

Child Safeguarding Policy









1st Edition – 2026

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GLOSSARY

BULLYING: Bullying behaviour can be Defined as repeated aggression be it verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against others.-

CATEGORIES OF ABUSE: Abuse is generally categorised into four categories – Neglect, Emotional Abuse, Physical Abuse and Sexual Abuse. Definitions for each of these categories of abuse are outlined in detail in Section 5 of the Child Safeguarding Policy as are other forms of abuse.

CHILD: For the purpose of the Guidance a Child is any person under the age of 18 years.

The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 and the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (NI) Order 2003 define a child as a person under 18 years of age while the Child Care Act 1991 (ROI) and Children First, National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children define a child as any person under 18 years.

CHILDREN'S OFFICER: The Children's Officer is central to maintaining the safeguarding of children and young people in our Gaelic Games Associations and to the implementation of the Child Safeguarding Policy at both Club and at County level. In addition to these core responsibilities the Children's Officer must also ensure, with the cooperation of other Officers, that legislative requirements governing the participation of children/young people and those who work with them are maintained at all times.

CHILD SAFEGUARDING, PROTECTION AND WELFARE:

- Child Welfare in a safeguarding context describes the procedures and actions adopted that promote the welfare of children and young people and protects them from harm.
- Sports associations also use the term player welfare as it may apply to both children and adults who play our games and this terminology in the case of children should not be confused with 'child welfare'. The term '**player welfare**' in a sports context generally describes the welfare of a player while they are playing or participating in our games. Player welfare in this context generally refers to player injury and on-field care, issues such as concussion, anti-doping and nutrition, the availability of medical aid and assistance and frequency of playing and training. Such requirements and the responsibilities to ensure that they are addressed are contained in our playing rules, regulations and coaching qualification training programmes.
- Child Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and young people and protect them from harm.
- Child protection refers to the procedures which detail how to respond to concerns about a child including our Child Safeguarding Statements.

CHILD SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT: Defined in the Children First Act 2015, this is a statement which includes a written assessment of risk of harm to children while availing of the service, and the measures that will be taken to manage any identified risks.

CHILD SAFEGUARDING TRAINING: Child Safeguarding Training is now a mandatory requirement in law for those who work with children. This requirement applies to our coaches, managers and others who fulfil a role of responsibility or a regulated role with children, on our behalf.

COACH/MENTOR/TRAINER: These terms are used throughout this document to describe an individual who assists young people to develop their Gaelic Games' skills and abilities or who may have other roles of responsibility relating to underage teams or individuals in their Association.

COUNTY/NATIONAL COMPLAINTS INVESTIGATION COMMITTEE: Carry out an investigation into a complaint of an alleged breach of the Code of Conduct (Underage) that has come to its attention as it considers appropriate. The Complaints Investigation Committee shall have the authority to propose a sanction where it is deemed appropriate. For further information please see Section 8.

COMPLAINTS HEARINGS COMMITTEE: The Decision-Makers in the Complaints Procedure process. Where the Complaints Investigation Committee charges a Respondent and a Respondent maintains his/her innocence, the Complaints Hearings Committee decide on the basis of evidence before the committee whether the Respondent is innocent or guilty of the alleged breach.

DEBARMENT: An interim decision taken by a Designated Liaison Person at either Club, County, Provincial or National level. Such action may only be taken following consideration of a matter that has given reasonable grounds for concern regarding a person who may, or may not be, working with children or vulnerable adults in any of our Associations following their alleged conduct, whether it be as part of their role(s) in any of our Associations or as a result of their conduct elsewhere. A debarment decision shall exclude a person from participation in or attendance at certain activities as prescribed in their terms of debarment, for a specified or non-specified period of time, and until the matter has received the necessary and due consideration at a later stage.

DESIGNATED LIAISON PERSON: The Designated Liaison Person at all levels of our Associations is generally responsible for receiving allegations of child abuse as they relate to Association personnel and activities and with reporting or assisting in the reporting of such allegations to the statutory authorities and to the National Designated Liaison Person in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy. The DLP has the authority to impose a debarment order following consideration of an allegation that has given reasonable grounds for concern.

EMPLOYEE: An individual who works part time or full time for their Association or any unit of the Association under a contract of employment, whether oral or written, express or implied, and has recognised rights and duties.

EXPULSION: The term expulsion within this policy refers to the removal of membership rights from an individual or individuals. In the context of this policy, following consideration of instances of abuse or of relevant prosecutions or convictions against individuals, members may subsequently be expelled from their Association.

GAELIC GAMES ASSOCIATIONS: Throughout this document we refer to The Gaelic Games Associations which for the purpose of the policy describes the Gaelic Athletic Association, Ladies Gaelic Football Association, The Camogie Association, GAA Handball and GAA Rounders.

IMAGE: In this Section 7 of the policy the word “image” refers to all photographic and video image captured, recorded or streamed.

MANDATED PERSON: As defined in the Children First Act 2015, mandated persons have a statutory obligation to report concerns which meet or exceed the threshold of harm, as defined in the Act, to Tusla and to cooperate with Tusla in the assessment of mandated reports, where requested to do so. A mandated person is a person named under Schedule 2 of Children First Act 2015 (ROI).

NAMED PERSON: A person appointed by an organisation to lead the development of guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures and for ensuring that policies and procedures are consistent with best practice as detailed in this policy.

PARENTS/GUARDIANS: A Parent may be defined as the natural parent, the adoptive parent or the adopting parent in respect of a child, or as the person(s) acting in loco parentis to the child. In the case of a child/young person under 18 years of age, the Guardian is charged with the legal responsibility for the care and management of the child and of the minor child's estate and general wellbeing.

This definition of Parents and Guardians does not purport to represent a legal definition.

PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES: Action(s) taken to mitigate against any potential risk of harm to Gaelic Games Participants, the person of concern, a unit and or the Association's. Any such measures will be implemented without prejudice to either party and in no way represent any predetermination of the outcome of the matters under consideration.

RELEVANT PERSON: As defined in the Children First Act 2015, ‘means a person who is appointed by a provider of a relevant service to be the first point of contact in respect of the provider's Child Safeguarding Statement’.

RELEVANT SERVICE: As defined in the Children First Act 2015, ‘means any work or activity specified in Schedule 1 [of that Act]’.

STATUTORY AUTHORITIES: The authorities who promote the welfare and protection of children and who in cases of alleged abuse of children have the responsibility to investigate all such allegations. In the Republic of Ireland, the statutory authorities are An Garda Síochána and Tusla while it is the PSNI and the Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) who have a similar role in Northern Ireland and in Britain the Police and LADO Network. The DHSSPS however do not investigate individual cases. These investigations are carried out by the relevant Health and Social Care Trusts.

TUSLA PORTAL: The Tusla Portal, is the preferred method of reporting to Tusla. It enables users to securely submit Child Protection and Welfare Report Forms (CPWRFs) and Retrospective Abuse Report Forms (RARFs) to Tusla online. To use the Tusla Portal, an individual will first need to create a user account. A user may submit a report on the Tusla Portal then print a copy for their own records.

UNDERAGE PLAYER: The term underage players, i.e. any person who is under 18 years of age, also refers to children regardless of what team, grade or age group they play with. ‘Underage’ is a general term given to the players and competitions up to Minor grade level and to whom the Code of Conduct ((Underage) Section 8) applies.

SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION

This policy recognises that in accordance with legislative requirements, and our commitments, to safeguard all children regardless of race, ability, ethnicity or sexual orientation from harm, that the welfare and interests of children are paramount in all circumstances. The Child Safeguarding Policy aims to ensure that children and young people have a positive, developmental and enjoyable experience of Gaelic games and other activities and that they do so, as far as is practicable, in a safe and enjoyable environment in accordance with the Children First Act (2015) and the Children (NI) Order 1995.

Purpose of document

The publication by the Gaelic Athletic Association, the Ladies Gaelic Football Association, the Camogie Association, GAA Handball and GAA Rounders of this joint Child Safeguarding Policy provides our membership, and particularly those who work with young people and children, with specific direction and guidance when fulfilling their safeguarding and good practice roles at local and national level.

Such is the importance of child safeguarding and protection in our work that each of The Gaelic Games Associations have brought together the collective best practices based on many years of experience as we seek to provide a safe environment in which we can promote our games and enable young people and children to develop in a caring and respectful manner.

This policy applies to all persons under 18 yrs. of age who participate in our games or other activities and to those who work with them and assist them in any capacity on our behalf.

The value of providing one agreed policy for our members enables us to jointly promote organisational and statutory guidance and legislation that governs our work with young people and children. This will assist and direct our members and units and provide guidance for those working with young people and children.

THE GAA PURPOSE AND VISION

Our purpose is to promote Gaelic games, culture and lifelong participation as a community-based, volunteer-led organisation which enriches lives and communities.

We are dedicated to ensuring that our games and values enrich the lives of our members, families, and the communities we serve

We are committed to active lifelong participation for all

We provide safe and inclusive facilities and environments for everyone

We are committed to applying a sustainable development ethos to managing our resources and activities

We actively seek to engage with and include all members of our society

We promote individual development and wellbeing and strive to enable all our members to achieve their full potential in their chosen roles

Our Values

Community Identity

Community and Club is at the heart of our Association

Everything we do helps to enrich the communities we serve

We foster a clear sense of identity and place

We support our members in contributing to the wellbeing of their respective communities

Amateur Status

All our players and members participate in our games as amateurs

We provide a games programme at all levels to meet the needs of all our players

We safeguard our position as the leading amateur games organisation in the world

Inclusiveness

We welcome everybody to be part of our Association

We are open to diverse opinions and cultures while respecting our Irish heritage and language

We cater for all abilities

Respect

We respect each other on and off the playing field

We operate with integrity

We listen to and respect the views of all

Player Welfare

We provide the best playing experience for all our players
We structure our games to allow players of all abilities to enjoy our sports and reach their potential
As with our players, we value the welfare and wellbeing of all our members

Teamwork and Volunteerism

We are a volunteer-led and democratic organisation
We flourish through the voluntary efforts of our membership
Our voluntary ethos inspires the engagement of members in the broader community
The cornerstone of our Association and sustainability is effective teamwork on and off the field
We celebrate and support the contributions of our volunteers and employees

THE CAMOGIE ASSOCIATION VALUES:

Respect

Respect is about always acting with integrity and holding each other, our Association and our game in the highest regard

Inclusiveness

There is a place for everyone within Camogie. We strive to provide equitable access to opportunities and resources for everyone

Equity

We believe equity is the cornerstone of our work, and we recognise that there are many levels within our sport

Excellence

We strive to be the best in all we do, in our leadership, communications and decisions.

Commitment

We recognise the commitment of our volunteers and all those who give their time to our sport. Community, collaboration and teamwork are at the core of Camogie's success.

Enjoyment

Is vital for players, officials, volunteers, members and fans engaging with Camogie and should be at the heart of all we do

THE LADIES GAELIC FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION VALUES:

Integrity

We will foster a culture of excellence, accountability and transparency

Brave

We will be creative, dynamic and innovative, building on what we have, trying new things and tackling difficult issues head on

Inclusive

We will aspire to provide a safe, fun and positive environment for all regardless of their background

Passionate

We will foster our love for the game and our pride in the unique heritage and identity of our sport in everything we do

Responsive

We will ensure that our members voice informs our future direction, opportunities and collaboration with others in Ladies Gaelic Football

Sustainable

We will strive for sustainability in how we resource and finance our sport and in how we contribute to a greener and more environmentally friendly society

SECTION 2 – CHILD SAFEGUARDING RISK ASSESSMENT & CHILD SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT

RISK ASSESSMENT & CHILD SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT

The Gaelic Games Associations must at all times ensure that we are vigilant and constantly aware as to the potential for harm that may come to a child when they are attending or participating in our games, at training or at other associated activities. Members and parents should be aware that we have adopted robust and relevant safeguarding policies, codes, guidelines and other practices that address the risk of harm.

We depend however on our coaches, parents, children and other club personnel to ensure that they are not only aware of these procedures but that they contribute to their implementation.

Clubs, County Boards and any other units within our Associations providing relevant services to children are required to prepare and display a Child Safeguarding Statement. The Statement cannot be agreed until a Risk Assessment has been carried out, and it must be reviewed at a minimum every 24 months or sooner if there has been a material change in any of the issues to which it refers or if there have been any changes in relevant legislation. E.g. could be a change in the relevant person (children's officer).

It shall specify the services being provided and the principles and procedures observed by our Associations, to ensure that as far as is practicable, a child availing of our services is safe from harm.

Independent, combined and amalgamated teams, whether they be a combination of a number of teams in a County, Region or District, are not clubs per se, but the Children's Officer of these units may carry out a parallel risk assessment and submit the outcomes of their risk assessment to their County Children's Officer. These outcomes shall be subsequently considered and shall be included as appropriate as part of the County Risk Assessment process and reflected as required in the County Child Safeguarding Statement. Independent and amalgamated teams may adopt the County Child Safeguarding Statement or may agree their own Statement.

At a minimum the Risk Assessment must take place at least every two years following which the relevant unit shall then agree and display a Child Safeguarding Statement. The two-year cycle is a legislative requirement in the 26 Counties in Ireland and is a requirement under rule by each of our Associations (GAA, LGFA, Camogie, Rounders and Handball). It is important to note that the risks referred to in this context relate to the risk of harm and not general health and safety risks.

The completion date for the Safeguarding Risk Assessment and Child Safeguarding Statement process is agreed by Gaelic Games Associations, and we provide user friendly templates, and other guidance, to assist our various units in completing these requirements.

WHAT IS A CHILD SAFEGUARDING RISK ASSESSMENT?

A Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment is a structured process that identifies and evaluates potential risk of harm to children within an organisation that provides a service to children. The overall aim is to ensure the safeguarding of children by examining practices and feature that could put a child at the risk of harm. It requires each of our units to examine all aspects of our services, e.g. coaching, training, games, social activities, away trips, Scór etc. from a safeguarding perspective, and to establish whether there are practices or features in place that have the potential to put children at risk. As previously highlighted, the risk in this context is the risk of harm and not general health and safety risks.

THE RISK ASSESSMENT PROCESS IS INTENDED TO ENABLE EACH OF OUR UNITS TO:

- Identify potential risks of harm
- Identify Association policies and procedures that have been adopted to minimise risk by responding in a timely manner to potential risks
- Review whether adequate precautions have been taken to eliminate or reduce these risks
- Identify any gaps in provision, if they exist, and how and when these gaps will be addressed

Upon completion, the Safeguarding Risk Assessment must be agreed by the relevant Club/County Executive or Committee and signed by the respective Chairperson and the Children's Officer. The Risk Assessment and Child Safeguarding Statement is completed on Foireann.

The Risk Assessment Template and Child Safeguarding Statement is available [here](#).

SECTION 3 – ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

CHILDREN'S OFFICER

The role of Children's Officer is central to maintaining the safeguarding of children and underage players in our Gaelic Games Associations and to the implementation of the Child Safeguarding Policy at both Club and at County level. In addition to these core responsibilities the Children's Officer must also ensure, with the cooperation of other Officers, that legislative requirements governing the participation of children/underage players and those who work with them are maintained at all times.

Achieving the above is a task that requires the cooperation of other Officers, coaches, parents/guardians and our underage players and given the legislative role that the Children's Officer must fulfil their work should be supported at all times by their respective Club Executive or County Committees.

The Children's Officer shall have the support of parents/guardians, coaches and children alike as somebody that can represent the views of others and we must ensure that their Club and/or County Committees acknowledges this and supports them to deliver upon their child safeguarding responsibilities.

CHILDREN'S OFFICER - AN OFFICER AT CLUB AND COUNTY LEVEL

In accordance with our rules, and due to a wide range of responsibilities attached to the role, the Children's Officer, both Club and County, are appointed as Officers to their respective Club Executive Committee or County Committee/Board. This is not 'an elected' position as happens in the case of other Officers.

When appointing a Children's Officer, the relevant Committee should also appoint an Assistant Children's Officer whose services may be called upon in the event of the absence, unavailability or in the event of a conflict of interest involving the Children's Officer. The Assistant Children's Officer shall not be a member of the Club Executive.

Given the key and over-arching Association and legal responsibilities attached to working with children/underage players it is recommended that the Children's Officer participates fully in all relevant aspects of their respective Club or County Committee's work and where possible should report on a monthly basis, to their Committee as to appropriate levels of safeguarding compliance and adherence to our rules and our statutory requirements. Non-adherence to rules and the failure to remain compliant with statutory safeguarding requirements can have serious consequences for a Club, County and for the individual concerned.

While the overall implementation of our Child Safeguarding Policy is the principal role for all Children's Officers the appointed person is a key influencer in the promotion of safeguarding and the interests of children and underage players in their Club/County and Association.

Neither the Club or County Children's Officers has the responsibility to validate allegations or concerns of abuse whether at Club or County level. The Club/County Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is the relevant person to assist in the processing of such matters as per our agreed Section 5.

CHILDREN'S OFFICERS IN INDEPENDENT/AMALGAMATED OR COMBINED TEAMS

The provisions of the Child Safeguarding Policy apply to all Clubs and teams and therefore also apply to independent, amalgamated or combined teams.

Each Club Executive must agree to nominate and ratify one of the Club Children's Officers to function as Children's Officer for the relevant independent, amalgamated or combined team from AGM to AGM. Club Executives may agree to put arrangements in place to change or rotate this appointment as appropriate as long as it is ratified annually by each Club Executive. The Clubs may decide to have the same individual or the same Club continue holding this position if it suits the Clubs as long as that decision is both taken and ratified annually.

CHILDREN'S OFFICER TRAINING

- All Club and County Children's Officer must attend the Gaelic Games Safeguarding 2 - Club Children's Officer Workshop, and prior to that must have also completed the Gaelic Games Safeguarding 1 - Child Protection in Sport Awareness Workshop
- Club and County Children's Officers must hold a valid vetting through the Gaelic Games Associations and be a current member of the relevant Association(s)
- Throughout the year safeguarding information and themes related seminars and webinars are organised by our National Children's Offices and both Club and County Children's Officers are urged to attend these events where up to date information on legislative changes or internal amendments to the Child Safeguarding Policy or Rules are outlined and discussed
- Children's Officers should avail of external training or attend seminars relevant to their role. The Gaelic Games Associations will continue to appraise our Children's Officers on changes to child safeguarding practices, legislation and requirements and will receive updates on such matters from their Association
- Where necessary it is recommended that County Children's Officers should organise training and information events for Club Children's Officers in their County

CLUB CHILDREN'S OFFICER – KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Oversee, in cooperation with the Club Executive, the completion of the Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment and the Child Safeguarding Statement in accordance with the time frame agreed by our Associations
- Ensure that all persons working with children and young people;
 - are a member of the relevant Associations
 - hold a valid vetting through The Gaelic Games Associations
 - relevant safeguarding training in accordance with the requirements of the Gaelic Games Safeguarding Training Policy
 - hold a relevant coaching qualification if in the role of a coach
- A record of such safeguarding compliance is now recorded on Foireann. The Children's Officer has access on Foireann to export a list of all those who are vetted and have safeguarding completed in the Club. For further details please click [here](#)
- Ensure a record is maintained of those working with underage in the Club. A record can be maintained by assigning the person working with underage as a coach on Foireann. For further details please click [here](#)
- Act as the validator for vetting identification process please see vetting policy
- Assist with the organising of the delivery of the Safeguarding 1 (Child Protection in Sport Awareness) Workshops, and any additional training.
- Direct members to the Child Safeguarding Policy
- The Club Children's Officer is the relevant person who shall be the first point of contact in respect of the Club's Child Safeguarding Statement. See role of relevant person.
- Include the Club Child Safeguarding Statement to the Club social media platforms in use by the Association
- Liaise in particular with parents/guardians of underage players and ensure that they are aware of and understand the basic elements of the Child Safeguarding Policy
- Be familiar with their role in processing alleged breaches as per the Complaints Procedure of the Child Safeguarding Policy
- Make themselves known to the general membership of the Club and in particular to coaches, team mentors, managers, parents/guardians and the children/underage players
- Influence policy and practice within the Club in order to prioritise children/underage players needs
- Promote greater consultation with underage players and participation by them in Club activities and planning
- Encourage the involvement of parents/guardians in organising Club activities and co-operate with parents/guardians in ensuring that every underage player enjoys his/her involvement with the Club
- Liaise with Coiste na nÓg to ensure that the "child-centred ethos" is being adhered to through coaching and games development
- Promote good practice procedures in the recruitment and selection of adults working with children/underage players in the Club
- Advise coaches/mentors etc. to ensure their Foireann and Tobar accounts are synched
- Monitor, in association with team coaches, any significant drop out rates, lack of attendance or Club transfers of underage players and report accordingly to the Club Executive or Management Committee
- Maintain ongoing contact with the County Children's Officer and with other Club Children's Officers in their locality

COUNTY CHILDREN'S OFFICER – KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Oversee, in cooperation with the County Committee, the completion of the Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment and the Child Safeguarding Statement in accordance with the time frame agreed by our Associations. The County Children's Officer is the relevant person who shall be the first point of contact in respect of the County Child Safeguarding Statement
- Assist Club Children's Officer in carrying out their roles at Club level and the manner in which they may implement an annual work plan to deliver upon such roles
- Upload the County Child Safeguarding Statement to the County website and other social media platforms in use by the Association, ensure the County Child Safeguarding Statement is displayed at County ground where applicable.
- Promote the Child Safeguarding Policy at County level and ensure that a link to Child Safeguarding Policy is on the County website
- Coordinate and liaise with counterparts within The Gaelic Games Associations and with the assistance of Club Children's Officers, the delivery of Safeguarding 2- Club Children's Officer Workshops
- Coordinate and liaise with counterparts within The Gaelic Games Associations, the delivery of The Designated Liaison Person Workshops – Safeguarding 3
- Make themselves known to the Club Children's Officers in the County, to development squads and county underage team personnel
- Ensure that all relevant personnel working with underage squads and county teams are compliant with Association safeguarding requirements
- Liaise with the referee administrators to ensure that all match officials, officiating at underage games are compliant with Association safeguarding requirements
- Ensure that the County has appointed and ratified a County Complaints Investigation Committee and a County Complaints Hearings Committee
- Promote greater consultation with underage players and participation by them in Club and County activities and planning
- Influence policy and practice within the County with the assistance of Club Children's Officer so as to prioritise the safeguarding needs of children and young people in the Association
- Promote consultation with underage players and participation by them in Club and County activities
- Liaise with the County Board/Coiste na nÓg and Games Development Committee to ensure that the "child-centred ethos" is being adhered to throughout the County as required
- Monitor, in association with Club Children's Officers, any significant drop out rates, lack of attendance or significant Club transfers of underage players and report accordingly to the County or other appropriate forum
- Maintain ongoing contact, and organise regular meetings with the Club Children's Officers in the County
- Maintain regular contact with the Association's National Children's Office

THE DESIGNATED LIAISON PERSON

All Clubs and County Boards shall appoint a Designated Liaison Person (DLP) who on their behalf shall be responsible for dealing with concerns relating to the possible abuse of children. Each of our Gaelic Games Associations shall also appoint a National Designated Liaison Person.

Should a Club or County Committee fail to appoint a DLP, the role automatically falls to the Chairperson of the Club or County Committee.

The Designated Liaison Person, or DLP as referred to hereafter, must be familiar with the safeguarding and child welfare roles and responsibilities of statutory authorities and agencies within their jurisdiction, and the Association's Child Safeguarding Policy.

The Designated Liaison Person is responsible for ensuring the reporting of allegations or concerns of abuse to Tusla (ROI) or Gateway Services Team at the Health and Social Care Trusts (NI), or Children's Social Care Team at the child's Local Authority (Britain) and/or An Garda Síochána/Police Service of Northern Ireland/Britain, having established reasonable grounds for concern. A report may be made by the Club or County DLP or the County DLP, as appropriate, or as a joint report with a Mandated Person (ROI) and must be done without delay once reasonable grounds for concern have been established.

When appointing a DLP the relevant committee should also appoint a Deputy DLP whose services may be called upon in the event of the absence or unavailability of the DLP or in the event of a conflict of interest involving the DLP.

If deemed appropriate Provincial Councils may appoint a Designated Liaison Person who shall liaise with their relevant National DLP on all matters pertaining to their role.

THE CLUB DESIGNATED LIAISON PERSON

The Designated Liaison Persons at Club level, appointed by their Club Executive Committee, shall be responsible for dealing with concerns relating to the possible abuse of children.

The appointed person must complete the Gaelic Games Safeguarding 1 Child Protection Sport Awareness Workshop and Safeguarding 3 Designated Liaison Persons training Workshop, regardless of any external prior training or additional qualifications, and have the ability to approach child welfare and protection matters in a sensible, balanced, facilitative and nonthreatening manner and should be aware of the responsibilities that they are required to fulfil on behalf of their Club and their Association.

The DLP must be familiar with the safeguarding and child welfare roles and responsibilities of statutory authorities and agencies within their jurisdiction and with the role of the National Designated Person and Mandated Persons.

It is important to note that the Designated Liaison Person does not have a counselling or therapeutic role or a responsibility for investigating or validating child protection concerns within their Club or County.

If the Club DLP is conflicted in relation to the parties to, or the subject matter of an allegation/concern, the matter should be referred to the Deputy DLP. If for whatever reason the Deputy DLP may also be conflicted, then the matter should be notified to the Chairperson of the Club and a temporary DLP should be appointed to address the matter, or it may be referred to the National DLP for their consideration.

The Club Designated Liaison Person is responsible for ensuring the reporting of allegations or suspicions of child abuse to Tusla (ROI) or Gateway Services Team at the Health and Social Care Trusts (NI), or Children's Social Care Team at the child's Local Authority (Britain) and/or An Garda Síochána/Police Service of Northern Ireland/Britain having established reasonable grounds for concern.

Inform the child's parents/guardians that a report is to be submitted to the statutory authorities, unless:

- o Informing the parents/guardians is likely to endanger the child or young person;
- o Informing the parents/guardians may place you as the reporter at risk of harm from the family;
- o The family's knowledge of the report could impair the statutory authorities ability to carry out an assessment.

DESIGNATED LIAISON PERSON IN INDEPENDENT/AMALGAMATED OR COMBINED TEAMS

Each Club Executive must agree to nominate and ratify one of the Club Designated Liaison Persons (DLP) for the Independent Team. (The DLP is not required to sit on the joint sub-committee).

While these teams have formed a joint sub-committee to oversee the organising of the team, it is not a requirement of the DLP to sit on this sub-committee.

THE CLUB DESIGNATED LIAISON PERSON SHALL:

- Be aware and committed to the Association's Child Safeguarding Policy
- Have knowledge of relevant child protection and safeguarding legislation in the jurisdiction in which they operate
- Have a knowledge of categories and indicators of abuse
- Undertake relevant child safeguarding training (Safeguarding 1 & 3) Please see Section 4A for the Safeguarding Training Policy
- Abide by vetting guidance in the relevant jurisdiction
- Be aware of local contacts and services in relation to child protection i.e., principal and duty social workers and their contact details, Gardai/PSNI/Police, Tusla/Gateway team/ Social Care Team at the child's Local Authority etc.
- Consult informally with statutory authorities on child abuse concerns or allegations, if deemed necessary
- Communicate with parents/guardians and/or Statutory Agencies as and when appropriate
- Follow reporting procedures and inform Statutory Agencies and their Association's DLP of any concerns or allegations as a matter of urgency
- Maintain regular contact with their National DLP and seek their advice whenever required
- When reasonable grounds for concern exist where a child may have been, is being or is at risk of being abused, a report should be made without delay to Tusla and/or An Garda Síochána, or to the relevant Gateway Team or PSNI or in Britain the Police or Social Care Team at the child's Local Authority.
- A report may be made by the Club DLP or the County DLP, as appropriate, or as a joint report with a Mandated Person (ROI) and must be done without delay
- Always forward a copy of reported concerns and allegations received, whether reported to statutory authorities or not, to your Association's DLP
- Advise club administrators on issues of confidentiality, record keeping and data protection
- Inform the National DLP if you are aware that a member of the Association, in your Club or County, is or has been subject to a statutory investigation, a prosecution or a conviction or an allegation in relation to the abuse of a child or an adult

- Be aware of and maintain regular contact with their National DLP and always inform the National DLP of any concerns or reports made that relate to a member of our Associations and seek advice from the National DLP as appropriate
- The DLP should be made known to the general membership of the Club and in particular to team mentors, managers, to parents/guardians and underage players. Contact details can be displayed for the DLP in the Club. Clubs should ensure that the DLP is happy for contact details to be publicly displayed

THE COUNTY DESIGNATED LIAISON PERSON

The County Designated Liaison Person, appointed by their County Committee, shall be responsible for dealing with concerns relating to the possible abuse of children arising from County related or referred matters. The County DLP may be called upon to assist, advise or carry out the role of Club DLP in certain circumstances.

The appointed person must complete the Gaelic Games Safeguarding 1 Child Protection Sport Awareness Workshop and Safeguarding 3 Designated Liaison Persons Training Workshop regardless of any external prior training or additional qualifications.

The County Designated Liaison Person shall be required in certain situations to lead on child welfare and protection matters in the County in a knowledgeable, sensible, balanced, facilitative and nonthreatening manner and should be aware of the responsibilities that they are required to fulfil on behalf of their County. Appointment to this role does not infer or grant the DLP a role as an Officer of their County Committee (Board).

THE COUNTY DESIGNATED LIAISON PERSON SHALL:

- Ensure that all Clubs have appointed a Designated Liaison Person and that these officers have Gaelic Games Designated Liaison Persons Safeguarding Training, are fully aware of their responsibilities and of the contents of the Child Safeguarding Policy
- Abide by vetting guidance in the relevant jurisdiction
- Function as the formal liaison person between the County Board and statutory authorities on all matters related to allegations of child abuse arising from activities organised under the auspices of the County Board
- Have knowledge of statutory guidelines and relevant legislation as they relate to child protection and welfare of young people in their jurisdiction
- Consult with the National Designated Liaison Person on matters appropriate to their role
- Communicate with parents/guardians and external agencies as appropriate
- Be aware of local contacts and support services that may assist in developing and delivering their role
- Ensure that all individual case records pertaining to their role are maintained, that all actions taken are recorded and that such records are kept in a secure and confidential place
- Formally report allegations or concerns of child abuse to the statutory authorities as required, having established that reasonable grounds for concern exist
- When making a report to Tusla, DLPs are encouraged to use the Tusla reporting portal when submitting the Tusla Child Protection and Welfare Report Form
- When making a report to a Gateway Team/PSNI the report should include the child's name, address and age and the name address of parents/guardians, the name, if known, of the alleged perpetrator, the grounds for concern including details of the allegation, dates of incidents, description of injuries etc.
- In Britain, when making a report to the Children's Social Care Team (at the child's Local Authority) or the Police the report should include the child's name, address and age and the name address of parents/guardians, the name, if known, of the alleged perpetrator, the grounds for concern including details of the allegation, dates of incidents, description of injuries etc.
- Always forward a copy of reported concerns and allegations received, whether reported to statutory authorities or not, to your Association's DLP

THE PROVINCIAL DESIGNATED LIAISON PERSON

A Provincial Designated Liaison Person may be appointed by the relevant Provincial Council as the need for such a role is identified and agreed. The person appointed shall ensure that each County in their Province has appointed a County Designated Liaison Person and that such persons are fully au fait with their roles and responsibilities.

THE PROVINCIAL DESIGNATED LIAISON PERSON SHALL:

- Complete the Gaelic Games Safeguarding 1 Child Protection Sport Awareness Workshop and Safeguarding 3 Designated Liaison Persons Training Workshop regardless of any external prior training or additional qualifications.
- Abide by vetting guidance in the relevant jurisdiction
- Have comprehensive and detailed knowledge and experience of child welfare, protection and reporting procedures and be familiar with all such procedures in the jurisdictions in which they operate
- Promote the role of Club and County Designated Liaison Persons and provide information and advice for them in assisting them to fulfil their role

- Promote the Child Safeguarding Policy
- Liaise and consult with statutory authorities and other relevant agencies on child welfare and protection matters if required to do so
- In consultation with National Designated Liaison Person, represent the Association on matters relating to the reporting of child abuse allegations, if so required
- The Provincial Designated Liaison Person may be required in situations to lead on child welfare and protection matters in a knowledgeable, sensible, balanced, facilitative and non-threatening manner and should be aware of the responsibilities that they are required to fulfil on behalf of their Province and their Association
- The Provincial Designated Liaison Person shall forward a report of all reported concerns and allegations received, whether reported to statutory authorities or not, to their Association's DLP

DEBARMENT OF A PERSON FROM GAELIC GAMES ACTIVITIES

Where it has been established that there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that a child has been, is being or is at risk of being abused, a debarment order against any person named in the complaint or report shall be considered.

Consultation on a debarment should take place with the National DLP, see Section 5 for further information.

HOW TO CONTACT YOUR NATIONAL DESIGNATED LIAISON PERSON

The GAA National Designated Liaison Person contact is nationaldlp@gaa.ie

The LGFA National Designated Liaison Person contact is nationaldlp@lgfa.ie

The Camogie Association National Designated Liaison Person contact is nationaldlp@camogie.ie

MANDATED PERSONS (26 Counties)

Children First Act 2015 places a legal obligation on certain people, many of whom are professionals, to report child protection concerns at or above a defined threshold to Tusla - Child and Family Agency 'as soon as practicable'. These mandated persons must also assist Tusla, on request, in its assessment of child protection concerns about children who have been the subject of a mandated report.

Mandated persons are people who have contact with children and/or families who, by virtue of their qualifications, training and experience, are in a key position to help protect children from harm. Mandated persons include key professionals working with children in the education, health, justice, youth, sports and childcare sectors.

The majority of volunteers in sports clubs are not mandated persons. A mandated person is normally a paid professional. However, there are some situations where a paid professional who is volunteering in a sports club may be regarded as a mandated person.

These may include, but may not be limited to:

A person who is employed by a sports club or sports organisation to be the 'Safeguarding officer, child protection officer' and 'is employed for the purpose of performing the child welfare and protection function' of the sporting organisation, is a mandated person. This does not apply to DLPs in local clubs

- A member of An Garda Síochána, who is a mandated person 24/7
- A physiotherapist, who acting in their role as a physiotherapist for the sports club
- A doctor or nurse, whose role in the Club is that of a doctor or nurse administering medical assistance
- A counsellor, whose role in the club is that of providing counselling
- Foster carer registered with the Agency

Volunteers in our Associations are not identified as mandated persons but will continue to report any allegations or concerns of child abuse, internally in their Association as per Association rules and externally to the relevant statutory authority as per legislation.

Remember: all persons, mandated or not, must always report child protection or welfare concerns to Tusla, if they have reasonable grounds for concern about a child.

Mandated Persons have two main legal obligations under the Children First Act 2015. These are:

- To report the harm of children above a defined threshold to Tusla
- To assist Tusla, if requested, in assessing a concern which has been the subject of a mandated report

Please see Schedule 2 of the Children First Act 2015 for a list of [Mandated Persons](#)

The threshold for making a mandated report

A mandated person, in accordance with legislation, is required to report any knowledge, belief, or reasonable suspicion that a child has been harmed, is being harmed, or is at risk of being harmed, to the Authorised Person within Tusla

“Harm” means, in relation to a child:

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

The GAA, LGFA, Camogie and Handball have identified a number of key staff members, who due to their employment role and functions are Mandated Persons in their Association. The respective Mandated Persons in the GAA, LGFA and Camogie may be contacted at:

GAA - mandatedperson@gaa.ie

Camogie - mandatedperson@camogie.ie

Handball - mandatedperson.handball@gaa.ie

LGFA - mandatedperson@lgfa.ie

RELEVANT PERSON

The Children First Act 2015 defines a “relevant person” as a person who is appointed by a provider of a relevant service, that is the first point of contact in respect of the Child Safeguarding Statement.

A procedure for appointing a relevant person is a specified procedure under the Children First Act 2015.

The Gaelic Games Associations are a provider of a relevant service under the Children First Act 2015 and are required to appoint a relevant person. The relevant person is the first point of contact in relation to the Child Safeguarding Statement; their name and contact details should be included in the Child Safeguarding Statement.

Appointing a Relevant Person

For the purpose of Gaelic Games, the Children’s Officer is the appointed relevant person. They are appointed by the relevant executive/committee at Club, County and National level. The Children’s Officer shall be available as a point of contact to discuss the Child Safeguarding Statement.

