



Safeguarding Children Policies and Procedures 2010



Swim Ireland Safeguarding Children Policies and Procedures 2010

POLICY STATEMENT

Swim Ireland is fully committed to safeguarding the well-being of all its members with the welfare of children as paramount

Swim Ireland aims to foster and develop swimming (including synchronised swimming), diving, water polo and associated disciplines and to promote the development of physical and social qualities that come from swimming and associated sports

Swim Ireland is committed to the promotion of the teaching and practice of swimming (including synchronised swimming), diving and water polo and associated disciplines in accordance with current best practice

Every individual in the organisation should at all times show respect and understanding for each member's rights, overall development, safety and welfare

Every individual should conduct themselves in a way that embraces the ethos and principles of Swim Ireland and this document

Every individual should conduct themselves in a way that reflects the principles contained in the following documents:

Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport (Irish Sports Council & Sport NI),

Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection of Children (Department of Health and Children)

Our Duty to Care: Principles of Good Practice for the Protection of Children and Young People (Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety and Department of Health and Children)

Every adult member should be aware of their responsibilities and obligations in the welfare and protection of children

Success is not a destination; it is a journey we can take our children on

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General Information

Swim Ireland Safeguarding Children Policies and Procedures 2010

Introduction to Safeguarding Children

This document is a revision of the Swim Ireland Guidelines for Safeguarding Children 2008, and maintains the ethos and principles of Swim Ireland contained in the overall Policy Statement.

This document includes updated and extended information, and aims to provide this in a clear and precise format so that all members can follow the necessary procedures to ensure the welfare of children at all times.

Child welfare and protection policies are reviewed on an annual basis, and undergo a comprehensive review every two years to allow for changes in legislation and best practice for safeguarding children. This document will be updated and revised in line with the review.

Children's safety, welfare and protection are paramount in Swim Ireland. Swim Ireland will work with all affiliated clubs and bodies to make sure they implement these requirements, that members have access to required training and any necessary professional advice in creating child-centred clubs.

For all enquiries and any further information contact should be made with the Swim Ireland National Children's Officer or the National Designated Person:

Contact details:

National Children's Officer

Swim Ireland
Sport H
13, Joyce Way
Park West
Dublin 12

01 6251140
086 8560672
children@swimireland.ie

National Designated Person (CEO)

Swim Ireland
Sport HQ
13, Joyce Way
Park West
Dublin 12

01 6251122
086 8115637
ceo@swimireland.ie

Child Welfare Committee

The Child Welfare Committee is a Standing Committee of Swim Ireland annually appointed by the regions. The committee consists of one member from each region with the capability for two further members to be co-opted where required. The Child Welfare Committee works in conjunction with the National Children's Officer to promote and protect children's welfare and safety within Swim Ireland.

See Roles and Responsibilities for further information.

Club Development Officers

Club Development Officers can also be contacted for general child welfare enquires:

edo1@swimireland.ie
edo2@swimireland.ie
edo2@swimireland.ie

These Safeguarding Policies and Procedures are available for download on the Swim Ireland website on the Child Welfare page: www.swimireland.ie and from Swim Ireland Head Office.

Confidentiality Statement

The welfare of the child is paramount; no guarantees of secrecy or confidentiality can be given to information regarding a child as the child's welfare and safety supersedes all other considerations. Information should only be passed to individuals who are in appropriate positions to safeguard a child's welfare and safety.

Information regarding children and young people should therefore be managed in a respectful, professional and purposeful manner. Confidentiality must be a priority for all persons involved in suspected poor practice, or the subject of a concern or an allegation of abuse within a Club or Swim Ireland.

The rights of both the child and the person about whom information has been obtained or where a complaint or allegation has been made should be protected with consideration given to the following points:

Information is disclosed on a need to know basis, with care and sensitivity – this means that there will be certain people that need to know information about a child in order to provide a safe and secure environment. This includes passing information about poor practice and/or an allegation of abuse to the appropriate persons in order to deal with the matter, e.g. children's officer, designated person, complaints committee, statutory authorities. Information should not be disclosed to any individual who does not need to be involved. **

The parent/guardian must be given any information relating to their child unless to do so would endanger the child. In cases of an allegation or disclosure of abuse this information should be passed on to a parent/guardian by the statutory authorities. Advice should be taken from the statutory authorities if there is any concern.

Passing information to individuals on a need to know basis for the purposes of protecting a child is necessary to safeguard the child's welfare. Passing on any information concerning complaints, allegations of abuse, personal or other details related to any other person is a breach of confidentiality and would be considered a disciplinary offence – e.g. where a complaint involves a child only the persons relevant to dealing with the complaint need be given details; in this example these persons would include the complaints committee, children's officer, parties involved in the complaint.

Club Children's Officers and the Designated Person, as with any person involved with children within Swim Ireland, are bound by confidentiality. However due to the nature of the role of CCO's and DP's they may be in possession of more information pertaining to a child and this should be viewed as a resource in order to determine the well-being of any child. It is important that all information relating to any child at risk is passed on to the appropriate authorities.

Further advice on confidentiality can be sought from the National Children's Officer or the National Designated Person by any member; understanding the need for and the boundaries of confidentiality are important ingredients in creating a child centred environment where young people are safe and are protected.

**For further information regarding appropriate persons see the Swim Ireland Complaints and Disciplinary Procedures (see Policies and Procedures Section) and the Basis for reporting concerns and Standard Reporting Procedure (see Child Protection Section)

Go to: Safeguarding Children 2010 in Child Welfare Section on www.swimireland.ie

Glossary

Child/Young person – for the purposes of this document all individuals under the age of 18 are considered as children

Club – refers to a Swim Ireland affiliated Club, and includes National Regional and Affiliate bodies

Coaches – where specified refers to any individual, including teachers, involved in the practice of teaching and coaching any of the aquatic disciplines

Committee member – where specified refers to any person appointed to a Club, Regional or National Committee (personnel excluded from holding a committee position are Club Children’s Officers and any Coach involved in the practice of teaching or coaching for more than three (3) hours per week)

Leader – any person, whether paid or unpaid, with responsibility for children; roles include but not limited to children’s officers, designated persons, supervisor, team manager, sports science personnel, chaperone, helpers, committee members, tutors, coaches and teachers

Member – any person affiliated to Swim Ireland or acting as a representative of a member of Swim Ireland where they are governed by Swim Ireland rules; categories of membership as defined by the Swim Ireland Articles of Association

Parents/Guardians are defined as those who have parental responsibility for a child

Swimmers – this term includes *water polo players, divers, and synchronised swimmers* and for the purposes of the Swim Ireland Safeguarding Policies and Procedures the term refers to those individuals who are under 18 unless specified otherwise

Statutory Authorities – this refers to the government departments tasked with receiving reports or concerns relating to child abuse, namely the Social Work departments of the Health Service Executive and the Garda Síochána (Ireland) or the Health and Social Care Trusts and Police Service Northern Ireland (NI)

Working – refers to any individual working within sport whether paid or in a voluntary capacity; for those individuals who are employed the requirements of this document need to be observed in conjunction with any employment contract in place

Abbreviations used

Access NI – Access Northern Ireland, organisation responsible for processing vetting checks in Northern Ireland

CCO – Club Children’s Officer

Code of Ethics – Code of Ethics & Good Practice for Children’s Sport

CWC – Child Welfare Committee

DP – Designated Person (Club)

This document – Swim Ireland Safeguarding Children Policies and Procedures 2010

GVU – Garda Vetting Unit, organisation responsible for processing vetting checks in Ireland

HPC – Swim Ireland High Performance Centre (includes all centres in operation)

HSCT – Health and Social Care Trusts (Northern Ireland)

HSE – Health Services Executive (Ireland)

ISA – Independent Safeguarding Authority (NI)

ISC – Irish Sports Council, the Sports Council in Ireland

NI – Northern Ireland

PPU – Police Protection Units, PSNI sector responsible investigating child abuse allegations

PSNI – Police Service of Northern Ireland

ROI – Republic of Ireland

Sport NI – Sport Northern Ireland, the Sports Council in Northern Ireland

Core values in sport for young people (taken from Code of Ethics, ISC)

A young person's experience of sport should be guided by what is best for the young person. The stage of development and the ability of the young person should guide the type of activity provided within a club environment. Adults will need to have a basic understanding of the needs of young people, including their physical, emotional and personal needs. Sport gives young people an opportunity to be part of a team and to learn and develop skills; the sporting environment should be regarded by children as a safe place.

Integrity in relationships

Any adult interacting with young people in sport should do so with integrity and respect. An adult is in a position of trust and influence. Their 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, neglect and use of the position of trust to exploit or undermine children are unacceptable.

Quality atmosphere and ethos

Sport for young people should be fun, and be conducted in a safe, challenging and encouraging atmosphere. Adults should ensure a child-centred ethos that recognises that standards of behaviour are as important as standards for performance.

Fair play

All children's sport should be conducted in an atmosphere of fair play. Ireland and Northern Ireland have contributed to 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 with 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)

The importance of participation, best effort and enjoyment should be stressed. Encouragement for children to win should emphasise the necessity for this to be in an open and fair manner. Behaviour which constitutes cheating must be discouraged.

Equality

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

Training and competition

Competition and specialisation should be in response to a young person's age, ability and development and not the central ethos. A balanced approach to training and competition can make a significant contribution to the development of a young person, while at the same time providing fun, enjoyment and satisfaction. Too often demands are placed on children too early, which results in excessive levels of pressure on them. This can contribute to a high level of drop out from sport. Leaders should aim to put the welfare of the child first and competitive standards second. Adults need to find the balance between the child's desire to win and the right to participate irrespective of ability.

Creating a child centred environment

Swim Ireland structure

National

Swim Ireland has a National Children's Officer (NCO) and a National Designated Person (NDP). The NCO works in collaboration with the National Child Welfare Committee to ensure Swim Ireland is constantly striving towards the implementation of best practices for safeguarding children in the organisation.

The National Children's Officer provides advice and support for members. This role is supported by the National Designated Person, whose primary role is to liaise with statutory authorities in the instance of allegations of concern or abuse.

Region

The Swim Ireland Child Welfare Committee is comprised of nominated and co-opted representatives from every region. These representatives work on a regional basis promoting the implementation of Swim Ireland's child welfare requirements.

Details of the Child Welfare Committee can be found on the website

Club

Every Club with children in their membership has at least one Club Children's Officer whose role, in liaison with the NCO, is to advise and direct the Club towards being a child centred environment by implementing the Safeguarding Children Policies and Procedures 2010. The CCO role is also supported by a Club Designated Person.

Responsibilities of each of these roles are described in People in Sport section.

Primary measures for creating a child centred ethos and for safeguarding children are accomplished through education, awareness and monitoring

Education

The following child protection training/workshops tailored for sports are those required by Swim Ireland

Basic workshops

Children in Sport Awareness Workshop (Code of Ethics) – Irish Sports Council

Safeguarding Young People in Sport – Sport NI

Advanced workshops

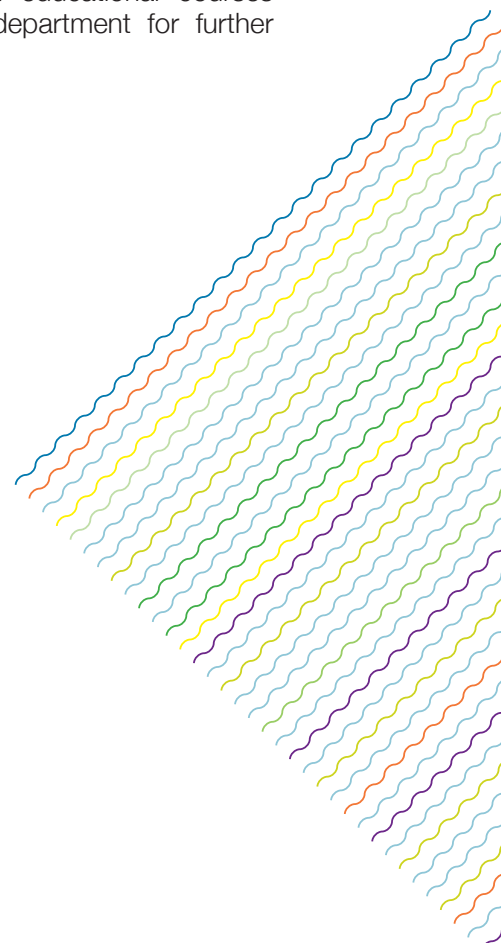
Club Children's Officer Workshop – Irish Sports Council

Designated Safeguarding Children Officer – Sport NI

Previous/alternative courses may be accepted on application to the NCO.

Access to the required training is available locally through the Local Sports Partnership network (Ireland) and the Sport Development Officers of local councils (NI). Central and regional training is available through Swim Ireland.

Basic child protection training is a pre-requisite for some Swim Ireland educational courses – apply to Education department for further information.



Awareness

An awareness of possible risks is achieved through promoting an open approach to issues.

Parents/guardians should discuss the topics with their children in a way appropriate to their age.

Swim Ireland Safeguarding Children Policies and Procedures 2010 should be available as resource material.

Adults must be active in promoting, understanding and taking action to implement this document.

All adults must be vigilant and follow the appropriate response to any concerns/abuse raised or disclosures from within or outside Swim Ireland made by a young person.

Leaders must respond to breaches of the codes of conduct and act to deal with poor practices

Members must recognise and understand the role of their Club Children's Officer.

All Clubs and members have access to the National Children's Officer and Child Welfare Committee ensuring advice is accessible.

Monitoring

Monitoring the implementation of this document helps members and Clubs identify remaining risk areas and reinforce the importance of these measures. The CCO should assist the committee in monitoring the member movements within the Club. Monitoring includes:

Information: sought during the affiliation process will identify measures in place, e.g. roles established; child protection training and vetting completed.

Check visits made to the Club or an associated activity.

Review of Club policies and procedures on requested submission of Club documentation.

Review of advice and information that has been sought by members.

Examining the issues dealt with by Clubs/Regions/NCO.

Undergoing risk assessments for activities and events and the facilities.

Provision of supervision for individuals requiring support or new to their role.

Clubs, Associate and Affiliate members

Club, Associate and Affiliate members of Swim Ireland are required to abide by the requirements for safeguarding children.

Clubs

Clubs whose membership includes children are required to abide by and implement the Swim Ireland Safeguarding Children Policies and Procedures 2010 and the Code of Ethics – some basic requirements are shown in Table 1.

Each Club must adopt this document and the Code of Ethics into the Club constitution at a Club AGM. The wording for this can be found in the Swim Ireland template constitution.

Clubs should promote the voice of young people within the Club, through CCO representation at committee meetings and representation at an AGM/EGM. For details of the CCO role – see Roles and Responsibilities

This document should be distributed to each CCO and DP and every Club should hold at least one copy for reference.

The requirements for roles within a Club are shown in Table 2 with child protection training required shown in Table 3.

The Club is responsible for ensuring all roles working in the Club are aware and fully appraised of this document.

Associate members

Associate members as defined by the Swim Ireland Articles of Association are required to abide by and implement the Swim Ireland Safeguarding Children Policies and Procedures 2010 in all their contact with children

Affiliate members

Affiliate members are as defined in the Swim Ireland Articles of Association should adopt and incorporate the Swim Ireland Safeguarding Children Policies and Procedures 2010 into their constitution.

Affiliate members may have rules and recommendations specific to the nature of their sport. However additional rules and recommendations must not be in violation of the Policy Statement and the obligation to ensure a child centred environment within their organisation.

Irish Water Polo Association(IWPA)

The IWPA operates the water polo programme of education and development for young people working within the principles and ethos of Swim Ireland.

Club requirements (Table 1)

Requirement	Mandatory	Recommended	Source of information (Swim Ireland)
Club Children's Officer	One CCO per Club – must not be on committee	Two CCO's per Club	Safeguarding Children 2010 Club Development Officers NCO
Coaches/Teachers Team Managers Officials	Numbers as required with appropriate qualifications and licensed (if relevant)		Safeguarding Children 2010 Club Development Officers Education department
Committee	Chairman Treasurer Secretary 5 other members	Other subcommittees as required	Safeguarding Children 2010 Club Development Officers
Designated Person	One per Club – must be on the committee (can hold other role)	Nominated person in case of absence of appointed DP	Safeguarding Children 2010 Club Development Officers NCO
Club information	Noticeboard for CCO/DP contact Supervision rota Selection criteria Event information	Other communications as required by Club	Safeguarding Children 2010 Club Development Officers NCO
Constitution	Required	See template constitution	Club Development Officers
Safety Statement and Risk Assessment	For all activities and facilities	See template safety statement	Safeguarding Children 2010 Club Development Officers NCO
Supervision of sessions	Coaching and teaching sessions (pool and dry land) All club events		Safeguarding Children 2010 Club Development Officers NCO

Requirements for members and their roles (Table 2)*

Recruitment & Selection – see Policy Section	Codes of Conduct – see People Section	Garda Vetting / Access NI – see Policy Section	Licensing – contact Education Dept
Committees	Children/Athletes	Committee	Associate members (by end June 2011)
Club Children’s Officer	Parents	Club Children’s Officer	Club Coaches
Designated Person	Committee	Designated Person	Team Managers
Coaches	Leaders including:	Coaches	Officials
Teachers	Club Children’s Officer	Teachers	
Team Managers	Designated Person	Team Managers	
Chaperones/Helpers	Coaches	Chaperones/Helpers	
Officials	Teachers	Officials	
	Team Managers	Associate members	
	Chaperones/Helpers	Licensed members	
	Officials		
	Associate members		

*Bold type = mandatory requirement

Child protection training requirements (Table 3)*

Child protection training – Basic approved course	Club Children’s Officer course/Designated Person Course (this is a follow on from the basic course)
Committees (by end 2011)	Club Children’s Officers (one per Club by end 2010)
Club Children’s Officer	Designated Person
Designated Person	Committee
Coaches	Coaches
Teachers	Teachers
Team Managers (by end 2010)	Parents
Officials (by end 2011)	
Associate members	
Chaperones/Helpers	
Parents	

*Bold type = mandatory requirement



People in Sport

Roles and Responsibilities

This section looks at the people with access to children and their roles and responsibilities. The section will describe the requirements of the role within Swim Ireland relevant to Club, Regional and National levels and for members who are working independently.

