitored. Any unusual or unexpected dropout or club transfer of children or Sports Leaders should be reviewed by the club DLP and/or the Irish Squash depending on the level of drop out. If any concerns regarding a child or children’s welfare are raised the matter should be handled in accordance with Irish Sports safeguarding procedures.

## ***Discipline in Squash***

Discipline in squash 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.

Children should be helped to become responsible about the decisions and choices they make within squash, 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 squash.

## ***The use of sanctions***

The use of sanctions is an important element in the maintenance of discipline. The age and developmental stage of the child should be taken into consideration when using sanctions. Sanctions should be fair and consistent and in the case of persistent offence, should be progressively applied. They should never be used to retaliate or to make a sports leader feel better. The following Steps are suggested and should always be used in conjunction with the code of conduct for young people.

- 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. The use of green, yellow and red cards is encouraged.
- If a rule is broken for the third time the child should be spoken to, and if necessary, the parent/guardians may be involved
- 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.
- 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 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
- Once sanctions have been imposed, it is important to make the young person feel s/he is a valued member of the group again
- Where relevant some sanctions may need to be recorded and parents informed

## **Filming and Photography Guidance**

The Filming and Photography guidance provides assistance for Irish Squash members on taking and using appropriate images. This guidance is not about preventing parents/guardians and supporters from taking pictures, but rather to ensure that only those who have a right to take photographs do so. This guidance is designed to promote safeguards for any photographic or filming/video activity to minimise the risk of inappropriate taking and use of images.

- **Definitions**
- **Permission to take images**
- **Announcement at events regarding taking and the use of images**
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### **Definitions**

- **Event:** may include competition, training session, social function or any activity organised at any level of Irish Squash.
- **Image:** refers to all photographic and film/video footage.
- **Responsible person:** may include the children's officer, head coach, event manager, event controller or facility manager at an event.
- **Young people:** refers to all people U18; whilst this guidance is designed to minimise risk to U18's this guidance should be used to minimise risks for all athletes of any age.

### **Permission to take images**

Permission is sought by Irish Squash to ensure that young people and parents/guardians are aware of when and how their images may be used. Permission can be obtained through:

- Individual permission where permission is sought for a single or specific event and has not been sought generally through membership/competition entry/other contract means.
- General permission granted through completion of membership/competition entry/other contract where permission is included as part of the form.

For third party photographers, film/videographers or other organisations employed to take images each person must complete the Self-Declaration Form. For any other person wishing to use photographic devices at events they must first register their device with the organiser. Each person registering a device will be required to produce photographic identification as proof of identity.

### **Announcement at events regarding taking and the use of images**

The Tournament Director of a squash event should ensure the following announcement is read out at the start and during an event to ensure everyone is clearly aware of the need to register:

*“All persons wishing to take photographs or film footage at this event must first register their device(s) with the Tournament Director. Please note photographic identification will be required as proof of identity.*

If a company/person has been authorised by completing the Self-Declaration Form the following should be included in the announcement:

*(Person/Company Name) has been authorised to take photographs of individuals in accordance with Irish Squash policy.”*

### **Taking images in certain environments**

Irish Squash members and third party photographers, film/videographers or other organisations shall ensure that images are not taken in such environments considered inappropriate irrespective of any permission sought. In certain cases, it may be an offence to take such images.

Taking images using any type of equipment is banned in an area where people are changing or would normally expect their privacy to be recognised. Examples of such areas would include:

- Changing rooms.
- Open changing areas such as ‘villages’
- Individual changing/private cubicles provided for personal use.
- Toilets.
- Medical/physiotherapy treatment rooms.

Flash photography is prohibited in an environment where any performance may be affected or there is the potential for its use to cause harm to the young person.

### **Types of appropriate images**

Only appropriate images of children should be used, for example:

- Posed images such as during medal ceremonies, presentations or team shots where young people must be wearing t-shirt and shorts/tracksuits.
- Action shots of young people where the focus is on the participation in the sport, not the athlete.

Images of children should not be taken where the pose is inappropriate e.g. open legs; bending over from behind, etc.

## Safe use of images

Images can be taken for a variety of purposes, including for administration or personal use, publicising the sport or aiding skill development. Anyone taking images should be aware of action poses that may be inappropriate; these are not suitable for use/publication.

Types of images and appropriate use:

- a) Personal images – images taken by parents/guardians or other family members during an event as a celebration of a young person’s attendance or achievement. This includes the use of a professional photographer, with permission, taking images for the personal use of those attending. Other people may be included in an image and we expect parents/guardians and other family members to respect this by not distributing images publicly.
  
- b) Training images – these are images or footage taken during a training session or during an event specifically to aid the young person in the development of a skill or technique. We expect these images to be taken by a qualified coach or a person specifically appointed by the young person’s coach. These images may be used as examples of technique or mastery of a skill for teaching/coaching purposes and should not be distributed outside this specific use.
  
- c) Media images – these are images taken by an individual from the media, i.e. TV, newspaper or professional photographer where the images are to be used for publicity or promotion of the event or future events.
  
- d) Administration images – these are images taken for general administration purposes; including images used for membership cards, competition entries and could also include images that form part of an archive record.

## Use of images on social media

Where images of young people are used on social media the person responsible for posting an image must be aware of the potential for an image to be used inappropriately. The following safeguards must be in place to protect young people:

- i) Personal details of a young person should not be included.
- ii) Captions should be in keeping with the sport represented.
- iii) The posting and any purpose should not breach the codes of conduct.
- iv) The type of image should not breach guidance in this policy.

## Storage of Images

Storage includes any image stored as a hard copy and/or electronically as a soft copy. This includes images on social media, photographic archives, individual personal databases e.g. personal cameras, phones, etc. How personal images are stored is the responsibility of parents/guardians with their child/young person. All other images should only be stored for defined and intended purposes e.g. membership, promotion, and/or archiving.

- If storage of images is required the images must only be stored for the length of time for which they are needed
- If possible, avoid using the names of children, or any other identifying feature

Once images are no longer required they must be properly destroyed. Digital images stored on computer systems need to be fully deleted, including deletion from the cache memory and/or temporary files.

