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Basketball Ireland Code of Ethics for Children's Sport



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Appendices Available to download from the BI Website
www.basketballireland.ie

Appendices are listed at the end of this document

Primary and Post Primary Schools

Basketball Ireland recognises the importance and relevance of existing and mandatory Primary and Post Primary School policies regarding Child Protection and the primacy of these policies in all school activities.

These policies apply to all personnel (staff and non-staff) involved in all mini-basketball and school basketball activities.

Basketball Ireland's Code of Ethics is intended to complement school policies in the school context and be the relevant policies in non-school based basketball activity.



Basketball Ireland Policy Statement

Basketball Ireland is fully committed to safeguarding the well being of its members. Every individual in the organisation 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.



Basketball Ireland Code of Ethics Guiding Principles

The guidelines in this document are based on the guidelines and legislation outlined in the following documents

Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport - Irish Sports Council and Sport NI, 2000, (COE reviewed in 2006).

For Republic of Ireland Irish Basketball and Clubs should reference:

- Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children, Dept. of Health & Children 2011
- Our Duty to Care, Dept. of Health & Children 2002
- Criminal Law (sexual offences) Act 2006
- The Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998

For Northern Ireland Basketball NI and Clubs should reference:

- **Children (NI) Order, 1995**
- **Co-operating to Safeguard Children, 2003**
- **Area Child Protection Committee Regional Policy and Procedures, 2005**
- Our Duty to Care, DHSSPS 2007
- Getting It Right, DHSSPS 2009
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007
- Sexual Offences (NI) Order 2008
- Criminal Law (NI) Act 1967
- Protection of Freedom Act 2012

Safeguarding or Child Protection -The term child protection has been extended to safeguarding as it reflects the wider responsibility for health safety and prevention as well as just protection from abuse. It may be defined as: **Doing everything possible to minimise the risk of harm to children and young people.** Safeguarding is about being proactive and putting measures in place in advance of any contact with children to ensure that children are going to be kept safe. This could include:

- Ensuring staff/volunteers are properly checked when they are recruited
- Guidelines for people who come into contact with children as part of their role to ensure they know what they need to do to keep children safe

- Guidelines for planning an event or activity with children and putting measures in place to minimise the risk of safeguarding issues occurring.

The aim of this code is to promote best practice by everyone involved in the sport of Basketball and to provide a safe, healthy, enjoyable environment for all members.

Glossary of Terms

Children & Young People

A child or young person is defined by the law in both jurisdictions as a person under the age of 18 years. For the purposes of this document the term children & young people applies to all under the age of 18.

Parent/guardian

For the purposes of this document when referring to parent/guardian the term is used to include parents, legal guardians, and/or carers.

Child Abuse

Physical - Physical abuse is the deliberate physical injury to a child, or the wilful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering. This may include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, confinement to a room or cot, or inappropriately giving drugs to control behaviour.

Neglect - Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's physical, emotional and/or psychological needs, likely to result in significant harm. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate foods, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment, lack of stimulation or lack of supervision. It may also include non-organic failure to thrive (faltering growth).

Sexual - Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at or the production of pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Emotional - Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Smothering a child's development through over-protection can also be a form of abuse. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone. Domestic violence, adult mental health problems and parental substance misuse may expose children to emotional abuse.

Bullying

Has been recognised and defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. It can take many forms, but the three main types are physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, theft), verbal (e.g. racist or sectarian remarks, threats, name-calling) and emotional (e.g. isolating an individual from the activities and social acceptance of his peer group). The damage inflicted by bullying can frequently be underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to children, to the extent that it affects their health and development or, at the extreme, causes them significant harm (including self-harm).

Age of consent

The Sexual Offences (NI) Order 2008 became operational on 2 February 2009. This legislation effectively brought Northern Ireland into line with the rest of the UK in terms of the law relating to when young people are deemed to be able to consent to sexual activity. Specifically, the age of consent has been reduced from 17 years old to 16 years old. It has also introduced new offences of sexual abuse against children under the age of 13.

