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**POLICY STATEMENT**

**The Club aim to promote the participation of children in our club by creating a culture of safety and fun. We recognise that all children have the right to be safe and that this fundamental principle takes precedence over all other considerations.**

*"Children have the right to be protected from all forms of violence; they must be kept safe from harm, and they must be given proper care by those looking after them"*

(Article 19; UN Convention on the Rights of the Child)

The Club recognises that we have a responsibility to:

- ✓ Safeguard and promote the interests and well-being of all those under 18 years who are involved in our club activities;
- ✓ Take all reasonable steps to protect children from harm, discrimination or degrading treatment;
- ✓ Respect the rights, wishes and feelings of all children in our club

**RATIONALE**

All children's sport should be conducted in an atmosphere of fair play. Ireland has adopted and is committed to the European Code of Sports Ethics, which defines fair play as:

*"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."*

(European Sports Charter and Code of Ethics, Council of Europe, 1993)

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The Children (NI) Order (1995) is based on a clear and consistent set of principles designed with the common aim of promoting the welfare of children.

This policy applies to all those involved in **St. Joseph's GAC**: coaches, mentors, trainers, administrators, officials, volunteers, parents/guardians, young people and supporters.

**The Club has the right to:**

- ✓ Expect all leaders to comply with its' Code of Conduct.
- ✓ Expect all youth members to maintain standards of reasonable behaviour.
- ✓ Take appropriate action if members breach the Code of Conduct or Child Protection Policy.
- ✓ Expect all members to undertake appropriate training when advised to.
- ✓ Expect leaders will not abuse members physically, emotionally or sexually.
- ✓ Take appropriate action in the event of accusations, in line with the GAA Guidelines for Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Fourth Edition 2009.
- ✓ Acquire AccessNI checks on all coaches and personnel who are responsible for working with children or vulnerable adults as from April 2008, as agreed by the Ulster Council.
- ✓ Maintain records on individuals in line with the Data Protection Act 1998 and advice from the data protection agency i.e. only hold records on individuals that they have a justifiable reason for holding.

**DEFINITIONS**

For the purpose of this policy we define children as any person under the age of 18 years. As defined in the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Order 2007.



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## **EQUALITY STATEMENT**

All children should be valued and treated in an equitable and fair manner regardless of ability, age, sex, religion, social and ethnic background or political persuasion. Children, irrespective of ability or disability should be involved in sports activities in an integrated and inclusive way, whenever possible, thus allowing them to participate to their full potential alongside other children (Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport 2006)

The Club 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 will seek guidance on working with children with a disability from external agencies, parents/guardians and the children themselves.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT**

We at **St. Joseph's GAC** will never promise to keep secrets. However, information of a confidential nature will only be communicated on a "need to know" basis, with the welfare of the child paramount.

Considerations of confidentiality will not be allowed to override the rights of children or young members to be protected from harm.



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**CLUB DESIGNATED PERSON**

The appointed Designated Officer during 2017/18 in St. Joseph's GAC is **Mrs Carmel McCormack, 07841101588**

The Deputy Designated Officer is **Mr Peter McClenaghan, 07921072015**

**Carmel McCormack** shall be made known to young members, coaches and parents alike as the designated person to whom concerns will be addressed. If the concern is about the designated person please report to the Executive Committee Chairperson or another trusted member of the committee, who will be aware of the correct procedures to deal with any concerns.

A list of current committee members is on display in the club and on the club website: **[www.glenavygac.com](http://www.glenavygac.com)**

The Club Designated Person will be responsible for dealing with any concerns about the protection of children in the Club. The designated person is responsible for reporting allegations or suspicions of child abuse to the County Board Designated Person, Social Services Social Care Trusts and/or Police Service of Northern Ireland.

**The Club Designated Person should:**

- ✓ Have detailed knowledge of the GAA Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport and the GAA Guidelines for Dealing with Allegations of Abuse document (Fourth Edition 2009).
- ✓ Have knowledge of the Code of Ethics Good Practice for Children's Sport (Irish Sports Council and Sport Northern Ireland).
- ✓ Have knowledge of statutory guidelines and relevant legislation as they relate to child protection and welfare of young people.
- ✓ Have knowledge of definitions, categorization and indicators of abuse.
- ✓ Undertake Code of Ethics (ISC/SportNI) Basic Awareness training provided by Cumann Lúthchleas Gael and any other training relating to their role or to Child Protection and Welfare matters.
- ✓ Be familiar with and able to carry out reporting procedures as outlined in the GAA Guidelines for Dealing with Allegations of Abuse (Fourth Edition 2009).
- ✓ Communicate with parents and external agencies as appropriate.

