

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



Child
Protection
Policies

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.

Disciplinary, Complaints and Appeals Procedure

RIBSA have a complaints procedure in place that allows all members who are dissatisfied to register their complaint in a formal way.

- Complaints may be lodged by all members of RIBSA.
- They should be received in writing by the secretary of RIBSA.
- The complaint should outline all relevant details about other parties involved.
- The complaint should be brought to the attention of the Chairperson who will convene the disciplinary committee.
- The disciplinary committee should hear the case of all parties involved and decide if a rule or regulation has been infringed.
- They should, in writing, inform those involved of the sanctions to be imposed.
- Keep all records on file.
- If any party does not agree with the disciplinary committee, they can appeal the decision in writing within 10-day period.
- An appeals committee is convened, whose chairperson should **NOT** be taken from the executive committee and those who have **NOT** been on the original disciplinary committee.
- The appeals committee should confirm or set aside or change any sanction imposed by the disciplinary committee and this committee's decision is final.
- Written notification should be given to parents if the complaint is against a junior.
- If the complaint involves a child the children's officer will inform the statutory authorities.

Recruitment and Selection Policy

RIBSA will take all reasonable steps to ensure that people working with young people are suitable and appropriately qualified. Recruitment and selection procedures are therefore necessary and these procedures apply to all persons with substantial access to young people, whether paid or unpaid.

1. All adults taking responsibility for children in sport should undergo a recruitment process. The responsibilities of the role and the level of experience/qualifications required should be drawn up and clearly stated
2. Volunteers should fill in an application form – see sample – giving details of two referees that can be contacted.
3. Where possible there should be an interview.
4. A probationary period is advisable.
5. There will be a “sign-up” procedure, whereby the newly recruited volunteers, agree to abide by the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children in Sport and to the RIBSA Code and policies.
6. Every effort should be made to manage and support Sport Leaders. Adequate supervision should always be provided; a leader should not work alone.
7. A decision to appoint an Official is the responsibility of the RIBSA and not of any one individual within it.
8. RIBSA committee should ratify all recommendations for appointment.

Anti-Bullying Policy

What is Bullying?

Bullying can be defined as repeated aggression, be it verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against others. It is behaviour that is intentionally aggravating and intimidating and occurs mainly in social environments such as schools, clubs and other organisations working with children and young people. It includes behaviours such as teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting and extortion behaviour by one or more children against a victim.

How would you know if a child is being bullied?

All bullies operate using furtiveness, threats and fear. Bullying can therefore only survive in an environment where the victim does not feel empowered to tell someone who can help or in which it is not safe to do so. The following indicators are warning signs that a young person might be getting bullied: -

- Reluctance to come to a venue or take part in activities
- Physical signs – unexplained bruises, scratches, or damage to belongings
- Stress-caused illness – headaches, and stomach aches which seem unexplained
- Fearful behaviour – fear of walking to a meeting, going different routes, asking to be driven
- Frequent loss of, or shortage of, money with vague explanations
- Having few friends
- Changes in behaviour –withdrawn, stammering, moody, irritable, upset, distressed
- Not eating
- Attempting suicide or hinting at suicide
- Anxiety – shown by nail-biting, fearfulness.

There are other possible reasons for many of the above

Who should deal with bullying?

While the more extreme forms of bullying would be regarded as physical or emotional abuse and are reported to the statutory authorities. Dealing with bullying behaviour is the responsibility of all Officials within RIBSA

How can it be prevented?

- Ensure that all members follow the code of conduct, which promotes the rights and dignity of each member.
- Deal with any incidents as they arise.
- Use a whole group policy or ‘no-blame approach’, i.e., not ‘bullying the bully’ but working with bullies and the group of young people, helping them to understand the hurt they are causing, and so make the problem a ‘shared concern’ of the group, (see below)

- Reinforce that there is ‘a permission to tell’ culture rather than a ‘might is right’
- Encourage young people to negotiate, co-operate and help others, particularly new or different children
- Offer the victim immediate support and put the ‘no blame approach’ into operation
- Never tell a young person to ignore bullying, they can’t ignore it, it hurts too much
- Never encourage a young person to take the law into their own hands and beat the bully at their own game
- Tell the victim there is nothing wrong with them and it is not their fault

What is the 'No Blame' Approach?

