



## Waterford Sports Partnership Child Safeguarding Policy

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Policy Area	Child Safeguarding Policy
Reviewed	Every three years
Responsibility	Board
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## Contents

Glossary .....	2
SECTION 1 .....	5
Context.....	5
Purpose of Document .....	5
Values and Principles.....	5
SECTION 2 .....	7
Responsibilities of WSP in Child Safeguarding and Child Protection .....	7
1. Risk Assessment and Child Safeguarding Statement.....	7
2. Safeguarding Policies and Procedures .....	8
i. Roles and Responsibilities.....	8
ii. Safe Recruitment and Selection of People .....	9
iii. Reporting & Protection.....	10
3. Code of Conduct.....	23
Code for Sport Leaders.....	23
Code for Young People .....	25
Code for Parents/Guardians/Carers.....	26
Responsibility of WSP Board and Safeguarding Committees .....	27
Appendix 1: Safe Recruitment .....	28
Appendix 2: Best Practice Guidance .....	33
Appendix 3: Categories of Abuse.....	50
Appendix 4: Signs of Abuse .....	53
Appendix 5: Statutory Contacts Republic of Ireland / WSP Contacts.....	55



## Glossary

**Child:** For the purpose of this guidance a child is any person under 18 years of age unless they are or have been married (Child Care Act 1991).

**Club Children's Officers (CCO):** Children's Officers are appointed within clubs to act as a resource for children and to represent them at committee level.

**Designated Liaison Person (DLP):** A person who is responsible for reporting allegations or suspicions of child abuse and welfare issues to the Statutory Authorities. This person will be a resource to anyone in the organisation/club who has a child protection/welfare concern.

**Mandated Person:** The mandated person is a person named under schedule 2 of Children First Act 2015 (ROI). They have a legal responsibility to report concerns or allegations that reach or exceed the threshold of harm of abuse to Tusla (refer to NGB/Club for list of mandated persons).

**National Children's Officer (NCO):** The National Children's Officer should be a member of the executive committee or have access to the committee and its accompanying documents, to ensure that children's interests are kept on the agenda and influence the decisions of the Governing Body .

**Provider of Relevant Service:** As defined in the Children First Act 2015 (ROI), this means, in relation to a relevant service, a person:

- (a) who provides a relevant service, and
- (b) who in respect of the provision of such relevant service-
  - (i) employs (whether under contract of employment or otherwise) one or more than one other person to undertake any work or activity that constitutes a relevant Service,
  - (ii) enters into a contract for services with one or more than one other person for the provision by the person of a relevant service, or
  - (iii) permits one or more than one other person (whether or not for commercial or other consideration and whether or not as part of a course of education or training, including an internship scheme) to undertake any work or activity, on behalf of the person, that constitutes a relevant service.

**Relevant Service:** As defined in the Children First Act 2015 (ROI), this means any work or activity specified in Schedule 1 [of that Act].

**Relevant Person:** As defined in the Children First Act 2015 (ROI), this 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



**Safeguarding Committee:** The Committee has a role in developing, reviewing and monitoring of safeguarding policies and procedures and making decisions in respect of child protection and safeguarding concerns.

**Sport Ireland:** The remit of Sport Ireland is to develop and disseminate guidelines and training standards that promote best practice for the protection of children in sport consistent with child welfare and protection guidance and legislation.

**Sports Leaders:** For the purpose of this guidance all adults involved in children's sport are referred to as Sports Leaders. All have a role to play in ensuring that procedures as described in this policy are followed. The principal leadership roles (some of which overlap) include the following:

- **Administrators:** While administrators may not be actively involved in children's sport, they may be involved in organising activities and events.
- **Assistants:** Assistants are those people who provide back-up to any of the roles outlined in this section and often such assistants are involved on an intermittent basis (e.g. student placement, youth volunteers).
- **Coach/ Trainer:** A coach is a person who assists a young participant to develop his or her skills and abilities in a progressive way.
- **Instructor/ Teacher:** Instructors are involved in the systematic development of the core skills and abilities of an activity, sometimes in a non-competitive context.
- **Mentor:** A mentor is an individual who undertakes an overseeing role with a group of participants under 18 years of age, often in co-operation with other mentors.
- **Official:** An official is an individual charged with the responsibility of ensuring that the rules of an activity are adhered to in a formal way. This category includes referees, judges, umpires, etc.
- **LSP Staff:** An LSP staff member, employed by the LSP, may be involved in the development, delivery and management of programmes and activities for children and young people.
- **Tutors:** A tutor is a person who leads or assists in the lead of a programme of physical activity and may be involved in the development, delivery and management of programmes and activities for children and young people.

**Statutory Authorities:** The authorities who promote the protection and welfare of young people and who have the responsibility for the investigation and/or validation of suspected child abuse, i.e., in



the ROI it is Tusla & An Garda Síochána and in NI it is the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and the Health and Social Care Trusts.

**Statutory Authority Guidelines on Child Protection: In the Republic of Ireland - Children First:** National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, Department of Health and Children 2017 (ROI).



## SECTION 1

### Context

Waterford Sports Partnership (WSP) is committed to ensuring that the best interests of children and young people attending our services are of paramount importance. Our guiding principles are underpinned by national policy and legislation in ROI Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017, and the requirements under The Children First Act 2015.

This policy is also informed by Sport Ireland's Safeguarding Guidance for Children & Young People, Tusla's Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, The Child Care Act 1991, The Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998 and the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012-2016.

While this policy document has been developed in the context of children and young people, WSP also follows this policy, where applicable, for **vulnerable adults**.

As noted above, the foundation for this document came from Sport Ireland's Safeguarding Guidance for Children and Young People in Sport and we are committed to integrating future specific guidance around vulnerable adults from Sport Ireland into this policy.

Our commitment to children, young people and vulnerable adults requires that this policy will be reviewed every three years or as required in line with legislative updates.

### Purpose of Document

The aim of this policy is to create a culture of safety in WSP that promotes the welfare of children and young people engaged in sporting activities. This will support WSP to meet their child safeguarding and child protection responsibilities which are cognisant of, and in line with, requirements under policy/legislation and with best practice.

### Values and Principles

Participation in sport plays a crucial role in the development of children and young people. The range of skills learned through being involved in sport contribute towards the holistic development of children. WSP wants a safe, positive and nurturing environment where all children can learn important values. These can include honesty, teamwork and fair play. Children can learn to respect themselves and others, adhere to rules, and develop a healthy relationship with competition. We believe that this desired outcome is possible with the support of this policy document. We acknowledge that these values are relevant throughout sport but identify them as being particularly essential when we talk about children's sport.



1. **Fun and Healthy:** Sport must be a fun and healthy experience for all.
2. **Inclusion:** Sport is welcoming and inclusive, offering appropriate opportunities for participation and development for all children.
3. **Fair Play:** We will promote fair play, respect, ethics, integrity and safety throughout the sports system when it comes to dealing with children's sport.
4. **Safe:** With the best interests of children in mind, we will foster best practice in safeguarding procedures and policies throughout the sports sector.



## SECTION 2

### Responsibilities of WSP in Child Safeguarding and Child Protection

A central goal for all involved in children's sport is to provide a safe, positive and nurturing environment where children can develop and enhance their physical and social skills. Promoting a child-centred ethos should go hand in hand with identifying and eliminating practice that impacts negatively on safe and enjoyable participation in children's sport.

In order to create a culture of safety which promotes the welfare and protection of children, WSP is required to:

1. Carry out a risk assessment of harm and produce a Child Safeguarding Statement
2. Produce, implement and review an organisational **Child Safeguarding Policy** which outlines procedures and practice (outlined within this document)
3. Produce, implement and review organisational **Codes of Conduct and Best Practice guidelines** when working with children and young people.

### 1. Risk Assessment and Child Safeguarding Statement

The risk assessment considers the potential for harm to come to children whilst they are in WSP's care. This risk assessment precedes the Child Safeguarding Statement (Section 11 (1b) Children First Act 2015 (ROI)) and informs the development of safeguarding policies and procedures to manage the risk identified. In accordance with Children First the risk is of abuse and/or poor practice in terms of child welfare and not general health and safety.

Under the Children First Act 2015 (ROI), WSP, as a provider of a relevant service, will:

- Keep children safe from harm while they are using WSP's service.
- Carry out a risk assessment to identify whether a child or young person could be harmed while receiving WSP services. Refer to *WSP Safeguarding Risk Assessment*.
- Develop a Child Safeguarding Statement that outlines the policies and procedures which are in place to manage the risks that have been identified. Refer to *WSP Child Safeguarding Statement*.
- Appoint a relevant person to be the first point of contact in respect of WSP's Child Safeguarding Statement. WSP has appointed this role to the **Sports Co-ordinator**.





## 2. Safeguarding Policies and Procedures

By carrying out a risk assessment and producing a Child Safeguarding Statement WSP is required to have in place detailed policies and procedures outlining how the organisation safeguards children and young people and addresses any potential risks identified.

WSP's policies and procedures include:

- i. The roles and responsibilities of the people within the organisation,
- ii. Safe recruitment and selection of people, and
- iii. The procedures to follow in relation to identifying and reporting child welfare or child protection concerns and responding to allegations against someone within the organisation.

### i. Roles and Responsibilities

Everyone in sport i.e., Sports Leaders, parents /carers and children should accept the role and responsibilities that they undertake in their commitment to maintaining an enjoyable and safe environment.

Sports Leaders play a vital role in children's sport. WSP aims to ensure that the work of Sports Leaders is guided by this policy. Sports Leaders, in addition to parents /carers, have an important role in creating an environment in which meaningful, open relationships are valued and where the integrity of everyone is respected and can promote positive interactions.

Interactions between children and their peers and adults should be conducted in a spirit of mutual respect, equality and non-discriminatory with a spirit of fair play.

Roles within safeguarding in WSP:

- Relevant Person\*
- Designated Liaison Person (DLP)\*
- Mandated Person\*
- Safeguarding Committee
- LSP Board

#### **\* WSP Relevant Person, Designated Liaison Person & Mandated Person**

Rosarie Kealy, Sports Co-ordinator, Waterford Sports Partnership  
Civic Offices, Dungarvan, Co. Waterford.

While the Sports Co-ordinator holds all these distinct roles, DLP will be used throughout the document.

Other roles within Safeguarding in the Sports Sector:

- National Children's Officer's – within National Governing Bodies of Sport
- Club Children's Officers – within sports clubs
- Sport Ireland



For relevant definitions see Glossary.

For contact details see Appendix 5: Statutory Contact Republic of Ireland / WSP Contacts.

## ii. Safe Recruitment and Selection of People

### Procedures

The following is an overview of the principles and considerations that support the safe recruitment and selection of Sports Leaders. There are differences in how we approach the safe recruitment of staff, service providers and partners and these are outlined in more detail in **Appendix 1: Safe Recruitment**. WSP has also developed a number of policies, procedures and templates to support safe recruitment and selection of employees/core staff, service providers and partners.