The roles and responsibilities of people working in sporting environments are wide and varied. Some individuals have substantial access to children, whilst others make policy decisions that affect the young people in sport. People working in other roles may not have access to children however they may indirectly impact on the young members in the Club, for example those working on committee. All roles are valuable to the running of a club, region and nationally.

Working alone with a young person should be avoided. It is the responsibility of Clubs and Regions to ensure no adult is left in this position.

General Requirements for all Swim Ireland Roles

Table 1 shows the various requirements for Clubs and Table 2 shows the requirements for specific roles including vetting and signing up to codes of conduct. The basic and advanced child protection training requirements are shown in Table 3

All roles described below must be subject to the recruitment procedures and undergo proper management and supervision for their role (see Policy section).

Further training and development should be available for individuals.

Club Children's Officer (CCO)

The appointment of Club Children's Officers is an essential element in the creation of a child centred atmosphere in Clubs. The CCO ensures that young people can talk freely and have a voice in the running of their Club. The CCO contact details must be easily available for all members.

Requirements

At least one Club Children's Officer is required, two are recommended for Clubs with more than one teaching, training or competitive squad and/or in excess of twenty children.

The CCO must have an understanding of the Swim Ireland Safeguarding Children document and of the Code of Ethics and abide by and annually reaffirm/sign the relevant code of conduct.

The CCO must have attended a Swim Ireland approved child protection course.

The CCO must submit a Garda Vetting or Access NI application form (as relevant) to ensure their suitability to work with children within Swim Ireland.

The CCO role is independent of the coaching and administrative structure of the Club; however the CCO must have access to the Club Committee by attending at least 50% of committee meetings per annum to advise and ensure the implementation of the Safeguarding Children Policies.

At least one CCO from each Club must attend the advanced follow on training (see creating a child-centred environment section for workshops available)

Skills and Attributes

The Club Children's Officer must be child centred in focus and have as his/her primary aim the safeguarding of children in the Club.

The CCO is the link between the children and the adults in the Club and takes responsibility for monitoring and reporting to the Club Committee on how Club policies and procedures including activities impact on children and leaders.

The CCO should be a good listener, approachable and available and understand the confidentiality requirements of the role – see the Confidentiality Statement

The CCO is a valuable resource to the Club Committee with a detailed knowledge of the requirements of Swim Ireland in relation to child protection and experience in best practice in dealing with children in sport

The requirement on the CCO to maintain confidentiality as set out in the Confidentiality statement The Safeguarding Children Policies and Procedures 2010 must be respected by all

Responsibilities of the Club Children's Officer

To act at all times with the welfare and protection of children as paramount

To be available for children, parents or leaders who have concerns, providing access through meetings or via phone

To promote awareness of Safeguarding Children Policies and Procedures 2010 within the Club, among young members and their parents/guardians

Ensure that the Club rules and regulations reference Safeguarding Children Policies and Procedures 2010 with regard to policies and procedures and monitor implementation including child protection training requirements

To influence policy and practice within the Club in order to prioritise children's needs, reporting regularly to committee, giving children a voice in their Club

To ensure committee keep records of all members on file, contact numbers and each member signs an annual membership form that includes signing up to the relevant code of conduct

To ensure that children know how to make concerns known to appropriate adults or agencies; and how children can express concerns regarding their sport

To pass any concerns relating to child protection in accordance with reporting procedures on to the Designated Person or, if necessary, the appropriate statutory authority.

To encourage the appropriate involvement of parents/guardians in the Club activities

To act as an advisory resource to the Club Committee and all other leaders on best practice in children's sport

To monitor changes in membership and follow up any unusual dropout, absenteeism or club transfers by children, leaders or teachers/coaches

To be an advocate for children in a complaints/disciplinary procedure to ensure the environment is safe and the process fair for children regardless of the complaint/disciplinary action.

To establish contact with regional representative from the Child Welfare Committee and the National Children's Officer at national level

To work with, and act as Designated Person if

necessary eg. if the DP is unavailable, unless a conflict of interest occurs where the welfare of the child would take precedence.

To operate with and encourage a strict code of confidentiality within the Club, including any matters concerning a child occurring outside the Club environment

Club Designated Person (DP)

The Designated Person must be an appointed committee member. The DP may hold another committee role and ideally is one of the officers of the Club. The DP is an essential role responsible for liaising with statutory authorities in the case of suspected or disclosed abuse. The role of the DP also provides support to the CCO and helps link the CCO with the committee. The contact details for the DP must be available with those of the CCO for all members.

Requirements:

One Designated Person is required in each Club, ideally an officer of the committee

The DP must have a full understanding and knowledge of the Swim Ireland Safeguarding Children document and the Code of Ethics and abide by and annually reaffirm/sign the relevant code of conduct.

The DP must have attended a Swim Ireland approved child protection course; it is recommended that the DP also attends the advanced follow on course.

The DP will be required to submit a Garda Vetting or Access NI application form (as relevant) to ensure suitability to work with children within Swim Ireland.

Responsibilities of the Designated Person

Be familiar with and carry out the reporting procedure as contained in this document

Consult informally with the local duty social work department to clarify areas of concerns regarding children

To inform the local duty social worker in the HSE/HSCT or Gardai/PSNI (in emergency) of concerns about individual children

Be aware of the local contacts and services available in relation to child protection

Communicate with statutory agencies and parents as appropriate

Assist with the implementation of this document for Clubs, liaising with the Club Children's Officer where required

Report persistent poor practice within the Club/ Swim Ireland to the National Children's Officer.

Act as an advisory source for matters of confidentiality, record keeping and data protection

Designated Persons and Club Children's Officers can seek advice from the National Children's Officer or the National Designated Person. It is not the remit of either role to investigate or validate child abuse concerns originating from within or outside the Club and they have no counselling or therapeutic role. These functions are filled by the statutory authorities, as outlined in *Children First* and *Our Duty to Care*.

Coaching, Teaching and Leader Roles

Coaches and Teachers

Coaches and Teachers come under the remit of the general term Leaders; however Coaches and Teachers involved in Clubs or as individuals working independently have the additional responsibility for teaching the development of core skills and abilities; and for coaching skills and abilities in a progressive way. These individuals have a responsibility for the development of young people with an emphasis on building on success rather than winning.

Leaders

Leaders may be involved in working a wide range of activities with young people in the Club environment. The term leaders includes those with specific roles and responsibilities previously outlined, e.g. children's officers, designated person and coaches and teachers.

Examples of other leader roles include but not limited to:

- Team Manager/Chaperone
- Pool Assistant/Helper
- Sports Science personnel (medical officer, physiologist, psychologist, strength and conditioning coach, biomechanist)
- Official (timekeeper, referee, competition judge)
- Event organiser (for competitions, team building and other Club based activities)

Individuals working in any of the positions in their professional capacity (usually limited to qualified Sports Science personnel) may have a code of conduct in place relating to their

profession or employment. This code should be observed in conjunction with the procedures in Safeguarding Children Policies and Procedures 2010 notwithstanding their code may take precedence due to the professional standing of the individual e.-g. a doctor seeing a 16 year old patient is permitted within a doctor's ethical code. This applies only where the individual is working within Swim Ireland in their professional capacity, all other individuals will be governed by this document.

Requirements for Coaches, Teachers and Leaders

Coaches, teachers and Leaders in sport must:

Understand the Swim Ireland Safeguarding Children Policies and Procedures 2010 by recognising and implementing best practice policies for the welfare of children and being child centred in their approach to their role

Follow all the procedures in the Safeguarding Children Policies and Procedures 2010 including the selection and recruitment process

Be adequately qualified for their position

Be provided with a clearly identified role plus the responsibilities specific to their position

Be given clear procedures to report to the Club Committee/relevant person on a regular basis

Attend a Swim Ireland approved child protection course

Submit a Garda Vetting or Access NI application form (whichever is relevant) and abide by the outcome of such

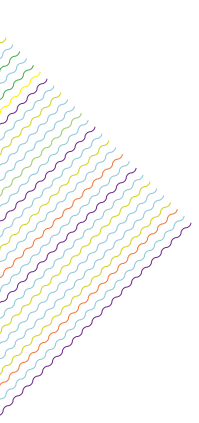
Abide by and annually reaffirm/sign the relevant code of conduct

Be an Associate member of Swim Ireland (applies only to coaches and teachers)

Have no management or elected position on the Club Committee (applies to coaches and teachers working in the Club as coach/teacher for more than three hours per week and all CCO's)

Committees

A Club Committee manages the administrative tasks for Club members and may well delegate certain specific duties to sub-committees or working groups. A Club Committee is usually nominated and appointed at the Club AGM – this does not negate the need to conduct the checks required through the recruitment



process. Sub committees should be subject to the same recruitment procedures as for any other role.

These requirements, where relevant, apply to Committees at all levels of Swim Ireland and will be reflected in the terms of reference for each committee.

Requirements for Committees

Committees at Club, Regional and National level must:

Ensure the Swim Ireland Safeguarding Children Policies and Procedures 2010 and the Code of Ethics are adopted and endorsed into the Club constitution

Have clearly defined roles and responsibilities for each committee position; including those for sub-committees or working groups (refer to template constitution for role descriptions)

Follow all the procedures the Swim Ireland Safeguarding Children Policies and Procedures 2010 including the selection and recruitment process

Ensure affiliation of Club members to Swim Ireland, including notification of changes to details, status, roles, etc. to Swim Ireland in a timely manner.

Together with the Club Children's Officers ensure that Swim Ireland Safeguarding Children Policies and Procedures 2010 is communicated and implemented ensuring a child centred ethos exists within the Club

Inform and communicate with members as regards Swim Ireland and Club rules and recommendations and any requirements of the constitution e.g. AGM's, EGM's and other meetings

Ensure the relevant individuals report regularly to the committee, e.g. Club Children's Officer, Coaches and Teachers, ensuring their expertise and knowledge is sought where appropriate

Attend a Swim Ireland approved child protection course

Ensure that the Club constitution and rules are in place and endorsed as required by the Club members

Submit a Garda Vetting or Access NI application form (whichever is relevant) and abide by the outcome of such

Abide by and annually reaffirm/sign the relevant code of conduct

Work with the Club Children's Officers to monitor changes in membership and follow up any unusual dropout, absenteeism or club transfers of children, leaders or teachers/coaches

Information to Swim Ireland to monitor drop outs and changes

Club committees are required to inform Swim Ireland each year with an updated list of persons they have registered. This happens through the membership process in October. New members can be added at any time during the year and must be submitted to Swim Ireland.

All drop outs, resignations or volunteers/staff let go or had their membership revoked by a Club or Region must be notified to Swim Ireland.

Parents/Guardians

Parents/guardians play a vital role in the promotion of an ethical approach to and a young person's enjoyment in sport. A parent/guardian is expected to be aware, respect the ethos and support the implementation of the Swim Ireland Safeguarding Children Policies and Procedures 2010 that are dedicated to the protection and welfare of their children.

A parent/guardian is not subject to a recruitment process unless taking on a separate specific role as described above.

Parents/guardians must recognise the roles within a Club, especially the Club Children's Officer and support the measures in place to create a safe environment for children.

Parents/Guardians should be involved in promoting an atmosphere that allows their children to participate for fun, safely and in the spirit of fair play and must be afforded the opportunity to represent the voice of their child/children through meetings or AGM's

Together with their child/children parents/guardians must annually reaffirm and abide by the relevant code of conduct

The parent/guardian should promote an open approach to safeguarding issues with their child/children appropriate to their age.

National Children's Officer

The Swim Ireland National Children's Officer shall develop, manage and implement the national programme including the Safeguarding Children Policies and Procedures 2010 in conjunction with the Swim Ireland Child Welfare Committee. The NCO will ensure the promotion of values, attitudes and structures which make the aquatic sports enjoyable for young people and will be the voice of young people within the organisation.

Responsibilities of the National Children's Officer

The National Children's Officer will:

Act at all times with the welfare and protection of children as paramount

Develop and circulate all relevant information and resource materials on children's sport to clubs and affiliates

Act as a point of contact for child welfare and protection enquiries

Be available to Regional, National and HPC Squads in the role of Children's Officer and advise and support Club Children's Officers at Club level

Be informed and respond to child welfare concerns arising within Swim Ireland at regional and national level including concerns arising from other processes, e.g. team trips, complaints, competitions or similar.

Act as an advocate in complaints and disciplinary processes at regional and national level to ensure a safe and fair environment for children regardless of the complaint/disciplinary action

Communicate with Club Children's Officers to ensure the implementation of the Safeguarding Children Policies and Procedure 2010 and the promotion of related education programmes, materials and events

Co-ordinate training in child welfare for clubs and related personnel

Monitor and feedback on clubs' implementation programmes and conduct on-site visits as appropriate

Liaise with clubs to ensure drop-out rates and transfers are monitored so that unusual developments or trends can be addressed, including transfer of sports leaders

Assist in the development of a system of record keeping which maintains confidentiality allowing appropriate information to be passed to relevant authorities where necessary

Review and revise the Swim Ireland policies and procedures for safeguarding children on a regular basis

Act as administrator and co-ordinator to the child welfare committee

Act as an Authorised Signatory/Counter-signatory for the purposes of Garda Vetting/ Access NI

Work with the National Designated Person, and with the agreement of the NDP the National Children's Officer may also act carry out the role and responsibilities of the NDP.

National Designated Person

The Swim Ireland CEO acts as the National Designated Person and is responsible for liaising with the statutory authorities regarding any areas of concern that arise at a regional or national level. This may involve informally consulting with the duty social work department or reporting any allegations or concerns of abuse to the statutory authorities. Where allegations or concerns are brought to the attention of the National Designated Person these will be referred to the local statutory authorities. In the absence of a CEO the Board of Swim Ireland will appoint an appropriately qualified Board member as a replacement.

Responsibilities of the National Designated Person

The National Designated Person will:

Be familiar with and carry out the reporting procedure as contained in Swim Ireland Safeguarding Children Policies and Procedures 2010

Consult informally with the local duty social work department to clarify areas of concerns regarding children

Inform/report to the local duty social worker in the HSE/HSCT or Gardai/PSNI (in emergency) of concerns about individual children

Liaise with the National Children's Officer on matters of concern regarding child welfare and safety at regional and national level

Liaise with senior Board members where a Swim Ireland member is required to step aside (dependant on the circumstances – this can be undertaken by the NDP) – see Allegations against Swim Irelands members.

Maintain record of action taken by Swim Ireland for any concerns or allegations of abuse made to the statutory authorities

Be aware of the local and national contacts and services available in relation to child protection

Communicate with statutory agencies and parents as required

Assist with the implementation of the child protection training requirements for Swim Ireland, liaising with the National Children's Officer where required

Support the NCO with the implementation of procedures within Swim Ireland to deal with persistent poor practice

Act as an advisory source for matters of confidentiality, record keeping and data protection

Where required act as an Authorised Signatory/ Counter-signatory for the purposes of Garda Vetting/Access NI

In agreement with the National Children's Officer, the National Designated Person may also act carry out the role and responsibilities of the NCO where considered appropriate.

Responsibilities of the Child Welfare Committee

The CWC, in conjunction with the appointed National Children's Officer, shall:

Ensure that the welfare of children is of paramount importance in all dealings of Swim Ireland.

Act in an advisory capacity to Swim Ireland on child welfare issues

Review on an annual basis Swim Ireland's child welfare documentation and the implementation of child welfare practices and procedures

Advise on the contents of any communications/ newsletters with Club Children's Officers

Advise on the maintenance of the child welfare section of the Swim Ireland website.

Review child welfare information received from Irish Sports Council and Sports Council NI

In their role as regional representatives be informed by the NCO of regional concerns and asked for their input

Should they receive any general concerns, pass these to the NCO

Pass on concerns of possible abuse, to the National Designated Person

Maintain confidentiality in all their dealings

The National Child Welfare Committee

The Committee's aim is to ensure a child centred approach and that children will be kept safe and have fun while swimming under the auspices of Swim Ireland. The Committee in conjunction with the CEO and the National Children's Officer shall agree the specific aims for child welfare and protection. The Committee shall support and aid the National Children's Officer in the implementation of these agreed aims.

The regionally appointed members of the Committee shall be the Child Welfare Committee representative for their Region. Further members may be appointed in accordance with the terms of reference for the committee.

Codes of Conduct and Poor Practice

The principles of the codes of conduct are to identify a standard of behaviour that is applied to a relationship between individuals involved in sport. The specific codes of conduct included here comply with recognised best practice for safeguarding young people. Breaches of any of the codes of conduct may be considered as issues of poor practice, unless the severity or nature of the breach is considered an abuse of a child in the terms as described in the Child Protection section. Breaches of the codes of conduct can be dealt with through the disciplinary and complaints process with the emphasis on resolution through an informal route.