NAMED PERSON

The Gaelic Games Associations provide services to children to develop our Gaelic Games and Irish cultural activities among young people and children. These games and related activities are organised and promoted by dedicated volunteers at Club, County, Provincial and National levels with the cooperation and support of an equally dedicated cohort of staff all of whom are committed to the safeguarding of children and young people in our Association as we seek to create a safe environment for young people to grow and develop.

The Gaelic Games Associations Child Safeguarding Policy outlines our procedures in accordance with legislative requirements and our commitment to safeguard all children and to ensure that children/underage players have a positive, developmental and enjoyable experience of Gaelic Games and that they do so, as far as is practicable, in a safe and enjoyable environment

To assist The Gaelic Games Associations with our aims each of the Associations have a named person to develop our guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures.

The named person within the Associations;

- GAA Safeguarding Manager, Michelle Harte
- Camogie, Safeguarding Officer, TBC
- LGFA, Safeguarding Officer, Aislinn Harkin

CHILD SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE ((CSC) NATIONAL)

The Committee, appointed by Uachtarán Chumann Lúthchleas Gael, consisting of nominees of The Gaelic Games Associations, and appointed to advise our Associations on all matters pertaining to child safeguarding shall oversee the implementation of the Child Safeguarding Policy.

While the CSC shall ensure that effective safeguarding policies, standards and guidance have been adopted it is the duty of each member and unit to ensure that they are compliant with the relevant statutory child safeguarding requirements and guidelines in the jurisdictions in which the organisation operates.

Safeguarding compliance – Child Safeguarding Committee temporary action

All members, teams and other units participating in activities and games for children and young people within The Gaelic Games Associations must at all times be safeguarding compliant in accordance with Association Child Safeguarding procedures and legislative requirements.

The Child Safeguarding Committee may, at any time, make a determination that a team, unit, or member is non-compliant with Association child safeguarding procedures or in breach of the Code of Conduct (Underage) (a “Determination of Non-Compliance”). If such a Determination is made, the team, unit, or member shall be notified in writing.

The team, unit, or member in receipt of a Determination of Non-Compliance shall not be permitted to participate in any competitions, games or activities under the jurisdiction of any of our Associations (GAA, LGFA, Camogie, Rounders or Handball) from the date of receipt (or deemed date of receipt) of notice of the Determination of Non-Compliance until the Child Safeguarding Committee has determined that it is in compliance (“a Determination of Compliance”). The Child Safeguarding Committee shall review a Determination of Non-Compliance no later than two weeks after it has been made and shall review it at intervals of no more than four weeks thereafter. Where a team, unit or member remains non-compliant, a further Determination of Non-Compliance shall be made and notice of that Determination shall be given to the team, member or unit concerned.

If a team, unit or member in receipt of a Determination of Non-Compliance wishes to appeal a Determination of Non-Compliance, it/they may appeal this decision to the Child Safeguarding Appeals Panel by submitting their appeal to the Secretary of the Child Safeguarding Appeals Panel (cwpappeals@gaa.ie) within three days of receipt of the Determination of Non-Compliance.

The Secretary of the Child Safeguarding Committee shall notify relevant County, Provincial or National Committees of a Determination of Non-Compliance and the County, Provincial or National Committee concerned shall ensure that the sanction attached to the Determination of Non-Compliance is applied. Failure by the relevant Committee to enforce this sanction shall result in disciplinary action, in accordance with Association Rules.

CASE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (NATIONAL)

The Case Management Committee are appointed by the Child Safeguarding Committee to consider and take appropriate action following receipt of complaints and allegations made against members, non-members that may have breached *Section 5 Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Allegation or Concerns of Abuse* or where a court order has been invoked on a person or persons or where a person or unit is subject to a court sentence or where a statutory order has been made in relation to a person/unit that may give cause to deem them unsuitable to work with children, adults or vulnerable persons in our Associations, as brought to its attention by members and or officials of the above Associations, parents/guardians of members, the public and statutory authorities. The CSC shall be responsible for the referral of a case to the Case Management Committee.

Interim action on behalf of CSC

Following a complaint, allegation or report of abuse relating to members of The Gaelic Games Associations or against non-members, interim actions in accordance with the terms of debarment and/or recommendations on action may be taken by the Association’s National Designated Liaison Person.

All such actions taken must be reaffirmed or otherwise by a Case Management Committee or appointed by the CSC, within 21 days of the date on which such action was taken.

CHILD SAFEGUARDING APPEALS PANEL (NATIONAL)

A Child Safeguarding Appeals Panel shall be responsible for the management of the appeals process relating to decisions reached by:

- a) A Case Management Committee, appointed by the Child Safeguarding Committee, following consideration of complaints and allegations made against members, non-members and staff that may have breached the Child Safeguarding Policy
- b) A Complaints Hearings Committee, at County or National level following consideration of complaints made against members, non-members and staff that may have breached the Code of Conduct (Underage)
- c) The Liaison Person or Authorised Signatory in refusing an acceptance letter to a member of our Associations, following the processing of a Garda Vetting and/or Access NI criminal background application
- d) A Club, County, Provincial or National Designated Liaison Persons following the placing of a debarment upon members or non-members imposed following grounds for concern for the safeguarding of children in our Associations

COMPLAINTS INVESTIGATION COMMITTEE

The role of County/National Complaints Investigation Committee is to carry out an investigation into a complaint of an alleged breach of the Code of Conduct (Underage) that has come to its attention as it considers appropriate. The Complaints Investigation Committee shall have the authority to propose a sanction where it is deemed appropriate. For further information please see Section 8.

COMPLAINTS HEARINGS COMMITTEE

The Complaints Hearings Committee are the Decision-Makers in the Complaints Procedure process. Where the Complaints Investigation Committee charges a Respondent and a Respondent maintains his/her innocence, the Complaints Hearings Committee decide on the basis of evidence before the committee whether the Respondent is innocent or guilty of the alleged breach. If Complaints Hearings Committee decide that he/she is guilty of it, the committee decide what the appropriate sanction is to be in accordance with the Sanction Grid. The committee is responsible for ensuring that procedures are properly followed.

COACH

Coaches must be at least 18 years of age.

Coaches must be in membership of one of The Gaelic Games Associations.

All coaches must be in receipt of a valid Gaelic Games Associations vetting acceptance letter prior to commencing their role.

Coaches must hold a valid relevant Child Safeguarding Training certificate as approved by our Associations.

Coaches, as a minimum, must have achieved a Foundation level/Introduction to Coaching and Games (ICGG) coaching qualification.

The number of coaches required is dependent on the number of children attending a camp as Supervisors and Camps Assistants do not have a coaching role.

Where a coach is a Nursery Coach, the coach is not required to complete the ICGG award but should complete the Nursery Programme, <https://learning.gaa.ie/NurseryProgramme>

SUPERVISOR (RESPONSIBLE ADULT)

The responsible adult, i.e. a person over 18 yrs. of age, if not a qualified coach, shall be deemed a Supervisor of Children. He/she must also be receipt of a Gaelic Games Vetting Acceptance Letter, prior to commencing their role and must have attended relevant Child Safeguarding Training as approved by our Associations. Club, County and Camp Supervisors must be in membership of one of The Gaelic Games Associations. When appointing a person as a Supervisor or “responsible adult” to work at underage level, Clubs have a responsibility to appoint persons of the highest standards who shall be recognised as role models to work with children. If a supervisor is working with the Gaelic Games All Stars, the supervisor should be encouraged to attend the Gaelic Games All Stars Workshop (Optional).

FEMALE LIAISON OFFICER (FLO)

A female liaison officer (FLO) is the female official required to be part of every management team where there are female players involved.

A FLO must be in membership of the relevant code.

A FLO must be in receipt of a valid Gaelic Games Associations vetting acceptance letter prior to commencing their role.

A FLO must hold a valid relevant Child Safeguarding Training certificate as approved by our Associations.

The FLO will act as a liaison between the players, the management team and the club board. The FLO should not be part of the selection process of teams where possible so as to remain neutral.

CAMP & ACTIVITY ASSISTANT

The role of Camp and Activity Assistant is that of assisting and not coaching or supervising

The following applies to a Camp Assistant:

- ✓ Camp/Activity Assistants must be at least 16 yrs. of age, parental consent to assist must be provided:
- ✓ Must be in receipt of a valid Gaelic Games Vetting Acceptance Letter, prior to commencing their role
- ✓ Must complete the Camp Assistant Safeguarding Training Programme or acceptable and equivalent safeguarding training programme
- ✓ May choose to attend additional Child Safeguarding training e.g. Safeguarding 1 workshop
- ✓ May not act in a coaching or supervisory role, which are two other distinct roles
- ✓ May not be included in the supervision ratio

PARENT/GUARDIAN OR NOMINATED ADULT FOR GAMES FOR ALL

Parents/ Guardians play a crucial role in a child's experience of sport and inclusion within the GAA. Where parents provide supervision and/or 1-1 provision they must:

- Always accompany their child to GAA Games for All at all times
- Undergo Garda Vetting/Access NI checks or relevant vetting
- Hold a valid relevant Child Safeguarding Training certificate as approved by our Associations.
- They are also encouraged to attend the Gaelic Games All Stars Workshop (Optional). More information can be found here - <https://learning.gaa.ie/AllStarsProgramme>

SECTION 4 - SAFE RECRUITMENT & SELECTION PRACTICES

INTRODUCTION

Children and young people continue to gain from the knowledge, experience and skills that adults, acting in a role of responsibility such as coaching, mentoring or supervising, bring in the promotion of our Gaelic games. Such support presents them with a sense of achievement, with an opportunity to develop their individual and team skills and promotes a sense of fun and fair play in our underage games and activities.

Those who oversee and promote underage games in our Associations have a responsibility to ensure that our coaches and mentors working with our children and underage players are selected, supported and trained to the required level in accordance with Statutory guidance and legislative requirements, all of which are embedded in our recruitment and selection procedures.

Gaelic games at underage level can create a respectful and trusting relationship that can be enhanced by the recruitment, selection and upskilling of adults who are suitable for such roles. While the role of the adult may vary from team to team, and from age group to age group, it is however essential that regardless of such variations in role, that the chosen adult is fully aware at the outset as to what is expected of them, what supports they will receive and what levels of responsibility they themselves have on behalf of the team, the parents and the underage players in their care, and the respective unit(s) they are working with.

This can all be achieved by adopting good practice procedures and adhering to all aspects of our Child Safeguarding Policy when we recruit our managers, coaches and other personnel to work with children and underage players.

This Child Safeguarding Policy affirms that all those in a relevant role of responsibility with children/ underage players must:

- Be a member of our Association
- Undergo vetting or police background checks
- Attend relevant child safeguarding training as approved by our Associations
- Obtain a minimum Gaelic games coaching qualification (if in a coaching role)

All of which must be completed prior to taking up their role.

The following recruitment and selection procedures are put in place as a support mechanism so as to ensure that those recruited adhere to the best possible standards that we have adopted in ensuring that our Games are played and promoted in an enjoyable, safe and developmental environment.

Safe recruitment and selection

It is essential that all adults who have undertaken a role of responsibility with children and underage players, whether in a paid or voluntary capacity, should undergo a comprehensive recruitment and selection procedure **prior** to commencing their role. The recruitment of adults who work with underage players should be coordinated by the Club Children's Officer and in conjunction with the Club Executive. The following procedures will assist Clubs & Counties when choosing suitable/qualified individuals to undertake a role of responsibility with an underage team or squads in the position to which they are best suited.

1. Role Clarification

The role and responsibilities envisaged e.g. manager, coach, mentor, trainer, supervisor, female liaison officer to name just a few and team's age group should be clearly known and stated at the outset. Any specific levels of experience or qualification required should also be clarified in advance.

2. Role Assistance

The various supports available via the club, e.g. Nursery Introduction to Coaching Gaelic Games Coaching Award, Child Safeguarding Training are basic good practice training programmes that should assist adults who wish to work with underage teams in the promotion of our Gaelic games.

3. Application Form

Applicants should complete the Coach and Mentor Application Form (Appendix 3A) prior to being considered for a coaching role. Evidence of qualifications required should be provided.

4. References

Applicants should submit written references. These should refer to the person's character and to their previous background in sports and in Gaelic games and in other areas that are relevant. References should be verified by phone call or visit.

5. **Vetting and Police Checks**

All applicants are required in law to complete Vetting and/or Police Checks, as appropriate, prior to the commencement of their role(s) with underage players in our Associations. Vetting must be renewed every three years in the Associations.

6. **Child Safeguarding Training & Coaching Qualification**

All persons working with underage players are required to undertake Safeguarding Training as approved by our Associations, in line with our Safeguarding Training Policy as promoted by The Gaelic Games Associations, prior to the commencement of their role(s) and must also possess a recognised coaching qualification. Safeguarding training must be renewed every three years in the Associations.

7. **Meet the applicant**

A senior representative, club children's officer and or another member of the Club Executive should meet with all applicants or a short list of applicants to discuss the roles, the applicant's experience and general suitability to work with children and underage players. Always ensure a person is chosen to work with children/underage players only when you are satisfied that they have the attributes and temperament to fulfil what is required of them in such an important role. The same process applies to County underage teams and or squads.

8. **Induction**

Once the successful applicant has been chosen, they should be provided with an appropriate induction programme which addresses the following;

- Values, policies and procedures
- The Club's approach to the development of underage players
- To afford meaningful playing time for all
- To support the management team in their roles in line with this policy

This also provides the opportunity to provide any additional training required.

The same process applies to County underage teams and or squads.

9. **Code of Conduct (Underage)**

All persons who work with children/underage players are required to sign the Code of Conduct (Underage) Declaration. See Appendix 5A.

10. **Foireann**

New appointees who are not club members are required to add the respective unit to their profile on Foireann.

11. **Ratification of Appointment**

All persons appointed to work with children/underage players must be ratified by the executive of the relevant unit.

This also applies to County underage teams or development squads and recorded in the minutes.

12. **Probationary/trial period**

Every new appointee should be reviewed within an agreed time period. The length of time will vary depending on the nature of the post. A review should be held at the end of the probationary/trial period.

13. **Support and Review**

Continuous support should be made available to all coaches etc. so as to enable them to fulfil their roles as requested. The role of the Children's Officer may be invaluable in identifying such supports.

14. **Adult Teams**

Coaches of adult teams that include underage players must be vetted, must have attended child safeguarding training and must have a minimum coaching qualification.

15. **Referees**

Referees should undertake agreed vetting and or background Police checks within the jurisdictions in which they officiate and attend relevant child safeguarding training.

While the purpose of any specified role and the frequency of activity by an individual in a Club may influence what recruitment criteria must be met, Clubs are advised that they should act on the side of caution and where deemed appropriate seek the vetting and child safeguarding training of individuals relevant to their roles. Such individuals could include bus drivers of underage club teams employed by the Club, parents who regularly drive children to games on behalf of the Club, physios etc.

SECTION 4A - SAFEGUARDING TRAINING POLICY

SAFEGUARDING TRAINING POLICY FOR GAELIC GAMES

This policy is part of the Safeguarding Statement for Gaelic Games under the *Children First Act 2015*, *Children's First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017)*, the *Children (NI) Order 1995*, *Tusla's Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy and Procedures and Practice* and as required by our Association Rules.

It is highlighted in Section 11(3) Children First as being mandatory and is required for whatever level of child safeguarding engagement one has in the Association. While we previously maintained this level of training as part of our good practice standards and included it as part of basic coaching qualification requirements, safeguarding training is now mandatory in law. This policy includes a list of training workshops available for specific roles within The Gaelic Games Associations.

Different levels of Child Safeguarding Training (see below) are now in place in Gaelic Games. Attendance at any of the workshops depends on the role an individual has in any of our Associations. Training is delivered in workshop format, with each session lasting three hours unless specified otherwise below. The provision of Online Gaelic Games safeguarding training shall be permitted under the direction of the Child Safeguarding Committee.

This policy sets out the accepted Safeguarding Workshops for all Gaelic Games Associations together with any specific requirements for attendance and renewal of certification.

Renewing Safeguarding certificates

Safeguarding training requires renewal every 3 years unless specified below.

N.B. If you do not hold a *valid safeguarding training certificate, you cannot continue in your role until you refresh your training.

The Club (and/or County where applicable) & individual are responsible to ensure that appropriate training has been completed and is valid.

*Valid certificate refers to a Gaelic Games certificate issued in respect of attendance at a Child Protection in Sport (Safeguarding 1) programme or the Sport Ireland or Sport NI equivalent certificate or the certificate issued following satisfactory completion of the Gaelic Games Safeguarding 1 Online Refresher programme (where appropriate to complete – see below)

All Safeguarding certificates 1,2 and 3, are valid for a maximum of three years.

ROLES THAT REQUIRE SAFEGUARDING TRAINING

Role	Safeguarding 1 Child Protection in Sport Awareness Workshop)	Safeguarding 1 E-learning Refresher Module (See pre- conditions)	Safeguarding 2 (Children's Officer Workshop)	Safeguarding 3 (Designated Liaison Person Workshop)	Cúl Camp Assistant Programme (Aged 16/17 – See pre- conditions)	Referees Inservice Module	Child Safeguarding Policy – Dealing with Alleged Breaches
Team Management & Backroom for underage teams(Including S&C, Physio etc.)	✓	✓					
Club/County Executive Member	✓ (Preferable)	✓ (Preferable)					✓
Designated Liaison Person/ Deputy DLP/ Chairperson	✓	✓	✓ (optional)	✓			
Club and County Children's Officer	✓	✓	✓	✓ (optional)			✓
Staff	✓	✓					
Mandated Person	✓	✓		✓			
Scór/Cultural	✓	✓					
Complaints Hearings Committee (County)	✓	✓					✓
Complaints Investigation Committee (County)	✓	✓					✓
First Aiders	✓	✓					
Other Volunteers	✓ (optional)						
Parent	✓ (optional)						
Referee						✓	
Cúl Camp Assistant (Aged 16/17 – See pre- conditions)	✓ (Preferable)				✓		
Nursery Coach (4-6 year olds)	✓	✓					
Coach with U18's and on adult team	✓	✓					

OUTCOMES FROM SAFEGUARDING 1

- Implement best practice in protecting the welfare of participants through our Child Safeguarding Policy
- Create a child-centred environment within the Association
- List categories of abuse and indicators associated with abuse
- Make a report to the appropriate Statutory Authority
- Make a report to a Designated Liaison Person, and/or Association's Mandated Person

GAELIC GAMES ACCEPTED WORKSHOPS

The following are accepted as valid Safeguarding 1 certificates once pre-conditions are met:

- 1 Gaelic Games – Safeguarding 1 Child Protection in Sport Awareness Workshop (3 hour face-to-face or Virtual workshop with a qualified Gaelic Games Tutor)
- 2 Gaelic Games Safeguarding 1 eLearning online Refresher Programme (See pre-conditions below)
- 3 Sport Ireland/Sport NI Child Welfare & Protection Awareness Safeguarding 1 Workshop (participants who rely on this certificate **MUST** complete the Gaelic Games Refresher Programme – see details below)
- 4 Integration Workshop (See pre-conditions below)

1. GAELIC GAMES - SAFEGUARDING 1 CHILD PROTECTION IN SPORT AWARENESS WORKSHOP (3-HOUR FACE-TO-FACE OR VIRTUAL WORKSHOP, WITH A QUALIFIED GAELIC GAMES TUTOR)

Certification validation period = This certificate lasts for 3 years from the date of issue.

Who needs to attend? Any individual who has a role with young people must be in possession of a valid Safeguarding certificate. Any participant aged 16/17 years of age is not permitted to attend a Virtual Workshop, and in order to attend a Face to Face workshop must submit a parental consent form prior to attending the workshop (this must be retained by the Club Children's Officer or organiser of the workshop for 21 days).

Renewal: Gaelic Games Safeguarding 1 certificate may be renewed by completing;

- Gaelic Games Safeguarding 1 (3-hour workshop with qualified Gaelic Games tutor)

Or

- Gaelic Games Safeguarding 1 Online Refresher (e-learning module – **ONLY** if your last certificate is for a 3-hour workshop with a qualified Gaelic Games tutor - see next)

You can complete the Gaelic Games online refresher programme if:

2. GAELIC GAMES SAFEGUARDING 1 ELEARNING ONLINE REFRESHER PROGRAMME

- You have a valid Gaelic Games Safeguarding 1 certificate delivered by a qualified Gaelic Games tutor dated within the last 3 years

Or

- You have a valid Safeguarding 1 Sport Ireland or Sport Northern Ireland certificate dated within the last 3 years

Certification Validation period = within a 3 year period of completion of a Gaelic Games 3 hour workshop

Or

Upon completion of a Sport Ireland or Sport NI workshop (please note that the refresher certificate will only remain valid until the expiration date of the original certification)

Renewal: Gaelic Games Safeguarding 1 Online Refresher certificates may only be renewed by attendance at a Gaelic Games Safeguarding 1 3-hour workshop with a qualified Gaelic Games tutor.

Link for e-learning module; <https://learning.gaa.ie/node/280985>

3. SPORT IRELAND/SPORT NI CHILD WELFARE & PROTECTION AWARENESS SAFEGUARDING 1 WORKSHOP

Members who present a Safeguarding 1 certificate obtained via Sport Ireland/Sport NI must also complete the Gaelic Games online refresher programme (details above).

N.B. Upon completion of the Gaelic Games online Refresher course, the validity of the certification will align with the original expiration date of the Sport Ireland/Sport NI Safeguarding 1 certificate, regardless of when the refresher is taken. For example, if a member completed the Sport Ireland/Sport NI Safeguarding 1 workshop in January 2020 and then completes the Gaelic Games online refresher in January 2021, the refresher certificate will only be valid until January 2023, in line with the original certification period. Certification validation period= The Coaching element of this workshop only needs to be completed once. The Safeguarding element must be updated every 3 years from the date of issue.

Who needs to attend? Individuals who are getting involved in Coaching for the first time may attend this workshop.

Renewal: The Coaching element does not need to be renewed. The Safeguarding element may be renewed by completing:

- Gaelic Games Safeguarding 1 (3 -hourworkshop with qualified Gaelic Games tutor)

Or

- Gaelic Games Safeguarding 1 Online Refresher (e-learning module – see above for more information)

ADVANCED SAFEGUARDING WORKSHOPS – ROLE SPECIFIC ARE OUTLINED AS FOLLOWS;

Outcomes from Safeguarding 2;

- Implement best practice in protecting the welfare of underage players
- Create a child-centred environment within the club
- Understanding and awareness of Gaelic Games Child Safeguarding Structures
- Reflect on the Club Children's Officer role & develop an action plan
- Understand how to communicate with young people
- Deal with Child Safeguarding Policy, breaches and manage Safeguarding issues

SAFEGUARDING 2 (CLUB CHILDREN'S OFFICER WORKSHOP – FACE TO FACE WITH QUALIFIED GAELIC GAMES TUTOR)

Who needs to attend? Both Club and County Children's Officers must attend the Gaelic Games Safeguarding 2 – Club Children's Officer Workshop, and must be vetted and hold a valid Safeguarding 1 Workshop Certificate.

Validation period = 3 Years

Renewal: Safeguarding 2 certificate may only be renewed by attendance at Gaelic Games Safeguarding 2 CCO face to face workshop with qualified Gaelic Games tutor.

SAFEGUARDING 3 (DESIGNATED LIAISON PERSON WORKSHOP – FACE TO FACE WITH QUALIFIED GAELIC GAMES TUTOR)

Outcomes of Safeguarding 3;

- Awareness of Legislation
- Understanding and awareness of Gaelic Games Child Safeguarding Structures
- Understanding of your role as Designated Liaison Person
- Understanding of dealing with Allegations & Concerns of Abuse
- Understanding and awareness of communications with Parents/Agencies as appropriate
- Understanding and awareness of Reporting Procedures

Prerequisite: Valid Gaelic Games Safeguarding 1 or valid Gaelic Games Safeguarding 1 Refresher certificate

Certificate Validation period = within a 3 year period

Renewal: Safeguarding 3 may only be renewed by attendance at Gaelic Games Safeguarding 3 (face to face workshop with qualified Gaelic Games tutor)

ADDITIONAL TRAINING

CÚL CAMP ASSISTANT SAFEGUARDING TRAINING

Validation period = 1 year

Mandatory attendees: person appointed to role of Cúl Camp Assistant if they do not already have a valid Safeguarding 1 Certificate

Renewal: If in the role of Camp Assistant in a different calendar year, the workshop must be repeated

N.B. This programme does not replace Safeguarding 1 (i.e. if a Cúl Camp Assistant becomes a Coach working with children in any of our Associations, a full Safeguarding 1 workshop must be attended)

REFEREE SAFEGUARDING TRAINING

Prerequisite: Nil

Duration of Workshop: It is a Safeguarding module built in as part of training for referees.

Expected attendees: any person taking on the role of a referee (excluding young whistlers who are under 16)

Renewal: Inservice to be undertaken every year by Referees

The Referees Administrator and County Children's Officer should work together to ensure that all referees complete this module each year, maintaining full compliance with the Safeguarding Training Policy.

Footnotes: Notwithstanding the mandatory requirement for participants to attend the Gaelic Games Safeguarding 1 workshop.

1. It is the responsibility of the individual and club (and County where applicable) to ensure that anyone working with, or who has interaction with, or who is involved in the planning/administration of activities or events with children and young people in our Associations, holds a valid Gaelic Games accepted Safeguarding 1 certificate and also fulfils any other Safeguarding Requirements.
2. If a member of any Gaelic Games Associations presents a Safeguarding 1 certificate from Sport Ireland/Sport NI or other LSP, the member will be obliged to complete the Gaelic Games Online Safeguarding Refresher programme prior to commencing their role with the relevant Gaelic Games Associations. The purpose of this is to ensure that those who work with children and young people receive relevant information on our own Gaelic Games safeguarding policies or practices, our reporting procedures, our structures and on the role of Gaelic Games Children's Officers and DLPs in our Associations.
3. If a member of any Gaelic Games Associations presents a Safeguarding 1 Refresher certificate from Sport Ireland/Sport NI, the member will also be obliged to complete the Gaelic Games Online Safeguarding Refresher programme in order to be compliant with Gaelic Games Safeguarding Training Policy.
4. Our Children's Officers and our Designated Liaison Persons in our Associations are required to have a valid Safeguarding 1 Certification as well as attend the relevant Gaelic Games workshop in order to receive information specific to their role as Gaelic Games Children's Officers and DLPs in our Associations and in order to be fully appraised on our own Gaelic Games safeguarding policies or practices, our reporting procedures and structures.

Should a Gaelic Games Children's Officer or Designated Liaison Person present with a certificate of attendance from an LSP or a Sports NGB Safeguarding 2 (Children's Officer) or Safeguarding 3 (DLP) workshop, that is within the three years recognition period, and the individual has yet to attend The Gaelic Games Associations Safeguarding 2 or Safeguarding 3 workshop, their Club shall accept this certificate and permit the relevant Officer to carry out their role as per organisational requirements.

Children's Officers and or Designated Liaison Persons who present with a Safeguarding 2/ Safeguarding 3 certificate of attendance from an LSP or a Sports NGB shall subsequently be required to attend a Gaelic Games Associations Safeguarding 2 or Safeguarding 3 workshop by agreement with their Club Executive.

5. Validation period commences from the date of workshop completion/date of certificate.
6. It is the responsibility of the attendee to ensure they are registered correctly on Tobar and are in receipt of a valid cert.
7. Attendance lists must be destroyed 28 days after a workshop takes place.

SECTION 4B - VETTING POLICY

Gaelic Games Vetting Policy

INTRODUCTION

The Gaelic Games Associations provide vetting or criminal background check for any of our members who may be working in a role of responsibility with children or vulnerable persons.

The Gaelic Games Associations are committed to providing a safe environment for all children and vulnerable adults who take part in our games and activities. One of the most important parts of safeguarding is vetting.

The GAA provides a vetting (criminal background check) service for members in roles of responsibility with children or vulnerable persons. This ensures safeguarding and compliance with legal requirements of the Garda National Vetting Bureau (NVB), Access NI and Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) and Disclosure Scotland.

Vetting Definition

Vetting or a criminal background check is a service conducted in respect of any person who is carrying out work or activity, a necessary and regular part of which consists mainly of the person having access to, or contact with, children or vulnerable persons. Vetting is carried out with the permission of the applicant by a registered organisation through the National Vetting Bureau in Ireland, Access NI in Northern Ireland and the Disclosure and Barring Service and Disclosure Scotland in Britain to establish whether there is any criminal record or specified information relating to the applicant that may deem them unsuitable to work on our behalf with children or vulnerable persons.

Vetting Legislation

- **Republic of Ireland:** The National Vetting Bureau (Children & Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 - 2016 commenced on 29th April 2016 and from that date a statutory obligation was placed upon each of The Gaelic Games Associations to ensure that all persons who on our behalf and who undertake 'relevant work' with children and vulnerable persons in Ireland are vetted, prior to taking up any such role.
- **Northern Ireland:** The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) helps employers in Northern Ireland make safer recruitment decisions and prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups, including children.

It is an offence in Northern Ireland to permit someone to work with children or young people or adults at risk when they have been barred by the DBS from doing so. Organisations therefore must carry out background checks on any such individual to assess their suitability for their position applied. The Enhanced Disclosure Certificates are issued by Access NI, and all applications must be made through Ulster GAA at <http://ulster.gaa.ie/safeguarding/access-ni/>

- **Cross Jurisdiction:** Vetting in one jurisdiction does not exempt individuals from vetting in the other if they are active in both.

Vetting conducted in any other jurisdiction has no standing in law in the Republic of Ireland. To satisfy the requirements of the National Vetting Bureau (Children & Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016 a coach who lives in Northern Ireland and coaches for the GAA in the Republic of Ireland would require vetting through the National Vetting Bureau even if they have been previously vetted via Access NI. Similarly, if the coach was also working with a GAA Club in Northern Ireland and resident in the Republic of Ireland they would have to be vetted under Access NI even if they had been previously vetted via the National Vetting Bureau.

- **Britain:** Vetting is carried out on our behalf by Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS – England & Wales) or Disclosure Scotland. The Gaelic Games Council of Britain are required to work within their respective Codes of Practice.

Disclosure Scotland and the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) help employers to make safer recruitment decisions and prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups, including children.

It is an offence to permit someone to work with vulnerable groups, including children when they have been barred by the DBS or Disclosure Scotland from doing so. Therefore, to support the safer recruitment process and assess an applicant's suitability for their applied role, we must carry out the relevant background checks.

Applicants should obtain applications via their club/county representative.
Further details can be found at: <https://ggcb.org.uk/safeguarding/dbs-pvg/>

Vetting: System and Process

The GAA is a Registered Organisation with the National Vetting Bureau (NVB) for vetting members in the Republic of Ireland. Ulster GAA enable members to undertake the necessary background check through Access NI. The Gaelic Games Council of Britain are registered with the Disclosure and Barring Service and Disclosure Scotland.

The GAA administer vetting on behalf of all Gaelic Games Associations – GAA, Camogie, LGFA, GAA Handball and GAA Rounders. Each vetting letter issued are recognised by all Gaelic games organisations.

All units of the Association, regardless of what jurisdiction in which they operate, must vet their personnel who work in roles of responsibility with children and vulnerable adults.

Vetting: Who requires Vetting?

Responsibility has been placed on each organisation to determine who should be vetted in accordance with legislation. The National Vetting Bureau (Children & Vulnerable Persons).

Acts 2012 – 2016 defines these people as undertaking relevant work “any person who is carrying out work or activity, a necessary and regular part of which consists mainly of the person having access to, or contact with, children or vulnerable adults” while the term ‘regulated activity’ is referred to under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007.

All those who have regular access to or contact with children or vulnerable adults through their GAA role must be vetted. Non-members who assume these roles also need to be vetted.

Such roles, also referred to as ‘relevant work or regulated activity’ in legislation, include the following but are not exclusive to these roles:

- Coach or Manager with players 18 years and under
- Cúl Camp Coaching children 18 and under
- Caretaker in care and supervision of children
- Chaperone working with children
- Supervisor working with children or vulnerable persons
- Mentoring players 18 years and under
- First aider providing treatment to children and vulnerable adults
- Artane Band Tutor working with under 18s
- Host Family Child Accommodation
- Match Official in care and supervision of children
- Physiotherapist providing treatment to children and vulnerable adults
- Scór tutor working with under 18s
- Club or County Childrens Officer
- Photographer of childrens games
- Camp Assistant with children under 18

Inter organisational vetting agreements may be ratified by the GAA with others, as deemed appropriate in accordance with the Section 12(3A) of the National Vetting Bureau Act 2012-2016.

Vetting Process in Republic of Ireland (NVB)

Vetting is conducted through Foireann, an online system used by the organisations to manage Vetting and other membership functions. Once an application has been submitted, both the applicant and the Club Childrens Officer will receive confirmation of receipt, and the vetting application is then processed and reviewed by the statutory authorities. The length of time is determined by the time of year, the address history of the applicant and if there are any offences recorded.

To apply for vetting a Foireann account must be created on Foireann.ie. For age 16 – 17, a parent/guardian account is created, and the applicant is added to the profile.

Step 1 Complete NVB1 Vetting Invitation Form

Step 2 Organise ID documents from provided Garda NVB list – one photo ID and one proof of address (dated within 6 months)

Step 3 Arrange to meet Club Children’s Officer (CCO) in person to complete NVB1 Identity Document Validation Form.

Applicant takes a copy of the forms, CCO retains the original forms for 6 months to ensure compliance with the GNVB requirements.

Step 4 Upload application through Foireann account (ensuring profile details are complete and match the NVB1 forms).

Once you complete the Gaelic Games Invitation Form the information provided is forwarded to the NVB by the GAA and you will receive an eVetting invitation to complete. This must be completed and returned within 30 days.

For more information, please see <https://www.gaa.ie/the-gaa/child-safeguarding-and-protection/vetting>

Vetting of applicants under 18 yrs. of age

The Gaelic Games vetting services is available to any person over 16 yrs. of age and under 18 yrs. of age who fulfil a role of responsibility when working with children or vulnerable adults in The Gaelic Games Associations.

The application steps are as above except for the following:

- The applicants parent/guardian must complete NVB3 Parent/Guardian consent form and meet their Club Children's Officer (CCO) with the applicant
- Parent/Guardian must create or log in to their Foireann account. Under the Family Tab, add the details of or select the profile of the child that requires vetting and upload the application under their profile

Vetting Disclosure

Once an application is processed by the GNVB a disclosure is issued for all individuals on the GNVB portal. This disclosure is downloaded and stored securely by the Gaelic Games Liaison Person(s).

A vetting disclosure shall include particulars of the criminal record (if any) relating to the person, and a statement of the specified information (if any) relating to the person or a statement that there is no criminal record or specified information, in relation to the person.

A criminal record in relation to a person means a record of the person's convictions whether within or outside the state for any criminal offence together with any ancillary or consequential orders made pursuant to the convictions concerned or a record of any prosecutions pending against the person whether within or outside the state for any criminal offences or both.

Vetting disputes

Where a vetting applicant disputes the detail contained in a vetting disclosure from the National Vetting Bureau, he or she may refer the issue to the National Vetting Bureau dispute process.

This process is activated by the vetting applicant, who should outline the basis of his or her dispute, in writing (email), to the Gaelic Games Liaison Person. The Liaison Person then submits the complete application file to the GNVB for further checks.

Case Pending

Where a case is pending against an individual, and if the nature of such a case could lead to a re-examination of an application, our practice in these circumstances is to await the outcome of such court cases before deciding on issuing the vetting applicant with a Garda Vetting acceptance letter.

Once the matter has been concluded with the court. The vetting individual will be required to submit a new vetting application for a disclosure to be issued and re-examined.

Vetting decision making

No individual may commence work with children or vulnerable persons until the vetting process has been fully completed, and clearance has been confirmed.

The vetting process is but one of many recruitment considerations undertaken when a person is being considered for a role of responsibility or regulated role with children and vulnerable persons in The Gaelic Games Associations.

In all matters relating to a vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau in Ireland the decision to issue an acceptance letter or to refuse any such letter is a matter for the Association Liaison Person(s) on behalf of the National Children's Office.