In the Republic of Ireland under the Criminal Law (Sexual offences) Act 2006 the age of consent is 17 years.

Statutory Authorities

The authorities who promote the protection and welfare of young people and vulnerable adults who have the responsibility for the investigation and/or validation of suspected child abuse, i.e., in the ROI it is An Garda Síochána and the Health Services Executive (HSE), and in NI it is the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and the Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT).

Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport

This has been developed by the Irish Sports Council & Sport NI to promote the core values in Sport for Young People

The work of the Basketball Ireland is based on the principles outlined in the Code of Ethics that will guide the development of sport for young people. Young People's experience of sport should be guided by what is best for the young person. The stages of development and the ability of the young person should guide the types of training provided within the club. Adults will need to have a basic understanding of the needs of young people, including physical, emotional and personal.

BI Guidelines for Young Players:

Basketball Ireland wishes to provide the best possible environment for all young people involved in the sport. Young players deserve to be given enjoyable, safe sporting opportunities, free of abuse of any kind. These players have rights, which must be respected, and responsibilities which that they must accept, including the responsibility of treating sports leaders and other participants with fairness and respect.

Young players are entitled to:

- Be happy, have fun and enjoy our sport
- Be treated with dignity and respect
- Be safe and to feel safe
- To have the support of the adults within the sport
- To say No where they deem appropriate
- To be listened to
- To be believed
- To protect their own bodies
- To refuse inappropriate touches

Young players should always:

- Treat all coaches, managers, selectors, club and tournament organisers and officials with respect
- Abide by the rules set down by team managers when travelling to away events
- Behave in a manner that avoids bringing the game of Basketball into disrepute
- Play fairly at all times, do their best
- Respect team members, even when things go wrong
- Respect opponents, be gracious in defeat
- Talk to the club children's officer if they have any problems

Young players should never:

- Use Unfair or bullying tactics to gain advantage on or off the court
- Pass on gossip or spread rumours about another player or adult
- Make false allegations against other players or adults
- Cheat
- Use violence or physical contact that is not allowed within the rules
- Shout or argue with officials, coaches, selectors, team mates or opponents
- Harm team members, opponents or their property
- Bully or use bullying tactics to isolate another player
- Take banned substances
- Keep information secret, especially if they or others have been caused harm
- Tell lies about other adults/young people

BI Policy Guidelines for Parents

Basketball Ireland is committed to providing a safe and fair environment for all juvenile young players. Our first priority is the welfare of young players and we are committed to providing an environment, which will allow participants to perform to their best ability, free from bullying and intimidation. Basketball Ireland also has a duty of care for volunteers working with young players on behalf of the organisation. Basketball Ireland 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
- Encourage your child to play by the rules
- Always behave responsibly on the sidelines and do not seek to unfairly affect the game on court or the player on court
- Take care not to expose any young player, intentionally or unintentionally, 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

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- Respect referees, coaches, organisers and other players
 - Do not publicly question the judgement or honesty of referees, coaches or organisers
 - 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
 - Ensure that their children are collected at the appointed times
 - Check transport plans and be happy with the arrangements
 - Parents should support all efforts to remove abusive and bullying behaviour in all its forms

Basketball Ireland Policy for Officials: (including all technical members)

Basketball Ireland recognises the key role coaches, referees, selectors and team managers play in the lives of children in sport.

All Technical members 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 Basketball Ireland's Code of Ethics.

Officials must respect the rights, dignity and worth of every child and must treat everyone equally, regardless of sex, ethnic origin, religion or ability. Basketball Ireland will take all reasonable steps to ensure that people working with young people in basketball are suitable and appropriately qualified. Assessment procedures are therefore necessary and these procedures apply to all persons, paid or unpaid, with substantial access to young people.

There must be a "sign-up" procedure, whereby the appointed/reappointed technical member agrees to abide by "BICode of Ethics for Children's Sport" (which can be downloaded at: www.basketballireland.ie) and BI Code of Conduct.