Codes of Conduct

Within our aquatic sport there are a number of roles required to ensure that the athletes are provided with the best possible environment and opportunity to grow and develop; and to allow sport to become an integral part of their lives into the future. Each of these roles, including athletes, has a duty to behave and carry out their work, either voluntary or employed, in a safe and responsible manner.

The codes of conduct cover all roles that are involved in our aquatic disciplines.

Code for young people – this is predominantly for young people under 18, however this covers the behaviour expected of all athletes

Code for parents/guardians – this is for parents/guardians regardless of their membership status

Code for coaches, teachers and leaders – this code includes all other roles working in a voluntary or employed capacity within Swim Ireland including but not limited to coaches, teachers, tutors, team managers, officials, helpers, Club Children's Officers and Designated Persons.

Code for committees – this is for those tasked with the specific responsibility for the management of Swim Ireland, Regions or Clubs or other group given charge of a particular area i.e. a sub-committee or working group.

Recognising Signs of Poor Practice

Poor practice is not necessarily abuse, and should be considered as a breach of the codes of conduct or protocols.

Some indicators of poor practice would include the following:

- Bullying behaviour - See Bullying policy
- During involvement in sports where a young person is not treated equally, or their particular skills/needs are not recognised by a leader. E.g. one swimmer in a squad is regularly left out of Club activities, and does not get a

chance to take part with his/her team-mates.

- Regular and prolonged delay in collecting children from the pool leaving them at risk due to lack of supervision. E.g. a parent regularly leaving a child to wait after a session has ended, a child would be especially at risk if the pool is closed.
- Non-appearance of a coach/leader may result in a lack of supervision; however the primary responsibility of supervision of children in these instances lies with the parents. E.g. parents dropping children off for a pool session without checking that the coach/teacher/leader is present
- Raising your voice to be heard often takes place in a noisy pool but no child should be regularly shouted at. E.g. Leader consistently shouting at the swimmers throughout the sessions

Other examples of poor practice would include lack of encouragement for children with weaker skills; not listening to children's views and opinions; failure to address issues such as bullying; consistently not providing adequate supervision.

Where poor practice is a concern, advice may be taken from the Club Children's Officer. Often poor practices are due to a lack of understanding, awareness and education of what is considered a child centred environment. It is important to help and support those involved to ensure they receive the training and up-skilling to recognise this. In extreme cases the Designated Person may consider taking an informal consultation with the local Duty Social Worker to help with the determination of the situation. Poor practice should be dealt with through the appropriate complaints and disciplinary process.

Remember:

Young people should be motivated and encouraged, based on their needs and ability. Children should be encouraged to establish their goals and motivated to achieve them. Goals should be agreed between an athlete and coach and not imposed. These are indications of good practices with children involved in sport.



Code of Conduct for Young People

Swim Ireland promotes the provision of the best possible environment for all young people involved in the aquatic sports and the promotion of good practice in sport will depend on the co-operation of all involved, including the young members of clubs.

Young people have a great deal to gain from sport in terms of their personal development and enjoyment and they have rights which must be respected and responsibilities which they must accept. To respect the rights of children a sporting environment should be safe, enjoyable and free from harm. Young people should understand their responsibility to treat others with fairness and respect and should conduct themselves in a safe manner. For all levels of participation, from learn to swim to elite athletes this ethos is the same.

Children and adults should read and understand **The Code for Young People** to allow children to be involved in an enjoyable, organised and fair way in their sport appropriate to their level of participation.

Code of Conduct for Parents/Guardians

Parents/guardians have the primary responsibility for the care and welfare of their children.

Parents/guardians should work in partnership with their children's club to create and support a safe environment through the promotion of good practice and measures in place to prevent poor practice and all forms of abuse

Parents/guardians have a responsibility to ensure that the measures in the Safeguarding Children Policies and Procedures 2010 are implemented and to make sure their children are treated with fairness, respect and understanding.

They should foster an open approach to discussing safeguarding issues to allow their children to tell them about anyone causing them harm or making them feel upset.

Parents/guardians as representatives of their child/children are subject to and should be aware of the rules and procedures of Swim Ireland, the Regions and their Club, in particular where changes are made that affect them or their children. Parents/guardians should be informed of all matters relating to ethics and good practice. They 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.

Parents must read and understand **The Code for Parents** and should always remember that children play sport for their own enjoyment not that of the parents/guardians.

Codes of Conduct for Coaches, Teachers, Leaders (Volunteers), Committee Members

Adults in our aquatic activities should strive to create a positive environment for the children in their care. They have an overall responsibility to ensure that sport is positive and healthy experience for young people.

Leaders (parents, CCO's, club officials, teachers and coaches etc.) play a key role in the lives of children involved in Swim Ireland clubs. These individuals should have as their first priority the children's safety and enjoyment of the sport and should adhere to the rules and regulations set out in the Code of Ethics, this document and, where relevant, the Club Rules

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

Leaders working with young people in any branch of the aquatic disciplines under auspices of Swim Ireland should be suitably and appropriately qualified for their role.

Leaders should act as a role model for young people and promote the positive aspects of sport and maintain the highest standards of personal conduct.

Leaders must understand that the welfare of a child is paramount, and any conflict of obligation must put the welfare of the child first.

Leaders must read and understand **The Code for Leaders and Coaches/Teachers**

The Code for Young People

As an athlete you have rights and responsibilities. The following code will help identify these for you – if you are not sure ask your parent or your Club Children’s Officer to explain them.

This is your Code, whatever your ability or wherever you take part and you should encourage others to follow it.

In your sport you should

Be happy, have fun and enjoy taking part and being involved in your sport

Be treated fairly by everyone, adults and other athletes

Feel safe and secure when you are taking part in your sport

Be listened to and allowed to reply

Be treated with dignity, sensitivity and respect

Have a voice in the decisions that affect you within the Club and Swim Ireland

Say no to something which makes you feel uncomfortable

Train and compete at a level that is suitable for your age, development and ability

Know that any details that are about you are treated with confidentiality

Be loyal and give friends and teammates a second chance.

Your responsibilities are to

Treat Leaders who may be teachers, coaches, team managers, officials or other parents with respect

Be fair at all times, do your best to achieve your goals; be gracious if you do not achieve your goals

Respect other athletes and your opponents

Be part of the team and respect and support other team members both when they do well and when things go wrong;

Never bully or use bullying actions against another person; you should never hurt other team members, athletes or your opponents, this includes never taking/damaging their property, never spreading rumours or telling lies about other young people or adults

Keep to rules and guidelines set by Swim Ireland, the Region and your Club and make sure you understand the rules e.g. if you play a team sport what contact is allowed; as a swimmer in

competitions what suits are allowed

Take part in your sport without cheating; you are responsible for not cheating and must not allow others to force you to cheat

Listen to and respect decisions made by others; if you feel unjustly treated you can talk to your Club Children’s Officer or your parents;

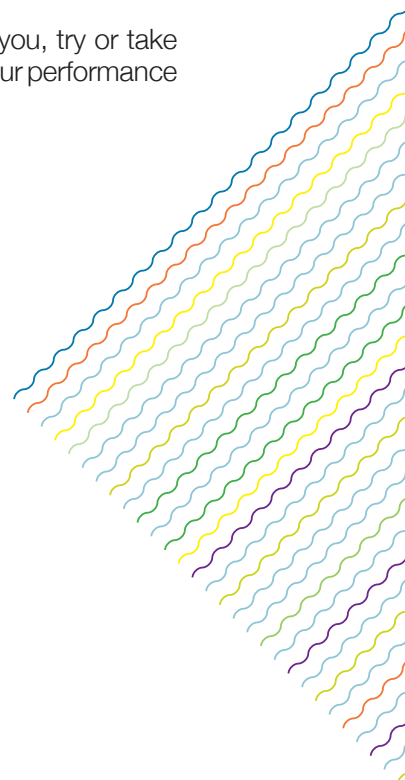
Behave in a manner that is respectful towards Swim Ireland, your region and your club

Never use violence or bad language; do not shout or argue with leaders, team mates or opposing participants – talk to someone if you are upset or angry or if someone has caused you to be upset or angry

Talk with your Coach, Team Captain, Club Children’s Officer or a trusted Swim Ireland member if you have any difficulties or do not understand something; you should never keep secrets about any person who may have caused you harm or has made you feel upset

Understand sport can be hard work and requires discipline to achieve your goals; you should understand the commitment and attendance needed – set at a level for what you want to achieve; talk through any worries or concerns with your parent and/or your Club Children’s Officer

Do not, or allow others to make you, try or take banned substances to improve your performance



The Code for Parents/Guardians

You should help and support the implementation of best practice policies in your child's/children's Club by following the code below:

Become members of the Club and contribute your time and effort in the daily running of the Club; no club can operate successfully and safely without the help of volunteers

Understand and ensure your child/children abide by **The Code for Young People**

Be available for specified duties if and when required; some duties are mandatory and form part of the procedures for safeguarding your children; some will be at the request of the Club.

Have an awareness of and respect for Leaders and other adults and their roles within the Club

Respect and abide by the decisions made by the Committee and other Leaders, these should be made in the best interests of the children in the Club

Understand the complaints process and follow the proper procedure if you feel unjustly treated, with the knowledge that any complaint will be dealt with fairly and confidentially

Know your child's training and/or competitive programme, and accept it is your responsibility for delivering and collecting your child/children. Parents/guardians should ensure they do not leave their child/children waiting unsupervised at any time

Ensure the environment is safe and enjoyable for your child/children

Promote fair play and the positive aspects of sport

Be a role model for your children and other young people by maintaining the highest standards of personal conduct and respectful behaviour in any activity related to the Club or Swim Ireland.

Allow your child to focus their efforts and success in terms of their goals rather than winning being the main objective

Promote participation for children that is fun, safe and in the spirit of fair play

Ensure appropriate leaders are informed regarding any absenteeism, medical conditions or other relevant matters concerning your child

Arrange an appropriate time and place for discussing any matter with leaders and coaches; communication should not take place whilst leaders and coaches are in a position of supervision or responsible for other young people

You should have the opportunity to put forward suggestions and comments

Provide the Club and your child with emergency contact information and to be reasonably available in case of emergency

Abide by the procedures and policies in Safeguarding Children Policies and Procedure 2010 especially with regard to the use of mobile phones, any type of camera and videoing equipment.

Be aware and abide by the Swim Ireland Safeguarding Children Policies and Procedure 2010 and the rules and constitution of your own Club

The Code for Leaders and Coaches/Teachers

You must follow the points stated in the code of conduct as described below:

Be familiar with and follow the required procedures in the Code of Ethics, this document, Swim Ireland rules and Regional and Club rules

Carry out your duties and responsibilities understanding that the welfare of children is paramount

Where relevant you should be qualified for your position and have obtained up-to-date knowledge and skills as required by Swim Ireland

Create a safe and enjoyable environment for children by:

- Planning and preparing appropriately and be positive during sessions
- Making sure all levels of participation should be enjoyable and fun,
- Prioritising skill development and personal satisfaction over highly structured competition.
- Setting age appropriate and realistic goals
- Avoiding favouritism – each child will need attention according to their sporting needs
- Praising and encouraging effort as well as results
- Showing respect for all involved, children and adults

Recognise and ensure the welfare of children by:

- Keeping attendance records
- Not exposing a child to criticism, hostility or sarcasm
- Never swearing at, ridiculing, shouting unnecessarily or arguing with a child
- Being aware of a child's developmental needs and how a child may be psychologically or physically affected (if relevant for your role)

- Working in an open environment
- Ensuring there is adequate supervision
- Involving and updating parents, especially if a problem has arisen
- Respecting a child's sensitivity to their height and weight
- Never using physical punishment or force
- Not using verbal or physical punishments or exclusion for mistakes
- Do not allow or engage in bullying behaviour, rough physical games, sexually provocative games, never allow or engage in inappropriate physical contact of any kind or make sexually suggestive comments about or to a child

Co-operate with the recommendations from medical and ancillary practitioners in the management of a child's medical or related problems. You may request a certificate of medical fitness to ensure safe continued participation

Avoid carrying out any medical testing or giving advice of a personal or medical nature if not qualified to do so or undertake any form of therapy (hypnosis etc.) in the training of children. Any such activity, if qualified, must only be with parent/guardian consent and the understanding of the child

Keep any information in relation to a swimmer of a personal or medical nature strictly confidential unless the welfare of the child requires the passing on of this information.

Never exert undue influence over a participant in order to obtain personal benefit or reward including the abuse of trust of your position in any relationship with an athlete.

Acknowledge the use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco is incompatible with a healthy approach to sporting activity and must be discouraged. Avoid the use of alcohol at all times whilst responsible for young people e.g. training sessions, events and on trips with young people

The Code for Committees

Committees should follow the points as below:

Be familiar with the Code of Ethics, this document, Swim Ireland Rules and any Regional and/or Club rules

Within a Club ensure and approve the appointments of Club Children's Officers (non-committee) and a Designated Person (on committee)

Carry out your required duties for Swim Ireland, Region or Club understanding that the welfare of children is paramount

Follow the Swim Ireland policies and procedures so that all activities are in accordance with this document:

- Create safe environment for young people
- Ensure the codes of conduct are in place for all involved
- Provide adequate supervision for training sessions with an attendance record being kept
- Recruit volunteers/employees ensuring vetting and training is completed
- Understand and implement the complaints and disciplinary procedures
- Ensure safe induction and supervision of volunteers/employees
- Ensure other activities follow procedures e.g. away trips
- Ensure all required procedures contained in the Safeguarding Children Policies and Procedure 2010 are adopted

Ensure complaints including rumours are not ignored and dealt with appropriately, following the relevant procedures including

- Recording all incidents/issues
- Reporting the incident/accident or injury
- Informing the parent or guardian (if child is involved)

Keep and store securely all documentation with respect to meetings, correspondence and minutes of committee meetings together with General Meetings, including the Treasurers report

Set up, maintain, revise and implement rules in the best interests of Swim Ireland, the Region or Club. Rules should not contravene any Swim Ireland rules and must be communicated to the relevant members.

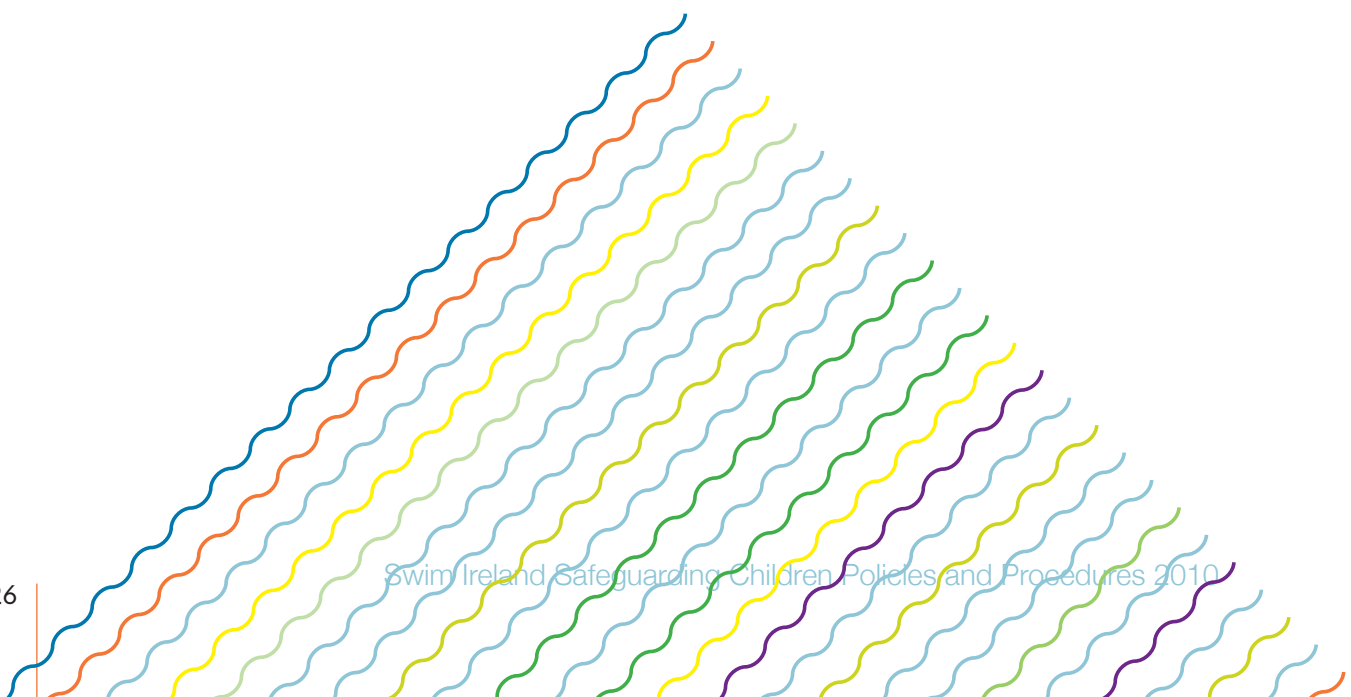
Ensure effective communications with members through recognised means e.g. e-mail, web posting, use of noticeboards, etc.

Inform parents/guardians in advance and obtain consent for children to be involved in events outside the normal activities within the aquatic disciplines e.g. fun day out, fundraising.

