



SECTION  
**11**

## DEALING WITH ALLEGATIONS OR CONCERNS OF ABUSE

THIS GUIDANCE FORMS PART OF  
THE CODE OF BEHAVIOUR (UNDERAGE) &  
CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY STATEMENT



**INTERNATIONAL SAFEGUARDING**

Feabhra 2024

**In more than 50 Countries across the world the Gaelic Athletic Association, the Ladies Gaelic Football Association, the Camogie Association, GAA Handball Ireland and the GAA Rounders engage with hundreds of thousands of young people each week in the promotion and delivery of our Gaelic Games and we must therefore, amongst the many responsibilities we face, be alert and be prepared to the possibility that children with whom we are working may be suffering from abuse or neglect.**

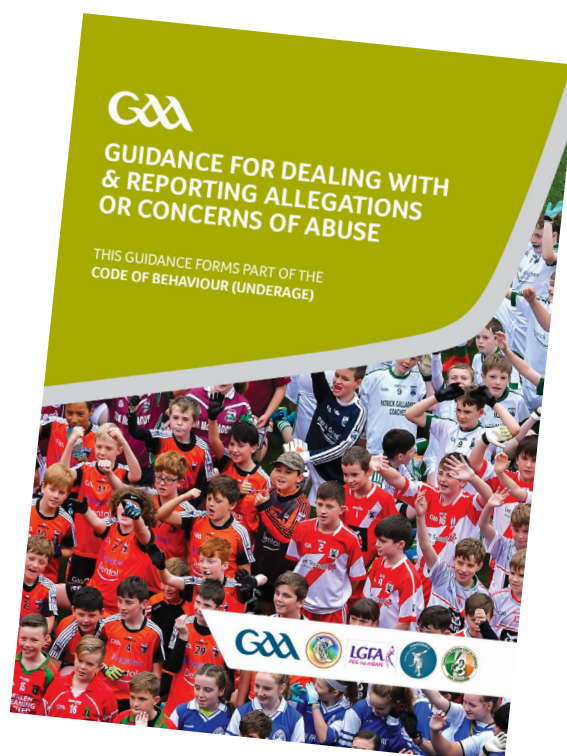
We all have a legal duty of care to children and young people. This means that we have an obligation to provide them with the highest possible standards of care and safety as we promote their wellbeing and as we safeguard them from abuse, particularly while they are in our care or attending our activities.

Coupled with that responsibility and the assistance we provide in the form of training, policies, codes and legislation is the requirement to work closely with statutory authorities and to report allegations or concerns of abuse that may be known to us to the relevant authorities, in whatever jurisdiction in which we operate.

As associations that provide a service to children we will assist our members and employees in whatever way possible in reporting concerns or suspicions of abuse whether it has come to our attention as a result of reported abuse or concerns within our Associations or due to external matters.

This section of the Code, Dealing with Allegations or Concerns of Abuse, provides a broad outline as to our roles and responsibilities in relation to reporting abuse, what is the role of the Designated Liaison Person (DLP), while Appendix 4 of this Code outlines definitions and types of abuse.

The Gaelic Games ['Guidance for Dealing with and Reporting Allegations or Concerns of Abuse'](#) acts as a directive for DLPs, parents and members of our Association when dealing with concerns of abuse. The primary purpose of the Guidance is to ensure that reporting procedures are known to our members and staff. Guidance and assistance is available for those who wish to report concerns of abuse and neglect. Our Associations seek at all times to adhere in full to our legal obligations in respect of reporting abuse or neglect to the statutory authorities in every jurisdiction in which we operate.



## REASONABLE GROUNDS FOR CONCERN

The term 'Reasonable Grounds for Concern' is used where a person may form the view that a child may have been, is being, or is at risk of being abused or neglected. Child abuse may not be visible to all and we therefore rely on adults in particular to be vigilant and to observe any forms of abuse and to ensure that such matters are reported to their Designated Liaison Person and to the relevant statutory authority without delay. The term 'Reasonable Grounds for Concern' is used in many jurisdictions and similarly, if an individual has such concerns about an adult who may be subject to abuse, they should report such matters to the relevant statutory authority.

### Reasonable grounds for a child protection or welfare concern include:

- 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

Our Association DLPs, at Club, County, Regional or International, will always be available to assist any person who may wish to report a concern to the relevant statutory authority.

It is not necessary for an individual to prove that abuse has occurred when they wish to report such matters. It is the role of the statutory authority to carry out their enquires and assess each case on its own merits.

