

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



*Child  
Protection*

**GUIDELINES  
& CODE OF  
CONDUCT**

# 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 member's 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.

# Core Values in Sport for Young People

**RIBSA** is committed to safeguarding children and by working under the guidance of our Safeguarding Policies our staff, both volunteers and employed, working with our young people, throughout the organisation, seek to create a safe environment for young people to grow and develop within sport. The following set of principles should be adhered to:

- **Importance of childhood** - The importance of childhood should be understood and valued by everyone involved in sport.
- **Needs of the child** - All children's sport experiences should be guided by what is best for children. This means that adults should have a basic understanding of the emotional, physical and personal needs of young people.
- **Integrity in relationships** - Adults interacting with children in sport are in a position of trust and influence. They should always ensure that children are treated with integrity and respect, and the self-esteem of young people is enhanced.
- **Fair Play** - All children's sport should be conducted in an atmosphere of fair play. The principles of fair play should always be emphasised, and organisers should give clear guidelines regarding acceptable standards of behaviour.
- **Quality atmosphere & ethos** - Children's sport should be conducted in a safe, positive and encouraging atmosphere.
- **Competition** - Competition is an essential element of sport and should be encouraged in an age appropriate manner. A child centred ethos will help to ensure that competition and specialisation are kept in their appropriate place.
- **Equality** - All children should be valued and treated in an equitable and fair manner regardless of ability, age, gender, religion, social and ethnic background or political persuasion.

# Code of Conduct for Young People

The Republic of Ireland Billiards & Snooker Association wishes to provide the best possible environment for all young people involved in the sport.

Young people deserve to be given enjoyable, safe sporting opportunities, free of abuse of any kind. These participants have rights, which must be respected, and responsibilities that they must accept.

Young people should be encouraged to realise that they have responsibilities to treat other participants and officials with fairness and respect.

## *Young players are entitled to:*

- Be safe and to feel safe
- Be listened to
- Be believed
- Be treated with dignity, sensitivity and respect
- Have a voice in the club/organisation
- Participate on an equal basis
- Have fun and enjoy sport
- Experience competition at a level at which they feel comfortable
- Make complaints and have them dealt with
- Get help against bullies
- Say No
- To protect their own bodies
- Confidentiality

## *Young players should always:*

- Treat RIBSA officials with respect – e.g. coaches, managers, referees and officials
- Play fairly at all times, do their best
- Respect team members, even when things go wrong
- Respect opponents, be gracious in defeat
- Abide by the rules set down by team managers when travelling to away events.
- Behave in a manner that avoids bringing the sport of Snooker & Billiards into disrepute
- Talk to children's officer if they have any problems.

## *Young players should never:*

- Cheat
- Use violence or physical contact.
- Shout or argue with RIBSA officials, team mates or opponents.
- Harm team members, opponents or their property
- Bully or use bullying tactics to isolate another player
- Use unfair or bullying tactics to gain advantage
- Take banned substances
- Keep secrets, especially if they have been caused harm.
- Tell lies about adults/young people.
- Spread rumours.

## Guidelines for Parents

The Republic of Ireland Billiards & Snooker Association believes that parents should:

- Be a role model for your child and maintain the highest standards of conduct when interacting with children, other parents, officials and organisers.
- Always behave responsibly and do not seek to unfairly affect the player / opponent or match.
- Never intentionally expose any young participant to embarrassment or disparagement by the use of flippant or sarcastic remarks.
- Always recognise the value and importance of the volunteers who provide sporting/recreational opportunities for your child.
- Do not publicly question the judgement or honesty of referees, coaches or organisers.
- Respect referees, coaches, organisers and other players.
- Encourage your child to play by the rules.
- Teach your child that honest endeavour is as important as winning and do all you can to encourage good sportsmanship.
- Set a good example by applauding good play on both sides.
- Encourage mutual respect for team-mates and opponents.
- Please read bullying policy within the organisation's guidelines.

### *Parents Code of Conduct:*

1. Parents /guardians should respect the rules and procedures set down in the Republic of Ireland Billiards & Snooker Association Code of Ethics for Children in Sport.
2. Respect my child's team-mates, coaches, officials and parents, as well as players, parents and coaches from opposing teams. I will encourage my child to treat other participants, coaches, selectors, and managers with respect.
3. Give encouragement and applaud only positive accomplishments whether from my child, his/her teammates, their opponents or the officials.
4. Respect my child's leader(s) and support his/her efforts
5. Respect the officials and their authority during competitions
6. Never demonstrate threatening or abusive behaviour or use foul language.
7. Complete Travel agreement forms and nonattendance forms if needed if requested by RIBSA.
8. Parents should support all efforts to remove abusive behaviour and bullying behaviour in all its forms.

## Guidelines for RIBSA Officials

Officials in children's sport should strive to create a positive environment for the children in their care. They have an overall responsibility to take the necessary steps to ensure that positive and healthy experiences are provided.

The Republic of Ireland Billiards & Snooker Association recognises the key role officials – coaches, selectors and team managers, etc. – play in the lives of children in sport.