Officials should familiarise themselves with Basketball Ireland's Code of Ethics for Children's Sport & BI Code of Conduct and follow the procedures if they suspect or receive complaints of abuse or poor practice of any sort.

When travel/overnight travel is involved, the official travelling with children must sign a separate agreement. Parents will also be asked to sign permission forms in these instances. All adults taking responsibility for children in sport should undergo a recruitment process. Before recruitment, terms of reference should be drawn up and these should clearly state:

- a. The responsibilities of the role,
- b. The level of experience/qualifications required.

c. Basketball Ireland's commitment to safeguard the welfare of its members.

Potential coaches/selectors/team managers must complete an Application/Assessment form. – See appendix 2.

References will be needed and will be followed up.

Potential appointees should be made aware of the following publications

- Basketball Ireland's Code of Ethics for Children's Sport and Basketball Ireland's Code of Conduct both of which can be downloaded from the Basketball Ireland website: www.basketballireland.ie
- Code of Ethics & Good Practice in Children's Sport from the Irish Sports Council and SportNI which can be downloaded from the Irish Sports Council Website: http://www.irishsportsCouncil.ie/Participation/Code_of_Ethics/

Further Reading

Children First & Our Duty to Care from the Department of Health & Children which can be downloaded from their website: Their website address is: <http://www.dohc.ie/>

Guidelines for Officials:

- An Official working with a juvenile children's team(s) has a duty of care, which is more onerous than that of a coach to an adult team.
- An Official must act as a role model and promote the positive aspects of sport and of basketball and maintain the highest standards of personal conduct.
- The use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco must be actively discouraged as being incompatible with a healthy approach to sporting activity.
- Remember your behaviour to players, other officials, and opponents will have an effect on the players in your care.
- 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.
- Be careful to avoid the "star system". Each child deserves equal time and attention.
- 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.
- Physical punishment or physical force must never be used. Never punish a mistake - by verbal means, physical means, or exclusion.

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- Insist that players in your care respect the rules of the game. Insist on fair play and ensure that your players know that you will not tolerate cheating or bullying behaviour.
 - Remember that young players play for fun and enjoyment and that skill and playing for fun have priority over highly structured competition.
 - Never make winning the only objective.
 - Encourage the development of respect for opponents, officials, selectors and other coaches and avoid criticism of fellow officials.
 - It is important to realise that certain situations or friendly actions could be misinterpreted by the participant or by outsiders.
 - Basketball Officials are responsible for setting and monitoring the boundaries between a **working relationship** and **friendship** with players. It is inadvisable for officials to involve young players in their personal life i.e. visits to coaches home, overnight stays or to interact with them online using social media websites such as "face book" etc.
 - Adults should ensure they do not make reference online to any players through social media without their consent and prior agreement that they are doing so on behalf of the club. This includes all photos, videos and media material.
 - Those in authority positions should ensure they maintain healthy, positive and professional relationships with all athletes. Coaches and others in positions of authority and trust in relation to athletes aged less than 18 years must not engage in sexual relationships with them.
 - 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.
 - When young players are invited into adult groups/squads, it is advisable to get agreement from a parent/carer. Boundaries of behaviour in adult groups are normally different from the boundaries that apply to junior Children's groups/squads. The group leader or senior coach should nominate one adult member of the group to take particular responsibility for the underage player. Where necessary, two adult members, one of each gender, can be appointed.
 - Basketball 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.

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- Basketball officials should communicate and co-operate with medical and ancillary practitioners in the diagnosis, treatment and management of their players' medical and psychological problems.
 - Set realistic goals for the team and for the individual players and do not push young players. Create a safe and enjoyable environment.
 - Avoid working alone and ensure there is adequate supervision for all activities.
 - 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.
 - Officials should communicate and co-operate with medical and ancillary practitioners in the diagnosis, treatment and management of their players' medical or related problems.
 - The nature of the relationship between an official and player 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 or poor practice is suspected, must not be divulged to a third party without the express permission of the player/family.