Inform parents/guardians where a matter or problem arises relating to their child

Monitor, with the Children's Officer, any changes in membership and any unusual dropout, absenteeism or Club transfers of children or leaders. Ensure these are followed up to determine the reason for the trend.

Children's Officers and Coaches must be invited to at least 50% of committee meetings per annum to report and advise the Committee. Children's Officers and Coaches/Teachers may not be appointed/elected members of the committee



Codes of Conduct Annual Declaration

The following declarations are to be signed annually by all members. The completed declarations should be held by the secretary of the committee/club.

It is presumed that by submitting membership to Swim Ireland that every Club member has signed the appropriate code of conduct.

Young People

I have read, understood and agree to abide by the Code of Conduct for Young People, Safeguarding Children 2010 and the Rules of Swim Ireland and _____ (enter Club name)

Signature of Young person _____ Date _____

Please print name _____

Parents/Guardians

I have read, understood and agree to abide by the Code of Conduct for Parents/Guardians, Safeguarding Children 2010 and the Rules of Swim Ireland and _____ (enter Club name)

Signature of Young person _____ Date _____

Please print name _____

Leaders, Coaches and Teachers Declaration

Have you ever been asked to leave a sporting organisation? Yes No

Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence or been the subject of a caution; a Bound Over Order; or are you at present the subject of criminal investigations? Yes No

(If you have answered yes to either questions above we will contact you in confidence)

I have read, understood and agree to abide by the Code of Conduct for Leaders, Safeguarding Children 2010 and the Rules of Swim Ireland and _____ (enter Club name)

If an allegation of abuse is made against me, I agree to step aside until the results of the investigation are completed.

Signed _____ Date: _____

Print Name _____ Child protection number/date: _____

Club _____ Coach/Teacher position: _____

Committee Member Declaration

Have you ever been asked to leave a sporting organisation? Yes No

Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence or been the subject of a caution; a Bound Over Order; or are you at present the subject of criminal investigations? Yes No

(If you have answered yes to either questions above we will contact you in confidence)

I have read, understood and agree to abide by the Code of Conduct for Committees, Safeguarding Children 2010 and the Rules of Swim Ireland and _____ (enter Club name)

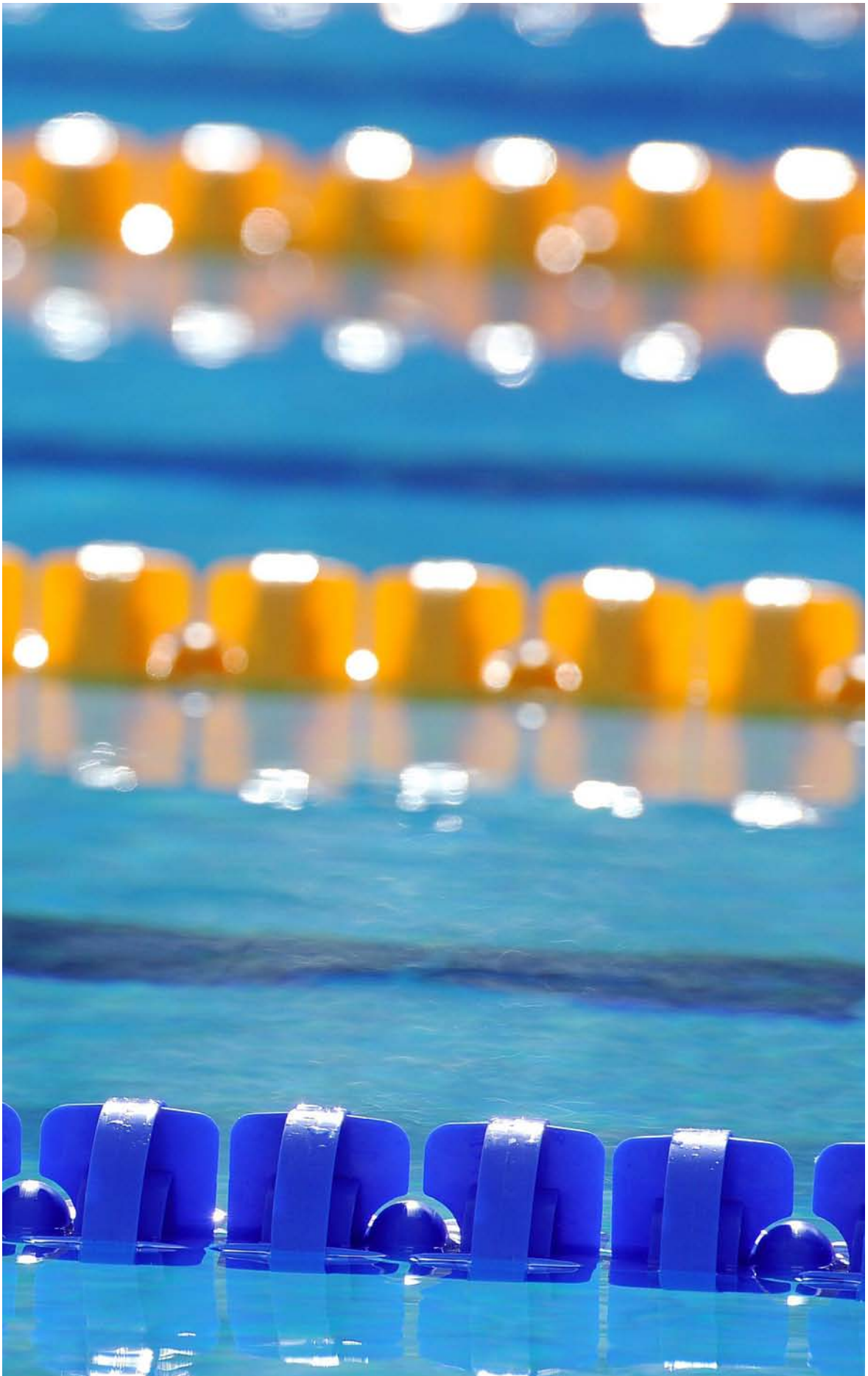
If an allegation of abuse is made against me, I agree to step aside until the results of the investigation are completed.

Signed _____ Date: _____

Print Name _____ Child protection number/date: _____

Club _____ Committee position: _____

All codes of conduct are available on the Child Welfare pages on the Swim Ireland website: www.swimireland.ie



Safeguarding Policies and Procedures

Swim Ireland have a number of policies to assist and support Regions and Clubs to implement the best practices in relation to keeping children safe. Some of these are published as separate documents and are subject to review and update at different times. For these policies, a summary is given below with reference given to the full documentation and where it can be located. These documents are included at all levels within Swim Ireland and will be an integral part of any accreditation programme. Links to the recent versions of all of these documents are available in the Child Welfare section of the Swim Ireland website and are available from the Swim Ireland Office.

Current policies and procedures in place

Current policies and procedures are described in the sections below. Some of the policies are included in full and some have been summarised with information as to where the full policy can be located. The complete policies with any related procedures are detailed on the Swim Ireland website. This enables all information to be kept up to date and to reflect changes in best practice and legislation concerning young people.

The summaries described below are a brief outline and should not be relied on in the event of putting any of these policies or procedures in place. It is not the intention here to replace or alter anything that might be contained currently or in the future within any of the detailed policy documents. The full policy and procedure should always be referenced and used.

Policies and Procedures

Full policy included:

Bullying – reviewed and extended document Sept 2010

Monitoring member movements – new document Sept 2010

Age Considerations – new document Sept 2010

Disability - new information 2010

Summarised policies:

The Swim Ireland Rule Book – publication titled: Swim Ireland Rule Book (July 2010)

Vetting Policy – publication titled: The Swim Ireland Vetting Policy, (January 2009)

Recruitment procedure – revised Sept 2010

Supervision – revised Sept 2010

Complaints and Disciplinary Policy – publication titled: The Swim Ireland Complaints and Disciplinary Procedure (Sept 2009)

Travelling and Away Trip Policy – publication (Sept 2010); included in the Team Manager Training programme

General Risk Assessment Policies – publications titled:

Assessing the Risks for the Safety of Children, (revised Sept 2010)

Policy to determine suitability of Swim Ireland Members (revised Sept 2010)

Communication – revised and updated Sept 2010

Photography and videoing – revised and updated Sept 2010

Physical contact – revised Sept 2010

Substance misuse – Anti-Doping Policy from Irish Sports Council

Safety – outline information 2010

Bullying

Definition of bullying

Bullying can be defined as repeated aggression be it verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against others.

Bullying and harassment should be prevented by anticipation of an occurrence and having a planned course of action.

Bullying Behaviour

Bullying behaviour is intentionally aggravating and intimidating and occurs mainly in social environments such as schools, clubs and other organisations with children and young people. It includes behaviour such as teasing, taunting, threatening, and hitting and extortion by one or more children against a victim. A bully operates using furtiveness, threats and fear. Bullying can therefore only survive in an environment where the victim does not feel able to tell someone who can help or in a situation where it is not safe to do so. Bullying can take place between adults, children and child to adult or adult to child, and is not restricted by age, socio-economic background or sex. Each case of bullying must be dealt with as soon as the symptoms are apparent or bullying is suspected.

Types of Bullying

Bullying can occur in a number of ways and in various forms. Traditionally bullying would take place where the opportunity arises for a bully to meet a victim face to face – e.g. in a changing room, going to or from school/Club, travelling on a bus. This afforded a victim the opportunity to escape situations where they may be vulnerable. Unfortunately today the technological advances in methods of communications has meant that people are much more accessible through the use of mobile phones, email, social networking sites, etc. This means that a victim can be targeted by a bully without being physically present.

Bullying need not be solely physical where a victim is physically harmed; bullying can be verbal, involve the use of gestures, by exclusion, and using extortion.

Recognising the signs of bullying

The following indicators are warning signs that a young person might be the subject of bullying:

Reluctance to come to a venue or take part in activities

Physical signs (unexplained bruises, scratches, or damage to belongings)

Stress-caused illness – headaches, and stomach aches which seem unexplained

Fearful behaviour (fear of walking to swimming, going via different routes, asking to be driven)

Frequent loss of, or shortage of, money with vague explanations

Having few friends

Changes in behaviour (withdrawn, stammering, moody, irritable, upset, distressed)

Not eating

Attempting suicide or hinting at suicide

Anxiety (shown by nail-biting, fearfulness, tics)

This list is not exclusive to a victim of bullying; there may be other possible reasons for many of the signs listed above. Some signs will be more attributable to the bullying occurring within a child's peer group and some where an adult is concerned.

What Clubs can do

The Club should state that bullying is not an accepted behaviour towards anyone in the Club whether they are a child, coach, leader, other volunteer or parent.

Anyone found to be bullying others will be dealt with seriously both in regards to the behaviour exhibited and the reasons for the behaviour.

The possibility of people being bullied should be discussed openly within the Club and all young people and staff informed of both the Clubs' views on bullying and ways in which bullying can be prevented /stopped. It should be emphasised that anyone can be the victim of bullying and that being or feeling bullied is not a sign of weakness and does not make the victim a less valuable person.

Prevention

There are certain times that bullying occur, usually where an individual feels threatened by feelings of inadequacy, or has been over harshly punished; where there is a lack of supervision or the bully is themselves a victim elsewhere. By recognising where bullying may occur e.g. changing rooms, on a team bus and why it may occur e.g. change in squad structure with children moving 'up' or 'down' lanes, new children joining the Club, the CCO's can work with members to prevent this detrimental behaviour.

Members should be reminded and encouraged to recognise behaviour that promotes the rights and dignity of all individuals and follows the codes of conducts.

The CCO's can hold regular awareness workshops to emphasise the unacceptable behaviour of bullying and create an ethos within the Club that encourages all members to report bullying

Action to be taken

All young people should be given the time and the opportunity to say how they are being bullied and reassured that they were right to tell.

The Club Children's Officer should keep the young person informed of the proposed action and to take the young person's feelings into account.

The child's parents should be informed and guided as to how the bullying will be dealt with. The complaints procedure may be used as a mechanism to deal with the issue

Dealing with bullying – children

Where bullying is between children, and this need not necessarily between peer groups, there generally is always a reason for a bully to behave in a bullying way. This does not mean the behaviour is acceptable – it needs to be dealt with immediately. Bullying is a breach of the codes of conduct which is a disciplinary offence; however this may not be the most effective way to deal with bullying behaviour.

The environment for children to raise issues of bullying must be encouraged, through regular meetings with CCO's and ensuring children are aware of who to and how to raise issues. A useful tool for resolving bullying behaviour is the No Blame Approach (described on page 32). This has the advantage of bringing all parties together under adult supervision and affords the

bully the chance to understand the destructive nature of their behaviour without apportioning blame directly. If there is no resolution through the No Blame approach advice should be sought from the NCO and the possibility of resolving the matter through a complaints process must be considered.

It is also important to provide support for any child who is a victim of bullying and obtain the cooperation of parents to help with preventative measures; bullying should never be ignored or left for someone to take the law into their own hands.

Dealing with bullying – adults

Where the alleged bully is reported as being an adult the matter may be dealt with through an informal process or a formal complaints procedure. However the feelings of the young person involved must be considered. The CCO should approach the young person to establish what is happening and how they are being bullied.

An informal approach can be used with the adult concerned where they can reply to the issues raised by the child. It is imperative that the child feels protected in all these actions, especially where the adult is in a position of authority or power over the child. It may be necessary to observe the adult interaction with young people to establish if their behaviour is breaching the codes of conduct.

If an informal approach does not resolve the bullying as perceived by the young person the CCO should direct the matter to the complaints process, observing all the boundaries of confidentiality.

Who should deal with bullying?

Dealing with bullying behaviour which occurs in the aquatic environment is the responsibility of all Leaders within Swim Ireland and the Clubs. The Club Children's Officers would usually be involved and may act as an intermediary in a resolution. Bullying can also be dealt with formally through the complaints process.

More extreme forms of bullying may be regarded as physical or emotional abuse and should be reported to the Health Services Executive/Health and Social Care Trust or An Garda Síochána/Police Service NI. The Designated Person should consult informally with the statutory authorities if any concerns arise.

The No Blame approach can be managed with the CCO's

The NO BLAME approach

Step 1 – Meet with the victim

If you find that there has been an incident of bullying, first talk to the victim. At this stage find out who was involved and what the victim is now feeling. Try asking the following questions:

- Was it verbal or physical intimidation?
- How hurt is the victim
- Was it within his/her own peer group?
- Reassure come out in the investigation
- Actively listen
- Advise the victim of the next steps that will be taken.

Step 2 – Meet with all involved

Arrange to meet with all those involved; this should include some bystanders, those who may have colluded, those who joined in and those who initiated the bullying.

Have a maximum of six to eight in the group keep the number controllable

Make a point of calling a 'special' meeting

Ensure the severity of the topic is understood by all

Speak only of the hurt caused in general terms with no reference to the victim

Play on the conscience of all – ask questions like: How would you feel? Would you like it done to you?

Step 3 – Explain the problem

The distress being suffered as a result of the bullying incident is explained. At this stage the details of the incident or the allocation of the blame is not discussed. Explain the feelings of loneliness, feeling left out, rejected, laughed at. Try asking questions:

- Would they like it if it happened to them?
- Someone here in this group was bullied by someone within the group; what could we do to see it does not happen again?

Listen and watch out for reactions and pick up on any without isolating anyone, this is an opportunity to find out how the others in the group feel about bullying.

Step 4 – Share the responsibility

Explain what steps / controls may have to be introduced to prevent further incidents and how everyone will lose out as a result. This could range less free time, or social activities, i.e. less opportunity to interact individually allowing the bullying behaviour to continue to removal of the means, e.g. if involved, mobile phones removed for certain periods. Any steps introduced must be in the ethos of prevention and not punishment and parents of the children involved should be informed.

Step 5 – Ask the group for their ideas

At this stage the group is encouraged to suggest ways that would make a victim feel happier. All positive responses are noted. Use phrases "if it were you" to encourage a response. Listen to all suggestions and note them

Step 6 – Leave it to them

Now the problem has been identified, solutions suggested, the problem is now handed over to the group to solve. Arrange to meet again in a week's time. Pass responsibility over to the group and give a time frame within which something must be done

Step 7 – Meet them again

Meet everyone, including the bully, discuss how things are going, who is doing what and have there been other incidents. This allows for continual monitoring and also keeps all involved in the process.

Again enforce the idea of the team looking after each other at regular intervals to ensure it is known that bullying or intimidating behaviour will not be tolerated.

Monitoring member movements

Policy

Swim Ireland have a strict notification requirement with regard to members leaving the sport. All movements, transfers and drop outs must be recorded and notified to Swim Ireland who can then monitor any trends and identify any unusual movements.

General considerations

Clubs are required to inform Swim Ireland each year with an updated the list of persons they have registered. This happens through the membership process in October. Clubs must monitor membership numbers and check for the reason for leaving the Club or sport. This is done by the Club committee in conjunction with the CCO's. In the majority of cases the reasons are clear; however this may also help to identify an underlying issue. All drop outs, resignations or volunteers/staff that have been let go or any member that has had their membership revoked by a Club or Region throughout the year must be notified to Swim Ireland at the time.

