

IRISH ATHLETIC BOXING ASSOCIATION



SAFEGUARDING YOUNG PEOPLE IN BOXING POLICY

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Policy Statement

The Irish Athletic Boxing Association is fully committed to safeguarding the well-being of its members. Every individual in the Irish Athletic Boxing Association should at all times, show respect and understanding for members rights, safety and welfare and conduct themselves in a way that reflects the principles of the organisation and the guidelines contained in the Safeguarding Guidance for Children & Young People in Sport.

In the IABA our first priority is the welfare of the young people and we are committed to providing an environment which will allow participants to perform to the best of their ability, free from bullying and intimidation. Safeguarding and the protection of young people within boxing is the concern of all adults at all times, irrespective of their role within the organisation.

This policy statement will guide all other rules and regulations as they relate to volunteers and young people who partake boxing as members of the IABA. This policy document provides various IABA's templates which can be modified to suit the specific needs of each club. However, they should reflect the principles outlined by the IABA and should be approved by the club management committee.

1.1 Context

The Irish Athletic Boxing Association (IABA) are committed to ensuring that the best interests of children and young people attending our services are of paramount importance. Our guiding principles and this guidance document 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, and in Northern Ireland – the Children (NI) Order and Cooperating to Safeguarding Children and Young People 2017.

This guidance is also informed by 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. In Northern Ireland guidance is also from Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007, Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 and Cooperating to Safeguard Children and Young People 2017.

➤ *For more information on Legislation and Policy please see Appendix 1*

1.2 Purpose & Aim

The aim of this guidance document is to help boxing clubs to create a culture of safety that promotes the welfare of children and young people engaged in boxing. This guidance document supports boxing clubs 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.

It does this through the provision of guidance and information in relation to the carrying out of a risk assessment, the development of a Child Safeguarding Statement (see appendix 2 for sample for club's to adapt and use) and the development and implementation of policies and procedures for safeguarding and protection of children and young people.

This guidance is for the benefit for everyone involved in volunteering with children and young people's in boxing. It has been developed to support boxing clubs in the ROI, and in NI, to meet their child safeguarding and child protection responsibilities.

1.3 Values & 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. We want 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 guidance document. We acknowledge that the values are relevant throughout sport but identify them as being particularly essential when we talk about children's sport.

- 1. Fun and Healthy boxing must be a fun and healthy experience for all.*
- 2. Inclusion boxing 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.*

2.1 Overall Safeguarding & Child Protection Responsibilities for Boxing Clubs

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 impact 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, organisations working with children and young people are required to:

- **Carry out a risk assessment of harm and produce a Child Safeguarding Statement. For club's this means agreeing a club specific risk assessment and producing a Child Safeguarding Statement based on the IABA sample appendix 2**
- **Produce, implement and review an organisational Child Safeguarding Policy which outlines procedures and practice. For all boxing clubs in Ireland this requires them to agree to adhere to this revised IABA policy and procedures as part of the affiliation process**
- **Produce, implement and review organisational Codes of Conduct/ Practice guidelines when working with children and young people. For clubs they must ensure all youth member, officials, coaches and parents are made aware of the code of conduct and take opportunities to remind them throughout the season.**

2.2 Safeguarding Risk Assessment

Children First National Guidance 2017 (ROI) states clearly that organisations who provide services to children must ensure that they prevent, as far as practicable, deliberate harm or abuse to the children while availing of their services. This includes National Governing Sport bodies such as the IABA and their affiliated clubs.

The safeguarding risk assessment considers the potential for harm to come to children whilst they are in the relevant organisation's (IABA and/or Affiliated clubs) 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 not general health and safety.

While Children First National Guidance 2017 refers directly to legislation enacted in ROI, the IABA expect all our clubs in the 32 counties (including NI) to conduct a safeguarding risk assessment and produce a Child Safeguarding Statement at least every 24 months.

Under the Children First Act 2015 (ROI) and IABA affiliation regulations, if your organisation is providing a relevant service for children, you must:

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

The above responsibilities rest with the provider of the relevant service, the clubs committee.