## Inappropriate Images

### Taking inappropriate images

If there is any concern about the nature of any image taken this should be reported to the responsible person (in the club or event/activity) who will refer to the statutory authorities. The concerned individual may also report their concern directly to the statutory authorities. The contact details for the statutory authority can be found in the *Irish Squash Safeguarding Policies and Procedures*.

### Non-authorized taking of images

If you are concerned about an individual taking images at an event this should be verbally reported to the relevant responsible person. It may be necessary to report the non-authorized taking of images to the appropriate statutory authorities.

The responsible person will identify the person and check if their device is registered for the event. If not registered, the person must be asked to register their device, with appropriate identification. If the person is not willing to register their device they should be asked to leave.

Where the event is open to the public e.g. where only part of the facility is being used, it will be necessary to report non-authorized taking of images to the facility manager.

## **Inappropriate use of images**

Where there is a concern about the use of images this should be reported to the responsible person who will take appropriate action. This will include reporting the alleged use to:

- The parent/guardian of any young person involved.
- The person responsible for posting the image.
- The media platform i.e. twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, print media etc.
- The statutory authorities.

Inappropriate use of images is a breach of this guidance and the code of conduct and may result in a complaint/disciplinary procedure against those involved in Irish Squash. Where there is a concern about the publication of an image in local or national newspapers you should contact the individual newspaper or the Press Council of Ireland and the Office of the Press Ombudsman – website <http://www.presscouncil.ie/>

## **Installation and use of CCTV (Closed Circuit Television)**

The use of CCTV is a positive step in safeguarding those that use facilities. It is important that clubs using a facility are aware of blind spots (potential risk areas), who has access, the use of images and the facility procedure for dealing with incidents or misbehaviour. The information regarding the presence of CCTV within a facility should be available to members and/or parents/guardians.

A club should have a copy of the facility's policy regarding the use of CCTV, usually as part of a club/facility agreement. Queries regarding the use of CCTV are a matter for the facility or the operating company. Any queries from members should be directed through the club as the club has the agreement with the facility.

The following information should be noted:

- Who in the facility has day to day responsibility for the system and operation of the CCTV.
- The number of cameras located in the specified areas.
- Are spectator areas covered (i.e. can someone misbehaving in this area or regularly turning up for less than innocent viewing purposes be monitored).
- Identify areas of the facility that cannot be monitored – if these areas are easily identified by anyone with intent it would be important to know in order to be extra vigilant.
- Who, during sessions, is responsible for monitoring the cameras and what is the policy for dealing with any perceived misconduct or incidents viewed at the time.
- Who has access to the password protected files.

CCTV does not replace vigilance and proper supervision for training sessions and activities as required by Irish Squash.

## ***Use of Mobile Equipment***

### ***Mobile Phones***

Mobile phones are often given to children for security, enabling parents to keep in touch and make sure they are safe. In addition, mobile phones allow quick and easy contact, which can make a safe and efficient way to carry out club business. However, such technology has also allowed an increase in direct personal contact with young people and in some cases has been used to cross personal boundaries and cause harm to young people. Within clubs there is a need to encourage responsible and secure use of mobile phones by adults and young people.

#### **As a Leader remember:**

While good use of such media can be beneficial we must be vigilant and alert to the possibilities of misuse and consequent harm that can result to young people. Leaders must also take care to protect themselves.

1. Leaders involved in coaching young people should only have children's and young people's mobile numbers if the nature of their involvement requires them to phone or text them.
2. Parental permission should be sought if the leader in this role will be contacting children or young people via mobile phone.
3. A method of accountability should be arranged e.g. copies of texts could also be sent to the club DLP or to parents. Use group texts for communication among players and teams and inform parents of this at the start of the season
4. It is not appropriate to have constant communication with individual young players
5. Don't use the phone in certain locations; inappropriate use of your camera phone may cause upset or offence to another person, e.g. changing rooms
6. If a leader had a child/young person's phone number it should only be used for the purposes it has been given, i.e., the leader should not share this information.
7. In an ideal situation it is recommended that youth coaches had a separate phone for club purposes rather than using their personal phone for contacting children and young people.

#### **As a young person remember:**

- If you receive an offensive photo, email or message, do not reply, save it, make a note of times and dates and tell a parent or children's officer/designated person within the club.
- Be careful about who you give your phone number to and don't respond to unfamiliar numbers
- You can consider changing your phone number in cases of bullying or harassment
- Don't use the phone in certain locations; inappropriate use of your camera phone may cause upset or offence to another person, e.g. changing rooms
- Treat your phone as you would any other valuable item so that you guard against theft

## **Social media guidance**

**For Club's Publishing A Social Networking Site the following principles should be applied:**

1. The page/profile must be password-protected, and the password must be held by at least three leaders of the organisation.
2. The site should be monitored by a designated supervisor. This person should have access to the login details of the site. This supervisor will be appointed by the club committee.
3. Any inappropriate posts by children/young people or leaders should be removed by the designated supervisor. Reasons should then be explained to the person who posted the content. Where possible sites should be monitored before content is put up.
4. The site should be kept 'Private' i.e. only permitted members or 'friends' can see what is posted on the site.
5. The use of personal addresses and telephone numbers etc., should be avoided as, while sites are 'private', there is the potential for items to be copied and shared.
6. Content of any postings should be consistent with the aims of the organisation. In cases of doubt leaders should seek advice from the club DLP or Irish Squash.

**For Leaders Using a Social Networking Site:**

1. Leaders should not 'friend' or 'follow' children or young people on social media. (Children or young people may 'follow' leaders on social media so leaders should make sure any content they post is appropriate.)
2. Messages left to or from children or young people on social network sites should be written on an open page (e.g. A facebook 'Wall') and not in a private message or by using 'chat' [one-on-one].
3. Leaders should not network with youth members of their organisation/group via closed [one-on-one] chats e.g. facebook messenger, WhatsApp, etc, this should be done only through 'Group Chat.'
4. Any events or activities run by the organisation that are organised or publicised on the site should be a closed event so as non-members cannot access the event without suitable permission by the site administrators.
5. Any emails sent to children or young people via the site must be sent to at least one other leader. (This can be done by 'bcc' if necessary.)
6. Leaders should avoid communicating with children or young people in their organisation/group via email late at night.
7. In signing off a post or email leaders should not do so in a way that could be misconstrued or misinterpreted by the recipient, e.g. "Luv X"; "xoxoxo". Simply sign your name.
8. Parents/guardians should be asked to give their approval for leaders to communicate with their children/young people via social networking sites, or by any other means of internet communications (e.g. email).
9. Parental permission is required before pictures or videos of children or young people are posted online.
10. Any disclosures of abuses reported through a social networking site must be dealt with according to your reporting procedures.