Officials must be particularly careful about their use of alcohol, before coaching, during events, on trips with young players, to ensure they remain fit and able to monitor and care for the needs of the young people they are responsible for.

Officials should familiarise themselves with the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport, Basketball Ireland Code of Conduct and the Basketball Ireland Code of Ethics for Children's Sport and follow the procedures if they suspect or receive complaints of abuse of any sort.

Do:

- **Be Positive** during a session, praise and **encourage effort** as well as results
- Plan and prepare appropriately
- Put welfare of young person first, strike a balance between this and winning / results
- Encourage fair play, treat participants equally

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- Recognise developmental needs
 - Be qualified and up-to-date with knowledge and skill of sport for young people
 - Involve parents where possible and inform parents when problems arise
 - Coaches should keep record of attendance at training
 - Keep a brief record of injury(s) and action taken
 - If behavioural problems arise and a young player has to be disciplined, keep a brief record of problem/action/outcomes and communicate with parents

Avoid:

- Spending excessive amounts of time with children away from others
- Taking sessions alone
- Taking children to their (the Officials) home
- Taking children on journeys alone in their (Officials) car
- Interacting with junior players online unless by email and only in relation to the sport with the prior agreement of your club, parent and young person

Do 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

Safety

- Officials should be aware of potential risks to safety and take steps to safeguard against these risks.
- Ensure activities are suitable for age and stage of development of participants
- Keep a record of any specific medical conditions of the participants

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- Keep a record of emergency contact numbers for parents / guardians
 - Ensure appropriate kit is used
 - Know the contact numbers of emergency services
 - If an incident occurs, make a brief record of injury and action taken. Make a brief record of the problem/action/outcome. Contact the participants parents and keep them informed of all details
 - Participants should know and keep the rules of their sport.
 - Officials should hold appropriate qualifications required by the governing body
 - Have adequate insurance cover for all activities under the relevant body E.g. club or school
 - Make parents/guardians aware of their duty to be present at finishing time of sessions or events.

Physical Contact.

Physical contact during sport should always be intended to meet the child's needs – NOT the adult's.

Adults should use appropriate contact which is aimed at assisting the development of the skill or activity or for safety reasons e.g. to prevent or treat an injury. This should be done in an open environment with the permission and understanding of the participant.

In general

Contact should be determined by the age and development stage of the participant – Don't do something that a child can do for itself.

Never engage in inappropriate touching such as touching of groin, genital areas, buttocks, breasts or any other part of the body that might cause a child distress or embarrassment.

Basketball Ireland Policy: Recruitment/Appointment: Volunteers/Sports Leaders (Sports Leaders: all adults with responsibility for keeping Children safe in Basketball)

Basketball Ireland will take reasonable steps to ensure that suitable people work with young players. Procedures will be adopted for all persons with substantial access (known as regulated activity in NI) to young people.

There will be a “sign up” procedure, whereby the newly recruited volunteer agrees to abide by Basketball Ireland’s Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics in Children’s Sport. All adults taking responsibility for children in sport should undergo a recruitment process

- Potential Sports Leaders must complete an Application/Assessment form – see appendix 2 that includes an opportunity for the person to self declare any criminal or relevant civil proceedings.
- Formal Garda/ AccessNI Vetting procedures should be availed of if deemed appropriate by Basketball Ireland and/or an affiliated Club
- Reference checks will be followed up
- A decision to appoint a sports leader is the responsibility of the Club or Organisation and not of any one individual within it

The club management/organisations executive should ratify all recommendations for appointments. Every effort will be made to manage and support appointed Sports Leaders

Effective Management of Volunteers or staff: Good management of volunteers will contribute to safe activities for children. Good management will also create an atmosphere where volunteers feel valued, are listened to and where issues can be dealt with quickly by systems already in place. BI would wish to advise clubs of the following;

Volunteers should be made aware of how to access training. Basketball Ireland advise all those coaching/instructing children to attend Code of Ethics Course in the ROI which are run through your local sports partnership or safeguarding training in Northern Ireland (information on which can be accessed from your local sports development officer). In addition to this we would ask clubs to ensure all their volunteers are made aware of BI reporting procedures that are contained in the Basketball Ireland Code of Ethics which is available to download from the BI website.