A safeguarding risk assessment is an exercise where your club's committee or members selected by the club's committee examine all aspects of the service provided by the club from a safeguarding perspective. This process is conducted to establish whether there are any practices or features of the service provided by the club that have the potential to put children at risk of harm. The risk assessment process is intended to enable your club to:

- Identify potential risk.
- Develop policies and procedures to minimise risk by responding in a timely manner to potential risks.
- Review whether adequate precautions have been taken to eliminate or reduce these risks.

The IABA in consultation with Sport Ireland, Sport NI and the Children in Sport Group have designed a sport specific risk assessment template which is available to the all IABA affiliated clubs. As stated in the Children First Act 2015 (ROI) the risk assessment is a legal requirement that must be undertaken by the providers of relevant services who engage in sporting activities with children and young people in Ireland.

In Northern Ireland there is an expectation that all regulated activities have robust safeguarding procedures in place and this requirement though not a legal requirement is often linked to public funding. While Children First Act 2015 refers directly to legislation enacted in ROI, the IABA expect all our affiliated clubs in the 32 counties (including NI) to conduct a safeguarding risk assessment and produce a Child Safeguarding Statement at least every 24 months.

➤ For more information on Risk Assessments please see Appendix 2

2.3 Child Safeguarding Statement

The Children First Act 2015 (ROI) legally requires boxing clubs in ROI that are providers of relevant services to prepare a Child Safeguarding Statement. This is good practice and an affiliation and funding requirement for all boxing clubs throughout Ireland. The Child Safeguarding Statement is a written statement that specifies the service being provided and the principles, that a child availing of the service is safe from harm. Clubs should ensure that their Child Safeguarding Statement has due regard to the Children First Guidance

https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Children_First_National_Guidance_2017.pdf, or equivalent and any other child protection guidelines issued by the relevant government departments or any guidelines issued by statutory authorities concerning Child Safeguarding Statements. Appendix 2 is the sample statement produced by the IABA for clubs to adopt.

What the Child Safeguarding Statement should contain:

As outlined above, the Children First Act 2015 (ROI) places obligations on organisations that provide relevant services to children. These obligations are:

1. To keep children safe from harm while they are using the service (section 10) and promote the paramountcy principle that the welfare of the child is core
2. To carry out a risk assessment to identify whether a child or young person could be harmed while using the service (section 11.3)
3. To develop a Child Safeguarding Statement (section 11.3) which must include both the written risk assessment and the procedures that are in place to appoint a relevant person to be the first point of contact in respect of the organisation's Child Safeguarding Statement

Manage any risk identified

The IABA are committed to ensuring we can reduce any identified risk by:

- Investigating an allegation against any staff/volunteer member about any act, omission or circumstance in respect of a child availing of the service. Unless that allegation is of a threshold that requires statutory agencies involvement, if so then clubs and the IABA must await advice on how to proceed.
- Having procedures in place to ensure we only select and recruit staff /volunteer members who are suitable¹ to work with children.
- Providing information and training to staff /volunteer members on child protection and safeguarding issues.
- Enabling staff/volunteer members in ROI, whether mandated persons or otherwise, to make a report to Tusla in accordance with the Act or any guidelines issued by the statutory authorities. In NI reports are made to the Health and Social Care Trust in accordance with their guidance.
- Maintaining a list of persons in the organisation who are mandated persons under the Act.

¹ Please note that ensuring a person's suitability is more than just vetting them, it also requires references, meeting/interviewing the person and setting a probationary period to help assess their suitability.

- Appointing a relevant person in the organisation for the purposes of the Act.
- Developing a culture within boxing of listening to children and facilitating their views.

The IABA in consultation with Sport Ireland, Sport NI and the Children in Sport Group have designed a sport specific risk assessment template which is available to the all IABA affiliated clubs. As stated in the Children First Act 2015 (ROI) the risk assessment is a legal requirement that must be undertaken by the providers of relevant services who engage in sporting activities with children and young people in Ireland.

➤ *For more information on Child Safeguarding Statements please see Appendix 2*

2.4 Sport Ireland’s Safeguarding Audit Framework

The Sport Ireland Safeguarding Audit framework (see appendix 3 for more information) is designed to support National Governing Bodies (NGB’S) and their affiliated clubs to strengthen their adherence to safeguarding policies and procedures thereby ensuring that children and young people are protected in sport. It has been designed to help sporting organisations safeguard children from harm, meet their legal obligations and adopt best practice.

