



CHILD AND VULNERABLE ADULT SAFEGUARDING
December 2013

1.0 Child and Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Policy Statement

- 1.1 The Fence Like an Olympian (FLO) club has a duty of care to safeguard all children from harm. All children have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account.
- 1.2 FLO will ensure the safety and protection of all children involved in the club through adherence to the Child Protection guidelines applicable in Northern Ireland.
- 1.3 A child is defined as a person under the age of 18

2.0 Policy aims

2.1 The aim of the FLO Child Protection Policy is to promote good practice:

- Providing children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of FLO representatives and staff.
- Allow all staff/volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

3.0 Promoting good practice

- 3.1 Child abuse, particularly sexual abuse, can arouse strong emotions in those facing such a situation. It is important to understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with your judgment about the appropriate action to take.
- 3.2 Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and the sporting environment. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with young people in order to harm them. A coach, instructor, teacher, official or volunteer will have regular contact with young people and be an important link in identifying cases where they need protection. All suspicious cases of poor practice should be reported following the guidelines in this document.
- 3.3 If a child has been subjected to child abuse outside the sporting environment, FLO must work with the appropriate agencies to ensure the child receives the required support.

4.0 Good practice guidelines

All personnel should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect themselves from false allegations. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate.

4.1 Good practice means:

- Always working in an open environment avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication.
- Treating all young people/disabled adults equally with respect and dignity.
- Always putting the welfare of each young person first.
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with players (eg it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them).
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust and empowering children to share in decision making.
- Making sport fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play.
- Ensuring that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly and according to guidelines provided by the Governing Body of that sport. If it is difficult to maintain hand positions when the child is constantly moving, young people should always be consulted and their agreement gained. Some parents are becoming increasingly sensitive about manual support and their views should always be carefully considered.
- Keeping up to date with technical skills, qualifications and insurance.
- Involving parents/carers wherever possible. For example, encouraging them to take responsibility for their children in the changing rooms. If groups have to be supervised in the changing rooms, always ensure parents, teachers, coaches or officials work in pairs.
- Ensuring that if mixed teams are taken away for the day or night, they should always be accompanied by a male and female member of staff. However, remember that same gender abuse can also occur.
- Ensuring that at tournaments or residential events, adults should not enter children's rooms or invite children into their rooms without prior approval of management.
- Being an excellent role model – this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of young people and disabled adults – avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will.
- Securing parental consent in writing to act in loco parentis, if the need arises to administer emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment.
- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.
- Requesting written parental consent if officials are required to transport young people in their cars.

4.2 Practices to be avoided

Avoid:

- Spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others.
- Taking or dropping off **A** child to an event.

4.3 Practices never to be sanctioned

The following should **never** be sanctioned. You should **never**:

- Engage in rough physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- Share a room with a child.
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun.
- Reduce a child to tears as a form of control.
- Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Do things of a personal nature for children or disabled adults that they can do for themselves.
- Invite or allow children to stay with you at your home unsupervised.

4.4 Guidance on Physical Contact

There are a number of principles that should be followed when the activity involves physical contact.

- Physical contact during sport should always be intended to meet the young person's needs, NOT the adult's. The adult should only use physical contact if their aim is to:
 - Develop sports skills or techniques
 - To treat an injury
 - To prevent an injury or accident from occurring
 - To meet the requirements of the sport
- The adult has responsibility to be aware of their own sports guidelines and work within them. They should seek to explain the nature and reason for the physical contact to the young person's reinforcing the teaching or coaching skill. Unless the situation is an emergency, the adult should ask the young person for permission.
- It is good practice for the Sports Governing Body as part of an induction process, to explain to parents/carers and the young person any guidance about any physical contact that will be required as part of that sport. Young people should be encouraged to voice concerns they have if any physical contact makes them feel uncomfortable or threatened.
- Contact should not involve touching genital areas, buttocks, breasts or any other part of the body that might cause a child distress or embarrassment. Physical contact should always take place in an open or public environment and not take place in secret or out of sight of others.
- **NB** It may sometimes be necessary for staff or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are young or are disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents and the players involved. There is a need to be responsive to a person's reactions. If a person is fully dependent on you, talk with him/her about what you are doing and give choices where possible. This is particularly so if you are involved in any dressing or undressing of outer clothing, or where there is physical contact, lifting or assisting a child to carry out particular activities. Avoid taking on the responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained.

5.0 Incidents that must be reported/recorded

If any of the following occur you should report this immediately to another colleague and record the incident. You should also ensure where possible the parents of the child are informed:

- if you accidentally hurt a player
- If he/she seems distressed in any manner
- if a player appears to be sexually aroused by your actions
- if a player misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

6.0 Use of photographic/filming equipment at sporting events

6.1 There is evidence that some people have used sporting events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young and disabled sportspeople in vulnerable positions. You should be vigilant and any concerns should be reported to the nominated Child Protection Officer.

6.2 Video as a coaching aid: there is no intention to prevent coaches and teachers using video equipment as a legitimate coaching aid. However, performers and their parents/carers should be made aware that this is part of the coaching programme and such films should be stored safely.