WSP staff will consider the following as part of the Safe Recruitment of Sports Leaders who have regular access to children or children's information as part of their role with WSP:

- Role description available
  - Suitable qualifications and experience
  - References sought
  - Satisfactory Garda Vetting
  - Probationary period for relevant Sports Leaders
  - Formal interview or informal meeting as appropriate
    - assess the individual's experience of working with children or young people and knowledge of safeguarding issues.
    - assess their commitment to promoting good practice and
    - assess their ability to communicate with children and young people (i.e., be approachable)
  - Plan to induct and manage all staff/Sports Leaders and communicate relevant policies and procedures
  - Confidential storage of staff/Sports Leader information. Both soft and hard copy information should be stored securely and should be accessible only to the LSP Co-ordinator and their nominee
- The Sports Leader Database will be kept up to date and made available to relevant staff to ensure that only Sports Leaders who are fully up to date with all requirements are selected to work with children and young people
- Commitment in place to abide by the WSP Code of Conduct for those working with young people
  - Ensure that Sports Leaders have clarity/understanding with regard to the role they are taking on. This is especially important if moving from one role to another among different skill sets, ages, genders, etc. Working with young people will have additional responsibilities attached due to their vulnerability
  - Commitment in place to complete the necessary safeguarding training



- Ensuring they understand that supervision is a vital safeguard for WSP so they should avoid working alone
- Contact details of the WSP Designated Liaison Person shared and structures of WSP understood.

## **Safeguarding Training**

Sport Ireland's Safeguarding 1, 2 & 3 workshops must be recognised across all sporting organisations.

### Who is Safeguarding Training for?

All WSP staff, tutors, students and volunteers should receive safeguarding training appropriate for their role. Basic awareness courses or workshops are appropriate for those working in sport with regular responsibility for children and young people. Training should be updated and reviewed regularly for staff, tutors, students and volunteers, and in line with national guidance and changing legislation.

### What this training should include:

- A basic awareness and understanding of safeguarding issues and roles within organisation/club.
- Establishing minimum standards of best practice and codes of conduct.
- Exercises to identify, respond and report concerns.
- Signposting for further information and sources of support.

### Training Guidance:

WSP has a procedure in place for the provision of information and training that ensures compliance with the Children First Act 2015 (ROI) Section 11(3).

### Importance of facilitated training:

Training facilitated by a safeguarding tutor, whether in-person or online, allows individuals to ask questions in a safe environment and can benefit from the experience of other participants. For someone who is attending safeguarding training in sport for the first time it is important that they have an opportunity to discuss specific safeguarding issues that arise during the training, an opportunity they would not have if merely doing static online training. Facilitated training also means you are using a greater range of your senses to learn than sitting in front of a screen working through a course alone. For some, in-person training may be more effective than courses delivered on zoom as some find the technology challenging and/or may not engage as much as they might at an in-person training. For online training therefore, it is important that there are breakout rooms and opportunities to engage in polls and smaller groups. Since Covid, the LSP offers both in-person and online training, and it is important for both forms to continue to be offered.

## **iii. Reporting & Protection**



All those involved in sport have a moral duty of care to report child protection concerns in order to help create a safer environment for children. The procedure in ROI for reporting child protection or welfare concerns to Tusla is a specified procedure under the Children First Act 2015 (ROI) and should be done online following a discussion with Tusla staff. It is recommended best practice that any telephone referral is followed up in writing.

Sport organisations have a duty to promote the welfare and safety of children. Sports Leaders should be alert to the possibility that children with whom they are in contact may be abused or at risk of being abused. They should know how to recognise and respond to the possibility of abuse or neglect, so as to ensure that the most effective steps are taken to protect a child and to contribute to the ongoing safety of children.

The guiding principles on reporting child abuse or neglect may be summarised as follows:

1. The safety and wellbeing of the child must take priority over concerns about adults against whom an allegation may be made.
2. Reports of concerns should be made without delay to Tusla. If you think the child is in immediate danger and you cannot contact Tusla, you should contact the Gardaí without delay.

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in a paid or voluntary capacity, or those working in affiliated organisations, to take responsibility or to decide whether or not child abuse is taking place. However, there is a responsibility to protect children in order that appropriate agencies can then make enquiries and take any necessary action to protect the young person.

### **Responding to Child Abuse**

Regardless of how a concern comes to a Sports Leader's attention, it must be reported to the Designated Liaison Person (DLP). The DLP, in consultation with the person who raised the concern, will decide if reasonable grounds for concern exist. If reasonable grounds for concern exist, the DLP will report to a Tusla duty social worker. Refer to Appendix 5: Statutory Contacts ROI / WSP Contacts.

#### Responding to a child/young person who discloses abuse.

A child or young person may disclose to a Sports Leader that they have been or are being harmed or abused. Children/ young people will often have different ways of communicating that they are being abused. If a child or young person hints at or tells a Sports Leader that they are being harmed by someone, be it a parent/carer, another adult or by another child/young person (peer\* abuse), it should be treated in a sensitive way.

**\*Allegations of abuse by a child:** where the person allegedly causing harm to a child is another child (peer abuse), reports should be made to Tusla for both children.

Child to child relationships: Interaction between children should be conducted in a spirit of mutual respect, equality and non-discrimination and with a spirit of fair play. In a situation where abuse is



alleged to have been carried out by another child, you should consider it a child welfare and protection issue for both children and you should follow safeguarding procedures for both the victim and the alleged abuser.

Remember, a child/young person may disclose abuse to you as a trusted adult at any time during your work with them. It is important that you are aware and prepared for this.

- Be as calm and natural as possible.
- Remember that you have been approached because you are trusted and possibly liked.
- Do not panic.
- Be aware that disclosures can be very difficult for the child/young person.
- Remember, the child or young person may initially be testing your reactions and may only fully open up over a period of time.
- Listen to what the child/young person has to say. Give them the time and opportunity to tell as much as they are able and wish to.
- Do not pressurise the child/young person. Allow him or her to disclose at their own pace and in their own language.
- Conceal any signs of disgust, anger or disbelief.
- Accept what the child or young person has to say – false disclosures are very rare.
- It is important to differentiate between the person who carried out the abuse and the act of abuse itself.
- It may be necessary to reassure the child/young person that your feelings towards him or her have not been affected in a negative way as a result of what they have disclosed.
- Reassure the child/young person that they have taken the right action in talking to you.

When asking questions:

- Questions should be supportive and for the purpose of clarification only.
- Avoid leading questions, such as asking whether a specific person carried out the abuse.
- You should also avoid asking about intimate details or suggesting that something else may have happened other than what you have been told.

#### Guidance on dealing with adult disclosures of child abuse.

Retrospective Abuse Report form is required when reporting any concerns about retrospective abuse. This forms can be found on Tusla website in the following location: <https://www.tusla.ie/children-first/publications-and-forms/>

#### Not reporting to Tusla

If as the DLP you decide not to report a concern to Tusla, the following steps should be taken:

- The reasons for not reporting should be recorded.
- Any actions taken as a result of the concern should be recorded.
- The employee or coach/volunteer who raised the concern should be given a clear written explanation of the reasons why the concern is not being reported to Tusla.



- The employee or coach/volunteer should be advised that if they remain concerned about the situation, they are free to make a report to Tusla or An Garda Síochána.

The Sports Leader has protections under the Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998, should they report independently.

#### Informal Consultation

Consult with the DLP and decide if the matter will be reported to Tusla duty Social Worker.

In the event that both the DLP and Sports Leader conclude that there is no definite knowledge or reasonable grounds for concern of child protection or a child welfare issue, note the reason for not making an official report to Tusla and record on file.

The process of making the decision to report or not may involve informal consultation with the duty social worker in Tusla.

The DLP telephones Tusla duty social worker and makes clear that it is an informal consultation in confidence. A record should be kept of this informal consultation and any decisions arising out of it.

If the social worker states that the information constitutes reasonable grounds for concern, make a formal report to Tusla.

If the social worker states that the information does not constitute reasonable grounds for concern, a note of the informal consultation and the reason for not making an official report should be recorded on file.

#### Does not meet Reasonable Grounds for Concern.

WSP has a procedure for recording certain concerns which, following consideration, do not initially meet reasonable grounds for concern. This procedure identifies where such concerns are recorded, who has access to these records and who is responsible for reviewing these records in line with GDPR. Concerns which do not initially meet reasonable grounds for concern may, upon review, show patterns or clusters which may heighten the level of concern.

#### Reasonable Grounds for Concern.

There are many reasons a Sports Leader may be concerned about the welfare or protection of a child or young person. Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017 (ROI) states that "Tusla should always be informed when a person has reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been, is being, or is at risk of being abused or neglected".

Child abuse can occur in many different situations including the home, in school, in youth and sports activities and elsewhere. Child abuse can often be difficult to identify and may present in many forms.

No one indicator should be seen as being conclusive of abuse. It may indicate conditions other than child abuse. All signs and symptoms must be examined in the context of the child's situation and family circumstances. The ability to recognise child abuse can depend as much on a person's willingness to accept the possibility of its existence as it does on their knowledge and information. Early detection is important and individuals working with children should share their concerns about child protection or welfare with the DLP in WSP.

**Child Welfare Concern:** Often cases encountered are of a welfare nature and may not be recognised as obvious or deliberate (abuse) but the effect of the problem may have similarly negative consequences for the child and so needs to be responded to. It is equally important that the same procedures are applied to matters relating to the welfare of children as well as that of abuse.

**Child Protection Concern:** Child abuse can be categorised into four different types: neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse and emotional abuse. A child may be subjected to one or more forms of abuse at any given time. Refer Appendix 3: Categories of Abuse.

It is the responsibility of the DLP to report to Tusla using the Report Form (available on Tusla website: [www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie)) where reasonable grounds for concern exist - <https://www.tusla.ie/children-first/individuals-working-with-children-and-young-people/how-do-i-report-a-concern-about-a-child/>. In the event that the DLP does not consider that reasonable grounds for concern exist, this does not preclude the sports leader from making a report directly to Tusla.

It is important to remember that children/young people are sometimes abused by members of their own family, by peers or by others outside the family environment such as strangers, workers or trusted adults. Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017 (ROI) lists the following as reasonable grounds for concern:

- 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 a child being abused.

Note: A suspicion, which is not supported by any objective indication of abuse or neglect, would not constitute a reasonable ground for concern. Equally, a suspicion should not be disregarded, and it is recommended an informal consultation with Tusla should be conducted to ascertain if it constitutes a reasonable ground for concern. The concern and any advice from Tusla regarding the decisions made should be recorded and stored in a secure manner in line with GDPR procedures.



Wherever appropriate, any issues should be checked with the parents/guardians/carers when considering whether a concern exists, **unless doing so may further endanger the child or the person considering making the report. The DLP should be able to support this process.**

It is important to remember that abuse is not always committed through personal contact with a child or young person, sometimes it is perpetrated through social media or the use of information and communication technology.

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

### **Confidentiality**

It is essential that there is a clear understanding of professional and legal responsibilities with regard to confidentiality and the exchange of information. Confidentiality is about managing sensitive information that arises in a trusting relationship and doing so in a manner that is respectful, professional and purposeful.