Step 1 – Interview with the victim

If you find that there has been an incident of bullying, first talk to the victim. At this stage find out who was involved and what the victim is now feeling. Try asking the following questions:

- Was it verbal or physical intimidation?
- How hurt is the victim?
- Was it within his/her own peer group?
- Ensure the victim that his/her name will not come out in the investigation
- Actively listen

Step 2 – Meet with all involved

Arrange to meet with all those involved; this should include some bystanders, those who may have colluded, those who joined in and those who initiated the bullying.

- ❑ Have a maximum of six to eight in the group – keep the number controllable
- ❑ Make a point of calling a 'special' meeting
- ❑ Ensure the severity of the topic is understood by all
- ❑ Speak only of the hurt caused in general terms with no reference to the victim
- ❑ Play on the conscience of all – ask questions like: How would you feel? Would you like it done to you?

Step 3 – Explain the problem

The distress being suffered as a result of the bullying incident is explained. At this stage the details of the incident or the allocation of the blame is not discussed. Explain the feelings of loneliness, feeling left out, rejected, laughed at. Try asking questions:

- ❖ Would they like it if it happened to them?
- ❖ "Someone here in this group was bullied by someone within the group, what could we do to see it does not happen again?"
- ❖ Listen, watch out for reactions, and pick up on any without isolating anyone.

Step 4. – Share the responsibility.

Explain what steps / controls may have to be introduced to prevent further incidents and how everyone will lose out as a result

Step 5. – Ask the group for their ideas.

At this stage the group is encouraged to suggest ways that would make the victim feel happier. All positive responses are noted. Use phrases "if it were you" to encourage a response. Listen to all suggestions and note them

Step 6. – Leave it to them.

Now the problem has been identified, solutions suggested, the problem is now handed over to the group to solve. Arrange to meet again in a week's time. Pass responsibility over to the group and give a time frame within which something must be done

Step 7. – Meet them again.

Each member of the group, including the bully, discuss how things are going, who is doing what and have there been other incidents. This allows for continual monitoring and also keeps all involved in the process. Again, enforce the idea of the 'team' looking after each other at regular intervals to ensure it is known that bullying or intimidating behaviour will not be tolerated.

Guidelines on Supervision

Travelling with children

There is extra responsibility taken on by leaders when they travel with children to events. When travelling with young people you should:

- Ensure that there is adequate insurance cover
- Not carry more than the permitted number of passengers
- Ensure use of safety belts
- Avoid being alone with one participant, put passenger in the back seat, drop off at central locations or seek parental permission to transport an individual participant on a regular basis and clearly state times of pick- up and drop off

Supervision

- Make sure there is an adequate adult: child ratio. This will depend on the nature of the activity, the age of the participants and any special needs of the group.
- As a guide a ratio of 1:8 for under 12 years of age.
- 1:10 for participants over 12 years of age.
- This is only a guide and will change depending on the circumstances, e.g. athletes with special needs or away trips
- Where there are mixed groups there should be leaders of both genders
- Avoid being alone with one participant, if you need to talk separately do so in an open environment, in view of others
- In changing rooms, ask parents to take responsibility and supervise in pairs of appropriate gender
- Leaders should not have to enter the changing rooms unless children are very young or need special assistance, where supervision should be in pairs of appropriate gender
- Clearly state time for start and end of training sessions or competitions, leaders should remain in pairs until all participants have been collected
- Keep attendance records and record of any incidents / injuries that arise
- Ask parents to stay and supervise sessions, (for safety and supervision, not necessarily for their 'technical' expertise).

