

Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy

LIMERICK SPORT HUSKIES



Child Welfare Officer: Elena Nemes (087) 6103905

Designated Liason Person: Terri Culligan (087) 9919770

POLICY STATEMENT

We at Limerick Sport Huskies are committed to good practice which protects children from harm. Staff, coaches and volunteers accept and recognise their responsibility to provide an environment which promotes the safety of the child at all times. To achieve this we will:

- Develop an awareness of the issues which may lead to children being harmed.
- Create an open environment by identifying a 'Designated Liaison Person' (DLP) to whom the children can turn to if they need to talk [Terri Culligan]
- Adopt child centred and democratic coaching styles.
- Adopt safeguarding guidelines through codes of conduct for members and all adults working at the club. Adult workers include coaches, parents and volunteers.
- Ensure careful recruitment, selection and management procedures. These procedures will include regular support and supervision is provided to staff/ volunteers.
- Ensure complaints, grievance and disciplinary procedures are included in our constitution.
- Share information about concerns with children and parents and others who need to know.
- Provide information as required to the management committee.
- Ensure good and safe working/playing practices.
- Be involved in training made available through the various agencies and strengthen links with these agencies.
- Keep Safeguarding policies under regular review (every three years minimum).
- Have procedures relating specifically to bullying, away trips, transport, use of photography and communication through texting or social media forums.

- Have an induction document available for parents, coaches and children clearly outlining their rights, responsibilities and expectations.

Date Agreed by Club Committee: 13th August 2023

Date for Review: 13th August 2026

Safeguarding or Child Protection

The term child protection has been expanded to safeguarding as it reflects the wider responsibility for health and safety and prevention as well as just protection from abuse. The word safeguarding has been used with increasing frequency over the last few years in a wide range of settings and situations, going well beyond the world of children and child protection. It may be defined as **“Doing everything possible to minimise the risk of harm to children and young people.”**

Safeguarding is about being proactive and putting measures in place in advance of any contact with children to ensure that children are going to be kept safe. This could include:

- Ensuring staff are properly checked when they are recruited;
- Guidelines for people who come into contact with children as part of their role to ensure they know what they need to do to keep children safe; and
- Guidelines for planning an event or activity with children and putting measures in place to minimise the risk of safeguarding issues occurring.

The **Children First Act 2015** is based on a clear and consistent set of principles designed with the common aim of promoting the welfare of children.

Children have the right to be safe. All coaches should ensure that this fundamental principle takes precedence over all other considerations.

This policy applies to all those involved in Limerick Sport Huskies, coaches, administrators, officials, volunteer drivers, parents and young people.

EQUALITY STATEMENT

- This club is committed to ensuring that equity is incorporated across all aspects of its development. In doing so, it acknowledges and adopts the following Sport Northern Ireland definition of sports equity:

“Sports equity is about fairness in sport, equality of access, recognising inequalities and taking steps to address them. It is about changing the culture and structure of sport to ensure it becomes equally accessible to everyone in society.”

- The club respects the rights, dignity and worth of every person and will treat everyone equally within the context of their sport, regardless of age, ability, gender, race, ethnicity, religious belief, sexuality or social/economic status.

- The club is committed to everyone having the right to enjoy their sport in an environment free from threat of intimidation, harassment and abuse.
- All club members have a responsibility to oppose discriminatory behaviour and promote equality of opportunity.
- The club will deal with any incidence of discriminatory behaviour seriously, according to club disciplinary procedures.

To address the vulnerability of children with a disability coaches will seek guidance on working with children with a disability from external agencies, parents/guardians and the children themselves.

CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

We at Limerick Sport Huskies have a committee and management team comprised of parents, guardians and other adults working to protect the players on our club. During meetings, Child Protection matters are noted and flagged however they are not discussed in detail. Information of a confidential nature will only be communicated on a "need to know" basis, with the welfare of the child always remaining paramount thus communication regarding a case is discussed between DLP (Clodagh Carey) and the adult/player raising the concern. Considerations of confidentiality will not be allowed to override the rights of children or young members to be protected from harm.