The WSP is committed to ensuring people's rights to confidentiality. However, in relation to child protection and welfare it is important that:

- Where child protection and welfare concerns arise, information must be shared on a 'need to know' basis in the best interest of the child/young person with the relevant statutory authorities and with parents /guardians.
- Giving information to others for the protection of a child or young person is not a breach of confidentiality.
- The proportionate provision of information to the statutory agencies necessary for the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality or data protection.
- No guarantee of confidentiality is given where the best interests of the child or young person are at risk .
- Parents /guardians and children/young people have a right to know if personal information is being shared, unless doing so could put the child/young person at further risk or may put the reporter at risk.

Anyone who received information from colleagues about possible or actual child abuse must treat it as having been given in confidence subject to the above. Any breaches of confidential information may be regarded as a disciplinary matter, subject to the above.





Records must be kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act and be available only to those directly involved and within the confines of the obligations and duties of the Data Protection Act 2003.

### **Reporting Concerns about a Child**

The following is WSP procedures for reporting any concerns about the welfare or protection of a child that arise:

By its nature, the position of Sports Co-ordinator within WSP, is a mandated position. Mandated persons must report child protection and welfare concerns that reach or exceed the threshold for 'harm' as defined in the Children First Act 2015. A Mandated Person has a statutory obligation to report mandated concerns to Tusla, they cannot discharge this duty to the DLP. However, they may make a report jointly with another person, whether the other person is a mandated person or not. In effect, this means that a mandated person can make a joint report with a designated liaison person.

All records and copies of child protection and welfare concerns and reports should be held securely by the DLP.

#### Reporting Child Protection & Welfare Concerns

The following procedure is designed to help WSP staff report concerns so that the WSP DLP can make effective reports to the relevant authorities, using the standard reporting procedure, concerning suspected, disclosed or alleged child protection and welfare situations.

To enable this to happen the DLP should:

- a. Have the contact details for the local Tusla Social Work Department and the Local Garda on file
- b. Have Tusla Standard Form for Reporting Child Protection and/or Welfare Concerns available on the WSP shared network or [Child Protection and Welfare Report Form FINAL.pdf \(tusla.ie\)](#).
- c. Ensure that each staff member and adult leader working with children has completed a Child Welfare and Protection Basic Awareness course.

Under no circumstances should any individual employee or sports leader working with WSP attempt to intervene or deal with the problem of suspected child abuse alone -reporting procedures should be followed.

#### Procedure for Reporting a Concern or Disclosure

##### **1. Write down accurate notes as soon as possible.**

Observe and note dates, times, locations and contexts in which the incident/disclosure occurred or suspicion was aroused, together with any other relevant information. Records should be factual and include details of contacts, consultations and any actions taken.



## **2. Contact the Designated Liaison Person immediately or as soon as possible.**

Contact the DLP immediately and discuss the matter in confidence. The matter should not be discussed with any other person. If the DLP is unavailable, contact the WSP Chairperson.

## **3. Decide, in consultation with the DLP, if a report will be made to Tusla duty Social Worker.**

Consult with the DLP and decide if the matter will be reported to the Tusla duty Social Worker.

In the event that both the DLP and staff member/person leader conclude that there is no definite knowledge or reasonable grounds for concern of child protection or a child welfare issue, note the reason for not making an official report to Tusla and record on file.

The process of making the decision to report or not may involve informal consultation with the duty social worker in Tusla.

The DLP telephones the Tusla duty social worker and makes clear that it is an informal consultation in confidence. A record should be kept of this informal consultation and any decisions arising out of it.

If the social worker states that the information constitutes reasonable grounds for concern, make a formal report to Tusla.

If the social worker states that the information does not constitute reasonable grounds for concern, a note of the informal consultation and the reason for not making an official report should be recorded on file.

It is possible for WSP staff to report even if the advice has been that the Social Worker does not think there are reasonable grounds for concern.

## **4. Making a report.**

The person reporting suspected child abuse to the statutory authorities will first inform the family of their intention to make such a report unless doing so would endanger the child or undermine an investigation (where the family's knowledge of the report could impair Tusla's ability to carry out an assessment). Also, it is not necessary to inform the family if the person making the report reasonably believes it may place them at risk of harm from the family. A record of the rationale for not informing the family is held on file.

A report will be submitted using the standard reporting form and a copy held on file.

## **5. Following the submission of a Report.**

After you have submitted the report to the Tusla, you may not have any further contact from them.



WSP's guidance on record-keeping.

- All agencies dealing with children must cooperate in the sharing of records with the statutory authorities where a child protection or welfare issue arises.
- Records should only be used for the purpose for which they are intended.
- Clearly state who within WSP has access to particular types of records.
- Indicate how long WSP will retain these types of records.
- Child protection records should be updated as required and reviewed regularly by the Designated Liaison Person (DLP).

#### Procedure for Reporting a Concern or Disclosure in an Emergency Situation

In cases of emergency where a child appears to be at serious and immediate risk and you are unable to contact the Tusla duty social worker, An Garda Síochána should be contacted. Under no circumstances should a child be left in a situation that exposes him or her to harm or to risk of harm pending Tusla intervention.

As soon as possible after the young person is safe, prepare the standard reporting form and submit to the Tusla. File a copy of the Report.

#### Storage of written records

The following procedures should be followed by staff when dealing with the creation, storage and communication of written records and documents relating to child protection/child welfare concern cases:

1. Files containing records on child protection and child welfare concerns must be stored secured. Only the DLP and relevant staff member should have access to these files.
2. When a decision is made to submit a written formal report to Tusla in relation to a child protection or welfare concern, the formal report is made by completing Tusla Standard Report Form [Child Protection and Welfare Report Form FINAL.pdf \(tusla.ie\)](#)
3. Section 14 of the Children First Act 2015 requires mandated persons to report a mandated concern to Tusla "as soon as practicable". Tusla's Web Portal allows users to securely submit child protection and welfare concerns to Tusla online - <https://www.tusla.ie/children-first/web-portal/>.
4. Alternatively, you can report your concern in person, by telephone or in writing to Tusla's social work service in the area where the child lives. Child Protection and Welfare Forms can be accessed at: [Publications and FormsTusla - Child and Family Agency](#) and should be submitted by registered post. Dedicated Contact Point information for Tusla's social work service can be found at [Contact a Social Worker - Mandated PersonsTusla - Child and Family Agency](#)
5. If you feel the concern may require urgent intervention to make the child safe, section 14(7) of the Children First Act 2015, allows you to alert Tusla of the concern in advance of submitting a written report. You must then submit a mandated report to Tusla on the Web



Portal or by using the Child Protection and Welfare Report Form (by registered post) within 3 days.

6. Ask for a formal acknowledgement in writing of the receipt of the report made to Tusla.
7. Any further correspondence with the statutory bodies will be recorded and held on file.

## **Procedure for Dealing with Child Protection Complaints or Allegations against WSP Employees and Sports Leaders**

All allegations against an employee or Sports Leaders who work with WSP must be reported to the DLP. If the suspicion or allegation is against the DLP then the WSP Chairperson should be contacted immediately. The same reporting procedures, as outlined earlier in this document, will be applied to these allegations.

### Allegations against a WSP Employee or Sports Leader

Where an allegation of abuse of a child is made against an employee or volunteer the reporting procedure must be dealt with and managed by WSP, guided by WSP's DLP, principles and child safeguarding procedures, the rules of natural justice and any relevant employment law. It is important to note that the investigation of suspected child abuse is the responsibility of the statutory authorities i.e. Tusla or An Garda Síochána and shall not be undertaken by DLP, other WSP employees or Sports Leaders.

There are two separate procedures to be followed:

- The reporting procedure to Tusla in respect of the child/ young person and the alleged abuser.
- The internal personnel procedure for dealing with an employee/sports leader.

When an allegation of abuse is received, it should be assessed promptly and carefully by WSP. Action taken in reporting an allegation of child abuse against an employee should be based on an opinion formed 'reasonably and in good faith'. It will be necessary to decide whether a formal report should be made to Tusla. This decision should be based on reasonable grounds for concern.

An allegation of abuse may relate to a person who works with children who has:

- Behaved in a way that has or may have harmed a child/young person;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence in relation to a child/young person;
- Behaved towards a child/young person or children/young people in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to a child/young person;
- Behaved in a way that is contrary to the WSP code of behaviour for Sports Leaders;
- Behaved in a way that is contrary to professional practice guidelines.

The first priority is to ensure that no child is exposed to unnecessary risk.



Where the concern is connected to the actions of an employee/Sports Leader, they should be asked to stand aside pending the outcome of any investigation by the Statutory Authorities. WSP 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/Sports Leaders, financially or otherwise, unless necessary to protect children. Where protective measures penalise the employee, it is important that early consideration be given to the case.

Any action taken should be guided by agreed procedures, the applicable employment contract and the rules of natural justice.

The WSP Sports Co-ordinator should be informed about the allegation as soon as possible.

- In making an immediate decision about the Sports Leader's involvement in WSP activities, the Sports Co-ordinator should as a matter of urgency take any measures necessary to protect the child/young person. These should be proportionate to the level of risk to the child/young person; 'protective measures' do not presume guilt.
- The Sports Co-ordinator should privately inform the Sports Leader that an allegation has been made against him or her and the nature of the allegation.
- The Sports Leader should be afforded an opportunity to respond.
- The Sports Co-ordinator should note the response from the Sports Leader and pass on this information if making a formal report to Tusla.
- The Sports Leader should be offered the option to have representation at this stage and should be informed that any response may be shared with Tusla.
- While Tusla will not provide advice on employment matters, advice and consultation with regard to risk to children/ young people can be sought from the local Tusla social work office.
- The Sports Co-ordinator should ensure that actions taken by WSP do not undermine any investigations or assessments undertaken by Tusla or An Garda Síochána. WSP should liaise closely with the investigating bodies to ensure this.

When an employer becomes aware of an allegation of abuse of a child or children by an employee during the execution of that employee's duties, the employer should privately inform the employee of the following:

- i. the fact that an allegation has been made against him or her
- ii. the nature of the allegation.

The employee should be afforded an opportunity to respond. The employer should note the response and pass on this information if making a formal report to Tusla.



All persons involved in a child protection process (the child, his /her parents /carers, the alleged offender, his /her family, Sports Leaders) should be afforded appropriate respect, fairness, support and confidentiality at all stages of the procedure.

Employers or persons-in-charge should take care to ensure that actions taken by them do not undermine or frustrate any investigations/assessments conducted by Tusla or An Garda Síochána. It is strongly recommended that employers maintain a close liaison with the statutory authorities to achieve this.

Employers or persons-in-charge should be notified of the outcome of an investigation and/or assessment. This will assist them in reaching a decision about the action to be taken in the longer term concerning the employee.

Once the criminal process is completed, employers should consider the need to examine whether there are grounds for disciplinary proceedings for misconduct. The fact that the alleged abuser has not been prosecuted or has been found not guilty does not mean that such proceedings are not necessary or feasible.

The Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998 makes provision for the protection from civil liability of persons who have communicated child abuse 'reasonably and in good faith' to designated officers within Tusla or to any member of An Garda Síochána. This protection applies to organisations as well as to individuals. This means that even if a communicated suspicion of child abuse proves unfounded, a plaintiff who took an action would have to prove that the person who communicated the concern had not acted reasonably and in good faith in making the report.

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

- advice should be sought from the local duty social worker with regard to any action by WSP deemed necessary to protect the child/children who may be at risk.

### **Disciplinary, Complaints & Appeals of Code of Behaviour Breaches**

A code of conduct reflecting a child centred ethos is available, widely disseminated, signed by and applied to all Sports Leaders.

#### Complaints of a General Nature

Complaints of a general nature (not related to child safeguarding) which are made against its Sports Leaders must be investigated, dealt with and managed by WSP in accordance with the procedures outlined in the relevant policy e.g. Complaints Policy, Staff Handbook.

### Allegations or Complaints in Respect of Child Welfare and Protection Concerns



All allegations or complaints concerning children and young people against Sport Leaders must be reported to:

- the DLP
- or in the absence of the DLP, the Deputy DLP.
- If the allegation or complaints is against the DLP, then the report is made to the WSP Chairperson.

Reference to DLP within this section also covers the Deputy DLP or the WSP Chairperson dependant on the circumstances.

If the complaint involves suspected abuse or a criminal offence or reaches reasonable ground for concern, a report will be made to the statutory authorities as outlined in the procedure above by the DLP. The Sports Leader is stepped aside immediately, pending the outcome of the statutory process. WSP's internal procedures will only proceed following advice from statutory authorities on the outcome of their process.

The Safeguarding Committee, appointed by the WSP Board, will consider and make decisions with respect to complaints involving a breach of WSP's code of behaviour. This includes disclosures and/or returns referred to the WSP Contact Person by Sport Ireland and the outcome of any child welfare and protection reports in accordance with the procedures outlined in the relevant WSP policy.

Sports Leaders are required to co-operate with investigations by or on behalf of WSP in accordance with the relevant procedures.

The DLP reviews any relevant paperwork and holds any necessary meetings with all parties to proceed with complaints into any incident of suspected misconduct that does not relate to child abuse. It, as soon as possible, informs the Safeguarding Committee of the progress of the process. This should be done within 10 working days.

The DLP furnishes the individual with the nature of the complaint being made against him/her and affords him/her the opportunity of providing a response either verbally or in writing, but usually at a meeting with the DLP.

This information is brought to the Safeguarding Committee for review and decision.

WSP disciplinary procedures may be invoked in circumstances where it is found that an employee has engaged in negligent, unsafe or otherwise inappropriate behaviour in respect of the allegation.

Where it is established that an incident of misconduct has taken place, the Safeguarding committee notifies the Sports Leader of any sanction being imposed. The notification is made in writing, setting



out the reasons for the sanction. If the Sports Leader is under 18 years of age, correspondence will be addressed to the parents / carers.

If the Sports Leader against whom the complaint was made is unhappy with the decision of the safeguarding committee s/he should have the right to appeal the decision to an appeals committee (independent of the members of safeguarding committee involved in the original decision). Any appeal should be made in writing within an agreed period after issue, usually 10 days of the decision of the safeguarding committee.

The appeals committee will comprise of two members of the WSP Board (which may include Safeguarding Committee members not involved in the original decision) in addition to an external member with knowledge and experience of Child Safeguarding e.g. DLP within another LSP

The chairperson of the appeals committee should be a member of the WSP Board. The appeals committee should consult with the DLP in relation to issues of child welfare and codes of conduct.

The appeals committee has is provided the authority to confirm, set aside or change any sanction imposed by the Safeguarding committee. The decision of the appeal committee is final.

Records must be kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act and be available only to those directly involved and within the confines of the obligations and duties of the Data Protection Act 2003.

### **3. Code of Conduct**

Codes of conduct are an integral part of WSP. They set a standard of behaviour that help build WSP culture and make it easier to deal with conduct and behaviour issues as they arise. These can be many and varied, from poor sportsmanship to unfair treatment, inappropriate social media posts, activity incidents, side-line abuse and mismanagement, and more. Codes of conduct set expectations for everyone involved – from the Sports Leaders to children/young people, parents and carers. The WSP code of conduct is informed by the organisation’s risk assessment and is used as a tool in the management of specific risks.

WSP has a code of conduct in place for Sports Leaders, young people and parents/guardians/ carers which outlines the agreed standard of behaviour for everyone.

The WSP Code of Conduct is available on our website.

Sports Leaders are expected to conform to ethical standards in a number of areas. It is required that all staff, tutors, students and volunteers will sign an agreement to abide by the WSP code of conduct.

### **Code for Sport Leaders**





Sport Leaders play a vital role in children's sport. WSP ensures that the work of Sport Leaders, is guided by this safeguarding guidance and best practice whilst also recognising that they are entitled to obtain a healthy sense of achievement and satisfaction through their involvement in children's sport.

In order to act as a role model and to promote their safety and the safety of young people Sport Leaders should:

Create a safe and enjoyable environment for children by:

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

Recognise and ensure the welfare of children by:

- Monitoring attendance for activities.
- Not exposing a child to criticism, hostility or sarcasm.
- Never swearing at, ridiculing, shouting unnecessarily or arguing with a child.
- Being aware of a child's developmental needs and how a child may be psychologically or physically affected (if relevant for your role).
- Working in an open environment.
- Ensuring there is adequate supervision.
- Involving and updating the appropriate person and/or parents/guardians when a problem has arisen.
- Respecting a child's sensitivity.
- Never using physical punishment or force.
- Not using verbal or physical punishments or exclusion for mistakes.

Additional Information:

- Do not allow or engage in bullying behaviour, rough physical games, sexually provocative games, never allow or engage in inappropriate physical contact of any kind or make sexually suggestive comments about or to a child.
- In the management of a child's participation, where there are recommendations around the management of a child's medical needs, WSP will aim to facilitate, where possible, a child's participation in WSP activities through prior discussion between parents and sports leaders.
- Avoid carrying out any medical testing or giving advice of a personal or medical nature if not qualified to do so or undertake any form of therapy (hypnosis etc.) in the training of children. Any such activity, if qualified, must only be with parent/guardian consent and the understanding of the child.



- Keep any information in relation to a child/young person of a personal or medical nature strictly confidential unless the welfare of the child requires the passing on of this information on a need-to-know basis.
- Never exert undue influence over a participant in order to obtain personal benefit or reward.
- Acknowledge the use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco is incompatible with a healthy approach to sporting activity and must be discouraged. The use of alcohol is not permitted at any time whilst responsible for young people e.g. training sessions, events and on trips with young people.

## Code for Young People

Children have a great deal to gain from sport in terms of their personal development and enjoyment. The promotion of good practice in sport will depend on the co-operation of all involved, including young people involved in WSP activities. Children must be encouraged to realise that they also have responsibilities to treat other children and Sport Leaders with fairness and respect. The following are WSP's expectations for and of children in the participation of our activities.

In WSP activities children should:

- Be happy, have fun and enjoy taking part and being involved in sport.
- Be treated fairly by everyone, Sports Leaders and other participants.
- Feel safe and secure when taking part in sport.
- Be listened to and allowed to reply.
- Be treated with dignity, sensitivity and respect.
- Have a voice in the decisions that affect them within WSP activities.
- Say no to something which makes them feel uncomfortable.
- Participate at a level that is suitable for their age, development and ability.
- Know that any personal details about them will be treated with confidentiality but if they are at risk of harm or WSP are worried about their safety it may be necessary for WSP to pass this information on to the relevant authorities.
- Know who to go to if they feel unsafe.

Children's responsibilities are to:

- Treat all Sports Leaders with respect.
- Be fair at all times, do their best to achieve their goals; be gracious if they do not achieve their goals.
- Respect other participants and opponents.
- Be part of the team and respect and support other team members both when they do well and when things go wrong.
- Never bully or use bullying actions against another person; never hurt other team members, participants or opponents, this includes never taking/damaging their property, never spreading rumours or telling lies about other young people or adults.
- Keep to rules and guidelines set by the Sports Leader.



- Take part in-sport without cheating; participants are responsible for not cheating and must not allow others to force them to cheat.
- Listen to and respect decisions made by other participants/ Sports Leaders- If participants feel unjustly treated they can talk to their parents or the WSP staff member;
- Behave in a manner that is respectful towards the organisation facilitating the activity.
- Never use violence or bad language; never shout or argue with leaders or other participants – talk to someone if upset or angry or if someone has caused upset or anger.
- Talk with the Sports Leader, parent or WSP if they have any difficulties or do not understand something; children should never keep secrets about any person who may have caused them harm or has made them feel upset.
- Do not, or allow others to make them, try or take banned substances to improve their performance.

### Code for Parents/Guardians/Carers

Parents/guardians/carers play a key role in the promotion of an ethical approach to sport and young people's enjoyment in sport. Parents/guardians/ carers therefore need to be aware, informed and involved in promoting the safest possible environment for children to enjoy their participation in sport. Sports Leaders need the support of parents/guardians/ carers in conveying the Safe, Fun and Fair Play message.

Parents/ guardians/ carers should help and support the implementation of best practice policies in their child's/ children's participation in WSP activities by following the guidance below.

- Understand and ensure their child/children abide by the Code for Young People.
- Have an awareness of and respect for Sports Leaders and other adults and their roles within the activity.
- If one wishes to raise an issue with a Sports Leader this should be addressed with the Sports Leader in an appropriate manner and not in front of children and young people.
- Respect and abide by the decisions made by the Sports Leaders, these should be made in the best interests of the children.
- Be aware of the complaints process (see [www.waterfordsportspartnership.ie](http://www.waterfordsportspartnership.ie)) and follow the proper procedure if felt unjustly treated, with the knowledge that any complaint will be dealt with effectively and confidentially.
- Know the activity schedule, and accept it is the responsibility of parents/ guardians/ carers for delivering and collecting their child/children and should ensure they do not leave their child/children waiting unsupervised at any time.
- Ensure the environment is safe and enjoyable for their child/children.
- Promote fair play and the positive aspects of sport.
- Be a role model for their children and young people by maintaining the highest standards of personal conduct and respectful behaviour in any activity related to the activity.



- Allow their child to focus their efforts and success in terms of their goals rather than winning being the main objective.
- Promote participation for children that is fun, safe and in the spirit of fair play.
- Ensure appropriate Sports Leaders are informed regarding any absenteeism, medical conditions or other relevant matters concerning their child.
- Arrange an appropriate time and place for discussing any matter with Sports Leaders; communication should not take place whilst Sports Leaders are in a position of supervision or responsible for other young people.
- Provide the activity organiser with appropriate information in relation to their child to ensure their safe inclusion in the activity and with emergency contact information and to be reasonably available in case of emergency.
- Be aware of and abide by WSP child safeguarding procedures and policies especially with regard to the use of smart phones, any type of camera and videoing equipment.