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- ✓ Assist with and identify the need for Code of Ethics training within the Club and other appropriate training in consultation with the Club's Children's Officer.
- ✓ Be aware of local contacts and support services that may assist in developing and delivering their role(s).
- ✓ Provide advice as appropriate, club administrators on issues of confidentiality, record keeping and data protection.

The distinct role of the GAA Club Designated Person is outlined in the GAA Guidelines for Dealing with Allegations of Abuse (Fourth Edition 2009). It is important to note that the Designated Officer does not have a counselling or therapeutic role or a responsibility for investigating or validating child protection concerns within their Club.

Investigations of alleged abuse are carried out by the relevant Statutory Authorities as outlined in Our Duty to Care or by specially appointed trained personnel in counselling, psychological and child therapeutic services. Further review and consideration of any Allegations of Abuse within the GAA structures may be carried out as deemed necessary by the appropriate body in the GAA, appointed for such purposes.

Further details on the role of the Club and County Designated Persons may be obtained in the GAA Guidelines for Dealing with Allegations of Abuse (Fourth Edition 2009).

### **CLUB CHILDRENS OFFICER**

The appointed Children's Officers during 2017/18 in **St. Joseph's GAC** are **Jonathan Rogan, 07939836049** and **Catherine Nelson, 07598163622**

The Club Children's Officer has as his/her primary aim the establishment of a child and youth centred ethos within the Club and will be viewed by many as the link between the children/young people in the Club and the adults. The Club Children's Officer shall be made known to young members, coaches and parents alike at the beginning of the year. It is the responsibility of the Children's Officer to regularly report to the Club Executive or Management Committee on how Club policy and

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procedures impact on the welfare and safeguarding of underage players and their coaches.

**The Club Children's Officer should:**

- ✓ Promote greater awareness within the Club of the GAA Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport.
- ✓ Assist with and identify the need for Code of Ethics training within the Club and other appropriate training in consultation with the Club's Designated Person.
- ✓ Ensure, in as far as possible, that all Players, Coaches/Team mentors, Parents/Guardians, Officials and Spectators adhere to the Code of Best Practice for youth Sport.
- ✓ Distribute copies of the GAA Joint Code of Behaviour at club level.
- ✓ Influence policy and practice within the Club in order to prioritise children's and young people's needs.
- ✓ Promote greater consultation with underage players and participation by them in club activities and planning.
- ✓ Encourage the involvement of parents/guardians in organising Club activities and to co-operate with parents in ensuring that every young person enjoys his/her involvement with the Club.
- ✓ Establish good links with local schools involved in the promotion of Gaelic Games.
- ✓ Liaise with Coiste na nÓg to ensure that the "child centred ethos" is being adhered to through coaching and games development.
- ✓ Develop good practice procedures in the recruitment and selection of persons working with young people in the club.
- ✓ Assist, or oversee if appropriate, the distribution of AccessNI forms as applicable in the club.
- ✓ Monitor, in association with team coaches, any significant drop out rates, lack of attendance or club transfers of underage players and report accordingly to the Club Executive or Management Committee.
- ✓ Maintain on-going contact with the County Board Children's Officer and with other Club Children's Officers.

Club Children's Officers do not have the responsibility to investigate or validate child protection allegations or concerns within the Club. The liaison person appointed by the Club to deal with such concerns is the Club's Designated Person as

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per the GAA Guidelines for Dealing with Allegations of Abuse (Fourth Edition 2009).

The Club Children's Officer should avail of any training provided for them at County Provincial or National level.

## **AWARENESS OF THE ISSUES**

Background knowledge in relation to child abuse, the general principles of child protection and the ability to recognise and respond to abuse are important issues. Of primary concern for **St. Joseph's GAC** is the issue of Child Protection 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 is of an equal importance for the safety and well being of that child.

**The Children (NI) Order 1995 formally recognises four types of abuse:**

**Physical** - Physical abuse is the deliberate physical injury to a child, or the wilful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering. This may include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, confinement to a room or cot, or inappropriately giving drugs to control behaviour.

**Neglect** - Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in significant harm. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate foods, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment, lack of stimulation or lack of supervision. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.



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**Sexual** - Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at or the production of pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

**Emotional** - Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Smothering a child's development through over-protection can also be a form of abuse. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone. Domestic violence, adult mental health problems and parental substance misuse may expose children to emotional abuse.

#### **INDICATORS OF ABUSE**

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.