Examples of convictions that require consideration in the GAA:

- Any crime/conviction against a child while an adult
- Any crime/conviction against a child while a child
- Any crime involving aggression/assault
- Crimes of deception
- Drink Driving or Dangerous Driving
- Dealing/Possession of illegal or controlled drugs
- Domestic Violence/Coercion/Breach of Order
- Fraud or Theft
- Illegal possession of firearms or offensive weapon
- Possession of abusive images of children
- Murder, manslaughter
- Sexual Assault, Rape, attempted rape

Where no concerns arise, an official acceptance letter is issued to the applicant by email and is available on their Foireann personal account. An email is also issued to the Club Childrens Officer.

Where there are details on a disclosure, a risk assessment is conducted on whether to issue the acceptance letter.

Low Level Risk:

- For low level risks, note will be taken of the details on the disclosure, and the applicant will be issued their acceptance letter

Medium/High Level Risk:

- For medium/high level risks the applicant will be contacted directly by the organisation
- The applicant will be afforded the opportunity to confirm the details which may involve consultation with the applicant and other relevant parties with the applicant's consent
- The Gaelic Games Liaison Persons may consult with each other regarding on an applicant's risk assessment for their association
- In some cases, after a risk assessment and consultation among Gaelic games Liaison Persons, a vetting disclosure shall be referred to the Case Management Committee (National Level) to decide on the suitability of the applicant
- The applicant shall be included in the vetting case management process

Vetting Acceptance

If the levels of any convictions/prosecutions are deemed not to be of a level that deem the applicant unsuitable they are issued with their Gaelic games vetting acceptance letter. A copy of their vetting acceptance letter is also be issued to the applicant's Club Children's Officer.

The issuing of a vetting acceptance letter does not automatically grant an individual the right to work with children or vulnerable persons. Any such decision shall be made by the relevant club or unit having considered other criteria of suitability, including vetting.

Vetting Refusals

Should consideration be given to refusing an application processed by the NVB or Access NI the Liaison Person shall engage directly on the matter with the applicant who may appeal any such decision, to an independent Appeals Panel, and no discussion shall take place with the applicant's Club without their permission or until all processes relating to the application have been exhausted, including appeals.

The decision to reject or accept a vetting application is not made by the applicant's Club or by a Committee of the Club but made by the Gaelic Games Liaison Person(s) and or the Vetting Panel/Case Management.

Vetting Appeals

Where a decision has been made by The Gaelic Games Associations to restrict or refuse the participation of an individual in any role in the Associations following concerns that arose during the vetting process the individual may appeal to the Child Safeguarding Appeals Panel at cwpappeals@gaa.ie within 3 days of the decision being made. Decisions made by statutory authorities in relation to vetting may not be appealed to the GAA.

Data Protection and Storage

To ensure compliance with all applicable data protection legislation, including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018, and the UK Data Protection Act 2018, as well as requirements relating to and requirements relating to AccessNI, Code of Practice, DBS Code of Practice and Disclosure Scotland Code of Practice the Association will ensure that all vetting applications and disclosure documentation are stored securely and retained only for as long as necessary to meet its legal and regulatory obligations. Such records will be disposed of securely once they are no longer required.

Vetting forms held by CCO's should be stored securely in a locked filing system, accessible to relevant personnel. Once retention period is met, the paper forms must be shredded using a cross-shredder to ensure all data is securely destroyed.

Break in Service

Any person, previously vetted by the GAA, but who for whatever reason may have ceased their regulated activity or work with children and or vulnerable persons in the GAA, LGFA, Camogie Association, Handball and GAA Rounder for a period of more than one year, shall be required to be re-vetted prior to commencing or re-commencing any regulated activity or work with children and or vulnerable persons in our Associations. Compliance with the element of our vetting policy is the responsibility of the vetting applicant and their club. An email should be sent to evetting.ie to cancel existing vetting to allow applicant to reapply.

Residency outside of Ireland

In addition to the above any person who may have resided outside of Ireland for more than one year or who may be a resident in Ireland for less than one year shall be obliged to obtain a police background check from the country of their last residence and/or country of origin at the discretion of a Gaelic Games Vetting Liaison Person.

Collating information on who is vetted and their roles

For legal purposes, and to also ensure compliance within the rule of our Associations, each unit of the Association must be able to identify if those selected to work with children are suitably vetted. In the instance that an applicant changes role from the role they are originally vetted for, while they have an existing in date vetting acceptance letter, this change should be noted in the minutes of their Club Executive meeting. Club Children's Officers can export a list of all those vetted on Foireann.

When a club applicant submits their vetting form via Foireann, both the applicant and their Club Children's Officer will receive an acknowledgement of their application. Similarly, when the application has been fully processed and where a vetting acceptance letter, the applicant will receive an email with a link to the letter and the letter will be available for applicant to download on Foireann. The Club Children's Officer will also receive a copy of the acceptance letter. This is to ensure that we are compliant with our legal responsibilities to have personnel vetted and to enable the Club Secretary to collaborate with the relevant Children's Officer in ensuring that a record is kept of those who have been vetted or may require to be vetted. Is this a repeat of the previous paragraph in different words?

Re-vetting

Vetting in The Gaelic Games Associations, regardless of jurisdiction, shall be subject to the 3-year recognition rule. (An exception being if any jurist imposes a period of recognition that is less than 3 yrs). A similar 3-year recognition period applies to all levels of safeguarding training delivered by The Gaelic Games Associations.

A vetting acceptance letter issued by The Gaelic Games Associations shall cease to be valid three years after the date of issue or if replaced by an updated letter received following a re-vetting within this period. A person can be requested to be re-vetted at any time within the three-year period. Renewing a vetting requires a complete reapplication. Applications can be renewed 90 days from the date on the original vetting letter through the Foireann account.

For vetting queries please contact evetting@gaa.ie

VETTING ACCESS NI PROCESS

Vetting Access NI Process

1. Applicant fills out the online Enhanced Access NI Application Form via [NI Direct](#)
 - ▷ If you have an Access NI account- enter details
 - ▷ If you do not- please create an account
 - ▷ When prompted- *'Please enter the PIN code provided by the organisation asking you to complete this application'* Ulster GAA Pin code: 540101
2. Continue through the process,
 - o *You will be required to upload two identity documents so that information provided on your application can be verified. (acceptable forms of ID)*
 - ▷ Confirm all details in Applicant's declaration
 - ▷ You will be provided with an individual 10 digit Reference Number, this will be used throughout the process
3. Next open [Foireann](#)
 - ▷ Click 'Qualifications and Vetting'
 - ▷ Apply to be Access NI vetted (volunteer)
 - ▷ Enter Access NI (10 digit) Reference number
 - ▷ Upload ID Documents
4. Club Children's Officer verifies Applicant ID Documents on Foireann.
5. Ulster GAA approve the form and the ID and send to Access NI in line with [Access NI Code of Practice](#).
6. Access NI Process the form and issue the Disclosure Certificate directly to the applicant.
7. Ulster GAA write to the applicant (via email) to confirm their vetting acceptance, this is updated on your Foireann profile and your club secretary receives a copy of your acceptance letter via email.

Please note:

- Under our NI legislation, DLP's Chairpersons, and committee members are deemed to be persons responsible for the management of those engaged in regulated activity and therefore must be vetted

- If there is information on your Certificate, Ulster GAA will write to request that you share your digital certificate with us via the digital link directly to safeguarding.ulster@gaa.ie
 - Ulster GAA risk assess all Enhanced Disclosure Certificates that contain information, where there are areas of concern, we will contact the applicant directly to discuss before any decision with regard to their suitability for the position applied is made
 - Where required, and with the applicants consent Ulster GAA will meet with club officers to discuss any areas of concern
 - Applicants have the right to appeal any decision made by Ulster GAA in relation to their suitability for the position applied
 - Acceptance letters are valid for three years from the date of completion at which stage they must then be renewed by submitting a new application
 - You will receive a reminder email when your Access NI Application is due to expire
- If you have any queries in relation to this, please do not hesitate to accessni.ulster@gaa.ie

VETTING (BRITAIN) PROCESS IN BRITAIN

England and Wales - Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Applications

The Gaelic Games Council of Britain are a registered body with the DBS to complete direct applications:

Process:

1. Obtain application form from the Club Children's Officer.
2. Applicants complete the paper application form in black ink and applicant consent form.
3. Applicants meet with the evidence checker and provides 3 forms of original ID (as per the DBS acceptable ID guidelines).
4. The approved evidence checker reviews the application and ID provided to ensure the accuracy of application against ID and to confirm true identity of the applicant.
5. On completion of the above verification, the completed form is issued to the GGCB Children's Officer for counter-signatory and submission to the DBS.
6. The DBS will process the application.
7. Once all relevant checks are made, the DBS issues the certificate directly to the applicants' home address.
8. The GGCB Children's Officer requests the certificate for verification purposes. The applicant has 14 days to supply the certificate.
9. The certificate is reviewed:
 - In the case of a clear certificate an acceptance letter is returned to the applicant with his/her certificate
 - Certificates containing disclosures are reviewed and, if there are areas of concern, the GGCB Children's Officer will liaise with the applicant before any decision is made regarding their suitability for the position applied for. In some circumstances, with consent of the applicant discussions may also involve the respective club.
 - Applicants have the right to appeal against any decision made by the Gaelic Games Council of Britain (see national procedures)
10. Club and County are informed by email of any DBS clearance and records updated.

Please note:

- Certificates are valid for a 3-year period from the issue date.
- Renewals should be made in advance of the expiry date.
- If the DBS certificate is on the Update Service, then written consent needs to be provided to allow the GGCB Children's Officer to check the portal to ensure membership remains valid. Refer to Club Children's Officer.
- Where the Update Service membership is current, the certificate can roll-over for another year.
- If the membership has lapsed, then a new application is required.

Further information can be obtained from childrensofficer.britain@gaa.ie

SCOTLAND - DISCLOSURE SCOTLAND (DBS) APPLICATIONS

The Gaelic Games Council of Britain are a registered body with Disclosure Scotland to complete direct online applications:

Process:

1. Club Children's Officers will provide applicants with a Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) preapplication form.
2. Applicants are required to complete the preapplication, providing basic details.
3. There are approved evidence checkers in Scotland. They review the preapplication and ID provided to ensure the accuracy of the application against ID and to confirm the identity of the applicant.
4. On completion of the above verification, the completed form is issued to the GGCB Children's Officer for

countersigning and submission to Disclosure Scotland.

5. A computer-generated link is released from Disclosure Scotland directly to the applicant.
6. Applicants will need to set-up a ScotAccount to enter more detailed personal data. (Note: Information on how to set up a ScotAccount is issued to the applicant prior to the computer-generated link being issued).
7. The applicant has 14-days from the issue of the link to supply Disclosure Scotland with the requested information.
8. Once all relevant checks are made, Disclosure Scotland issue the vetting outcome electronically to the applicant.
9. At this stage the applicant has 14-days (from the release date) to share the outcome with the GGCB Children's Officer.
10. Failure to follow any of the above time limited processes will mean that data is removed from the Disclosure Scotland portal, and a new application must be made.
11. The vetting outcome needs to be reviewed within 14-days of the clearance being shared:
 - In the case of a clear outcome an acceptance letter is released to the applicant.
 - Outcomes containing disclosures will be reviewed and may require discussions with the applicant before any decision is made regarding their suitability for the position applied for. In some circumstances, with consent of the applicant, discussions may also involve the respective club
 - Applicants have the right to appeal against any decision made by the Gaelic Games Council of Britain (see national procedures).
12. Club and County are informed by email of any PVG clearance and records updated.

Please note:

- The GGCB follow the requirements of its National Governing Body and require certificates to be renewed every 3 years
- Renewals should be made in advance of the expiry date

Further information can be obtained from childrensofficer.britain@gaa.ie

SECTION 5 - PROCEDURES FOR RESPONDING TO AND REPORTING ALLEGATIONS OR CONCERNS OF ABUSE

Introduction

We recognise that our Associations have a legal responsibility to take action to avoid a child being a victim of any form of abuse while engaged in our activities and to take appropriate action where allegations or concerns of abuse may arise. Similarly, we recognise that if a member of our Associations is made aware of an allegation of abuse, they have an obligation to report such matters that give reasonable grounds for concern to the relevant statutory authority. Our mentors, coaches and other personnel, who work with children or hold a role of responsibility at Club, County Provincial or National level, are aware through our safeguarding training with the procedures that we have in place for the protection of children and that they act accordingly. Our basic objective is to prevent situations arising where children could be at risk of any form of abuse while engaged in Association activities.

This section of our Child Safeguarding Policy details how allegations or concerns of abuse should be responded and reported to and the process thereafter.

CATEGORIES AND INDICATORS OF ABUSE

Child abuse can generally be categorised into four types:

Neglect, Emotional Abuse, Physical Abuse and Sexual Abuse. A child may at any given time be subjected to more than one form of abuse

Neglect

Child neglect is the most frequently reported category of abuse. Neglect occurs when a child does not receive adequate care or supervision to the extent that the child is harmed physically or developmentally. It is generally defined in terms of an omission of care, where a child's health, development or welfare is impaired by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, medical care, intellectual stimulation or supervision and safety. Emotional neglect may also lead to the child having attachment difficulties. The extent of the damage to the child's health, development or welfare is influenced by a range of factors.

These factors include the extent, if any, of positive influence in the child's life as well as the age of the child and the frequency and consistency of neglect.

A distinction can be made between 'wilful' neglect and 'circumstantial' neglect. 'Wilful' neglect would generally incorporate a direct and deliberate deprivation by a parent/carer of a child's most basic needs, e.g. withdrawal of food, shelter, warmth, clothing, contact with others. 'Circumstantial' neglect more often may be due to stress/inability to cope by parents or carers. Regardless of whether a concern is about circumstantial or wilful neglect, there is a need for a response where there are concerns that a child is experiencing neglect.

Source: https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/CF_WelfarePracticehandbook.pdf

A reasonable concern for the child's welfare would exist when neglect becomes typical of the relationship between the child and the parent or carer.

The following are features of child neglect:

- Children being left alone without adequate care and supervision
- Malnourishment, lacking food, unsuitable food or erratic feeding
- Non-organic failure to thrive, i.e. a child not gaining weight due not only to malnutrition but also emotional deprivation
- Failure to provide adequate care for the child's medical and developmental needs, including
- Intellectual stimulation
- Inadequate living conditions – unhygienic conditions, environmental issues, including lack of adequate heating and furniture
- Lack of adequate clothing
- Inattention to basic hygiene
- Lack of protection and exposure to danger, including moral danger, or lack of supervision appropriate to the child's age
- Persistent failure to attend school
- Abandonment or desertion

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the systematic emotional or psychological ill-treatment of a child as part of the overall relationship between a caregiver and a child. Once-off and occasional difficulties between a parent/carer and child are not considered emotional abuse. Abuse occurs when a child's basic need for attention, affection, approval, consistency and security are not met, due to incapacity or indifference from their parent or caregiver.

Emotional abuse can also occur when adults responsible for taking care of children are unaware of and unable (for a range of reasons) to meet their children's emotional and developmental needs. Emotional abuse is not easy to recognise because the effects are not easily seen.

A reasonable concern for the child's welfare would exist when the behaviour becomes typical of the relationship between the child and the parent or carer.

Emotional abuse may be seen in some of the following ways:

- Rejection, lack of comfort and love
- Lack of attachment, lack of proper stimulation (e.g. fun and play)
- Lack of continuity of care (e.g. frequent moves, particularly unplanned)
- Continuous lack of praise and encouragement
- Persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming of the child
- Bullying
- Conditional parenting in which care or affection of a child depends on his or her behaviours or actions. Extreme overprotectiveness
- Inappropriate non-physical punishment (e.g. locking child in bedroom)
- Ongoing family conflicts and family violence
- Seriously inappropriate expectations of a child relative to his/her age and stage of development

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is when someone deliberately hurts a child physically or puts them at risk of being physically hurt. It may occur as a single incident or as a pattern of incidents. A reasonable concern exists where the child's health and or development is, may be, or has been damaged as a result of suspected physical abuse.

A reasonable concern exists where the child's health and/or development is, may be or has been damaged as a result of suspected physical abuse.

Physical abuse can include the following:

- Physical punishment
- Beating, slapping, hitting or kicking
- Pushing, shaking or throwing
- Pinching, biting, choking or hair-pulling
- Use of excessive force in handling
- Deliberate poisoning
- Suffocation
- Fabricated/induced illness
- Female genital mutilation

The Children First Act 2015 includes a provision that abolishes the common law defence of reasonable chastisement in court proceedings. This defence could previously be invoked by a parent or other person in authority who physically disciplined a child. The change in the legislation now means that in prosecutions relating to assault or physical cruelty, a person who administers such punishment to a child cannot rely on the defence of reasonable chastisement in the legal proceedings. The result of this is that the protections in law relating to assault now apply to a child in the same way as they do to an adult.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or arousal, or for that of others. It includes the child being involved in sexual acts (masturbation, fondling, oral or penetrative sex) or exposing the child to sexual activity directly or through pornography.

Examples of child sexual abuse include the following:

- Any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of a child
- An invitation to sexual touching or intentional touching or molesting of a child's body whether by a person or object for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification
- Masturbation in the presence of a child or the involvement of a child in an act of masturbation

- Sexual intercourse with a child, whether oral, vaginal or anal Sexual exploitation of a child, which includes inviting, inducing or coercing a child to engage in prostitution or the production of child pornography [for example, exhibition, modelling or posing for the purpose of sexual arousal, gratification or sexual act, including its recording (on film, videotape or other media) or the manipulation, for those purposes, of an image by computer or other means]
 - ▷ Inviting, coercing or inducing a child to participate in, or to observe, any sexual, indecent or obscene act
 - ▷ Showing sexually explicit material to children, which is often a feature of the 'grooming' process by perpetrators of abuse. Exposing a child to inappropriate or abusive material through information and communication technology Consensual sexual activity involving an adult and an underage person

The Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2006 states that the age of sexual consent is 17 years of age in the Republic of Ireland. The Sexual Offences NI Order 2008 stipulates that the legal age of sexual consent for the six counties of Antrim, Armagh, Derry, Down, Fermanagh and Tyrone is 16 years of age.

The above examples of child sexual abuse presented here are not necessarily deemed to be legal definitions but are adopted from statutory guidelines that govern our work with children and young people in Sport.

It should be remembered that sexual activity involving children/underage players may be sexual abuse even if the young person concerned does not themselves recognise it as abusive.

Other forms of Abuse

There are other forms of behaviour that may not be defined as abuse but should cause concern to Gaelic Games personnel working with children. The abuse spectrum has been expanded in recent years to cover not just the aforementioned categories but also recognising other examples of abuse that include Bullying, Peer Abuse, Organisational Abuse, Cyber Bullying, E Bullying and different forms of Internet Abuse. While they may not be generally included in the aforementioned categories of abuse it should be noted that in their extreme forms, they would all be regarded as abuse.

Circumstances which may make children more vulnerable to harm

If you are dealing with children, you need to be alert to the possibility that a welfare or protection concern may arise in relation to children you come in contact with. A child needs to have someone they can trust in order to feel able to disclose abuse they may be experiencing. They need to know that they will be believed and will get the help they need. Without these things, they may be vulnerable to continuing abuse.

Some children may be more vulnerable to abuse than others. Also, there may be particular times or circumstances when a child may be more vulnerable to abuse in their lives. In particular, children with disabilities, children with communication difficulties, children in care or living away from home, or children with a parent or parents with problems in their own lives may be more susceptible to harm.

The following list is intended to help you identify the range of issues in a child's life that may place them at greater risk of abuse or neglect. It is important for you to remember that the presence of any of these factors does not necessarily mean that a child in those circumstances or settings is being abused.

Parent or carer factors:

- » Drug and alcohol misuse
- » Addiction, including gambling
- » Mental health issues
- » Parental disability issues, including learning or intellectual disability
- » Conflictual relationships
- » Domestic violence
- » Adolescent parents

Child factors:

- » Age
- » Gender
- » Sexuality
- » Disability
- » Mental health issues, including self-harm and suicide
- » Communication difficulties
- » Trafficked/Exploited
- » Previous abuse
- » Young carer

Community factors:

- » Cultural, ethnic, religious or faith-based norms in the family or community which may not meet the standards of child welfare or protection required in this jurisdiction
- » Culture-specific practices, including:
 - Female genital mutilation
 - Forced marriage
 - Honour-based violence
 - Radicalisation

Environmental Factors:

- » Housing issues
- » Children who are out of home and not living with their parents, whether temporarily or permanently
- » Poverty/Begging
- » Bullying
- » Internet and social media-related concerns

Poor motivation or willingness of parents/guardians to engage:

- » Non-attendance at appointments
- » Lack of insight or understanding of how the child is being affected
- » Lack of understanding about what needs to happen to bring about change
- » Avoidance of contact and reluctance to work with services
- » Inability or unwillingness to comply with agreed plan

Source: Children First National Guidance 2017

Dealing with Allegations or Concerns of Abuse

While Designated Liaison Persons at all levels of the Association should be fully aware as to the procedures for reporting allegations or concerns of abuse the procedure prior to reporting, i.e. the responding and recording procedure is also a key aspect to identifying any cases of abuse or of poor practice. Designated Liaison Persons at Club level should, as deemed appropriate, seek the guidance and advice from their County, Provincial or National Designated Liaison Person and the statutory authorities on such matters. The accurate recording of allegations or disclosures will be of major assistance to statutory authorities and to the National Child Safeguarding Committee should an allegation be processed internally and/or externally.

The guidance provided is primarily concerned with instances of abuse that may occur when children are engaged in Gaelic Games activities or against Gaelic Games personnel (e.g. mentors, officers, employees etc.) who act on behalf of the Association. The Association has a direct responsibility to deal with such instances of abuse including instances where the abuse may be perpetrated by one child against another. Should a complaint or allegation of abuse be made that is deemed to be non-Association related, this matter should be referred to the relevant Designated Liaison Person so as to enable them bring such matters to the attention of the relevant statutory authority in the jurisdiction in which they operate or the individual may themselves report the matter to the relevant statutory authority.

Through our work with young people in The Gaelic Games Associations our mentors, coaches and indeed other parents may be seen to be part of a safe environment in which young people may wish to share their concerns or divulge confidential information. Young people may choose to seek such advice because they believe the environment of their Club to be safe, secure and supportive.

It is important to recognise that a young person and indeed an adult wishing to report or outline their concerns may also have feelings of reluctance, hesitancy, and guilt about what they wish to report. Designated Liaison Persons or any member of the Association who may be in receipt of such reports or disclosures should respond in a supportive, sensitive and caring manner.

If parents do not wish to have the allegation pursued, it should be explained that for the purpose of protecting their own and other children, that all allegations must be recorded and reported in line with statutory obligations.

If a DLP or Deputy DLP is conflicted in relation to the parties to or the subject matter of an allegation or concern, they shall notify the Chairperson of the Committee that appointed them, or should they be the Chairperson they shall notify the Secretary of the Committee and shall remove themselves from the case.

Responding to disclosures or allegations of abuse

When responding to a disclosure or allegation of abuse it is important to observe the following and to exercise particular care and act most sensitively if the disclosure is being made by a young person or child:

- Be sensitive and listen carefully to what is being reported to you
- Take what is said to you seriously
- React calmly when responding, as overreacting may alarm the young person and compound feelings of anxiety and guilt
- Emphasise that the discussion, while confidential, may have to be shared with others so as to pursue the allegation correctly and keep the child safe
- Reassure the person that they have taken the correct action in making the disclosure
- Never make a judgmental statement or express an opinion about the allegation or the alleged abuser
- Do not make false promises, particularly regarding secrecy

- If asking any questions do so for the purpose of clarification only
- Explain and ensure that the young person understands the procedures which will follow
- Check back with the person making the disclosure in a calm manner that what you have heard is correct
- Inform the relevant Designated Liaison Person of the allegation received as per the procedures outlined in this section.
- Make a written record of the conversation as soon as possible, with as much information as possible, using the wording shared by the young person or child
- Treat all information received in a confidential manner

Responding to adults who disclose retrospective childhood abuse

There are an increasing number of adults disclosing abuse that took place during their childhood.

Such disclosures may come to light when people attend counselling or may sometimes arise as a consequence of adult services and services which work with parents/guardians and families.

Where such a disclosure is made it is essential to establish whether there may be a current risk to any child or young person who may be in contact with the alleged abuser revealed in the disclosure and this may necessitate carrying out a risk assessment specifically to establish these facts and applying any precautionary measures in line with this policy.

If any risk is deemed to exist to a child/young person who may be in contact with an alleged abuser, and in accordance with our reporting procedures; a mandated person or DLP should report the allegation to Tusla or their local Gateway Team without delay.

Tusla have issued a Retrospective Abuse Report Form which should be used when reporting cases of adults disclosing childhood abuse to them.

Recording disclosures or allegations of abuse

It is the relevant Designated Liaison Person acting on behalf of their Association who shall record specific information as part of the reporting procedures, as outlined elsewhere in this section. Where a mandated report is being submitted, it is a Mandated Person who shall make the report.

It will be necessary when making reports, to complete the relevant statutory reporting form and to do so online if required, e.g. in the case of Tusla to use the Tusla Portal. In cases where the young person themselves may be reporting the disclosure or allegation to a Gaelic Games Designated Liaison Person, please consider the following so as to ensure the accuracy of all information recorded and the welfare of the young person:

- Be accurate and factual in the recording of disclosures or allegations
- Record the conversation as soon as possible, and in as much detail as possible
- Do not ask specific or leading questions and don't ask the person to repeat their story unnecessarily
- Treat the information confidentially, sharing it only with persons who have a right to know
- Sign and date the record

Confidentiality

Confidentiality should be maintained in respect of all allegations involving cases of alleged abuse. This however does not supersede the rights of the child to be kept safe from abuse or harm.

Confidentiality is vital if the rights of both the child and the person against whom the allegations or complaint has been made are to be protected.

The following points should be considered so as to ensure that all parties acknowledge and adhere to the required levels of confidentiality at all times:

- All information should be treated in a careful and sensitive manner and should be discussed on a need to know basis only with those who need to know, as outlined elsewhere in this booklet
- The sharing of information on a 'need to know basis' is not deemed to be a breach of confidentiality
- Use and disclose the information collated only in ways compatible with the purposes for which it was initially given
- If a young person discloses information relating to possible child abuse, it cannot be dealt with as a 'secret' between the young person and the person to whom they have reported their concerns
- Information should be conveyed to the parents of the child, unless to do so may further endanger the child. The conveying of information should always be done in a sensitive manner and discussions with the statutory authorities should take place in advance of the sharing of information with all parties, so as to ensure that any such actions do not obstruct or hinder ongoing investigations that may be taking place
- All persons involved in a child protection and welfare process (the child, his/her parents/ guardians, the alleged offender, his/her family, coaches) should be afforded appropriate respect, fairness, support and confidentiality at all stages of the procedure

- Information should be stored in a secure place, with limited access only by the relevant Designated Liaison Person
- Breaches of confidentiality shall be deemed a serious matter and dealt with accordingly within the Association
- The sharing of information or the passing on of information to relevant authorities is not deemed to be a breach of confidentiality

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 remains paramount and as such anonymous complaints should be followed up in a discreet manner. Any such complaints relating to possible abuse or other child protection concerns, that have reached the threshold for reasonable grounds for concern, should be brought to the attention of the Designated Person and a report to the Statutory Authorities shall be submitted.

Note: It is not the role of a Designated Liaison Person or anybody else in our Associations to commence investigation surrounding the allegations of abuse or to interview the person against whom an allegation has been made or interview others that may have been subject to the allegation. This role shall be carried out by the statutory authorities in the relevant jurisdiction in which the Association operates.

Reporting Allegations of Child Abuse

Any member/employee of our Associations who is informed, knows, suspects or is concerned that a child is, has been or may be the subject of child abuse, while engaged in Association activities or who has received information regarding any such concerns involving persons who act on behalf of the Association, has a duty to convey such concerns as a matter of urgency to the relevant Designated Liaison Person at either Club, County, Provincial or National level in accordance with Gaelic Games procedures, as outlined elsewhere in this Guidance.

Members/Employees are furthermore obliged to facilitate and co-operate with any review or consideration of a complaint, a report or allegation of abuse which may be carried out by statutory authorities or by the relevant Club, County or Provincial Designated Liaison Person or by the National Child Safeguarding Committee.

Members/Employees may themselves submit a report of alleged abuse to the relevant statutory authority regardless of what action may be taken by the Gaelic Games. See Tusla Dedicated Contact Points (Appendix 2A) and Health and Social Care Trusts Contact Details (Appendix 2B) and for the LADO Network in Britain (Appendix 2C).

The Association's National Designated Liaison Person, must as a matter of policy be informed of all reports submitted to statutory authorities on behalf of any unit of the Association both in the Republic of Ireland and in Northern Ireland and of any decisions made not to report an allegation of abuse that failed to reach the threshold for reasonable grounds for concern. This requirement to inform the Association of any reports submitted to statutory authorities is in place so as to enable the Association's National Designated Liaison Person to take appropriate precautionary measures involving members of the Association who may be working with children and if required to put supports in place for children who may be subject to the report of abuse.

It should be noted from the outset that when a report of abuse has been received all units and members of the Association are obliged to consider the following:

- The safety and welfare of the child must be of paramount concern to all members of the Association. Any steps deemed necessary to protect the child should be implemented as a matter of urgency while also being careful that the person against whom the allegation has been made is not unreasonably penalised
- When an allegation has been made and where reasonable grounds for concern have been established the matter shall be reported to the relevant authorities as a matter of urgency and also to the National DLP. The formal reporting may be made directly by the relevant DLP or jointly with the Association's Mandated Person
- All matters concerning any allegation of abuse must be dealt with in strict confidence
- The principle of natural justice must always be adhered to thus ensuring that the presumption of innocence applies until otherwise proven
- If an allegation of child abuse is received protective measures proportionate to the level of risk, should be taken by the relevant Designated Liaison Person. Other than in exceptional circumstances, where a risk to a child's welfare and safety takes precedence the advice of the relevant statutory authority should be sought before contact is made with the person against whom the allegation is made. This should ensure that any precautionary measures taken by the Association will not impact negatively on possible future external investigations
- The need to invoke the temporary debarment of the person against whom an allegation has been made, shall be done in a confidential manner, while also ensuring that the welfare of the child is deemed to be of paramount importance. All debarment actions shall be of a temporary nature and shall be considered proportionate to the acts carried out or alleged and must be reported to the National DLP
- All reports made, whether internal or external to the Association, shall note times, dates, locations etc. and should be signed by the person that raised the concern or made the allegation

- Designated Liaison Persons shall accept reports, allegations or concerns of abuse from members or non-members of the Association verbally or in writing but must request a written or signed report in the event of reporting such matters to the statutory authorities. The absence of a written or signed report does not prohibit a report from being made to the statutory authorities nor should it cause a delay in making a report to the statutory authorities
- Any reports or concerns regarding allegations of abuse, once received by the Designated Liaison Person, shall be recorded, signed, dated and where reasonable grounds for concern have been established shall be reported by the Designated Liaison Person to the statutory authorities and to the National DLP
- Responses to and the reporting of allegations/ reports/concerns of abuse to the Statutory Authorities and to the National DLP should be carried out as soon as possible and without delay

If a report is made to the relevant Association Safeguarding Officer/Manager and it meets the thresholds for abuse for a Mandated Person to report, as a Mandated Person, the Safeguarding Officer/Manager will complete a Mandated report and submit it to Tusla.

Reasonable Grounds for Concern

The ability to recognise child abuse depends very much on a person's willingness to accept the possibility of its existence as it does on an individual's knowledge and information on such matters. Child abuse may not be visible to all and while a young person may disclose that they are being abused, we primarily rely on adults to be vigilant and to observe any possible forms of suspected abuse and to report all such matters to their Designated Liaison Person.

Mentors or other adults in a club are not expected to be in a position to instantly recognise instances of abuse, particularly without any prior training or experience in these matters.

The following would constitute reasonable grounds for concern and should be reported to the designated person:

- Evidence, for example an injury or behaviour, that is consistent with abuse and is unlikely to have been caused in any other way
- Any concern about possible sexual abuse
- Consistent signs that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect
- A child saying or indicating by other means that he or she has been abused
- Admission or indication by an adult or a child of an alleged abuse they committed
- An account from a person who saw the child being abused

If you think a child is in immediate danger and you cannot contact Tusla you should contact the Gardaí without delay or in Northern Ireland, contact the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) if you are unable to make contact with the Health and Social Care Trust.

A suspicion that is not supported by any indicator of abuse or neglect would not constitute a reasonable suspicion or constitute reasonable grounds for concern. If an individual is unsure as to how to proceed with their concerns, they should consult with their relevant Designated Liaison Person. Where reasonable grounds for concern exist, the relevant statutory authority must be contacted unless the matter is previously known to them. However, any new allegations or concerns must be reported without delay.

THE DESIGNATED LIAISON PERSON (DLP)

All Clubs and County Boards shall appoint a Designated Liaison Person who on behalf of the Club or County shall be responsible for dealing with any concerns relating to the possible abuse of children. If deemed appropriate Provincial Councils may also appoint a Designated Liaison Person who shall assist and advise Club and County Designated Liaison Persons on their roles.

When a Club or County appoints their Designated Liaison Person it is equally important to select a Deputy Designated Liaison Person who in the event of the unavailability of the Designated Liaison Person may be called upon to fulfil this role.

It is important to note that the Designated Liaison Person does not have a counselling or therapeutic role or a responsibility for investigating or validating child protection concerns within their Club or County. If a DLP is conflicted in relation to the parties to or the subject matter of an allegation or concern the matter should be referred to the Deputy DLP. Should the Deputy DLP also be conflicted then the matter should be notified to the Chairperson of the Committee that appointed them and a temporary DLP should be appointed to address the matter under consideration.

Investigations of alleged abuse are carried out by the relevant Statutory Authorities as outlined in Children First – National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, Co-Operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (2017 NI) and in Keeping Children Safe: Our Duty to Care NI (2017) or by other specially appointed and trained personnel. Further review and consideration of any allegations or concern of abuse within our Associations may be carried out as deemed necessary by the appropriate body or persons appointed for such purposes including the National Child Safeguarding Committee's Case Management Committees. Any review or consideration of alleged abuse should only take place following consultation with the relevant statutory authority.

Note: Should a Gaelic Games Designated Liaison Person, or other member of the Association, be made aware of a complaint or allegation of abuse against a person, regardless of whether that person is in membership or the employment of the Association or not, this matter should be referred without delay by the Designated Liaison Person or member of the Association to the relevant statutory authority in the jurisdiction in which they reside, having established reasonable grounds for concern. The DLP may seek informal consultation from the relevant statutory authority when an allegation or concern of abuse is made to them.

For more information on the role of the DLP please see Section 3.

Joint Reporting

A mandated person can make a report jointly for example with a Club or County DLP and there is nothing to prevent the mandated person from providing a copy of the mandated report submitted to Tusla for the information of the Designated Liaison Person if it is deemed appropriate.

The legal obligations however under legislation, to report mandated concerns, rest with the Mandated Person and not with the DLP.

If a concern does not reach the threshold for mandated reporting, but there is a belief that it gives grounds for reasonable concern about the welfare or protection of a child, then the matter should be reported to the relevant statutory authority as per procedures outlined in this section.

County Boards and Clubs do not select or appoint a Mandated Persons but individuals who fall under the list of those identified as Mandated Persons under Schedule 2 of the Children First Act 2015 may in the event of them fulfilling their professional roles in a Club or County setting be recognised Mandated Persons.

MANAGING ALLEGATIONS AGAINST A VOLUNTEER, STAFF MEMBER OR EMPLOYEE

The Designated Liaison Person in each Club, County or Province shall receive allegations or reports of abuse.