Clubs should take time to induct volunteers on BI policies and procedures. A sample induction checklist is also available on the BI website.

Clubs should introduce a system for reviewing a volunteer’s role. Clubs may consider doing this on an annual basis, perhaps as part of pre-season planning. This will help to ensure clubs get the best out of volunteers and will provide volunteers with the opportunity to progress to new roles that accommodate their own particular skills and aptitude. This should assist the clubs to retain volunteers in fulfilling roles.

Basketball Ireland Policy – Travelling with children

Guidelines/regulations for Coaches/selectors/managers/referees & authorised volunteers

Basketball Ireland recognises the extra responsibilities taken on by coaches/selectors/managers and authorised volunteers when they travel with children to events. This responsibility is even more onerous when overnight stays are involved.

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- Cars used to transport players/teams: Those who use their own vehicles to transport players must ensure that they have adequate insurance cover and be careful not to carry more than the permitted number of passengers.
 - Avoid being alone with one player (e.g. travelling to a venue or consulting/ advising in closed off room – If necessary leave the door open and be in view/earshot of others.
 - Avoid unnecessary physical contact. Any physical contact required should be for coaching the sport, maintaining the safety of young people in your care or providing comfort and support.
 - Remember to ensure that your language and comments remain within the standards expected by BI.

At residential events the following rules should apply:

- Adults should not enter a player's room without first knocking, leave the door open at all times and try to have another adult nearby.
- 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.
- The behaviour of the group should at all times be such that the good name of the Basketball Ireland is upheld
- There must be at least one authorised adult of each gender with a mixed party.
- Lights out times should be enforced.
- Young players should be under reasonable supervision at all times and should never be allowed to leave the accommodation or sports hall without prior permission.
- **Injury(s):** Make a brief record of injury and action taken and inform the parents.
- **Behavioural Problems:** Make a brief record of the problem/action/outcome. Submit report on return home as appropriate.

Coaches/Selectors/Managers/ Authorised Volunteer asked to travel with the group in a supervisory capacity must sign up for each trip – parents of children on the team should not be asked to accept group responsibilities.

Parents: Must sign an agreement that their children will abide by the rules laid down.

Young Players: Must sign a behaviour agreement.

See appendix 6 for Tavel with underage players form referred to above



Guidelines for use of photographic & filming equipment

Guidelines to Basketball Ireland clubs & committees

Basketball Ireland understands the responsibility of clubs to promote their own games on their own communications channels such as their website, videoing or in the local regional media. Basketball Ireland in no way seeks to eliminate this important function from clubs but proposes a number of points to avoid the inappropriate use of photographs.

- Ensure you have parental/guardian consent. (Registration stage may be best opportunity for parents/guardians to sign up to consent forms)
- Avoid personal information in captions which accompany images of young children
- Ensure photograph or recording should focus on activity rather than a young person
- Parents/spectators taking photographs/recordings should seek permission from club in advance from the club and make themselves available to state purpose of recording if club seek to do so.
- Group and team photographs are permitted but avoid matching a player's name with the position in which they may be standing or seated in team photograph.
- Create recognised procedures for reporting the use of inappropriate images to reduce the risks to under age players. Any instances of the use of inappropriate images should be reported to the Club's Children's Officer and/or Designated Person and also to the relevant statutory authorities as deemed appropriate.

The key concerns regarding the use of images and photographs of children/young people relate to:

- The possible identification of children when a photograph is accompanied by personal information and its inappropriate use thereafter.
- The inappropriate use, adaptation or copying of images for the development of abusive images of children or illegal websites.
- The taking of inappropriate photographs or recorded images of children.