Specific causes for dropping out of sport

There are various reasons why people leave sport, e.g. financial restraints, move away from the area, dislike the sport. Some reasons for drop-out, especially in young people may be a cause for concern and must be monitored. Such reasons may include bullying, school work, not included in activities/competitions, not achieving goals, being shouted at, friends leaving etc. There are specific reasons that can occur in highly competitive environments including:

Burnout

Burnout can occur when an activity that was once a source of fun and enjoyment becomes associated with progressive physical and psychological distress. This can be as a result of the time involved in training, high expectations, and pressure from adults. It manifests itself with signs of anxiety and stress, where the child no longer has fun and becomes overwhelmed by the demands of the training and competition leading to a desire to drop-out of the sport.

The following practices can be seen as harmful and contributory factors to dropping out of sport:

Pressure on a young person to perform at a level beyond their capacity based on age or development

Overtraining and increased demands on a child leading to burnout

Knowingly permitting an injured young person to continue in an activity

Failure to create a safe environment for the child

Failure to account for known ailments or weaknesses of the young person

Psychological Stress

Psychological stress in the sporting context may be caused by:

Over emphasis on winning

Expectations that are inappropriate for the age of the child

Inappropriate use of sanctions

Criticism, use of inappropriate language or rejection

Failure to provide support, encouragement and involvement

Disapproval of performance

Psychological stress and burnout may be manifested by disturbance to sleep, irritability and a lack of energy. Young people will often show a change in behaviour becoming frequently absent and showing signs of illness.

To ensure that children maintain a healthy attitude to and environment for participating in sport their views should be listened to and the importance of winning should be de-emphasised, encouraging the development of individual skills and effort. Any young person who shows an aptitude for sport should not be expected to participate in a range of team sports, across a range of age groups. The sport should be appropriate to the age of the child. Activities should be fun and enjoyable – ensuring all children are able to participate.

Age Considerations

Sport is an ideal environment for fostering long term friendships regardless of age, race, community background, ability or gender. This includes ages under 18 and over 18 mixing and taking part in sport for the benefit of each other. Some consideration should be given to all athletes in recognising the vulnerable areas where ages are mixed:

Within pool and dry-land training sessions

Playing under 18's on a senior team

Under 18's gaining teaching/apprentice coaching qualifications

During teaching sessions where an over 18 teacher may be in the water from a safety aspect

Within these areas the supervising adult should ensure that any young person is comfortable in their role and environment. It is also important that all athletes know to raise any issues or queries with their Club Children's Officer or other trusted adult.

There are some situations that must be avoided as follows:

Over and under 18 athletes sharing rooms

Over 18's being regularly responsible for transporting under 18 athletes unless this is with parental permission

Over 18 athletes acting in a supervisory role in the absence of the appointed supervisor or instead of a supervisory rota in place

As a reminder athletes and leaders must never share rooms regardless of age, this is not permitted in Swim Ireland.

The only exception that can be allowed for is where a parent takes the responsibility for sharing a room with their child.

These measures are to protect both the under 18's and the adult in these circumstances and to make sure there is clarity around the differences.

Disability

The safeguarding and welfare procedures for children with a disability are the same as non-disabled children, however disabled children may have increased needs relating to physical, sensory, cognitive and/or communication impairments. Attention should be paid to promoting and maintaining the highest standards of care and training.

Vulnerability

Disabled children are more vulnerable to abuse due to their increased needs. The attitudes and assumptions of people in general leads to a misconception that abuse occurring to disabled children is not as harmful; and is impossible to prevent. This contributes to the lack of reporting of abuse that is happening to disabled children.

Disabled children have a greater dependency on adults and may also have a barrier to effective communication, increasing their vulnerability.

Swim Ireland Rule Book

Swim Ireland Rule Book Policy

All Swim Ireland members, Clubs and Regions are bound by and must comply with the Swim Ireland Rule Book (as amended from time to time).

General Information

Swim Ireland is a company limited by guarantee and its constituent documents are its Memorandum and Articles of Association (M&A). The Swim Ireland M&A deals primarily with the functioning of Swim Ireland as a legal entity (i.e. as a company) but does not provide the level of detail required for the day-to-day operating of the organisation. Therefore, the Swim Ireland Rule Book deals with the more general aspects of the day-to-day operations of Swim Ireland.

Any claim that a Member, Club, Region or any other person bound by the provisions of this Rule Book has breached any part of the Rule Book will be dealt with through the Swim Ireland Complaints and Disciplinary Procedures.

The Swim Ireland Rule Book specifically states that all members, Clubs and Regions should be aware of the contents of the Safeguarding Children Policies and Procedure 2010 and use best endeavours to conform and comply with the non-mandatory aspects of this document. Sanctions may be applied in the event that Members, Clubs and Regions fail to follow the set down best practice to comply with the non-mandatory aspects of this document.

Specific Child Welfare and Protection Rules

All members, Clubs and Regions must comply with the mandatory sections of the Safeguarding Children Policies and Procedure 2010 (as amended from time to time) and sanctions will be applied where these mandatory requirements are not strictly adhered to.

An individual convicted of any charges relating to the abuse of a child will be immediately and permanently excluded from membership of Swim Ireland in any capacity.

An individual not convicted of alleged child abuse, but where the offences are considered by the Director of Public Prosecutions to be chargeable, i.e. the matter should proceed to court, is above the threshold of risk considered acceptable by Swim Ireland. This outcome will result in immediate and permanent exclusion of that individual from membership of Swim Ireland in any capacity.

These rules as stated in the Swim Ireland Rule Book are fully described in the relevant policy documents, including the Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures 2010 and the Policy to determine suitability of Swim Ireland Members following allegations of child abuse (revised Sept 2010)

Vetting Procedures

The Swim Ireland Vetting Policy

The Swim Ireland Vetting Policy Garda Vetting (Ireland) and Access NI (Northern Ireland) policy requires any personnel working with or involved in the management or decision making process involving children to undergo a check against convictions and prosecutions to ensure suitability for their role or position. The Swim Ireland Vetting Policy will follow the demands of legislation for both Ireland and Northern Ireland.

General Information

The Swim Ireland policy requires that all existing and new personnel in identified positions undergo a check.

The positions requiring vetting are (also see Table 2):

Swim Ireland employees

Members of the Board and elected Standing Committee members with influence over decisions involving children

National Coaching and Teaching staff including Team Management

Club Children's Officers

Designated Persons

All coaching and teaching personnel in Clubs and Regions

Club and Regional team managers

Club and Regional Committee Officers (for Clubs that have under-18 memberships) Associate members

Garda vetting /Access NI checks should be included in all recruitment and selection processes within Swim Ireland and its members.

The responsibility for ensuring the relevant members within a Club or Region have completed and returned the required forms lies with the Club or Region.

The relevant forms are available from Swim Ireland and accompanying documentation explains the procedure.

The Vetting Policy is available on the Swim Ireland website

Vetting and Identification forms and guidance notes are also on the website

Recruitment Policy and Procedure

Recruitment Policy

Recruitment is required for all positions within Swim Ireland, Clubs and Regions and should be conducted in accordance with the full policy and procedure.

General

Opportunities for young people to participate in sport may not exist without the time and commitment of volunteers. Research has shown that most leaders who work with young people are motivated by their desire to put something back into their sport. In order to ensure the experience is positive and safe for young people volunteers wishing to take on a role and responsibility for children should undergo a recruitment and selection process. Any recruitment process should be carried out objectively and will help place leaders in a position in which they are suited and supported.

Renewal of Existing Leaders

All adults who have supervisory responsibility for children must complete the annual self-declaration form as included on the relevant Code of Conduct, this is best done at Club registration when everyone is required to complete their memberships.

Regions and Clubs must ensure the relevant individuals are Garda /Access NI vetted and have attended the required child welfare training for their role.

Who should be recruited?

A standard application process should be followed for all adults, working as volunteers or employed, with access to or involved in the management of policies concerning children. These positions at all levels would include, but not limited to:

Club Children's Officer

Designated Person

Tutor, Coach or Teacher

Team Manager

Officials where there is a direct involvement or responsibility for making decision concerning children

Committee members

There are certain positions where there is no unsupervised involvement or direct responsibility for children e.g. supervising parents, some officials such as a timekeeper, where a recruitment process may not need to be enforced. For such roles all personnel should still complete an application form with the self-declaration, which should be held in the Club or Region.

By introducing volunteers and staff to their role this

- Strengthens the message of safeguarding children within the Club and Swim Ireland
- Reduces the vulnerability of children
- Reduces the vulnerability of the leader

It is the responsibility of the Region or Club to ensure that anyone involved with young people are suitable with regard to the requirements for the welfare and protection of children.

The full recruitment and selection policy is available on the Swim Ireland website.

Supervision

Supervision Policy

Swim Ireland has a policy that no individual should be alone with a child and all pool and dry-land training sessions must be supervised. Adequate supervision is required for all other activities in accordance with best practice requirements described in the procedures.

General

Young people are left at the pool or training facilities by parents/guardians who expect their children to be safe. This can only happen when everybody works together to put safeguards in place for everyone's protection. Parents/guardians must understand that they have an important role in implementing safe practices for their children. Parents/guardians must be willing to help.

The details of the policy must be followed for all Swim Ireland activities including:

Supervision for activities

Training supervision

Duties of the supervisor

Changing rooms

Further information on the Supervision Policy can be found on the Swim Ireland website

Complaints and Disciplinary Procedures

Swim Ireland Complaints and Disciplinary Policy

All complaints and disciplinary matters occurring within Swim Ireland must be dealt with in accordance with the Swim Ireland Complaints and Disciplinary Procedures

General

The complaints and disciplinary process are detailed in a separate document entitled The Swim Ireland Complaints and Disciplinary Procedure.

It must be noted that any complaint or issue concerning suspected child abuse is not covered by the complaints and disciplinary procedures and must be referred to the relevant authorities in accordance with the reporting procedure in the Safeguarding Children Policies and Procedures 2010 – see Child Protection section

Affiliate member organisations must provide for a complaints process or follow the Swim Ireland Complaints and Disciplinary procedures as if the complaint was occurring at Club level.

Discipline

Disciplinary processes for young people and adults (who are not employed by Swim Ireland or a Club) are suggested within the procedures to ensure fair and consistent measures for issues such as breaches of rules or codes of conduct. The procedures clearly state the circumstance under which these may be imposed in order to ensure a process that recognises natural justice and fairness for young people involved.

Complaints

Complaints should be raised within the jurisdiction of where they occurred. There are certain matters that fall outside the scope of the Swim Ireland Complaints and Disciplinary procedures and guidance is given in the full procedures to determine whether the nature of the complaint is within the Swim Ireland process.

The Complaints and Disciplinary Procedure is

adopted by Swim Ireland, Regions and Clubs and must be regarded as part of the safeguarding requirements within this document. The process allows for all members to be treated fairly and consistently whatever their role or position is within Swim Ireland, the Region or Club.

The full Complaints and Disciplinary Procedure is available on the Swim Ireland website.

Travelling and Away Trip Policy

Travel Policy

The travel policy requires that adults should avoid travelling alone with a single child, and that all laws and rules of the road pertinent to the country in which the children are must be observed. Swim Ireland has requirements for children travelling with adults where their safety and well-being is paramount.

There are a number of sections within the detailed travelling policy and procedures to be considered:

General Transport – this covers the everyday transport arrangements that parents and Clubs may encounter and describes the basic transport regulations that should be observed for the safety of children

Away events – camps, competitions and other group activities for young people help with their motivation and support their participation in sport. Travelling and staying together for an event or activity helps develop a team spirit together with an open, honest and inclusive team atmosphere.

There are a number of options for Regions and Clubs to consider when staying away. The options are dependent on clear boundaries of responsibility for the trip arrangements for young people involved, as follows:

- Parent responsibility – parents are responsible solely for their own children
- Club responsibility – whereby the Club agrees to undertake all the arrangements
- Parent and Club responsibility – a combination of Club and parent responsibilities
- Use of host families – where local families are used for accommodating young people

The Swim Ireland Protocol for Away Events covers the requirements for teams and groups travelling away together where by the arrangements are made either in conjunction with or solely by the Club or Region. The protocol provides detailed

procedures for all young people, coaches, team managers and associated personnel to adopt and adhere to for away events including all camps and competition (for both day and overnight trips) in order to safeguard the well-being of all participants.

Further details for general considerations and away trip options are contained in the Swim Ireland Away Trip Protocol on the Swim Ireland website.

Risk Assessment Procedures

Risk Assessment Policy

Sport should provide a safe, positive nurturing environment for children to develop and enhance physical and social skills. A child centred ethos will assist in identifying and eliminating practices that impact negatively on safe and enjoyable participation for young people.

Swim Ireland recognises and strives to reduce any risk or cause of harm to young people and children whilst participating in the aquatic disciplines. The policy includes identifying operational risks in the environment in which children participate and the suitability of personnel working with children.

There are two policies currently covering the assessment of risks within Swim Ireland, the Regions and Clubs.

- Assessing the Risks for the Safety of Children, (revised Sept 2010)
- Policy to determine suitability of Swim Ireland Members following allegations of child abuse (revised Sept 2010)

Some general guiding principles and observations should be noted in the determination of any risk factor, especially where children are involved.

Identification of Areas and Nature of Risk

An awareness of some of the risks young people are exposed to within sports is required to ensure protection against harm, example of some risk areas:

- lack of supervision and safe use of equipment and/or facilities
- adults subjecting children to constant criticism, sarcasm, rejection, threatening behaviour or pressure to perform or achieve
- infliction of any non-accidental injury or other form of significant harm as defined as abuse

The nature of risks to children and young people are varied and mostly dealt with throughout this document. The adoption and full implementation of this document should be regarded as a major prevention for the areas of risk for children and young people. Below are some areas that are of particular concern:

Abuse

An environment should be created for children where abuse is prevented from occurring. The various categories and indicators of abuse are defined and described in the Child Protection section.

Bullying

Bullying may be due to a number of factors, an awareness and interaction from adults will help with prevention and resolution.

Poor practice

Where poor practice is allowed to continue to the detriment of children's well-being this becomes a risk area.

Vulnerability of children

Children may be especially vulnerable due to a number of reasons including children who are separated from their parents or family or children with certain disabilities who rely on adults to care for and meet their basic needs.

Psychological stress, burn out and drop outs

This is relevant to all young people regardless of their level of participation as it relates to a young person's age and developmental stage and the expectation of their performance.

Substance misuse

Recognising and education against the misuse of drugs, alcohol and/or tobacco is important for young people to understand the associated risks.

For further information on Risk Assessment policies view the Swim Ireland website

Communication

Communication Policy

The aim of communication is to convey messages and information safely and securely to intended recipients without exposing children to risk of harm. It is also the Swim Ireland policy to ensure that children have the means to communicate with adults without the need to utilise technology or seek help in doing so from others.

General Considerations

Communication is a valuable tool and the types of communication available today are wide and varied. Adults need to be aware of the effect and power of communication between children and adults.

The emphasis is on the need to communicate with children in an open environment, and any conversations with children should take place in public surroundings.

Communication tools are valuable in helping keep children safe, often the reason quoted for a child to have a mobile phone. It is important for Clubs to consider the most effective means of communication between members ensuring that everyone has access to the chosen method, reflecting that several methods may be the most effective.

Communication carried out on an individual basis is open to exploitation and it can cross the boundary between

Communication with people under 18

Adults should be aware of communication directly with young people and any such contact should be open and honest. The voice and written word can be interpreted in many ways by different people and therefore any individual communication should be at the request of the child. Information can be conveyed through various means – for general information this can be a mass communication sent to groups of children or for more specific individual information this can be copied openly to another responsible person.

The important point to remember is that any individual communication should be instigated by the child and/or in response to their needs.

Whilst we recognise the benefits of technology as a means to send easy, cost effective mass communications we also need to recognise that these forms of contact may be open to

misinterpretation and exploitation, in some cases used to cross personal boundaries and cause harm to young people. Within clubs there is a need to encourage responsible and secure use of communication by adults and young people.

Types of Communication available

Noticeboards

Post

Email

Phone/Mobile phone including the use of text

Internet and Websites including the procedure for safe use of text messages/emails

For further information see the full Communication Policy on the Swim Ireland website

Photography and Filming Equipment (including camera phones)

Photographic Policy

In line with Swim Ireland policy no one may video, film or take photographs of children without having received permission to do so, however it is a condition of Swim Ireland membership that all members have agreed to this permission. Adults should avoid naming children in a photograph and any image should be in keeping with the ethos of the sport.

General considerations

Swim Ireland do not wish to prevent parents and adults from taking pictures, but try to ensure only those who have a right to take photographs do so.

There should be a request for permission to take and use individual and group photographs and/or video footage for training, competition and/or promotional purposes.

For all Swim Ireland events any person must accept they may be photographed or filmed as part of the occasion, either as an individual or as a member of a group. An individual may also appear in a photograph or video inadvertently, parents and children must accept this. All participants should be aware of this procedure and have, if necessary, signed the required permission form (permission is deemed obtained if part of the event conditions). Permission can be incorporated into club membership registration if required.

It is the responsibility of the event/organiser/

Region/Club to ensure only those taking photographs are permitted to do so.

The details of the Photographic and Filming policy include and must be followed for all Swim Ireland activities:

Announcement/Notice at Events

Registration/Accreditation for Swim Ireland events/training

Taking Photographs

Use of Images

Media Images

Videoin/filming for training/competition purposes

Storage/Disposal

Further details of the full policy can be found on the Swim Ireland website

Physical Contact

Physical Contact Policy

Swim Ireland supports the policy of appropriate physical contact in response to the needs of a child which is in accordance with the child's age and stage of development. Adults should not do what a child can do for themselves. Contact should be in an open environment and preferably with the permission of the young person.