- If the relevant DLP is unsure as to how to manage an allegation of abuse they should seek advice from the relevant statutory authority and the NDLP and where reasonable grounds for concern are established in relation to an allegation or concern of abuse then the relevant DLP must report this matter to the relevant statutory authority without delay
- Where a mandated person, knows believes or has reasonable grounds to suspect, on the basis of information they have received that a child (a) has been harmed, (b) is being harmed, or (c) is at risk of being harmed, he or she as soon as possible must report that knowledge, belief or suspicion to Tusla
- All matters reported to the Statutory Authorities must also be reported to the National Designated Liaison Person
- Where it has been established that there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that a child has been, is being, or is at risk of abuse or harm, a debarment order against any person named in the complaint or report shall be considered. Consultation on a debarment should take place with the National DLP. The debarred person(s) shall be instructed to withdraw from all activities in our Associations pending the outcome of a full consideration and review of the allegation
- In most circumstances it is the DLP, or a person on their behalf, who following consultations with the National DLP shall;
 - » issue a debarment order and shall do so in writing, and
 - » inform the person against whom allegations have been made as to the nature of the allegations or may delegate such action to another officer
- It is however not appropriate for the DLP to engage any further with the person who has been debarred due to the possibility that they may be engaging with the family of the child, who is the subject of the concern. Any further engagement with the person against whom the allegation has been made would more appropriately be carried out by the Deputy Designated Liaison Person or another senior officer (Club, County, Provincial or National), and who is not conflicted in such matters
- Any engagement with either the person against whom allegations have been made or with the family of the child, who is the subject of the concern, should only take place following consultation with the relevant Statutory Authority. Always allow for the necessary level of confidentiality when reporting such allegations.
- The debarment of any individual should be done in a confidential manner and the presumption of innocence remains until proven otherwise. A debarment decision, once communicated, comes into effect immediately and remains in effect until removed and the person against whom the debarment decision has been informed of such a removal or a reversal of such decision
- A debarment decision must be confirmed in writing to the person whose actions has given cause for concern
- The Chairperson of the unit shall be informed if a debarment order is made against any member of the unit. Such information shall be treated with the strictest of confidence and the unit shall be obliged to adhere to the terms of the debarment

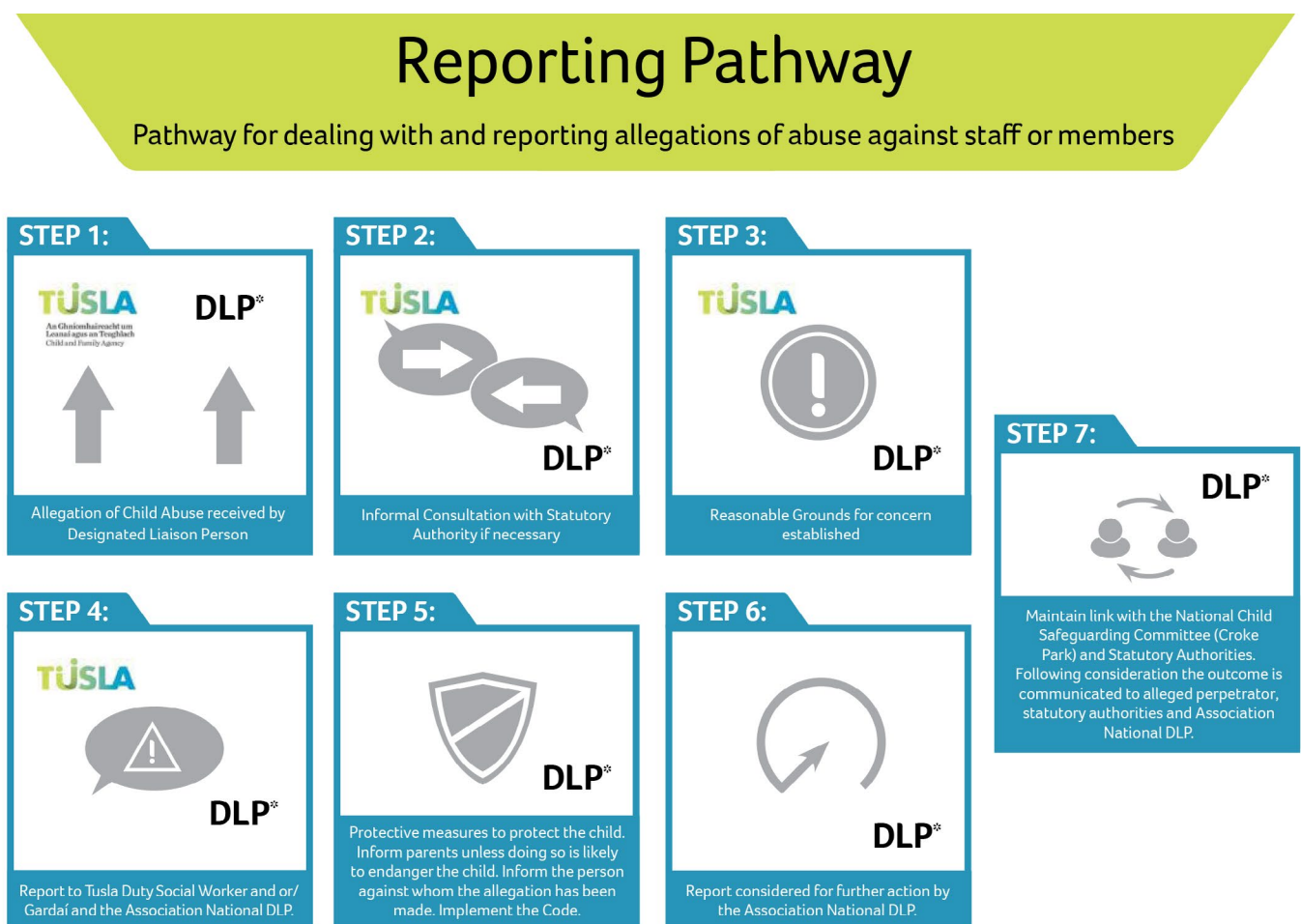
Reporting retrospective allegations or concerns

- Any person who may be unsure about whether to report a retrospective allegation or concern or not, should consult with their relevant statutory authority. Reports by adults of childhood abuse will be assessed by the relevant statutory authority who, in the event of ongoing concerns, will take necessary actions to ensure any child who may be at risk of harm is protected. The Retrospective Abuse Report Form (RARF) should be used to report disclosures of Childhood abuse by adults to Tusla. Please see link to Form [Retrospective Abuse Report Form FINAL.pdf](#)

NON AVAILABILITY OF DESIGNATED LIAISON PERSON OR IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

In an emergency, or in the event of a Club or County Designated Liaison Persons (or Deputy DLP) being unavailable to assist, reports and/or allegations of abuse must be made directly to An Garda Síochána or Tusla or to the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) or Health and Social Care Trust by a member of the GAA or by any member of the public without delay.

REPORTING PATHWAY



Precautionary Measures

A person against whom a concern has been raised, may, when approached about it, volunteer to step aside. In the event that they do not do so voluntarily the appropriate steps under this policy shall be taken.

Temporary Debarment

If an allegation of child abuse is received protective measures proportionate to the level of risk, shall be taken by the relevant Designated Liaison Person. Other than in exceptional circumstances, where a risk to a child's welfare and safety takes precedence, the advice of the relevant statutory authority should be sought before contact is made with the person against whom the allegation is made. This should ensure that any actions taken by the Association will not impact negatively on possible future external investigation.

The need to invoke the temporary debarment of the person against whom an allegation has been made, shall be done in a confidential manner, while also ensuring that the welfare of the child is deemed to be of paramount importance. All debarment actions shall be of a temporary nature and shall be considered proportionate to the acts carried out or alleged and must be reported to the National DLP.

All reports made, whether internal or external to the Association, shall note times, dates, locations etc. and should be signed by the person that raised the concern or made the allegation.

Once communicated, a debarment comes into effect immediately and remains in effect until removed and until the person against whom the debarment decision has been informed of such a removal or a reversal of such decision.

A debarment decision shall be communicated by a DLP to the recipient and may only be removed by a Case Management Committee, as appointed by the National Child Safeguarding Committee, or if successfully appealed to the National Child Safeguarding Appeals Panel. A debarment is not a suspension, but an interim decision taken following reasonable grounds for concern regarding a member or non-member who may have access to children or vulnerable persons in our Associations.

Issuing a Debarment

- Consultation on a debarment should take place with the National DLP
- In most circumstances, it is the DLP, or a person on their behalf, who following consultations with the National DLP shall issue a debarment order and shall do so in writing
- Inform the person against whom allegations have been made as to the nature of the allegations or may delegate such action to another officer
- The debarment of any individual should be done in a confidential manner and the presumption of innocence remains until proven otherwise
- A debarment decision, must be confirmed in writing, is a temporary decision, and once communicated, comes into effect immediately and recipient may only be removed by a Case Management Committee, as appointed by the Child Safeguarding Committee, or if successfully appealed to the National Child Safeguarding Appeals Panel

Allegations of Child Abuse relating to a staff member or an employee

Where any of our Associations, at Club, County, Provincial or National level has entered into an employer/employee arrangement with an individual the 'employer' must ensure that employees are aware of the internal line management reporting procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse. These procedures should clarify how allegations of abuse are processed when such allegations are made against fellow employees, volunteers or young people. Employers should be aware of employment legislation and any other employee relations policies when dealing with allegations involving paid employees.

Similarly, as to cases involving allegations of abuse made against a volunteer, should any allegations of abuse be made against an employee; the safety and welfare of the child must be the paramount concern to all members of our Associations. Any steps deemed necessary to protect the child should be implemented as a matter of urgency while also being careful that the person against whom the allegation has been made is not unreasonably penalised.

Employer's procedural responsibilities

It is recommended that the same person should not have responsibility for dealing with the issues surrounding the reporting of allegations and the employment/contractual issues. The Designated Liaison Person will normally have responsibility for the volunteer or young person while a person acting in the capacity of employer or on behalf of the employer e.g. a Chief Executive Officer, County Secretary, Human Resources Manager or equivalent senior person will have responsibility for dealing with allegations made against an employee;

Staff and indeed volunteers may be subject to erroneous or malicious allegations. Therefore, any allegations of abuse should be dealt with sensitively and relevant supports provided, within the resource capabilities of the Association and following legal and statutory authority advice.

The principal aim however is to protect the child while taking care to treat the employee fairly.

Action taken in reporting an allegation of abuse against an employee should be based on an opinion formed reasonably and in good faith. When an allegation is received it should be assessed promptly and carefully. It will be necessary to decide whether a formal report should be made to the statutory authorities and informal advice may be sought prior to making any such decision. The decision to formally report should be based on the threshold for reasonable grounds for concern being reached.

When an allegation has been made against an employee;

All actions and precautionary measures shall be guided by agreed Gaelic Games reporting procedures, as outlined elsewhere in this Guidance booklet, by the employee's contractual arrangements and by the principles of natural justice.

- The Chief Executive Officer, County Secretary, Human Resources Manager or equivalent senior person, (which may be dependent on the employee's place of employment), shall be informed of the allegation as soon as possible and shall take responsibility for processing the matter on behalf of the Association or their actions may involve external agencies if the 'employee' is externally funded or contracted
- The first priority should be to ensure that no child is exposed to unnecessary risk. The employer should, as a matter of urgency, take any necessary protective measures. These measures should be proportionate to the level of risk and should not unreasonably penalise the employee financially or otherwise, unless this action is deemed necessary to protect children. Where protective measures do penalise the employee, it is important that early consideration be given to the case
- The agreed recording and reporting procedures, as outlined elsewhere in the Guidance should be adhered to at all times in respect of the young person and the employee
- The CEO/HR Manager or equivalent senior person should advise the employee of the allegation. This should be done in private and with due consideration of confidentiality and natural justice and following advice from the statutory authorities. The procedures for dealing with the allegation should also be outlined to the employee
- The employee should be afforded the right to respond in accordance with established grievance procedure. The response should be noted and made available to the statutory authorities as part of any subsequent formal reporting procedure
- The CEO/HR Manager or equivalent senior person should also notify the statutory authority of any other organisation working with children with which the person against whom the allegation is made may be involved
- If the allegation is against the CEO or any member of the National Children's Office Staff, the allegation should be referred to the Chairperson of the National Coiste Bainistí or an equivalent senior person
- The parents/guardians of the young person should be informed immediately of the complaint against the employee unless doing so endangers the young person or impacts on any investigation being carried out by statutory authorities. Advice must be taken from the statutory authorities and the Mandated Person/National DLP as to how this might best be done
- Any follow up on an allegation of abuse against an employee should be made in consultation with the relevant statutory authorities. An immediate meeting should be arranged for this purpose
- After the consultations referred to above have taken place, and when pursuing the question of the future position of the employee the CEO/HR Manager or equivalent senior person on behalf of the employer should advise the employee of the situation and should follow the agreed procedures
- Employers should ensure that any actions taken or precautionary measures implemented by them do not undermine or frustrate any investigations being conducted by the statutory authorities
- Employers must keep comprehensive records of any allegations made, details of how the allegations were managed and details of any action taken, and decisions reached. These records must be stored confidentially, and a copy given to the individual concerned. This information must be retained on file for an agreed period of time, including information on those who may leave the employment of the organisation for further possible reference. Records should be confidentially maintained as they be required to be made available to the statutory authorities as part of any subsequent or ongoing investigations

Where an allegation has been made against a young person

In some cases of abuse the alleged perpetrator will also be a child. This sometimes is referred to as Peer Abuse, which can be defined as the sexual, emotional, physical abuse by one child of another. In its extremes bullying can become peer abuse.

In a sporting context, whether in a team or individual context, we need to be cognisant of situations where a child/young person could mistreat another child/young person of a similar age. In these situations, the Gaelic Games child safeguarding policy, should be adhered to for both the victim and the alleged abuser.

If there is any conflict of interest between the welfare of the person against whom allegations of abuse are made and the victim, the victim's welfare is of paramount importance.

Abusive behaviour perpetrated by children and young people must be taken seriously. Early referral and intervention are essential in all such instances. Advice should be sought from the statutory authorities as to how best manage these allegations.

With regard ongoing/future participation of a child or young person who has been alleged to have perpetrated the abuse, advice should also be sought from the statutory authorities in this regard.

Where 'Reasonable Grounds for Concern' may not exist

There will be occasions where certain instances of alleged abuse against a volunteer or staff member/ employee may be suspected, or there may be doubts as to the substantive nature of an allegation or suspicion. A suspicion which is not supported by any objective indication of abuse or neglect would not constitute a reasonable suspicion or reasonable grounds for concern. Where there may be insufficient grounds for establishing or substantiating such concerns the following course of action is recommended but should be proceeded with carefully and confidentially while ensuring the welfare of the child remains paramount:

- The issue, as it may relate to a volunteer or young person in the Association, should be subject to clarification of facts (without investigating) and updating where appropriate with the National DLP
- In the case of an employee the matter should be subject to updating by the CEO/HR Manager or equivalent senior person previously involved in the initial reporting of the allegation or suspicion of abuse
- Advice at all times may be sought from the National Designated Person and informal consultation may always be obtained from the relevant statutory authority
- The conduct and behaviours of the person that caused such concerns should be monitored and recorded as appropriate
- A formal review of the matter should be agreed between the relevant Designated Liaison Person and the National DLP as it relates to a volunteer or young person and the CEO/HR Manager or equivalent senior person in consultation with the National Designated Liaison Person, as it relates to an employee
- Should reasonable grounds for concern be established, following the commencement of this course of action, the formal reporting procedures should be enacted
- At all times the welfare of any child involved in such matters should be of paramount concern and the Association through the appointed Designated Liaison Persons or while acting in the capacity of an employer should act accordingly

When an allegation is not referred to the statutory authorities

In situations where the Designated Liaison Person, following consultations (perhaps with the relevant statutory authorities and other relevant bodies) subsequently decides that an allegation received or concerns relayed to them will not be formally reported to the relevant statutory authorities, as it has not met the threshold for reasonable grounds for concern, the individual who raised the concerns or made the allegations should be given a clear written statement of the reasons why the reported concerns are not being reported to the statutory authorities. The individual should be advised that, if they remain concerned about the situation, they are free to consult with, or report to, the statutory authorities themselves.

Should the person who passed their concerns be a child then the child's parents should be informed of the decision not to formally report to the statutory authorities, unless there are extenuating reasons not to report this to the parents.

All reports of alleged abuse made against members of the Association must be forwarded to National Designated Liaison Person, regardless of whether it has or has not been reported to the relevant statutory authorities. Where a decision is made not to refer reported concerns to statutory authorities, due to not reaching the threshold for referring, this decision and the reasons contained therein must be recorded and subsequently brought to the attention of the National Designated Liaison Person. The above directions also apply to situations where an allegation received, or concerns relayed against an employee are not being reported to the relevant statutory authorities.

False Allegations

The making of a false allegation by any member of our Associations shall be deemed to be a serious issue of misconduct and dealt with accordingly. Any allegation made, which is subsequently found to be false or of a malicious nature, shall also be deemed to be a serious breach of the Guidance and subsequent disciplinary action may follow.

Protection for Persons Reporting

In the Republic of Ireland, the Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998 provides immunity from civil liability to persons who report child abuse 'reasonably and in good faith' to the Health Service Executive or An Garda Síochána. This also applies to reports made to Tusla. The Act also covers the offence of 'false reporting'. The main provisions of the Act are:

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

- It should be noted that an individual who reports concerns in 'good faith' is not deliberately attempting to slander another person's name. The Criminal Law Act (NI) 1967 exists in the six counties and places the responsibility on everyone to report offences or to forward information to the police by emphasising the, 'duty of every other person, who knows or believes,
 - (a) that the offence or some other arrestable offences has been committed: and
 - (b) that he/she has information, which is likely to secure, or to be of material assistance in securing, the apprehension, prosecution or conviction of any person for that offence.

SECTION 6 - CODE OF CONDUCT (UNDERAGE)

INTRODUCTION

The Code of Conduct (Underage) is a vital section of the Child Safeguarding Policy. It addresses the minimum appropriate levels of behaviour, practice and conduct required from our Underage Players, Coaches, Supporters, Parents/Guardians, Referees, Clubs and Counties and those who work with them on our behalf.

The contents of the Code shall assist those who promote and participate in our Gaelic games as we seek to ensure the implementation of the highest possible standards in our work with children and young people.

Should a breach of the Code be alleged, or when people may refuse to adhere to the contents of the Code, certain actions may be deemed necessary and appropriate. Alleged breaches of this Code may therefore be dealt with as per Section 8. Complaints Procedure or an Allegation of Abuse may be dealt with as per Section 5 (depending on the issue being addressed)

Underage Players

Underage Players can benefit greatly from sports in terms of personal development and enjoyment. Our players are encouraged to realise that as a result of their participation in our Gaelic games that they also have a responsibility to treat all other players and officials with fairness and respect. Underage Players, and those who work with them in our Associations are required to 'sign up' and abide by this Code of Conduct (Underage) and to any other policies or codes in our Clubs or Associations.

UNDERAGE PLAYERS SHOULD BE ENTITLED TO:

- Be safe and feel safe
- Have fun and experience a sense of enjoyment and fulfilment
- Be treated with respect, dignity and sensitivity
- Be afforded appropriate confidentiality
- Participate in games and competitions at age appropriate levels
- Be afforded meaningful playing time to assist in the development of their playing skills, within their own age group and in accordance with Rule
- Make their concerns known and have them dealt with in an appropriate manner
- Be protected from abuse
- Be listened to and have their suggestions heard in a constructive manner

UNDERAGE PLAYERS SHOULD ALWAYS:

- Play fairly, do their best and enjoy themselves
- Respect fellow team members and opponents regardless of ability, cultural or ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation or religion
- Support fellow team members regardless of whether they do well or not
- Represent their team, their Club and their family with pride and dignity
- Respect all coaches and decisions of officials
- Be gracious in defeat and modest in victory
- Shake hands before and after a game as part of the Respect Campaign
- Inform their coach/mentor/manager in advance if they are unavailable for training and games
- Take due care of Club equipment
- Know that it is acceptable to talk to the Club Children's Officer with any concerns or questions they may have
- Tell somebody else if they or others have been harmed in any way

UNDERAGE PLAYERS SHOULD ENGAGE IN GOOD PRACTICE:

- Never cheat – always play by the rules
- Never shout at or argue with a game's official, with their coach, their team mates or opponents
- Never use violence towards team mates, coaches, officials, opponents or supporters
- Accept the decisions of referees and other officials
- Never use unfair or bullying tactics to gain advantage or isolate other players
- Never spread rumours
- Never tell lies about adults or other young people
- Never play or train if they feel unwell or are injured
- Never use unacceptable language or racial and/or sectarian or homophobic references towards a team mate, an opponent, a fellow player, coach, official or supporter by words, deeds or gestures
- Never consume non-prescribed drugs or performance enhancing supplements

- Never use social media to discuss team mates, opponents, coaches, match officials or other individuals
- Never use social media or social media apps to distribute or redistribute offensive content or to taunt, bully or racially abuse others

CONSIDERATION OF UNDERAGE PLAYERS ON ADULT TEAMS (WHERE APPROPRIATE)

The progression of a player from underage grades to adult teams (as per the rules of the relevant Association) is always welcomed and may come sooner for some rather than others. While it is not unusual for players under 18 yrs. of age to be part of adult club teams their participation requires additional attention by their parents, their coaches/mentors, fellow players and their Club as the underage player is still legally a child which must be recognised and upheld by all.

This may require their fellow team members being spoken to by the team mentors so as to address the legal status of the under 18 yr. olds and to emphasise that adults must always conduct themselves in an appropriate manner and an assurance that the adults will not encourage or facilitate the under 18 yr. olds to participate in adult related socialising or activity.

COACHES, MENTORS AND TRAINERS

All Coaches, Mentors and Trainers of underage players (referred to hereafter as coaches) should ensure that these players benefit significantly from our games by promoting a positive, healthy and participatory approach with underage players. In developing the skills levels of every player, coaches should always encourage enjoyment and fun while ensuring meaningful participation in our games and activities. Coaches should always remember that they are role models for the players in their care.

COACHES SHOULD MAINTAIN A CHILD-CENTRED APPROACH

- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person
- Treat each person equally regardless of age, gender, ability, ethnic origin, cultural background or religion
- Be positive during coaching sessions, games and other activities
- Recognise the development needs and capacity of all underage players, regardless of their ability, by emphasising participation for all while avoiding excessive training and competition
- Recognise that skills development and personal satisfaction should have priority over competition when working with underage players
- Ensure all those eligible to participate in any team within the Club are provided with an opportunity to do so with preference given to playing in their own age group
- Develop an understanding of relevant coaching methods and ensure that they have the appropriate level of coaching accreditation
- Do not equate losing with failure and do not develop a preoccupation with medals and trophies. The level of improvement made by underage players is the best indicator of effective coaching

COACHES SHOULD LEAD BY EXAMPLE

- Never use foul language or provocative language/gestures towards any player, fellow coaches, officials or supporters.
- Only enter the field of play with the referee's permission
- Do not question a referee's decisions or integrity
- Encourage players to respect and accept the judgement of match officials
- Promote Fair Play and encourage all players and fellow officials to always play by the rules of the game
- Do not encourage or threaten a player by deed or gesture to act in any unacceptable manner towards a fellow player, coach or official
- Do not smoke or vape while working with underage players
- Do not consume alcohol or non-prescribed drugs immediately prior to or while underage players are in your care
- Do not use the shower facilities when being used by underage or adult players

CONDUCT OF COACHES WHEN WORKING WITH UNDERAGE PLAYERS

- Develop an appropriate working relationship with underage players based on mutual trust and respect
- Address bullying in any form whether physical or emotional. Bullying is not acceptable behaviour be it from a young person, coach, parent/guardian, spectator or match official
- Do not shout at or lecture players or reprimand/ridicule them when they make a mistake. Children/underage players learn best through trial and error. They should not be afraid to risk error so as to learn
- Never engage in the use of physical interventions as a form of response to misbehaviour, unless it is absolutely necessary to prevent imminent harm, injury, or serious damage to oneself, others and or property
- Avoid incidents of horse play or role play or telling jokes etc. that could be misinterpreted
- Coaches must never encourage the use of sports supplements by underage players and should direct them toward

- foodfirst, age appropriate nutrition guidance
- Coaches must not encourage, administer or advise on the use of non-prescribed medication
- Coaches should challenge misinformation about supplements or “performance boosters” and promote safe, evidence-based messages to players and seek professional advice from nutritionists if needed
- Coaches should model safe and healthy behaviours regarding nutrition, hydration, and recovery practices.
- Never undertake any form of therapy or hypnosis with children/underage players
- Never use racial and/or sectarian or homophobic references towards another coach, player, official or supporter by words, deeds or gestures

AVOID COMPROMISING YOUR ROLE AS A COACH

Some activities may require coaches to come into physical contact with underage players in the course of their duties. However, coaches should;

- Avoid taking coaching sessions on your own and ensure that any delivery of one-to-one coaching takes place in an overall group setting
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact with an underage player and never engage in inappropriate touching of a player
- Be aware that any necessary contact should be determined by the age and development of the player and should only take place with the permission and understanding of the player and in an open environment in the context of developing a player’s skills and abilities

BEST PRACTICE

- Ensure that all of your players are suitably and safely attired to play their chosen sport. e.g. helmets (Hurling and Camogie), goggles (Handball), gum shields (Football)
- As a coach always be punctual and properly attired
- Be accompanied by at least one other adult at coaching sessions, games and in underage team dressing rooms, in accordance with our agreed adult to child ratios
- Abide by a minimum ratio of 2 adults to 10 children, (2:10). This ratio level requires at least one qualified coach and at least one other responsible adult to be present at all times
- Groups of 10-20 children must have a minimum of 3 adults present at all times. Please see Section 7 for more information on supervision ratios
- In the case of an all-female team, at least one of the two adults must be female and similarly in the case of an all-boys team, at least one of the two adults must be male
- Where a team or training group consists of both boys and girls, the supervision/coaching personnel, must also comprise of both male and female personnel
- Clubs may choose to appoint suitable persons to the role of Supervisor, i.e. Supervisor of Children/Underage Players. A supervisor is not a coach, but a person appointed to assist in normal supervisory roles which could include access and entry to club grounds, registration, dressing room duties, supervision at away trips etc.
- The number of coaches required will naturally depend on the number of children attending a training session, camp, game or other activity. When assessing how many coaches are required always note that Supervisors and Camps Assistants (at camps) do not have a coaching role
- Set realistic – stretching but achievable – performance goals for your players and teams
- Keep a record of attendance at training and at games by both players and coaches
- Rotate the team captaincy and the method used for selecting teams so that the same player(s) are not always selected to the exclusion of others
- Afford meaningful playing time to young players so as to assist in the development of their playing skills, within their own age groups. For the purpose of clarification, playing a player occasionally as a substitute in the concluding minutes of a game, would not constitute meaningful playing time
- Keep a record of any injuries and actions subsequently taken. Ensure that another official referee/team mentor is present when a player is being attended to and can corroborate the relevant details.
- Make adequate provision for First Aid services
- Do not encourage or permit players to play while injured
- Inform parents/guardians if their child has been injured or becomes unwell at games and training as soon as is practical
- Be aware of any special medical or dietary requirements of players as indicated on the medical consent/registration forms or Foireann or as informed by parents/guardians.
- Be willing to retain the necessary and emergency medication of players in a safe and accessible place in accordance with the wishes and permission of the parents/guardians
- Do not administer medication or medical aid unless you are willing to do so and have received the necessary training to do so
- If necessary use mobile phones, only via a group text or email system, for communicating with the parents of players. Any exception to this form of group texting can only be proceeded with following permission from parents/guardians

- Do not communicate individually by text, email or via social media network sites and or apps with underage players
- Encourage parents/guardians to play an active role in organising and assisting various activities for your teams and your Club
- With the exception of their own child a coach should not transport a child alone, except in emergency or exceptional circumstances
- Ensure that all dressing rooms and the general areas that are occupied by your players and other Club personnel, prior to, during or immediately following the completion of any match are kept clean and are not damaged in any way
- Should you be aware of or have concerns regarding the possible abuse of a child you should, without delay, report this to the relevant statutory authority and you may seek the assistance of your Designated Liaison Person (DLP) so that they may assist you in processing this matter. All such concerns and subsequent reports must also be forwarded to your Association's National Designated Liaison Person without delay

PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Our Associations constantly seek the active participation of all parents and guardians, particularly at Club level, where the ethos of volunteerism forms the basis of our community led Clubs and also enables us to promote and participate in many other community based endeavours.

In common with coaches and club personnel the parents/guardians of underage players should act as role models for their children and are welcome to attend their child's training activities and games.

PARENTS/GUARDIANS SHOULD ENCOURAGE THEIR CHILD TO:

- Always play by the rules
- Improve their skills levels
- Appreciate everybody on their team and their opponents, regardless of ability
- Respect and appreciate the contribution made by their coaches towards developing players and teams
- Maintain a balanced and healthy lifestyle with regard to exercise, food, rest and play. Advice may be sought if necessary from Club officials on this issue

PARENTS/GUARDIANS SHOULD LEAD BY EXAMPLE:

- Adopt a positive attitude to their children's participation in our games
- Respect officials' decisions and encourage children to do likewise
- Do not exert undue pressure on your child
- Never admonish your own child or any other child for their standard of play. Be realistic in their expectations.
- Show approval for effort, not just results
- Avoid asking a child or young person, 'How much did you score today' or 'What did you win by' or 'What did you lose by.' Ask them 'Did they enjoy themselves.'
- Never embarrass a child or use sarcastic remarks towards a player
- Applaud good play from all teams
- Do not criticise playing performances. Identify how improvements may be made.
- Do not seek to unfairly affect a game or player
- Do not enter the field of play unless specifically invited to do so by an official in charge

PARENTS/GUARDIANS SHOULD:

- Complete through Foireann the annual registration/ permission and medical consent information for their child's participation in the Club
- Inform the coaches, and any other relevant Club personnel, of any changes in their child's medical or dietary requirements prior to coaching sessions, games or other activities
- Ensure that their child punctually attends coaching sessions/games or other activities
- Provide their child with adequate clothing and equipment as may be required for the playing of our games including for example helmets, gum shields etc.
- Ensure that the nutrition/hydration and hygiene needs of their child are met
- Never encourage their child to consume non-prescribed drugs or take performance enhancing supplements.
- Listen to what their child may have to say
- Show approval whether the team wins, loses or draws a game
- Never attempt to meet their own needs and aspirations for success and achievement through their children's participation in games
- Raise any issues or concerns they may have regarding their child's participation or performance in a team directly with the team coach(es) and should do so in a constructive and non-confrontational manner and not in the company or vicinity of young players or other parents
- If deemed necessary, bring complaints about the conduct or practice of a coach to the attention of the relevant Club or County Children's Officer
- Support your Club by becoming an active member and by participating in Club activities

PARENTS/GUARDIANS SHOULD ASSIST THEIR CLUB BY:

- Showing appreciation to volunteers, coaches and Club officials
- Attending training and games on a regular basis
- Assisting in the organising of Club activities and events as requested
- Respecting the rights, dignity and worth of every person and by treating each one equally regardless of age, gender, ability, ethnic origin, cultural background or religion
- Not entering team dressing rooms unless deemed necessary by the team coach(es) so as to protect the privacy of all players

PARENTS/GUARDIANS HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

- Know their child is safe and to make a complaint if they believe that their child's safety is in any way compromised.
- Be informed of problems/concerns relating to their child
- Be informed if their child gets injured or becomes unwell
- Complain to the relevant persons if they have concerns about the standard of coaching
- Have, as a member, a say in relation to decisions being made within the Club

SUPPORTERS

Young Players are eager to enjoy and benefit from the support they receive from parents, guardians, friends and other members of the Club who attend our games as supporters of the team and Club. Active, loyal and well behaved supporters add to the enjoyment of our games and are always welcome to attend our games but should be aware that their conduct will always reflect upon the team, players and Clubs that they support and represent.

Fellow supporters have a responsibility to ensure that all spectators conduct themselves in an acceptable manner at all times, when attending our games and competitions or indeed before or after our games. Unacceptable conduct by supporters should be reported to stewards or officials in charge (if appropriate) or at Club level to the Children's Officer.

Supporters should realise and respect that young players are encouraged to participate in Gaelic Games so that they may enjoy themselves while also improving their skills levels.

WE EXPECT OUR SUPPORTERS TO:

- Encourage and applaud good performance and effort from players and opponents alike, regardless of the result.
- Never engage in the use of violence, on their own or with others
- Demonstrate appropriate good behaviour by not using foul language, and by not engaging in racially abusive language or deeds or by harassing players, supporters, coaches or officials
- Never enter the field of play, before, during or after a game
- Respect the decisions of all officials
- Never ridicule or scold a player for making a mistake during games or competitions
- Show respect to your Club's opponents. Without them there would be no games or competitions
- Uphold the principles of FAIR PLAY and RESPECT for all

REFEREES

Throughout this Code emphasis has been placed on the need to co-operate with and facilitate those who organise and deliver our games and activities. Referees, and other officials who officiate at our games, are central to in the delivery of our games and should be respected and assisted in their roles at all times.

Referees are conscious of the fact that they are instrumental in ensuring our games are played in a sporting manner and in accordance with the rules of the game as do players, coaches, mentors, parents/ guardians and other Club personnel.

The manner in which we accept the role, authority and decisions of a referee will naturally be scrutinised most closely by our underage players and adults alike. Therefore, there is a need to show good example to players and to their children in how they should express their respect for referees and other match officials.

Parents and Clubs should encourage underage players, at an appropriate age level, to attend referee training courses and to subsequently officiate age appropriate games which could result in refereeing being their preferred pathway or role in our Gaelic Games Associations.

Any referee, under 16 years of age, when officiating at a game, must be accompanied by a suitable adult who shall act as a supervisor to the referee. This supervisor must fulfil the requirements of a supervisor, as outlined elsewhere in the Child Safeguarding Policy.

IN THEIR CAPACITY AS REFEREES OF UNDERAGE GAMES REFEREES SHALL:

- Apply the playing rules on an impartial and consistent basis
- Act with integrity and objectivity in all games
- Communicate decisions to players and team officials in an effective and constructive manner and in consideration of the age groups playing our games

- Deal with dissent firmly and fairly
- Work as a team with other match officials
- Maintain composure regardless of the circumstances
- Avail of assessments and supports to improve performance
- Uphold and implement the Respect Campaign initiative at all levels
- Report misconduct of players, team officials or supporters conscious of the fact that such matters may be followed up in accordance with rule and by Club or County Children's Officers

Players, Coaches, Supporters, Parents/Guardians and other Club personnel should recognise the pivotal role that referees play in our underage games and should support them at all times when fulfilling their roles.

THE CLUB

All Clubs that cater for children/ underage players must do so with a child-centred approach and philosophy that recognises that maintaining best practice in the safeguarding of children/underage players is paramount at all times.

Clubs must ensure that those chosen to work on their behalf with children/underage players and teams have been selected following thorough recruitment, selection and training procedures.

All of the above are part of a range of support services that are available from Clubs for those seeking to work with children in our Associations.

Such requirements are elaborated upon in greater detail in Section 4 of the Child Safeguarding Policy. Clubs must ensure that those chosen to work with children/underage players are at all times competent and confident in their roles and have received relevant child safeguarding and sports-related training, as provided or instructed by our Associations to enable them fulfil such roles.