A common sense approach is required when deciding on what may or may not be appropriate as we do not wish to prohibit the recording of games, coaching or celebrations at club level through the use of photography or by recording on video equipment.

Outlining the Club's photography and recording policy at the outset will clarify matters for all concerned. It may also be useful to request players and their parents to give the club signed permission for the recording of photographic and recorded images etc as part of the player's registration process.

It should be noted that we have little or no influence on what photographs may be taken and published in local or national newspapers as such photography is covered by a different set of guidelines. Should we ever be unhappy with the publication of such photographs or images we can address this matter with the individual newspaper or the Press Council of Ireland and the Office of the Press Ombudsman.

Web site usage

Many if not most of our Basketball clubs have well established web sites that enable them publicise their club activities, improve their means of communication with members and the general public and are also used as a general publicity forum for local, national and possible international use.

The Internet is an exciting and user friendly communication outlet for young people and it is therefore important that we attempt to engage with our young players in an equally user friendly manner and publicise Basketball activities as being modern, presentable, popular and relevant to their needs and interests.

The most successful and newsworthy of basketball web sites are regularly used by our under age or younger members. It is important that while not wishing in any way to restrict the use of and accessibility to such sites that we recognise our responsibility in maintaining web sites that are purposeful, educational, newsworthy, attractive in design and use and above all else are safe.

FOR NORTHERN IRELAND ONLY (AUP)

Agree a club web site policy also known as an Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) following discussions at your Club Management or Executive Committee and with members, including the under-age members of the Club.

This AUP will promote your strategy on the safe use of the Internet and also outlines the parameters of behaviour and specifies the consequences of breaching those parameters.

Decide at the outset what purpose your web site serves.

- Appoint a web master to manage your web site on behalf of the club.
- Ensure that the web master is answerable to a member of the Club's Management Committee e.g. Chairperson, Secretary, PRO, etc.
- The Club Management Committee should agree at the outset the style, design and content policy of the web site with the appointed web master, prior to going on-line.
- Agree if you will have a specific youth section and if so also agree the extent and the limitations on its content etc.

- Decisions on the appropriate use of photographic images and other similar content should be in accordance with the Guidelines for Photographic/Recorded Images as outlined

See Appendix 8 for Photography/Video Permission Form

Responding to Disclosure, Suspicions & Allegations

Basketball Ireland accepts that organisations, which include children as members, are vulnerable to the occurrence of child abuse/poor practice and therefore there is a need for policies and procedures to deal with this issue. The safety of young people is everyone's responsibility.

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

ABUSE	Physical	Behavioural
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

The above is only a sample list and is not exhaustive

Grounds for Concern

Consider the possibility of child abuse if there are reasonable grounds for concern. Reasonable grounds for concern, 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
- 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, dysfunctional behaviour;
- consistent indication, over a period of time, that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect

False allegations of abuse can occur, though very rare. However, if a young person says or indicates that he/she is being abused, or information is obtained which gives cause for concern that a young person is being abused, you should react immediately.

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 Board or the Gardai. The act also covers the offence of "**false reporting**". This Act came into operation on 23rd January 1999. 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 Health Boards or any member of An Garda Síochána
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 a concern 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 everybody to report offences or to forward information to the police by emphasising the, '*duty of every other person, who knows or believes,*
a) *That the offence or some other arrest able offences has 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.'*

Each Junior Basketball Club affiliated to Basketball Ireland should follow BI procedures for responding to reports or concerns relating to the welfare and safety of children. All involved adults, children and parents/guardians should be aware of how to report, and to whom concerns should be reported, within the club/organisation. The club Children's Officer should be aware of Statutory Authority guidelines (Children First Publication which can be downloaded from the website: <http://www.dcy.gov.ie>. Everyone involved in child protection matters should be aware of his/her responsibility to work in co-operation with the statutory child protection authorities.

The term "**Sports Leader**" means all adults; in a paid or voluntary capacity e.g. club helpers, tournament officials, coaches, team managers, camp managers.