**Remember Child abuse is not always readily visible.**





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

**PHYSICAL INDICATORS**

- 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

**BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS**

- 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

**GUIDELINES IN RESPONDING TO A DISCLOSURE**

When responding to a disclosure or allegation of abuse it is important to observe the following:

**DO's**

- ✓ Be sensitive, stay calm and listen carefully to what is being reported to you. React calmly when responding, as over-reacting may alarm the young person and compound feelings of anxiety and guilt.

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- ✓ Listen & hear. Give the person time to say what they want and take what is said to you seriously.
- ✓ Reassure them that they have done the right thing in telling and that it will be dealt with appropriately.
- ✓ Emphasise that the discussion, while confidential, may have to be shared with others so as to pursue the allegation correctly.
- ✓ Explain and ensure that the young person understands the procedures which will follow.
- ✓ Record in writing what was said as soon as possible.
- ✓ Report to someone else in the organisation - "the designated person". Inform the relevant GAA Designated Person of the allegation received as per the procedures outlined in Section 6 of GAA Guidelines for Dealing with Allegations of Abuse 2009.
- ✓ Record your report.
- ✓ Treat all information received in a confidential manner

**DON'TS**

- ✓ Panic.
- ✓ Do not make false promises, particularly regarding secrecy.
- ✓ Enquire into the details of the abuse. If asking any questions do so for the purpose of clarification only
- ✓ Make a child repeat the story unnecessarily.
- ✓ Never make a judgmental statement about the allegation or the alleged abuser

**GUIDELINES FOR REPORTING ALLEGATIONS/ INCIDENTS OF CHILD  
ABUSE IN THE GAA**

- ✓ Record all incidents reported or observed on an Incident Form (**Appendix 1**)
- ✓ 1 copy to designated person
- ✓ Ensure confidentiality - only "need to know basis" (reference confidentiality clause)
- ✓ The designated person will be responsible for storing any report in a safe and secure environment
- ✓ Please refer to "Guidelines for Dealing with Allegations of Abuse", Cumann Luthchleas Gael, (Fourth Edition 2009)

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Any member/employee of the Gaelic Athletic Association, who is informed, knows, suspects or is concerned that a child may be or may have been subject to child abuse, while engaged in Association activities or involving persons acting on behalf of the association, has a duty to convey such concerns as a matter of urgency to the Designated Persons at Club, County, Provincial or National level in accordance with GAA procedures, as outlined in the GAA Guidelines for Dealing with Allegations of Abuse (Fourth Edition 2009).

Members of the GAA, in common with all other members of the public, have a responsibility to report allegations of abuse directly to the statutory authorities. The GAA however is happy to facilitate our members in reporting these matters to the statutory authorities and have appointed Designated Persons at Club, County, Provincial and National level so as to assist this procedure.

Members/Employees of Cumann Lúthchleas Gael are furthermore obliged to facilitate and co-operate with any review or consideration of a complaint, a report or allegation of abuse which may be carried out by statutory authorities or by the relevant Club, County or Provincial, National Designated Person or by the GAA National Child Welfare and Protection Committee.

It should be noted from the outset that when a report of abuse has been received all units and members of the Association are obliged to consider the following:

- ✓ The safety and welfare of the child must be of paramount concern to all members of the GAA. Any steps deemed necessary to protect the child should be implemented as a matter of urgency while also being careful that the person against whom the allegation has been made is not unreasonably penalized
- ✓ All actions taken should be carefully considered by the Club and County Designated Person. Issues of debarment and reporting to statutory authorities should be considered in the strictest of confidence. The formal reporting of any allegation to statutory authorities and the issuing of a debarment order shall be

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made by the County Designated Person on behalf of Clubs within their County or if necessary by the Provincial Designated Person (where applicable) or the GAA National Designated Person

- ✓ All matters concerning any allegation of abuse must be dealt with in strict confidence
- ✓ The principle of natural justice must always be adhered to thus ensuring that the presumption of innocence applies until otherwise proven
- ✓ When an allegation has been made and where reasonable grounds for concern have been established the matter shall be reported to the relevant authorities as a matter of urgency and to the relevant GAA Designated Person

If an allegation of child abuse is received, protective measures, proportionate to the level of risk, should be taken by the GAA Designated Person. Other than in exceptional circumstances, where a risk to a child's welfare and safety takes precedence or where the relevant statutory authority is unavailable, the relevant statutory authority must be consulted before contact is made with the person against whom the allegation is made. This may ensure that any actions taken by the GAA do not impact negatively on possible future external investigations.