## Responsibility of WSP Board and Safeguarding Committees

The WSP Board and Committees should follow the points as below:

- Be familiar with WSP's safeguarding policies and procedures, Garda Vetting and relevant child welfare legislation.
- Ensure, oversee and approve the appointment of all relevant safeguarding positions and ensure their contact details are available on [www.waterfordsportspartnership.ie](http://www.waterfordsportspartnership.ie).
- Ensure that the required Board/Committee safeguarding duties are carried out with the understanding that the welfare of children is paramount.
- Ensure that the appropriate assurances are in place to oversee the adoption, implementation and review of the child safeguarding policies and procedures within WSP.



## SECTION 3

### Appendix 1: Safe Recruitment

The vast majority of Sports Leaders will get involved in sport or leadership through a genuine desire to see children or young people or their particular sport develop. Unfortunately, we must face the reality that a small minority of people will get involved as an opportunity to gain access to children or young people. These adults create an air of acceptability about their role, therefore justifying their close contact with children or young people.

Although those who want to abuse children or young people may find it more difficult to do so in a group setting, such as a leisure centre or sports pitch, they can use this time to gain the trust of not only the young person but also other adults, including other Sports leaders/parents/carers. This is known as 'grooming' or 'entrapment'. Developing credibility is an essential part of any abusers 'grooming process.' An abuser will "groom" the environment i.e. creating a justifiable reason for getting the child alone.

The safe recruitment process supports WSP to try to ensure that the Sports Leaders working with young people have the best interests of the children and young people at heart, deliver under good practice guidelines so that children have a positive experience of sport and physical activity.

### a. LSP Employees and LSP Core Staff

The following are the steps WSP will take to ensure that people who are employed by WSP are suitable to work with children. WSP staff includes permanent or temporary staff, fulltime or part-time, student placements and work placements.

<b>Procedure for Safe Recruitment</b>	<b>Yes/ No</b>	<b>Date/ Initials</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>Recruitment Process</b>			
Clearly defined job description including role and responsibilities and person specification including level of experience/qualifications required made available			
Recruitment documentation must specify WSP's commitment to safe recruitment and the protection of children and vulnerable persons			
<b>Application/Interview Process</b>			
Cover letter and CV required/provided			
Interview completed with at least two people on interview panel			
Suitability of individual for position working with children/vulnerable persons assessed based on experience, ability to communicate and commitment to good practice			
Individual made aware of WSP's Code of Conduct in relation to children and be advised that should they be appointed they will be subject to garda vetting and reference checks			
Individual to provide contact details for two referees. Referees should not be related and ideally will have had regular contact with the applicant over a sustained period of time.			
<b>Checks Required Prior to Appointment</b>			
Self-Declaration Form completed			
WSP Code of Conduct signed			
Garda Vetting process satisfactorily completed			
Qualifications checked			
References – obtain at least two and ensure the question with regard to Safeguarding is satisfactorily answered.			
Contract including Job/Role description issued and signed			
<b>Onboarding/Induction/Training</b>			
Safeguarding training completed			
Safeguarding Policy read and signed			
WSP Induction to role/organisation complete			
Training plan in place (on the job, training courses, workshops etc.)			
Supervision plan in place			
Probation period and process in place			

## b. LSP Service Providers

The following are the steps WSP will take to ensure that people who are employed by WSP are suitable to work with children. LSP service providers include tutors, programme leaders and volunteers, coaches and commercial providers.

<b>Procedure for Safe Recruitment</b>	<b>Yes/ No</b>	<b>Date/ Initials</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>Recruitment Process</b>			
Clearly defined /Tutor Service Agreement/ Volunteer Agreement including role and responsibilities and person specification including level of experience/qualifications required made available			
Recruitment documentation must specify WSP's commitment to safe recruitment and the protection of children and vulnerable adults			
<b>Application/Interview Process</b>			
Tutor Application Form required/provided. Volunteer Application Form required/provided			
Meeting / informal interview with a minimum of one LSP staff member			
Suitability of individual for position working with children/vulnerable persons assessed based on experience, ability to communicate and commitment to good practice			
Individual made aware of WSP's Code of Conduct in relation to children and be advised that should they be appointed they will be subject to garda vetting and reference checks			
Individual to provide contact details for two referees. Referees should not be related and ideally will have had regular contact with the applicant over a sustained period of time.			
<b>Checks Required Prior to Appointment</b>			
Self-Declaration Form completed			
WSP Code of Conduct signed			
Garda Vetting process satisfactorily completed			
Qualifications checked			
References – obtain at least two referees and ensure the question with regard to Safeguarding is satisfactorily answered.			
Tutor Contract for Services Agreement issued and signed. Volunteer Agreement issued and signed.			
<b>Onboarding/Induction/Training</b>			
Safeguarding training completed			
Safeguarding Policy read and signed			
WSP Induction to role/organisation complete			
Support plan in place			
Tutors – Supervision and monitoring plan in place.			

### c. LSP Partners

This *Safe Recruitment Checklist for Partners* outlines the steps taken by WSP to ensure that we are satisfied that organisations we work in partnership with to deliver programmes/activities to children and young people or vulnerable persons are suitable to do so. WSP Partners are varied and include sports clubs, community organisations, schools, leisure centres, national governing bodies and commercial providers/companies hired to deliver a programme etc.

Engagement with a potential WSP partner will often be initiated by WSP due to the nature of our requirements or may be a response by WSP to a request from a Partner organisation. The following are the elements of the WSP's Safe Recruitment Process for Partners that need to be considered.

Procedure for Safe Recruitment of Partner	Yes/No	Date/Initials	Comment
<b>Pre-Programme Development Process</b>			
Has there been sufficient planning/ meetings / discussions between WSP and the Partner organisation to effectively plan the programme?			
Has the Partner organisation identified a Programme Co-ordinator with whom WSP will engage with for all planning, administration and programme logistics?			
Has the lead Partner been agreed? This may be one of the following : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partner led programme where the involvement of WSP is likely to provide funding / share expertise etc.</li> <li>• Partner led programme where the involvement of WSP is to provide a coach/ tutor.</li> <li>• WSP led programme with the Partner supporting the programme.</li> <li>• If other, please detail.</li> </ul>			
On deciding to engage with a Partner has a Partnership Agreement been developed?			
Does the Partnership Agreement clearly specify WSP's commitment with regard to the protection of children and vulnerable persons?			
Does the Partnership Agreement clearly outline the commitment by the Partner with regard to the protection of children and vulnerable persons?			
Are there clearly defined roles and responsibilities for WSP with regard to safeguarding outlined within the Partnership Agreement?			



Are there clearly defined roles and responsibilities for the Partner with regard to safeguarding outlined within the Partnership Agreement?			
Has the Partner confirmed that their personnel have the appropriate level of experience/qualifications required to lead the activity?			
Has the Partner confirmed that the organisation has a safeguarding policy in place?			
Has the Partner confirmed that appropriate Garda Vetting procedures are in place and implemented within their organisation?			
Has the Partner confirmed that the relevant personnel in their organisation have undertaken safeguarding training?			
Has the Partnership Agreement been signed and dated by a senior representative from the Partner organisation and a WSP staff member?			
<b>Clarification of Ongoing Programme Communication, Monitoring and Reporting</b>			
Are there arrangements in place for the relevant WSP staff member to meet/ link with the Partner Programme Co-ordinator to discuss the ongoing roll out of the programme?			
Is it clearly understood that in the event of a safeguarding incident arising where the Partner is the programme lead that the organisation will refer to its own safeguarding policy and procedures and will alert WSP of any incident?			
Is it clearly understood, that in the event of a Partner led programme where a safeguarding incident arises relating to a Sports Leader provided by WSP, that the partner will follow their own policies and procedures, but will also alert WSP of the incident, at which point WSP will refer to its own safeguarding policy and procedures?			
Is it clearly understood that when a safeguarding incident arises where WSP is the programme lead the safeguarding policy and procedures of WSP will be followed?			

## Appendix 2: Best Practice Guidance

### Physical Contact

Physical contact during sport should always be intended to meet the child's needs, NOT the Sports Leaders. Appropriate physical contact may be required to assist in the development of a skill or activity or for safety reasons e.g., to prevent or treat an injury/ to assist a young person when learning how to grip a piece of sports equipment for the first time. This should be in an open environment with the permission and understanding of the participant.

#### When is physical contact appropriate in sport?

Contact should be determined by the age and developmental stage of the participant - Don't do something that a child can do for themselves. Physical contact between Sports Leaders and children in sport should take place only when necessary to:

- Develop sports skills or techniques.
- Treat an injury.
- Prevent an injury or accident from occurring.
- Meet the requirements of the sport.
- Comfort a distressed child or to celebrate their success.

#### What are good principles to follow?

- Physical contact should take place in the interests of and for the benefit of the child, rather than the Sports Leader involved.
- Sports Leaders should explain the nature of and reason for the physical contact to the child.
- Unless the situation is an emergency, the Sports Leader should ask the child for permission, for example to aid the demonstration a specific sports technique.
- Sports Leaders should provide guidance about any physical contact that will be required as part of that activity. The reasons for the physical contact and the nature of the physical contact should be explained and agreed.
- Children and young people should be encouraged to voice concerns they have if any physical contact makes them feel uncomfortable or threatened.
- Contact should not involve touching genital areas, buttocks, breasts or any other part of the body that might cause a child distress or embarrassment.
- Physical contact should always take place in an open or public environment and not take place in secret or out of sight of others.
- Well intentioned gestures such as putting a hand on the shoulder or arm, can, if repeated regularly, lead to the possibility of questions being raised by observers. As a general principle, Sports Leaders in positions of responsibility should not make gratuitous or unnecessary physical contact with children and young people. Resistance from a child should be respected.

#### What about children who need specific assistance due to disability or injury?

In the case of a young person with a disability specific support or assistance may be required. The following guidelines should be followed:

- Efforts should be made to receive as much information as possible on the child to ensure safe inclusion of him/her. There should be clear agreements on what is required.
- Parents/ guardians/ carers or their delegated care providers should be asked to undertake all intimate or personal care tasks for their child. This is not an appropriate role for Sports Leaders and others involved in leading activities.
- When children with disabilities are lifted or manually supported, they should be treated with dignity and respect.
- Relevant health and safety guidelines must be followed to ensure the safety of the child and those assisting.
- It is recommended that those assisting receive appropriate training in order to minimise the risk of injury both to themselves and the child.

#### What about physical punishment?

Any form of physical punishment is unlawful in all circumstances. It is a criminal offence and should be reported to An Garda Síochána and Tusla.

#### What about direct contact in coaching?

Some sport or physical activities are more likely to require Sports Leaders to come into physical contact with children and young people from time to time in the course of their duties. Examples include teaching a pupil how to use a piece of apparatus or equipment or demonstrating a move or exercise during a coaching or teaching session in order to reduce the risk of injury due to falls or errors when performing. Sports Leaders should be aware of the limits within which such contact should properly take place, and of the possibility of such contact being misinterpreted.