**The safety and well-being of the child must take priority over concerns about adults against whom an allegation may be made. The welfare of the child shall always be paramount.**



## CONFIDENTIALITY

It is important that all parties dealing with concerns of allegations of abuse have a clear understanding as to what constitutes confidentiality and what is permissible in the exchange of information.

- 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
- All information regarding concern or allegations of abuse 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
- The sharing of information on a 'need to know basis' is not deemed to be a breach of confidentiality
- The sharing of information with statutory agencies or with your Association, solely for the protection of a child, is not a breach of confidentiality or data protection
- It must be clearly understood that information gathered for one purpose must not be used for another, without consulting the person who provided that information
- Be aware that all persons involved in a child protection and welfare process (the child, his/her parents/guardians, the alleged offender, his/her family, coaches, etc.) should be afforded appropriate fairness, support and confidentiality at all stages of the procedure
- Information should be stored in a secure place, with limited access internally only by the relevant Designated Persons or other appointed person
- Breaches of confidentiality shall be deemed a serious matter and dealt with accordingly within the GAA, Ladies Gaelic Football Association, the Camogie Association, GAA Handball Ireland and GAA Rounders





## ROLE OF THE DESIGNATED LIAISON PERSON (DLP)

The Club, County, Regional or International Chairperson of each unit automatically assumes the role of DLP unless another person is chosen and ratified by the relevant Committee unit to undertake the role. The DLP should be ratified by their respective Committees on an annual basis. Detailed information on the Role of the Designated Liaison Person is available in Section 8 of the Code of Behaviour (Underage).

### The Designated Liaison Person shall:

- Be aware and be committed to the Association's *Guidance for Dealing with & Reporting Allegations or Concerns of Abuse* and our *Code of Behaviour (Underage)*
- 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
- In addition to the Gaelic Games safeguarding training programmes they must also undertake relevant child safeguarding training relevant to their jurisdiction
- Be aware of local contacts and services in relation to child protection i.e., social workers, Police, child care agencies and their relevant contact details
- Consult informally with statutory authorities on child abuse concerns or allegations, as required
- Communicate with parents and/or statutory agencies as and when appropriate
- Follow reporting procedures and inform Statutory Agencies and their Association's National DLP of any concerns or allegations and do so as a matter of urgency
- Maintain regular contact with other DLPs and seek advice from their Association's National DLP if or 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 the relevant statutory authority
- Always forward a copy of reported concerns and allegations received, whether reported to statutory authorities or not, to your Association's National DLP at [nationaldlp@gaa.ie](mailto:nationaldlp@gaa.ie), [nationaldlp@lgfa.ie](mailto:nationaldlp@lgfa.ie), [nationaldlp@camogie.ie](mailto:nationaldlp@camogie.ie) or [nationaldlp.handball@gaa.ie](mailto:nationaldlp.handball@gaa.ie)
- Advise Club administrators on issues of confidentiality, record keeping and data protection
- Inform the National DLP and the Chairperson of your unit (Club, County etc.) if you are aware that a member of the Association relevant to your jurisdiction is or has been subject to a statutory investigation, a prosecution or a conviction in relation to the abuse of a child or an adult
- The existence of and the identity of the DLP should be made known to the general membership of the Club and in particular to team mentors, managers and to parents/guardians

## MAKING A REPORT TO THE STATUTORY AUTHORITIES

In this section each International Committee must outline how a member of our Association may submit a report, allegations or concern of child abuse to the relevant statutory authority in your jurisdiction.

Detailed information, if available, should include a link to any reporting forms, portal or website, to whom should this information be sent, what information must accompany the report, reporting guidance from statutory authorities and also the name of the relevant Gaelic Games Association person/Designated Liaison Person in each of our Associations within your jurisdiction who should also, in confidence, be made aware of the report.

## HOW TO CONTACT YOUR NATIONAL DESIGNATED LIAISON PERSON

- The GAA/Rounders National Designated Liaison Person is Michelle Harte, [nationaldlp@gaa.ie](mailto:nationaldlp@gaa.ie)
- The GAA Handball National Designated Liaison Person is David Britton [nationaldlp.handball@gaa.ie](mailto:nationaldlp.handball@gaa.ie)
- The LGFA National Designated Liaison Person is Paula Prunty [nationaldlp@lgfa.ie](mailto:nationaldlp@lgfa.ie)
- The Camogie National Designated Liaison Person is Sinéad McNulty [nationaldlp@camogie.ie](mailto:nationaldlp@camogie.ie)

**YOUR DESIGNATED LIAISON PERSON** (NAME OF CLUB, COUNTY, REGION OR INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE)

**NAME** \_\_\_\_\_

**CONTACT DETAILS** \_\_\_\_\_



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Produced by the Child Safeguarding Committee in association with  
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