The framework is comprehensive and sets out expectations beyond those referenced in existing statutory guidance.

The framework provides the structure for risk assessments as required by section 11(1) (a) of the Children First Act 2015 (ROI) and as such, will complement the development of effective Child Safeguarding Statements. It also provides a robust reassurance process that benchmarks the quality of safeguarding practice and delivers a mechanism for ensuring ongoing compliance.

The framework is:

- Fundamentally child focused.
- Easy to access and simple to understand.
- Designed to support the whole sporting community.
- Configured to reflect the voices of children, parents, carers, staff and volunteers.
- Fully compliant with legislation and statutory guidance.

Who is the Framework for?

The framework has been developed for use by all sports organisations that work with children, from grassroots to the national level. It is applicable across the island of Ireland and covers individual sport clubs, and the National Governing Bodies of Sport.

Principles

In sport, whilst practice might not make you perfect it will always make you better. This key principle should be applied when using the framework. Regular and consistent implementation of the framework will help us all make children safer.

The framework is underpinned by the requirements set out in relevant legislation, statutory guidance and Sport Ireland's Safeguarding Guidance for Children & Young People in Sport. It has a fundamental focus on the context of children in sport and the creation of safe spaces where they can be seen, heard and helped.

- For more information on the Safeguarding Audit Framework please see Appendix 3

2.5 Child Safeguarding and Protection - Policies, Procedures and Practice

By carrying out a safeguarding risk assessment and producing a Child Safeguarding Statement each IABA affiliated club 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.

The policies and procedures include the roles and responsibilities of the people within the organisation, safe recruitment and selection of people, and 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.

2.5.1 Safe Recruitment Procedures for those working with Children & Young People

** Please note: A procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of workers and volunteers to work with children is a specified procedure under the Children First Act 2015 (ROI) and Keeping Safe - Our Duty to Care resource pack*

The Risks

The majority of volunteers will help out through a genuine desire to see children and/or their particular club develop. Unfortunately, we must face the reality that a small minority of people will join an organisation or club as an opportunity to gain access to children. They will create an air of acceptability about their role, justifying their close contact with children. One important factor in deciding whether behaviour is a risk of abuse or neglect is the impact of that behaviour on the child rather than the intention of the adult.

In order to safeguard young people against such risks it is important that clubs take all reasonable steps to ensure that only suitable people are recruited to work with children and families by adopting and consistently applying a safe and clearly defined method of recruiting staff and volunteers.

Below are steps to assist clubs with safe recruitment. If you are dealing with someone new to the club you will need to be rigorous with respect to recruitment procedures, however you equally need to be sure of all those working with young people, including those who have been members for quite some time undertake recruitment checks². Any existing member who wishes to work with young people will also need to be assessed for their suitability for a role with children.

² Retrospective National Vetting Bureau checks are a legal requirement in ROI and club officials are in breach the law if they allow anyone to coach or volunteer with young people if that person has not had an NVB check administered by the IABA.

Easy Rules to Remember

The implementation of thorough recruitment and selection procedures will help to keep children and young people safe within your club. Good practice in management and supervision of workers and volunteers after appointment is a further essential safeguard to help keep children/young people safe.

The procedures outlined below are recommended best practice in your club. This reduces the risk of someone targeting your club to gain access to children and/or of 'seasoned' members moving roles [Please see safe recruitment guidance on the following page].