# CONDITIONS AND RULES FOR JUNIORS TRAVELLING TO MATCHES

## Applying for Entry:

- entry forms must be submitted to the organising body by the closing date specified
- by completing the entry form players are declaring that they have read and understood this **Conditions and Rules for Juniors travelling to Matches and Events**

## Travelling:

- make sure you have packed everything: racquet, gear, eye-guards, etc.
- be at the departure point on time
- when travelling by car / bus do not distract the driver and always wear a seatbelt

## At the Venue:

- upon arrival check in and find out when and where your first match is on
- be courteous at all times and carry out the instructions of the organisers without delay
- over the course of the tournament make sure you always know when your next match is on and that you are ready to play when required
- do not leave the tournament venue without permission
- do your fair share of refereeing
- dispose of your litter properly and keep changing rooms tidy
- do not distract the players while play is in progress
- do not distract or attempt to influence the referee

### **On Court:**

- play fairly following the rules
- be on time for your matches
- appeal in the proper manner (do not argue with referee)
- always shake hands after your match
- wear eye-guards at all times (including 'knock-ups' and 'three/quarters')
- when on court wear your squash shoes
- do not use abusive / bad language

### **Drug Testing:**

- the tournament application form must be signed by a parent or guardian and by the player. By signing this form, players / guardians hereby provide their formal consent to accept, if requested at the tournament, drug testing for any prohibited substance Add link to Sport Ireland Clean Sport app

### **General:**

- good behaviour is expected at all times
- the consumption of alcohol or other banned substances is not permitted
- When staying with a host family, ensure you comply with the "house" rules. Do not disturb the host family members
- When staying in hotel / B&B accommodation ensure you do not disturb the other guests

**We depend on the goodwill of clubs, voluntary organisers and host families for the successful operation of Junior Squash. Keeping the above guidelines helps you and your tournaments.**

**Breach of these guidelines is harmful to the future of our junior tournaments, will not be tolerated and may result in the application of disciplinary procedure of the host province or Irish Squash.**

# TRANSPORT

There is an extra responsibility on adults and leaders when they transport young people to events. Adults transporting children should:

- Ensure there is adequate insurance cover on their car; follow the rules of the road, including legal use of seat belts.
- Ensure they do not carry more than the permitted number of passengers.
- Avoid being alone with one passenger. If transporting an individual ask them to sit in the back seat.
- If transporting an individual participant on a regular basis, seek parental permission and clearly state times of pick- up and drop off.
- Parents should check with young people about the plans, listen to what young people are saying, be sure they are happy with the transport arrangements.
- Consider the need for the use of booster seats. From 2006, the law in Europe requires all children in cars, vans and other goods vehicles to be carried using an appropriate child restraint until either they have reached the age of 12 years or are 150 cm (5" in Republic of Ireland) and 135 cm (4' 5" in Northern Ireland) or whichever comes first with very few exceptions<sup>1</sup>. **Overnight & Away Trips**
- Written permission of parents /guardians should be obtained for all overnight away trips. This should include permission to travel, behaviour agreement and any medical / special needs of the group (including permission to treat the participant) *Appendix 11 Overnight/Travel Form*.
- The agreement should be signed by both parents and participants
- A meeting with parents and participants is useful to communicate travel times, competition details, other activities, gear requirements, special needs (medical or dietary), and any other necessary details, contact details, codes of conduct, etc.
- Irish Squash should share any appropriate information with leaders of the group
- All adults who travel on away trips should be carefully chosen, using the recruitment and selection guidelines
- The roles and responsibilities of adults participating in away trips should be clearly defined.
- The Board of Irish Squash / Provincial Squash Organisation / Squash club will 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 team for the duration of the trip.
- Upon return home, the team manager should submit a written report which would include:
  - Injury(s) - Make a brief record of injury and action taken
  - Behavioural Problems - Make a brief record of problem/action/outcome
  - Any other significant issue arising.
- 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 leaders of both genders (at least one female and/or male in the management/ coaching structure). There should be a good adult – child ratio.
- Managers should check out the venue beforehand, so that separate and appropriate sleeping arrangements can be made in advance
- Adults should not share rooms with children and should knock before entering children's rooms
- Children should share rooms with those of same age and gender
- All group socialisation should take place in communal areas (i.e. no boys in girls' rooms and vice versa).

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<sup>1</sup> The European law allowed countries to opt for a minimum height of between 135 and 150 cm. For more information visit; Northern Ireland (link to <http://www.childcarseats.org.uk/the-law/> )  
Republic of Ireland Link to <http://www.rsa.ie/en/RSA/Your-Vehicle/About-your-Vehicle/Example-of-non-Dup/Seat-belts--child-restraints-/>

- Alcoholic drink, smoking or other illegal substances are forbidden to players. Leaders should act as role models in this respect
- Leaders should consider how they will access medical personnel should the need arise.
- Lights out times should be enforced
- Young players should be under reasonable supervision at all times and should never leave the venue or go unsupervised without prior permission.

### **Safety**

- Leaders/managers/coaches should be aware of potential risks to safety and take steps to safeguard against these risks.
- Ensure activities are suitable for age and stage of development of participants
- Keep a record of any specific medical conditions of the participants
- Keep a record of emergency contact numbers for parents / guardians
- Ensure appropriate kit is used
- Know the contact numbers of emergency services
- If an incident occurs, make a brief record of injury and action taken. Make a brief record of the problem /action/outcome.
- Contact the participants parents and keep them informed of all details
- Officials (umpires, referees, etc.) should ensure the conduct of the game
- Participants should know and keep the rules of their sport.
- Have adequate insurance cover for all activities
- Make parents/guardians aware of their duty to be present at finishing time of sessions or events.

