



# **Safeguarding Policy and Guidelines**

**For Leaders, Players, Volunteers and  
Parents**

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# (SANTRY VOLLEYBALL CLUB) SAFEGUARDING

## Introduction

The promotion of a child centred environment goes hand in hand with identifying and eliminating practices that impact negatively on the safe and enjoyable participation of children in sport.

**SANTRY VC** like any other organisation that includes young people among its members, is vulnerable to the occurrence of child abuse. This possibility should be openly acknowledged and addressed in its formal policies and procedures. An environment in which awareness of what constitutes abusive behaviour and a willingness to tackle the issue is most likely to achieve effective implementation of child protection measures. It is only by discussing and agreeing procedures and best practice that all Sports Leaders/Players/Volunteers/Parents can be assured that they are providing the safest and most enjoyable experiences for sport for young people and for themselves in the club.

The purpose of this Safeguarding Policy is to ensure that all necessary steps are taken to protect from harm of those children and young people who participate in the club activities at all levels. The policy establishes **SANTRY VC's** position, role and responsibilities and together with the Procedures Guidelines clarifies what is expected from all Leaders/Players/Volunteers/Parents and individuals involved in the club. It clearly highlights the importance placed by **SANTRY VC** on the protection of children and young people.

Every child and young person who plays volleyball in the club should be able to participate in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from abuse. Under the Children's Act 2015, it is everyone's responsibility to make sure that the safety and welfare of a young person is being protected.

**SANTRY VC** recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people by protecting them from physical, sexual or emotional harm and from neglect or bullying. Clear practices and procedures will ensure that everyone knows exactly what is expected of them in relation to the protection of children and young people involved in the club. The key principles underpinning this Policy are that:

- The child's welfare is, and must always be, the paramount consideration.
- All children and young people have a right to be protected from abuse regardless of their age, gender, disability, culture, language, racial origin, religious beliefs or sexual identity.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

Working in partnership with children and young people and their parents/carers is essential. The Volleyball Ireland (VI) and Irish Sports Council have a statutory responsibility to ensure the welfare of children and young people. **Santry VC** is committed to working together with VI, the Irish Sports Council and local Community Care in accordance with their procedures.



## Policy statement

**SANTRY VOLLEYBALL CLUB** is fully committed to safeguarding the well-being of its members. Every individual in the club should at all times show respect and understanding for their rights, safety and welfare, and conduct themselves in a way that reflects the principles of the club and the guidelines contained in the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport.

Our first priority is the welfare of the young people in the club and we are committed to providing an environment, which will allow participants to perform to the best of their ability, free from bullying and intimidation.

## Principles

Children in sports should be guided by a set of core values in accordance with VI, Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport.

### Fair Play

Fair play is the guiding principle of the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport. Santry VC supports the view that all children's sport should be conducted in an atmosphere of fair play. In this context the club undertakes to adopt the definition of fair play as set out in the European Sports Charter and Code of Ethics, Council of Europe (1993).

*"Fair play is much more than playing within the rules. It incorporates the concepts of friendship, respect for others and always playing within the right spirit. Fair play is defined as a way of thinking, not just a way of behaving. It incorporates issues concerned with the elimination of cheating, gamesmanship, doping, violence (both physical and verbal), exploitation, unequal opportunities, excessive commercialism and corruption."*

### Equality

All children should be treated in an equitable and fair manner regardless of age, ability, sex, religion, social and ethnic background or political persuasion. Children with disability should be involved in sports activities in an integrated way, thus allowing them to participate to their potential alongside other children.

Santry VC recognises the additional vulnerability of some children and the extra difficulties they may face when seeking help, i.e.

- Dependency due to disability may make some children feel powerless
- On occasions possible limited ability to communicate their feelings
- A negative self-image can make children vulnerable to manipulation by others. To address this vulnerability, coaches, sport leaders, volunteers and parents are encouraged to seek guidance on working with children with disability from external agencies, parents / guardians and the children themselves.

### Integrity in relationships

Adults interacting with young people in sport should do so with integrity and respect for the child. There is a danger that sporting contexts can be used to exploit or undermine children. All adult actions in sport should be guided by what is best for the child and in the context of quality, open working relationships. Verbal, physical, emotional or sexual abuse of any kind is unacceptable within sport and within the club.

### Quality atmosphere and ethos

Sport for young people should be conducted in a safe, positive and encouraging atmosphere. A child-centred ethos will help to ensure that competition and specialisation are kept in their appropriate place.