General

It is important that our sport promotes appropriate physical contact between adults and children and young people. Misleading or inaccurate information relating to physical contact can undermine the confidence of adults working with our children and young people and can also have safety implications for children.

For leaders, coaches, teachers or any adults and children to feel comfortable attention should be given to the following sections detailed in the full policy:

Appropriate physical contact

Respect for a young person

Distress and Success situations

Medical and Sport Science practitioners

The detailed description of the Physical Contact Policy is available from the Swim Ireland website

Substance Misuse

Policy

Swim Ireland's policy is that any form of substance misuse is contrary to the spirit of sport and every member has a duty to ensure that the sport is free from the use of alcohol, drugs and tobacco.

General considerations

The use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco is forbidden as being incompatible with a healthy approach to sporting activities

Any sporting activities should take place where possible in a non-alcoholic environment and adults should be encouraged to act as role models for young people

Promote fair competition through sound training to actively discourage the use of any substance to improve or enhance performance

Young people should be educated regarding the effects of long and short term effects of substances taken to enhance performance and the charges that may occur with the use of illegal or banned substances

Sponsorship from alcohol and/or tobacco companies should be avoided

Further information can be found in the Sports Councils Anti-Doping Programmes:

ISC: www.irishsportsCouncil.ie

Sport NI: www.ukSport.gov.uk/did

Safety

Safety Policy

Swim Ireland and all clubs should have a safety statement, including specific and potential risks attached to their sport and the procedures put in place for safeguarding against such risks.

General considerations

The following areas must be considered when putting together a safety statement for Clubs/Regions and Swim Ireland events:

Activities should be suitable for age and stage of development of participants

Coaching staff must be aware of any medical condition of the participants in case of emergency

Any necessary protective gear is used

A First Aid kit, kept well stocked, is close at hand with access to qualified first-aider

The contact numbers of emergency services must be readily available

The emergency contact details for the participants (this must not be freely available outside those required to have access to this information – for data protection purposes.)

If an incident or injury occurs, a record of the injury and any action taken must be recorded, together with the problem/action/outcome. This should be recorded in a hard copy book and the details notified to Swim Ireland.

For any incident or injury concerning a young person contact should be made with their parent/guardian and who should be kept informed of all details. For other individuals their nominated emergency contact person should be informed.

Officials should ensure the event is run according to appropriate codes of conduct and within the boundaries of the rules whether a competition, gala or water polo game

Participants should know and keep to the rules of their sport, bearing in mind that many rules are there for safety

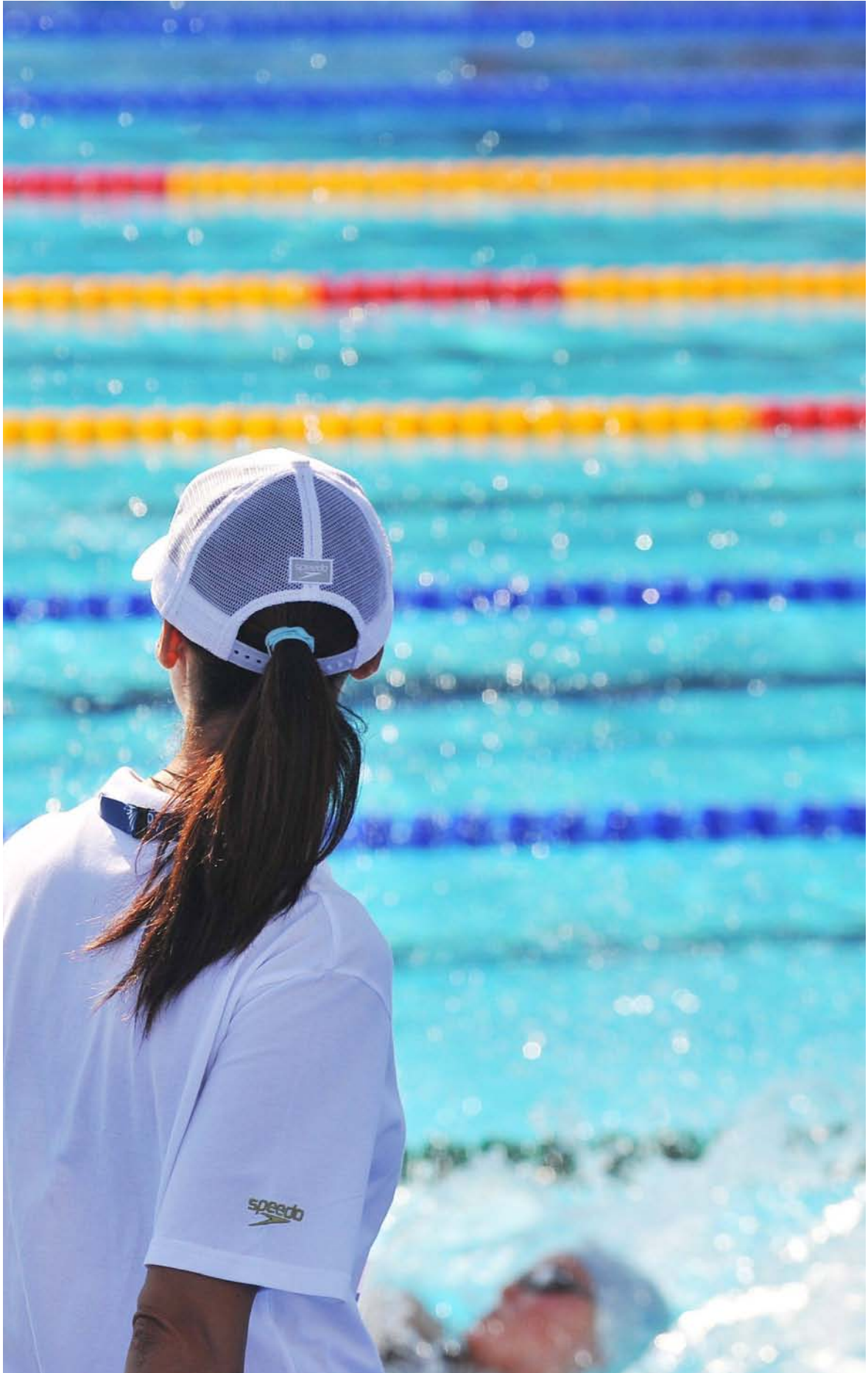
Leaders involved in the activity should hold the appropriate qualifications as required by Swim Ireland

There should be adequate insurance cover for all activities – it is the responsibility of the organisers of any event to ensure the insurances are sufficient.

There must be adequate supervision in place for any event/activity or training session to continue.

Parent/guardians must be present at finishing time of sessions or events

For further guidance on Safety Statements view the Swim Ireland website or contact Swim Ireland head office.



Child Protection

Definition and Recognition of Child Abuse

Types of child abuse

This section outlines the principal types of child abuse and offers guidance on how to recognise such abuse. Child abuse can be categorised into four different types: neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse. A child may be subjected to one or more forms of abuse at any given time. More detail on each type of abuse can be found in Children First, National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children (Department of Health and Children publication 2010)

Definition of 'neglect'

Neglect can be defined in terms of an omission, where the child suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults, and/or medical care.

Harm can be defined as the ill-treatment or the impairment of the health or development of a child. Whether it is significant is determined by the child's health and development as compared to that which could reasonably be expected of a child of similar age.

Neglect generally becomes apparent in different ways over a period of time rather than at one specific point. For example, a child who suffers a series of minor injuries may not be having his or her needs met in terms of necessary supervision and safety. A child whose on-going failure to thrive or whose height is significantly below average may be being deprived of adequate nutrition. A child who consistently misses school may be being deprived of intellectual stimulation. The threshold of significant harm is reached when the child's needs are neglected to the extent that his or her well-being and/or development are severely affected.

Definition of 'emotional abuse'

Emotional abuse is normally to be found in the relationship between a parent/carer and a child rather than in a specific event or pattern of events. It occurs when a child's need for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met. Unless other forms of abuse are present, it rarely shows in terms of physical signs or symptoms.

Emotional abuse can be manifested in terms of the child's behavioural, cognitive, affective or physical functioning. Examples of these include insecure attachment, non-organic failure to thrive, unhappiness, low self-esteem, educational and developmental underachievement, and oppositional behaviour. The threshold of significant harm is reached when abusive interactions dominate and become typical of the relationship between the child and the parent/carer.

Definition of 'physical abuse'

Physical abuse is any form of non-accidental injury or injury that results from wilful or neglectful failure to protect a child.

Definition of 'sexual abuse'

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

It should be noted that the definition of child sexual abuse presented in this section is not a legal definition and is not intended to be a description of the criminal offence of sexual assault.

Grooming

It may be more difficult for those who want to abuse children to do so in a group setting, such as a leisure centre or pool environment. This environment may be used to gain the trust of not only a young person but also other adults. Developing credibility is an essential part of any abusers 'grooming process'. The grooming process is not only directed at the child, there is also grooming of other adults including parents i.e. the abuser gives the impression of becoming the best, most helpful and accommodating volunteer.

The final stage, enabling someone to offend against a child, is viewed as grooming the environment i.e. creating a justifiable reason for getting the child alone. This is seen as an opportunity within the sport setting for those who wish to abuse children to isolate a particular child. Leaders must be aware of the vulnerable nature of all individuals.

Steps to ensure children are best protected in a Club environment against grooming by potential abusers are:

- Recruitment and selection of all adults involved with children
- Ensure adequate supervision of activities involving children
- New volunteers should be supported and supervised in their role
- Avoid circumstances where an adult is alone with a child

Recognising child abuse

Indicators or signs of abuse

Child abuse can often be difficult to identify and may present in many forms.

Indicators of abuse can be developmental, physical or behavioural – and any signs that are cause for concern should be noted. It is important to remember that indicators can have other relevance where abuse is not a factor for consideration, e.g. a child may be having difficulty with school work or upset about a family bereavement – the concern should still be noted. No one indicator should be seen as conclusive in itself of abuse. It may indicate conditions other than child abuse.

Concerns should be passed to the Club Children's Officer or to the Designated Person. The Club Children's Officer may raise these concerns with the child and/or parents and/or the Designated Person may consider an informal consultation with a social worker. The list of indicators is also not exhaustive and an indicator may not be obviously apparent. All signs and symptoms will be examined by the social worker in the total context of the child's situation and family circumstances.

Guidelines for recognition

The ability to recognise child abuse can depend as much on a person's willingness to accept the possibility of its existence as it does on their knowledge and information.

There are commonly three stages in the identification of child abuse:

- (i) Considering the possibility;
- (ii) Looking out for signs of abuse;
- (iii) Recording of information.

Stage 1: Considering the possibility

The possibility of child abuse should be considered if a child appears to have suffered a suspicious injury for which no reasonable explanation can be offered. It should also be considered if the child seems distressed without obvious reason or displays persistent or new behavioural problems. The possibility of child abuse should also be considered if the child displays unusual or fearful responses to parents/carers or older children.

Stage 2: Looking out for signs of abuse

Signs of abuse can be physical, behavioural or developmental. They can exist in the relationships between children and parents/carers or between children and other family members/other persons. A cluster or pattern of signs is likely to be more indicative of abuse. Children who are being abused may hint that they are being harmed and sometimes make direct disclosures. Disclosures should always be believed. The child should not be interviewed in detail about the alleged abuse without first consulting with the HSE or HSCT. This may be more appropriately carried out by a social worker. Less obvious signs could be gently explored with the child, *without direct questioning*. Play situations, such as drawing or story-telling, may reveal information.

Some signs are more indicative of abuse than others. These include:

- disclosure of abuse and neglect by a child or young person;
- age-inappropriate or abnormal sexual play or knowledge;
- specific injuries or patterns of injuries;
- absconding from home or a care situation;
- attempted suicide;

- underage pregnancy or sexually transmitted disease;
- signs in one or more categories at the same time. For example, signs of developmental delay, physical injury and behavioural signs may together indicate a pattern of abuse.

Most signs of abuse are non-specific and will be considered in the child's social and family context. It is important to always be open to alternative explanations for physical or behavioural signs of abuse. Sometimes, social workers will request a specialist assessment to clarify if particular concerns constitute abuse. Care should be taken as to how such information is stored and to whom it is made available.

Stage 3: Recording of information

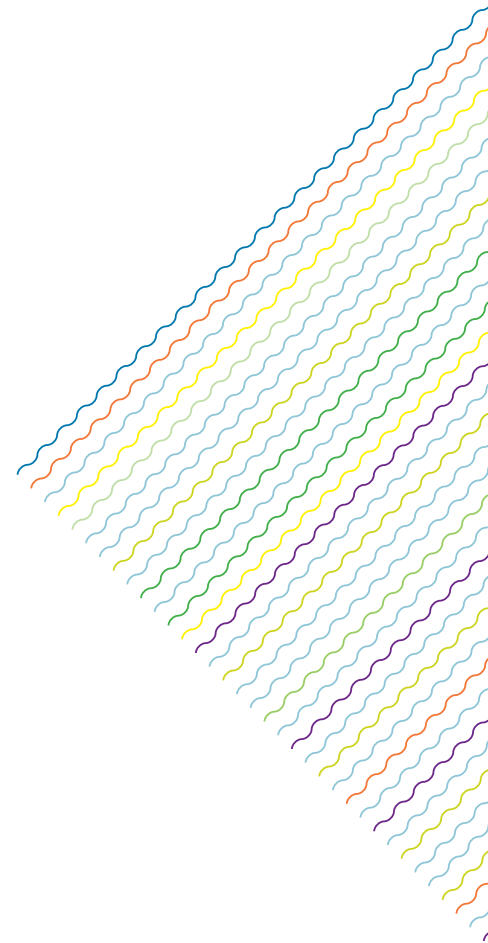
If abuse is suspected, it is important to establish the grounds for concern by recording as much detailed information as possible. Observations should be accurately recorded and should include dates, times, names, locations, context and any other information that may be relevant.

Children with special vulnerabilities

Certain children are more vulnerable to abuse than others. Such children include those with disabilities, children who are homeless and those who, for one reason or another, are separated from their parents or other family members and who depend on others for their care and protection. The same categories of abuse – neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse – are applicable, but may take a slightly different form. For example, abuse may take the form of deprivation of basic rights, harsh disciplinary regimes or the inappropriate use of medications or physical restraints.

Points to remember

- The severity of a sign does not necessarily equate with the severity of the abuse.
- Neglect is as potentially fatal as physical abuse.
- Child abuse is not restricted to any socio-economic group, gender or culture.
- Challenging behaviour by a child or young person should not render them liable to abuse.
- It is sometimes difficult to distinguish between indicators of child abuse and other adversities suffered by children.
- The child's welfare must be the primary consideration.
- The aim of child protection services is to promote positive and enduring change in the lives of children and families.
- Society has a duty of care towards children.





Basis for reporting concerns and Standard Reporting Procedure

Purpose

This section offers guidance to the general public and to all people, both professional and voluntary, working with or in direct contact with children who may be concerned or who suspect that children are being abused or at risk of abuse. It outlines the standard reporting procedure to be used in passing information to the statutory authorities about child protection concerns.

Responsibility to report child abuse

Everyone must be alert to the possibility that children with whom they are in contact may be being abused. Concerns should be reported to the Children and Family Social Services of the HSE or Health and Social Care Trusts. This responsibility is particularly important and relevant to the roles with the Regions and Clubs who have regular contact with children, i.e. coaches, teachers, Club Children's Officers, Team Managers.

A concern about a potential risk to children posed by a specific person, even if the children are unidentifiable, should also be communicated to the HSE/HSCT.

The guiding principles in regard to reporting child abuse may be summarised as follows:

- The safety and well-being of the child must take priority;
- Reports should be made without delay to the Children and Family Social Services of the HSE/HSCT

Any reasonable suspicion of abuse must elicit a response. Ignoring the signals or failing to intervene may result in on-going or further harm to the child. Children may suffer long-lasting emotional and/or psychological harm as a result of abuse. Physical abuse and neglect can be fatal and some children may be permanently disabled or disfigured as a result of such child abuse.

In Ireland Section 176 of the Criminal Justice Act 2006 introduced the criminal charge of reckless endangerment of children. It states:

'A person, having authority or control over a child or abuser, who intentionally or recklessly endangers a child by

- causing or permitting any child to be placed or left in a situation which creates a substantial risk to the child of being a victim of serious harm or sexual abuse, or
- failing to take reasonable steps to protect a child from such a risk while knowing that the child is in such a situation, is guilty of an offence.'

The penalty for a person found guilty of this offence is a fine (no upper limit) and/or imprisonment for a term not exceeding 10 years.

The HSE/HSCT has a statutory obligation to identify children who are not receiving adequate care and protection, to provide family support services and, where necessary, to take children into the care of the HSE/HSCT. People who report concerns need to be assured that their information will be carefully considered with any other information available, and a child protection assessment will only proceed where sufficient risk is identified.

Grounds for concern

The HSE/HSCT should always be informed when a person has reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been abused, or is being abused, or is at risk of abuse.

The following examples would constitute reasonable grounds for concern:

- A specific indication from the child that he or she was abused (disclosure);
- An account by a person who saw the child being abused;
- Evidence, such as an injury or behaviour, that is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused in another way;
- An injury or behaviour that 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 and/or dysfunctional behaviour;
- Consistent indication, over a period of time, that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect.