# HOSTING

The Sport Ireland and Sport NI recognise that Hosting is an integral part of many sports and if handled appropriately can add to a child's enjoyment and experience of sport. However, safety of our young players must be the primary concern. Irish Squash has drawn up Hosting & Travel Agreement Forms (appendix 11 & 12), which must be completed, by Leaders, Young Players and Parents/Guardians.

## General

- Parents should be advised of the regulations and guidelines for Hosting at the start of season.
- Parents who have a concern should be encouraged to voice their concerns and make suggestions for greater safety.
- No pressure should be put on young players/parents to travel or undertake return hosting if they have concerns in this area.
- All travel and accommodation arrangements should be made known to parents, players and host families.
- It should be made absolutely clear to players, to parents of players being hosted and to the host families that the use of substances such as alcohol is not allowed for underage players.

## Squash clubs should:

- Provide a travel pack to hosting families
- Ensure the host association / organisation complies with the regulations set down by Irish Squash.
- Ensure all adults in host families are NVB/AccessNI cleared
- Provide an itinerary of the trip
- Gather information on destination and venue

## Host Families should:

- Be known to the host association / organisation which itself must comply with the regulations set down by Irish Squash.
- Agree to abide by Irish Squash's Code of conduct
- Consent to NVB/AccessNI clearance checks and any other appropriate references required
- Attend host family meetings before competitions or events
- Provide a safe and supportive environment for young people
- Be given contact numbers for parents plus an additional contact which may be used in an emergency, details of medical conditions, medication requirements or allergies.
- Be given the contact number of the adult responsible for the travelling group and should know that they are free to contact this person if they encounter any difficulty.

## Young players

- Should sign a behaviour agreement
- Should be hosted in same gender pairs.
- Should not be asked to share a bed with another child
- Should not be asked to share a room with an adult

### **Before travelling- Young players & their parents (as a group where possible):**

- Should be advised of the hosting arrangements.
- Should be advised of the name of travelling adult to whom concerns can be reported.
- Should be made aware of the importance of reporting concerns.
- Asked to make their children aware of particular behaviours that may be a cause for concern.
- Provided with the name and phone number of the host family for their child.
- should be advised that if players behave inappropriately, arrangements will be made for the players early return home. The player's parents must meet any extra expense.
- Parents should supply all relevant information, their contact numbers, plus additional emergency contact number, medical condition, medication requirements, or allergies and this information should be passed on to the host family.

### **Personal Arrangement**

Arrangements made independently between parents are not the responsibility of Irish Squash but the above good practice principles should be considered by all those involved in Squash.

# RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION POLICY

Irish Squash will take all reasonable steps to ensure that leaders are appropriately qualified and suitable to work with young people. These procedures apply to all adults with substantial access to, or influence over, young people.

The responsibilities attached to particular posts should be drawn up and clearly stated before appointments are sanctioned. Irish Squash will make available sample role descriptions outlining the responsibilities and level of experience required.

Every effort should be made to support appointed Sport Leaders who are required to agree to the Regulations and Guidelines set out in Irish Squash's Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Squash.

A decision to appoint a Sports Leader is the responsibility of the organisation/club and not of any one individual within it. The organisation/club committee should ratify all recommendations for appointment.

Applicants/appointees will be asked to complete the information forms as recommended in Irish Squash's Safeguarding for Children's Sport.

Formal vetting procedures will be availed of including NVB/AccessNI vetting

Information in relation to applicant's information must be treated as sensitive and confidential. It should be stored in a secure place and only accessible to nominated officers.

References will be verified.

See Appendices 5, 5a and 6:

- New Leader Information Form
- Disclosure of Criminal Convictions & Permission for Statutory Checks Form
- Existing Leaders Information Form
- Confidential Reference Form.

## **SUMMARY GUIDANCE ON CHILD PROTECTION**

- 1.** Children should be protected from abuse and neglect.
- 2.** The welfare and protection of children is of paramount importance.
- 3.** Everyone has a responsibility for the welfare and protection of children.
- 4.** If you are concerned about a child, you should report that concern without delay to the TUSLA Child Welfare and Protection Services or the HSCT Gateway Teams, which have statutory responsibility to protect children.
- 5.** You can report your concern in person, by telephone or in writing
- 6.** Before deciding whether or not to make a formal report, you may wish to discuss your concerns with TUSLA Child Welfare and Protection Services of the HSE or the HSCT Gateway Teams.
- 7.** If it is an emergency and you think a child is in immediate danger and you cannot get in contact with the TUSLA Child Welfare and Protection Services of the HSE or the HSCT Gateway Teams, you should contact the police at any station.

# CHILD WELFARE AND PROTECTION PROCEDURES

Irish Squash accepts that organisations, which include young people among its members, are vulnerable to the occurrence of child abuse. Below are the procedures for dealing with any welfare or protection issue that may arise. Child welfare and the protection of young people is the concern of all adults at all times, irrespective of their role within the organisation.

If there are grounds for concern about the safety or welfare of a young person you should react to the concern. Persons unsure about whether or not certain behaviours are abusive and therefore reportable should contact the duty social worker in the local TUSLA Child Welfare and Protection Services of the HSE or the HSCT Gateway Teams where they will receive advice. Grounds for concern include a specific indication from a child, a statement from a person who witnessed abuse or an illness, injury or behaviour consistent with abuse.

A report may be made by any member in the club but should be passed on to the Club Designated Liaison Person (DLP) who may in turn have to pass the concern to the local Statutory Authorities. It is not the responsibility of anyone working within any affiliated group of Irish Squash, in a paid or voluntary capacity, to take responsibility or decide whether or not child abuse is taking place. That is the job of the local statutory authorities. However, there is a responsibility to protect children by assisting the appropriate agencies so they can make enquiries and take any necessary action to protect the young person.

