



# **TRALEE BAY MARITIME CENTRE**

The Pier, Fenit, Tralee, Co. Kerry  
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## **Child Protection Procedures, Code of Ethics & Good Practice for Young People in Sailing**



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## **POLICY STATEMENT**

It is the policy of TBMC to provide an enjoyable and safe environment free from abuse of any kind. Every individual should, at all times, show respect and understanding for their own safety and welfare and they should conduct themselves in such a way that reflects the principals of TBMC's core values and code of conduct.

All people affiliated with TBMC should be aware that any organisation working with children has a responsibility to protect those children.

## **FAIR PLAY**

Fair play is the guiding principle of the code of ethics and good practice for children's sport. Fair play is defined as "much more than playing within the rules". It incorporates friendship, respect and good sportsmanship.

## **CORE VALUES AND PROTECTION POLICIES**

TBMC has Core Value and Protection policies because it seeks to:

Protect children on and off the water

Assure parents their children are safe at a TBMC event

Treat children in an equitable and fair manner

Protect coaches/instructors/volunteers by giving guidelines to avoid situations which could lead to allegations which could damage their careers

To protect our club by showing TBMC has taken all reasonable steps to provide a safe environment



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## CODES OF CONDUCT

### CODE OF CONDUCT FOR SAILORS

Young sailors should:

Feel safe

Be listened to and treated with respect

Experience competition at a level at which they feel comfortable

Get help against bullying

Treat coaches with respect

Sail fairly and respect fellow sailors

Behave in a manner that avoids bringing sport of sailing into disrepute

Speak with children's co-ordinator if required

SAILORS SHOULD NEVER:

Cheat

Shout or argue with officials

Bully or use bullying tactics to isolate or gain advantage over another sailor

### CODE OF CONDUCT: PARENTS

TBSC believes parents should:

Be role models maintaining highest standard of conduct

Behave responsibly and do not seek to unfairly upset a race

Never intentionally embarrass a sailor

Recognise the value of coaches.

Support all efforts within the club to remove bullying behaviour in all its forms

Focus on the effort rather than the performance

### CODE OF CONDUCT: COACHES AND INSTRUCTORS

COACHES AND INSTRUCTORS MUST:

Be familiar with the code of ethics for protection of children and anti-bullying policy

Create a positive environment and have children's safety as first priority

Respect rights, worth and dignity of every child and treat all equally

Be suitably qualified and remember your behaviour reflects that of the sailors

Avoid favouritism. Every child deserves equal time and attention

Insist on fair play

Encourage sailors to accept responsibility for their own performance and behaviour

Set realistic goals

COACHES AND INSTRUCTORS MUST NEVER:

Punish a mistake by physical or verbal means or by exclusion

Engage in rough physical or sexually provocative games

Engage in inappropriate touching of any form

Do things of a personal nature that children can do for themselves

Be inappropriately alone with a child

Coaches should avoid the use of alcohol before coaching, during events or on away trips



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## GUIDELINES ON GENERAL ISSUES

### USE OF PHOTOGRAPHIC EQUIPMENT

Use of camera phones in changing rooms is not permitted and will be regarded as bullying. Before videos or photographs are taken for use in teaching or for advertisement consent must be obtained from child and parent before the image can be used.

Before publishing images make sure they are appropriate and do not include any information that could enable a person to contact the child.

Press or media photographers must wear identification at all times.

Amateur photographers must seek permission of event organiser.

Only use images of sailors in suitable attire.

Anyone concerned about any photography taking place at a training session or event should contact the coach or event organiser.

### TOUCHING

Sailing can require a hands on approach i.e., assisting in a capsize or helping a child onto a rib.

The following must 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.

Avoid fitting buoyancy aids; try to get the sailors to put on their own.

When lifting a child into a safety boat, avoid making contact with sensitive parts of the body

### TRAVELLING

It is essential that those accompanying young sailors to away events or training camps and the participants themselves have a clear understanding of their roles and the conduct expected of them. The codes of conducts must be adhered to by those travelling with squads.

Parents will be notified if there is a "team mom" travelling and will be asked for contact numbers and relevant medical details to be made available.

Should a child become ill or injured at a TBMC event, the parents will be informed as soon as possible and if necessary, suitable arrangements agreed for the safe and comfortable return home or collection of the child.

Consent will be obtained for the administration of medication or medical aid in the absence of a parent.