## Code of Conduct for young people

In accordance with VI and Sports Ireland, Santry VC also wants to provide the best possible environment for all young people involved in the sport. Young people deserve to be given enjoyable, safe sporting opportunities, free of abuse of any kind. These participants have rights, which must be respected, and responsibilities that they must accept. Young people should be encouraged to realise that they have responsibilities to treat other participants and sports leaders with fairness and respect.

### Young players are entitled to:

- Be safe and to feel safe
- Be listened to
- Be believed
- Have fun and enjoy volleyball
- Have a voice in relation to their activities within volleyball
- Be treated with dignity, sensitivity and respect
- Participate on an equitable and fair manner, irrespective of ability, disability, gender, religion, social class, etc.
- Experience competition at a level at which they feel comfortable
- Make complaints and have them dealt with
- Get help against bullies
- Say No
- Protect their own bodies
- Confidentiality (see our confidentiality statement)

### Young players should always:

- Treat Sports Leaders with respect, (including administrators, coaches, umpires, managers, children's officers, club officials, etc.,)
- Look out for themselves and the welfare of others
- Play fairly at all times, do their best
- Be organised and on time, tell someone if you are leaving a venue or competition
- Respect team members, even when things go wrong
- Respect opponents, be gracious in defeat
- Abide by the rules set down by team managers when travelling to away events, representing the club, school, province or country, etc.
- Behave in a manner that avoids bringing volleyball in any way into disrepute
- Talk to the Children's Officer within the club if they have any problems.

### Young players should never:

- Cheat
- Use violence or physical contact that is not allowed within the rules
- Shout or argue with officials, team mates or opponents
- Harm team members, opponents or their property
- Bully or use bullying tactics to isolate another player or gain advantage
- Take banned substances, alcohol, smoke or engage in sexual behaviour
- Keep secrets, especially if they have caused or could cause harm
- Tell lies about adults / young people
- Spread rumours

## Guidelines for Sports Leaders

Santry VC recognises the key role leaders (coaches, youth administrators, captains, selectors and team managers, etc.) play in the lives of young people in sport. Leaders in volleyball should strive to create a positive environment for the children in their care. They have an overall responsibility to take the necessary steps to ensure that positive and healthy experiences are provided. All Leaders should have as their first priority the children's safety and enjoyment of volleyball and should adhere to the guidelines and regulations set out in the Volleyball Ireland's Code of Ethics.

### Leaders should:

- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every child and must treat everyone equally, regardless of gender, disability, ethnic origin, religion, etc.

### Leaders working with young people should:

- Be suitable and have the necessary qualifications. Leaders will be expected to go through appropriate **recruitment and selection procedures** that apply to all persons with substantial access to young people, whether paid or unpaid. References will be needed and will be followed up.
- Comply with a 'sign-up' procedure, whereby the appointed/reappointed leaders agree to abide by the *Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children in Sport* and to the policies and Code of the Conduct stated in VI and the club.
- Know and understand the child protection policies and procedures.
- Act as a role model and promote the positive aspects and maintain the highest standards of personal conduct.
- Develop an appropriate relationship with young people, based on mutual trust and respect. Remember your behaviour to players, other officials, and opponents will have an effect on the players in your care.
- Report any concerns they have to the Designated Person/Children's Officer in the club.

### As a role model they:

- Will be required to display high standards of language, manner, punctuality, preparation and presentation.
- Ensure that players in their care respect the rules of the game. Insist on fair play and ensure players are aware that you will not tolerate cheating or bullying behaviour.
- Encourage the development of respect for opponents, officials, selectors and other leaders and avoid criticism of fellow trainers and coaches. Do not criticise other leaders.
- Must actively discourage the use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco as being incompatible with a healthy approach to sporting activity.
- Must avoid the use of alcohol and banned substances, before coaching and training, during events, while supervising trips with young players.

## Protection for leaders and young people

- Leaders are responsible for setting and monitoring the boundaries between a working relationship and friendship with players. It is advisable for leaders not to involve young players in their personal life i.e. visits to leader's / coach's home or overnight stays. It is important to realise that certain situations or friendly actions could be misinterpreted by the participant or by outsiders.
- Avoid working alone and ensure there is adequate supervision for all activities.
- Where possible work in an open environment and ensure that physical contact is appropriate and has the permission or understanding of the young person
- 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.