CLUBS SHOULD PROMOTE QUALITY PARTICIPATION BY:

- Adopting the Code of Conduct (Underage) as a basic level of agreement between the Club and their players, their coaches, parents/ guardians and supporters and others who work with children/underage players
- Leading by example and ensuring that a user-friendly and child-centred approach is adopted in our work with children/underage players and that equal opportunities are available for all to participate in our games and activities, regardless of an individual's ability
- Developing effective procedures for responding to and recording all attendances, incidents, accidents and injuries
- Ensuring that any allegations of abuse or alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct (Underage) are recorded and acted upon, without delay, in accordance with Association procedures
- Ensuring that all Club personnel are made aware as to the identity of their Club Children's Officer and their Designated Liaison Person and that these persons and their deputy officers are suitably trained for their role

CLUBS SHOULD ENCOURAGE THE PARTICIPATION OF THEIR MEMBERS BY:

- Agreeing the specific role of each and every coach or mentor or others working with young people
- Adopting and implementing clearly defined recruitment and selection procedures when choosing coaches and other relevant personnel to work with children and young people

ENCOURAGE THE PARTICIPATION OF UNDERAGE PLAYERS BY:

- Ensuring that training schedules, playing rules, use of equipment and length of games are structured to facilitate greater participation by all underage players, and are suitable to all age categories, and to the ability and maturity level of players
- Not imposing responsibilities or roles on young people that may be inappropriate to their age
- Respecting the rights, dignity and worth of all players and treating them equally regardless of their age, gender, ability, ethnic origin, cultural background or religion
- Affording players meaningful playing time to assist in the development of their playing skills, within their own age group and in accordance with Rule
- Creating pathways for children/underage players to participate in our games not just as players but by affording them other developmental opportunities including training to become referees, coaches etc.
- Ensuring that when the team may travel away and stay overnight that separate sleeping facilities are provided for all adults and for young people. Similarly, for mixed groups, separate sleeping quarters for males and females shall be required
- When a group consists of both males and females, that an adequate adult to player ratio of male and female coaches is present, in accordance with Association agreed adult to child supervision ratios

ENCOURAGE THE PARTICIPATION OF PARENTS/GUARDIANS BY:

- Encouraging parents/guardians to become members of their Club and to make themselves aware as to the running of juvenile games and activities and to the rules and codes that direct us in our work
- Welcoming all parents/guardians to attend the games and training sessions that relate to their children. Information relating to such events should be made known to them at all times

- Informing parents/guardians as to the identity of their Children's Officer. This person should be available to assist with any concerns or enquiries that parents/guardians may have regarding the welfare and safety of children and underage players in the Club and the implementation of the Child Safeguarding Policy

THE COUNTY (For County Underage Teams and Squads)

All Counties that cater for underage players must do so with a child-centred approach and philosophy that recognises that maintaining best practice in the safeguarding of children and underage players is paramount at all times

Counties must ensure that those chosen to work on their behalf with underage players and teams have been selected following thorough recruitment, selection and training procedures

While the purpose of any specified role and the frequency of activity by an individual in a County underage team or squad may influence what recruitment criteria must be met, Counties are advised that they should act on the side of caution and where deemed appropriate seek the vetting and child safeguarding training of individuals relevant to their roles. Such individuals could include bus drivers of underage county teams employed by the county, parents who regularly drive children to games on behalf of the County, physios, doctors, Strength & Conditioning (S&C) etc.

All of the above are part of a range of support services that are available from Counties for those seeking to work with children with county teams or squads with underage

Such requirements are elaborated upon in greater detail in Section 4 of the Child Safeguarding Policy

Counties must ensure that those chosen to work with children and underage players are at all times competent and confident in their roles and have received relevant child safeguarding and sports-related training, as provided or instructed by our Associations to enable them to fulfil such roles

COUNTIES SHOULD PROMOTE QUALITY PARTICIPATION BY:

- Adopting the Code of Conduct (Underage) as a basic level of agreement between the County and their players, their coaches, parents/ guardians and supporters and others who work with underage players
- Leading by example and ensuring that a user-friendly and child-centred approach is adopted in our work with underage players and that equal opportunities are available for all to participate in our games and activities, regardless of an individual's ability
- Developing effective procedures for responding to and recording all attendances, incidents, accidents and injuries.
- Ensuring that any allegations of abuse or alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct (Underage) are recorded and acted upon, without delay, in accordance with Association procedures
- Ensuring that all County personnel are made aware as to the identity of their County Children's Officer and their County Designated Liaison Person and that these persons and their deputy officers are suitably trained for their role

COUNTIES SHOULD ENCOURAGE THE PARTICIPATION OF THEIR MEMBERS BY:

- Agreeing the specific role of each and every coach or mentor or others working with underage players.
- Adopting and implementing clearly defined recruitment and selection procedures when choosing coaches and other relevant personnel to work with children and underage players

ENCOURAGE THE PARTICIPATION OF UNDERAGE PLAYERS BY:

- Ensuring that training schedules, playing rules, use of equipment and length of games are structured to facilitate greater participation by all underage players, and are suitable to all age categories, and to the ability and maturity level of players
- Not imposing responsibilities or roles on underage players that may be inappropriate to their age
- Respecting the rights, dignity and worth of all players and treating them equally regardless of their age, gender, ability, ethnic origin, cultural background or religion
- Ensuring that when the team may travel away and stay overnight that separate sleeping facilities are provided for all adults and for underage players. Similarly, for mixed groups, separate sleeping quarters for males and females shall be required
- When a group consists of both males and females, that an adequate adult to player ratio of male and female coaches is present, in accordance with Association agreed adult to child supervision ratios

ENCOURAGE THE PARTICIPATION OF PARENTS/GUARDIANS BY:

- Encouraging parents/guardians to become members of their Club and to make themselves aware as to the running of juvenile games and activities and to the rules and codes that direct us in our work
- Welcoming all parents/guardians to attend the games and training sessions that relate to their children. Information relating to such events should be made known to them at all times
- Informing parents/guardians as to the identity of the County Children's Officer. This person should be available to assist with any concerns or enquiries that parents/guardians may have regarding the welfare and safety of children and underage players in the Club and the implementation of the Child Safeguarding Policy

SECTION 7 - SAFE MANAGEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

INTRODUCTION

This section provides comprehensive guidance for organising club activities specifically for underage players within Gaelic games. It forms a crucial part of the Child Safeguarding Policy. The aim is to ensure that all activities involving children/underage players are conducted in a safe, well-structured, and supportive environment that prioritises their welfare and development.

From planning away trips and managing overnight stays to hosting events and arranging transport, this section details the necessary steps and best practices for clubs to uphold their responsibilities to players, parents, and the coaches. Attention is given to safeguarding standards, adult supervision, consent procedures, and considerations to create positive sporting experiences while protecting children/underage players who participate in our activities.

This section reflects the commitment of Gaelic games units to nurturing young talent responsibly while fostering camaraderie, team spirit, and respect within all club activities.

ORGANISING CLUB ACTIVITIES FOR UNDERAGE PLAYERS

Supervision ratios

Children/underage players must always be adequately supervised regardless of activity, and it is the responsibility of Clubs to ensure that a satisfactory supervisory ratio of adults to young people is always maintained.

Supervision ratios will depend on the nature of the activity, the age of the players and any special needs of the group.

The Gaelic Games adult - child supervision ratio agreement forms part of the Child Safeguarding Policy and applies as a minimum ratio to all Club, and County up to and including the minor level grade and to Cumann na mBunscol Gaelic Games activities.

Ratios

- Playing and training activities must abide by a minimum ratio of 2 adults to 10 children, (2:10)
- This ratio level requires at least one qualified coach and at least one other supervisor to be present at all times to ensure that any adult is not working on their own
- Ratios of 2:10 apply to each group of ten children/underage players or up to ten children/underage players in a group
- Groups of 10-20 children/underage players must have a minimum of 3 adults present at all times
- Any group that exceeds 20 in number must also abide by the minimum ratios as per above
- The number of coaches and or supervisors required will depend on the number of children/underage players attending a training session, or game, with consideration also given to the nature of the activity as required and the needs of the children
- Ratios for Games for All are 2 adults to 4 children (2:4)

Gender requirements

- Where a team or training group consists of both boys and girls, the supervision and coaching personnel, must also comprise of both male and female personnel
- In the case of an all-female team, at least one of the adults (coach/supervisor) must be female and similarly in the case of an all-boys team, at least one of the adults (coach/supervisor) must be male

Supervision Ratios for Cúl Camp and Club Camps

The supervision ratios for Cúl and Club camps shall abide by the supervision ratios outlined in the Camp Policy issued every year. Please note the above gender requirements also apply.

HOSTING AN EVENT

The hosting of a series of games, a challenge match, an underage blitz or an inter Club tournament is seen as a normal event for most Clubs in Hurling, Football, Camogie, Ladies Football, Rounders and Handball.

While such events are generally organised by age category and by code, so as to provide inter Club games and offer skill development opportunities, these events by their very nature can also provide underage players of all ages with a positive social experience enabling them to develop within a safe environment.

The safeguarding criteria and procedures that apply to away trips, recruitment, travel, health and safety, etc. also apply to the hosting of an event with the additional responsibility that when hosting you are organising the games or the event for more than your own Club or team.

A number of ground rules apply to a Club etc. hosting an event.

1. Don't be pressurised into offering to host an event (Club) if you cannot do it or if you do not have adequate resources or facilities to cater for the proposed event
2. Be absolutely clear that you have the full support of your own Club when embarking on hosting an event or an away trip
3. Clarify with Coistí na nÓg, Féile Committee, County Board etc. what is required of your Club in hosting the event
4. Form an organising team, with a nominated person in charge, to oversee, plan and implement hosting the event
5. Allocate specific responsibilities to each member of the organising team
6. Agree a timescale and a plan for the delivery of all of your actions (see Event Action Plan)
7. Agree your plan with Coistí na nÓg, Féile Committee, County Board etc. who requested your Club to host the event
8. Meet regularly to review all work in progress
9. If you are providing a home stay option for your guest Clubs, you must abide by the guidance given under the Home Stay Accommodation
10. Never presume that somebody else had done it!

Event action plan

Event: Inter Club Underage Tournament

It is very useful to draw up an event action plan that can be used as a guide for all persons working on the event and also as a check list for the organising committee in reviewing their progress to date.

Below is the commencement of an Event Action Plan for an underage Inter Club Tournament that your Club had been invited to organise by the County Board. It contains some identified actions, some of which have a time scale inserted while blank spaces remain to be completed when agreeing dates and timescales for other actions or completing tasks.

This template is only an example and is based on an 8-week lead in period. It should be amended and completed by the relevant person in charge as each target or task is completed or achieved.

ACTIONS	BY WHEN? (DATE)	RESPONSIBILITY (NAME)	DONE? (DATE)
APPROX. 8 WEEKS BEFORE EVENT			
Accept invitation to host event	8 weeks before	Relevant Club Committee	
Establish Organising Committee and named person in charge	8 weeks before	Appointed by Club Committee	
1st meeting of Tournament Committee	7 weeks before	Organising Committee Chair	
Allocate responsibilities at 1st meeting		Name the tasks and people	
Agree correspondence to visiting Clubs		Agree with Secretary	
Prepare budget at 1st meeting		Responsibility of Treasurer	
Identify sponsors (if appropriate)		Overseen by Treasurer	
Book pitches or venues as appropriate		A Committee member	
Agree on home stay option and plan accordingly (see Home Stay Section)			
APPROX. 6 WEEKS BEFORE EVENT			
Organising Committee meeting			
Post correspondence to visiting Clubs with relevant forms etc.			
Check insurance implications if any			
Complete event plan and circulate			
Check out all venues by visit			
APPROX. 4 WEEKS BEFORE EVENT			
Organising Committee meeting			
Confirm participating teams and Clubs			
Make 'draws' and circulate information			
Arrange for First Aid at tournament			
APPROX. 2 WEEKS BEFORE EVENT			
Organising Committee meeting			
A team withdraws from the Tournament			
APPROX. 1 WEEK BEFORE EVENT			
2nd team withdraws from tournament			
New sponsor seeks role in the Tournament			
DAY OF THE TOURNAMENT			
Up Early!			
Register each team and their coaches			
Check dates of birth			
AFTER THE EVENT REVIEW			
Organising Committee meeting			
Financial report			
Event report			
Treat the organising Committee and all helpers!			

Away Trips

Many teams and Clubs participate in trips away from home throughout the year. These trips are seen as additional to the regular games that take place as part of a County fixtures schedule or during inter Club blitzes. Trips away from home are often viewed as a means by which young teams and underage players may be rewarded for their endeavours at the end of their season or as a means by which greater team morale and camaraderie can be developed, regardless of age.

An example of rewarding a team or organising a trip is to invite the team or a number of teams to attend intercounty matches. This is a popular means by which young people may see and attend games where their chosen code is played at a high level of skill and competitiveness. Visiting other Clubs and playing matches against teams of a similar age group in other areas or Counties will also give underage players an insight into the broad geographical nature and community ethos attached to our Games while creating greater camaraderie with their colleagues and within their own Clubs.

The pre-planning and detailed organising of such trips for underage players will require a high degree of care and preparation and adults should always remember the key roles of responsibilities they have during such trips on behalf of their Club, on behalf of parents and on behalf of the underage players themselves.

Pre-trip preparations

- A detailed programme of activity should be approved in advance at Club level following agreement with the other Club(s) involved in the away trip
- Where possible, a member of your organising group should be familiar with the away venue, should visit the venue in advance if deemed necessary and ensure themselves that the venue can cater for the planned programme of activities. This is particularly relevant should an overnight stay be required
- Parental/guardian written consent must be obtained so as to permit any underage player to participate in any organised trip. This consent should be in addition to the consent provided on Foireann
- Contact details for all parents/guardians must be obtained in advance of the trip
- Underage players and their parents/guardians should sign a form agreeing to abide by the programme and to any agreed procedures that relate to the organised trip
- The Child Safeguarding Policy shall apply for all involved in an away trip such as the coaches and players etc.
- Medical, allergy and food intolerance information, deemed relevant by the parents/guardians of underage players, should be made known to the leaders of the Club trip and what action, if any, may be required of them in the case of an emergency
- A detailed programme which includes the following should be presented to all underage players and their parents/guardians in advance of the trip:
 - ▷ The named leader of the trip and their contact details
 - ▷ A time schedule of departure and arrival at your destination
 - ▷ Full information about the trip; including all activities and events planned
 - ▷ Emergency contact numbers of Club personnel who are accompanying the group
- All adults accompanying the underage team should be compliant with Vetting/AccessNI/DBS and safeguarding requirements and be aware as to what are their responsibilities and what role(s) they may have during the trip. Please note this that these requirements take time to process
- It is the club's responsibility to ensure that the trip itself and all activities taking place throughout the trip adhere and comply with the respective Association's Official Guide \ Codes. Risk assessments should be completed for all planned activities during the trip. For trips organised within the Island of Ireland, Injury Benefit Fund cover is in place for all registered paid playing members whereby the respective club is taking part in sanctioned fixtures/official supervised training sessions. For any trips organised outside the Island of Ireland, Injury Benefit Fund cover does not reply. It is the responsibility of the club as the trip organiser to organise travel insurance cover for the travelling party and ensure that the travel insurance cover has an extension on it to cover the playing of Gaelic Games as part of a team if the playing of Gaelic Games are part of the planned trip itinerary
- Where it is deemed necessary the organisers of all such trips should seek and gain the permission of their County Board, to enable the trip take place, prior to announcing the details of the programme to their members

During the trip

- It is essential that at least one adult with first aid qualifications be part of your organising group and that this adult be present or available throughout the trip
- Underage players must be adequately supervised throughout the trip as per the agreed supervision ratios of 2 adults to 10 underage players. This ratio may differ depending on the age group of participants, the activities to be undertaken, whether there is an overnight stay, if the trip is abroad etc.
- Organisers of Club trips should always be mindful of ensuring that additional adults accompanying their groups on trips away for supervision purposes are subject to our vetting and child safeguarding training requirements

Overnight stays

When participating in an overnight stay a number of matters require careful preplanning and agreement. By agreement with all parties, including underage players and parents, a decision is required as to whether the Club will avail of hotel or guest house accommodation, or if invited, will avail of a hosting arrangement by the host Club in the houses of their Club members.

Hotel or guest house accommodation

- Check out the proposed accommodation for children/ underage players and Club coaches. Ensure that it complies with health and safety regulations, is accessible, is of a suitable standard and is appropriate for the particular age group and programme of events
- When availing of overnight accommodation adults (except parents) should not share a room with a child
- Where children/ underage players are sharing a room it must be with others of the same age grouping and gender
- All children/ underage players should be provided with a bed each and should not have to share a bed with another child
- It is also preferable that the sharing of rooms be done with fellow Club members at inter Club events and that such arrangements are made known in advance of the trip to the child's parents
- It is worth noting that the use of Community Halls/Centres for overnight stays is not advisable

Home stay accommodation (Host Families)

Host Families is a rare event in the Gaelic games but can provide an enjoyable experience for young people, their Clubs and families if organised in accordance with our procedure. This can also raise additional risks which need careful consideration.

A Club seeking to host children/ underage players from another Club shall inform their County Board and the reason for hosting e.g. A visiting Club from overseas.

When selecting a host family, the Club is responsible for choosing the host family and the host family should be known to the hosting Club.

It is vital that the host Club meet with the host families in person, visit their home and look at what the hosting arrangements are.

Accommodation

The host families should be made aware of the Association's Child Safeguarding Policy.

Screening of host families is essential. Those in the host house at the time of hosting and are 16 years and over are required to be satisfactorily vetted in accordance with Association requirements. It is also advisable to check references. Give placement details to the parents/guardians of underage players and their families at least four weeks in advance of the hosting in order to facilitate any contact required.

Provide a briefing for host families including the timetable of events and locations, their responsibilities and emergency contact details.

In the planning stage, carry out a thorough review of the proposed sleeping arrangements for underage players as well as who will be staying at the house at the time of the hosting.

Ensure that coaches accommodation is appropriate.

All coaches must have a rooming list that details where underage players are accommodated.

When availing of home stay accommodation adults must not share a room with a child/underage player.

All children/underage players should be provided with a bed each and should not have to share a bed with another child/underage player.

Where children/underage players are sharing a room, it must be with others of the same age grouping and gender.

The named leader should visit players in the host family to check their wellbeing.

Underage players should be advised that they should contact the named leader in the event of any difficulties.

In a situation of a serious difficulty arising with their accommodation, the named leader should remove the underage player immediately and make alternative arrangements as required. They should follow the reporting procedures if the difficulty is related to a safeguarding matter.

Some of the above points have been sourced via: <https://www.leargas.ie/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/European-Mobility-Projects-Safeguarding-Guidance.pdf>

Review of trip

A record should be kept of any difficulties arising during a host event by both the sending and the hosting Club, for future reference.

TRANSPORT

Adequate preparation and an insistence on the use of safe transport arrangements regardless of the length of journey are key elements of good practice when considering any trip taken by an underage team or players. This applies regardless of the length of journey or indeed the mode of transport availed of, whether it is public, private or personal transport.

The transport arrangements for underage players is a priority safety matter for Gaelic games clubs, teams, parents and for underage players themselves. While it may be preferential to avail of private bus or coach transport it is also recognised that in some instances this is not feasible and certain Clubs and teams could not operate without the goodwill of volunteers and parents who ensure that children are transported to an event or a match and are returned safely.

In so far as we rely on many parents to provide transport in our Clubs, the challenge we also face is to ensure that that all such provision is provided in a safe environment that complies with our own standards of good practice and with local or national legislative requirements.

It is advisable if possible not to use members' or parents/guardians cars when travelling on away trips of great distance. In such circumstances, Clubs are advised to avail of bus or coach transport, and it is essential therefore that all aspects of the transport arrangements are checked out and agreed in advance.

A number of basic requirements apply when travelling to games as follows:

- A parent/guardian of a participating child/underage player is supplied with at least two emergency contact numbers of the team coaches that may be used in the event of an emergency concerning their child or in the event of a change in schedule
- All parents/guardians have completed a travel consent form
- Any particular rules or regulations relating to a trip are made known to parents/guardian and children/underage players alike and agreed in advance of departure
- Collection from GAA for ALL events or participation/ coaching activities is the responsibility of parent's/guardian's/ responsible adult
- Where transport is provided/organised by the GAA the same principles as outlined below

Bus and coach transport:

The following should be considered when availing of bus and coach transport:

- The company chosen must be a reputable transport company
- All vehicles should be well-maintained and roadworthy and should be properly taxed and insured
- Transport should be fully accessible for people with disabilities whether they are members of the group or for others who may accompany them
- Seat belts must be worn at all times on buses and coaches
- Alternative transport should be available in case of emergency
- Coaches should ensure that children/underage players remain safely seated at all times during the journey
- An adequate ratio of adults to children/underage players on the bus must be ensured at all times taking the age of the group members into consideration and the need for male/female ratios with mixed gender groups- as per the Association supervision ratios

Private transport in cars

If an adult has to transport a child/children to a game, training or organised event there are a number of safety measures that should be agreed so as to minimise any potential child welfare or safety risks to children and or adults:

- If a child is being transported by car the parents of the child should be informed as to who will be transporting their child, why this mode of transport has been chosen, how long the journey may take, the departure time and the estimated time of return
- It is important that children are comfortable with whoever may be the driver of the car in which they travel and are made aware as to what are the transport arrangements made for them by their Club
- Central collection and drop off points are recommended when transporting children
- With the exception of their own child, an adult should not transport any other child alone, except in emergency or exceptional circumstances
- In accordance with transport legislation children must use appropriate seat belts when travelling in a car or other vehicles
- No driver should ever consume alcohol or non-prescribed drugs prior to driving
- No driver should smoke or vape in the car when transporting children on behalf of the Club or Association
- Where a driver may be under medical care or taking prescribed medication he/she must ensure that such medication does not inhibit their driving abilities

Public transport

When using public transport please ensure that

- That the full travel schedule is made known in advance to all parents and players
- That drop off and pick-up arrangements have been agreed in advance
- That where available, seat booking arrangements are agreed in advance e.g. trains
- Where a team or training group consists of both boys and girls, the supervision and coaching personnel, must also comprise of both male and female personnel

PLAYER INJURY FUND BENEFIT

For information in relation to the **GAA Injury Benefit Fund** please click [here](#)

For information in relation to **LGFA Injury Fund** please click [here](#)

For information in relation to Personal Injury Cover in Camogie please click [here](#)

PHOTOGRAPHY, RECORDING & STREAMING

The Child Safeguarding Policy is not about preventing images from being taken but to ensure that those who have a right to take images do so. It should be noted that having photographic guidelines is not about preventing parents and guardians from taking pictures, but rather to ensure that only those who have a right to take photographs do so and that all images are captured in a sensible and non-intrusive way.

This policy outlines the safeguards in place so as to prevent instances of harm or unacceptable behaviour, so as not to impact negatively on any child and on those who work with them.

While we respect the rights of all members to use social media, it is important to be mindful of the benefits and at times the negative impact it can have on our members and particularly children and young people.

In this section of the policy the word “image” refers to all photographic and video image captured, recorded or streamed.

When a Club or County is uploading images or videos on Club or County websites or social media platforms, the Club/County is then a data controller and is responsible for ensuring the lawful use and compliance with data protection legislation.

One of the following legal bases must be identified prior to uploading or sharing images:

1. Consent/Permission
2. Legitimate interest
3. Performance of a contract
4. Compliance with a legal obligation
5. Performing a public task
6. Vital Interest

Permission

- Ensuring agreement and permission of parents/ guardians in the taking and any use of images/ photographs. Parents are aware of when and how their child’s images may be used
- Seek this permission as part of annual membership process or by use of parental consent forms (Club only)
- Counties are required to seek separate parental permission for squads etc. as the permission on Foireann is only for the Club
- Parental permissions for each unit must identify third party photographers, film/videographers or other organisations whether employed or in a voluntary capacity to take images

Appropriate Images

A common-sense approach is required when deciding on what may or may not be appropriate image(s)

- Ensuring that images chosen are suitable and in good taste with the images chosen focussing on activity rather than a particular child
- Images of children should not be taken where the pose is inappropriate e.g. open legs; from behind bending over, etc.
- Images are not permitted in areas where people are changing or would normally expect their privacy to be recognised such as:
 - ▷ Changing rooms
 - ▷ Individual changing/cubicles provided for personal use
 - ▷ Toilets
 - ▷ Medical/physio and/or first aid rooms

Use of Images

- Avoid the individual identification of children in group or team images unless by agreement e.g. for special events, an award or achievements ceremony
- Ensuring prior accreditation is given to 'professional photographers' who may attend your games or events
- Parents and supporters taking images should where possible seek permission in advance from the Club/County Board and should also be prepared to identify themselves if requested and state the purpose for their photography/filming. If Club/County Board personnel are unhappy about any matter relating to taking of images the permission granted may be withdrawn immediately
- The posting of any image on social media should not breach the Code of Conduct
- Personal images – these are images taken by parents/guardians or other family members during a game. Other underage players or people may be included in an image, and we expect parents/guardians and other family members to respect this by not distributing images publicly

Use of images on social media

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

- i. Personal details of a young person should not be given
- ii. Any caption should be in keeping with the sport represented
- iii. The purpose of the posting should not breach the codes of conduct
- iv. The type of image should not breach any requirement stated within this policy

Announcement at events regarding taking and the use of images

An announcement should be read out at the start and during an event to ensure everyone is clearly aware of the policy on images.

Storage of Images

Storage includes any image stored as a hard copy or electronically including social media, photographic archives or individual personal databases e.g. personal cameras, phones, etc.

Storage of personal images is a matter for the parent/guardian and the child/young person.

All other images should only be stored for defined and intended purposes e.g. membership, promotion, and/or archiving.

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

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

- Clubs, Counties and coaches and volunteers permitting the use of video equipment as a legitimate coaching aid and as a means of recording special occasions; care should be taken in the dissemination, storage and use of such material

Our members and third-party photographers, film/videographers shall ensure that images are not taken in such environments considered inappropriate irrespective of any permission sought. In certain cases, it may be an offence and shall be deemed a breach of policy to take such images.

It should be noted that we have little or no influence on what images may be taken and published in local or national newspapers as such photography is covered by a different set of guidelines. Should we ever be unhappy with the publication of such photographs or images we can address this matter with the individual newspaper or the Press Council of Ireland and the Office of the Press Ombudsman.

RECORDING & STREAMING

It should be noted that having recording and streaming guidelines is not about preventing Clubs & Counties from recording and or streaming, but rather to ensure that only those who have a right to record/stream do so and that all recorded images are captured in a sensible and non-intrusive way.

These safeguards should still permit and facilitate the recording of a game and or training session to enable coaches to use the latest technology in the delivery of training skills and should also enable Clubs or Counties to promote their activities in a safe and non-threatening manner. Image refers to all photographic and film/video footage.

There are certain steps that need to be considered as outlined earlier in this section on page 60 Legitimate Interest and permission are vital elements of the legal basis.

Before a decision is made to record or stream a game or a training session it is necessary to consider the following:

Step 1:

- Where are the data retained?
- Will it be shared with third parties?
- Will it be processed outside of the EEA?
- How long will the data be retained for?
- Is Artificial Intelligence (AI) being used?
- What security measures are in place to protect the integrity and confidentiality of the data?
- In addition, do you the Club have a contract in place with third party? If so does it include a Data Protection Agreement?

Step 2:

All going well with the above and the Club is satisfied that this particular company meets the requirements outlined, you may proceed on the basis of step 2.

- Written Parental permission is required from each player's parent/guardian(s) who must be informed the matches (season) is being recorded/live streamed. If any parent/guardian does not give consent, then the streaming of the matches cannot proceed
- Written parental permission to include AI if the platform being used is using AI is also required
- Both Clubs must also provide permission to the County Board. If one Club does not give consent, then the recording or streaming cannot go ahead. The club will need to verify with the County Board that written consent from the parent/guardian(s) of ALL players is obtained exclusively for the recording/live stream for this game only. The County Board should receive an email from the Club to verify consent has been obtained
- The relevant CCC must also provide permission for the streaming of the game
- All attendees should be informed that the match is being recorded. A simple announcement prior to recording taking place will suffice
- Data minimisation principles must be adhered to i.e. do not record the warmup session, etc.
- In the scenario where recording/streaming is for the purpose of County underage teams or development squads, the same above steps applies in that parental permission is required to record/stream a game or training session. If a parent does not give permission to record/stream the game/training session, then the recording/streaming cannot take place

Please see link for: <https://www.gaa.ie/the-gaa/child-safeguarding-and-protection/child-safeguarding-policy>

REPORTING OF INAPPROPRIATE IMAGES

Taking inappropriate images

If there is any concern about the nature of images being taken, this should be reported to the relevant Designated Liaison Person who will refer to the statutory authorities. The concerned individual may also report directly to the statutory authorities.

THE USE OF DRONES AT SPORTING EVENTS.

Drone use at Gaelic Games grounds must adhere to relevant aviation and applicable data protection legislation and any Gaelic Games policies in effect at the time. The main principle is that drones should not be used where they might impact uninvolved persons, specifically where individuals on or near the ground may be unaware of their presence. This requirement applies on both event and non-event days.

As per the GAA Event Safety Management Guide

Authorised Drone Use

- Any person or organisation wishing to operate a drone at the ground must seek prior authorisation from Ground Management, regardless of scale, purpose, or whether an event is taking place. Each request will be considered on a case-by-case basis
- Certain activities, such as broadcast operations, may generally proceed as a matter of course, but prior consultation is required in all cases
- All drone operators must hold the necessary permissions from the Irish Aviation Authority (or Civil Aviation Authority in the North), comply with relevant aviation regulations, and follow any conditions set by Ground Management

Unauthorised Drone Activity

- Unauthorised drone activity at GAA grounds is prohibited. If an unauthorised drone is observed, Ground Management should notify An Garda Síochána/PSNI immediately and take any necessary steps to ensure the safety of those present, including suspending play or restricting access if required.

COMMUNICATIONS IN RELATION TO UNDERAGE TEAM ACTIVITIES

- All coaches should make it known that our Associations' preferred option of communicating team information for underage teams is via the parental/guardian mobile phone of each player and not via the mobile phone of the child
 - If requested by a parent to send messages regarding games or training via the mobile phone of the child, the coach/club should enquire as to the rationale of such requests and if in agreement must receive any such request in writing
 - Upon any agreement, any messages sent to the child can only be as part of the team group text that will also go to their parents and to all other members of that group text
 - Coaches are not permitted to communicate individually via texting and or social media with underage players
- Our Associations do not approve of Clubs or coaches engaging in or facilitating messaging apps in which players and coaches participate, nor do we approve of the creation of Club messaging forums for underage players
- Any form of individual social media communication by a coach with an underage player shall be deemed a serious breach of the Child Safeguarding Policy

MOBILE PHONES

Except in exceptional circumstances, or in the case of very young children, most underage players attending our training or games generally have a mobile phone or access to a phone

While the ownership and general use of the mobile is primarily a matter between the child and their parents the use or accessing of the mobiles at our events or in our clubhouses or dressing rooms is a matter for us to monitor and or follow up and if need be, to agree with parents. While we never wish to curtail the rights of a child, we can limit the use of mobiles on our premises and if doing so, we should inform the parents in advance. Guidance in relation to mobile phone usage includes:

- Do not permit the use of any phones in dressing rooms or shower area
- No individual communication via mobile phone with any of the underage players

SOCIAL MEDIA SITES

The world of social and digital media is an enjoyable and engaging place and is in itself a useful asset in promoting our Clubs and activities within the membership and to a wider audience. We must be aware that while these communication tools can be used to our advantage vigilance is also required to ensure that our use of such communication methods shall at all times be appropriate.

- Each individual (child and adult) is responsible for any posting, comments or their conduct while engaging with such sites
- Any social media site approved or promoted by a Club/County must be subject to terms and conditions regarding its usage and must also be under the direct monitoring of a nominate person
- Agree a club policy on reporting of games, club news and use of images or photography
- Club sites may be used to promote training times, fixtures and events
- Content published on Club web sites or social network pages should at all times be factual and follow the parameters of good behaviour
- Clubs should ensure all members are aware of acceptable usage policies regarding communication between coaches or other adults and underage players
- Social media sites should not be used as a forum for exchanging views between other clubs or irate members. Such usage should be terminated by the site controller
- The GAA will shortly publish new Social Media Guidelines or current Social Media Guidelines are available <https://www.gaa.ie/api/pdfs/image/upload/skxfguu6n6lj6kx7fl2.pdf>
- If in agreement with other coaches, seek parental permission for all phones of underage players to be 'bagged' prior to a game and returned to the players after each game
- Advise children if they receive an offensive photo, email or messages, to tell their parent/guardian or a trusted adult and to report it to the Gardai/Police

CCTV

GAA Units utilising CCTV within their premises must ensure compliance with data protection legislation. In order to ensure compliance, appropriate agreements must be in place with the CCTV provider, signage must be in place notifying individuals of the use of CCTV, and a CCTV Policy must be retained by the individual unit. Please see CCTV Policy Template below.

[CCTV Policy Template.docx](#)

[CCTV Guidance - Data Protection Commission.pdf](#)

EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

It is important to note that this is only a section of the Child Safeguarding Policy, the full GAA for All programmes and resources should be reviewed and taken into account before organising such activities. While we aim to embed EDI across all Gaelic Games programmes, we also have specific EDI related programmes which are encompassed under the umbrella of GAA for All.

Achieving a strong sense of belonging across the Association depends on everyone playing their part, through leadership, behaviour and everyday practice.

See below some examples of GAA Games for ALL Activities:

- Wheelchair football/ Wheelchair Hurling/Camogie
- All Star Programme
- Inclusive Camps
- Intercultural Family days and events
- LGBTQ+ events

Checklist for Clubs:

- Initial Meeting: If a Club decides to introduce the Games For All programme a meeting of all interested parties takes place
- Review and Sign the Active Disability Ireland Charter
- Link with relevant Gaelic Games Development staff, Local Sports Partnership (LSP) Sports Inclusion Disability Officer (SIDO)/Disability Sports Staff and community partners
- Legal Requirements: Ensure all contributors have completed Vetting, Safeguarding, Introduction to Coaching Gaelic Games and/or All Stars Workshop
- Logistics: Venue and time confirmed for each week for training session; visual guide circulated, Passport ID distributed, source any specialist/necessary equipment
- Programme promotion throughout club and community and also with any local disability services
- Follow the Recruitment & Selection Process Section 4
- Accident/Injury Records must be completed and notified to the parents/guardians and relevant GAA personnel as soon as possible after the event has occurred

GUIDELINES FOR INCLUSION IN GAA GAMES FOR ALL PROGRAMMES:

To create a GAA Games for All ethos in your club, please also ensure the following aspects are considered and followed:

- The programme abides by a minimum ratio of 2 adults to 4 children, (2:4). This ratio level requires at least one qualified coach and at least one other responsible adult to be present at all times. In the case of an all-female team, at least one of the two adults must be female and similarly in the case of an all-boys team, at least one of the two adults must be male
- Where a team or training group consists of both boys and girls, the supervision/coaching personnel, must also comprise of both male and female. Clubs may choose to appoint suitable persons to the role of Supervisor, i.e. Supervisor of Children
- Have clear physical boundaries for each session and explain safety rules in a way that each child/young person/ parent/ guardian understands

SECTION 8 - COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE (COMPLAINTS OF ALLEGED BREACH OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT (UNDERAGE) SECTION 6)

INTRODUCTION

The Gaelic Athletic Association (“the GAA”);
Ladies Gaelic Football Association (“the LGFA”);
The Camogie Association;
GAA Handball Ireland;
GAA Rounders
(collectively the “Associations”)

The Code of Conduct (Underage) (Section 6) (“Code of Conduct”) outlines the standards of practice required of those participating in underage games and activities, regardless of what role they may play and in doing so, brings together the collective good practice experiences of our Associations.

Unfortunately, incidents of poor practice and / or poor behaviour may occur from time to time, which may be a minor or major alleged breach of the Code of Conduct ((Underage) Section 6).

The Associations have adopted a child-centred approach in relation to our complaint’s procedures for alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct ((Underage) Section 6).

What is the benefit of an effective child-centred complaints system?

Developing complaints and feedback mechanisms that are child-centred and user-friendly deliver multiple benefits:

Legitimacy – A child-centred approach is grounded in and required by international children’s rights law, which provides for its legitimacy.

Inclusion – A child-centred approach recognises that children can face particular barriers to accessing and participating in complaints processes affecting them and therefore procedures and practices are adapted to meet children’s specific needs.

Best interests of the child – A child-centred approach fully considers the rights, best interests and needs of the child or children affected by the complaint and supports decision-making that is focused on securing the best outcome for them.

Empowerment – A child-centred approach is empowering for children because it recognises them as rights-holders and agents in their own lives, respects their evolving capacities and supports them to participate in the process if they wish to and in accordance with their capacities.

Affirmation – A child-centred approach affirms that children are welcome to raise their concerns, that they will be treated with respect and that their views will be heard and taken into account.

Accountability – A child-centred approach promotes accountability by decision-makers for and to children and their representatives.

Quality improvement – A child-centred approach can support the identification of gaps in the implementation of children’s rights and highlight areas that need to be addressed or improved in the best interests of children.

All complaints affecting any child will be handled in a way that meets all of their rights under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We have drawn on the principles devised by the Ombudsman for Children (ROI) and Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children & Young People (NICCY).

CORE PRINCIPLES DEVELOPED BY THE OMBUDSMAN FOR CHILDREN

1. Openness and Accessibility

We aim to:

Encourage feedback from underage players about the Associations.

Learn from complaints by taking an open approach to handling complaints and recognising complaints as opportunities to improve our practice.

Make this procedure available to underage players and their parents/guardians by publicising it through our websites, safeguarding training, membership system and supported by our Club and County Executives.