## Response to a Child Disclosing Possible Abuse

- Deal with any allegation of abuse in a sensitive and competent way through listening to and facilitating the child to tell about the problem, rather than interviewing the child about details of what happened.
- Stay calm and avoid showing any extreme reaction to what the child is saying. Listen compassionately, and take what the child is saying seriously
- Understand that the child has decided to tell something very important and has taken a risk in doing so. The experience of telling should be a positive one so that the child will not mind talking to those involved in the investigation
- Be honest with the child and tell them that it is not possible that any information will be kept a secret but you will keep it confidential
- Make no judgmental statements against the person about whom the allegation is made
- Do not question the child unless the nature of what s/he is saying is unclear. Leading questions should be avoided. Open, non-specific questions should be used such as “Can you explain to me what you mean by that”
- Check out the concerns with the parents/guardians before making a report unless during so would endanger the child or compromise an investigation – if in doubt about telling the parents, consult with the statutory agencies first.
- Give the child some indication of what will happen next, such as informing parents/guardians, TUSLA or social services. It should be kept in mind that the child may have been threatened and may feel vulnerable at this stage.
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you.
- Carefully record the details
- Pass on this information to the DLP who will proceed as set out in “Reporting Suspected or Disclosed Child Abuse.

## Reporting Suspected or Disclosed Child Abuse

The following steps should be taken in reporting child abuse to the statutory authorities:

- Note dates, times, locations and context in which the incident occurred or suspicion was aroused, together with any other relevant information
- Report the matter as soon as possible to the club DLP or national DLP with responsibility for reporting abuse. If the DLP has reasonable grounds for believing that the child has been abused or is at risk of abuse, s/he will make a report to the TUSLA/social services who have statutory responsibility to investigate and assess suspected or actual child abuse.
- If the DLP is unsure whether reasonable grounds for concern exist s/he can informally consult with the local TUSLA/social services. S/he will be advised whether or not the matter requires a formal report.
- If it is a case of poor practice the DLP will implement internal procedures to deal with the issue.
- In cases of emergency, where a child appears to be at immediate and serious risk and the DLP 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.
- A DLP reporting suspected or actual child abuse to the Statutory Authorities will first inform the family of their intention to make such a report, unless doing so would endanger the child or undermine an investigation. If they are unsure they should consult informally with the Statutory Agencies before informing the parents.
- The National DLP should be informed of:
  - Any reports being made to Statutory Bodies.
  - Name of any leader being asked to step aside and brief details of the case.
  - Any case of poor practice which cannot be adequately resolved at local level.

## Protection.

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 TUSLA or the Gardaí. The act also covers the offence of 'false reporting'. The main provisions of the Act are:

- The provision of immunity from civil liability to any person who reports child abuse "reasonably and in good faith" to designated officers of Health Service Executive or any member of An Garda Síochána;
- 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;
- 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 concerns in 'good faith' is not deliberately attempting to slander another person's name. In Northern Ireland there is legislation, the Criminal Law Act (NI) 1967 which places the responsibility on everyone 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 offence(s) 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*'

## ***Allegations Against Sports Leaders***

When a concern is raised about a Leader (Coach, Manager, Selector or Appointed Adult):

- In the case of suspected child or disclosed child abuse the procedures set out under “Reporting Suspected or Disclosed Child Abuse” should be implemented.
- If the concern is of poor practice it should be reported to Club DLP who will use internal procedures to deal with the issue (Irish Squash’s Complaints Management Procedures).
- If Club DLP feels unable to deal appropriately with any issue they should consult with Irish Squash’s DLP.

In addition, the safety of the child making the allegation should be considered and the safety of any other children who may be at risk. The club should take any steps that may be necessary to protect children in its care

The issue of confidentiality is important. Information is on a need to know basis and the Sports Leader about whom the allegation is being made should be treated with respect and fairness.

The DLP makes the report to the local statutory authorities and also privately informs the individual that an allegation has been made against him/her and the nature of the allegation. He / she should be afforded an opportunity to respond and that response should be noted and passed on to the health board / social services.

The leader should be asked to step aside pending the outcome of the investigation.

The DLP will keep those responsible for the management of the club advised of the situation but only in as much detail as is necessary to protect young members. It usually not necessary to reveal the names of the individuals involved until investigations have been completed and an outcome has been reached.

The National DLP should be informed of:

- Any reports being made to Statutory Bodies
- Name of any leader being asked to step aside and brief details of case.
- Any case of poor practice, which cannot be adequately resolved at local level.

The board of Irish Squash will consider disciplinary action on the leader but should ensure that this does not interfere with the investigation of the Statutory Authorities. Irish Squash will consider the outcome of any statutory authority investigation and any implications it might have. *The fact that the alleged abuser has not been prosecuted or been found guilty does not mean that they are appropriate to work with young people in the future and Irish Squash will need to undertake a risk assessment.*

## Confidentiality

Confidentiality should be maintained in respect of all issues and people involved in cases of abuse, welfare or poor practice. It is important that the rights of both the child and the person about whom the complaint has been made are protected.

Irish Squash have a clear commitment to confidentiality and how this is to be respected. This commitment covers much broader issues than safeguarding. Families and children in contact with our organisation should be sure, for example, that personal and sensitive details which they have confided about their lives or family situations will not be talked about or passed on to others without their consent.

However, the legal principle that 'the welfare of the child is paramount' means that considerations of confidentiality should not be allowed to override the right of children to be protected from harm. Everyone in our organisation, including children, must be aware that they can never promise to keep secrets. However, information of a confidential nature will only be communicated on a 'need to know' basis.

This will mean, at the very least, informing:

- the person responsible for safeguarding in Irish Squash;
- where relevant, a statutory child protection agency;
- the parent/guardian of the child, unless to do so would place the child at further risk;
- the alleged perpetrator, but only following advice/consultation with the statutory agencies.

Informing the parents of a child about whom you are concerned will need to be handled in a sensitive way and may be undertaken in consultation with a statutory agency.

Any individual under suspicion whether or not s/he is a staff member or volunteer within Irish Squash has a right to be notified of the cause of the concern. This is a matter that will need careful consideration and should only be undertaken in consultation with a statutory agency if it is an issue of suspected abuse.

Depending on the outcome of your initial inquiries for clarification, staff and other agencies who have contact with either the child concerned or the alleged perpetrator may need to be given brief details of the incident and subsequent action. The statutory agency will advise you about who should be told, when they should be told, and the kind of information which it is appropriate to share.