Sports clubs/organisations should ensure good recruitment procedures for 'all' members by:

- Insisting that a person applying for any post of responsibility within the club complete the relevant membership application form, verify qualifications, person should be provided with a role descriptor.
- Obtaining two references in writing, followed up with personal contact with the reference provider (any request for references should only be sought for preferred applicants).
- Ensuring the individual completes their vetting with either the National Vetting Bureau or Access NI through the IABA prior to commencement of working with children or vulnerable people. For more information on this process please visit <http://iaba.ie/documents/>
- Setting a probationary period (six months) which can be used to assess the volunteer's commitment to promoting good practice in relation to young people.
- Interviewing or meeting the individual either formally or informally. Appoint two club members to meet the applicant who will be able to: - 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).
- Ensuring the club management committee ratifies appointments.
- Once recruited into the club, all volunteers and members should be adequately managed and inducted into policies and procedures.
- When storing information in relation to applicants this should be treated as highly sensitive and confidential. It should be kept in a locked cupboard that is accessible only to a nominated officer and a deputy nominated officer.
- Ensuring they have agreed to and signed up to the relevant Code of Conduct for those working with young people. For more information please visit <http://iaba.ie/safe-guarding-and-child-protection-section/>
- Ensuring they have met with club officials and that they understand 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.
- Ensuring they give a commitment to complete the necessary safeguarding training.
- Ensuring they understand that supervision is a vital safeguard for the club so they should avoid working alone.
- Ensuring they know who the Child Protection Officer/Designated Liaison Person within the club is and understand the youth structures of the club/organisation.

➤ *For more information on Safe Recruitment please see Appendix 4*

2.5.2 Safeguarding Training

Sport Ireland's and Sport NI has developed 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. Sport Irelands Safeguarding 1, 2 & 3 and Sport NI Safeguarding 1&2 workshops are recognised by the IABA as a requirement for staff & volunteers who work directly with children.

Who is Safeguarding Training for?

All staff and volunteers should receive safeguarding training appropriate for their role. Basic face to face 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 and volunteers, and in line with national guidance and changing legislation. The IABA require those working with young people refresh their safeguarding knowledge every 5 years.

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.

2.6 IABA Safeguarding Training Policy:

Any individual whose role will have ongoing contact with our young members or vulnerable persons in the provision of their activities must complete safeguarding training (as part of best practice the IABA would encourage anyone involved who may not have ongoing contact with our young members to complete safeguarding training - including parents).

Renewing Safeguarding certificates

Safeguarding training requires renewal **every 5 years**.

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

- *For more information on Safeguarding Training Requirements please see Appendix 9*

2.7 Roles and Responsibilities

Everyone in boxing i.e. children, parents /carers and Sports Leaders 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. Clubs should ensure that the work of Sports Leaders which occurs mainly on a voluntary basis, is guided by this Safeguarding Guidance. Interaction 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. Adults including parents /carers, who create an environment in which meaningful, open relationships are valued and where the integrity of everyone is respected, can promote such interaction.

The IABA

The IABA is recognised by the respective international federations (AIBA & EUBC) as being responsible for the administration of boxing on an all-Ireland basis. The IABA is responsible for overseeing the adoption and implementation of this guidance, the legal requirements set out by and Children First (ROI) and the good practice guidelines and standards in NI by all its affiliated members.

Boxing Clubs

To ensure that best practice is being followed, all boxing clubs should work closely with the IABA. Club committees and club members should follow the guidance outlined in this policy to ensure that best practice is implemented in the club environment. For more information on safeguarding and child protection in the IABA please visit - <http://iaba.ie/safe-guarding-and-child-protection-section/>

- *For more information on Safeguarding Roles, Responsibilities & Relationships in Sport please see Appendix 5*

2.8.1 Reporting & Protection

All those involved in boxing 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 (See appendix 11 for sample TUSLA proforma). In NI there is a standard UNIOCNi form for statutory agencies, however voluntary sports can complete their own proforma. Please see appendix 12 for sample form to be used for reporting incidents in NI. 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. Staff and volunteers should be alert to the possibility that children with whom they are in contact may be being 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 either Tusla or HSCT.**

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in a paid or voluntary capacity, or those working in affiliated organisations (clubs, county boards, provincial bodies and various IABA committees), 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. 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 club/organisation’s Child Protection Officer/Designated Liaison Person (DLP).

Any individual can contact TUSLA or the HSCT to discuss or report a child protection/welfare concern. Please see link to Tusla/ HSCT Gateway Teams websites below.