Provide a range of ways for underage players to make complaints.

2. Best interests of the child/child-centred approach

We treat the best interests of the child as a primary consideration at each stage of the process and in all actions and decisions taken in relation to the complaint.

We are committed to ensuring that no harm or distress is caused to the child.

Take a problem-solving approach that is focused on securing the best outcome for the child concerned.

In cases where the complaint means you need to consider the interests of more than one child, separately assess and seek to carefully balance the best interests of the different children concerned, with a view to reconciling possible conflicting interests

Maintain records of the stages and outcomes from the complaints process (Safeguarding Data Capture Foireann)

3. Participation of children

We will make every effort to ensure that complaints made by and on behalf of children are handled with their input. We will:

Seek the views of the child affected by the complaint, where the child has the capacity to form a view. Give due weight to the child's views, in accordance with their age and maturity.

Remember that while every child has a right to be heard, no child has an obligation to express their views: a child's participation must be voluntary.

Start from the position that a child has the capacity to form their own views and that it is generally in the best interests of the child to be afforded the opportunity to express their views.

Facilitate children to express their views on the issues raised in the complaint and on any follow-up actions that are proposed. Support children to speak to what they know and remember that it is not necessary for children to have comprehensive knowledge of all of the issues. Make sure that children are supported to raise any issues, which they feel are important or relevant.

Be mindful of barriers that may exist for children in expressing their views freely – for example, power imbalances, fear of negative repercussions of making a complaint, and a lack of trust in authority figures and/or complaints systems. In particular:

- consult with children about how they would like to be heard as part of the complaints process
- use approaches and methods that support children to take part effectively and in ways they are comfortable with
- Always give children the opportunity to involve a support person (e.g. a parent/guardian, a member of the relevant Association, referred to as a nominated person, a sibling or a friend) if they wish

4. Transparency and communications

It is important to ensure that children and their representatives understand the options that are available to them if they wish to make a complaint, as well as the complaints process itself.

- Acknowledge all complaints promptly
- Provide regular, clear, accessible updates, depending on the stage of the process

5. Timeliness

We will prioritise complaints made by or on behalf of children, aim to resolve complaints early and complete any complaints process affecting children in the shortest time possible.

We will deal with safety / welfare / child protection concerns urgently and in line with the Gaelic Games Associations's procedures.

6. Fairness

Children are entitled to fair procedures in the resolution of complaints. Therefore, we will deal with all complaints in a fair and impartial manner.

7. Monitoring and review

We will:

- Keep a check on the numbers of complaints directly submitted by children / involving children, and associated outcomes (Foireann)
- Note any policy change occurring in the aftermath of a complaint

(Adapted from 7 Core Principles https://www.oco.ie/app/uploads/2018/02/14433_OCO_child-centred-complaints_covers_WEB-1.pdf

https://www.unicef.org/eca/sites/unicef.org.eca/files/2019-02/NHRI_ComplaintMechanisms.pdf

<https://www.niccy.org/>

This section sets out the process on how to deal with a complaint of an alleged breach of the Code of Conduct ((Underage) Section 6) for the Associations;

GENERAL PROVISIONS FOR DEALING WITH COMPLAINT(S)

Status

A complaint of an alleged breach of the Code of Conduct ((Underage) Section 6) may also be an alleged breach of the rules of the relevant Association. A complaint may not be addressed under both processes and the process for an alleged breach of rule is dealt with by the Official Guide in the first instance of the relevant Association.

Where a complaint is made of a breach of the Code of Conduct ((Underage) Section 6) members of the Associations are obliged to cooperate with the informal or formal procedures as outlined below. Any failure to do so may be dealt with in accordance with the disciplinary procedures of the relevant Association's rules and will not prevent the process from continuing in the absence of any member of the relevant Association.

COMPLAINTS PROCESS & PROCEDURES

Individual Initiative

Misunderstandings, disagreements, and conflict can occur in any environment. The most effective way to resolve these issues is to address them as close to the source as possible and as soon as they arise. This is best achieved through individual initiative.

In the context of resolving concerns or complaints, individual initiative means taking prompt, direct steps to address an issue rather than delaying it or escalating it through multiple layers of process. Wherever possible, the first step in resolving an issue should involve the individuals directly involved for example the coach or mentor and the child or parent/guardian. This allows people to openly raise their concerns, listen to one another, and work together toward a resolution.

This approach focuses on acknowledging concerns early, engaging respectfully with the person who raised the issue, and working toward a timely solution. Taking swift individual initiative shows respect, demonstrates responsiveness, and helps prevent issues from escalating. It also supports positive relationships, maintains trust, and contributes to a more supportive and cooperative environment.

There are many benefits to this approach. Issues are resolved more quickly and efficiently, reducing unnecessary stress and disruption. Both underage players and adults have the opportunity to develop important life skills such as assertive communication, active listening, and problem-solving. Encouraging regular, open communication also helps build a culture grounded in respect, dignity, and shared responsibility, where concerns are addressed constructively and everyone feels heard and valued.

Where individual initiative does not resolve the complaint or where the complainant does not feel comfortable raising the complaint directly with those involved, or a more serious complaint has arisen, the complaint may be dealt with informally or formally in accordance with the structures outlined.

Complaint

A complaint may be made in relation to a breach of the Code of Conduct ((Underage) Section 6) under this process.

Where an allegation, suspicion, or concern of abuse under Section 5 Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Allegations or Concerns of Abuse, is alleged to have occurred this will follow the process outlined in Section 5 of the Child Safeguarding Policy and not this section.

Complaints outside the scope of this process may include (but not be limited to):

- ▷ matters that are or have been the subject of legal proceedings or that may prejudice legal proceedings
- ▷ matters relating to an employee of an Association in their capacity of as an Employee of an Association
- ▷ matters that may prejudice an investigation by the statutory authorities (e.g. An Garda Síochána/PSNI/Police and/or Tusla/The Trust/ Children's Social Care Team at the child's Local Authority)
- ▷ complaints not related to a breach of the Code of Conduct ((Underage) Section 6)

False Complaints

Any member found to have made a false or vexatious complaint shall be dealt with in accordance with the disciplinary procedures in the relevant Association's rules.

Who can complain?

A complaint may be raised by a child, by an adult, either on a child's behalf, or an adult may complain in their own right about matters that affect any child within an Association. Adults, other than a child's parent or guardian are permitted to raise a complaint involving a child.

A child is defined as anyone under the age of 18 years.

Making a complaint

A complaint of an alleged breach of the Code of Conduct (Section Underage) may be verbal or written and should be made to the Club, County or National Children's Officer ("the relevant Children's Officer"). Where the complaint is verbal, a written note of the complaint will be made by the relevant Children's Officer who receives the complaint.

Child Friendly Complaints Process

Please see page 76 of an overview of the Child Friendly Process which aligns with the overall complaints process but does so in a Child Friendly and accessible manner.

Initial Assessment /Triaging Complaint

The Children's Officer shall carry out an initial assessment/triaging to determine initially whether the issue falls within the scope of this complaint's procedure and if so if the complaint can be managed through the informal or the formal procedure.

It is not the role of the relevant Children's Officer to investigate but to validate or reaffirm the details of the complaint. The initial assessment may include seeking further information from the complainant, if required, to establish if the complaint is a complaint of an alleged breach of the Code of Conduct ((Underage) Section 6) and is within the scope of this process. It is not seeking information from the respondent or any potential witness.

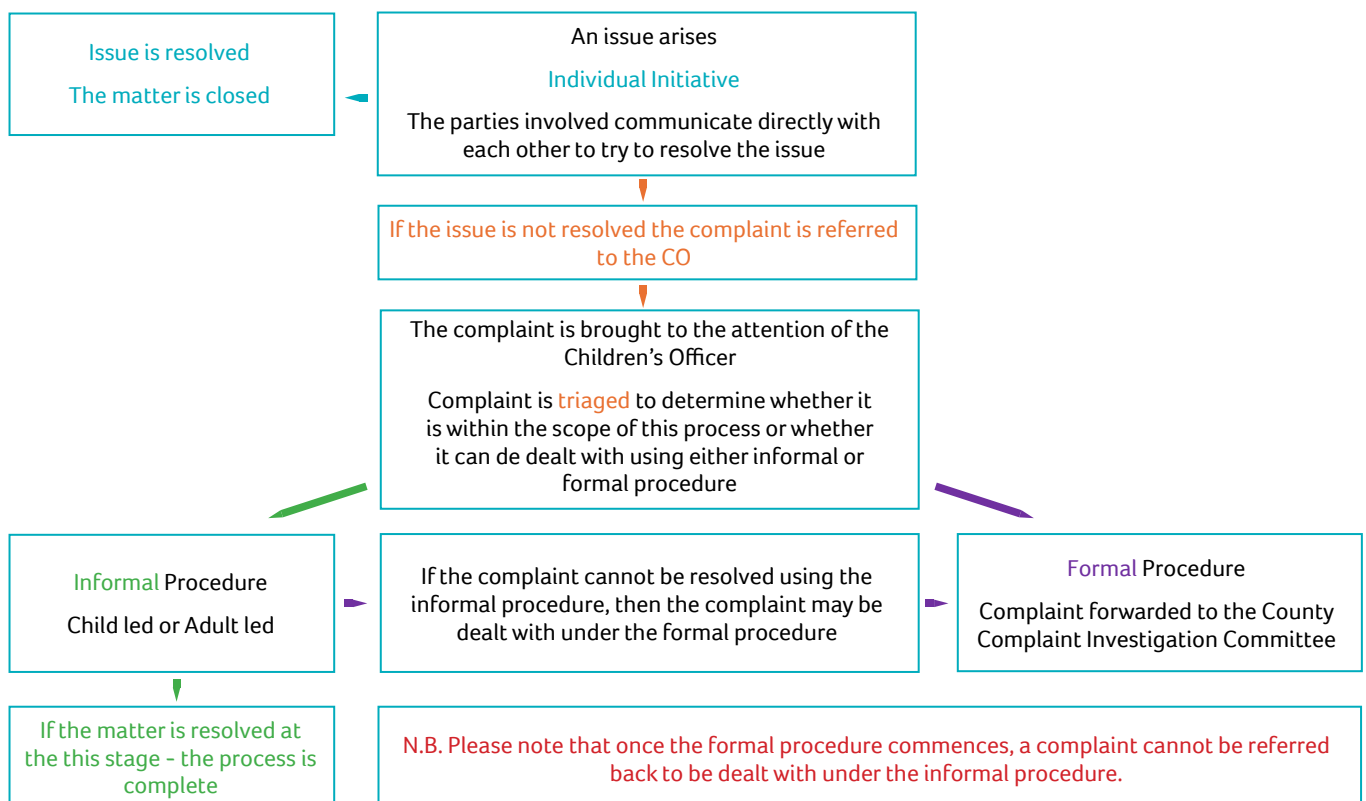
If, having carried out an initial assessment, the relevant Children's Officer decides that the complaint is not a complaint of an alleged breach of the Code of Conduct ((Underage) Section 6) or that it is outside the scope of this process, they shall inform the complainant of their decision and may either close the complaint or refer the complaint to another procedure applicable to the complaint raised.

If, having carried out an initial assessment, the relevant Children's Officer decides that complaint is a complaint of an alleged breach of the Code of Conduct ((Underage) Section 6) they may deal with the complaint informally or refer it for investigation under the formal process below.

If the Children's Officer is conflicted in relation to the parties or the complaint the Children's Officer shall notify their respective committee and shall not be involved in the assessment/ triaging the complaint. The committee will appoint a suitable alternative e.g. Assistant Children's Officer.

Where a complainant, respondent or a child involved objects to a complaint being dealt with informally by the relevant Children's Officer, it shall be referred to the County Secretary for consideration under the formal process.

COMPLAINTS PROCESS & PROCEDURES



8.1 INFORMAL PROCESS

An informal complaints process is an approach to resolving concerns or complaints by addressing them directly with the individuals involved. The aim is for resolution without a formal documented investigation. If the informal approach does not work, then it would move to a formal process, if the complainant wishes to proceed.

Where a complaint is being dealt with informally, the person complained against (“the respondent”) will be provided with an overview of the complaint that has been received and given an opportunity to respond. For e.g. name of the complainant, date, brief description of the alleged incident.

After a response has been received from the respondent (or a reasonable period has elapsed without a response having been received), a method will usually be agreed, where possible, to progress the complaint to resolution so that the parties concerned can resolve the complaint.

The relevant Children’s Officer will keep a record of all stages: the complaint, any meetings, action(s) agreed in relation to the final resolution of the complaint. These details will be uploaded to Foireann. The purpose of the records, which will not include details of any discussion, is to provide evidence that the complaint was addressed and resolved.

8.2 FORMAL PROCESS

Where the relevant Children’s Officer is of the view that the complaint is serious (because of the gravity of the alleged breach, or in some other relevant circumstance) or where informal action has not resolved the complaint, or the complainant or respondent or child involved does not wish to engage in the informal process, the relevant Children’s Officer shall refer the complaint for investigation by the relevant Complaints Investigation Committee via the Secretary of the County Committee or the Secretary of National Child Safeguarding Committee.

While an alleged breach of the Code of Conduct ((Underage) Section 6) may initially be made verbally (and recorded in writing by the relevant Children’s Officer), a formal complaint must be submitted in writing and contain the following information:

- name and contact details of the complainant
- the time, date, location of the alleged breach of the Code of Conduct ((Underage) Section 6)
- description of the alleged breach
- the identity of any person(s) allegedly involved
- the name(s) of person(s) who may have witnessed the alleged breach

Any failure to provide the information outlined above shall not invalidate a complaint.

Anonymous complaints can be difficult to deal with and therefore individuals are encouraged to put their name to the complaint. Complaints expressed anonymously will be treated in accordance with this procedure, where possible.

8.3 INVESTIGATION – GAELIC GAMES COUNTY COMPLAINTS INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE

The County Committees of each of the Associations shall ratify the membership of the Gaelic Games County Complaints Investigation Committee (referred thereafter as the County Complaints Investigations Committee) and they shall appoint a panel of six individuals, including two appointees from each of the Associations. If an appointee is not made from one of the Associations, the other two Associations shall by agreement appoint an individual to the County Complaints Investigations Committee. These individuals do not have to be on the executive but shall be a member of the Association.

The County Complaints Investigations Committee shall comprise of three individuals appointed from within the panel.

A Children’s Officer shall not be a member of a Complaints Investigations Committee.

The County Complaints Investigations Committee shall be responsible for the investigation of any complaint forwarded to them by either the Secretary of the relevant Club Executive Committee or the Secretary of the relevant County Committee.

8.4 INVESTIGATION OF THE COMPLAINT – NATIONAL COMPLAINTS INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE (IN THE EVENT OF A CASE BEING REFERRED TO IT)

The National Child Safeguarding Committee shall appoint a National Complaints Investigations Committee comprising of six people from a national panel appointed by the National Child Safeguarding Committee.

The National Child Safeguarding Committee shall refer a relevant complaint to the National Complaints Investigation Committee or to the County Complaints Investigations Committee to investigate the complaint. The National Complaints Investigation Committee may also investigate a relevant complaint at Club and County level as are referred to it.

8.5 CONFLICT OF INTEREST

If an individual appointee to a Complaints Investigations Committee is conflicted in relation to the parties to or the subject matter under investigation, that individual shall notify their respective appointing Committee and shall not be involved in investigating the complaint and shall be removed from the relevant Complaints Investigation Committee.

If an appointee is removed from a Complaints Investigations Committee or unable to fulfil their role for any reason, the Committee that appointed them shall appoint a different appointee.

8.6 ROLE OF THE COUNTY/NATIONAL COMPLAINTS INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE

The role of the County/National Complaints Investigation Committee is to carry out an investigation into a complaint that has come to its attention as it considers appropriate. The Complaints Investigation Committee shall have the authority to propose a sanction where it is deemed appropriate.

8.7 INVESTIGATION OF A COMPLAINT AT COUNTY/NATIONAL LEVEL (COMPLAINTS INVESTIGATION COMMITTEE)

Provided that the complaint is to be dealt with under the Complaints Procedure in this section (Section 8), the relevant Complaints Investigation Committee (comprising of three persons who are appointed from the panel of six) may investigate any complaint that has come to its attention as it considers appropriate.

The level of investigation required will depend on the circumstances and will be decided by the Complaints Investigations Committee. It may involve interviewing and taking statements from the Complainant/Nominated Person and/or the Respondent, members or witnesses and/or reviewing relevant documents. There is no Hearing at this stage because no findings of fact are made. The Complaints Investigation Committee has no power to make findings of fact: that is the job of the Hearings Committee if the complaint is defended. If the complaint is contested, the Respondent will have an opportunity to seek a Hearing, and all the necessary rights and protections will be available to the respondent when the matter comes before the Complaints Hearings Committee.

Where statements are being taken from individuals, it is best practice that two or more members of the Complaints Investigation Committee attend. This avoids later disputes as regards what was said and to whom, etc.

8.8 UNDER 18S

If the Complainant is under 18 years of age, meetings or interviews should not take place with the Complainant without the presence of his or her parent/guardian, unless the Complainant parents/guardians or nominated person have been notified of the investigation and invited to attend the meeting or interview but have refused to do so. In circumstances where the Complainant parents /guardian or nominated person refuse to accompany him or her to a meeting or interview, the Complainant shall be entitled to be accompanied to the meeting or interview by an adult of his/her choosing. If the Complainant chooses not to be accompanied to the meeting by an adult, the meeting or interview may not proceed. However, the Complainant may be invited to make written submissions to the Complaints Investigations Committee with the invitation copied to the child's parent/guardian. Refusal or failure to co-operate with the investigation will not prevent the Complaints Investigation Committee from issuing a report on the information available

If the Respondent is under 18 years of age, meetings or interviews should not take place with the Respondent without the presence of his or her parent/guardian, unless the Respondent's parents/guardians or nominated person have been notified of the complaint and invited to attend the meeting or interview but have refused to do so. In circumstances where the Respondent's parents /guardian or nominated person refuse to accompany him or her to a meeting or interview, the Respondent shall be entitled to be accompanied to the meeting or interview by an adult of his/her choosing. If the Respondent chooses not to be accompanied to the meeting by an adult, the meeting or interview may not proceed. However, the Respondent may be invited to make written submissions to the Complaints Investigations Committee with the invitation copied to the child's parent/guardian. Refusal or failure to co-operate with the investigation will not prevent the Complaints Investigation Committee from issuing a report on the information available.

If a witness is under 18 years of age, meetings or interviews should not take place with the witness without the presence of his or her parent/guardian or of a nominated person on behalf of the parent/guardian, unless their parent(s) or guardian(s) have been notified of the meetings or interview and invited to attend and have refused to do so. In circumstances where the parent(s) or guardian(s) of a witness who is under 18 years of age refuse to accompany him or her to a meeting or interview, or nominate a person in their place, the witness shall be entitled to be accompanied to the meeting or interview by an adult of his/her choosing. If they choose not to be accompanied to the meeting by an adult, the meeting or interview may not proceed. However, the witness may be invited to make written submissions to the Complaints Investigations Committee with the invitation copied to the child's parent/guardian. Refusal or failure to co-operate with the investigation will not prevent the Complaints Investigation Committee from issuing a report on the information available.

If any party to the investigation is a child under 18 years of age, meetings or interviews should not take place with the child without the presence of his or her parent/guardian or nominated person, unless the child's parent/guardian or nominated person have been notified of the complaint and invited to attend the meeting or interview but have refused to do so. In circumstances where a child's parents /guardian or nominated person refuse to accompany him or her to a meeting or interview, the child shall be entitled to be accompanied to the meeting or interview by an adult of his/her choosing. If the child chooses not to be accompanied to the meeting by an adult, the meeting or interview may not proceed. However, the child may be invited to make written submissions to the Complaints Investigations Committee with the invitation copied to the child's parent/guardian or nominated person. Refusal or failure to co-operate with the investigation will not prevent the Complaints Investigation Committee from issuing a report on the information available.

8.9 NOT A COMPLAINT OF CODE OF CONDUCT ((UNDERAGE) SECTION 6)

If during the investigation, the Complaints Investigations Committee decides that the complaint is not a complaint of an alleged breach of the Code of Conduct ((Underage) Section 8) or that it is outside the scope of this process, they shall inform the complainant of their decision and may either close the complaint or refer the complaint to another procedure of the Association relevant to the complaint raised.

On foot of the investigation, a decision to initiate Disciplinary Action may be taken by the Complaints Investigation Committee. This task should be carried out by means of a collective decision by the committee (three persons who have been appointed from the panel of six).

If the Complaints Investigation Committee members decide to commence Disciplinary Action, a Disciplinary Report must be prepared.

8.10 THE DISCIPLINARY REPORT

At the conclusion of the investigation, the Complaints Investigation Committee shall prepare a report. The essential contents of the report are set out;

- The identity of any person(s) or Unit(s) against whom action is being taken (“the Respondent”);
- A statement of the alleged breach quoting the provision(s) of the Code of Conduct ((Underage) Section 8) it is alleged has been breached;
- Copies of all relevant documents and other relevant evidence available to the relevant Investigations Committee (including where appropriate, the original complaint); and a copy of any statements taken from witnesses and
- A list of witnesses, if any, who will be required by the Investigations Committee for any Hearing

The Disciplinary Report of the relevant Complaints Investigation Committee shall be final, and binding save in the case of manifest error.

Please see link for Template Disciplinary Report. <https://www.gaa.ie/the-gaa/child-safeguarding-and-protection/child-safeguarding-policy>

8.11 NOTIFICATION

The Complaints Investigation Committee must notify the Respondent if there is Disciplinary Action. The purpose of notification is:

- to inform the Respondent that he/she is being charged with a breach of the Code of Conduct (Underage)
- to give him/her a fair opportunity to dispute the charge brought against him/her; (to request a hearing)
- to give him/her a fair opportunity to admit the charge and accept a suggested penalty; and
- to inform him/her of his position in the event that he/she (a) admits or (b) disputes the charge

8.12 WHAT MUST THE NOTICE CONTAIN?

The Notice must include (either in the letter itself or in the accompanying documents)

- the four essential provisions of the Disciplinary Report as outlined above (including separate documents/files referenced);
- it must also include a Proposed Sanction;
- and it must inform the Respondent of the Respondents right to a Hearing by replying within two days from the date and time of receipt of the Notice
- It should also warn the Respondent of the consequences of a failure to reply to the Notice

The Notice will have the complaint attached and will include any further information needed to make up the requirements (such as the specific breach of the Code of Conduct), together with a Proposed Sanction.

The **Proposed Sanction** is the key to disposing of the vast majority of cases with the minimum effort. Where the breach of the Code of Conduct is not disputed, this fast-track system allows an admission to be made so the time of a formal hearing can be avoided. The Proposed Sanction is what the Complaints Investigation Committee believes the appropriate sanction under the Complaints Process to be for the alleged breach. It can never be less than the minimum applicable. A Complaints Investigation Committee should not have a fixed policy in relation to proposed penalties and should assess every individual case on its own merits.

8.13 SERVING THE NOTICE

It is important that the Notice is properly served on the Respondent. The Rules for serving notices are;

- Personally (i.e. handing it to the individual), or
- By email or
- By email to his/her Club Secretary or County Secretary if the breach arises by the respondent in their role with County, or

- By post his/her usual address, or
- By post to his/her Club Secretary or County Secretary if the breach arises by the respondent in their role with County, or

N.B.: When a Notice is sent via a Unit Secretary, it must be addressed to the Member personally.

A Club or Committee is served by either serving its secretary personally or by post, hand, e-mail to the address/number of the Unit or its Secretary.

A note should be kept of when, where and how the Notice was served, because the service of the Notice starts the time for the Respondent Reply (see further below).

8.14 REPLY

The Respondent must now respond to the proposed sanction made. Where there is no dispute that the breach as alleged has occurred and the Respondent considers the Proposed Sanction to be correct, then the Respondent will save both himself/herself and the Complaints Hearings Committee the trouble of a Hearing by accepting the Proposed Sanction.

If the Respondent does not Reply within two days from the date and time of receipt of the notice, then that Party is taken to have accepted the Proposed Sanction. This period may appear to be very short. It is essential, therefore, that he/she is properly served, and that the date and time of posting are noted by the Secretary of the Complaints Investigation Committee. The two days run as 48 hours from the time of delivery.

If the Respondent replies that they are not accepting the Proposed Sanction, the case shall be referred to the relevant Complaints Hearings Committee.

8.15 TIME OF DELIVERY

Unless otherwise proved to the satisfaction of the appropriate Committee in-Charge (or Appellate Council or Committee as the case may be), such notice or other communication shall be deemed to have been received:

- Where sent by ordinary post, at 10a.m. on the second day after it was sent;
- Where sent by hand delivery, at the time of delivery;
- Where sent by e-mail, at the time of transmission

Exception to (iii): If the time of transmission is after 9 p.m. on a Monday to Thursday inclusive, the time of receipt shall be deemed to be 9am the next morning. If the time of transmission is during a week-end, i.e. from 6 p.m. on Friday to 12 midnight on Sunday, the time of receipt shall be deemed to be 9a.m. on the following Monday morning.

(iv) Where sent by any means to a member via the appropriate Secretary, and the member is affected by a time limit in making a response, the time of receipt by the member shall be deemed to be four hours after its receipt by the appropriate Secretary, subject to the provision in the Exception to (iii) above.

8.16 PROOF OF DELIVERY

Where a dispute arises as to the fact or time of service of any notice or other communication by email, the sender shall be required to furnish such proof of transmission as the Council or Committee-in-Charge shall deem necessary in the circumstances.

8.17 WHERE THE PROPOSED SANCTION IS ACCEPTED

Where the Proposed Sanction is accepted, either by the Respondent accepting it in the Reply Form or by not replying, the Proposed Sanction becomes a formal sanction and is placed on the record of the Respondent by the Complaints Investigation Committee. Confirmation of this sanction shall be sent to the Respondent, quoting the Breach(es) under which the sanction is imposed. It goes without saying that there can be no Appeal against the imposition of a sanction where the proposed sanction is accepted.

8.18 WHERE THE PROPOSED SANCTION IS NOT ACCEPTED

In order to refuse the Proposed Sanction and seek a Hearing, the Respondent needs to state their refusal in the Reply Form. If the Respondent has any special request(s) (e.g. if the Respondent is, or the Respondent's witnesses are, unavailable on any particular date) these too should be stated, so that the Secretary of the Complaints Hearings Committee, who will have to set a date for the Hearing, can accommodate the request(s), within reason.

8.19 CLARIFICATION OF THE COMPLAINTS INVESTIGATION REPORT

The Respondent may request that Clarification of a Complaints Investigation Report be sought, and if the Respondent does so, the Complaints Investigation Committee must comply with the request.

8.20 APPOINTMENT OF THE COUNTY COMPLAINTS HEARINGS COMMITTEE

The County Committees of each of the Associations shall ratify the membership of the Gaelic Games County Complaints Hearings Committee (referred thereafter as the County Complaints Hearings Committee) and they shall appoint a panel

of six individuals, including two appointees from each of the Associations. If an appointee is not made from one of the Associations, the other two Associations shall by agreement appoint a third individual to the County Complaints Hearings Committee. These individuals do not have to be on the executive but shall be a member of the Association.

The County Complaints Hearings Committee shall comprise of three individuals appointed from within the panel.

If an individual appointed to the County Complaints Hearings Committee is conflicted in relation to the parties to or the subject matter of the Report, that individual shall notify their appointing County Committee of the conflict and shall be removed from the County Complaints Hearings Committee.

If an appointee is temporarily or otherwise removed from the County Complaints Hearings Committee, the County Committee(s) that appointed them shall appoint a different appointee from the same Association as the removed appointee on a temporary or permanent basis.

The County Complaints Hearings Committee shall appoint from within its membership a Chairperson and a Secretary.

Members of the County Investigations Committee and the County Children's Officer may not be members of the County Complaints Hearings Committee in respect of the same complaint.

8.21 APPOINTMENT OF THE NATIONAL COMPLAINTS HEARINGS COMMITTEE

The National Child Safeguarding Committee shall appoint a National Complaints Hearings Committee comprising of three people from a national panel previously appointed by the National Child Safeguarding Committee.

If an individual appointed to the National Complaints Hearings Committee is conflicted in relation to the parties to or the subject matter of the Report, that individual shall notify the Child Safeguarding Committee of the conflict and shall be removed from the National Hearings Committee.

If an appointee is temporarily or otherwise removed from the National Complaints Hearings Committee, the Child Safeguarding Committee shall appoint a different individual on a temporary or permanent basis to the National Complaints Hearings Committee.

The National Complaints Hearings Committee shall appoint from within its membership a Chairperson and a Secretary.

Members of the National Investigation Committee and the National Children's Officers may not be members of the National Complaints Hearings Committee in respect of the same complaint.

8.22 SETTING UP THE COMPLAINTS HEARING

The Secretary of the Complaints Investigation Committee, on receiving the Reply seeking a Hearing, sends the Disciplinary Report and Notice together with the Reply to the Secretary of the Complaints Hearings Committee. The Secretary of the Complaints Hearings Committee convenes a meeting of the Complaints Hearings Committee. Copies of the Notice, the Disciplinary Report and the Reply should be available to the Complaints Hearings Committee conducting the Hearing.

The Proposed Penalty (as well as any reasons given), must be "blacked out" on the copy of the Notice of Disciplinary Action forwarded to the Hearings Committee. This is to help to eliminate the influence that the Proposed Sanction might have on the minds of the Complaints Hearings Committee. If they find the breach proved, they must fix a sanction on the basis of what has been presented to them and not what was proposed by the Complaints Investigation Committee. Often disclosure of the Proposed Sanction will happen anyway, especially in high profile cases (and often because the Respondent or his/her Club/County discloses it): that will not invalidate the proceedings but is undesirable.

The Secretary of the relevant Complaints Hearing Committee shall notify the respondent of:-

- The date, time, and location of the hearing which must be scheduled within 21 days of the relevant Complaints Hearings Committee Chairperson receiving a copy of "the Reply", where possible
- The respondent's right to be accompanied to the hearing by his/her parent/guardian or nominated person

If the respondent is under 18, the Secretary of the relevant Complaints Hearing Committee shall notify the parent/guardian or nominated person of:-

- The date, time, and location of the hearing which must be scheduled within 21 days of the relevant Complaints Hearings Committee Chairperson receiving a copy of "the Reply", where possible
- The respondent's right to be accompanied to the hearing by his/her parent/guardian or nominated person

If the Complaints Investigation Committee wishes to add to its list of witnesses, it must notify the Respondent and the Secretary of the Complaints Hearings Committee (ideally in writing, for proof purposes) at least 24 hours before the appointed starting time of the Hearing.

8.23 CONDUCT OF THE HEARING AND RULES OF EVIDENCE

Attendance: The Hearing should be attended by:

- At least three members of the Hearings Committee (otherwise the meeting lacks the required quorum)
- Not more than two Representatives of the Complaints Investigations Committee, as the case may be
- The Respondent
 - ▷ who if an Individual Adult Member, may be accompanied by one Full Member of his/her Club/Unit
 - ▷ who if a Youth or Child Member may attend personally or be represented by his/her parents/guardians or nominated person
 - ▷ Where a Youth or Child Member attends personally he/she may be accompanied by his/her parent(s) or guardian(s) and by a Full Member of his/her Club
 - ▷ which if a Club, Committee or Council, shall be represented by a maximum of two of its Full Members
- Any Witnesses - it is the responsibility of the party calling a witness to make sure they attend

A complainant is not required to be part of the hearings process unless is invited to do so by the Hearings Committee for an item of clarification only.

Evidence: Subject to exceptions, evidence should be given orally. Letters and documents should not be treated as conclusive evidence of what they say if their contents are going to be the subject of a major dispute. Obviously, the person who created a document may give oral evidence that the document is accurate: if he/she does, then the document is considered to have the status of oral evidence. Essentially, the Hearings Committee should assess each item of evidence and where it is coming from and attach weight or importance to it accordingly. Thus, a letter from the Respondent's brother, stating that the Respondent "has never shouted a child in his/her life", would obviously be of little value to the Hearing.

Order of events: At the outset of the Hearing, the Complaints Investigation Committee should state the complaint made, read out any relevant extracts from 'the Disciplinary Report' concerned, and introduce any witnesses. The witnesses, if any, should then be asked to give their evidence.

Documents and video evidence should be presented where they are being relied on. Please note that copies should have been provided to the Respondent with the Notice of Disciplinary Action.

The Respondent or his/her Club/Unit Representative is allowed to cross-examine the witnesses after they have given their evidence. If any new facts are discussed in the cross-examination, the Complaints Investigation Committee may ask further questions of the witnesses arising from those new facts. After the Complaints Investigation Committee's witnesses, if any, have given their evidence, the Respondent's witnesses, if any, give theirs, and the same protocol applies as regards questioning.

The Complaints Hearings Committee may ask questions of the witnesses at any time during the Hearing, ideally just after they have been examined and cross-examined. If the Respondent is in the best position to prove a fact (e.g. his/her age) and does not do so, the Complaints Hearings Committee is entitled to consider that his/her reasons for not doing so are self-serving. Obviously if a good reason is available, that should be taken into account, but the Respondent may not sit silently and assume that his/her silence cannot be held against him/her.

When the evidence has been given, the Complaints Investigation Committee and the Respondent may each make a statement in their favour, and answer any questions put to them by the Hearings Committee. The Complaints Hearings Committee should keep Minutes or detailed notes of the Hearing.

Proposed Sanction: We have seen earlier that the Proposed Sanction is blacked out on the documentation sent to the Hearings Committee. The Proposed Sanction should not arise for discussion at all. Sometimes the Respondent might only have sought a hearing because he/she thought that the Proposed Sanction was too harsh and is seeking a lower sanction. In that case, he/she may argue that the incident was not grave enough to merit what was proposed. The Complaints Investigation Committee should not get drawn into a debate on whether the Proposed Sanction was fair or not, because it has no status once a hearing is sought. The Complaints Investigation Committee attends the Hearing in order to show

(a) that a breach occurred and

(b) how grave the breach was. It is for the Complaints Hearings Committee to decide what the sanction should be in a case of a proven breach and if the Proposed Sanction is brought up by the Respondent, the Complaints Investigation Committee should restrict itself to stating that the Proposed Sanction is irrelevant and that the Complaints Hearings Committee is empowered to impose such penalty as it sees fit (within Procedure) on the basis of the minimum applicable sanction and the gravity of the case. Always remember, the Hearing is not an "appeal" against the Proposed Sanction.

Legal Representation is not provided for in Rule. The Association is amateur in nature and disciplinary proceedings rarely have serious consequences, beyond the sanction imposed internally. In general, therefore, lawyers cannot attend Complaints Hearings, unless by coincidence a Full Member of the Respondent's Unit happens to be a lawyer.

8.24 CLARIFICATION FROM COMPLAINANT AFTER THE HEARING

In the course of a Hearing it may emerge from the evidence that the Complaints Hearings Committee requires further information from the Complainant. If so, the Complaints Hearings Committee, at its absolute discretion, may seek Clarification, after the Hearing. This must be sought in writing, and any Clarification so provided must also be in writing. It is important to note that in this circumstance, Clarification may only be sought or used if it may serve to mitigate the Sanction or exonerate the Respondent. This power is not one that would be required often. In general, any glaring ambiguities would have been the subject of clarification before the hearing. Nevertheless, the facility exists because the Hearing may throw up some unusual factor that had not been foreseen by the various parties concerned. It may be useful for the Complaints Hearings Committee to make a preliminary Decision, which would be kept private, and in the event that the Clarification received does not serve to mitigate or exonerate, the preliminary Decision can be made Final, without the need for further discussion. This saves time and also ensures that any 'negative' Clarification received does not affect the minds of the Committee Members in making a Final Decision.

8.25 DECISION BY THE COMPLAINTS HEARINGS COMMITTEE

At the conclusion of the hearing, the relevant Complaints Hearings Committee will retire to consider its decision as to what sanction (if any) is appropriate and proportionate in the circumstances. They may choose not to make a Decision on the occasion of the Hearing e.g. they may require more time to consider the evidence. Its role is to assess the evidence put before it in an impartial manner and to adjudicate on the disputed facts or interpretations in dispute. It is by discharging this function fairly and in good faith that a Complaints Hearings Committee provides the best service to the Association.