A full Safeguarding policy statement is displayed and available within club premises/on the club app/Google Drive for all interested parties to read.

AWARENESS OF THE ISSUES

Background knowledge in relation to child abuse, the general principles of safeguarding and the ability to recognise and respond to abuse are important issues. Of primary concern for Limerick Sport Huskies is the issue of Safeguarding of our young members within the operation of the club. However, being cognisant of the indicators of abuse in respect of young members caused by others outside the club, are of an equal importance for the safety and well being of that child.

Co-operating with the Children's First Act 2015

There is no absolute definition of 'significant harm', as this will be assessed on a case by case basis. Chapter 5 of the Act states that "Where serious concerns of ongoing risk of significant harm are identified during the assessment and interventions, or where a social worker has concerns that progress is not being made under the Child Welfare Plan/Family Support Plan, a plan of action is prepared. This is done by consulting with the parents and appropriate professionals to protect the welfare and safety of the child. A Child Protection Conference will be held to decide whether it is necessary to put the child's name on the **Child Protection Notification System (CPNS)** and if so, to agree a **Child Protection Plan**. In general, parents are invited to attend the Child Protection Conference, unless there are concerns that to do so could put the child at further risk"

Harm can be suffered by a child or young person by acts of abuse perpetrated upon them by others. Abuse can happen in any family, but children may be more at risk if their parents have problems with drugs, alcohol and mental health, or if they live in a home where domestic abuse happens. Abuse can also occur outside of the family environment.

Harm from abuse is not always straightforward to identify and a child or young person may experience more than one type of harm or significant harm. Harm can be caused by:

- Physical abuse;
- Sexual abuse;
- Emotional abuse;
- Neglect; and
- Exploitation.

Physical Abuse is deliberately physically hurting a child. It might take a variety of different forms, including hitting, biting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating a child.

Sexual Abuse occurs when others use and exploit children sexually for their own gratification or gain or the gratification of others. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape, or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via e-technology). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Emotional Abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. It is also sometimes called psychological abuse and it can have severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development. Emotional abuse may involve deliberately telling a child that they are worthless, or unloved and inadequate. It may include not giving a child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. Emotional abuse may involve bullying – including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones – by a child's peers.

Neglect is the failure to provide for a child's basic needs, whether it be adequate food, clothing, hygiene, supervision or shelter that is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child's health or development. Children who are neglected often also suffer from other types of abuse.

Exploitation is the intentional ill-treatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over a child or young person; to take selfish or unfair advantage of a child or young person or situation, for personal gain. It may manifest itself in many forms such as child labour, slavery, servitude, engagement in criminal activity, begging, benefit or other financial fraud or child trafficking. It extends to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation can be sexual in nature.

Anti-Bullying Policy Statement

Bullying is not an accepted behaviour towards anyone at Limerick Sport Huskies be they child, coach, volunteer or parent. Bullying will be dealt with seriously both in regards to the behaviour exhibited and the reasons for the behaviour. This club has an anti-bullying policy in place.

Bullying can take many forms but usually includes the following:

Physical – hitting, kicking, pinching, punching, scratching, spitting or any other form of physical attack. Damage to or taking someone else's belongings may also constitute physical bullying.

Verbal – offensive name calling, insults, racist remarks, sexist jokes or comments, homophobic/transphobic or gender related jokes and comments, teasing, threats, using sexually suggestive or abusive language.

Sexual – abusive sexualised name calling, inappropriate and uninvited touching, inappropriate sexual innuendo and/or proposition.

Indirect – spreading nasty stories/rumours about someone, intimidation, exclusion from social groups.

Homophobic or transphobic bullying can be hard to identify because it may be going on in secret. It may include a person being made to feel unwelcome, belittled, or harassed (through gossip, name-calling, jokes and other hate acts – both in the virtual e.g. online and 'real' world.)