## A positive environment

- 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.
- Remember that young players play for fun and enjoyment and that skill development and personal satisfaction have priority over highly structured competition. Never make winning the only objective.
- Set realistic goals and appropriate challenges for the participants and do not push young players. Create a safe and enjoyable environment.
- When approached to take on or take on a new player, ensure that the relationship with the previous club/coach has been ended in a professional manner.
- When young players are invited into adult groups/squads, it is advisable to get agreement from a parent/guardian. Boundaries of behaviour in adult groups are normally different from the boundaries that apply to junior groups/squads.
- Leaders who become aware of a conflict between their obligation to their players and their obligation to the club must make explicit the nature of the conflict and the loyalties and responsibilities involved, to all parties concerned.
- Leaders should communicate and cooperate with medical and ancillary practitioners in the diagnosis, treatment and management of their players' medical or related problems. Avoid giving advice of a personal or medical nature if you are not qualified to do so. Any information of a personal or medical nature must be kept strictly confidential unless the welfare of the child requires the passing on of this information. Any referral to medical and ancillary practitioners requires parental consent.
- The nature of the relationship between leader and a participant can often mean that a leader will hear confidential information about a player or player's family. This information must be regarded as confidential and must not be divulged to a third party without the express permission of the young person/family, except where abuse or neglect is suspected.

## Sports Leaders Code of Conduct

Leaders should familiarise themselves with the *Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport* and The Volleyball Ireland Code of Conduct and follow the procedures if they suspect or receive complaints of abuse of any sort. Leaders should read below and agree to abide by these terms.

### Leaders should

- Be positive during sessions and competitions, praise and encourage effort as well as results
- Put welfare of young person first, strike a balance between this and winning / results
- Encourage fair play and treat participants equally
- Recognise developmental needs, ensuring activities are appropriate for the individual
- Plan and prepare appropriately
- Anyone working with children should do the child protection awareness course and hold up to-date qualifications and be committed to the values and guidelines of the VI
- Involve parents where possible and inform parents when problems arise
- Keep a record of attendance at training and competitions
- Keep a brief record of injury(s) and action taken
- Keep a brief record of problem/action/outcomes, if behavioural problems arise
- Report any concerns in accordance with this Code's reporting procedures
- Encourage young people to respect one another and to expect respect for their worth as individuals for their worth regardless of their level of play
- Be acutely aware of the power that you as a coach develop with your players in the coaching relationships and avoid any sexual intimacy with young people that could develop as a result
- Actively discourage the use of performance enhancing drugs, the use of alcohol and tobacco and any illegal substance
- Encourage young people and other coaches to develop and maintain integrity in their relationship with others

### Where possible Leaders should avoid:

- Spending excessive amounts of time with children away from others
- Taking sessions alone
- Taking children to their home
- Taking children on journeys alone in their car

### Sports Leaders should not:

- Use any form of punishment or physical force on a child
- Exert undue influence over a participant in order to obtain personal benefit or reward
- Engage in rough physical games, sexually provocative games or allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any kind, and /or make sexually suggestive comments about, or to a child. This includes innuendo, flirting or inappropriate gestures and terms
- Take measurements or engage in certain types of fitness testing without the presence of another adult and permission of the parent(s).
- Undertake any form of therapy (hypnosis etc.) in the training of children
- Do not exploit any coaching relationship to further personal, political or business interests at the expense of the best interest of your players
- Never communicate or form a "friendship" with children online with the intent of arranging to meet in the "real world"
- Never ask anyone to keep secrets of any kind

## Guidelines for Parents

The Volleyball Ireland believes that parents should:

- Be a role model for your child and maintain the highest standards of conduct when interacting with young people, other parents, officials and organisers
- Always behave responsibly and do not seek to unfairly affect the outcome of a game, a player or the opponent
- Never intentionally expose any young participant to embarrassment or disparagement by the use of flippant or sarcastic remarks
- Always recognise the value and importance of the officials and volunteers who provide sporting and recreational opportunities for your child. Do not publicly question their judgment or honesty. Respect Designated Persons, coaches, umpires, youth organisers, managers and other players.
- Encourage your child to play by the rules. Teach your child that honest endeavour is as important as winning and do all you can to encourage good sportsmanship.
- Set a good example by applauding good play on both sides. Encourage mutual respect for teammates and opponents.
- Take an interest in your child's sport and support the child's participation in their chosen activity.
- Parents should support all efforts to remove abusive behaviour and bullying behaviour in all its forms.