Decision on the Complaint: How far must the Complaints Investigation Committee go to prove their case? This is not a criminal trial, so the complaint does not have to be proved "beyond reasonable doubt". The standard set out in the Complaints Procedure is that the Complaints Hearings Committee must be satisfied that the complaint is "more likely to have occurred than not to have occurred."

The Complaints Hearings Committee may decide that what has occurred is not as serious as the complaint alleged but that an incident of lesser seriousness has occurred and may impose a sanction proportionate to the breach.

When giving their Decision, the Complaints Hearings Committee must state the Section under the Child Safeguarding Policy which the Decision was taken. Although it is not obligatory, it is sometimes a good practice to give brief reasons for a Decision. For example, if there is a dispute of fact, they might state why they believe one version and not the other, even if it is simply to say that they found one version to be more credible. Often the only evidence will be the Complainant and the Respondent's testimony. In that case, the test is for the Respondent to provide "compelling" evidence that the Complainant made a mistake. If the Respondent's evidence is not compelling, that would be the reason for simply finding the complaint as proven.

Decision on Sanction: If a breach is proved, the Complaints Hearings Committee must decide what sanction to impose. It is essential that the Hearings Committee treats the case on its own merits and does not adopt a policy of, for example, imposing severe sanctions in relation to particular offences in order to deter others from committing them.

The Complaints Hearings Committee should guard against being influenced by what the Proposed Sanction was, when deciding sanction. Once the Proposed Sanction is rejected it counts for nothing and the Complaints Hearings Committee cannot have regard to it when deciding sanction. That is why the Proposed Sanction is blacked out from the copy of the Notice of Disciplinary Action forwarded to the Complaints Hearings Committee. As noted earlier, sometimes the Proposed Sanction will come to the attention of the Complaints Hearings Committee by other means, and in those cases the members of the Hearings Committee must do their best to put it out of their minds.

In the event of a Breach not being proven, the Hearings Committee shall provide a reason for its decision.

A Complaints Hearings Committee may remit a matter for reprocessing, back to the Complaints Investigation Committee with or without recommendations as to procedures. This might occur when it becomes obvious that a particular procedure has been missed.

A decision shall be made by the majority of the members of the relevant Hearings Committee presiding over the Hearing.

The decision shall be recorded and shall be notified to the respondent.

8.26 NOTIFICATION AND RECORDING OF DECISION

The Secretary, on behalf of the Complaints Hearings Committee, shall notify the Complaints Investigation Committee and the Respondent in writing of the Decision. If a sanction is imposed, that shall be placed on the Respondent's record by the Secretary of the Complaints Investigation Committee, stating the Sanction under which the Decision was taken. If the sanction includes a suspension that is more than the minimum it is a requirement to provide a reason(s) which sets out the grounds for awarding suspensions greater than the minimum.

While a Complainant is not entitled to the detail of any sanction imposed, they must be informed by the County Secretary that the appropriate action has been taken with regard to their complaint.

8.27 APPEALS

A respondent who is aggrieved by the decision of the relevant Hearings Committee, may appeal the sanction only (save in exceptional circumstances) by serving notice in writing ("the Appeal") to the Secretary of the Child Safeguarding Appeals Panel within three days from the date and time of notification of the decision. Email cwpappeals@gaa.ie

The Standard Appeal Form (See Link here - <https://www.gaa.ie/the-gaa/child-safeguarding-and-protection/child-safeguarding-policy>) shall be signed by the appellant or in the case of a Club or Unit, by its Secretary and shall set out the grounds of appeal on sanction.

The Secretary of the Appeals Panel shall notify the Chairperson of the Appeals Panel that an Appeal has been lodged.

A right to an appeal on a sanction is that of the respondent and not that of the complainant.

8.28 WHERE AN APPEAL IS LODGED

On receiving an Appeal, the Secretary of the Appellate Hearings Committee, checks if the Appeal is in order in respect of:

- (i) Time - within three days from the date and time of notification of the decision OR - where the notification of the decision.
- (ii) Submission in duplicate (except where sent by e-mail).
- (iii) Signature (in Irish); If sent by e-mail, name in Irish.
- (iv) Grounds (statement as to what infringement is alleged to have been made and the specific Section alleged to have been infringed or misapplied).
- (v) Use of the Irish Language (in Gaeltacht or Bye-Laws requirement).

The Secretary also checks if the Appellant has requested an Oral Hearing.

If the Appeal is considered to be in order, the Secretary of the Appellate Hearings Committee sends a copy of the Appeal to the Secretary of the Unit against whose decision the Appeal is being made i.e. the Decision-Making Committee.

The Secretary of the Appellate Hearings Committee also sends a copy of the Appeal to the other party (parties) that was/were involved in the previous Hearing(s).

If the Appeal is considered to be out of order by the Secretary, and cannot be rectified, the Secretary, without the necessity of convening an 'in person' meeting, shall circulate the Appeal to the Complaints Investigation Committee to validate that opinion, and if it agrees its decision shall be notified to the Appellant and recorded in the Minutes.

8.28 APPOINTMENT OF THE APPEALS PANEL

The Associations shall have an Appeals Panel comprised of no more than ten individuals which include representatives from each of the Associations.

The Chairperson of the Appeals Panel shall appoint an Appeals Committee comprised of three members from the Appeals Panel to consider an appeal from a decision of the relevant Complaints Hearings Committee.

8.28 NOTIFICATION OF THE APPEAL AND THE APPEAL HEARING

An appeal shall take place within 21 days of the receipt of the appeal by the Secretary the Child Safeguarding Appeals Panel except in exceptional circumstances.

A copy of the Appeal, together with notification of the place, date and time of the Appeal Hearing shall be sent by the Secretary of the Appeals Committee to the respondent.

The appeal shall be on sanction only. No determination of fact by a relevant Complaints Investigation Committee shall be set aside unless shown to be manifestly incorrect.

The Appeals Committee appointed to hear the appeal shall not have been connected to the investigation or the complaint previously, and no member of the Appeal's Committee shall have been a member of the relevant Complaints Investigation Committee or the relevant Complaints Hearings Committee considering the original Report

8.29 APPEALS DECISION

A decision shall be made by the Appeals Committee on foot of the Appeal, and such decision shall be notified to the respondent and the relevant Complaints Hearing Committee who imposed the sanction.

In the event of the Appeal being upheld, the Appeals Committee shall substitute its own decision on sanction.

OVERVIEW OF THE CHILD FRIENDLY COMPLAINTS PROCESS

Stage	Child – led Child makes the complaint	Child & Adult- led Adult makes the complaint together with the child	Adult – led Adult makes a complaint on behalf of a child
Individual Initiative Dealing with everyday issues.			
- Minor issues/concerns. - Requests for actions to be taken. - Conversations about something that is worrying a child. - The stage before entering into the complaints process.	- The Children's Officer/ Coach/first point of contact/ has a conversation with the child. - Provide immediate response and or action. - Check whether the child and their parent/guardian is satisfied with the outcome. - If not, offer the complaints process in a way that seems safe and manageable.	- The Children's Officer/Coach /first point of contact Have a conversation with the adult and the child. - Provide immediate response and or action. - Check whether the child and their parent/guardian is satisfied with the outcome. - If not, offer the complaints process in a way that feels safe and manageable.	- The Children's Officer/ Coach /first point of contact. Have a conversation with the adult (and the child if appropriate). - Provide immediate response and or action. - Check whether the adult/child is satisfied with the outcome. - If not, offer the complaints process in a way that feels safe and manageable
Initial Assessment/Triaging by Children's Officer The Children's Officer shall carry out an initial assessment/triaging to determine initially whether the issue falls within the scope of this complaint's procedure and if so if the complaint can be managed through the informal or the formal procedure.			
Informal Complaints Process. Please note that the Children's Officer is responsible for managing this process. Informal Process is aimed at fast response and resolution. The detailed process depends on who is complaining and the advice and support needed. The process should focus on outcomes for the child. Potential Outcomes include the following: - Child does not wish to proceed - Complaint resolved - Complaint upheld, not upheld or upheld in part - Refer to Formal Process	- Ask the child whether they would like to nominate a parent/guardian/ member of the GAA (referred to as Nominated Person) to support them - Follow the guidance in the Informal process. - Give due weight to the views of the child and consider their best interests - Have an outcome discussion with the child and their parents/guardian to explain the outcomes reached. - The CO will keep a record of all stages: the complaint, any meetings, action(s) agreed in relation to the final resolution of the complaint. These details will be uploaded to Foireann. The purpose of the records, which will not include details of any discussion, is to provide evidence that the complaint was addressed and resolved.	- Follow the guidance in the Informal process. - Give due weight to the views of the child and consider their best interests. - Have an outcome discussion with the adult and child to explain the outcomes reached. - The CO will keep a record of all stages: the complaint, any meetings, action(s) agreed in relation to the final resolution of the complaint. These details will be uploaded to Foireann. The purpose of the records, which will not include details of any discussion, is to provide evidence that the complaint was addressed and resolved.	- Follow the Guidance in the Informal process. - Give due weight to the views of the child and consider their best interests. - Give decision to adult through normal process. - If the child wishes, have an outcome discussion with them to explain the outcomes reached. - The CO will keep a record of all stages: the complaint, any meetings, action(s) agreed in relation to the final resolution of the complaint. These details will be uploaded to Foireann. The purpose of the records, which will not include details of any discussion, is to provide evidence that the complaint was addressed and resolved.
Formal Process Refer to Section on page 69			

SANCTIONS

The below grid outlines the Offences and the categories of Level 1/Level 2/Level 3 for Proposed Sanctions for County/National Complaints Investigation Committee and the Sanction for a County/National Hearings Committee if an offence has been proven.

THE OFFENCES/BREACHES	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3
	Minimum Proposed or Imposed Sanction	Minimum Proposed or Imposed Sanction	Minimum Proposed or Imposed Sanction
Disrespect the rights & dignity of everyone for example. damaging the dignity of a person or a group of persons, in any way whatsoever, in particular due to his/her age, gender, ability, ethnic origin, cultural background or religion.	Verbal Warning	Suspension & *Completion of Safeguarding 1 Workshop	Suspension & Consider completion of Safeguarding 1 Workshop
Argue with players, coaches or match officials	Written Warning	Written Warning & Suspension & *Completion of Safeguarding 1 Workshop	Written Warning & Suspension & *Completion of Safeguarding 1 Workshop
Unsportsperson like behaviour; Fighting Never use foul language or provocative language/gestures towards any player, coach, official or supporter	Verbal Warning	Written Warning & Suspension & *Completion of Safeguarding 1 Workshop	Written Warning & Suspension & *Completion of Safeguarding 1 Workshop
Violence towards Gaelic Games Officials, coaches, players	Written Warning & Suspension	Suspension & *Completion of Safeguarding 1 Workshop	Suspension & *Completion of Safeguarding 1 Workshop
Bullying	Written Warning	Written Warning & *Completion of Safeguarding 1 Workshop	Suspension & *Completion of Safeguarding 1 Workshop
Intimidation or threats	Written Warning & Suspension	Suspension & *Completion of Safeguarding 1 Workshop	Suspension & *Completion of Safeguarding 1 Workshop
Alcohol or substance use at an Event	Written Warning	Suspension & *Completion of Safeguarding 1 Workshop	Suspension & *Completion of Safeguarding 1 Workshop
Other	At Discretion of the Committee	At Discretion of the Committee	At Discretion of the Committee

Notes:

1. The table below outlines the Suspension Period Definition based on the level of Offence.

SUSPENSION PERIOD DEFINITION	LEVEL 1 = 2 - 4 Weeks	LEVEL 2 = 4 - 8 Weeks	LEVEL 3 = Minimum 8 Weeks
If the respondent is a child, the suspension shall be halved			

2. In the event of the sanction being that of a warning the relevant Secretary shall issue the warning.
3. **Mitigating and Aggravating Factors**
 - i. A Hearings Committee shall consider mitigating and aggravating factors once a decision on culpability is reached but prior to the imposition of a sanction.
 - ii. A Hearings Committee shall consider the following factors:
 - a) Age
 - b) Cooperation
 - c) Prior warnings
 - d) Repeat offences
 - e) Apology made
 - f) Remorse
 - g) Gravity of the offence
 - h) Effect on the victim
 - i) Effect of sanction on the Respondent
 - j) Any other factor deemed relevant

**If the Respondent is a Child, then it shall be noted that a sanction on completing Safeguarding 1 Training shall not be applicable*

SECTION 9 - ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

AIM OF THE GAELIC GAMES ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

The Gaelic Games Associations aim to create a supportive, safe environment where any form of bullying behaviour is not acceptable. We adopt a whole organisation approach in addressing bullying and are committed to developing and implementing the relevant structures and training to deal with allegations of bullying behaviour.

Our Associations aim to ensure that children and young people have a positive, developmental and enjoyable experience of Gaelic Games in a safe environment in accordance with the Children's First Act 2015 and the Child (NI) Order 1995. Incidents of bullying behaviour are regarded as breaches of our Child Safeguarding Policy. We are committed to achieving an ethos of respect in order to maximise the potential of all our members when playing or participating in our Games.

Gaelic Games clubs have become increasingly aware of the issue of bullying and the detrimental impact it may have on those involved, i.e. victims, perpetrators, families, bystanders and the Association in general. It is vital therefore that all units of our Associations are equipped to deal with any instances of bullying and in doing so shall seek to counteract and prevent such unacceptable behaviour occurring or re-occurring.

DEFINING BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

Bullying can be defined as repeated aggression – whether it is verbal, psychological or physical – that is conducted by an individual or group against others. It is behaviour that is intentionally aggravating and intimidating and occurs mainly among children in social environments such as schools. It includes behaviours such as physical aggression, cyberbullying, damage to property, intimidation, isolation/exclusion, name calling, malicious gossip and extortion. Bullying can also take the form of abuse based on gender identity, sexual preference, race, ethnicity and religious factors. With developments in modern technology, children can also be the victims of non-contact bullying, via mobile phones, the internet and other personal devices.

While bullying can happen to any child, some may be more vulnerable. These include children with disabilities or special educational needs; those from ethnic minority and migrant groups; from the Traveller community; lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) children and those perceived to be LGBT; and children of minority religious faiths.

Source: Children First National Guidance

TYPES OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

Bullying Behaviour can take many forms, and it's important that all members are aware of the following which may take place in a sports context so we can better recognise and address issues when they arise:

DIRECT: where the behaviour is obvious and bystanders are aware of it, e.g. physical or verbal bullying

INDIRECT: where the behaviour is more difficult to recognise, e.g. intimidation or isolation

PHYSICAL: Physical bullying includes any physical action towards a person, regardless of whether it causes physical injury. This can be done to a person physically or their belongings.

VERBAL: Verbal bullying includes saying or writing something to or about someone that cause harm. This may include the tone used (shorting or sarcasm), name calling, gossiping or spreading lies, or making hurtful or belittling comments.

GESTURE: Bullying can also occur through non-verbal actions, such as facial expressions. Gestures may go unnoticed by others but carry meaning for those involved making this difficult to detect.

EXCLUSION: Exclusion can be subtle and may not always be obvious. Someone may appear to be included in a group but is regularly isolated during group activities.

CYBER: Cyberbullying involves the use of technology such as texting, private messaging, sharing photography or posting on social media. It's important to note that even a single message or post can constitute bullying if it causes harm to the person that is targeted. Cyber bullying can continue beyond a club environment, without adult awareness.

All types and forms of Bullying are unacceptable. Bullying behaviour may take place in any setting whether it is in schools, the home or in a sporting environment. Instances of Bullying in a sporting environment, as with many other forms of social interaction by young people, may be carried out by other children, younger or older, by children individually or as part of a group or by an adult or adults involved in the club. Indeed, a child may be suffering from Bullying outside of their participation in any of our Associations, but the actions suffered may still impinge upon the child's participation in Gaelic Games Club activities and games.

Bullying is a 'whole organisation matter' and as such requires a 'whole organisation' approach. This means that any anti-bullying approach should step beyond those children and young people and sports leaders who are directly involved and take account of everyone in the organisation or club, as they all have a part to play in countering bullying.

A whole organisation approach aims to create a supportive environment where it is not acceptable to bully and where the ethos of the organisation is that it is 'ok to tell' or to report instances of bullying. In creating this type of environment, the cycle of silence in relation to bullying can be broken. In the first instance, it is the responsibility of the Club whether it is through their Children's Officer, their volunteer coaches, or employees to deal with any instances of Bullying at Club level. All Clubs should develop and implement strategies both in relation to prevention and intervention in order to adequately address the issue of bullying.

Prevention strategies include an anti-bullying policy, awareness raising through training, codes of behaviour, peer mentoring, and health education programmes. Intervention strategies include mediation, the 'No Blame Approach', Parental/ Guardian involvement and disciplinary measures.

The more extreme forms of bullying behaviour would be regarded as physical or emotional abuse, and as such should be referred to the Club's Designated Liaison Person who in line with this Guidance may deal with the matter as a reported allegation of abuse. Each Club should have a clear policy on countering bullying behaviour which is known to members, and in particular to the underage players and their parents. As with all policies the Club's Anti-Bullying Policy should be made known to all and implemented in full and should form part of the Club Child Safeguarding Statement.

UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT OF BULLYING

Bullying often involves a combination of the abovementioned behaviours. While individual incidents may seem minor or isolated, together they can form a sustained and harmful pattern for the victim(s) involved. Being aware of the signs and types of bullying helps us create a safer and more inclusive environment for everyone involved in our Games.

IDENTIFYING BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

People who engage in bullying behaviour may display some of the following characteristics:

- o Deliberate hostility or aggression, that may appear without any clear reason
- o An imbalance of power where an individual or group asserts control or dominance over another
- o Gaining satisfaction from their bullying behaviour
- o Causing harm to the target of bullying behaviour
- o Repeating the harmful behaviour, directed at the same person or group over a period of time

PREVENTING BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

This Anti-Bullying Policy recognises the serious nature of bullying behaviour and the negative impact it can have on the lives on our members. The Gaelic Games Associations adopt a number of key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling this behaviour which include:

- A positive Gaelic Games culture and climate which-
 - ▷ is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
 - ▷ encourages members to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and promotes respectful relationships across the Gaelic Games community;
 - ▷ Effective leadership;
 - ▷ An Association-wide approach;
 - ▷ A shared understanding of what bullying behaviour is and its impact;
 - ▷ Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that build empathy, respect and resilience in members; and explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying
- Effective supervision and monitoring of players and members;
- Supports for coaches, officers and mentors;
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
- Ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy
- Implementation of this policy in addition to the Child Safeguarding Policy as a whole

The Gaelic Games Child Safeguarding Policy describes how all members of our Associations are expected to behave. To prevent bullying behaviour everyone must:

- o Be aware of the Child Safeguarding Policy and what it means; adults and young people must sign and adhere to the Child Safeguarding Policy every year (as part of their registration on Foireann)
- o Sign the Club Anti-Bullying Statement; a copy of the Anti-Bullying Policy is available to every member and should be posted where everyone can read it and refer to it if needed
- o Be responsible for helping to prevent and stop any bullying behaviour; it is the right thing to do to tell about bullying behaviour. There are adults in the club that will help where a young person is involved in, or is the target of, bullying behaviour

Young people in the club should know who their Club Children's Officer is and their contact details should be prominently displayed within the club house. By telling someone you trust about bullying behaviour, such as the children's officer or your coach, they can help it stop.

IMPACT OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

Bullying behaviour has far reaching and long-lasting effects on everyone involved – the target of the bullying, the perpetrator and even the bystanders. For the person being targeted, bullying can cause significant emotional distress, leading to low self-esteem.

The impact extends beyond the immediate victim. Bullying behaviour can damage the culture engrained in the Gaelic Games Associations, which is why addressing bullying early and promoting respect for one another is essential in reducing its harmful impact and creating safe, supportive environments for everyone.

DEALING WITH ALLEGATIONS OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR INVOLVING YOUNG PEOPLE

The Gaelic Games Associations take all allegations of bullying behaviour seriously, and the priority is always the welfare, safety and wellbeing of the young people involved.

The first step is to report the concern to a trusted adult. Those involved in the allegation (those exhibiting the alleged bullying behaviour and the target(s)) and their parents should be informed of the allegation as soon as is reasonably possible with the focus being on resolving the issue promptly and fairly, ensuring both parties are treated with fairness and respect. This process may involve discussions with parents/guardians, mediation, or in more serious cases and/or if the issue persists, formal investigation. It is also worth noting that severe cases of bullying may be reported to Tusla in the Republic of Ireland and to the Trusts in Northern Ireland.

IMMEDIATELY AN ISSUE HAPPENS (WHERE BULLYING BEHAVIOUR INVOLVES YOUNG PEOPLE ONLY):

The first step in addressing bullying behaviour is for the coach or responsible adult to speak with everyone involved as soon as they become aware of the situation. The aim of this conversation should be to establish a clear understanding of what occurred and to guide the conversation toward resolution. During this discussion, specific reference should be made to the Code of Conduct (Underage), Child Safeguarding Policy and the Anti-Bullying policy. All involved parties should be reminded of the standards of respectful and acceptable behaviour that is expected within the club.

The Gaelic Games Associations expects parents and all adults involved to support the immediate resolution process, as addressing issues promptly and effectively is in the best interests of all young people concerned.

WHERE BULLYING BEHAVIOUR INVOLVES AN ADULT:

If an allegation of bullying behaviour by an adult is made by a child, a responsible adult (i.e. another coach, Club Childrens Officer etc.) should approach the adult concerned and request to speak with them privately. The responsible adult should clearly outline the behaviour that was reported, explain its impact on others (particularly young people) and remind the individual of their responsibilities under The Gaelic Games Associations Anti-Bullying Policy, Child Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct (Underage).

The adult against whom the allegation has been made should be asked to cease any inappropriate or bullying behaviour immediately. If the individuals dispute the allegations or fail to modify their behaviour – the matter may be referred to the Club Children's Officer, see Section 8 Complaints Procedure.

The responsible adult should also follow up with the young person targeted by the behaviour and their parent/guardian, reassuring them that steps have been taken to address the issue.

OUTCOME OF DEALING WITH THE ISSUE

The Club Children's Officer and the parents/guardians should be informed that the appropriate action has been taken relating to the incident. It is also important to monitor the situation to ensure the behaviour does not reoccur. The club should remind all young people that they should speak to a trusted adult if they have worries or concerns about bullying behaviour.

USING THE NO BLAME APPROACH

The Club Children's Officer should use the No Blame approach (see below) to address the behaviour. This approach can help restore previously positive relationships and encourage the young people involved to reflect on their feelings, actions and the impact of bullying behaviour

If the No Blame Approach is not successful, the Club Childrens Officer can refer the matter to be dealt with under the County for formal resolution. The outcomes of this process may result in sanctions being applied to those involved.

The 'No Blame' approach allows the group involved in the bullying behaviour to think about the action that has taken place and the effect it has on the target. It allows those involved in carrying out the bullying behaviour an opportunity to redeem themselves.

STEPS INVOLVED IN THE 'NO BLAME' APPROACH:

1. Interview the target of the bullying – let the target explain his/her feelings about the bullying that has taken place. Explain the 'No Blame' approach and ask the target's permission to have his/her feelings shared within the group. Try asking the following questions:

- a. What type of bullying behaviour has taken place?
- b. How hurt is the target?
- c. Did the behaviour occur within his/her own peer group?
- d. Can they identify a number of people involved? – the person(s) carrying out the bullying behaviour and bystanders.

2. Meet separately with all involved – this should include the main instigator(s) of the bullying behaviour and bystanders. If relevant share the feelings of the target and ensure the severity of the incident(s) is understood by all. Explain what steps/controls may have to be introduced to prevent further incidents occurring.

3. Hand over responsibility to the group – ask the group for their ideas and solutions to overcome the bullying and to stop it from happening again. Note all positive responses. Use phrases such as 'if it were you?' to encourage a response.

4. Working with the group – when working with the group to resolve the bullying incident(s) try asking the following questions:

- a. How would you feel if this was happening to you?
- b. Would you like it done to you?
- c. What can you do to sort this out?
- d. What can we do to ensure that similar behaviour does not happen again within this group?

5. Let the young people implement their plan – now that the problem has been identified and solutions suggested, allow the group a certain amount of time, (e.g. one week), to implement their plan to resolve the situation and to stop it from reoccurring.

6. Follow up interviews – meet with each member of the group (individually or as a group) to discuss how the issues are being addressed, and to check if there have been other incidents of bullying behaviour. Highlight the importance of working together as a team and that bullying behaviour will not be tolerated within the Club.

(Adapted from: NYCI Let's Beat Bullying 2007)

HOW TO DEAL WITH CYBERBULLYING

Here are some tips for dealing with cyberbullying.

Do not reply

Do not rise to the bait and reply to messages from someone who's bullying you. They want to know that they've got you worried and upset. If you never reply, they will probably get bored and leave you alone.

What to do if you're being bullied

Report or block someone

You can block people from phoning or sending messages. You can also report them. Find out how to report or block people in the help section or frequently asked questions (FAQ) section of the relevant website or app.

Go offline

If you feel like social media is becoming too much, switch off. Think about how much time and energy you spend on social media and if you need to keep your account.

Inform your phone company or Internet Service Provider (ISP)

Contact your phone company, internet service provider or social media company. They can block texts, calls or online messages from certain people.

Change your contact details

Get a new username, a new email address and a new mobile number. Only give them to your closest friends.

Tell someone

If cyberbullying is bothering you, do not keep it to yourself. Talk to someone about it. Talking to other people about your problems

Tell the Gardaí/PSNI/POLICE

If the messages are extremely offensive and intending to cause harm, tell the Gardaí/PSNI. It's against the law to threaten people and the Gardaí/PSNI can put a stop to it. They are there to keep you safe. <https://www2.hse.ie/mental-health/life-situations-events/bullying-harassment/cyberbullying/>

For more information on how to watch out for and how to deal with Cyberbullying do a search on the following websites as they contain lots of really useful and easy to access resources to help you find answers to questions.

Barnardos	www.barnardos.ie
Cybersafekids	www.cybersafekids.ie
Spunout	www.spunout.ie
Watchyourspace	www.watchyourspace.ie
Webwise	www.webwise.ie

www.hotline.ie The hotline.ie service provides an anonymous facility for the public to report suspected illegal content encountered on the internet. Get in touch: [Hotline.ie](http://www.hotline.ie) / 1890 610710

Childline: Childline offers a phone service, a text support service (text 'Talk' to 50101) and an online chat service to help support young people. There is also a special text service for young people experiencing bullying (text 'Bully' to 50101). Get in touch: [childline.ie](http://www.childline.ie) / 1800 666666

ISPCC Shield Anti-Bullying Programme www.ispcc.ie/ispcc-shield-programme

ANTI-BULLYING STATEMENT

Anti-Bullying Policy

This policy applies to everyone involved in The Gaelic Games Associations, including players, parents, spectators, match officials, committee members, staff and volunteers.

Our Statement

Our Child Safeguarding Policy aims to ensure that children and young people have a positive, developmental and enjoyable experience of Gaelic games and other activities, and that they do so, as far as is practical, in a safe and enjoyable environment. Our Anti-Bullying policy aims to ensure that we create a supportive environment for all of our members where any form of bullying is unacceptable. Our associations adopt a whole organisational approach in addressing bullying and are committed to implementing structures and relevant training to deal with allegations of bullying. Incidents of bullying are regarded as serious breaches of our Child Safeguarding Policy and will be dealt with accordingly.

Definition

Bullying can be defined as repeated aggression – whether it is verbal, psychological or physical – that is conducted by an individual or group against others. It is behaviour that is intentionally aggravating and intimidating and occurs mainly among children in social environments such as schools. It includes behaviours such as physical aggression, cyberbullying, damage to property, intimidation, isolation/exclusion, name calling, malicious gossip and extortion. Bullying can also take the form of abuse based on gender identity, sexual preference, race, ethnicity and religious factors. With developments in modern technology, children can also be the victims of non-contact bullying, via mobile phones, the internet and other personal devices.

While bullying can happen to any child, some may be more vulnerable. These include children with disabilities or special educational needs; those from ethnic minority and migrant groups; from the Traveller community; lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) children and those perceived to be LGBT; and children of minority religious faiths.

Source: Children First National Guidance

The Gaelic Games Associations seeks to ensure that:

1. Incidents of bullying behaviour are addressed appropriately
2. all who are involved in our Associations are aware that bullying behaviour is not acceptable

Our Policy when Dealing with allegations of Bullying

If you are aware of or have a concern that bullying behaviour is happening within your club, you should report the matter to your Club Childrens Officer or a trusted adult. All members of The Gaelic Games Associations are valued, respected, equal and we all have a responsibility to work together to prevent bullying behaviour

Incidents of bullying behaviour are considered a breach of our Child Safeguarding Policy, and all such incidents will be dealt with accordingly.

Signed by Club Childrens Officer, Name of Club, Date and a footnote to say (valid for 1 year from date of signature)

Child Friendly Version:

Anti-Bullying Policy

This policy is for everyone involved in Gaelic games – that means, players, parents, coaches, match officials, fans, workers and volunteers – ALL OF US!

Anti-Bullying Statement

We want everyone who play our games to feel safe, happy and included. Anyone who takes part in our games has a right to take part, have fun and be treated with kindness and respect no matter who they are, where they come from, what they look like or what they believe.

Bullying is never okay, and we promise to do our best to stop bullying behaviour if it happens and to help anyone who feels they are being bullied.

What is Bullying?

Bullying is when someone on purpose keeps being mean or hurtful to another person, either in person or online. It can hurt someone's body, feelings, or friendships.

Bullying usually happens more than once or can be shared again and again online.

Bullying happens when one person or group has more power than another, and the person being bullied finds it hard to stop it or stand up for themselves.

Sometimes people might do or say something unkind once — that's not always bullying. But if someone posts one hurtful message on social media that lots of people can see or share, that can count as bullying, because it keeps causing harm.

What can we do about bullying?

We take bullying very seriously. If you feel you are being bullied, or if you see it happening:

Tell your Coach, Club Childrens Officer or any adult you trust.

We promise to listen, help, and take action to stop the bullying. We all have a part to play to make sure our club is a fun and safe place for everyone.

Signed by Club Childrens Officer, Name of Club, Date and a footnote to say (valid for 1 year from date of signature).

SECTION 10 - COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

COMMUNICATING OUR SAFEGUARDING PRACTICES TO CHILDREN/UNDERAGE PLAYERS

The Gaelic Games Associations is committed to ensuring that the children/underage players that participate in our activities know what to expect from us, our responsibilities to keep them safe from harm, and our responsibilities to report to the statutory authorities if we are concerned for their welfare. We will do this through a variety of measures. All consent forms and information leaflets will contain a QR code that will bring you to the GAA Safeguarding webpage that includes our Child Safeguarding Statement and Code of Conduct (Underage).

Safeguarding policies are crucial for creating a safe environment for children/underage players. This involves a two-way process of sharing information, ensuring everyone understands the procedures, and knowing how to report concerns.

Key elements and approaches to communicating safeguarding, as outlined by The Gaelic Games Associations, include:

Core Communication Objectives

- **Creating a Safe Environment:** Establishing clear messages about best practice standards to ensure the child is in a safe place
- **Accountability and Transparency:** Communicating the Associations responsibility for past actions and its commitment to current, rigorous safeguarding standards
- **Information Sharing:** Ensuring that all involved working with children/underage players know the procedures for reporting concerns, suspicions or allegations
- **Training:** Ensuring those with a role of responsibility are trained and are aware of their role and responsibilities.

Methods of Communication

- **Digital Platforms:** Using websites to display safeguarding statements, policies, and contact details for Designated Liaison Persons (DLPs)
- **Club House:** Using club noticeboards, to share updates and posters
- **Direct Engagement:** The Children's Officer to engage directly to children, parents, and guardians
- **Training and Education:** Providing safeguarding training and vetting to keep our volunteers updated

Key Documents and Standards

- **Child Safeguarding Policy & Child Safeguarding Statement** The core policy documents governing safeguarding in The Gaelic Games Associations

Target Audiences

- **Children/Young People:** Tailoring messages to be age-appropriate and enabling them to speak up
- **Parents/Guardians:** Providing information on how children/young people are protected, including in online environments
- **Coaches:** Ensuring they know their responsibilities and how to recognize and report risks
- **Children's Officers:** Ensuring the implementation of the Child Safeguarding Policy and promoting a child-centred ethos
- **Designated Liaison Persons:** Ensuring the reporting of allegations or concerns of abuse to Tusla (ROI) or Gateway Services Team at the Health and Social Care Trusts (NI) and/or An Garda Síochána/Police Service of Northern Ireland
- **Club Executive/ County Committee:** Ensuring the implementation of the Child Safeguarding Policy
- **National level:** Ensuring our statutory responsibilities are adhered to and the development of policy and disseminate to Clubs and Counties to safeguard children/underage players

Best practice in working in partnership and communicating means that:

- Clubs should provide visual information and contact details for your Club Children's Officer and Designated Liaison Person
- Child Safeguarding Statement shall be displayed
- Information about online safety and your procedures for ensuring children and young people are protected from online abuse while availing of your service
- Parents/guardians should be informed about safeguarding a regular basis
- Information should be provided in a format and language that can be easily understood by everyone, including children/young people, e.g. a leaflet with the main points of your declaration of guiding principles outlined in brief, newsletters, etc. These should be translated into other languages where appropriate
- An open-door policy is in place which allows parents/guardians and children/young people to raise a concern at any stage

SECTION 11 - IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING, REVIEW AND EVALUATION

INTRODUCTION

This National Child Safeguarding Implementation Plan outlines the key actions that will support the effective implementation, monitoring and continuous improvement of the Gaelic Games Child Safeguarding Policy at national level. It sets out clear goals, actions, responsibilities and review timelines to ensure that safeguarding practices remain robust, responsive and aligned with current legislation, best practice and organisational priorities.

The plan provides a structured framework for the National Children's Office, the National Child Safeguarding Committee and other relevant stakeholders to oversee the ongoing development and implementation of safeguarding measures. It includes actions relating to policy review, training and education, recruitment and vetting, complaints management, governance, risk assessment, compliance monitoring, and the promotion of children's voices in decision-making.

Recognising that safeguarding is an ongoing process rather than a one-time activity, this Implementation Plan supports a culture of continuous review, learning and accountability. Through regular monitoring, collaboration across the Association, and engagement with clubs, counties and provincial councils, The Gaelic Games Associations seeks to ensure that the highest standards of child safeguarding are maintained throughout the organisation.

The successful delivery of this plan will help ensure that every child participating in Gaelic Games can do so in an environment where they are respected, protected and supported to reach their full potential.

The Gaelic Games Associations Child Safeguarding Implementation Plan at National level.

Goal	Action	Responsibility	Status
Review and revise Child Safeguarding Statement	Bi-annual risk assessment completed at club, county and national level (or more frequently on the basis of changes in legislation or practice at organisational level)	National Children's Office – Child Safeguarding Committee Ard Chomhairle (National Level)	To be completed bi-annually
Review and revise Child Safeguarding Policies and Procedures	Review of overall Gaelic Games National Child Safeguarding Policy Disseminate throughout the organisation at county and club level Publication of revised policy on GAA Website Promotion of revised policy through GAA social media platforms Development of e-learning modules on sections of the policy through Tobar Integration of relevant aspects of policy into Safeguarding Training Levels 1,2 and 3.	National Children's Office and Child Safeguarding Committee	To be completed bi-annually
Ongoing implementation monitoring and review complaints mechanisms	Review Complaints procedure, including child friendly procedure Continue monitoring the Safeguarding Data Capture	National Child Safeguarding Committee and National Children's Office	To be completed annually
Appoint of Child Safeguarding Committee who shall have oversight of child safeguarding	Ongoing meetings of the National Child Safeguarding Committee Overview of activity from National Children's Office Case Management Subgroup addressing breaches of the policy and allegations of abuse (following action by statutory services)	National Children's Office and An t-Uachtarán	Every three years

Goal	Action	Responsibility	Status
Ongoing monitoring of recruitment and selection procedures	Provision of Safeguarding Training to all personnel working with under 18's (underage players) Vetting completed for all personnel working with under 18's Record of all disclosures retained at national office (for the appropriate period of time) Certificate of vetting distributed on Foireann to all individuals who are vetted. Child Safeguarding Policy Guidance on Recruitment and Selection. Safeguarding compliance audits and Child Safeguarding Committee temporary action	National Children's Office National Child Safeguarding Committee	Ongoing
Development of additional policies as required	Review of Anti-Bullying Statement and development of updated anti-bullying policy Collaboration with other relevant GAA Departments.	National Children's Office	To be completed annually
Disseminate revised policies to members and other stakeholders	Publication on GAA website Promotion of the policies through social media platforms Development of relevant webinars Delivery of associated training	National Children's Office in collaboration with relevant GAA Departments	To be completed annually
Ongoing monitoring of the safeguarding training policy	Development and delivery of Levels 1, 2 and 3 Safeguarding Training Delivery of Training for Trainers Programme Training Records with Safeguarding Workshop Certificates of completion – retained on Tobar	National Children's Office	To be completed annually
Ensure mechanisms are in place to monitor and review Child Safeguarding Policies and Procedures	On the work plan for the National Children's Office and the National Child Safeguarding Committee Bi-annual risk assessment Implementation Plan and review checklist	National Children's Office and the National Child Safeguarding Committee	To be completed bi-annually
Peer support and learning opportunities	Club Compass (recognition system of quality practice, including safeguarding and vetting procedures) – Club to Club informal networking opportunities	National Children's Office and relevant GAA Dept.	To be completed annually
Ensuring the voice of the child is continually integrated into the GAA	National Youth Forum Development of Child Friendly Safeguarding Statement	National Children's Office and Community & Health Dept.	Bi-annually
Appointment of key personnel	Appointment of National Child Safeguarding Committee Appointment of Named Person Roles are clarified and promoted in the Child Safeguarding Policy and through training	An t-Uachtarán The National Children's Officer is the Named Person	To be completed annually

The Gaelic Games Associations Child Safeguarding Implementation Plan Template at Club & County level.

