

Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

1. Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to provide information and promote good practice for those working with children in the Donegal Local Sports Partnership CLG (DSP). It is crucial that staff, tutors, and volunteers are aware of what to do in situations where the welfare or safety of a child may be at risk.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all staff, tutors and volunteers in Donegal Local Sports Partnership CLG.

3. Policy Statement

Everyone who takes part in sport, irrespective of his or her role should be able to do so in a safe environment. Everybody who works with children has a duty of care to them, and we recognise that this is a responsibility which must be taken seriously.

DSP is fully committed to safeguarding the well-being of all the children with whom we work. Our policy on Child Protection is in accordance with “Children First – National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children”

The DSP respects and promotes the principles of equality and diversity and works with all children in a culturally sensitive way within the context of the Irish constitution and law and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

For the purposes of this policy a child is any person under 18 years of age.

4. Policy Principles

- All staff/tutors/volunteers working directly with children must be Garda vetted.
- Staff/tutors/volunteers are asked to sign that there is no reason why they would be considered unsuitable for working with children. In cases where they advise that they are unable to do so, appropriate action will be taken.
- When young people, under 18 years of age, are assisting DSP they will receive suitable information on the DSP Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy, and will always work in partnership with or under the supervision of an adult.
- Staff/tutors/volunteers should not take a child alone in a car on journeys. Where this is absolutely unavoidable and in the best interest of the Child it should be with the full consent and knowledge of the parents/guardians and the DSP Co-ordinator. (Examples where this might happen in practice are where a child is the last left at training and for some reason their parent/guardian suddenly cannot collect them)
- While we recognise that sometimes it is appropriate for staff/tutors/volunteers to work on a one to one basis with a child or young person, staff/tutors/volunteers are not permitted to spend excessive amounts of time alone with an individual child.

- It is mandatory for those working directly with children to have received appropriate training on child protection i.e. Safeguarding programmes.
- All staff/tutors/volunteers will be expected to participate in relevant training from time to time.
- Where DSP hold events where children are involved a clear system of registration and departure of children is in place at all events

5. Code of Behaviour

- Staff, tutors and volunteers must show respect and understanding for the rights, safety and welfare of children and young people.
- Inappropriate behaviour or language by the children will not go unchallenged.
- The privacy of the participants will be respected at all times and particularly in changing rooms, showers and toilets.

6. Dealing with Challenging Disruptive Behaviour

- Where instances of challenging or disruptive behaviour occur with children a record will be kept of this where the instance requires the intervention of a staff member, tutor or volunteer or where the safety and well-being of others are at risk.
- Staff members/tutors/volunteers who are present at a time of challenging or disruptive behaviour should complete an incident/accident report form.

7. Dealing with Disclosure of Abuse

In the event of a child/young person disclosing an incident of abuse it is essential that this is dealt with sensitively and professionally by the staff member/tutor/volunteer involved. In such circumstances the staff member/tutor/volunteer should:

- React calmly
- Listen carefully – take the young person seriously
- Reassure the young person that they have taken the right action in talking to you
- Do not promise to keep anything secret
- Ask questions for clarification only. Do not ask leading questions
- Check back with the child/young person that what you have heard is correct and understood
- Do not express opinions about the alleged abuser
- Record the conversation in writing as soon as possible, in as much detail as possible. Sign and date the record
- Ensure that the child/young person understands the procedures which will follow
- Treat the information confidentially
- Report to the Child Welfare Officer/ Designated Liaison Person

8. Guiding principles to reporting child Abuse

- The Designated Liaison Person is responsible for ensuring reporting procedures are followed so that child welfare and protection concerns are referred promptly to Tusla. (Please see 10 below for details of DSP's designated liaison)
- The safety and well-being of the child or young person must take priority

- Reports should be made without delay to the Child and Family Agency Tusla, Local Health Office area where the child resides. (Letterkenny Tusla Number 074 91 23672)

9. Action to be taken when an allegation is made against a Staff Member/Tutor/Volunteer

Where an allegation of abuse is made against a staff member/tutor/volunteer there are two procedures that DSP will put into place. Where possible these should be dealt with by two different people.

1. The reporting procedure in respect of the child
 - (a) The safety of the child is the first priority and all necessary measures will be taken to ensure the child/children are safe.
 - (b) The Designated Liaison Person will deal with the procedure involving the child and the reporting to Tusla/An Garda Siochana where the child is in imminent danger

2. The procedure for dealing with the staff member
 - (a) The DSP Co-ordinator/Chairperson of the Board will work in close co-operation with the HSE and An Garda Siochana.
 - (b) If a formal report is being made, the DSP Co-ordinator/Chairperson of the Board will notify the staff member/tutor/volunteer that an allegation has been made and what the nature of the allegation is. The staff member/tutor/volunteer has a right to respond to this and this response should be documented and retained. Furthermore Donegal Sports Partnership will ensure that the principles of 'natural justice' will apply whereby a person is considered innocent until proved otherwise.
 - (c) The DSP Co-ordinator/Chairperson of the Board will suspend the staff member with pay (where appropriate). In the case where the staff member is not suspended the level of supervision of the staff member will be increased. OR
 - (d) The DSP Co-ordinator/Chairperson of the Board will suspend the Tutor agreement pending the outcome of an investigation. OR
 - (e) The DSP Co-ordinator/Chairperson of the Board will suspend the volunteer agreement pending the outcome of an investigation.
 - (f) The DSP Co-ordinator/Chairperson of the Board will liaise closely with Tusla/An Garda Siochana to ensure that actions taken by the childcare service will not undermine or frustrate any investigations.
 - (g) The protective measures which can be taken to ensure the safety of children can include the following:
 - Suspension of duties of the person accused
 - Re-assignment of duties where the accused will not have contact with children
 - Working under increased supervision during the period of the investigation
 - Or other measures as deemed appropriate.

10. Donegal Sports Partnership - Designated Liaison Person

The Donegal Sports Partnership Board has approved Myles Sweeney as the Designated Liaison person.

The Donegal Sports Partnership Board has also approved the Chairperson of the Board as a Designated Liaison person.

Myles Sweeney, Donegal Sports Partnership, River Front House, Pearse Rd, Letterkenny, Co Donegal F92 T68V

Email: myles@activedonegal.com

Phone: 086 8561415

A. Formal Procedure

If an informal approach is inappropriate or unsatisfactory or if, after the informal stage, the bullying/sexual harassment/harassment persists, the following formal procedures will be invoked.

- **Written Complaint:** You should make a formal complaint in writing to the DSP Coordinator OR if preferred to Chairperson of the Board OR a Board Member. You must complete the formal complaints form and indicate the exact details of the complaint being made as well as indicating dates and potential witnesses to any incident. The complaint should be confined to precise details of the allegation.

Policy Version No	Date signed off by Board	Description/Reason for Policy update	Lead Person Policy/Policy Changes
1.0	Feb 2020	New Policy	MO'D