## Parents Code of Conduct

**Parent(s) will:**

- Respect the rules and procedures set down by the club and VI
- Respect my child's teammates and leaders as well as players, parents and coaches from opposing teams. Parents will encourage their child to treat other participants, coaches, children's officers, officials, selectors and managers with respect.
- Give encouragement and applaud only positive accomplishments whether from my child, his/her teammates, their opponents or the officials.
- Respect my child's leader(s) and support his/her efforts
- Respect the officials and their authority during sessions and events within the club and under the auspices of the VI
- Never demonstrate threatening or abusive behaviour or use foul language.

## Recruitment and Selection Policy

**Santry VC** will take all reasonable steps to ensure that adults working with young people are suitable and appropriately qualified. Recruitment and selection procedures will apply to all persons with substantial access to young people, whether paid or unpaid. A decision to appoint a Leader is the responsibility of the club and not of any one individual within it. The relevant committees should ratify all recommendations for appointment.

**Santry VC** will use the following as a suitable procedure:

- The responsibilities of the role and the level of experience/qualifications required should be drawn up and clearly stated.
- Before taking on the role the Leader should be made aware of the Code of Conduct as it relates to young people and any related guidelines within this document. Before being voted/nominated/appointed to a position which brings them in contact with young people, the Leader should be made aware of the Code of Conduct as it relates to young people and any related guidelines within this document. This involves newly recruited volunteers, paid/unpaid personnel and all volunteers assigned by the club for that season.
- New Leaders should fill in information and self-declaration form i.e. Garda Vetted through VI.
- All new volunteers should undergo an induction; this can be done in an informal manner.

Following this, a probationary period is advisable.

- All new volunteers and coaches will be subject to access checks & will be required to attend Safeguarding Children & Young People in Sport in awareness Training within 6 months of taking up their role.
- New and existing Leaders will sign the appropriate Code of Conduct, including the self declaration form.
- Adequate supervision should always be provided; a Leader should not have to work alone.

Every effort should be made to manage and support appointed Leaders. Coaching courses and workshops will be provided, Codes of Conduct will be made available and where possible, vetting will be implemented.

## Disciplinary, Complaints and Appeals Procedure

In line with VI, each club/organisation should put a complaints procedure in place that allows all members who are dissatisfied to register their complaint in a formal way.

- Each club/organisation, on receiving a complaint, should appoint a disciplinary committee to resolve problems relating to the conduct of its members. This should include bullying. The complaint should be in writing to the secretary or Children's Officer and should be responded to within 5 working days. The committee should consist of a representative from the Management Committee, the Children's Officer and ordinary registered members of the club.
- If the complaint involves suspected abuse or a criminal offence, the children's officer/designated person should be consulted and the disciplinary committee disbanded. The statutory authorities will then be informed.
- The disciplinary committee should review any relevant paper work and hold any necessary meetings with all parties to proceed with complaints into any incident of suspected misconduct that does not relate to child abuse. It should, as soon as possible, inform the Management Committee of the progress of the disciplinary process. This should be done within 10 working days.
- The disciplinary committee should furnish the individual with the nature of the complaint being made against him/her and afford him/her the opportunity of providing a response either verbally or in writing, but usually at a meeting with the disciplinary committee.
- Written confidential records of all complaints should be safely and confidentially kept and club procedures should be defined for the possession of such records in the event of election of new officers.
- Where it is established that an incident of misconduct has taken place, the disciplinary committee should notify the member of any sanction being imposed. The notification should be made in writing, setting out the reasons for the sanction. If the member is under 18 years of age, correspondence should be addressed to the parents/guardians.
- If the member against whom the complaint was made is unhappy with the decision of the disciplinary committee s/he should have the right to appeal the decision to an appeals committee (independent of a disciplinary committee). Any appeal should be made in writing within an agreed period after issue, usually 10 days of the decision of the disciplinary committee. The chairperson of the appeals committee should be a member of the Management Committee. The appeals committee should consult with the Children's Officer in relation to issues of child welfare and codes of conduct. The appeals committee should have the power to confirm, set aside or change any sanction imposed by the disciplinary committee.
- If any party is not satisfied with the outcome the matter can be referred to the Governing Body. However efforts to resolve the issue at local level should be exhausted before the Governing Body is engaged in attempts to resolve the matter.
- See Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport, page 22 and page 42 for 'Discipline in Children's Sport' (Also available at [www.volleyballireland.com](http://www.volleyballireland.com))

## Anti-Bullying Policy

Bullying can occur between an adult and young person and by young person to young person. In either case it is not acceptable within volleyball. The competitive nature of volleyball can create an environment that provides opportunities for bullying. The bully may be a parent who pushes too hard, a coach who adopts a win-at-all costs philosophy, a young player who intimidates another or an official who places unfair pressure on a person.