No child will be left alone with any medical personnel or in a hospital.

A child who feels sick and cannot sail will be supervised whilst off the water.

Adults should not share rooms with children (with exception of parent/child)

Children share rooms with those of same age and gender

All group socialisation, team meetings should take place in communal areas

Curfew time should be enforced and adhered to.

### SUPERVISION

Avoid being alone with any one child. If you need to talk separately do so in an open environment in view of others.

Coaches should not enter changing rooms or hotel bedrooms.

Do not leave a child or children unsupervised.

Start and finish times of sessions should be clearly stated.



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## DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

- Complaints may be lodged by all members of TBMC
- They should be received in writing by the honorary secretary
- The complaint should outline all relevant details about other parties involved
- The complaint will be brought to the attention of the TBMC commodore who will convene a disciplinary committee

## RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION POLICY

TBMC will take all reasonable steps to ensure that people working with young sailors are suitable and appropriately qualified.

Coaches and instructors agree to abide by the club's Code of Ethics and policies.

A decision to appoint coaches and instructors is the responsibility of the club.

**Beyond this published document TBMC have procedures for dealing with all child protection issues.**



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## 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. It includes behaviours such as teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting, extortion and exclusion 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 rigging or changing near others)
- Frequent loss of, or shortage of, money or gear 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)

### Dealing with bullying?

While the more extreme forms of bullying would be regarded as physical or emotional abuse and are reported to the health board or An Garda Síochana, dealing with bullying behaviour is the responsibility of all officials within TBSC.

### 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



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## 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 loose 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



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## 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 know that bullying or intimidating behaviour will not be tolerated.

## 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 Officer, and checked out without delay.

## 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, coaches) 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 child protection co-ordinator. The information should be checked out and handled in a confidential manner.



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## CHILD WELFARE AND PROTECTION PROCEDURES

TBMC 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 duty social worker in the local health board or social services department 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 in the club but should be passed on to the Designated Children's co-ordinator who may in turn have to pass the concern to the local Statutory Authorities. It is not the responsibility of anyone working within TBMC 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 to keep that 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 doing 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 children's co-ordinator
- (k) Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you



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## 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 children's co-ordinator 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 Health Board or the Gardai (See 5.13.1 – ISC. Code). 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 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 concerns in 'good faith' is not deliberately attempting to slander another person's name. In Northern Ireland there is legislation, the Criminal Law Act (NI) 1967 which places the responsibility on everyone to report offences or to forward information to the police by emphasizing the, *'duty of every other person, who knows or believes, (a) that the offence or some other arrestable 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'*

## Allegations Against Sports Leaders

TBSC has agreed ON procedures to be followed in cases of alleged child abuse against coaches. If such an allegation is made, two procedures will be followed:

- The reporting procedure in respect of suspected child abuse
- The procedure for dealing with the coach (carried out by the club Chair or senior officer, or a person not already involved with the child protection concern)

The safety of the child making the allegation will 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



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

## ***The reporting procedure***

If the designated person has reasonable grounds for concern, the matter should be reported to the local health board / social services, following the standard reporting procedure,

## ***The coach***

While the designated officer makes the report to the local health board, the Chair of the club will deal with the Sports Leader in question.

- The Chair will privately inform the leader that (a) an allegation has been made against him / her and (b) the nature of the allegation. He / she will be afforded an opportunity to respond. His / her response will be noted and passed on to the health board / social services.
- The coach will 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 committee should be informed by the Designated Person that the leader has been asked to stand aside

Committees 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.



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## CHILD ABUSE

Child abuse is a term used to describe ways in which children are harmed, usually by adults, often by people they know and trust. It refers to damage done to a child's physical or mental wellbeing.

### Categories of Abuse

**All coaches, instructors, volunteers and parents should be familiar with signs and behaviours that may be indicative of child abuse. Though a child may be subjected to more than one type of harm, abuse is normally categorised into four different types: neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse. The categories of abuse may be summarised as follows:**

#### ***Child Neglect***

Neglect is normally defined in terms of omission, where a child suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults, or medical care. It may also include neglect of a child's basic emotional needs.

Neglect generally becomes apparent in different ways over a period of time rather than at one specific point. For instance, a child who suffers a series of minor injuries is not having his or her needs for supervision and safety met. The threshold of significant harm is reached when the child's needs are neglected to the extent that his or her well being and /or development is severely affected.