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

Useful Contacts

- Tusla (ROI): www.tusla.ie/children-first/contact-a-social-worker3
- An Garda Síochána: **999/112**
- In Northern Ireland it is the [Police Service of Northern Ireland](#) (PSNI) and the Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT) Gateway Team. Alternatively you can contact the NSPCC helpline to discuss any concern about a child: Telephone: **0808 800 5000** Text: **88858** Email: **help@nspcc.org.uk** Visit gateway contacts: www.nidirect.gov.uk/publications/gatewayservice-teams-contact-details

2.8.2 Recognition

Signs of abuse can be physical, behavioural or developmental. A cluster or pattern of signs is the most reliable indicator of abuse. Indicators should be noted. It is important, however, to realise that all of these indicators can occur in other situations where abuse has not been a factor.

Category indicators

<u>ABUSE</u>	<u>Physical</u>	<u>Behavioural Physical</u>
Physical	Unexplained bruising in soft tissue areas Bites, burns and scalds	Becoming withdrawn or aggressive Reluctance to change clothing
Emotional	Drop in performance Crying	Regressive behaviour Excessive clinginess
Neglect	Weight loss Untreated fractures	Changes in attendance Reluctance to go home
Sexual	Torn or bloodstained clothing Inappropriate sexual awareness behaviour or language	Distrustful of adults’ Sudden drop in performance
Exploitation (NI definition only)		

***The above is only a sample list and is not exhaustive**

2.8.3 Grounds for Concern

Consider the possibility of child abuse if there are reasonable grounds for concern. Reasonable grounds for concern (Page 38, Children First 4.3.2,) exist when there is:

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

2.8.4 Response to a Child Making an Allegation of Abuse

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

- (a) deal with any allegation of abuse in a sensitive and competent way through listening to and facilitating the child to tell about the problem, rather than interviewing the child about details of what happened
- (b) Stay calm and not show any extreme reaction to what the child is saying. Listen compassionately, and take what the child is saying seriously
- (c) Understand that the child has decided to tell something very important and has taken a risk to do so. The experience of telling should be as positive as possible so that the child may be less concerned if talking to those involved in any further investigation
- (d) be honest with the child and tell them that it is not possible to keep information a secret
- (e) make no judgemental statements against the person whom the allegation is made
- (f) not question the child unless for clarification. Avoid using leading questions should be avoided. Open, non-specific questions should be used e.g. "can you explain to me what you mean by that" or "tell me more about that"
- (g) check out the concerns with the parents/guardians before making a report unless doing so would endanger the child or compromise any further investigation
- (h) give the child some indication of what would happen next, such as informing parents/guardians, Tusla Child & Family Agency or Gateway Service Team
- (i) carefully record the details (see template 4)
- (j) pass on this information to the Club Children's Officer
- (k) reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you

2.8.5 Reporting Suspected or Alleged Child Abuse

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

- (a) observe and note dates, times, locations and contexts in which the incident occurred, or suspicion was aroused, together with any other relevant information
- (b) Report the matter as soon as possible to the Club Children's Officer with responsibility for reporting abuse. If the Club Children's Officer has reasonable grounds for believing that the child has been abused or is at risk of abuse, s/he will make a report to the Tusla Child & Family Agency or Gateway Service Team who have statutory responsibility to investigate and assess suspected or actual child abuse
- (c) In cases of emergency, where a child appears to be at immediate and serious risk and the Club Children's Officer is unable to contact a duty social worker, the police authorities should be contacted. Under no circumstances should a child be left in a dangerous situation pending intervention by the Statutory Authorities
- (d) if the Club Children's Officer is unsure whether reasonable grounds for concern exist s/he can informally consult with the local statutory agencies, (clubs should ensure they have out of hours contact numbers for their local area). S/he will be advised whether or not the matter requires a formal report
- (e) In those cases where the club finds that it does not have reasonable grounds for reporting a concern to the Statutory Authorities, the member who raised the concern should be given a clear written statement by the Clubs Children's Officer of the reasons why the club is not taking action. The member should be advised that, if they remained concerned about the situation, they are free to consult with, or report to, the Statutory Authorities.