Bullying can 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 damage inflicted by bullying can frequently be underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to young people, to the extent it affects their health and development, or at the extreme, causes them significant harm. There are a number of signs that may indicate a person is being 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 training/match, going different routes, asking to be driven)
- Frequent loss of, or shortage of, money with vague explanations
- Having few friends or drop out of newer members
- Changes in behaviour (withdrawn, stammering, moody, irritable, upset, distressed, not eating, reduced concentration, drop in performance)
- Anxiety (shown by nail-biting, fearfulness, tics)

*This list is not exhaustive and there are other possible reasons for many of the above. The presence of one or more of these indicators is not proof that bullying is actually taking place.*

### 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.

### 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 statutory authorities, dealing with bullying behaviour is normally the responsibility of all leaders within the club but you should also liaise with the appropriate officer.

## 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 joined in and those who initiated the bullying.

- Just 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, discusses 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.

## Child Abuse

### Recognising Abuse/Concerns:

The ability to recognise child abuse depends as much on a person's willingness to accept the possibility of its existence as it does on knowledge and information. It is important to note that child abuse is not readily visible, and may not be as clearly observable as the text book' scenarios might suggest. If a sports leader, volunteers or a parent/guardian is uneasy about a child's safety or welfare they should talk to the designated person with responsibility for reporting within their club and/or duty social worker within the local health board.

### Categories of Abuse

All Sports Leaders 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. For detailed definitions of abuse refer to - Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection (<http://www.tusla.ie/services/child-protection-welfare/>)

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 of 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 are 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.
- (c) Premature imposition of responsibility on the child.
- (d) Over and under protection of the child.
- (e) Failure to provide opportunities for the child's education and development.
- (f) Use of unrealistic or over-harsh disciplinary measures.
- (g) 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
- (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 dependent on adults and their carers.

### **Response to a child reporting any form of abuse/concerns:**

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

- (a) It is important to deal with any allegation of abuse in a sensitive and competent way through listening and facilitating the child to tell about the problem, rather than interviewing the child about details of what happened.
- (b) 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.
- (c) 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.
- (d) The child should understand that it is not possible that any information will be kept a secret.
- (e) No judgmental statement should be made against the person whom the allegation is made.
- (f) 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".
- (g) 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, Tusla or Gardaí. It should be kept in mind that the child may have been threatened and may feel vulnerable at this stage.

**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 s/he 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., & broken arm results from a fall but this injury re-occurs through constant lack of supervision) and consistent signs of neglect over a period of time.

## Reporting Procedures

### 1. Action to take if a child or young person informs you directly that he/she is concerned about someone's behaviour towards them. If this happens you should:

- React calmly so as not to frighten the child or young person.
  - Tell the child or young person he/she is not to blame and that he/she was right to tell.
  - Take what the child or young person says seriously.
  - Ensure the safety of the child or young person- if the child needs immediate medical treatment, take the child to hospital or call an ambulance, inform doctors of concerns and ensure that they are aware that this is a Child Protection issue.
  - Avoid leading the child or young person and keep any questions to the absolute minimum necessary to ensure a clear understanding of what has been said.
  - Re-assure the child or young person but do not make promises of confidentiality or outcome which may not be feasible in the light of subsequent developments.
  - The club may seek advice from Tusla before contacting parents.
  - Make a full record of what has been said, heard and/or seen as soon as possible.

Report the concerns to the person in charge (Children's Officer) or designated person immediately, unless the concern is about the person in charge.

- The person in charge should be clearly identified i.e. Designated Member or Children's Officer.
- If the person in charge is not available, or the concern is about the person in charge, then report your concerns directly to Tusla or Garda. These agencies will advise whether a formal referral is necessary and what further action you may need to take.
- If you are advised to make a formal referral, make it clear to Tusla or Garda, a Child Protection referral.
- Confidentiality should be maintained on a strictly "need to know" basis and relevant documents stored in a secure location.

