

**CODE OF ETHICS & GOOD
PRACTICE FOR CHILDREN'S SPORT**



**INTRODUCTION
TO**

*Child
Protection
Procedures*

Introduction



The Republic of Ireland Snooker & Billiards Association (RIBSA) are committed to ensuring that the best interests of the children and young people attending or participating in our sport are of paramount importance.

Our guiding principles and this guidance document are underpinned by national policy and legislation in Republic of Ireland Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017, and the requirements under The Children First Act 2015, This guidance complies with the Tulsa'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.

The aim of this document is to create a culture of safety that promotes the welfare of children and young people engaged in our sport.

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Glossary: -

Adult Member;

For the purposes of this code, an 'adult member' is any member who is not a child, including associated members, supporters, friends, groups and honorary members.

The Association;

Republic of Ireland Snooker & Billiards Association. (RIBSA).

Child;

For the purposes of this code, a 'child' means anyone who is under 18 years of age. In Ireland, the Child Care Act (1991) and the Protection of Children define a child as any person under the age of 18 years, excluding a person who is or who has been married.

Child Protection Officer;

The Child Protection Officer (CPO) is the title given to the designated person in the Association appointed to respond to child protection concerns reported by volunteers, employees or young people or others.

Employees;

Paid staff of RIBSA or subsidiary companies.

Statutory Authorities;

These are An Garda Síochána, TUSLA (Child and Family Agency). They are obliged under the law to investigate and assess in child abuse cases. 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.

Volunteers;

Unpaid voluntary workers in the Association.



POLICY STATEMENT.

The Republic of Ireland Billiards & Snooker Association is fully committed to safeguarding the well-being of its members.

Every individual in The Republic of Ireland Billiards & Snooker 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 *Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport*.

In the Republic of Ireland Billiards & Snooker Association our first priority is the welfare of the young people and we are committed to providing an environment that will allow participants to perform to the best of their ability, free from bullying and intimidation.

Once the policy statement is approved and put into the constitution it can guide all other rules and regulations for sport for young people within the club/organisation.

The following pages provide sample codes of conduct, rules for travelling away, supervision of young people, recruitment and selection and reporting procedures for child welfare and protection.

They can be used to form rules and policies arising out of the inclusion of the policy statement in the constitution. The pages overleaf can be modified to suit each club and should be approved by the executive and the association legal advisors.

Child Welfare and Protection Procedures

The Republic of Ireland Billiards & Snooker Association accepts that organisations, which include young people among its members, are vulnerable to the occurrence of child abuse. Below are the procedures for dealing with any welfare or protection issue that may arise. Child welfare and the protection of young people is the concern of all adults at all times, irrespective of their role within the organisation.

If there are grounds for concern about the safety or welfare of a young person you should react to the concern. Persons unsure about whether or not certain behaviours are abusive and therefore reportable should contact the statutory agencies where they will receive advice.

Grounds for concern include a specific indication from a child, a statement from a person who witnessed abuse or an illness, injury or behaviour consistent with abuse.

A report may be made by any member of RIBSA but should be passed on to the Designated Person/Children's Officer who may in turn have to pass the concern to the local Statutory Authorities.

It is not the responsibility of anyone working within The Republic of Ireland Billiards & Snooker Association in a paid or voluntary capacity, or those working in affiliated organisations, to take responsibility or decide whether or not child abuse is taking place. That is the job of the local statutory authorities. However, there is a responsibility to protect children by assisting the appropriate agencies so that they can then make enquiries and take any necessary action to protect the young person.

Everyone should follow both procedures outlined below, firstly the procedure for responding to a child in distress and secondly the procedure for reporting the concern.

Response to a Child Disclosing Abuse

When 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 a positive one so that the child will not mind talking to those involved in the investigation.
- (d) be honest with the child and tell them that it is not possible that keep information a secret.
- (e) make no judgmental statements against the person whom the allegation is made.
- (f) not question the child unless the nature of what s/he is saying is unclear. Leading questions should be avoided. Open, non-specific questions should be used such as "Can you explain to me what you mean by that"
- (g) check out the concerns with the parents/guardians before making a report unless during so would endanger the child.
- (h) give the child some indication of what would happen next, such as informing parents/guardians, health board or social services. It should be kept in mind that the child may have been threatened and may feel vulnerable at this stage.
- (i) carefully record the details.
- (j) pass on this information to the Designated Person.
- (k) reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you.

Reporting Suspected or Disclosed 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 designated officer with responsibility for reporting abuse. If the Designated Person has reasonable grounds for believing that the child has been abused or is at risk of abuse, s/he will make a report to the health board/social services 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 Designated Person 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 Designated Person is unsure whether reasonable grounds for concern exist s/he can informally consult with the local health board/social services. S/he will be advised whether or not the matter requires a formal report.

A Designated Person 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 an investigation

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 statutory authorities. 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 statutory authorities.
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.

Allegations Against Sports Leaders

The Republic Of Ireland Billiards & Snooker Association has agreed procedures to be followed in cases of alleged child abuse against Sports Leaders. If such an allegation is made against an official working within RIBSA, two procedures should be followed: -

- The reporting procedure in respect of suspected child abuse (reported by the designated person/ children’s officer).
- The procedure for dealing with the Sports Leader (carried by 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 that may be necessary to protect children in its care

The issue of confidentiality is important. Information is on a need to know basis and the Sports Leader should be treated with respect and fairness.

The Reporting Procedure.

If the designated person has reasonable grounds for concern should be reported to the statutory authorities for investigation

The Sports Leader.

While the designated officer makes the report to the Statutory Authorities the Chairperson should deal with the Sports Leader in question: -

- The Chairperson should privately inform the leader that;
- An allegation has been made against him/her and 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 authorities.
- The leader should be asked to step aside pending the outcome of the investigation.
- When a person is asked to step aside it should be made clear that it is only a precautionary measure and will not prejudice any later disciplinary proceedings.

The governing body should be informed by the Designated Person that the leader has been asked to stand aside. Governing bodies can consider disciplinary action on the leader but should ensure that this does not interfere with the investigation of the Statutory Authorities. It is important that governing bodies consider the outcome of the investigation and any implications it might have. The fact that the alleged abuser has not been prosecuted or been found guilty does not mean that they are appropriate to work with young people in the future.

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 the child and the person about whom the complaint has been made are protected.

The following points should be kept in mind: -

- A guarantee of confidentiality or undertakings regarding secrecy cannot be given, as the welfare of the child will supersede all other considerations.
- 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.
- 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 alleged offender, his/her family, Sports 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 is a serious manner.

Anonymous Complaints.

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

Rumours

Rumours should **not** be allowed to hang in the air. Any rumours relating to inappropriate behaviour should be brought to the attention of the Designated Person, and checked out without delay.

Updated June 2020



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