A number of sports governing bodies have developed sport-specific guidance to assist Sports Leaders in this area. This guidance should be followed by those teaching these sports. Even in sports where there is a need to support physically or touch a child, over-handling should be avoided.

#### Is it ok to comfort a child or celebrate success?

There may be occasions where a distressed young person needs comfort and reassurance which may include physical comforting such as a caring parent would give. A young person may also want to mark a success or achievement with a hug or other gesture. Sports Leaders should use their discretion in such cases to ensure that what is (and what is seen by others present) normal and natural does not become unnecessary and unjustified contact, particularly with the same young person over a period of time. Contact that a Sports Leader may feel is appropriate may be unwanted or uncomfortable to a young person. Sports Leaders should always meet the needs of the child, be age appropriate and respect resistance.

## **Bullying**

What is Bullying?



Bullying is defined by the Department of Education and Skills guidelines as unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.

#### Bullying

- All forms of bullying will be addressed.
- Everybody in WSP has a responsibility to work together to stop bullying.
- Bullying can include online as well as offline behaviour.

#### Bullying can include:

- Physical pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching etc...
- Name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing and emotional torment through ridicule, humiliation or the continual ignoring of individuals.
- Posting of derogatory or abusive comments, videos or images on social network sites.
- Racial taunts, graffiti, gestures, sectarianism, sexual comments, suggestions or behaviour.
- Unwanted physical contact. Children with a disability, from ethnic minorities, young people who identify as LGBTQi, or those with learning difficulties are more vulnerable to this form of abuse and are more likely to be targeted.

#### WSP will:

- Recognise its duty of care and responsibility to safeguard all participants from harm.
- Promote and implement this anti-bullying policy in addition to our safeguarding policy and procedures.
- Seek to ensure that bullying behaviour is not accepted or condoned.
- Require all WSP employees and Sports Leaders be given information about, and sign up to, this policy.
- Take action to investigate and respond to any alleged incidents of bullying.
- Encourage and facilitate children and young people to play an active part in developing and adopting a code of conduct to address bullying.
- Ensure that coaches are given access to information, guidance and/or training on bullying.

#### Each participant and Sports Leader will:

- Respect every child's need for, and rights to, a play environment where safety, security, praise, recognition and opportunity for taking responsibility are available.
- Respect the feelings and views of others.
- Recognise that everyone is important and that our differences make each of us special and should be valued.
- Show appreciation of others by acknowledging individual qualities, contributions and progress.
- Be committed to the early identification of bullying, and prompt and collective action to deal with it.
- Ensure safety by having rules and practices carefully explained and displayed for all to see.



- Report incidents of bullying they see to the relevant person (e.g. Sports Leader, DLP) – by doing nothing you are condoning bullying.

#### Support to the child:

- Children should know who will listen to and support them.
- Systems should be established to open the door to children wishing to talk about bullying or any other issue that affects them.
- Potential barriers to talking (including those associated with a child's disability or impairment) need to be identified and addressed at the outset to enable children to approach adults for help.
- Children should have access to Helpline numbers.
- Anyone who reports an incident of bullying will be listened to carefully and be supported.
- Any reported incident of bullying will be investigated objectively and will involve listening carefully to all those involved.
- Children being bullied will be supported and assistance given to uphold their right to play and live in a safe environment which allows their healthy development.
- Those who bully will be supported and encouraged to stop bullying.
- Sanctions for those bullying others that involve long periods of isolation, or which diminish and make individuals look or feel foolish in front of others, will be avoided.

#### Support to the parents/ guardians/ carers:

- Parents/ guardians/ carers should be advised on the WSP's bullying policy and practice.
- Any incident of bullying will be discussed with the child's parent(s)/carers.
- Parents will be consulted on action to be taken (for both victim and bully) and agreements made as to what action should be taken.
- Information and advice on coping with bullying will be made available.
- Support should be offered to the parent(s) including information on other agencies or support lines.

#### Useful Contacts:

Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (ISPCC): [www.ispcc.ie/shield](http://www.ispcc.ie/shield)

Anti-Bullying Centre DCU: [www4.dcu.ie/abc/index.shtml](http://www4.dcu.ie/abc/index.shtml)

NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000

Sticks and Stones: 087 9015199 or [www.sticksandstones.ie](http://www.sticksandstones.ie)

ChildLine UK: 0800 11 11 / [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

ChildLine Republic of Ireland: 1800 66 66 66 or Text Talk to 50101, [www.childline.ie](http://www.childline.ie)

Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum: [www.niabf.org.uk](http://www.niabf.org.uk)

Kidscape: [www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)

Anti-Bullying Alliance: [www.antibullyingalliance.org](http://www.antibullyingalliance.org)

#### Filming & Photography



The Filming and Photography guidance provides assistance for Sports Leaders on taking and using appropriate images. This guidance is not about preventing parents/ guardians and supporters from taking pictures, but rather to ensure that only those who have a right to take photographs do so. This guidance is designed to promote safeguards for any photographic or filming/video activity to minimise the risk of inappropriate taking and use of images. Anyone concerned about photography taking place at an event should contact the Sports Leader or DLP to deal with the matter.

### Definitions

- Event: may include any programme, taster session or any activity organised by WSP.
- Image: refers to all photographic and film/video footage.
- Responsible person: In general, the responsible person within WSP is the DLP. However, it may include any Sports Leader if the concerns are raised at an event or activity at which the DLP is not present.
- Children and young people: refers to all people U18;

### Consent to Take Images

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

- Individual parental consent where consent is sought for a single or specific event.
- General parental consent for the taking and use of images included as part of registration process for WSP activities.
- Consent for the taking and use of images should be agreed with partners on WSP programmes (e.g., school, disability group, youth group)
- Third party photographers, film/videographers or individuals from other organisations employed to take images must complete the WSP Self-Declaration Form on an annual basis.

### Communication at Events Regarding Taking and the Use of Images

WSP should clearly communicate to relevant individuals its plan to take and use images at activities. This may be done in the following ways:

- Inform participants and parents that a photographer may be in attendance at an event.
- Ask for parental or guardian permission to use the participant's image and consult with the child about its usage where appropriate.
- Signage and/or announcements at open or public events notifying participants that photographers are present and to contact WSP staff if they have concerns or do not wish for their image to be taken or used in publications.

### Taking Images in Certain Environments

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



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

- Changing rooms / Open changing areas.
- Individual changing/private cubicles provided for personal use.
- Toilets.
- Medical/physio treatment rooms.

#### Types of Appropriate Images

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

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

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

#### Safe Use of Images

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

Types of images and appropriate use:

- Promotional images – these are images taken by WSP Sports Leaders, WSP photographers at WSP events and activities for use for by WSP for publicity and promotion of the activity, future activities or publications.
- Personal images – images taken by parents/guardians or other family members during an event activity. Other people may be included in an image and we expect parents/guardians and other family members to respect this by not distributing images publicly.
- Training images – Any Sports Leaders taking images or footage during an activity session to specifically aid the young person in the development of a skill or technique must obtained expressed permission from WSP in advance. Any such images/footage may only be used as examples of technique or mastery of a skill for teaching/coaching purposes and should not be distributed outside this specific use.
- Media images – these are images taken by an individual from the media, i.e. TV, newspaper, social media or professional photographer where the images are to be used for publicity or promotion of the activities or future activities.

#### Use of Images on Social Media

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



- Personal details of a young person should not be included.
- Captions should be in keeping with the activity represented.
- The posting and any purpose should not breach the WSP code of conduct.
- The type of image should not breach guidance in this policy.

### Storage of Images

Storage includes any image stored as a hard copy and/or electronically as a soft copy. This includes images on social media, photographic archives, individual personal databases e.g., personal cameras, phones, etc. How personal images are stored is the responsibility of parents/guardians/carers with their child/young person.

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

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

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

Records must be kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act and be available only to those directly involved and within the confines of the obligations and duties of the Data Protection Act 2003.

### Inappropriate Images

#### Taking inappropriate images

If there is any concern about the nature of any image taken this should be reported to the responsible person in WSP who will refer to the statutory authorities. The concerned individual may also report their concern directly to the statutory authorities. The contact details for the statutory authority can be found in the Appendix 5: Statutory Contacts Republic of Ireland / WSP Contacts.

#### Non-authorized taking of images

If there is a concern about an individual taking images at an event this should be verbally reported to the relevant responsible person. The relevant responsible person will identify the person, clarify their reason for taking images and take the necessary steps which may include asking the person to leave. Where the event is open to the public e.g., where only part of the facility is being used, it will be necessary to report non-authorized taking of images to the facility manager. It may be necessary to report the non-authorized taking of images to the appropriate statutory authorities.

#### Inappropriate use of images

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

- The parent/guardian/ carer of any young person involved.





- The partner organisation
- The person responsible for posting the image.
- The media platform i.e., twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, print media etc.
- The statutory authorities.

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

#### Use of CCTV (Closed Circuit Television)

The use of CCTV is a positive step in safeguarding those that use facilities. It is important that when WSP is using a facility, a check is completed on the presence of CCTV within a facility and confirms that the facility has a policy and/or procedures in place.

Queries regarding the use of CCTV are a matter for the facility or the operating company.

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

#### **Use of Mobile Phones**

Those whose work with children and young people need to be aware of the opportunities for abuse through the misuse of mobile phones and text messaging. While good use of such media can be beneficial, we must be vigilant and alert to the possibilities of misuse and consequent harm that can result to young people. Sports Leaders must also take care to protect the children in their care and themselves. WSP's policy is that all communication with children and young people should be with/through the parent/guardian or partner organisation. However, on the rare occasion that it may be necessary to communicate directly with young people, the following principles will be applied:

- Parental permission must be obtained if the WSP staff member will be contacting young people via mobile phone. Where possible, a parent or guardian receives the text in addition to the young person.
- Only WSP staff involved in programmes and events should have young people's mobile numbers if the nature of their involvement requires them to phone or text them. Other Sports Leaders should not have access to young people's mobile numbers.
- If a WSP staff member has a young person's phone number it should only be used for the purposes it has been given, i.e., the WSP staff member should not share this information.
- If a WSP staff member is contacting young people, it should always be from a work mobile.
- It is not appropriate or acceptable to have constant contact with an individual participant.
- The use of phones is not permitted in certain locations; inappropriate use of a camera phone may cause upset or offence to another person e.g., changing rooms.



- Texts should be used for the purposes of reminding young people about events which are forthcoming. If it turns into a conversation, communications should be ended. A Sports Leader can suggest discussing the subject further at the next event or, if they are concerned about the young person, arrange to meet up to talk further (within the usual child protection parameters).

### Smart Phones

Smart phones should be used safely and responsibly.

Pictures can be very powerful and stir up strong emotions. Smart phone users should respect the private lives of others and not take or distribute pictures of other people if it could invade their privacy.