### 2. Recording of information, suspicions or concerns

Information passed to Tusla or Garda must be as helpful as possible and it may be used in any subsequent legal action, hence the necessity for making a detailed record. The report should contain the following information.

- ✓ The child's or young person's name, address, and date of birth
- ✓ The nature of the allegation
- ✓ A description of any visible bruising or other injuries
- ✓ Any observations that have been made by you or to you
- Any times, locations, dates or other relevant information
- A clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay
- Your knowledge of and relationship to the child or young person
- Whenever possible, referrals to Tusla should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours.
- Keep a record of the name and designation of Tusla member of staff or Garda Officer to whom concerns were passed and record the time and date of the call in case any follow up is needed.

**NOTE: Club Children's Officer or Designated Person must also notify the National Children's Protection Officer for Volleyball Ireland (Norma McIntyre [nco@volleyballireland.com](mailto:nco@volleyballireland.com)) of the reports/concerns and procedures taken.**

## Child Protection Concerns (FAQs)

### Taken from Our Duty of Care

#### What do I do?

#### What should I do if I suspect a Child is Being Abused?

It can be difficult to know whether or not your suspicions about child abuse are real. Before you act on them, you need to consider whether any alternative explanation might exist and ask yourself these questions:

- Is there any other reason why the child or parent might be behaving in a particular way? •  
Is there a pattern to this type of occurrence?
- Did you or anyone else see what was happening?
- Has the child said anything to indicate that he or she is being abused?
- Could injuries or signs have been caused another way?

If you have considered these questions and you are still concerned, it is likely that you have reasonable grounds to take some action.

#### What action should I take?

Every organisation that provides services to children should have somebody who is responsible for dealing with suspected or actual child abuse. Santry VC has appointed a Club Children's Officer. If they are reluctant to take it further, and you still feel concerned, you should report it to your local health board yourself. If it is an emergency and outside health board hours, you should report your concern directly to An Garda Síochána. Under the law you cannot be penalised for reporting suspected child abuse to the health board or An Garda Síochána as long as your report is made in good faith and is not malicious.

#### What if I am mistaken?

Don't worry - if in doubt talk to Tusla Social Worker anyway, and they will decide whether or not your suspicion needs to be followed up. Under the law, nobody will be penalised for making a report of child abuse to the health board or An Garda Síochána as long as the report is not malicious and made in good faith. You are passing on a concern about a child or young person. You are not making a decision that child abuse has taken place and you are not making any accusations.

**Can I report suspected or actual child abuse without giving my name?** All reports will receive attention. However, experience shows that it is much harder to help children when reports are made anonymously, or through a third party. It is much more useful if you telephone, or better still go to see the local social worker in person. The health board/Tusla will not normally reveal the names of members of the public who report suspected child abuse unless they have permission to do so. Tusla social workers will know the right questions to ask. You should give as much information as you can about the child and their family, along with detailed reasons for your suspicion or concern. If a professional, e.g. a GP, hospital or clinic staff member, or teacher is reporting suspected or actual child abuse, they should tell the family beforehand, unless doing so would put the child in danger.



### **What will the health board social worker (TUSLA) do with the Information I give them?**

Tusla will consider the information and will assess the situation. If they feel it needs to be followed up they may look for more information from other sources and may contact the child and their parent/s. They will try to establish what is going on, and will act to protect the child in whatever way is necessary.

### **Will the Garda be told?**

Physical abuse, sexual abuse and wilful neglect are crimes and must be reported by Tusla to An Garda Síochána. Likewise, An Garda Síochána must report any child abuse that comes to their attention to Tusla. The Gardai and Tusla will work together as sensitively as possible and take any action necessary to protect the child, or any other children from future harm.

### **Will the child be taken away from their parents?**

Very, very few children are removed from their parents because of child abuse. It is much more likely that Tusla, together with other services who work with children, will try to help the children and families, and attempt to prevent the abuse happening again. They will provide advice, counselling, family support and practical help wherever they can. Children and parents are separated only as a last resort when other measures to help them have failed.

### **Further reading:**

Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children.  
Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport Chapter 5

## **CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT**

Santry Volleyball Club recognises that the legal principle and the welfare of the child is paramount means that consideration of confidentiality should not be allowed to override the right of children to be protected from harm. Everyone in our club, including children, must be aware that they can never promise to keep secrets. However, information of a confidential nature will only be communicated on a 'need to know' basis.