How to respond to a child making a disclosure

When a young person discloses information of suspected abuse you should:

- Deal with any allegation of abuse in a sensitive and competent way through listening to and facilitating the child to tell about the problem, rather than interviewing the child about details of what happened
- Stay calm and not show any extreme reaction to what the child is saying. Listen compassionately, and take what the child is saying seriously
- Understand that the child has decided to tell something very important and has taken a risk to do so And the child has done the right thing by telling you
- Be honest with the child and tell them that it is not possible to keep that information a secret
- Make no judgmental statements about the person against 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"
- Give the child some indication of what would happen next, such as informing, HSE or HSCT. It should be kept in mind that the child may have been threatened and may feel vulnerable at this stage. If you are not sure do not say anything about what will happen next.
- Carefully record the details
- Pass on this information to the Designated Person
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you.

It is not the responsibility of the Designated Person, Club Children's Officer or any member of Swim Ireland to 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 informing the appropriate agencies so that they can then make enquiries and take any necessary action to protect the young person.

A suspicion that is not supported by any objective indication of abuse or neglect would

not constitute a reasonable suspicion or reasonable grounds for concern.

Standard Reporting Procedure

Any person reporting a child abuse concern should do so without delay to the Children and Family Social Services of the HSE. A report can be made in person, by telephone or in writing.

Contact numbers for the various HSE/HSCT can be found in Appendix 6 and 7

Recording information

Observe and note dates, times, locations and contexts in which the incident occurred or suspicion was aroused, together with any other relevant information

Informing the Designated Person

Report the matter as soon as possible to the Designated Person with responsibility for reporting abuse. If the Designated Person 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 HSE/HSCT that have statutory responsibility to investigate and assess suspected or actual child abuse. The role of the NCO or CCO is to help support children where abuse is alleged or a concern.

Informal Consultation

If the Designated Person, or appointed person, is unsure whether reasonable grounds for concern exist s/he can informally consult with the duty social worker in their local HSE/HSCT. S/he will be advised whether or not the matter requires a formal report.

It is essential that no investigation of child abuse is carried out by anyone other than the statutory authorities.

The local duty social worker can be contacted by ringing the local HSE/ HSCT office and asking for the duty social worker. The contact numbers for the HSE can be found in Appendix 6. Contact details for the HSCT can be found in Appendix 7

The Designated Person should give an outline of the concerns, it is not necessary to give the details of those involved at this stage. The duty social worker will advise whether or not the nature of matter requires a formal report. This advice may be sought during working hours. In emergency cases the Gardai/PSNI should be called.

Reporting by phone

If a formal report is required then it should be given by the Designated Person to the statutory authorities in person or by phone and always followed up in writing, on the standard reporting form. A sample copy of the reporting form is shown in Appendix 5. A copy of the report should be kept by the Designated Person in a secure location.

Emergency Situations

Under no circumstances should a child be left in a situation that exposes him or her to harm or to risk of harm pending HSE/HSCT intervention. In the event of an emergency where you think a child is in immediate danger and you cannot get in contact with the HSE/HSCT, you should contact the Garda/PSNI. This may be done through any Garda/PSNI station.

Responding to concerned party

If Swim Ireland or a Club cannot find reasonable grounds for reporting a concern, the person who raised the concern should be given a clear written statement outlining the reasons why no action is being taken. If the person remains concerned about the situation they are free to consult with or report matters of concern to the HSE/HSCT.

Informing the family

The Designated Person should let the social worker know if the family are aware of the report being submitted.

Any professional (social worker within HSE/HSCT) who suspects child abuse should inform the parents/carers if a report has been submitted to the Children and Family Social Services of the HSE/HSCT or to An Garda Síochána PSNI, unless doing so is likely to endanger the child.

The HSE/HSCT will respect the wishes of non-professionals reporting concerns in good faith who ask to remain anonymous as much as possible, but cannot give a guarantee that the information would not be sought and given within judicial proceedings. (The Data Protection Acts offer protection under privacy, but should the information be sought directly within legal proceedings, there is no guarantee.)

Submitting the Report Form

The Standard Report Form (see Appendix 5) should be used by all volunteers when reporting child welfare and protection concerns to the Children and Family Social Services of the

HSE/HSCT. If a report is made by telephone, this form should be completed and forwarded subsequently to the HSE/HSCT. A copy must be kept by the Designated Person in a secure location.

Information required when making a report

The ability of the HSE/HSCT to assess suspicions or allegations of child abuse will depend on the amount and quality of information conveyed to them by the people reporting concerns (hereafter called 'reporters'). As much as possible detail on the form should be provided.

Important details are:

Name, address and age of the child (or children) for whom the report is being made;

Name and address of the reporter;

Contact number and occupation of the reporter;

Relationship of the reporter to the child;

A full account of what constitutes the grounds for concern in relation to the welfare and protection of the child or children, e.g. details of the allegation, incident, dates, description of any injuries, etc;

Names and addresses of the parents/carers of the child or children;

Names of other children in the household;

Name, address and details of the person allegedly causing concern in relation to the child or children;

Allegations against leaders within Swim Ireland

If an allegation of abuse occurring within Swim Ireland is made against a Swim Ireland member or leader these procedures should be followed (employees of Swim Ireland are subject to the conditions within their employment contract):

- The reporting procedure in respect of suspected child abuse should be followed. The welfare of the child making the allegation is paramount. Other children who may be at risk should also be considered. Swim Ireland/ the Club should take any steps that may be necessary to protect children in their care.
- The role of the NCO or CCO is to help support children where abuse is alleged or a concern.

- The Designated Person or appointed person is responsible for reporting the alleged abuse/concern to the statutory authorities; however the Swim Ireland leader concerned must be informed of the allegation, advice must be taken from the statutory authorities in order to safeguard any other children at risk.
- A senior member of the committee/board should contact the adult concerned who should confidentially be informed of (a) that an allegation has been made against him/her and (b) the nature of the allegation. The leader should be afforded an opportunity to respond and this response should be passed on to the HSE /HSCT.
- The leader should be asked to step aside from any involvement with children pending the outcome of the investigation. When a person is asked to step aside it should be made clear that it is only a precautionary measure and will not prejudice any later disciplinary proceedings.
- Other than following the above procedure, Swim Ireland or the relevant Club must not deal with the complaint/concern while the statutory authorities' investigation into the concern/complaint is on-going.
- The National Designated Person in Swim Ireland should be informed in confidence by the Designated Person of the Club that a leader has been asked to stand aside. They should keep in touch until there is a definite outcome from the statutory authorities. The NDP will inform the Board of Swim Ireland regarding the nature of the allegations only.
- The issue of confidentiality is very important. Information is on a need to know basis and the leader should be treated with respect and fairness. It is important that the rights of both the child and the person about whom the allegation has been made are protected.
- Information on a need to know basis means that those who need to be informed for the protection of any children must be told in confidence. Swim Ireland and the Club should ensure only necessary people are informed. Passing on information to others on this 'need to know' basis for the protection of a child/other children is not a breach of confidentiality eg. obtaining advice from the NDP or NCO on the welfare and protection of any children involved.
- Following the outcome of the investigation by the statutory authorities the Swim Ireland Policy to Determine the Suitability of Swim Ireland Members (revised Sept 2010) or latest

version comes into effect where an individual is assessed on their suitability to resume activities involving children.

- All contact with the sports leader throughout the process must be confirmed in writing.
- All information should be stored in a secure place, with access restricted to authorised personnel.

External Allegations of Abuse against Swim Ireland members

If an allegation of abuse/concern is made against a Swim Ireland member whereby the abuse occurs externally to Swim Ireland the above process must be followed with consideration given to the following points:

- The details must be passed on to the NCO or the NDP. It will be the responsibility of the NCO/NDP to liaise and verify the information with the organisation/body responsible for raising the concern.
- The adult against whom the allegation has been made can be contacted by the NDP and asked to step down in accordance with above process.
- In order to safeguard and protect children Club/Regional/National personnel should be informed on a need to know basis, e.g. if the adult has been operating in a Club, the Designated Person should be informed that the member is stepped aside, to ensure the Club do not engage the adult until the matter has been resolved.
- Vigilance should be observed in any group that the adult may have been in contact with, to ensure there has been no impact.
- As with the procedure above all contact with the sports leader should be confirmed in writing and any information should be stored in a secure place with access restricted to authorised personnel

Exclusion from Swim Ireland membership

If a person is expelled from any position in a club or in Swim Ireland due to child protection concerns, the Designated Person should make a report of the action taken and the concerns reported to the HSE/HSCT. The individual would be subject to a decision based on the procedure within the document: Policy to determine suitability of Swim Ireland members (revised Sept 2010)

Retrospective disclosures by adults

An increasing number of adults are disclosing abuse that took place during their childhood. Such disclosures often come to light when adults attend counselling. It is essential to establish whether there is any current risk to any child who may be in contact with the alleged abuser revealed in such disclosures.

If any risk is deemed to exist to a child who may be in contact with an alleged abuser, the disclosure must be reported to the Children and Family Social Services of the HSE/HSCT.

The HSE National Counselling Service is in place to listen to, value and understand those who have been abused in childhood. The service is a professional, confidential counselling and psychotherapy service and is available free of charge in all regions of the country (see www.hse-ncs.ie/en). The service can be accessed either through healthcare professionals or by way of self-referral (Freephone ROI 1800 477 477 NI 00800 477 477 77).

Details about counselling services are also available in Appendix 8

Extra-familial abuse

Abuse may occur by someone other than an adult living in the immediate family. This may happen where the child is in contact with a member of the extended family, a friend, an acquaintance or a person whose professional activity brings them into contact with the child. Such abuse should be reported to the Children and Family Social Services of the HSE/HSCT in the same way as abuse within the family.

Common impediments to adults reporting child abuse

- Disbelief that parent/guardians or persons given the responsibility to care for children would actually hurt or neglect them
- Difficult to distinguish between abusive situations and other social problems
- The family or alleged perpetrator is known to you
- Uncertainty or fear around the reporting process or repercussions
- Lack of confidence in the services to provide for the child

Confidentiality

The effective protection of a child often depends on sharing and exchanging relevant information. It is therefore critical that there is a clear understanding of responsibilities with regard to confidentiality and the exchange of information.

All information regarding concern or disclosure of child abuse should be shared on 'a need to know' basis in the interests of the child.

No undertakings regarding secrecy can be given. Those working with a child and family should make this clear to all parties involved, although they can be assured that all information will be handled confidentially taking full account of legal requirements.

Ethical and statutory codes concerned with confidentiality and data protection provide general guidance. The provision of information to the statutory agencies for the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality or data protection.

It must be clearly understood that information that has been received for one purpose (i.e. concerning the abuse of a child) must not be used for another without consulting the person who provided that information.

Legal protection

In Ireland the Protections for Persons reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998 makes provision for the protection from civil liability of persons who have communicated child abuse 'reasonably and in good faith' to designated officers of the HSE or to any member of An Garda Síochána.

This protection applies to organisations as well as to individuals. This means that even if a communicated suspicion of child abuse proves unfounded, a complainant who took an action would have to prove that the person who communicated the concern had not acted reasonably and in good faith in making the report.

A person who makes a report in good faith and in the child's best interests may also be protected under common law by the defence of qualified privilege.

A full list of the relevant legislation concerning child welfare and protection is provided in Appendix 10.

Freedom of information (Ireland)

Notwithstanding the requirement of all professionals involved in child welfare and protection cases to share relevant information, records are nevertheless confidential. They do not belong to individuals (except for independent practitioners) and are the property of the organisations that keep them. Under the Freedom of Information Act, 1997, members of the public have a right of access to records concerning them held by any public body and a right to have official information about themselves amended where it is incorrect, incomplete or misleading. Members of the public also have a right to be given reasons for decisions made concerning themselves. Requests to see records are processed in the first instance through the public body that holds the records. In the event of refusal of access, the decision may be appealed and the ultimate arbiter is the Information Commissioner. At present, the Act applies to the HSE, but not to An Garda Síochána.

The Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003 afford similar rights to individuals to access personal data held about them by any entity whether in the public or private sector. The right to access applies to records held by An Garda Síochána. However, the right to access does not apply in a range of circumstances that may be relevant in a child welfare context. Equally, the right of access does not extend to any information that identifies a third party where that third party had an expectation of confidence. Accordingly, it would not be necessary to provide any information that would identify a person making a child welfare report in response to a request under the Data Protection Acts.

A full list of the relevant legislation concerning child welfare and protection is provided in Appendix 10.

Concerns or cases not reported

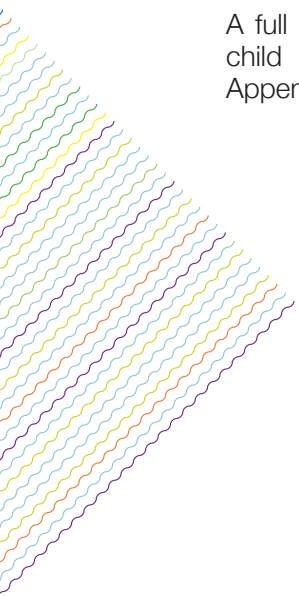
In those cases where Swim Ireland or a Club cannot find reasonable grounds for concern and decides not to report to matter to the statutory authorities, the individual who raised the concern should be given a clear written statement of the reasons why the organisation or Club is not taking such action. The person should be advised that if they remain concerned about the situation, they are free as individuals to consult with, or report to the statutory authorities. The provisions of the Protections for Persons reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998 apply once they communicate 'reasonably and in good faith' where applicable (i.e. in Ireland).

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 Designated Person. The information should be checked out (not an investigation) and handled in a confidential manner.

Rumours

Rumours should not be allowed to hang in the air. Any rumours relating to inappropriate behaviour should be brought to the attention of the Designated Person who should decide whether there is substance to the rumours or not and whether it should be reported to the HSE/HSCT (Informal consultation with the duty social worker can be sought if required)



Appendix One

Checklist for Club Visit

Checklist for Club Visit

Prior to visit

- Names of CCO/DP/Teachers/Coaches/Committees**
- Constitution**
- Aim and Objectives of Club**

On Visit

- Club Children's Officer**
- Designated person**
- Parent Rota**
- Codes of Conduct**
- Notice board information:** squad selection / Galas / media / Club news / swimmer involvement

Observation of the session (make comments under section)

- Coaches/Teachers and swimmers/players attending**
- Parent on duty in view of the pool/ changing entrances and in earshot of exchanges taking place**
- Watch interaction between adults and young people**
- Work ethic and responses:** praise / encouragement / issues/ frustrations
- Anyone leaving and returning**

Other areas to note

- Attendance records**
- Emergency numbers available**
- Accident/incident book**

General Observations (for any other comments)

Notes on Checklist for Clubs

Details of visit

Give the name of the Club, the date of visit and the staff member(s) carrying out the visit. Also record the venue of the visit, indicating if the observation was carried out by staff member or if the information was gathered from enquiries with Club members.

Prior to attending visit:

Note the names of CCO's, DP, Coaches, Teachers and main committee members in the Club

Check constitution for anomalies, deviations from SI template/required elements (e.g sign up to SI CW guidelines)

Check ethos of Club from constitution – to identify aims and objectives of the Club

On the Visit

Club Children's Officer – not on the committee

Designated Person – on the committee

The contact details for these positions must be on the Club notice board on the appropriate Swim Ireland poster – these should agree with previously found information; if opportunity arises ask group who the CCO's are in the Club.

Parent Rota

This must be on the Club notice board showing the parents attending current sessions (check session dates);

Note the following: method of parent signing, i.e. random or allocated, indication of what happens in the eventuality no parent attends, who is in charge of the rota

Code of Conducts

Indications that code of conduct is required by all members – look for code on the notice board; ask the duty parent who holds the completed codes – they should know they have signed it and who they have handed it back to in the Club.

General information on the notice board

Committee and Club personnel – listed on notice board, very helpful if accompanied by photographs

Squad selections – these should be clear and transparent for parents and swimmers

Gala selections – information on galas, how to take part, who to contact, should be opportunities for all levels to compete (this will largely depend on the ethos of the Club)

Media information – photographs should not contain U18's named; look for reports on activities for all levels in the Club

Various – note Club logo/motto/Club kit available; involvement of the swimmers e.g suggestion boxes, breakfast meetings, club trips or other activities

Information should be up to date and relevant.

Observation of the session (only if visit made to session – do not ask Club members for this feedback)

Note the coaches/teachers and numbers of swimmers attending session – names of adults should agree with previously found information

Record the parent on duty who should be in full view of the pool and changing room entrances to observe movements of Club members. The adult on duty should also be in ear-shot of any exchanges between the swimmers and adults.

Look for interaction between adults and young people – this should be appropriate and in accordance with the age of the child

Observe the work ethic and responses of the swimmers – look at how each react to authority, discipline; note praise and encouragement, note any show of exasperation/frustration by adult or young person.