### These roles include:

1. All Officials should have as their first priority the children's safety and enjoyment of the sport and should adhere to the guidelines and regulations set out in the RIBSA Code of Ethics.
2. Officials must respect the rights, dignity and worth of every child and must treat everyone equally, regardless of sex, ethnic origin, religion or ability.
3. Officials working with young people playing Billiards & Snooker should be suitable and appropriately qualified. Leaders will be expected to go through appropriate recruitment and selection procedures that apply to all persons with substantial access to young people, whether paid or unpaid. References will be needed and will be followed up.
4. There will be a 'sign-up' procedure, whereby the appointed/reappointed leaders agree to abide by the *Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children in Sport* and to the policies and code of the association
5. Officials will be given a copy of RIBSA code of ethics and they should be made aware of the procedures contained within the code.
6. Once appointed the Official must act as a role model and promote the positive aspects of sport and of Snooker and maintain the highest standards of personal conduct.
7. The use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco must be actively discouraged as being incompatible with a healthy approach to sporting activity.
8. Remember your behaviour to players, other officials, and opponents will have an effect on the players in your care.
9. Be generous with praise and never ridicule or shout at players for making mistakes or for losing a game. All young players are entitled to respect.
10. Be careful to avoid the "star system". Each child deserves equal time and attention.
11. Care must be taken not to expose a child intentionally or unintentionally to embarrassment or disparagement by use of sarcastic or flippant remarks about the child or his/her family.

12. Physical punishment or physical force must never be used. Never punish a mistake - by verbal means, physical means, or exclusion.
13. Insist that players in your care respect the rules of the game. Insist on fair play and ensure players are aware you will not tolerate cheating or bullying behaviour.
14. Remember that young players play for fun and enjoyment and that skill development and personal satisfaction have priority over highly structured competition. Never make winning the only objective.
15. Encourage the development of respect for opponents, officials, selectors and other coaches and avoid criticism of fellow coaches.
16. When travel/overnight travel is involved, the leaders travelling with children must sign a separate agreement.
17. Parents /guardians and participants will also be asked to sign permission forms in these instances.
18. Leaders are responsible for setting and monitoring the boundaries between a working relationship and friendship with players.
19. It is advisable for coaches not to involve young players in their personal life i.e. visits to coaches' home or overnight stays.
20. Avoid working alone and ensure there is adequate supervision for all activities.
21. It is important to realise that certain situations or friendly actions could be misinterpreted by the participant or by outsiders.
22. When approached to take on a new player, ensure that any previous coach-student relationship has been ended by the student/others in a professional manner.
23. When young players are invited into adult groups/squads, it is advisable to get agreement from a parent/ guardian. Boundaries of behaviour in adult groups are normally different from the boundaries that apply to junior groups/squads.
24. Officials who become aware of a conflict between their obligation to their players and their obligation to their governing body must make explicit the nature of the conflict and the loyalties and responsibilities involved, to all parties concerned.
25. Officials should communicate and co-operate with medical and ancillary practitioners in the diagnosis, treatment and management of their players' medical or related problems. Avoid giving advice of a personal or medical nature if you are not qualified to do so. Any information of a personal or

medical nature must be kept strictly confidential unless the welfare of the child requires the passing on of this information.

26. The nature of the relationship between officials and a participant can often mean that an official will learn confidential information about a player or player's family. This information must be regarded as confidential and except where abuse is suspected, must not be divulged to a third party without the express permission of the player/family.
27. Set realistic goals for the participants and do not push young players. Create a safe and enjoyable environment.
28. Do not criticise other leaders, officials, coaches, and selectors, etc. You are the role model for the children in your care.
29. Leaders should avoid the use of alcohol before coaching or during matches, on trips with young players.

## ***Coaches Code of Conduct***

Officials / Coaches should familiarise themselves with the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport and with the Republic of Ireland Billiard & Snooker Association Code of Conduct and follow the procedures if they suspect or receive complaints of abuse.

### **Leaders should be:**

- Positive during session, praise and encourage effort as well as results.
- Plan and prepare appropriately.
- Put welfare of young person first, balance between this and winning/results.
- Encourage fair play, treat participants equally.
- Qualified and up-to-date with knowledge and skill of sport for young people.
- Involve parents where possible and Inform parents when problems arise.
- Keep record of attendance at training.
- Keep a brief record of injury(s) and action taken.
- Keep records of problem/action/outcomes, if problems arise.

### **Where possible Leaders should avoid:**

- Spending excessive amounts of time with children away from others.
- Taking sessions alone.
- Taking children to your home.
- Taking children on journey's alone in their car.

### **Sports Leaders should not:**

- Use any form of punishment or physical force on a child.
- Exert undue influence over a participant in order to obtain personal benefit or reward.
- Engage in rough physical games, sexually provocative games or allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any kind, and /or make sexually suggestive comments about, or to a child.
- Take measurements or engage in certain types of fitness testing without the presence of another adults.
- Undertake any form of therapy – hypnosis, etc. – in the training of children

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