## Guidelines on General Issues

### 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.
- Not carry more than the permitted number of passengers.
- Avoid being alone with one participant, put passengers 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.

### General Supervision

- Make sure there is an adequate adult-child ratio. Leaders should try to have more than one adult present. The number of adults needed will depend on the nature of the activity, the age of the participants and any special needs of the group. As a guide, a ratio of 1:8 for under 12 years of age and 1:10 for participants over 12 years of age. This is only a guide and will change depending on the circumstances.
- Where there are mixed groups there should be leaders of both genders.
- Avoid being alone with one participant, if you need to talk separately do so in an open environment, in view of others.
- In changing rooms, ask parents to take responsibility and supervise in pairs of appropriate gender.
- Leaders should not need to enter the changing rooms unless children are very young or need special assistance, where supervision should be in pairs of appropriate gender.
- Clearly state time for start and end of training sessions or competitions.
- Leaders should not be left alone with young people at the end of sessions. If there are late collections leaders should remain in pairs until participants have left.
- Keep attendance records and record any incidents / injuries that arise.
- Ask parents to stay and supervise sessions, (for safety and supervision, not necessarily for their 'technical' expertise).

### Overnight and Away trips

- Separate permission forms should be signed by parents and participants, containing emergency contact numbers.
- Young participants should sign a behaviour agreement. Code of conduct will cover this.
- Appoint a group leader who will make a report on returning home.
- A meeting with parents and participants is useful to communicate travel times, competition details, other activities, gear requirements, medical requirements, special dietary needs and any other necessary details.
- Rooming arrangements – adults should not share rooms with children, children share rooms with those of same age and gender and adults should knock before entering rooms.
- 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.
- Leaders should act as role models in this respect.

- There must be at least one adult of each gender with a mixed party, there should be a good adult – child ratio, 1:5/6, and proper access to medical personnel.
- Lights out times should be enforced.
- Young players should be under reasonable supervision at all times and should never leave the venue or go unsupervised without prior permission.

### Safety

Santry VC should:

- Ensure activities are suitable for age and stage of development of participants.
- Keep a record of any specific medical conditions of the participants.
- Keep a record of emergency contact numbers for parents / guardians.
- Ensure any necessary protective gear is used.
- Ensure First Aid kit is close at hand with access to qualified first-aider.
- Know the contact numbers of emergency services.
- Keep First Aid kit stocked up.
- Ensure easy access to medical personnel if needed and have an emergency plan.
- If an incident occurs, make a brief record of injury and action taken. Make a brief record of the problem/action/outcome. Contact the participant's parents and keep them informed of all details.
- Officials (umpires, referees, etc.) should ensure good conduct of the game.
- Participants should know and keep the rules of their sport, keeping in mind that many rules are there for safety.
- Leaders should hold appropriate qualifications required by the governing body.
- Ensure there is adequate insurance cover for all activities.
- Ensure parents / guardians are present at the finishing times of sessions or events.

### Physical Contact

- Physical contact during sport should always be intended to meet the child's needs, NOT the adult's. The adult will probably use appropriate contact when the aim is to assist in development of the skill or activity or for safety reasons, e.g. to prevent or treat an injury. This should be in an open environment with the permission and understanding of the participant.
- In general, contact should be determined by the age and developmental stage of the participant - Don't do something that a child can do for themselves.
- 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.

### Use of Photographic and Filming Equipment

**Santry VC** has adopted a policy in relation to the use of images of players on their website and in other publications as there have been concerns about the risks posed directly and indirectly to children and young people through the use of photographs on sports websites and other publications.

Where possible we will try to use models or illustrations when promoting an activity and avoid the use of the first name and surname of individuals in a photograph. This reduces the risk of inappropriate, unsolicited attention from people within and outside the sport.

### Rules to guide use of photography:

- If the player is named, avoid using their photograph.
- If a photograph is used, avoid naming the player.
- Ask for the player's permission to use their image or parental permission if the player is under age. This ensures that they are aware of the way the image is to be used to represent the sport and the club. Player registration form/code of conduct is one way of achieving this.
- Only use images of players in suitable dress to reduce the risk of inappropriate use.
- The content of the photograph should focus on the activity not on a particular child.
- Follow the child protection procedures, ensuring either the designated officer or social service and/or police are informed.