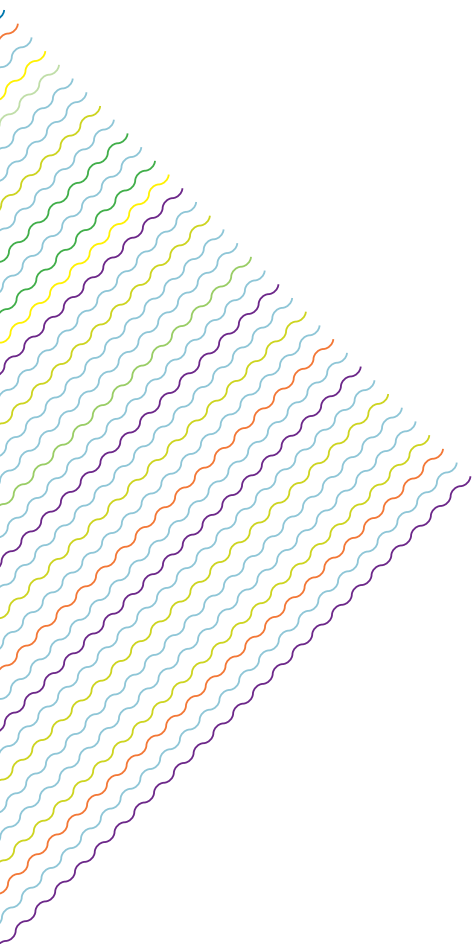
Note process for anybody leaving the session and returning; note any swimmer no returning

Other areas for note

Attendance records are kept – check these are up to date

Emergency numbers – access by Club personnel only on a need to know, access by general public must not be permitted

Accident/incident book – this should be available for sessions



Appendix Two Recruitment Form

Application Form

for _____ Swimming Club

Position applied for: _____

Full Name: _____ Any surname previously: _____

Current Address: _____

_____ Date of Birth: _____

Telephone No.(s): _____ National Insurance Number / PRSI _____

List previous experience / involvement in this or any other club. Include experience of working with young children in a voluntary or professional capacity. _____

Sporting/ NGB Qualifications: _____

Do you agree to abide by the guidelines contained in the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport? Yes No

Do you agree to abide by the Child Welfare Guidelines and rules of Swim Ireland? Yes No

Have you ever been asked to leave a sporting organisation? Yes No
(If you have answered yes, we will contact you in confidence)

Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence or been the subject of a caution; a Bound Over Order; or are you at present the subject of criminal investigations? Yes No

References:

Please supply the name and address of two people who we can contact and who, from personal knowledge, are willing to endorse your application. One of these names should be, where possible, the name of an administrator / leader in your last club / place of involvement

Name and Address of Referee 1: _____

Name and Address of Referee 2: _____

I am aware of and agree to abide by the Rules and Codes of Conduct for _____
(Name of the Club) and Swim Ireland

Signed _____ Date: _____

Print Name _____

Appendix Three

Reference Form for use during recruitment process

Confidential Reference Form

for _____Swimming Club
(This form can be used as a telephone reference or used as a written reference)

The following person:(name) has expressed an interest in working _____ with
 _____ (name club / organisation) as _____ (position)

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

How long have you known this person? _____

In what capacity have you known this person? _____

What attributes does this person have that would make them suited to this work? _____

What attributes does this person have that would make them suited to this work? _____

Please rate this person on the following (tick one box for each statement)

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

This post involves substantial access to young people. As an organisation committed to the welfare and protection of young people, we are anxious to know if you have any reason at all to be concerned about this applicant being in contact with children and young people: Yes No

If you answer yes, we will contact you in confidence

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Print name: _____

Name of club / organisation: _____ Position in organisation: _____

If reference obtained by telephone name of person and position in _____ Swimming Club conducting the call:

Name: _____ Position: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix Four

Examples of abuse

Neglect

Examples of neglect in children include:

- failure to thrive;
- occurrence of series of minor injuries;
- height is significantly below average
- weight is significantly below normal;
- consistently missing school;

Emotional abuse

Examples of emotional abuse of children include:

- the imposition of negative attributes on children, expressed by persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming;
- conditional parenting in which the level of care shown to a child is made contingent on his or her behaviours or actions;
- emotional unavailability of the child's parent/carer;
- unresponsiveness of the parent/carer and/or inconsistent or inappropriate expectations of the child;
- premature imposition of responsibility on the child;
- unrealistic or inappropriate expectations of the child's capacity to understand something or to behave and control himself or herself in a certain way;
- under- or over-protection of the child;
- failure to show interest in, or provide age-appropriate opportunities for, the child's cognitive and emotional development;
- use of unreasonable or over-harsh disciplinary measures;
- exposure to domestic violence:

Physical abuse

Examples of behaviours that cause physical injury include:

- shaking;
- use of excessive force in handling;
- deliberate poisoning;
- suffocation;
- fabricated/induced illness
- allowing or creating a substantial risk of significant harm to a child:

Sexual abuse

Examples of child sexual abuse include:

- exposure of the sexual organs or any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of the child;
- intentional touching or molesting of the body of a child whether by a person or object for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification;
- masturbation in the presence of the child or the involvement of the child in an act of masturbation;
- sexual intercourse with the child, whether oral, vaginal or anal;
- sexual exploitation of a child, which includes inciting, encouraging, propositioning, requiring or permitting a child to solicit for, or to engage in, prostitution or other sexual acts; sexual exploitation also occurs when a child is involved in the exhibition, modelling or posing for the purpose of sexual arousal, gratification or sexual act, including its recording (on film, video tape or other media) or the manipulation, for those purposes, of the image by computer or other means. It may also include showing sexually explicit material to children, which is often a feature of the 'grooming' process by perpetrators of abuse;
- consensual sexual activity involving an adult and an underage person:

Appendix Five

Sample Reporting Form

(for use when reporting allegations of abuse)

Recording Allegations or Suspicions of Abuse

This form is based on the 'standard reporting form' used by the health services executive in ROI. It is not necessary to answer all these questions, the form should be filled out in consultation with statutory authorities

1Details of Child

Name of Child: _____ Male / Female _____

Address _____ Age _____

_____ School _____

Name of the Mother _____ Name of the Father _____

Address if different to above _____ Address if different _____

Telephone Number _____ Telephone No: _____

Care and Custody arrangements regarding child, if known _____

Household Composition

Name _____ Relationship _____ Date of Birth _____

Add. Information _____

Details of concern(s), allegation(s) or incident(s), dates, times, who was present, description or any observed injuries, parent's view(s), child's view(s) if known

Details of person(s) allegedly causing concern in relation to the child

Name _____ Age _____ Male / Female _____

Address _____

Relationship to Child _____

Occupation _____

Sample 'standard reporting form' continued

Name and Address of other personnel or agencies involved with this child

Social workers _____ School _____

Public Health Nurses _____ Gardai _____

G.P. _____

Pre-school/crèche/youth groups/after Hospital _____ school clubs _____

Are parents/legal guardians aware of this referral to the social work depart. Yes No

If yes, what is their attitude? _____

Details of person reporting concerns (*please see guidance notes below*)

Name _____ Occupation _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

Nature and extent of contact with child/family _____

7 Details of person completing form

Name _____ Date _____

Occupation _____ Signed _____

Guidance notes:

Health Service Executives have a statutory responsibility under the Child Care Act, 1991, to promote the welfare and protection of children in their area. Health Service Executives at local level therefore have an obligation to receive information about any child who is not receiving adequate care and/or protection

The reporting form is for use by:

- Health Service Executive personnel
- Professionals and individuals in the provision of child care services in the community who have service contracts with the health services executives
- Designated persons in a voluntary or community agency
- Any professional, individual or group involved in services to children who become aware of a child protection or welfare concern, or to whom a child protection or welfare concern is reported.

Please fill in as much information and detail as is known to you, (health executive personnel should do this in consultation with their line manager). This will assist the Social Work Department in assessing the level of risk to the child, or support services required. If the information requested is not known to you, please indicate by putting a line through the question. It is likely that a social worker will contact you to discuss your report. Health Service Executives aim to work in partnership with parents. If you are making this report in confidence you should note that the Health Service Executive cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality as (a) a court could order that information be disclosed or (b) under the freedom of information act the commissioner may order that information be disclosed. You should also note that in making a 'bona fide report' you are protected under the Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998

This form should be sent to your local duty social worker in the local Health Service Executive

Appendix Six

HSE Duty Social Worker Contact Details

Eastern Region East Coast Area	Contact No.
Dun Laoghaire (area 1)	01 2808403
Clonskeagh (area 2)	01 2680320
Wicklow (area 10)	0404 60800

Mid-Western	Contact No.
North Tipperary/East Limerick	0505 24202
Clare	065 6863907
Limerick	061 483711

Eastern Region , South Western Area	Contact No.
Dublin South City District D8	01 6486650
Dublin South West D12	01 4520666
Dublin West 10	01 6206387
Naas	045 882400

North Eastern	Contact No.
Louth, Drogheda	041 9875282
Dundalk	041 9392200
Meath/Navan	046 907800
Cavan/Monaghan	046 9030616

Eastern Region , Northern Area	Contact No.
Dublin 7 (area 6)	01 8567704
Dublin 3 (area 7 north)	01 8556871
Dublin 1 (area 7 south)	01 8556871
Dublin 5 (area 8)	01 8160314

South Eastern	Contact No.
Waterford	051 842827
Wexford	053 9123522
South Tipperary	052 77303
Carlow	059 9136587
Kilkenny	056 7784781

Southern Area	Contact No.
Mallow, Cork	022 54100
South Lee Cork	021 4923001
West Cork	028 40447
North Lee Cork	214927000
Kerry/ Tralee	066 7184887

Western Area	Contact No.
Galway	091 521059
Mayo	094 9042283
Roscommon	090 6626732

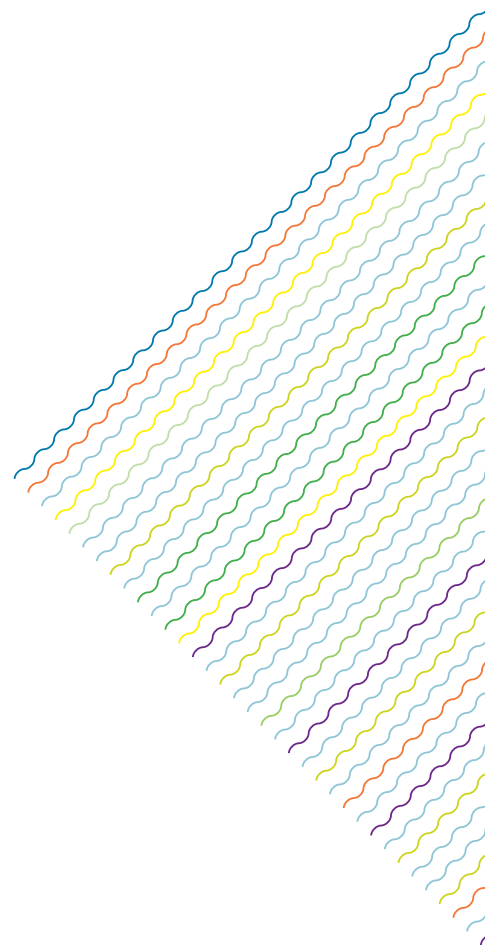
North Western Area	Contact No.
Sligo / Leitrim	071 9155136
Donegal	074 9123770

Midland Area	Contact No.
Laois/Offaly	057 9322488
Longford/Westmeath	044 9384450

Appendix Seven

Health and Social Care Trusts – Duty Social Worker Contact Details

Health and Social Care Trusts in NI	Each trust will have a Gateway team to deal with reports of abuse and also more local contacts for on-going professional liaison for advice on concerns.
Northern HSC Trust	Tel: 03001234333 Out of hours 028 9446 8833
South Eastern HSC Trust	Tel: 03001000300 Out of hours – 028 90565444
Southern HSC Trust	Tel: 08007837745 Out of hours – 028 38334444
Belfast HSC Trust	Tel: 028 90 507000 Out of hours – 028 90565444
Western HSC Trust	Tel: 028 71314090 Out of hours – 028 71345171



Appendix Eight

Other useful contacts

Irish Sports Council
Top Floor, Block A
West End Office Park
Blanchardstown, Dublin 15
Tel No. 01-8608800
www.irishsportsCouncil.ie

ISPCC
20 Molesworth Street
Dublin 2
01 6794944
ispcc@ispcc.ie
ISPCC Childline 1800 666666 (Freephone)

Volunteering Ireland
Coleraine House
Coleraine Street
Dublin 7
01 8722622
info@volunteeringireland.com

Ombudsman for Children
Millennium House
52-56 Great Strand Street
Dublin 1
1890 654 654 / 01 865 6800
oco@oco.ie

Sports Council Northern Ireland
House of Sport
Upper Malone Road
Belfast BT9 5LA
Tel No. 02890 381222
www.sportni.net

Child Protection in Sport Unit
NSPCC, Jennymount Business Park
North Derby Street
Belfast BT 15 3HN
02890 351135
www.thecpsu.org.uk
NSPCC Helpline 0808-8005000 (Freephone)
Child Line (UK) 0800 1111

Volunteer Development Agency
4th Floor, 58 Howard Street
Belfast BT1 6PG
Tel No. 02890-236100

Protection of Children Service
Child Care Policy Directorate
Health and Social Care Trust
Room D1.4, Castle Buildings,
Stormont Estate
Belfast BT4 3SQ,
Tel No. 028 90-522559
www.dhsspsni.gov.uk

Northern Ireland Commissioner
for Children & Young People,
Millennium House,
17-25 Great Victoria Street, Belfast, BT2 7BA.
Telephone (028) 9031 1616
www.niccy.org

The National Adults Counselling Service
Freephone 1800 477 477
NI 00800 477 477 77
www.connectcounselling.ie

Disability Sports Northern Ireland
Adelaide House
Falcon Road
Belfast
BT12 6SJ
Tel No. 0044 2890 387 062
www.dsni.co.uk

HSE Health Service Executive
Child and Family Services
www.hse.ie



Appendix Nine

Reference and Source Materials

Code of Ethics & Good Practice for Children's Sport (Irish Sports Council and Sport Northern Ireland, 2006)

Children First - Draft (Department of Health and Children, 2010) – Ireland

Children First (Department of Health and Children, 1999) – Ireland

Co-operating to Safeguard Children (Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety, 2003) – Northern Ireland

Our Duty to Care (Volunteer Development Agency supported by the Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety, 2007) – Northern Ireland

Our Duty to Care (Department of Health and Children, 2001) - Ireland

Getting it Right (Volunteer Development Agency supported by the Department of Health Social Services and Public safety, August 2005) – Northern Ireland

Child Protection for the Youth Work Sector, (Department of Education & Science) 2003

SafeSport Away - NSPCC & the Amateur Swimming Association

Sportscheck - Child Protection in Sport Unit 2002

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989

The Child Care Act, 1991

The Children's Act, 2001

Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (NI) Order 2003

Safeguarding Disabled Children – Practice Guidelines (2003)

Appendix Ten

Legislation

Ireland Legislation

Children Act 2001

The Children Act 2001 replaced provisions of the Children Act, 1908 and associated legislation with a modern comprehensive statute.

Child Care Act, 1991

The purpose of the Child Care Act, 1991 is to 'update the law in relation to the care of children who have been assaulted, ill-treated, neglected or sexually abused, or who are at risk'.

Criminal Justice Act 2006

Section 176 of the Criminal Justice Act 2006 introduced the criminal charge of 'reckless endangerment of children'.

Domestic Violence Act, 1996

The Domestic Violence Act, 1996 introduced major changes in the legal remedies for domestic violence.

Protections for Persons reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998

This Act came into operation on 23 January 1999.

Data Protection Act, 1988

The Data Protection Act, 1988 applies to the automatic processing of personal data.

Education Act, 1998

The Education Act, 1998 places an obligation on those concerned with its implementation to give practical effect to the constitutional rights of children as they relate to education.

Education (Welfare) Act 2000

The Education (Welfare) Act 2000, which was fully commenced in July 2002, replaced previous school attendance legislation.

Non-Fatal Offences against the Person Act, 1997

The two relevant provisions of this Act concern the physical chastisement of pupils and describe circumstances in which the use of reasonable force may be justifiable.

Freedom of Information Act, 1997

The Freedom of Information Act, 1997 enables members of the public to obtain access to information in the possession of public bodies.

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989

Some of the sections highlighting the rights of children would have specific relevance to children involved in sport. This covers both Northern Ireland and Ireland.

Northern Ireland Legislation

The Children (NI) Order 1995

There are five practice principles relating to children within this legislation.

Co-operating to Safeguard Children (2003)

This provides child protection guidelines and outlines the roles and responsibilities of all agencies in Northern Ireland.

Criminal Law Act (NI) 1967

This Act states that anyone with direct knowledge or information about an arrestable offence is required to inform the police within a reasonable time.

Data Protection Act 1998

This Act ensures that personal data shall be processed fairly and lawfully.

Our Children and Young People – Our Pledge DHSSPS 2006

This strategy is to ensure that by 2016 all children and young people are fulfilling their potential.

Sexual Offences (NI) Order 2008

This Order brings NI legislation in line with legislation in England and Wales, focussing on convicted individuals and their management, plus establishing the age of consent.

The Criminal Justice (NI) Order 2008

This legislation has created public protection sentences within an overall new sentencing framework for Northern Ireland. The new legislation also places the Public Protection Arrangements on a statutory footing.

The Sexual Offences Act 2003

This legislation means that people who have been cautioned or convicted for sexual offences on or after 1 September 1997, or who have been released from prison on or after that date, having been convicted for sexual offences must notify the police of certain details.

Rehabilitation of Offenders (Exceptions) Order (NI) 1979

Exceptions are made under this legislation to the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Northern Ireland) Order 1978 which lists the circumstances in which an employer may apply for a full criminal record disclosure.

Police Act (What is known as Part 5 of the Police Act 1996)

This was not initially implemented in Northern Ireland, but the Northern Ireland Office has now enacted this piece of the legislation.

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007

This Order introduced an Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA), who is currently responsible for making barring decisions.