Sometimes athletes witness homophobic or transphobic bullying, and even if they are not lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) and the subject of the abuse, they may be reluctant to report it in case participants, coaches or other adults assume they are also homosexual, bisexual or transgender. The CPSU has produced a briefing paper on homophobic bullying in youth sport.

Cyberbullying is a form of bullying which uses technology to deliberately harm or upset others. This type of bullying can happen in many ways, using mobile phones or the internet and could include:

- Sending hurtful messages or using videos and images to humiliate
- Leaving malicious voicemails
- A series of silent calls
- Creating a website about other people to humiliate them
- Writing hurtful comments on social networking sites e.g. Facebook, Twitter

- Excluding them from chat/messaging rooms
- Sending video/images of people being bullied, so others can see.

Children and young people with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to being bullied for a variety of reason. These include:

- the increased likelihood of social isolation
- having fewer outside contacts than non-disabled children, and perhaps having limited access to someone to disclose bullying to
- an impaired capacity to resist, avoid or understand bullying
- being viewed as a 'safe target' for bullies.

Anti-Bullying Procedures

The primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to re-store, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame); Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including players, parent(s)/guardian(s) coaches) understand this approach from the outset.

The club's procedures are as follows:

Reporting bullying behaviour

- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the committee
- Coaches, managers, parents/guardians etc must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to a committee member

Investigating and dealing with incidents: Style of approach Preliminary Investigation:

In investigating and dealing with suspected bullying, the (relevant) committee member will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved; The relevant committee member will investigate all instances of reported or suspected bullying behaviour with a view to establishing the facts and bringing any such behaviour to an end. Parent(s)/guardian(s), players, coaches etc are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the club in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible; Parties should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach.

Where possible incidents should be investigated outside the training/game/tournament situation to ensure the privacy of all involved; The club, through the relevant committee member, reserves the right to ask any player/adult to fill out a report of what happened as part of the investigation

If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements; Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that

may face them from the other members of the group after the interview by the committee member; It may be helpful at this stage to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s)

Formal Stage 1:

In the event that bullying behaviour has taken place the pupils involved are asked to sign a “Player Behaviour Promise 1” that they will treat all players, coaches, managers, officials fairly, equally and respectfully including the targeted persons.

The relevant committee member does not apportion blame but rather treats the behaviour as a mistake that can and must be remedied. S/he emphasises that the intention is not to punish the perpetrators but to talk to them, explain how harmful and hurtful the behaviour is and to seek a promise that it will stop. If that promise is forthcoming and honoured then there will be no penalty and that will be the end of the matter. Persons who report bullying therefore are not getting others into trouble so much as enabling them to get out of trouble into which they may ultimately get if the bullying continued.

Formal Stage 2:

If a person has signed such a promise but then chooses to break that promise and continue with the bullying behaviour this can be no longer considered a “mistake”. In this event parents/guardians will be informed and requested to counter-sign their son/daughter’s promise.

Formal Stage 3:

Breach of this additional promise by further bullying behaviour is regarded as a very grave matter and will be referred to the Chairman, Desmond O Sullivan. A serious sanction may be imposed (See below) In any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the persons being disciplined, his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) and the club;

Sanctions:

Where a player has been found to be engaged in bullying behaviour, has formally promised to stop, and has broken that promise, any of the following sanctions may be imposed:

-s/he may be required to sign another promise, this time counter-signed by a parent/guardian

- parents/guardians may be contacted by the committee and informed of the bullying behaviour with a view to meeting to agree a strategy whereby a promise to end the bullying behaviour would be honoured

-being excluded from games, blitzes, tournaments may be also sanctioned.

Follow up and recording

Incidents will be logged by the committee member and in instances where the behaviour has not been appropriately addressed within 20 days – (the bullying behaviour to have ceased; issues between the parties resolved as far as practicable; the relationships between the parties restored as far as practicable) the bullying behaviour will be recorded by the committee member on the recording template adapted from the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools. This template will be completed in full and a copy given to the Chairperson and DLP.