Amateur photographers/film/video operators wishing to record an event or practice session should seek accreditation with the children's officer or leader of the session. Santry VC will display the following information prior to the start of an event to inform spectators of the policy in line with the recommendation in our Code of Conduct. The promoters of this event request that any person wishing to engage in any video, zoom or close range photography should register their details with the organisers. On no account should children be photographed or filmed without their permission and the permission of their parents.

When commissioning professional photographers or inviting the press to an activity or event we will aim to ensure they are clear about our expectations of them in relation to child protection. Professional photographers/film/video operators wishing to record an event or practice session should seek accreditation with the children's officers/coaches/committees or event organiser by producing their professional identification for the details to be recorded. We will then:

- Provide a clear brief about what is considered appropriate in terms of content and behaviour
- Issue the photographer with identification which must be worn at all times

### Keep a record of accreditations

Inform players and parents that a photographer will be in attendance at an event and ensure they consent to both the taking and publication of films or photographs.

Videoring as a coaching aid: Video equipment can be used as a legitimate coaching aid. However, permission should first be obtained from the player and the player's parent/carer. Anyone concerned about any photography taking place at events or training sessions can contact the children's officer/designated person and ask them to deal with the matter.

### Missing Child

In accordance with VI, If a child goes missing during an event, the following procedure will apply:

1. Report the incident to the Event Director/ Venue duty manager and/or Designated Safety Officer.
2. Ensure that all other children continue to be supervised appropriately (if applicable), while a search for the child concerned is carried out.
3. Organise the remaining available responsible adults to conduct a search of the surrounding area, allocating each individual/team to a specific area.

**NB: Never send other underage people to assist in the search for a missing child.**

4. Request all those searching to report back within a short, specified time. Ensure those involved in the search have a contact phone number for the search coordinator, i.e. the Event Director/Venue duty manager or Designated Safety Officer. Reports from individuals/teams in their specific area should go directly to the search coordinator who can update other parties in the search.
5. Where applicable, ask the Event Director/Venue duty manager or Designated Safety Officer to announce over the PA system for the child to come to a designated safe area, e.g. check-in desk, reception desk. Try and avoid announcing directly that a child is missing over a PA system.
6. If the child cannot be found after an initial search of the immediate surroundings, contact the child's parents/guardians (if they are not already aware) to advise them of the concern and reassure them that everything is being done to locate the child.
7. Record/have available the following information:
  - o The circumstances in which the child has gone missing and where he/she was last seen;
  - o Prepare a detailed physical description of the child, to include their hair and eye colour, approximate height and build and clothing he/she was wearing.

***This information will be required by the Gardaí and other searchers.***
8. If the search is ongoing 20 minutes after the initial report of a missing child, the Event Director/Venue duty manager or Designated Safety Officer must report the concern to the local Gardaí. The person notifying the Gardaí should follow guidance if further action is recommended and maintain close contact with the Gardaí.
9. Ensure that you inform all adults involved including the parents, searchers and Gardaí when the child is located.

**NB: Prior to any volleyball event, the Event Director should ensure they have the contact details for the nearest Garda Station, have designated a Safe Area (e.g. check in desk) for a missing child to report to, for the purposes of this policy.**



## USEFUL Contact Informations

- **Club Children's Officers** ([cho@santryvolleyballclub.com](mailto:cho@santryvolleyballclub.com))

- **Nolivhen Lumanog (Kai)**
- **Chrysse Bagasbas**

- **National Child Protective Officer for Volleyball Ireland**

- **Norma McIntyre** ([nco@volleyballireland.com](mailto:nco@volleyballireland.com))

- **Tusla – Child and Family Agency**

- **National Office: For general inquiries**

- **Tusla – Child and Family Agency**

The Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter,  
Saint John's Road West, Dublin 8. D08 X01F

Phone: 01 7718500 Email: [info@tusla.ie](mailto:info@tusla.ie)

- **On Duty Social Worker: For reporting a concern**

- **Dublin North: Child and Family Agency**

80-189 Lakeshore Drive,  
Airside Business Park,  
Swords,  
Co. Dublin.  
Phone: 01 8708000

- **Dublin North City: Child and Family Agency**

Wellmount Health Centre,  
Wellmount Park,  
Finglas,  
Dublin 11  
Phone: 01 8567704

For more info <http://www.tusla.ie/>

- **Garda Siochana Contacts**

- **Santry Station** (01) 6664000
- **Finglas Station** (01) 6667500