REPORTING OF SUSPECTED OR ACTUAL CHILD ABUSE

If a Sports Leader or a parent/guardian is uneasy or suspicious about a child's safety or welfare the following response should be made:

Response to a Child Reporting Any Form of Abuse

The following Actions should be taken:

- React calmly.
- Listen compassionately and carefully –keep the questions to an absolute minimum, facilitating the child to tell about the problem.
- Take what the child is saying seriously.
- Remember the child has decided to tell about something very important and has taken a risk to do so.
- Reassure the child.
- If the nature of what the child is saying is unclear, use open, non-specific questions such as "Can you explain to me what you mean by that";
- The child should be given some indication of what happens next - 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.
- Carefully record the details.

The following actions should be avoided:

- Do not make promises to keep a secret – it may not be possible to keep that promise, though you should reassure the child that you will maintain confidentiality.
- Do not make a judgement or make negative comments about the alleged abuser
- Do not speculate or make assumptions
- Do not interview the child – do not probe for more information than is offered
- Do not approach the alleged abuser
- Do not allow your shock or distaste to show.

Reporting Child Abuse

It is not the responsibility of anyone working under the auspices of the Basketball Ireland, 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.

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.

Actions to Take:

- Observe and note dates, times, locations and contexts in which the incident occurred or suspicion was aroused, together with any other relevant information

- Report the matter as soon as possible to the person designated for reporting for example, the relevant Child Protection Officer or Basketball Irelands Child Protection Officer. If the person reported to has reason to believe that the child has been abused or is at risk of abuse, s/he will make a report to the health board/social services that have statutory responsibility to investigate and assess suspected or actual child abuse.
- In cases of emergency, where a child appears to be at immediate and serious risk and the Child Protection 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.** Make a record of the report.
- If the designated person is unsure whether reasonable grounds for concern exist or not, s/he should informally consult with the local HSE/Gateway 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 should first inform the family of their intention to make such a report, **unless doing so would endanger the child or undermine an investigation**
- A report should be given by the designated person to the Statutory Authorities in person or by phone, and in writing;
- It is best to report child abuse concerns by making personal contact with the relevant personnel in the Statutory Authorities.

Allegations of Abuse Against Sports Leaders

Each club/group affiliated to BI should follow the agreed procedures in cases of alleged child abuse against Sports Leaders. If such an allegation is made, two procedures should be followed:

- The reporting procedure as outlined in “Reporting Child Abuse” on previous page.
- The procedure for dealing with the Sports Leader (below)

The following points should be considered:

- The safety of the child making the allegation and any others who are/may be at risk should be ensured and this should take precedence over any other consideration. In this regard, the sports club/organisation should take any necessary steps which may be immediately necessary to protect children
- If a Sports Leader is the subject of the concern s/he should be treated with respect and fairness

Steps to be taken within the Sports Organisation

Where reasonable grounds for concern exist the following steps should be taken by the club/organisation:

-
- Advice should be sought from the local HSE/Gateway Team with regard to any action by the club deemed necessary to protect the child/children who may be at risk
 - The matter should be reported to the local HSE/Gateway Team following the procedures outlined previously
 - In the event that the concern is connected to the actions of a Sports Leader in the club, the Sports Leader involved in the concern should be asked to stand aside pending the outcome of any investigation by the Statutory Authorities. *It is advisable that this task be undertaken by an appointed committee member other than the Child Protection Officer/Authorised Signatory who takes the responsibility for reporting and only after consultation with statutory authority to ensure you do not undermine an investigation.*
 - The individual concerned should be made aware that the suspension is only a precautionary measure and will not prejudice any later possible disciplinary proceedings or be used in any way by any external agency as part of any assessment about guilt.

The Sports Leader should be informed, in private

- That an allegation has been made against him/her,
- The nature of the allegation

S/he should be afforded an opportunity to respond. His/her response should be noted and passed on to the Health Service Executive/Gateway personnel.

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.

BI and provincial designated safeguarding children officer should be informed by the club officer that the leader has been asked to stand aside.