#### ***Emotional Abuse***

Emotional abuse is normally to be found in the relationship between an adult and a child rather than in a specific event or pattern of events. It occurs when a child's need for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met. It is rarely manifested in terms of physical symptoms. For children with disabilities it may include over protection or conversely failure to recognise or understand a child's disability. Examples of emotional abuse include:

- (a) Persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming;
- (b) Where the level of care is conditional on his or her behaviour
- (c) Unresponsiveness, inconsistent or unrealistic expectations of a child;
- (d) Premature imposition of responsibility on the child
- (e) Over and under protection of the child
- (f) Failure to provide opportunities for the child's education and development
- (g) Use of unrealistic or over-harsh disciplinary measures
- (h) Exposure to domestic violence; adult mental health problems and parental substance misuse may expose children to emotional abuse

Children show signs of emotional abuse by their behaviour for example, excessive clinginess to or avoidance of the parent/guardian, their emotional state (low self-esteem, unhappiness), or their development (non-organic failure to thrive). The threshold of significant harm is reached when abusive interactions dominate and become typical of the relationship between the child and the parent/guardian.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

#### ***Physical Abuse***

Physical abuse is any form of non-accidental injury that causes significant harm to a child, including:

- (a) Shaking, hitting or throwing
- (b) Use of excessive force in handling



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- (c) Deliberate poisoning
- (d) Suffocation or drowning
- (e) Munchausen's syndrome by proxy (where parents/guardians fabricate stories of illness about their child or cause physical signs of illness)
- (f) Allowing or creating a substantial risk of significant harm to a child
- (g) For children with disabilities it may include confinement to a room or cot, or incorrectly given drugs to control behaviour
- (h) Burning or scalding

## **Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or sexual arousal, or for that of others. For example:

- (a) Exposure of the sexual organs or any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of a child
- (b) Intentional touching or molesting of the body of a child whether by a person or object for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification
- (c) Masturbation in the presence of a child or involvement of the child in the act of masturbation
- (d) Sexual intercourse with the child, whether oral, vaginal or anal
- (e) Sexual exploitation of a child

It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Some facts about abuse:

- Abuse occurs across all social classes, education, professions and ethnic groups
- Children and young people mostly know and trust their abuser
- A child will rarely be moved from the home, it's usual to remove the abuser from the situation
- Both boys and girls are abused.
- Disabled children are more vulnerable to abuse, less able to speak about it and more dependant on adults for their care
- Both men and women abuse children and young people
- Most cases of abuse do not go forward for criminal prosecution

## RECOGNISING ABUSE

It is not always easy to recognise when a child has been abused. Some of the more typical symptoms which should arouse your suspicions include:

Unexplained or suspicious injuries if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries.  
Sudden changes in behaviour.  
Changes occurring over a period of time i.e.: weight loss/gain, unkempt appearance.  
Distrust of adults.  
Difficulty in making friends.

## IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE

A child could be displaying some or all of these symptoms or behaving in a way which is worrying without necessarily meaning that the child is being abused.



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## Response to a child reporting any form of abuse

Where a child decides to disclose information to an adult or member of the club the following points should be taken into consideration:

- (l) It is important to 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
- (m) It is important to stay calm and not to show any extreme reaction to what the child is saying. Listen compassionately, and take what the child is saying seriously
- (n) It should be understood 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
- (o) The child should understand that it is not possible that any information will be kept a secret
- (p) No judgmental statement should be made against the person whom the allegation is made
- (q) The child should not be questioned 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"
- (r) It is advisable to check out the concerns with the parents/guardians before making a report unless doing so would endanger the child.

The child should be given 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.

## Reporting Child Abuse

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

- (e) Observe and note dates, times, locations and contexts in which the incident occurred or suspicion was aroused, together with any other relevant information
- (f) Report the matter as soon as possible to the designated person with responsibility for reporting abuse (a senior officer holder, or the children's officer). 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
- (g) 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
- (h) A report should be given by the Designated Person to the Statutory Authorities in person by phone and in writing. *See Appendix 6, page 53 of the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport, (sample reporting form).*
- (i) It is best to report child abuse concerns by making personal contact with the relevant personnel in the Statutory Authorities.
- (j) The Protection for Persons Reporting Act, 1998 provides immunity from civil liability to persons who report child abuse "reasonably and in good faith" to a designated officer within the health board or any member of the guards.