A Club Children's Officer reporting suspected or actual child abuse to the Statutory Authorities will first inform the family of their intention to make such a report, **unless doing so would endanger the child or undermine any further investigation.**

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

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

This law does not exist in Northern Ireland, but an individual who reports concerns in 'good faith' is not deliberately attempting to slander another person's name. In Northern Ireland there is legislation, the Criminal Law Act (NI)1967 which places the responsibility on everyone to report offences or to forward information to the police by emphasizing the 'duty of every other person, who knows or believes, (a) that the offence or some other arrest able offences have been committed: and (b) that he has information which is likely to secure, or to be material assistance in securing, the apprehension, prosecution or conviction of any person for that offence'

2.8.6 Allegations Against Sports Leaders

The IABA has agreed procedures to be followed in cases of alleged child abuse against its leaders. If such an allegation is made against a leader working within the club, two procedures should be followed:

- The reporting procedure in respect of suspected child abuse (reported by the club children's officer, see previous page)
- The procedure for dealing with the leader (carried out by the club Chair or senior officer, or a person not already involved with the child protection concern)

The safety of the child making the allegation should be considered and the safety of any other children who may be at risk. The club should take any necessary steps to protect the children in its care. The issue of confidentiality is important, information is on a need to know basis and the coach/leader should be treated with respect and fairness.

2.8.7 The reporting Procedure

If the club children's officer has reasonable grounds for concern, the matter should be reported to the statutory agencies, using the standard reporting pro-forma (please see appendix 11 RoI and appendix 12 for NI).

The Sports Leader

While the club children's officer makes the report to the local statutory authorities, the Chair of the club should deal with the leader in question.

- The Chair, following confirmation/consultation with statutory agencies should privately inform the leader that (a) an allegation has been made against him/her and (b) the nature of the allegation. He / she should be afforded an opportunity to respond. His / her response should be noted and passed on to the statutory agencies.
- The leader should be asked to step aside but it should be made clear that it is only a precautionary measure and will not prejudice any possible later disciplinary proceedings. If the leader fails to step aside voluntarily, the club should contact the National Children's Officer immediately – david@iaba.ie or **+353860453904**.

The IABA national children's officer and provincial children's officer should be informed by the club children's officer that the coach/leader has been asked to stand aside for safeguarding related matters.

The IABA case management group will consider if there is to be disciplinary action taken against the leader but should ensure that this does not interfere with the investigation of the statutory authorities. It is important that the IABA consider the outcome of the investigation and any implications it might have. The fact that person an allegation has been made against has not been prosecuted or been found guilty does not automatically mean that they are appropriate to return to work with young people in the future.

To support the club children's officer in dealing with sensitive matters that they feel uncomfortable with, as they may know both parties so well, the IABA have appointed children's officers at county/provincial levels and a central IABA children's officer who will take on the responsibility of liaising with the statutory authorities if the person at club level feel unable to do so.

2.8.8 Dealing with Concerns about a Colleague

The vast majority of people who work with children are well motivated and would never harm a child. Unfortunately, a few do, and it is essential that the organisation creates a culture that makes staff/volunteers willing and comfortable to voice their concerns, particularly those about someone with whom they work or whom they know. Again, the organisation's Safeguarding Procedures should be followed. During either an internal process or if required an external investigation, support should be given to the individual who voices concerns, to the person the concern is about and to any young person/people involved. Once the investigation is completed, the organisation must decide what action, if any, is necessary to prevent a similar situation arising again. The IABA and our clubs must base our decision-making process on the civil threshold of "balance of probability" rather than the criminal threshold of "beyond reasonable doubt" when dealing with poor practice non-criminal issues.

Poor practice is much lower balance of probability as it is likely to have occurred considering the person's behaviour, has similar things like this happened before.