Breach of confidentiality is a serious matter.

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

**Rumours:** Rumours should not be allowed to hang in the air. Any rumour relating to inappropriate behaviour should be brought to the attention of the Designated Liaison Person and checked out without delay.

## Non-Recent Abuse

Responding to Non-Recent Allegations of Abuse

It is possible that non-recent allegations of abuse can be made a number of years after the actual incident. This may be because of a change in circumstances for either the survivor or the alleged perpetrator. Any non-recent allegations must follow the current Irish Squash safeguarding procedures. If there are grounds for concern then statutory authorities must be informed (Police or TUSLA/HSCT Gateway Teams). The following points should also be considered;

- Clearly establish with the adult complainant if there may be any children currently at risk of harm from the person they are saying abused them as a child.
- Advise the person making the complaint that they should inform the Police. Encourage them to do so while acknowledging the brave steps they have already taken in beginning to talk about their experience as a child. It is important that the person knows that there is a likelihood that an abuser will not have stopped abusing after their individual abuse ended and if the person harmed them they could be continuing to cause harm to others. This needs to be done without reinforcing the inappropriate guilt the survivor may already have for not coming forward earlier.
- If the complainant refuses to talk to the statutory authorities but has provided you with enough identifying factors then this information MUST be shared with the police. This breach of the complainants' confidence is only appropriate if there is any potential that the alleged perpetrator is still a risk to children or could face prosecution (i.e. they are alive). Remember, the welfare of any children currently at risk is paramount. This must take priority over any request of confidentiality from the person providing you with the information/complaint. This should be explained to them at the earliest possible stage
- Offer support to the complainant when making a formal complaint to the police.
- Signpost the complainant to support agencies that can provide counselling for example;

In Northern Ireland - NEXUS <http://www.nexusni.org/>

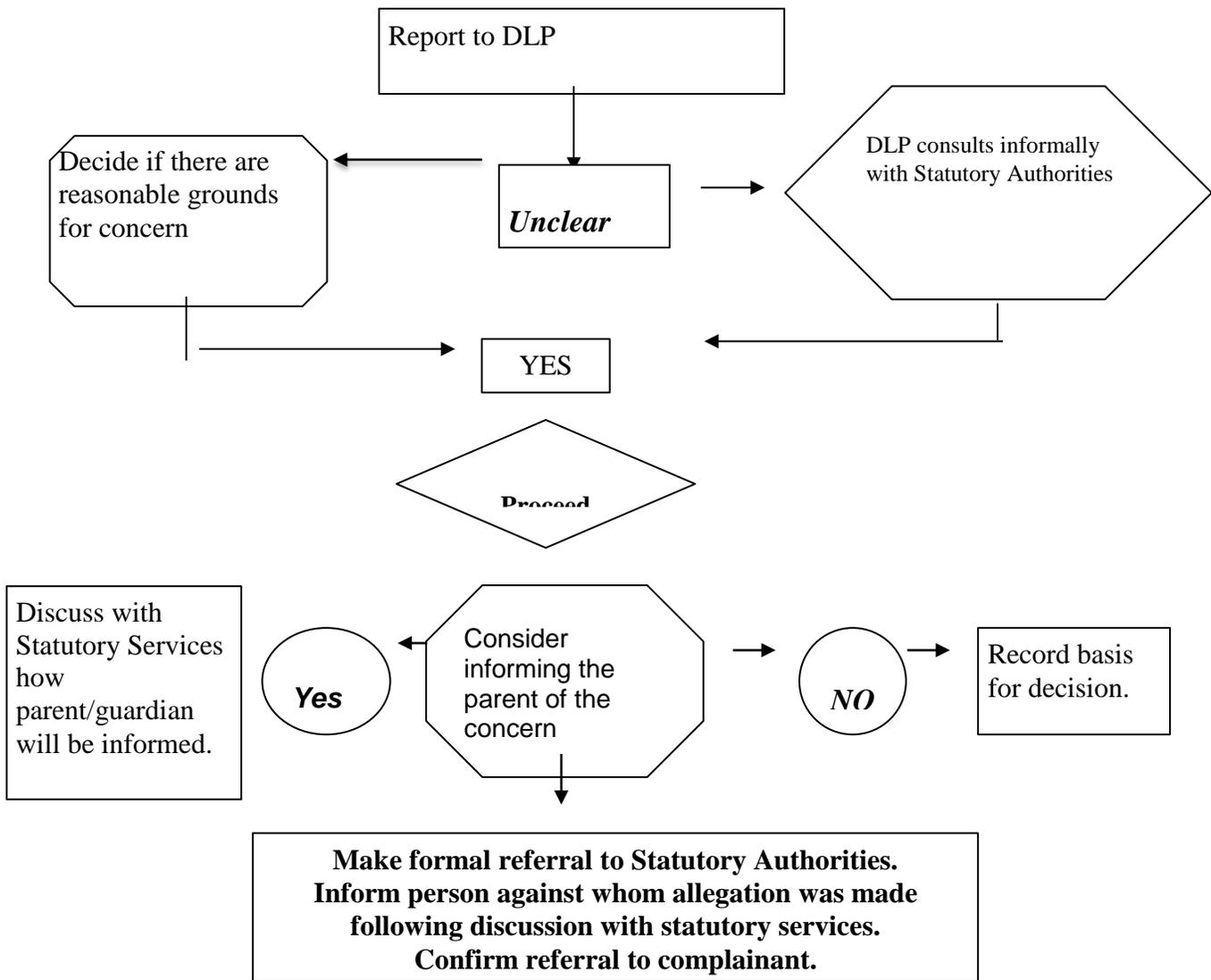
- Belfast 028 9032 6803
- L'derry 028 7126 0566
- Enniskillen 028 6632 0046

In Republic of Ireland -

When an adult making a complaint chooses not to report the matter to the police and you have already discussed the possibility of any child still being at risk you MUST follow Irish Squash's reporting procedures and inform the Police or TUSLA/Gateway Team immediately of any identifying features of the allegation including the name of the alleged abuser. The person making the complaint should be informed that this is the organisation's moral and legal responsibility (Criminal Law Act 1967/ Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998). If the individual wishes to remain anonymous this should be respected but again explaining that without any further cooperation there may be little action the Police can take to protect others. Encourage them to talk directly to the TUSLA/Gateway Teams, if not the Police, in order to enable social services to consider if there is any action they can take to protect children at risk, as their threshold for intervention is lower than the evidence required for any criminal justice prosecution.