Goal	Action	Responsibility	Status
Review and complete Child Safeguarding Statement	Bi-annual risk assessment completed at club, county and national level (or more frequently on the basis of changes in legislation or practice at organisational level)	Club Executive and County Committee and Children's Officers.	To be completed bi-annually
Ongoing implementation monitoring and review complaints mechanisms	Implement Complaints procedure, including child friendly procedure Continue monitoring the Safeguarding Data Capture	Children's Office & Club Executive/County Committee	Ongoing
Ongoing monitoring of recruitment and selection procedures	Completion of Safeguarding Training to all personnel working with under 18's (underage players) Vetting completed for all personnel working with under 18's Record of all disclosures (for the appropriate period of time) Child Safeguarding Policy Guidance on Recruitment and Selection. Safeguarding compliance records	Children's Office & Club Executive/County Committee	Ongoing
Disseminate revised policies to members and other stakeholders	Publication on GAA website Promotion of the policies through social media platforms	Children's Office & Club Executive/County Committee	Ongoing
Ensuring the voice of the child is continually integrated into the GAA	Promotion of a Child-Centred Ethos and Club & County level	Children's Office & Club Executive/County Committee	Ongoing
Appointment of key personnel	Appointment of Club and County DLPs Appointment of Club and County Children's Officers Appointment of Relevant Persons Roles are clarified and promoted in the Child Safeguarding Policy and through training	Club Executive and County Committee Children's Officer is the Relevant Person	Ongoing



SECTION 12 - APPENDICES

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- 1A) Legislation ROI
 - 1B) Legislation NI
 - 1C) Legislation Britain
 - 2A) Tusla Dedicated Contact Points
 - 2B) Health & Social Care Trusts NI Contact Details
 - 2C) The National LADO Network Britain
 - 3A) Coach and Mentor Application Form
 - 3B) Foirm Iarratais an Chóitseálaí agus an Mheantóra
 - 4A) Incident/Accident Reporting Form
 - 4B) Foirm Thuairiscithe Eachtraí & Timpistí
 - 5A) Code of Conduct (Underage) Declaration/Signatory
 - 5B) Dearbhú/Síniú and Chóid Iompair
 - 6) Child Safeguarding Structures in Independent, Amalgamated and Combined Teams
 - 7) Guidance for Interviewing Children for Complaints

SECTION 12 - APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1A. LEGISLATION (ROI)

Child Care Act 1991

This is the key piece of legislation which regulates childcare policy in Ireland. Under this Act, Tusla has a statutory responsibility to promote the welfare of children who are not receiving adequate care and protection. If it is found that a child is not receiving adequate care and protection, Tusla has a duty to take appropriate action to promote the welfare of the child. This may include supporting families in need of assistance in providing care and protection to their children. The Child Care Act also sets out the statutory framework for taking children into care, if necessary.

Children First Act 2015

The Children First Act 2015 is an important addition to the child welfare and protection system as it will help to ensure that child protection concerns are brought to the attention of Tusla without delay.

The Act provides for mandatory reporting of child welfare and protection concerns by key professionals; comprehensive risk assessment and planning for a strong organisational culture of safeguarding in all services provided to children; a provision for a register of non-compliance; and the statutory underpinning of the existing Children First Interdepartmental Implementation Group which promotes and oversees cross sectoral implementation and compliance with Children First.

Criminal Justice Act 2006

Section 176 of this Act created an offence of reckless endangerment of children. This offence may be committed by a person who has authority or control over a child or abuser who intentionally or recklessly endangers a child by: 1. Causing or permitting the child to be placed or left in a situation that creates a substantial risk to the child of being a victim of serious harm or sexual abuse; or 2. Failing to take reasonable steps to protect a child from such a risk while knowing that the child is in such a situation.

Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences Against Children & Vulnerable Persons) ACT 2012

Under this Act, it is a criminal offence to withhold information about a serious offence, including a sexual offence, against a person under 18 years or a vulnerable person. The offence arises where a person knows or believes that a specified offence has been committed against a child or vulnerable person and he or she has information which would help arrest, prosecute or convict another person for that offence, but fails without reasonable excuse to disclose that information, as soon as it is practicable to do so, to a member of An Garda Síochána. The provisions of the Withholding legislation are in addition to any reporting requirements under the Children First Act 2015.

Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017

This Act addresses the sexual exploitation of children and targets those who engage in this criminal activity. It creates offences relating to the obtaining or providing of children for the purposes of sexual exploitation. It also creates offences of the types of activity which may occur during the early stages of the predatory process prior to the actual exploitation of a child, for example, using modern technology to prey on children and making arrangements to meet with a child where the intention is to sexually exploit the child. The Act also recognises the existence of underage, consensual peer relationships where any sexual activity falls within strictly defined age limits and the relationship is not intimidatory or exploitative.

Domestic Violence Act 2018

The Act consolidates and strengthens protections for victims of domestic abuse. It introduces emergency barring orders, and coercive control as a criminal offence, providing enhanced court protections. It recognizes non-marital and non-cohabiting relationships. The Act expands legal tools to protect vulnerable adults from domestic abuse, including psychological and financial control.

The Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act 2020. (Cocos Law)

The nonconsensual sharing or threatened sharing of intimate images is a criminal offence, recognised as a form of sexual abuse. The Act also criminalises harmful online communications and provides enhanced protections for victims.

National Vetting Bureau (Children & Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012–2016

Under these Acts, it is compulsory for employers to obtain vetting disclosures in relation to anyone who is carrying out relevant work with children or vulnerable adults. The Acts create offences and penalties for persons who fail to comply with their provisions. Statutory obligations on employers in relation to Garda vetting requirements for persons working with children and vulnerable adults are set out in the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012–2016.

Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998

This Act protects you if you make a report of suspected child abuse to designated officers of Tusla, the Health Service Executive (HSE) or to members of the Gardaí as long as the report is made in good faith and is not malicious. Designated officers also include persons authorised by the Chief Executive Officer of Tusla to receive and acknowledge reports of mandated concerns about a child from mandated persons under the Children First Act 2015. This legal protection means that even if you report a case of suspected child abuse and it proves unfounded, a plaintiff who took an action would have to prove that you had not acted reasonably and in good faith in making the report. If you make a report in good faith and in the child's best interests, you may also be protected under common law by the defence of qualified privilege. You can find the full list of persons in Tusla and the HSE who are designated officers under the 1998 Act, on the website of each agency.

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

As a regulation, does not generally require transposition into Irish law (regulations have 'direct effect'), so organisations involved in data processing of any sort need to be aware the regulation addresses them directly in terms of the obligations it imposes. The GDPR emphasises transparency, security and accountability by data controllers and processors, while at the same time standardising and strengthening the right of European citizens to data privacy. Raising awareness among organisations and the public of the new law will be a combined effort of the Data Protection Commission (DPC), the Government, practitioners, and industry and professional representative bodies. The DPC has been proactively undertaking a wide range of initiatives to build awareness of the GDPR, in particular providing guidance to help organisations prepare for the new law which is in force as of 25th May 2018.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is a set of minimum standards that promotes the rights of the child worldwide. It contains many key Articles that have influenced national childcare and welfare legislation including the definition of a child as a person under 18 years of age. It specifically outlines non-discrimination rights and the rights of the child to express their opinion and to be heard. The Convention is a binding international treaty and all signatories are subject to monitoring on how they implement the Convention in their own Country.

Criminal Justice (Engagement of Children in Criminal Activity) Act 2024.

The law aims to protect vulnerable children from being drawn into criminal networks, such as those involved in drug dealing, smuggling, theft, and assault.

APPENDIX 1B – LEGISLATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND

AccessNI

This organisation was established by a joint programme between the Northern Ireland Office, DHSSPS, the Department of Education and the PSNI. It provides organisations registered with them with a central means of checking the suitability of an individual seeking work with children and young people by providing access to any information which might have a bearing on an individual's suitability. Its role is to complement each organisation's own safeguarding measures, and all organisations entrusted with the care or training of children and young people need to have robust recruitment and staff/volunteer selection procedures.

The Children (NI) Order 1995

Defines a Child as a person under 18 years of age and aims to ensure that the child's best interests are the paramount consideration in all decisions affecting the child. The Order sets out the law in relation to the responsibilities of parents and also the statutory duty of the state to protect and provide services for children. The five good practice principles of this legislation are: Paramountcy, Parental Responsibility, Prevention, Partnership and Protection.

The Criminal Justice (NI) Order 2008

This legislation has created public-protection sentences within an overall new sentencing framework for Northern Ireland. It removes the right to automatic 50% remission for prisoners who receive a custodial sentence. Arguably the most significant of the public-protection sentences is the new Indeterminate Sentence, which effectively means that the offenders who receive this sentence will have to satisfy new Parole Commissioners that their risk of causing serious harm has been reduced before they are released from prison to return to the community. The new legislation also places the Public Protection Arrangements on a statutory footing and provides for the courts to order the use of electronic tagging for offenders. Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 covers the Abuse of Trust making it illegal for a person who coaches, teaches, trains, supervises or instructs a person under 18, on a regular basis, in a sport to have a sexual relationship with any of those children.

The Criminal Law Act (NI) 1967

A key 'reporting' piece of legislation which places the responsibility on everyone to report offences or to forward information to the police by emphasising the, 'duty of every other person, who knows or believes, (a) that the offence or some other arrestable offences has been committed: and (b) that he has information, which is likely to secure, or to be material assistance in securing, the apprehension, prosecution or conviction of any person for that offence.'

Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (2017)

It provides the overarching policy framework for safeguarding children and young people in the statutory, private, independent, community, voluntary and faith sectors. It outlines how communities, organisations and individuals must work both individually and in partnership to ensure children and young people are safeguarded as effectively as possible.

Family Homes and Domestic Violence (Northern Ireland) Order 1998

Provides civil remedies to protect vulnerable adults from domestic abuse and secure safe housing. It enables courts to issue non-molestation and occupation orders and includes powers of arrest and exclusion zones. It serves to protect victims from abuse within family or intimate relationships.

Keeping Children Safe: Our Duty to Care 2017 (NI)

Sets out the principles of best practice and how to promote the rights of children within the community and voluntary sector. It provides advice on developing safe recruitment practices and strategies on developing safe management practice and policies within organisations while clearly stating the principle that child safety is paramount. It also suggests ways that organisations could raise awareness among their staff and volunteers about child abuse and how staff should respond to accidents or complaints and alleged or suspected abuse.

Police Act (Known as Part 5 of the Police Act 1996)

This piece of legislation has now been enacted thus enabling the PSNI to disclose what is termed 'soft intelligence', i.e. non-conviction information, when they deem it appropriate. This coincided with the establishment of Access NI, the equivalent to the Criminal Records Bureau in England and Wales.

Protection of Freedoms Act 2012

From September 2012 there have been some changes to safeguarding arrangements in relation to vetting in England, Wales and Northern Ireland; these have arisen from the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, which amends the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order. The Act includes a new and more limited definition of regulated activity. This new definition is intended to reduce the number and scope of positions that are eligible for a criminal record check with Barred List information.

Rehabilitation of Offenders (Exceptions) Order (NI) 1979

Ordinarily, due to the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Northern Ireland) Order 1978, an employer is only entitled to request an individual's unspent record. However, exceptions are made under this legislation, listing the circumstances in which an employer may apply for a full criminal record disclosure.

Safeguarding Guidance for Children & Young People in Sport (2019)

Safeguarding Guidance published by Sport Ireland and Sport NI developed to assist National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs) and clubs in meeting their child safeguarding and child protection responsibilities. It addresses issues relating to the roles and responsibilities of all involved in children's sport and underpins the importance of policies and procedures in providing quality leadership for children. The Code outlines principles of good practice and child protection policy and procedures. The joint Code of Conduct (Underage), published by The Gaelic Games Associations, incorporates the basic principles of the Safeguarding Guidance document and is reflected in the Gaelic Games Child Safeguarding Training Programme.

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007

Amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 provides the legislative framework for the establishment of a Disclosure and Barring Service and requirements relating to individuals who work with children and vulnerable adults. This legislation defines 'regulated activity' with children and prevents persons on barred lists from engaging in regulated activity.

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 personal details including name(s), address(es), date of birth, National Insurance Number etc. This process is sometimes referred to as 'signing the sex offender's register'. The period of time over which offenders are required to notify is determined by the sentence handed down by the courts.

The Sexual Offences (NI) Order 2008

The Order makes provision about sexual offences including the offences of rape, sexual assault and causing a person to engage in sexual activity without consent. It specifically makes provision relating to sexual offences against children and about sexual offences against a person with a mental disorder. The Sexual Offences Order sees the creation of new offences and increased tariffs for those who harm children. Part 2 of the act was implemented in 2003 which focused on the registration of those convicted and their management. This Order modifies the Sex Offenders Act 1997 to provide for a court to have the power to make a restraining order when sentencing a sex offender.

The Sexual Offences Act 2003 (NI)

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 including name(s), address(es), date of birth, National Insurance Number etc. This process is sometimes referred to as 'signing the sex offender's register' and offenders are required to notify for periods which are determined by the sentence handed down by the Courts.

Data Protection Act (NI) 2018

The Act ensures lawful and secure handling of safeguarding information, protecting privacy while enabling appropriate sharing. It implements UK GDPR standards. It regulates the processing of personal and sensitive data. It includes provisions for law enforcement and public interest exemptions.

APPENDIX 1C – LEGISLATION IN BRITAIN

Concerned about a child being abused:

- **For advice contact:** The relevant GGCB Designated Liaison Officer or the NSPCC – 0808 800 5000 or email: help@NSPCC.org.uk
- **Contacts:**

If the child is in immediate danger call the police on 999 or 101 or

Children's Social Care Team at the child's Local Authority. Local Authorities have a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), which forms part of the Safeguarding Children's Partnership. To find details of local Safeguarding Children's Partnerships visit – <https://www.gov.uk/report-child-abuse>

Laws, Act and Regulations in the UK.

Children Act 2004 (amendment of the Children Act 1989)

Main principles of the Children Act are as follows:

- The overall wellbeing of a children will always be the priority
- Any delay to activities or investigations is considered to be detrimental to the welfare of a child
- Court proceedings, and related activities should only take place if they are beneficial to the child's wellbeing
- Duty is placed on local authorities to be accountable for the delivery of regional child protection services. They must also co-operate in the promotion of a child's welfare, making arrangements to safeguard them at all times

Other legislation to be referenced when safeguarding children includes:

- The United Nations Convention on the rights of the child 1989 – This is a multinational agreement signed by all UN members promising to protect children's rights. It explains who children are, all their rights and the responsibilities of Governments
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006) – This was passed to prevent people who are deemed unsuitable to work with children and vulnerable adults from gaining access to them
- Protection of Children Act 1978 – This prevents inappropriate photographs or images of children from being taken or shared

APPENDIX 2A - TUSLA DEDICATED CONTACT POINTS

If you have concerns about the protection or welfare of a child, you should contact your local social work office.

Please see link to the Duty Social Work Teams/Dedicated Contact Points <https://www.tusla.ie/get-in-touch/duty-social-work-teams/>

Carlow	Galway	Limerick	Offaly	Wexford
Cavan	Kerry	Longford	Roscommon	Wicklow
Clare	Kildare	Louth	Sligo	
Cork	Kilkenny	Mayo	Tipperary	
Donegal	Laois	Meath	Waterford	
Dublin	Leitrim	Monaghan	Westmeath	

APPENDIX 2B - HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE TRUSTS NI CONTACT DETAILS

Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland/Gateway Teams If you have concerns about a child you must seek advice from professionals. If you think a child or young person under the age of 18 years is being abused or neglected, please contact the Gateway team in your local Health and Social Care Trust (contact numbers below). Do this as soon as you can and before the situation gets any worse. If you believe that a child or young person is at immediate risk, this should be reported without delay to the police service as a 999 emergency and contact should also be made to your local Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust:

Northern Ireland - Health and Social Care Trust contact information (ctrl + click to access website)

<u>Belfast Health and Social Care Trust</u> (covering local council areas of Belfast and Castlereagh)	<u>South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust</u> (covering local council areas of Newtownards, Down, North Down and Lisburn)	<u>Northern Health and Social Care Trust</u> (covering local council areas of Coleraine, Moyle, Larne, Antrim, Carrickfergus, Newtownabbey, Ballymoney, Ballymena, Magherafelt and Cookstown)	<u>Southern Health and Social Care Trust</u> (covering local council areas of Dungannon, Armagh, Craigavon, Banbridge and Newry and Mourne)	<u>Western Health and Social Care Trust</u> (covering local council areas of Derry, Limavady, Strabane, Omagh, and Fermanagh)
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APPENDIX 2C - THE NATIONAL LADO NETWORK (NLN)

All LADOs (or designated officers) across England

The role of the LADO (or Designated Officer) is set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) (Chapter 2 Paragraph 4) and is governed by the Local Authorities duties under section 11 of the Children Act 2004.

The Officer LADO is responsible for managing allegations against adults who work with children. This involves working with police, children's social care, employers and other involved professionals. The LADO does not conduct investigations directly, but rather oversees and directs them to ensure thoroughness, timeliness and fairness. Ordinarily, to ensure impartiality, the LADO will not have direct contact with the adult against who the allegation has been made, or the family of the child/children involved but will, as part of their role ensure that these have information regarding outcomes.

APPENDIX 3A - COACH AND MENTOR APPLICATION FORM

Surname: _____ Forename: _____

Previous name (if any): _____

Address: _____

Mobile number: _____

Email: _____

Role applied for: _____

Club: _____

Child Safeguarding Vetting, Training and Coaching Qualification

Have you completed the vetting process in accordance with Association procedures?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Have you attended Child Safeguarding Training relevant to your role as approved by your Association?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Do you possess a coaching qualification as required by your Association for your role?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Please outline why you wish to become involved in our Club?

Please give details of any previous involvement in sports including coaching experience and relevant qualifications:

Do you suffer from any illness or medical condition which may at times affect your ability to work with young people in this role?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If so, please give details:

Have you ever been asked to terminate your involvement in any Sporting or Community Organisation? (If yes we will contact you in confidence):

Yes ☐ No ☐

Please supply the name, address, and a contact telephone number of two people (non-relative), who from personal knowledge are willing to support your application. If you have a previous involvement in a sports organisation one of these two named person (below) should be from that sports organisation

Name 1: _____

Address: _____

Tel No: _____

Professional relationship with Referee _____

Name 2: _____

Address: _____ Tel No: _____

Professional relationship with Referee _____

Declaration:

- I confirm that nothing within my personal or professional background may deem me unsuitable for a position which involves working with children/young people in sport.
- I declare that the above information is true and agree abide by The Child Safeguarding Policy.
- I agree to abide by the Rules of the Association.

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____

This Form should be returned to and retained by the Club Secretary or Registrar.

FOR CLUB USE ONLY

Checked by phone ☐ Visit ☐ Letter ☐

Checked by: _____

Signed: _____

APPENDIX 3B – FOIRM IARRATAIS AN CHÓITSEÁLAÍ AGUS AN MHEANTÓRA

Sloinne: _____ Ainm Baiste: _____

Ainmneacha eile roimh seo (más ann dóibh): _____

Seoladh: _____

Fón Póca: _____

Ríomhphost: _____

An ról ar chuir tú siteach air: _____

Club: _____

Cáilíochtaí Cosanta Leanaí, Grinnfhiosrúcháin, Traenála agus Cóitseála

Ar chríochnaigh tú an próiseas grinnfhiosrúcháin faoi réir nósanna imeachta an Chumainn?

Chríochnaigh ☐

Níor chríochnaigh ☐

An ndearna tú an traenáil chuí chosanta leanaí don ról mar atá faofa ag an gCumann?

Rinne ☐

Ní Dhearna ☐

An bhfuil cáilíocht chuí cóitseála agat do do ról de réir mar atá ag teastáil ón gCumann?

Tá ☐

Níl ☐

Mínigh cén fáth ar mhaith leat a bheith páirteach lenár gClub?

Má bhí aon bhaint agat le heagrais spóirt eile roimhe seo, ina n-áirítear taithí cóitseála agus cáilíochtaí eile cuí, luaigh anseo iad:

An bhfuil aon tinneas nó fadhb sláinte ort a d'fhéadfadh cur isteach ar do chumas dul i mbun oibre le daoine óga sa ról seo?

Tá ☐

Níl ☐

Má tá, mínigh anseo:

Ar iarradh ort riamh deireadh a chur leis an mbaint a bhí agat le heagraíocht spórtúil nó pobail? (Má d'iarradh, déanfaidh muid teagmháil leat faoi rún):

Tá ☐

Níl ☐

Ar iarradh ort riamh deireadh a chur leis an mbaint a bhí agat le heagraíocht spórtúil nó pobail? (Má d'iarradh, déanfaidh muid teagmháil leat faoi rún):

Tá ☐

Níl ☐

Tabhair ainm, seoladh baile agus uimhir fóin do bheirt (nach bhfuil gaolta leat), a bheadh sásta tacú le d'iarratas. Má bhí tú bainteach le heagraíochtaí eile spóirt roimhe seo ba chóir go mbeadh duine amháin den bheirt bainteach leis an eagraíocht spóirt sin.

Ainm 1: _____

Seoladh: _____

Uimhir Fóin: _____

Gaol proifisiúnta leis an Moltóir _____

Ainm 2: _____

Seoladh: _____

Uimhir Fóin: _____

Gaol proifisiúnta leis an Moltóir _____

Deimhniú:

- Deimhním nach bhfuil mé, agus nach raibh mé riamh, bainteach le rud ar bith go pearsanta nó go proifisiúnta a dhéanadh mí-oiriúnach mé do ról ar bith ina n-áirítear oibriú le daoine óga i spórt.
- Deimhním go bhfuil an t-eolas thuas fíor agus deimhním go gcloífidh mé leis an gCód Iompair (faoi aois) maidir le hoibriú le himreoirí faoi aois.
- Deimhním go gcloífidh mé le Rialacha an Chumainn.

Sínithe: _____

Dáta: _____

Ní mór an fhoirm seo a chur ar ais chuig Rúnaí an Chlub nó chuig Cláraitheoir agus ní mór dó/dí í a choinneáil in áit sábháilte.

LE HÚSÁID AG AN gCLUB AMHÁIN

Deimhnithe ar an bhFón ☐

Cuairt ☐

Litir ☐

Deimhnithe ag: _____

Sínithe: _____

APPENDIX 4A - INCIDENT/ACCIDENT REPORTING FORM

This form should be used for each occasion of

- Accidental fall/injury
- Aggressive behaviour
- Verbal abuse
- Destruction of equipment or property (or threats of)
- Physical assault (or threats of)

Name of person completing this form:
Role/Position of person completing this form:
Signature of person completing this form:
Date:

INCIDENT/ACCIDENT

Date and time of incident (incident/accident):
Name/s of person/s involved in the incident, including their roles and their Clubs/Associations:
What activity was taking place when the incident occurred?
Description of incident:
What action, if any, did Club personnel take during or after the incident?
Witnesses to the incident/accident (include contact details if available):

REPORTING OF THE INCIDENT TO CLUB/ASSOCIATION

Incident Reported to:	Date:
How was the incident/accident reported? e.g. using this form, in person, email, phone.	

FOLLOW-UP ACTION

Signed	Date:
--------	-------

Description of actions to be taken:

CLUB/ASSOCIATION NOTES ONLY

APPENDIX 4B – FOIRM THUAIRISCITHE EACHTRAÍ & TIMPISTÍ

BA CHÓIR AN FHOIRM SEO A ÚSÁID I gCÁS NA n-EACHTRAÍ SEO A LEANAS:

- Titim/Gortú a tharlaíonn trí thimpiste
- Iompar trodach
- Íde Béil
- Scrios trealaimh nó maoine (nó bagairtí ar a leithéid)
- Ionsaí fisiciúil (nó bagairtí ar a leithéid)

Ainm an duine atá ag líonadh isteach na foirme seo:
Ról/Post an duine atá ag líonadh isteach na foirme seo:
Síniú an duine atá ag líonadh isteach na foirme seo:
Dáta:

EACHTRA/TIMPISTE

Dáta agus am na heachtra (eachtra/timpiste):
Ainm/ainmneacha an duine/na ndaoine a bhí páirteach sa timpiste chomh maith lena gcuid rólanna agus a gcuid Clubanna/Cumann:
Cén cineál gníomhaíochta a bhí ar bun nuair a tharla an timpiste?
Déan cur síos ar an eachtra:
Cén gníomh, má rinneadh ceann ar bith, a rinne pearsanra de chuid an Chlub le linn, nó, i ndiaidh na heachtra?
Finnéithe ar an eachtra/timpiste (luaigh sonraí teagmhála más ann dóibh):

AN EACHTRA A THUAIRISCIÚ DON CHLUB/CHUMANN

Tuairiscíodh an eachtra do:	Dáta:
Cén chaoi ar tuairiscíodh an eachtra/timpiste? Mar shampla, tríd an bhfoirm seo, go pearsanta, le ríomhphost, ar an bhfón.	

GNÍOMH IAR-EACHTRA/IAR-THIMPISTE

Sínithe:	Dáta:
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Déan cur síos ar na gníomhartha is gá a thógáil:

NÓTAÍ CLUB/CUMAINN AMHÁIN

APPENDIX 5A - CODE OF CONDUCT DECLARATION/SIGNATORY

This Code of Conduct (Underage) addresses the minimum levels of behaviour, practice and conduct required from our Young Players, Coaches, Officials, Managers, Supporters, Referees, Parents/Guardians and Clubs.

<https://www.gaa.ie/the-gaa/child-safeguarding-and-protection/child-safeguarding-policy>

DECLARATION

Name: _____

I acknowledge that I have read, understand and accept the Code of Conduct (Underage) and I agree to be bound by the principles set out in the Code when participating, playing or attending our Gaelic Games.

Signed: _____
(Underage Player)

Date: _____

Signed: _____
(Parent/Guardian of underage player)

Date: _____

Signed: _____
(Coach/Referee/Club Official etc)

Date: _____

APPENDIX 5B - DEARBHÚ/SÍNIÚ AN CHÓID IOMPAIR

Téann an Cód Iompair seo i ngleic leis na híosleibhéil iompair agus chleachtais a bhfuil muid ag súil leo ónár gcuid Imreoirí Óga, Cóitseálaithe, Oifigigh, Bainisteoirí, Lucht Leanta, Réiteoirí, Tuismitheoirí/ Caomhnóirí agus Clubanna.

<https://www.gaa.ie/the-gaa/child-safeguarding-and-protection/child-safeguarding-policy>

DEIMHNIÚ

Ainm: _____

Dearbhaím go bhfuil an Cód Iompair (faoi aois) léite agam, go dtuigim a bhfuil ann agus go nglacaim leis. Tá mé sásta feidhmiú de réir na bprionsabal atá leagtha amach sa Chód agus mé ag glacadh páirte, ag imirt nó ag freastal ar Chluichí Gaelacha.

Sínithe: _____

(Imreoir faoi aois)

Dáta: _____

Sínithe: _____

Tuismitheoir/Caomhnóir an imreora faoi aois)

Dáta: _____

Sínithe: _____

(Cóitseálaí/Réiteoir/Oifigeach Club srl.)

Dáta: _____

APPENDIX 6 - CHILD SAFEGUARDING STRUCTURES IN INDEPENDENT, AMALGAMATED AND COMBINED TEAMS

In the GAA, LGFA and Camogie provision is made to enable Clubs who are unable to field a team due to the lack of players at a specified age group to join with another Club/Clubs and for their players to play with another team. In accordance with the rules of each Association permission must be sought and granted for this to happen. This section of the Guidance outlines Child Safeguarding Guidance for these Independent, Combined and Amalgamated Teams.

CHILD SAFEGUARDING GUIDANCE FOR INDEPENDENT/ AMALGAMATED/COMBINED TEAMS?

The provisions of the Child Safeguarding Policy apply to all Clubs and teams and in this instance to Independent Teams.

Children's Officer - Each Club Executive must agree to nominate and ratify one of the Club Children's Officers to act as Children's Officer for the Independent Team from AGM to AGM. Club Executives may agree to put arrangements in place to change or rotate this appointment as appropriate as long as it is ratified annually by each Club Executives. The Clubs may decide to have the same individual or the same Club continue holding this position if it suits the Clubs as long as that decision is both taken and ratified annually.

Designated Liaison Person - Similarly, each Club Executive must agree to nominate and ratify one of the Club Designated Liaison Persons (DLP) for the Independent Team. (The DLP is not required to sit on the joint sub-committee).

WHAT IF THERE IS AN ALLEGED BREACH OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT (UNDERAGE)?

In the event of an alleged breach of the Code of Conduct (Underage) the appointed Children's Officer for the Independent/ Amalgamated/ Combined Team and/or the person alleging the breach of the Code must make such concerns known to the Club Executive(s) of that member(s).

In the event of an alleged breach of the Code of Conduct (Underage) at an Independent team activity or game by a non-member of the Association, the Club to which the alleged breach is reported shall deal with the matter if appropriate in accordance with the provisions of the Code of Conduct (Underage).

APPENDIX 7 – GUIDANCE FOR INTERVIEWING AND CROSS-EXAMINING CHILDREN/ VULNERABLE PERSON’S DEFENDANTS/WITNESSES

Guidance for interviewing and cross-examining children/vulnerable person’s defendants/witnesses		
In the event of a hearing involving a child U18 or a vulnerable person, the chairperson of the hearing committee has responsibilities to ensure the correct process is followed to ensure fair procedures to all parties. Extra conditions must be put in place to best collect the child or vulnerable persons input to the hearing. For the purpose of this process, the stages are broken into: Pre-Hearing, The Hearing Environment, Questioning, Cross examining.		
	ACTIONS	COMPLETE
	Pre-Hearing & Environment	
Pre-Hearing & Environment	Is the input of the child/vulnerable person essential to hearing proceeding.	
	Ensure written consent and presence of a parent/guardian of the child/ vulnerable person to participate in the hearing and inform them as to what it is you are doing, and why, and what they can expect. (Template Consent Form)	
	Will the child/vulnerable person’s interview be face to face/ virtually.	
	Confirm the time, date and venue of the hearing/interview, being mindful to set an appropriate time for the child/vulnerable person, and who will be present.	
	Prepare a statement outlining the purpose of the hearing and provide it to the parents/legal guardians/appropriate adult of the child/vulnerable person.	
	Where the hearing is in person a specific waiting room for the child/vulnerable person and their parent legal guardians/appropriate adult should be made available.	
	Where the hearing input is virtual, ensure that the children’s officer is present with the child/vulnerable person and their parent/legal guardian.	
	Set up the appropriate Microsoft teams video link and share with the parent/ legal guardian.	
	Where the input is face to face, adapt the environment of the hearing room to be child friendly.	
	When scheduling witness input, Avoid the potential for the witnesses to overlap and meet one another.	
	Ensure the minimum number of required adults are present for the interview. <i>(Best practice would suggest that no more than 5 are present).</i>	

	Questioning & Cross Examining	
Questioning & Cross Examining	The interviewers should build a rapport with the child/vulnerable person by introducing themselves and outlining their role in the process.	
	The interviewer may develop this further by asking the child/vulnerable person some personal questions like, do you play Gaelic games, who do you play with, what position, do you play in school, what class/year are you in.	
	Once settled the chairperson should outline the process and explain that a break can be taken at any time.	
	The chairperson should check that the child/vulnerable person understands the process. Where age appropriate, the chairperson should seek assent from the child/vulnerable person before proceeding with the process.	
	The questions should be open ended with the use of age appropriate language.	
	Example of questions are “Tell me about”, “What do you remember”, “Tell me more about”, “What happened next”.	
	Give the child/Vulnerable person sufficient time to answer the question. Allow the intermediary (parent/legal guardian/children’s officer) provide clarification or rephrase the question for the child/vulnerable person if required.	
	Summarise the child’s/vulnerable persons answer and check that it has been interpreted correctly, allowing them to correct or expand on it.	
	Cross examination of those Child/Vulnerable Person should only take place by addressing the questions to the Parent/Guardian/Support Person/CO or in advance via written form	
	Where appropriate, the Child/Vulnerable Person may opt to be in a different room or place and join the hearing/interview via MS Teams. If this is the preferred option, the Children’s Officer for the respective Unit conducting the hearing/interview shall be present with the U18 and their Parent/Guardian.	
Questioning & Cross Examining	Allow the opposing party submit questions to cross examine the child/vulnerable person. Questions should not be asked directly, instead through the hearings chairperson or to the intermediary who will relay the question to the child/vulnerable person.	
	Allow the child/vulnerable person to provide any further information they think is important.	
	Inform the child/vulnerable person that the process is nearly over, outline the next steps, explaining that there may be a few more questions to be asked after a short break.	
	Ensure questions are respectful and contain age appropriate language.	
	Once complete, and the chairperson is satisfied that opposing party has received sufficient opportunity to cross examine the child/vulnerable person, he/she should thank the child/vulnerable person for their participation.	
	The child/vulnerable person should be advised to leave the hearing at this point, if further clarification is required and arises during the remaining hearing, the chairperson may seek the information from the child/vulnerable person at a later point, virtually if required.	
	Where possible avoid any delays and keep the questioning to 30 minutes. If the process takes longer, ensure to take sufficient movement breaks.	
	Once the child/vulnerable person has finished, proceed with the hearing under the normal procedures.	

	Positive Experience	
	Ensure a positive experience by: · Using child-friendly age-appropriate language and check for understanding · Ensure you are welcoming and put the child/vulnerable person and their parent/guardian at ease · Arranging seating in a child friendly layout · Clearly introduce who you are to both the parent/guardian and the child/vulnerable person · Explain the purpose of the hearing and what the child/vulnerable person and parent/guardian can expect · Let the child know that she or he is free to take a break at any point during the hearing. The Chairperson should regularly check in with the child/vulnerable person during the hearing/interview · Ensure everyone is respectful of each other · Use open ended or indirect/unambiguous questions, for example, what do you remember from, tell me about, tell me more about that, what happened next · Questions or Clarifications for the child/vulnerable person may be directed to the adult who will then ask the child/vulnerable person · Take time in the conversation to summarise what has been discussed · Repeating back to the child what you have understood and give them an opportunity to correct any misunderstandings · Give them an opportunity to tell you anything else that they feel is important · Confirm next steps · Check in and ask how they are feeling before you conclude · Thank them for their attendance and participation · Conclude your findings and issue the report to the relevant parties as soon as is possible · Avoid making assumptions about what children/vulnerable persons are thinking or feeling · Avoid showing any frustration during the hearing. · Avoid interrupting a child who is in free narrative or answering a question · Be Alert and Respond appropriately to signs of distress, taking breaks where appropriate · Avoid the use of closed questions that allow the child only to answer "Yes" or "No."	







WHERE WE ALL BELONG