Responding to Non-Recent Allegations of Abuse

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

- Clearly establish with the adult complainant if there may be any children currently at risk of harm from the person, they are saying abused them as a child.
- Advise the person making the complaint that they should inform the Police. Encourage them to do so while acknowledging the brave steps they have already taken in beginning to talk about their experience as a child. It is important that the person knows that there is a likelihood that an abuser will not have stopped abusing after their individual abuse ended and if the person harmed them they could be continuing to cause harm to others. This needs to be done without reinforcing the inappropriate guilt the survivor may already have for not coming forward earlier.
- If the complainant refuses to talk to the statutory authorities but has provided you with enough identifying factors then this information MUST be shared with the police. This breach of the complainant's confidence is only appropriate if there is any potential that the alleged perpetrator is still a risk to children or could face

prosecution (i.e. they are alive). Remember, the welfare of any children currently at risk is paramount. This must take priority over any request of confidentiality from the person providing you with the information/complaint. This should be explained to them at the earliest possible stage

- Offer support to the complainant when making a formal complaint to the police.
- Signpost the complainant to support agencies that can provide counselling

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

Confidentiality

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

A guarantee to maintain confidentiality can be given but undertakings regarding secrecy cannot, as the welfare of the child will supersede all other considerations and all those involved should be made aware of the importance of confidentiality, but this does not mean secrecy.

- All information should be treated in a careful and sensitive manner and should be discussed only with those who need to know
- Information should be conveyed to the parents / guardians of the child in a sensitive way unless to do so would place the child at further risk and advice should be sought from statutory agencies.
- Giving information to others on a 'need to know' basis for the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality
- All persons involved in a child protection process (the child, his / her parents / guardians, the person the allegation is against, his / her family, coach/leaders) should be afforded appropriate respect, fairness, support and confidentiality at all stages of the procedure.
- Information should be stored in a secure place, with limited access only to designated people.
- The requirements of the Data Protection laws should be adhered to.
- Breach of confidentiality (i.e. only those who have a right to have the information receive it) is a serious matter.

Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints can be difficult to deal with but should not be ignored. In all cases the safety and welfare of the child/children is paramount. Any such complaints relating to inappropriate behaviour should be brought to the attention of the national/club children's officer. The information should be responded to and handled in a confidential manner.

Rumours

Rumours should not be allowed to hang in the air. Any rumours relating to inappropriate behaviour should be brought to the attention of the national/club children's officer and clarified without delay.

2.8.9 Disclosing information to Others

- **Northern Ireland**

If as a club who have information about an individual, who you are concerned poses a risk to children, joining another club/organisation you should seek advice from the PSNI (Public Protection Unit) before considering disclosing that information. Department of Justice guidance places the responsibility on the police to co-ordinate and lead the risk assessment and management process for those who pose a risk to children.

The police have a standardised assessment method to consider the risk an individual may pose. Depending on this risk assessment the police will take the decision about sharing information. If your concern is not of a threshold for PSNI disclosure process but your concern remains you can notify the local HSCT about your concerns for the safety of a particular group of children or individuals' behaviour.

Duty to Refer the Disqualification to the Disclosure and Barring Service

Under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Order, all organisations operating in NI have a legal duty to refer information to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) in certain circumstances. In all cases there are two conditions, both of which must be met, to trigger a referral to the DBS by a regulated activity provider (a boxing club for example).

A referral **MUST** be made to the DBS if the club or IABA:

1. withdraws permission for an individual to engage in regulated activity, or would have done so had that individual not resigned, retired, been made redundant or been transferred to a position which is not regulated activity; because
2. They think that the individual has:
 - a. engaged in relevant conduct.
 - b. satisfied the criteria set out in the Harm Test; or
 - c. Received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence.

The referral must be made to the DBS when the club/IABA (in accordance with good practice) has gathered sufficient evidence as part of its investigations to support its reasons for withdrawing

permission for the person in question to engage in regulated activity and consulted with the relevant social services or police if appropriate. The IABA must also be informed if any club removes an individual from engaging in regulated activity for reasons outlined above to enable the IABA to consider the information and decide about the persons coaching award. Additional information on the DBS and the referral process can be found on the DBS website: www.homeoffice.gov.uk/dbs.

- **Republic of Ireland**

In the absence of the above guidance, if a club/organisation has information about an individual, who you are concerned poses a risk to children, joining another club/organisation you should seek advice from the Garda before considering disclosing that information. If there is no conviction information but concerns about the individual's practice, then advice about managing the information should be sought from the IABA national Children's Officer and Tusla.

- *For more information on Recognising, Responding, Recording and Reporting please see Appendix 6*
- *To Access Safeguarding Reporting Form for RoI please see Appendix 11 & for NI see Appendix 12*

3.1 Safeguarding Guidance

A central goal for all involved in boxing 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.