## Procedures

# Chart 1. Procedure to follow if there is suspected abuse external to the organisation

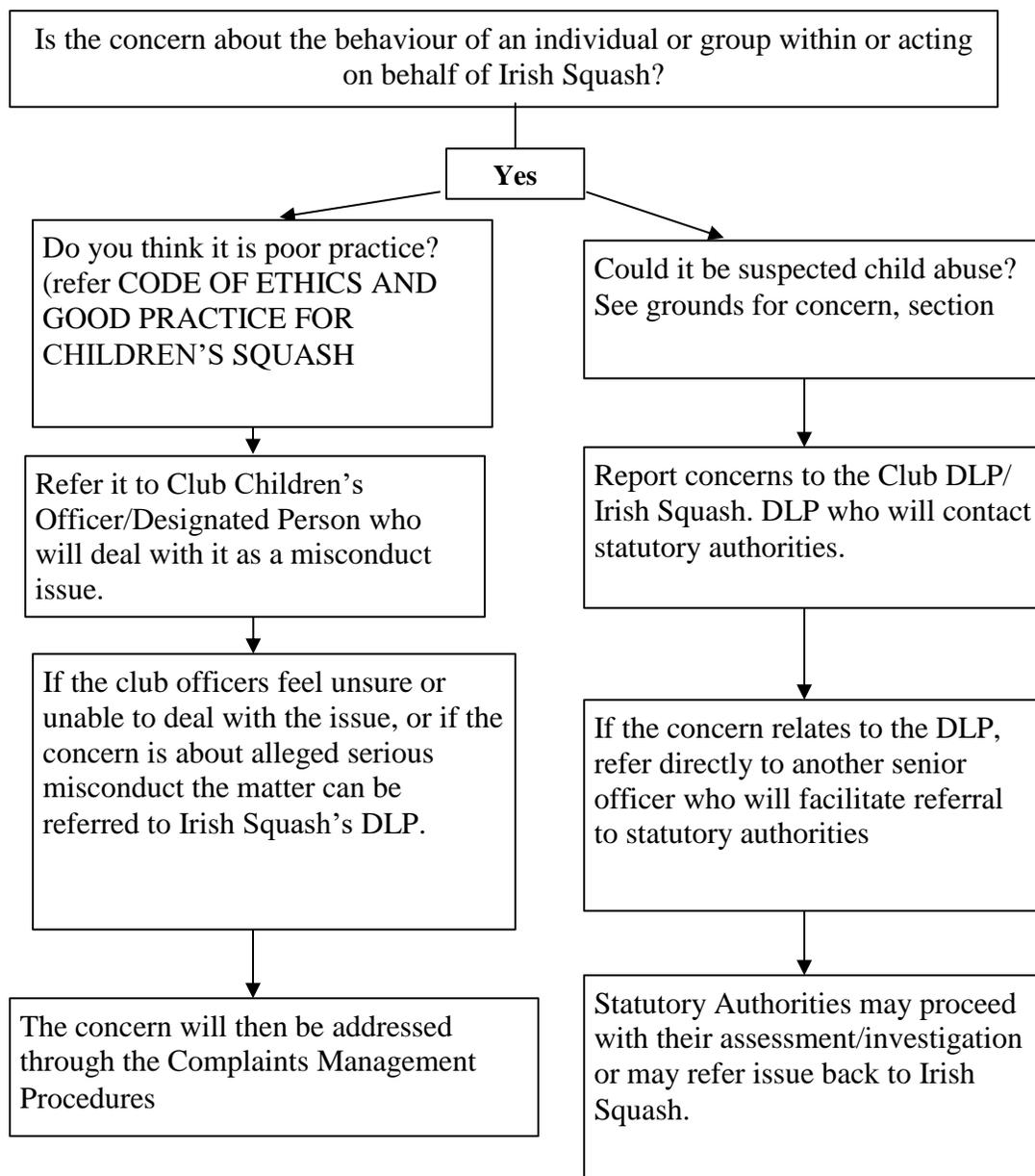


**Make formal referral to Statutory Authorities.  
 Inform person against whom allegation was made following discussion with statutory services.  
 Confirm referral to complainant.**

*CONFIDENTIALITY MUST BE KEPT THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS.  
 IF IN DOUBT AT ANY STAGE CONTACT THE STATUTORY AUTHORITIES.*

**The safety of the child making the allegation and any others who are/may be at risk should be ensured and this takes precedence over any other consideration -**

## Chart 2. Procedure if there is concern about the behaviour within the organisation.



Irish Squash may have to impose restrictions on individuals while internal or external processes are taking place. Irish Squash may also have to take internal action regardless of the outcome of the external process.

Irish Squash is committed to promoting equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons regardless of:

If, at any stage, you are concerned that a child is in immediate danger you should contact the Gardai/PSNI or Statutory Authorities.

- Political opinion
- Racial group
- Age
- Gender
- Marital Status
- Sexual orientation
- Level of ability of disability

Irish Squash will endeavour to ensure that all individuals are treated with respect at all times and will do all it can to make its services accessible to all

## **COACHES CHARTER**

Irish Squash recognises the key role coaches play in the development of the young people and adults with whom they work. All adults, including coaches and leaders in sport, have a Duty of Care for all children and they must do all they can to ensure that no action by them endangers the safety of any child. Therefore, as part of registration/qualification, coaches are required to sign this Coaches Charter.

Coaches are encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect the young players in their care and themselves from false allegations.

It is a condition of qualification that Coaches agree to this charter and to abide by the regulations and sign appendix 3 of Irish Squash's "Safeguarding Policy for Children's Squash"

Coaches must agree to the assessment/recruitment procedures outlined in Irish Squash's Code of ethics and Good Practice for Children's Squash.

Coaches travelling on away trips with underage players are required to sign a separate agreement and abide by the regulations set down in Irish Squash's "Safeguarding Policy for Children's Squash".