# TRALEE BAY MARITIME CENTRE

The Pier, Fenit, Tralee, Co. Kerry

mobile: 087 760 6795 email: [traleebaymc@gmail.com](mailto:traleebaymc@gmail.com)

[traleebaymaritimecentre.ie](http://traleebaymaritimecentre.ie)

## Grounds for Concern

Consider the possibility of the need to make a report if there are reasonable grounds for concern. Examples of reasonable grounds are:

- A specific indication from a child that he or she has been abused, (a disclosure).
- A statement from a person who witnessed abuse
- An illness, injury or behaviour consistent with abuse
- A symptom which may not itself be totally consistent with abuse, but which is supported by corroborative evidence of deliberate harm or negligence, (e.g., a broken arm results from a fall but this injuries re-occurs through constant lack of supervision)
- Consistent signs of neglect over a period of time

It is important to realise that children may be subjected to abuse by parents/guardians or other family members, persons outside their family, other children or those who have responsibility for their care for one reason or another for short or long periods of time.

**Children in certain situations may be especially vulnerable to abuse. These include children who, for short or long periods of time, are separated from parents or other family members and depend on other adults for their care and protection. Children with disabilities may also be more at risk as the nature of their disability sometimes limits communication between themselves and others and they may depend more on a variety of adults to meet their needs, for example, for care and transport.**

## Child-to-Child Abuse

In some cases of child abuse the alleged perpetrator will also be a child and it is important that behaviour of this nature is not ignored. Grounds for concern will exist in cases where there is an age difference and/or difference in power, status or intellect between the children involved. However, it is also important to distinguish between normal sexual behaviour and abusive behaviour.

Some facts about abuse:

- Abuse occurs across all social classes, education, professions and ethnic groups
- Children and young people mostly know and trust their abuser
- A child will rarely be moved from the home, it's usual to remove the abuser from the situation
- Both boys and girls are abused
- Disabled children are more vulnerable to abuse, less able to speak about it and more dependant on adults for their care
- Both men and women abuse children and young people
- Most cases of abuse do not go forward for criminal prosecution



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## Some points of importance

1. Children First outlines that all adults have a responsibility for the protection and welfare of children, all adults whether paid, voluntary, in a position of authority, on a committee, a member or non-member of the club.
2. The designated person for child protection officer does not have the responsibility of investigating or validating child protection concerns within the association and has no counselling or therapeutic role. These roles are filled by the Statutory Authorities as outlined in the Code, Children First.
3. It is possible that child protection concerns will be brought to the attention of the Children's Officer or any member of the club, as young people will confide in those that they trust. In this event it is essential

that the correct procedures are followed, i.e. that reports are passed on immediately to the designated person with responsibility for reporting within the association and/or to the Statutory Authorities.

4. All adults have the option to go directly to the Statutory Authorities as a concerned individual.

Persons unsure about whether or not certain behaviours are abusive, and therefore reportable, should contact the duty social worker in the local health board or social services department where they will receive advice.

## Procedures within TBMC

- TBMC has procedures for responding to reports or concerns relating to the welfare and safety of children.
- All coaches, children and parents/guardians should be aware of how to report and to whom concerns should be reported within TBMC. These procedures are consistent with the Statutory Authority guidelines, i.e. Children First and with the procedures outlined in the *Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport*.
- Everyone involved in child protection matters should be aware of their responsibility to work in co-operation with the statutory child protection authorities.

If you wish to pass on a concern or to consult informally with a social worker you can contact the duty social worker in the Health Service Executive (HSE) Southern area:

Tralee Social Work Department, Rathass, Tralee, Co. Kerry. Tel: (066) 7184500  
Office Hours are 9a.m. - 5p.m. Mon - Fri and closed between 1.30pm - 2.30pm daily.

Outside Working Hours all matters should be referred to An Garda Síochana. Under the protocols developed by An Garda Síochana and the HSE, all cases of suspected child abuse would then be referred to the HSE in the normal way.

You should go directly to the police for assistance in emergency cases.



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## **Confidential Garda Line**

1800 666 111 (24 Hours)

TBSC's policies and procedures are based on the:

Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport, Irish Sports Council, 2000.

Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children, Dept. of Health & Children 1999.

Our Duty to Care, Dept. of Health & Children 2002.

TBMC's designated persons for child protection co-ordinator are:

Paula Moloney 087 121 9643

John Patton 087 226 9244

Brian O'Sullivan – Centre Principal 087 2600066