Sports Leaders and children/young people should not send pictures that are obscene, indecent, or menacing and should be sensitive about other people's gender identity, sexual identity, racial heritage, religion, or personal background. Both Sports Leaders and children/young people should be made aware that it is a criminal offence to take, make, and permit to be taken, distribute, show, or possess an indecent or sexually explicit image of a child under 18.

When commissioning professional photographers or inviting the press to an activity the Sports Leader in charge should ensure they are clear about expectations of them in relation to child protection. Professional photographers/film/video operators wishing to record an activity should seek accreditation from Sports Leaders by producing their professional identification for the details to be recorded. The Sports Leader should then:

- Provide a clear brief about what is considered appropriate in terms of content and behaviour.
- Issue the photographer with identification which should be worn at all times.
- Keep a record of accreditations.
- Inform leaders, children/young people, and parents, that a photographer will be in attendance is at the activity and check that they consent to both the taking and publication of films or photographs.
- Not allow unsupervised access to children/young people or one-to-one photo sessions.
- Not approve/allow photo sessions outside the activity or at a child/young person's home.
- Anyone concerned about any photography taking place should discuss his or her concerns with the Sports Leader.

Smart phones can be used to make children/young people safer. Older children, for example, using a taxi can send a picture of the car's registration to a friend before they begin the trip, or can simply use the phone to show parents where they are.

- Children/young people can only be photographed when permission has been provided in writing from their parent/ guardian and child.
- The scope of the use of photographs must also be stated as part of the parental permission.



- Children/young people should not be named individually in photographs unless necessary and with clear agreement and consent of parents and child, for example, if the child/young person concerned was winning a prize worthy of publication.
- When posting photographs on social media settings should be such that children/young people cannot be individually tagged.
- All photographs must be stored in a secure place either electronically in a password protected file or physically in a locked cabinet.
- If any electronic device/memory which contains photographs is disposed of or passed on, then the device must be wiped of all photographs in such a way that they cannot be recovered on that device.

#### Use of Mobile Phones During Activities

Groups should, with parents and children/young people, agree on the use of mobile phones during youth activities. This should be communicated to all parents and youth members. This agreement includes:

- Confirmation that when on activities the Sports Leader is the primary point of communication and is to be contacted if there is an emergency or change to previously agreed arrangements.
- That the usage of smart phones including text messaging or playing games cannot be allowed to be a distraction from a safe awareness of the environment or be allowed to interfere with full participation in the activity.
- For activities with longer durations, there may be a stated preferred time period when parents may make contact, if they wish. Parents should be advised that contact outside of this time may not be possible due to activities.

#### Use of Computers/Tablets/Web-enabled Games Consoles/Smart TVs

If such devices are used as part of activities within the organisation, guidelines should be produced to ensure that they are used for the correct purpose, and include, for example, what websites are suitable for the age of children/young people that the leaders are working with.

#### Internet Safety

The Office for Internet Safety  
Department of Justice and Equality  
51 St. Stephen's Green  
Dublin 2 Ph: (01) 602 8258  
Email: [internetsafety@justice.ie](mailto:internetsafety@justice.ie)  
[gov.ie](http://www.gov.ie) - Cybercrime ([www.gov.ie](http://www.gov.ie))

#### **Internet Safety**

Children are becoming increasingly sophisticated in their use of communication tools on the internet such as social networking sites, internet enabled camera phones and video and photograph sharing websites. While this technology offers fantastic opportunities for them to learn, play and to interact



with their peers, there can be downsides too. The anonymous and instantaneous nature of the internet can leave people exposed to greater risks including from potential sexual predators.

The Office for Internet Safety (OIS) was established in March 2008 as an Executive Office of the Department of Justice and Equality and has primary responsibility for the development and promotion of strategic actions to promote the highest possible levels of internet safety, particularly in relation to combating child pornography. The functions of the Office for Internet Safety have been incorporated into the department's Cybercrime Division and refocused to deal with issues of law enforcement, oversight of [hotline.ie](http://hotline.ie) (the confidential reporting service for illegal content on the internet in Ireland) and the Garda Blocking Initiative, and coordination of EU funding proposals. Any instances of suspected online child abuse should be reported to [www.hotline.ie](http://www.hotline.ie) immediately.

The OIS offer a lot of advice and guidance to parents and young people on the safe use of the internet. See [gov.ie](http://gov.ie) - Cybercrime ([www.gov.ie](http://www.gov.ie)), [gov.ie](http://gov.ie) - Be Safe Online ([www.gov.ie](http://www.gov.ie)) and [www.webwise.ie](http://www.webwise.ie) for more information.

## **Social Media**

In all their contacts and communications Sports Leaders must be seen to be open and transparent. This is the case whether communications are by traditional means or by electronic means.

NB: Sports Leaders must not communicate with children or young people via Sports leader's personal social networking profiles, email accounts, or chat rooms.

As WSP use and publish on their social networking sites they will ensure the following principles are applied:

- The page/profile must be password-protected, and the password must be held by at least three WSP staff members.
- The site should be monitored by a designated staff member appointed by the DLP. This person should have access to the login details of the site.
- Any inappropriate posts/comments should be removed by the designated staff member. Inappropriate, derogatory or defamatory remarks/ or unseemly language should never be used and will be removed.
- Content of any postings should be consistent with the aims of the organisation. In cases of doubt, WSP staff should seek advice.

### For Sports Leaders Communicating Digitally with Children or Young People

- Sports Leaders should not 'friend' or 'follow' children or young people involved in WSP programmes on social media. (Children or young people may 'follow' Sports leaders on social media so sports leaders should make sure any content they post is appropriate.)
- Messages left to or from children or young people on social network sites should be written on an open page (e.g., A Facebook 'Wall') and not in a private message or by using 'chat' [one-on-one].



- Sports Leaders should not network with children or young people via closed [one-on-one] chats e.g., Facebook messenger, WhatsApp, etc. This should be done only through ‘Group Chat.’
- Any emails sent to children or young people must be sent to at least one other Sports Leader. (This can be done by ‘bcc’ if necessary.)
- Sports Leaders should avoid communicating with children or young people in their organisation/group via email late at night.
- In signing off a post or email Sports Leaders should not do so in a way that could be misconstrued or misinterpreted by the recipient, e.g., “Luv X”; “xoxoxo”. Simply sign your name.
- Parents/carers should be asked to give their approval for leaders to communicate with their children/young people via social networking sites, or by any other means of internet communications (e.g., email).
- Parental and child’s permission is required before pictures or videos of children or young people are posted online.
- Any disclosures of abuses reported through a social networking site must be dealt with according to your reporting procedures.

### **Registration and Dropout from Programmes**

Attendance and drop out of participants should be monitored. Any unusual or unexpected drop out of children or Sports Leaders should be brought to the attention of the relevant WSP staff member. If any concerns regarding a child or children’s welfare are raised the matter should be handled in accordance with procedures outlined in this Code.

### **Accidents & Incidents Template Reporting Form**

In addition to the H&S accident/incident report form, this form should also be completed for any additional information.

### **Facilities**

#### Introduction

WSP has a responsibility for children and young people and have a general duty of care towards them. However, there are no specific legal requirements regarding the use of changing facilities. This document is therefore intended as practice guidance to support WSP and Sports Leaders to consider issues relevant to their particular context to help provide a safe environment for children and young people.

#### Existing National Governing Body, Local Authority or Facility Policies

Many national governing bodies of sport and other organisations, such as local authorities and private sports facilities, will already have guidance and policies in place which should be followed by affiliated clubs or other user groups.

This guidance may be used in the absence of any other guidelines, and to address issues or circumstances not covered in such a policy. It may assist in the review and updating of existing policies and procedures to support improvements in safeguarding and to develop a safer environment. The following aspects should be taken into account when accessing facilities:

- Type of Facility.
- Adults using the changing rooms at the same time as children.
- Supervision.
- Who should supervise.
- Unsupervised children in sport or leisure facilities.
- Parents' (or carers') responsibilities.
- Facility Operators Responsibilities.
- Mixed Gender Teams.

#### Supervision in the Changing Facility may also be Necessary When:

- Children are too young to be left alone or change themselves. Organisers of groups of children under eight years will be expected to make arrangements for their supervision while changing before and after the activity. Although most children of school age (four years old) may be capable of changing their clothes, many leisure facilities have established guidelines that any child below the age of eight years must be accompanied.
- The group includes children with a disability who require additional support and assistance with changing (note this should be undertaken by prior agreement with their parent or professional carer)
- Children could injure themselves or access a potential risk such as a swimming pool that is unattended.
- There are concerns about bullying, fighting or other troublesome behaviours taking place which need to be managed.

#### Who Should Supervise?

Where children and young people need supervision, Sports Leaders should consider who will carry this out. This task provides access to children in circumstances of increased vulnerability and therefore careful consideration should be given to ensuring that those undertaking this task have been assessed as being suitable to do so.

- Numbers - organisers are recommended to have more than one adult supervising, as this will ensure cover in the event of an accident or incident occurring or if one supervisor is called away.
- Gender - it is considered good practice to ensure that children are supervised by the same gender while changing.
- Timings - by agreeing a very clear timetable for use of the changing facilities by children, the supervising adults and Sports Leaders respectively, the risks associated to any extended contact between the adults/Sports Leaders and children are minimised.
- Carry out safe recruitment practices.

#### Facility Operators Responsibilities:

When children are given access to facilities, operators assume a duty of care for them. The level of responsibility will vary depending on:

- If the child is alone and unsupervised
- With parent/ guardian/ carer/s.
- Attending an activity.
- Attending an activity staffed by the facility.
- Attending a school group or club.
- Attending a public session.

Operators have a responsibility to put in place appropriate safeguarding arrangements which include promoting and implementing a policy for admitting unaccompanied children. This information should be provided to WSP informing them about the facility's policy regarding unaccompanied children using the facility, and any rules about the supervision of young children within the facility (particularly in changing/ shower areas where potential safeguarding risks are increased).

Many facilities currently use the age of eight as a guide. In practice, while facilities need to be able to establish a lower threshold for admission that is practical to operate, identifying an age for this purpose is difficult given variations in children's physical, psychological and emotional development. While the facility may set the lower age limit, it is for parents (who know most about their children and have primary responsibility for their welfare) to judge if their child needs to be accompanied even if older than this limit.

## **Transport and Travel**

### Transporting Young People

Sport Ireland does not state that Sports Leaders can never transport a young person by themselves, however they recommend individuals and organisations recognise the risks and put in place appropriate measures to reduce these risks.

In general, it is not recommended that Sports Leaders give lifts in their cars to individual young people. Best practice is clearly to avoid transporting a child alone. Circumstances/ emergency situations may arise where it is necessary to do so.

If late collections occur Sports Leaders should remain in pairs until participants have left. It is the responsibility of parents/ guardians/ carers to make arrangements for collection of young people, it should be made clear that WSP is responsible for only WSP activities.