Coaches should hold up to date and nationally recognised coaching qualifications and hold appropriate individual insurance cover.

Coaching qualifications are awarded jointly by Coaching Ireland and Irish Squash. On successful completion of an approved coaching course, coaches may use the title "Irish Squash Registered Coach".

As a condition of remaining on the Irish Squash's Register of Coaches, it is essential that coaches' actions are in line with Irish Squash's approved programmes, and Branch or County/League programmes, for the management and development of the game.

Coaches about whom concerns have been raised regarding misconduct, illegality, or extreme poor practice, may be asked to stand aside from Squash activities until such time as the issue(s) have been satisfactorily resolved. This regulation stands whether the concern is being addressed by an official outside agency or internally by Irish Squash.

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

Coaches should place the well-being and safety of the player above the performance.

Coaches should develop an appropriate working relationship with young players based on mutual trust and respect.

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

Coaches are responsible for setting appropriate boundaries with the individuals they coach. They are responsible for maintaining and monitoring boundaries between a working relationship and friendship (e.g. it is illegal in ROI to abuse your position of trust to have an intimate relationship with an under 18 player and extreme poor practice to share a room, tent, shower/bath or changing facilities with them).

It is not appropriate for coaches to involve young players in their personal life i.e. visits to coaches home or overnight stays.

Where coaches appoint or employ younger coaches for projects, it is expected that they will adopt behaviour in keeping with appropriate employer/employee working standards.

Coaches must not exert undue influence to obtain personal benefit or reward.

Coaches should, at the outset, clarify with players, and where appropriate with their parents, exactly what is expected of them and what players are entitled to expect from their coach.

Coaches should ensure that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it is provided openly and according to agreed guidelines. If physical support is needed, talk aloud to the young person, explaining what you are doing, and why, as it is difficult to maintain hand positions when young person is constantly moving. Children/young people should always be consulted before they are touched and their agreement gained. Parental/carer views about manual support should always be carefully considered.

Coaches should involve parents/carers wherever possible (e.g. for the responsibility of their children in the changing rooms). If groups have to be supervised in the changing rooms, ensure parents/teachers/coaches/officials work in pairs.

Coaches should always work in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging an open environment, e.g. no secrets).

Coaches should avoid entering rooms of underage players, invite or permit young players into their rooms or become involved in unobserved or unsupervised 1:1 situations with underage players.

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. The group leader or senior coach should nominate one adult member of the group to take particular responsibility for the underage player. Where necessary, two adult members, one of each gender can be appointed.

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

Coaches should recognise the developmental needs and capacity of young players, including those with a disability – avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will. Physical punishment or physical force must never be used. Never punish a mistake by verbal means, physical means, or exclusion.

Coaches are advised to secure parental consent (a sample form appendix 13 is downloadable from the Irish Squash website) in writing to act in loco parentis, if the need arises to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment. Coaches should also keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.

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 a child is at risk or abuse is suspected, must not be divulged to a third party without the express permission of the player/family.

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

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

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 young player requires the passing on of this information. Coaches should insist that players respect the rules of the game and are aware that cheating or bullying behaviour will not be tolerated.

Coaches are expected to encourage the development of respect for opponents, officials, selectors and other coaches and avoid criticism of fellow coaches.

Coaches should immediately report any accusations made against them or their colleagues.

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.

Coaches should try to positively engage and communicate with parents

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

Irish Squash appreciates the valuable contribution our coaches make to the development of the sport and to the enjoyment of all our players, both junior and adult. Irish Squash will do all it can to protect players and coaches and strongly encourages "best practice" protocols for all personnel involved.

Coaches can best protect themselves against false allegations by adhering to the Irish Squash's good practice guidelines (Appendix 3).

Because Irish Squash is aware of the vulnerability of young adults between the ages of 18 and 25, even though they are no longer legally regarded as "children", all coaches should observe these guidelines when working with people in that age group.

## **Complaints Management Procedures**

Irish Squash has drawn up specific procedures to enable the organisation deal appropriately with any concern raised about the welfare of a young person.

All clubs and provincial organisations affiliated to Irish Squash are required adopt these procedures, which will allow all members who are dissatisfied to register their concern.

These procedures are designed to ensure that:

- The safety of the young person is the overriding priority.

- The reputation of the person against whom the allegation is made is protected while the process of dealing with the complaint is ongoing.
- That the process, while protecting the young person, is consistent and as fair as possible to everyone involved.

All records must be kept confidential, with limited access, and information will only be passed to others on a “need to know” basis

## Grounds for Concern

Reasonable grounds for concern exist when there is:

- A specific indication from a child that s/he has been abused.
- An account by a person who saw the child being abused
- Evidence, such as an injury or behaviour, which is consistent with abuse and unlikely, to be caused another way.
- An injury or behaviour, which is consistent both with abuse and with an innocent explanation but where there are corroborative indicators supporting the concern that it may be a case of abuse. An example of this would be a pattern of injuries, an implausible explanation, other indications of abuse, dysfunctional behaviour.
- Consistent indication, over a period of time that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect.

*(page 38 Children First 4.3.2),*

## Signs of abuse.

Signs of abuse can be physical, behavioural or developmental. A cluster or pattern of signs is the most reliable indicator of abuse. 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. This list is not exhaustive – for further information see Appendix 1, Children First (R.O.I.) or Cooperating to Safeguarding Children and Young People 2016). Some signs of abuse:

Type of Abuse	Physical Signs	Behavioural Signs
Physical	Unexplained bruising in soft tissue areas. Bites, burns, & Scalds	Becoming withdrawn or aggressive. Reluctance to change clothing.
Emotional	Drop in performance Crying	Regressive behaviour Excessive clinginess
Neglect	Weight loss Untreated fractures	Changes in attendance Reluctance to go home
Sexual	Torn or bloodstained clothing Inappropriate sexual awareness, behaviour or language.	Distrustful of adults Sudden drop in performance.
Emotional	Engagement in criminal activity, begging or child trafficking	Regressive behaviour fearful of adults

**N.B. Persistent or extreme bullying may also be classified as abuse.**