7.0 Recruitment and training of staff and volunteers

FLO recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children.

7.1 Pre-selection checks must include the following:

- All volunteers/staff should complete an application form. The application form will elicit information about an applicant's past and a self-disclosure about any criminal record.
- Consent should be obtained from an applicant to seek information from Access NI
- Evidence of identity should be provided (eg passport)

7.2 Interview and induction

- All employees (and volunteers) will be required to sign a contract with FLO which includes a Code of Conduct.
- Child protection procedures are explained and training needs are identified.

7.3 Training

In addition to pre-selection checks, the safeguarding process includes training after recruitment to help staff and volunteers to:

- Analyse their own practice against established good practice, and to ensure their practice is likely to protect them from false allegations.
- Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice or possible abuse.
- Respond to concerns expressed by a child or young person.
- Work safely and effectively with children.

FLO requires:

- Officials and Coaching staff to attend a recognised good practice and child protection awareness training workshop, to ensure their practice is exemplary and to facilitate the development of a positive culture towards good practice and child protection.
- Non-coaching staff and volunteers to complete a recognised awareness training course on child protection.
- Relevant personnel to receive advisory information outlining good practice and informing them about what to do if they have concerns about the behaviour of an adult towards a young person.
- Relevant personnel to undergo national first aid training (where necessary).
- Attendance of update training when necessary.

8.0 Responding to allegations or suspicions

- 8.1 It is not the responsibility of anyone working with FLO, in a paid or unpaid capacity, to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities. FLO will assure all staff/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone who in good faith reports his/her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child. **If staff/volunteer become aware that any young person is possibly suffering any abuse no matter how trivial they should report this to the Designated Safeguarding Children's Officer and an [Incident Report Form](#) completed.**
- 8.2 Any incident reported to the Designated Safeguarding Children's Officer should be responded to immediately taking all necessary steps and reporting the incident to the appropriate authorities when required.
- 8.3 As well as reporting allegations to appropriate authorities, FLO will follow our own organisation's internal disciplinary procedures. FLO will facilitate a referral to the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA), if appropriate (i.e. referral is appropriate when we remove an individual from the club or an individual leaves before we have had an opportunity to remove them, because you think they have engaged in relevant conduct or have harmed or placed a young person at risk of harm, or received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence), whether or not a criminal investigation proceeds. (visit <http://www.isa.gov.org.uk/> for more information).

9.0 INDICATORS OF ABUSE

The following are some indicators of abuse, but these are not exhaustive lists.

| PHYSICAL INDICATORS | BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unexplained bruising in soft tissue areas • Repeated injuries • Black eyes • Injuries to the mouth • Torn or bloodstained clothing • Burns or scalds • Bites • Fractures • Marks from implements • Inconsistent stories/excuses relating to injuries | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unexplained changes in behaviour - becoming withdrawn or aggressive • Difficulty in making friends • Distrustful of adults or excessive attachment to adults • Sudden drop in performance • Changes in attendance pattern • Inappropriate sexual awareness, behaviour or language • Reluctance to remove clothing |

10.0 GUIDANCE ON HOW TO DEAL WITH DISCLOSURE OR CONCERN OF ABUSE

| <u>DO'S</u> | <u>DON'TS</u> |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stay calm ▪ Listen and hear ▪ Give the child/young person time to say what they want reassure the child/young person that they have done the right thing in telling – they are not to blame. ▪ Record in writing what was said as soon as possible ▪ Report to Designated Safeguarding Children's Officer or Deputy in the organisation ▪ Record your report | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do not panic/frighten the child/young person ▪ Do not ask leading questions or speculate ▪ Do not promise or agree to keep secrets ▪ Do not inquire into details of the abuse ▪ Do not make a child/young person repeat the story unnecessarily ▪ Do not approach or confront the alleged abuser |

- Under no circumstances should any individual staff / volunteer member or FLO itself attempt to deal with the problem of abuse alone.
- The person who first encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is not responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has occurred. That is a task for the professional agencies following a referral to them, expressing concern, about a child/young person.
- **The primary responsibility of the person who first suspects or is told of abuse is to report it and to ensure that their concerns are taken seriously.**
- **Where there is a complaint against a member of staff there may be three types of investigation:**
 - a criminal investigation
 - a child protection investigation
 - a disciplinary or misconduct investigation.
- The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation, but not necessarily.

11.0 Action

11.1 Concerns about poor practice:

- If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice, the Child Protection Officer will deal with it as a misconduct issue.
- If the allegation is about poor practice by the Child Protection Officer, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to a relevant officer who will decide how to deal with the allegation and whether or not to initiate disciplinary proceedings.

11.2 Concerns about suspected abuse:

- Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer should be reported to the Child Protection Officer, who will take such steps as considered necessary to
- ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.
- The Child Protection Officer will refer the allegation to the social services department which may involve the police, or go directly to the police if out-of-hours.
- The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services department.
- The Child Protection Officer should also notify the relevant Governing Body officer. The Child Protection Officer may deal with any media enquiries.
- If the Child Protection Officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the appropriate Manager or in his/her absence to the Chairperson who will refer the allegation to social services

11.3 Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated strictly on a need to know basis only.