If all alternatives have been exhausted and a Sports Leader has to transport a child there are a number of safety measures that should be put in place to minimise the risk:

- Parents should be informed of the person who will be transporting their child, the reasons why and how long the journey will take.
- A Sports Leader other than the planned driver should talk to the child about transport arrangements to check they are comfortable about the plans.
- The driver must ensure that they have insurance to carry others.
- The Sports Leader should attempt to have another adult in the car with them.
- The Sports Leader should have a point of contact and mobile phone should they break down.
- Children/ young people should wear seatbelts at all times.

### Easy Rules to Remember When Organising Transport

- It is good practice to receive informed consent from staff, parents and young people who will be transporting their child, why and how long the journey will take.
- Attempt to have more than one child in the car.
- Alternate drivers if possible and which child is dropped off last.
- Driver should have a point of contact/mobile phone.
- A person other than the planned driver should talk to the child about transport arrangements to check they are comfortable about the plans.
- The driver must ensure that they have insurance to carry others.
- Drivers representing and volunteering on behalf of WSP should be vetted through National Vetting Bureau if driving regularly, and therefore meeting the regulated activity criteria.
- Consider the need for booster seats.
- Parents and coaches can also download Sport Irelands SafeSport App [https://www.sportireland.ie/Participation/Code\\_of\\_Ethics/Code-Of-Ethics-App](https://www.sportireland.ie/Participation/Code_of_Ethics/Code-Of-Ethics-App). One of the features of the App is a 'Travel Tracker' function. This allows parents and coaches who are driving someone else's child/children home, for example after a training session, to permit the child's parent or guardian to view and have oversight of their location for a specified period of time while they are travelling on a journey.

### Personal Arrangements Between Parents

If parents make personal arrangements between themselves this is not the responsibility of WSP unless there are particular concerns about a parent's ability to drive for example due to the consumption of alcohol.

### The Use of Booster Seats

From 2006, the law in Europe requires all children in cars, vans and other goods vehicles to be carried using an appropriate child restraint until either they have reached the age of 12 years or are 150cm (5" in Republic of Ireland) and 135cms or whichever comes first with very few exceptions. The European law allowed countries to opt for a minimum height of between 135 and 150cm. For more information visit; Republic of Ireland: <http://www.rsa.ie/en/RSA/Your-Vehicle/>

### **Overnight, Staying Away & Hosting**

Being a host family or being hosted is an integral part of many sports and, if handled appropriately, can add to a child's enjoyment and experience at an event or programme. Hosting can be a challenging role but also very rewarding. Special care should be taken in the selection of homes for overnight stays. A host should be provided with as much information about the child/children staying with them and details of the competition. Where practicable more than one child should be placed with each host family. The family in turn should agree to provide references and be vetted when and if this is available. In addition, WSP should follow the recruitment and selection that is also outlined in this code.





When arranging for events/trips abroad, WSP will be dependent on the ability of the host organisation to access vetting services and obtain appropriate references. It is the responsibility of the trip organiser to provide the hosts with the relevant information on the child and details of what is expected.

Host families should:

- Agree to abide by the WSP's Code of Conduct.
- Consent to appropriate checks and references.
- Attend host family meetings before competitions or events.
- Provide a safe and supportive environment for young people.

The Lead Organisation should:

- Provide a travel pack to hosting families.
- Check out references with hosting families.
- Provide an itinerary of the trip.
- Gather information on destination and venue.

Children and Young People should:

- Sign a behaviour agreement.
- Not be asked to share a bed or a room with an adult.
- Be happy with the arrangements.
- Show respect to the host families.

Supervision, Ratios & Environment

Ensure adequate Adult / Child Ratios:

Good practice dictates that a leader should try to ensure that more than one adult is present. This will help to ensure the safety of the children as well as protect adults.

Adult / Child Ratios:

- Will depend on the nature of the activity, the age of the participants and any special needs of the group, a general guide might be 1:8 for under 12 years of age and 1:10 for over 12 years of age.
- There should be at least one adult of each gender with mixed parties.

Environment:

- Away trips will need higher rates of supervision and these should be discussed and agreed in advance with the relevant partner, NGB or organiser, children and young people should be supervised at all times.
- Avoid adults being left alone with young participants, if a Sports Leader needs to talk separately to a participant this should be done in an open environment, in view of others.
- Respect the privacy of young people while changing, Sports Leaders may only need to enter changing rooms where the participants are very young or require special assistance.



- When necessary, Sports Leaders should supervise in pairs or seek assistance, it is the safety and welfare of the participants that is of paramount importance.
- Sports Leaders should not be left alone with young people at the end of an event or activity. Clearly state times for start and finish.
- If late collections occur Sports Leaders should remain in pairs until participants have left.
- It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to make arrangements for collection of young people. It should be made clear that the WSP is responsible for only WSP activities.
- If a child is involved in an incident or accident and/or suffers an injury the parents/guardians/carer should be informed.

### **General Health & Safety**

WSP's Safety Statement and Policy address specific and potential risks attached to the delivery of safe activities. WSP has procedures in place for safeguarding against such risks.

### Appendix 3: Categories of Abuse

Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017 (ROI) defines four categories of abuse: neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse. A child/young person may be subjected to one or more forms of abuse at any given time.

When working with children/young people it is important to be aware of the four categories of abuse these are as follows:

#### **Neglect:**

Child neglect is the most frequently reported category of abuse, both in Ireland and internationally. Ongoing chronic neglect is recognised as being extremely harmful to the development and well-being of the child and may have serious long-term negative consequences.

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.

Neglect generally becomes apparent in different ways over a period of time rather than at one specific point. For example, a child who suffers a series of minor injuries may not be having his or her needs met in terms of necessary supervision and safety. A child whose height or weight is significantly below average may be being deprived of adequate nutrition. A child who consistently misses school may be being deprived of intellectual stimulation.

The threshold of significant harm is reached when the child's needs are neglected to the extent that his or her well-being and/or development are severely affected.

#### **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. Unless other forms of abuse are present, it is rarely manifested in terms of physical signs or symptoms.

Examples may include:

- i. the imposition of negative attributes on a child, expressed by persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming;
- ii. conditional parenting in which the level of care shown to a child is made contingent on his or her behaviours or actions;
- iii. emotional unavailability of the child's parent/carer;

- iv. unresponsiveness of the parent/carer and/or inconsistent or inappropriate expectations of the child;
- v. premature imposition of responsibility on the child;
- vi. unrealistic or inappropriate expectations of the child's capacity to understand something or to behave and control himself or herself in a certain way;
- vii. under- or over-protection of the child;
- viii. failure to show interest in, or provide age-appropriate opportunities for, the child's cognitive and emotional development;
- ix. use of unreasonable or over-harsh disciplinary measures;
- x. exposure to domestic violence;
- xi. exposure to inappropriate or abusive material through new technology.

Emotional abuse can be manifested in terms of the child's behavioural, cognitive, affective or physical functioning. Examples of these include insecure attachment, unhappiness, low self-esteem, educational and developmental underachievement, and oppositional behaviour.

The threshold of significant harm is reached when abusive interactions dominate and become typical of the relationship between the child and the parent/carer.

#### **Physical Abuse:**

Physical abuse is when someone deliberately hurts a child physically or puts them at risk of being physically hurt. It results in actual or potential physical harm from an interaction, or lack of interaction, which is reasonably within the control of a parent or person in a position of responsibility, power or trust. 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.

Physical abuse can include the following:

- i. Physical punishment.
- ii. Beating Slapping, hitting or kicking
- iii. Pushing Shaking or throwing.
- iv. Pinching Biting, choking or hair-pulling.
- v. Use of excessive force in handling.
- vi. Deliberate poisoning.
- vii. Suffocation.
- viii. Fabricated/induced illness.
- ix. Female genital mutilation.
- x. Terrorising with threats.
- xi. Observing violence.
- xii. Allowing or creating a substantial risk of significant harm to a child.

### **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.

Child sexual abuse may cover a wide spectrum of abusive activities. It rarely involves just a single incident and in some instances occurs over a number of years. Child sexual abuse most commonly happens within the family, including older siblings and extended family members.

Cases of sexual abuse mainly come to light through disclosure by the child or his or her siblings/friends, from the suspicions of an adult, and/or by physical symptoms.

Examples of child sexual abuse include:

- i. exposure of the sexual organs or any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of the child.
- ii. intentional touching or molesting of the body of a child whether by a person or object for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification.
- iii. masturbation in the presence of the child or the involvement of the child in an act of masturbation.
- iv. sexual intercourse with the child, whether oral, vaginal or anal.
- v. sexual exploitation of a child, which includes inciting, encouraging, propositioning, requiring or permitting a child to solicit for, or to engage in, prostitution or other sexual acts.

Sexual exploitation also occurs when a child is involved in the exhibition, modelling or posing for the purpose of sexual arousal, gratification or sexual act, including its recording (on film, video tape or other media) or the manipulation, for those purposes, of the image by computer or other means. It may also include showing sexually explicit material to children, which is often a feature of the 'grooming' process by perpetrators of abuse.

- vi. consensual sexual activity involving an adult and an underage person. In relation to child sexual abuse, it should be noted that, for the purposes of the criminal law, the age of consent to sexual intercourse is 17 years for both boys and girls. An Garda Síochána will deal with the criminal aspects of the case under the relevant legislation.

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

NB: If you require further information on any of the categories of abuse listed above please consult Children First Guidance directly via the following link: [https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Children\\_First\\_National\\_Guidance\\_2017.pdf](https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Children_First_National_Guidance_2017.pdf)

(Chapter 2: Types of Child Abuse and How They May Be Recognised)

## Appendix 4: Signs of Abuse

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 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/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 plans.

You should consider these factors as part of being alert to the possibility that a child may be at risk of suffering abuse and in bringing reasonable concerns to the attention of Tusla.



## Appendix 5: Statutory Contacts Republic of Ireland / WSP Contacts.

Under no circumstances should any individual be left with a worry or concern about a child and feel they are unable to discuss it with their organisation's Designated Liaison Person (DLP).

Anyone can consult informally with TUSLA Child & Family Agency if you have a concern.

Please see link to Tusla website below.

If you think the child is in immediate danger and you cannot contact Tusla, you should contact the Gardaí without delay.

**Tusla (ROI): [www.tusla.ie/children-first/contact-a-social-worker3](http://www.tusla.ie/children-first/contact-a-social-worker3)**

**An Garda Síochána: 999/112**

### **Key Waterford Contacts:**

#### **Waterford Duty Social Work Team – Discuss/Report a Concern**

Waterford is located in a Tusla Area comprising of Wexford and Waterford. The duty social work office covering Waterford is located in Wexford.

Child and Family Agency

Ely House

Ferrybank

Co. Wexford

Phone: 053 9198201

#### **WSP Designated Liaison Person and Mandated Person**

Rosarie Kealy

Sports Co-ordinator

Waterford Sports Partnership

Civic Offices

Dungarvan

Co. Waterford

087 7576579





**Waterford Garda Stations – District Headquarters**

Waterford Garda Station  
Patrick Street  
Waterford  
051 305300

**Dungarvan Garda Station**

Youghal Road  
Dungarvan  
Co. Waterford  
058 48600