Where a parent(s)/guardian(s) is not satisfied that the club has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent(s)/guardian(s) must be referred, as appropriate, to the club's complaints procedures. In the event that a parent(s)/guardian(s) has exhausted the club's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the club must advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to make a complaint to the North Munster Board, Basketball Ireland or the Ombudsman for Children.

INDICATORS OF ABUSE

The following is a list of some indicators of abuse, but it is not exhaustive:

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

Reasonable Grounds for concern

Túsla should always be informed when there are reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been abused, or is being abused, or is at risk of abuse.

The following examples would constitute reasonable grounds for concern:

- A specific indication from the child that he or she was abused
- An account by a person who saw the child being abused

- Evidence, such as an injury or behaviour, that is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused in another way
- An injury or behaviour that is consistent both with abuse and with an innocent explanation, but where there are corroborative indicators supporting the concern that it may be a case of abuse e.g. a pattern of injuries, an implausible explanation, and other indications of abuse and/or dysfunctional behaviour
- Consistent indication, over a period of time that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect.

The responsibility of deciding if a child has been abused lies with Tusla and the Gardaí not with the people working within Limerick Sport Huskies. However, all adults have a responsibility to protect children by reporting grounds for concern.

RESPONDING TO A DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE

Always

- Record what has been said ASAP
- Remain sensitive and calm
- Reassure child that they
 - are safe
 - were right to tell
 - are not to blame
 - are being taken seriously
- Let child talk - do not interview
- Listen and hear, give the person time to say what they want
- Ensure the experience is as positive as it can be
- Explain that you must tell others to ensure action is taken to increase their safety, but will maintain confidentiality
- Tell child what will happen next
- Involve appropriate individuals immediately
- Stay calm
- Reassure them that they have done the right thing in telling and that it will be dealt with appropriately

Never

- Question unless for clarification
- Make promises you cannot keep
- Rush into actions that may be inappropriate
- Make/pass a judgment on alleged abuser
- Take sole responsibility, consult the designated safeguarding children officer so you can begin to protect the child and gain support for yourself

Designated Liaison Officer/Child Welfare Officer

The DPL/CWO shall be made known to young members, coaches and parents alike; as the DLP to whom concerns will be addressed. If the concern is about the DLP please report to Club Chairperson.

SAFE RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES FOR VOLUNTEERS/COACHES

- Volunteers and coaches are carefully selected, trained and supervised. The office bearers of the club committee must vouch for new volunteers/coaches potential involvement and their participation must be ratified by the unanimous approval of executive group/remaining coaches.
- All new coaches/volunteers working with children or young people must complete the sports own application form which includes a self declaration section
- All coaches & managers must complete BI Garda Vetting process
- **ALL** volunteers/coaches must agree to abide by the club's Safeguarding Policy and all are required to sign the Code of Conduct
- Any concerns or objections with regard to suitability of a coach should be submitted to the DLP. These matters will be raised with the Governing Body case management committee with appropriate action taken including a formal response in writing to the concerned party if required. Clubs should not deal with concerns about a coach in isolation.

TRAINING FOR VOLUNTEERS/COACHES

This club will:

- Ensure governing body approved coaching sessions for volunteers/coaches have been scheduled at the club and ALL participants are expected to qualify to at least Intro Level Coaching Certificate
- When appointing volunteers/coaches consider their current or previous experience either playing or coaching
- Education and training in the basics of Safeguarding will apply to all coaches/volunteers/management committee members working with the children or young members. **Limerick Sport Huskies** is committed to continuous updating and review of our current safeguarding policy.
- Safeguarding training should include:
 - Basic awareness of Safeguarding issues
 - Our club/organisation's safeguarding policies and procedures including our code of conduct
 - Safeguarding refresher training (Limerick Sports Partnership)
- Ensure that all new coaches have attended safeguarding awareness workshop within six months of taking up their post. This opportunity should also be made available to parents and other volunteers to enable a culture of a child-focused club to prevail.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers should receive induction, and training appropriate to their role. Training should be updated and reviewed regularly for new staff/volunteers and in line with changing legislation.