[Fence Like an Olympian Child and Vulnerable adult safeguarding policy. December 2013](#)

This includes the following people:

- the Child Protection Officer
- the parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused
- the person making the allegation
- social services/police
- the alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child).

Seek social services advice on who should approach the alleged abuser and when.

Information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws (eg that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

11.4 Internal enquiries and suspension

- The Chairperson will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services inquiries.
- Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries the FLO Disciplinary Committee will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision, particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases the Disciplinary Committee must reach a decision based upon the available information, which could suggest that on a balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child should remain of paramount importance throughout.

11.5 Support to deal with the aftermath of abuse

- Consideration should be given to the kind of support that children, parents and members of staff may need. Use of helplines, support groups and open meetings will maintain an open culture and help the healing process.
- Consideration should be given to what kind of support may be appropriate for the alleged perpetrator.

11.6 Allegations of previous abuse

- Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (e.g. by an adult who was abused as a child or by a member of staff who is still currently working with children).
- Where such an allegation is made, FLO should follow the procedures as detailed above and report the matter to the social services or the police. This is because other children, either within or outside sport, may be at risk from this person. Anyone who has a previous criminal conviction for offences related to abuse is automatically excluded from working with children.

11.7 Action if bullying is suspected

If bullying is suspected, the same procedure should be followed as set out in 'Responding to suspicions or allegations' above.

11.8 Action to help the victim and prevent bullying in sport:

- Take all signs of bullying very seriously.
- Encourage all children to speak and share their concerns. Help the victim to speak out and tell the person in charge or someone in authority.
- Investigate all allegations and take action to ensure the victim is safe. Speak with the victim and the bully(ies) separately.
- Reassure the victim that you can be trusted and will help them, although you cannot promise to tell no one else.
- Keep records of what is said (what happened, by whom, when).
- Report any concerns to the Child Protection Officer.

11.9 Action towards the bully(ies):

- Talk with the bully(ies), explain the situation, and try to get the bully(ies) to understand the consequences of their behaviour.
- Seek an apology to the victim(s).
- Inform the bully(ies)'s parents.
- Provide support for the victim's coach.
- Impose sanctions as necessary.
- Encourage and support the bully(ies) to change behaviour.
- Hold meetings with the governing bodies and encourage progress..
- Inform all organisation members of action taken.
- Keep a written record of action taken.

11.10 Concerns outside the immediate sporting environment (eg a parent or carer):

- Report your concerns to the Child Protection Officer, who should contact social services or the police as soon as possible. (See below for the information social services or the police will need.)
- If the Child Protection Officer is not available, the person being told of or discovering the abuse should contact social services or the police immediately.
- Social services and the Child Protection Officer will decide how to involve the parents/carers.
- The Child Protection Officer should also report the incident to the governing body. The governing body should ascertain whether or not the person/(s) involved in the incident played a role and act accordingly.
- Maintain confidentiality on a need to know basis only.

11.11 Information for social services or the police about suspected abuse:

To ensure that this information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern, which should include the following:

- The child's name, age and date of birth of the child.
- The child's home address and telephone number.
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else.
- The nature of the allegation. Include dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information.
- Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes.

- Details of witnesses to the incidents.

- The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.
- Have the parents been contacted? If so, what has been said?
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details.
- If the child was not the person who reported the incident, has the child been spoken to? If so, what was said?
- Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record details.
- Where possible referral to the police or social services should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours and the name of the contact who took the referral should be recorded. If you are worried about sharing concerns about abuse with a senior colleague, you can contact social services or the police direct, or the **NSPCC Child Protection Helpline** on **0808 800 5000**, or **Childline** on **0800 1111**.

12.0 FLO Designated Officers Contact details:

NAME: Conal Heatley
TELEPHONE: 07787 414776

STRICTLY PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

| | |
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| FENCE LIKE AN OLYMPIAN | |
| INCIDENT RECORDING FORM – SAFEGUARDING POLICY | |

| | |
|---|--|
| Your name: | |
| Your position: | |
| Child's name: | |
| Child's address: | |
| Parents/carers Names & Address: | |
| Child's date of birth: | |
| Date and time of any incident: | |
| Your observations: | |
| <p>Exactly what the child said and what you said: (Remember, do not lead the child – record actual details. Continue on separate sheet if necessary)</p> | |

| | |
|--|--|
| Action taken so far: | |
| Designated officer Informed; <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | |
| External agencies contacted (date & time) | |
| Police <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | If yes – which: Name and contact number: Details of advice received: |
| Social services <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | If yes – which: Name and contact number: Details of advice received: |
| Sport Governing body <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | Name and contact number: Details of advice received: |
| Local Council or Education Department <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No (If appropriate) | If yes – which: Name and contact number: Details of advice received: |
| Other (e.g. NSPCC) | Which: Name and contact number: Details of advice received: |

Signature

Date

Remember to maintain confidentiality on a *need to know* basis – only if it will protect the child. Do not discuss this incident with anyone other than those who need to know.

NB A copy of this form should be sent to social services after the telephone report and to the Governing Body Child Protection Officer for monitoring purposes.