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Away trips/Overnight stays

- Separate permission forms should be signed by parents and participants, containing emergency contact number.
- Young participants should sign a behaviour agreement
- Appoint a group leader who will make a report on returning home
- A meeting with parents and participants is useful to communicate travel times, competition details, other activities, gear requirements, medical requirements, special dietary needs and any other necessary details
- Rooming arrangements – adults should not share rooms with children, children share rooms with those of same age and gender and adults should knock before entering rooms
- All group socialisation should take place in communal areas (i.e. no boys in girls' rooms and vice versa).
- Alcoholic drink, smoking or other illegal substances are forbidden to players.
- There must be at least 1 adult of each gender with a mixed party, there should be a good adult – child ratio, 1:5/6, and proper access to medical personnel
- Lights out times should be enforced
- Young players should be under reasonable supervision at all times and should never leave the venue or go unsupervised without prior permission

Safety

RIBSA safety statement, including specific and potential risks attached to their sport. They should also have procedures in place for safeguarding against such risks.

In addition, RIBSA should:

- Ensure activities are suitable for age and stage of development of participants
- Keep a record of any specific medical conditions of the participants
- Keep a record of emergency contact numbers for parents/guardians
- Ensure any necessary protective gear is used
- Ensure First Aid kit is close at hand with access to qualified first-aider
- Know the contact numbers of emergency services
- Keep first aid kit stocked up
- Ensure easy access to medical personnel if needed and have an emergency plan
- If an incident occurs, make a brief record of injury and action taken. Make a brief record of the problem/action/outcome. Contact the participant's parents and keep them informed of all details. Forward a copy of report to Children's Officer for safe keeping.
- Officials – coaches, referees, etc. – should ensure the conduct of the game
- Participants should know and keep the rules of their sport, keeping in mind that many rules are there for safety
- Leaders should hold appropriate qualifications required by the governing body
- Ensure there is adequate insurance cover for all activities
- Ensure parents/guardians are present at finishing time of sessions or events

Touching

Some sports require a 'hands on approach', especially in a teaching or coaching situation, e.g., it may be necessary to support a child learning a new move in gymnastics but the following should be taken into consideration

- ❖ Avoid unnecessary physical contact
- ❖ Any necessary contact should be in response to the needs of the child and not the adult
- ❖ It should be in an open environment with the permission and understanding of the participant
- ❖ It should be determined by the age and developmental stage of the participant - Don't do something that a child can do for themselves
- ❖ Never engage in inappropriate touching

Use of Photographic and Filming Equipment Videoing as a coaching aid

RIBSA policy in relation to the use of images of players on their websites and other publications. There have been concerns about the risks posed directly and indirectly to children and young people. Coaches, adults and leaders need to work together to prevent those wishing to cause such harm to young people.

Remember having photographic and filming guidelines is not about preventing parents from taking pictures, it is to ensure that only those who have a right to take photographs do so.

Anyone concerned about photography taking place at events or coaching sessions can contact the children's officer/ designated person and ask them to deal with the matter. The purpose is to reduce the risk of inappropriate, unsolicited attention from people within and outside the sport.

Group photographs where the event is identified rather than individuals are good for publicity without creating a risk to those in the photographs.

As a guide try to remember the following: -

- If the player is named, avoid using their photograph.
- If a photograph is used, avoid naming the athlete.
- Ask for the player's permission to use their image to ensure that they are aware of the way the image is to be used to represent the sport.
- Ask for parental permission to use the athlete's image to ensure that parents are aware of the way the image is to be used to represent the sport. A permission form could be used or make an announcement at the start of an event.
- To reduce the risk of inappropriate use, only use images of athletes in suitable dress. The content of the photograph should focus on the activity not on a particular child
- Talk to children's officer/designated person if you are worried about use of images

Amateur photographers/film/video operators wishing to record an event or practice session should seek accreditation with the children's officer, event organiser or leader of session. Permission forms should be available on site.

To ensure spectators and participants are informed of the policy, the event/ organisation should display the following information prior to the start of an event and where possible make an announcement to all.

In line with the recommendation in the Code of Conduct, the promoters of this event request that any person wishing to engage in any video, zoom or close-range photography should register their details with the organisers. It is not advisable that children are photographed or filmed without their permission and/or the permission of their parent/guardian”.

Working in Partnership to protect young people photographs, when used with personal information, can be used as a means of identifying children. This practice can make a child vulnerable to an individual who may wish to “groom” that child for abuse.

Furthermore, the content of the photo can be used or adapted for inappropriate use. There is evidence of this adapted material finding its way onto child pornography sites. Adults and sports leaders need to work together to prevent those wishing to cause such harm to children.

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