CODES OF CONDUCT

A code of conduct lets all our staff/volunteers in our club/organisation know what behaviour is expected and what is unacceptable. It will also let all involved know what sanctions will be applied for non-compliance with the code. A written code of conduct will be prominently displayed or communicated to everyone associated with your club/organisation. It will be applied consistently. This club has a Code of Conduct for coaches/volunteers and young people and a code of expectations for parents/guardians.

GUIDELINES RELATING TO AWAY DAYS AND RESIDENTIALS

Travelling to away fixtures and residential are a regular event for this clubs. Trips may vary from short journeys across town to play another local team or involve more complicated arrangements involving overnight stays. But Limerick Sport Huskies is committed to ensuring that we follow certain standards to ensure the safety of our members. Any minors (u18) travelling with National League players to an away fixture, must have parental/guardian consent in writing (BI template). Underage players to and from matches are the responsibility of the parents/guardians.

SUPPORT and SUPERVISION

Limerick Sport Huskies recognises that it is good practice to set up a system of support and supervision of staff/volunteers. This will enable staff/volunteers to become more effective by identifying training needs, dealing quickly with difficulties and will contribute to safe activities for children. Volunteers will be offered regular opportunities to review their experiences at Limerick Sport Huskies and to identify any training or further support they require.

Good management will also create an atmosphere where volunteers feel valued, are listened to and where issues can be dealt with quickly by systems already in place. Therefore as a club we will ensure;

- Volunteers should be made aware of how to access training. Limerick Sport Huskies require all those coaching/instructing children to attend safeguarding training. In addition to this we will ensure all their volunteers are made aware of Limerick Sport Huskies reporting procedures.
- We will take time to induct volunteers on club/ sports policies and procedures.
- We will introduce a system for reviewing a volunteer's role on an annual basis, perhaps as part of pre-season planning. This will help to ensure we get the best out of volunteers and will provide volunteers with the opportunity to progress to new roles that accommodate their own particular skills and aptitude.
- All volunteers (team managers etc) will be Garda Vetted
- In the instance where a male coaches the team, a female manager is required to be present for the duration of the session.
- Due to COVID-19, managers are required to stay in the hall for health and safety reasons however, they must sit at the allocated chair, aware

from player pods and disinfect the touch points of the chair before leaving.

GUIDELINES FOR REPORTING ACCIDENTS

In the event of an accident, the following procedure will be carried out:

- Fill in two copies of the Accident Form ([See Google Drive](#))
- Make contact with parents/guardians- if over the phone, please also send out a text to have proof in writing
- One copy of form to incident book/folder.
- Keep copy for duration of season when they will be shredded according to Data Protection Guidelines.
- Contact emergency services/GP if required.
- Record in detail all facts surrounding the accident, witnesses, etc.
- Sign off on any action required.

GUIDELINES FOR REPORTING ALLEGATIONS/INCIDENTS

- Record all incidents reported or observed on an Incident Form
- Inform DLP ASAP.
- One copy to designated person within 24 hours.
- Ensure confidentiality - only "need to know basis" (reference confidentiality statement).
- Inform parents, unless to do so may put the child at further risk.
- The DLP will be responsible for storing any report in a safe and secure environment and forwarding a copy on to statutory agencies if required.

See reporting guidelines for further guidance

HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDELINES

This club are committed to ensure the safety of all members by completing a risk assessment for activities and endeavouring to provide first aid treatment for injury, accidents and cases of ill health during coaching sessions or at competitions.

(See Health and Safety Guidelines)

DEALING WITH CONCERNs ABOUT A COLLEAGUE

The vast majority of people who work with children are well motivated and would never harm a child. Unfortunately, a few do and it is essential that the organisation creates a culture that makes staff/volunteers willing and comfortable to voice their concerns, particularly those about someone with whom they work or whom they know. Again, the organisation's Safeguarding procedures should be followed.

During an investigation, support should be given both to the individual who voices concerns and to the suspected person who may have caused harm. Once the investigation is completed, the organisation must decide what action, if any, is necessary to prevent a similar situation arising again.