The IABA provide guidance documents and provides sample policies and templates in the appendices to establish a standard that guides how IABA Clubs can provide a safe environment for children and young people. The sample templates are in keeping with the values and goals of the IABA and should be followed by all affiliated bodies.

- Overnight, Staying Away & Hosting
- Supervision, Ratios & Environment
- Registration, Dropouts & Club Transfers
- Transport & Travel
- Filming & Photography
- Inappropriate Images
- Social Media
- Use of Mobile Phones
- Physical Contact
- Bullying
- Facilities

- For sample policies please see Appendix 7.

3.2 Disciplinary, Complaints & Appeals of Code of Behaviour Breaches

The IABA disciplinary process and the various procedures relating to discipline can be found in the Disciplinary Rules section of the 2019 Rule Book please see link below:

<http://iaba.ie/site3/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/IABA-Rulebook-2019.pdf>

It is important to note that the investigation of suspected child abuse is the responsibility of the Statutory Authorities and should not be undertaken by Children's Officers/Designated Liaison Persons or other club/organisation Sports Leaders. The standard reporting procedure outlined in the Statutory Authorities guidelines should be followed by each sports club/organisation and adhered to by its members.

Only following advice from statutory agencies about suspected child abuse cases should NGB's begin their own internal disciplinary procedures to ensure they do not impact on any statutory investigation.

Code of Conduct

Codes of conduct are an integral part of any club/sporting organisation. They set a standard of behaviour that help build a club's culture and make it easier to deal with conduct and behaviour issues as they arise. These can be many and varied, from in-ring incidents, spectator abuse and mismanagement, to inappropriate social media posts, unfair treatment, poor sportsmanship and more. Codes of conduct set expectations for everyone involved – from the administrators, coaches and officials, to players, parents and spectators. The code of conduct should be informed by the club/sporting organisation's risk assessment and be a tool in the management of specific risks.

A code of conduct should be in place for administrators, coaches, officials, players and parents. They outline the agreed standard of behaviour for everyone.

Sports Leaders are expected to conform to ethical standards in a number of areas. To be part of the coaching team in an organisation or club it is required that all potential coaches will sign an agreement to abide by a code of conduct and return it to the appropriate organisation / club officials.

The following elements should be included in your clubs Codes of Conduct.

- Code for Young People
- Code for Parents/Guardians
- Parents/Guardians consent form
- Code for Sport Leaders
- Code for Committees

➤ *For more information on Codes of Conduct please see Appendix 4 & Appendix 8*

Summary

The Irish Athletic Boxing Association greatly appreciates the army of volunteers who give up their time to strive to provide the highest standards of care for children and vulnerable adults within the sport of boxing.

Children who have positive early experiences of boxing are more likely to continue to some degree of lifelong participation. This contributes to their ongoing physical and emotional wellbeing in adulthood. Boxing, therefore, has a lot to offer children – provided it takes place in an environment that is safe, promotes enjoyment, and respects the physical and emotional health and wellbeing of each individual athlete.

This document is intended to assist people who are involved today with children & young people's boxing, ensuring they are equipped with the necessary tools to positively contribute to a young person's overall experience of sport.

3.3 References and Source Material

Child Protection in Republic of Ireland Legislation, policy and guidance

- Children First Act 2015
- Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017
- 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
- Criminal Justice Act 2006
- Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences Against Children & Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012
- Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017
- National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012-2016

Child Protection in Northern Ireland Legislation, policy and guidance

- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Access NI Code of Practice (NI)
- Children (NI) Order 1995 (NI)
- Children's Services Co-operation Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 (NI)
- Club Framework for Safeguarding Standards In Sport
- Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People 2017
- Criminal Law Act (Northern Ireland) 1967
- General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR)
- Part V of the Police Act 1997 (NI)
- Rehabilitation of Offenders (Exceptions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1979 (as amended 2013) (NI)
- Safeguarding Board Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 (NI)
- Sexual Offences (NI) Order 2008

www.sportireland.ie

www.sportni.net

www.thecpsu.org.uk

www.dataprotection.ie