BI will consider disciplinary action against the leader but should ensure that this does not interfere with the investigation of the statutory authorities. It is important that BI consider the outcome of the investigation and any implications it might have. **The fact that an individual has not been prosecuted or been found guilty does not automatically mean that they are appropriate to work with young people in the future.**

Referral to Independent Safeguarding Authority (for those who operate in NI only)

BI or the club (in Northern Ireland) have a legal a duty to refer to the ISA if the following conditions have both been met before the legal duty to make a referral to the ISA is triggered:

-
1. A person engaged in “regulated activity” must have harmed or posed a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult;

And

As a result the regulated activity provider must have either dismissed or permanently removed the person from working in “regulated activity” with children or vulnerable adults.

This includes situations where BI or the club as the regulated activity provider may have dismissed the person or permanently moved them to other duties, if the person had not resigned, retired or otherwise left their work.

What is harm?

We consider harm in its widest context. Harm may include:

- Sexual harm;
- Physical harm;
- Financial harm;
- Neglect;
- Emotional harm;
- Psychological harm; or
- Verbal harm.

Confidentiality

- Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned.
- Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only.
- Information should be stored in a secure place, with limited access 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.

Disciplinary, Complaints and Appeals Procedure

For any criminal or abuse allegations, please refer to page 22 of this document. For non-criminal or behavioural complaints in relation to child protection please follow the procedures outlined below:

Initial complaint should be dealt with at local level if possible. For example, if a complaint arises from a game, the complaint should be brought to the club child protection officer. The club complaints procedure will then be followed and a disciplinary committee may be convened if deemed necessary.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, he/she can bring it to the local Area Board. The Area Board child protection officer should be contacted in writing. All members who are dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint at Area Board level are required to register their complaint in writing to Basketball Ireland's Head Office and an open process of investigation will be conducted and responded to in writing.

- Complaints may be lodged by all members of the organisation or parents of junior members on their behalf
- They should be received in writing by the Secretary General of the organization, or in his absence, a nominated replacement
- The complaint should outline all relevant details about other parties involved
- The Secretary General will instigate an appropriate procedure (giving consideration to BI reporting of abuse guidelines) & will keep the complainant fully informed of the stages of the complaint handling
- If the complaint involves a criminal offence the designated person should inform the statutory authorities
- An appropriate forum 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. Written notification should be given to parents if the complaint is against a junior member
- Keep all records on file
- If any party does not agree with the outcome they can appeal the decision in writing within 10-day period

For more information on Disciplinary, Complaints and Appeals Procedures see Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport, page 23 section 3.4

Basketball Ireland's Anti Bullying Guidelines

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, tics

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 health board/Gateway team or police, dealing with bullying behaviour is normally the responsibility of all Leaders within this club/organisation.

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 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.

For more information on Bullying see Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport, page 41 section 5.4

Transport

There is extra responsibility on leaders when they transport young people to events. Adults should:

- Ensure that there is adequate insurance cover on their car, they follow the rules of the road, including legal use of seat belts and booster seats if required
- Not carry more than the permitted number of passengers
- Avoid being alone with one participant, put passenger in the back seat, have central drop off locations or seek parental permission to transport an individual participant on a regular basis and clearly state times of pick- up and drop off. Parents should check with young people about the plans and be happy with the transport arrangements

Appendices are listed below and are available on the website for download in the Club Child Protection section of (www.basketballireland.ie)

Appendix 1	Application form For New Junior Members (Under 18)
Appendix 2	Assessment/Application Form for BI Sports Leaders (Coaches, Selectors, Referees, Team Managers)
Appendix 3	Existing Leaders Information Form
Appendix 4	Assessment/Application Form for Newly Recruited Volunteers to work with Children
Appendix 5	Sample Email to Nominated Reference Provider
Appendix 6	Travel with Underage Players including Overnight Stays Form
Appendix 7	Photography/Video Permission Form
Appendix 8	Referee Course Participation Form