- ✓ The need to invoke the temporary debarment or standing aside of the person against whom an allegation has been made shall be done in a confidential manner, notwithstanding the urgency of the matter while also ensuring that the welfare of the child is deemed to be of paramount importance.
- ✓ All reports made, whether internal or external to the GAA, shall note times, dates, locations etc. and should be signed by the person that raised the concern or made the allegation.
- ✓ Designated Persons shall accept reports, allegations or concerns of abuse from members or non members of the GAA verbally or in writing
- ✓ Any reports or concerns regarding allegations of abuse once received by the Club/County Designated Person shall be recorded, signed, dated and where reasonable grounds for concern have been established shall be reported by the County Designated Person to the Statutory Authorities and to the GAA National Designated Person
- ✓ Responses to and the reporting of allegations, reports or concerns of abuse to Club/County Designated Persons, to the Statutory Authorities and to the GAA National Designated Person (as appropriate) shall be carried out as soon as possible and as a matter of priority.

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### **Where Reasonable Grounds for Concern Exist**

The ability to recognise child abuse depends very much on a person's willingness to accept the possibility of its existence as it does on an individual's knowledge and information on such matters. Child abuse need not be visible to all and while a young person may disclose that they are being abused we primarily rely on adults to be vigilant and to observe any possible forms of suspected abuse and to report all such matters to their Designated Person.

Mentors or other adults in a club are not expected to be in a position to instantly recognise instances of abuse, particularly without any prior training or experience in these matters.

The following would constitute reasonable grounds for concern and should be reported to the designated person:

- ✓ disclosures by a young person that they have been abused
- ✓ an account by a person who witnessed a child being abused
- ✓ evidence of injury for which there is no explanation, or which is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused in any other way
- ✓ age-inappropriate or abnormal sexual play or knowledge
- ✓ specific injuries or patterns of injuries
- ✓ consistent indication, over a period of time, that a young person is suffering from emotional or physical neglect
- ✓ absconding from home
- ✓ attempted suicide
- ✓ under-age pregnancy or sexually transmitted disease
- ✓ a young person's behaviour may raise concerns

A suspicion that is not supported by any objective indicator of abuse or neglect would not constitute a reasonable suspicion, or constitute reasonable grounds for concern. If an individual is unsure as to how to proceed with their concerns they



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should consult with their relevant Designated Person. Where reasonable grounds for concern exist the relevant statutory authority must be contacted.

**Allegations of Child Abuse relating to a volunteer in the GAA**

- ✓ The Designated Person in each Club, County or Province shall receive complaints, allegations or reports of abuse
- ✓ Should the Club, County or Provincial Designated Person be unsure as to the status of any allegations of abuse they should contact a duty social worker for advice or may seek advice from the GAA National Designated Person
- ✓ Allegations received at Club level shall be assessed in consultation with the County Designated Person. Where reasonable grounds for concern are subsequently established the County Designated Person shall report such matters to the statutory authorities, and also to the GAA National Designated Person, as soon as is practically possible

**All allegations and or complaints, whether reported to the statutory authorities or not, shall be reported to the GAA National Designated Person.**

- ✓ Where it has been established that there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that a child has been abused or may be at risk of being abused the County Designated Person shall immediately invoke a debarment order against any person named in the complaint or report. This would normally be done following consultation with the relevant statutory authority. The debarred person(s) shall be instructed to withdraw from all activities in the GAA pending the outcome of a full consideration and review of the allegation
- ✓ The debarment of any individual should be done in a confidential manner and the presumption of innocence remains until proven otherwise. A debarment decision, once communicated, comes into effect immediately and remains in effect until removed and the person against whom the debarment decision has been informed of such a removal or a reversal of such decision
- ✓ When an individual has been debarred by a County Designated Person this information shall also be reported immediately to the National Child Welfare and Protection Committee (through the National Children's Office) for further possible consideration

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- ✓ A debarment decision must be communicated by the County, Provincial or National Designated Person or by the NCWPC
- ✓ The Designated Person making the report shall inform the parents/guardians of the child named in the complaint as to the nature of the complaint or allegation received unless by doing so it could endanger the child. This would normally be done following consultations with the relevant Statutory Authority. Actions taken by the GAA in relation to the allegations or complaint shall be communicated to the parents/guardians of the child based on the advice received from the Statutory Authorities
- ✓ The Designated Person making the report shall inform the person against whom allegations have been made as to the nature of the allegations. This would normally be done following consultations with the relevant Statutory Authority. Always allow for the necessary level of confidentiality when reporting such allegations. Inform the person if a debarment order has been enacted and the nature of such a debarment order which will remain in effect pending further consideration by the NCWPC
- ✓ The Cathaoirleach of the club shall be informed if a debarment order is made against any member of the Club. Such information shall be treated with the strictest of confidence

**Non availability of Designated Person or in case of emergency**

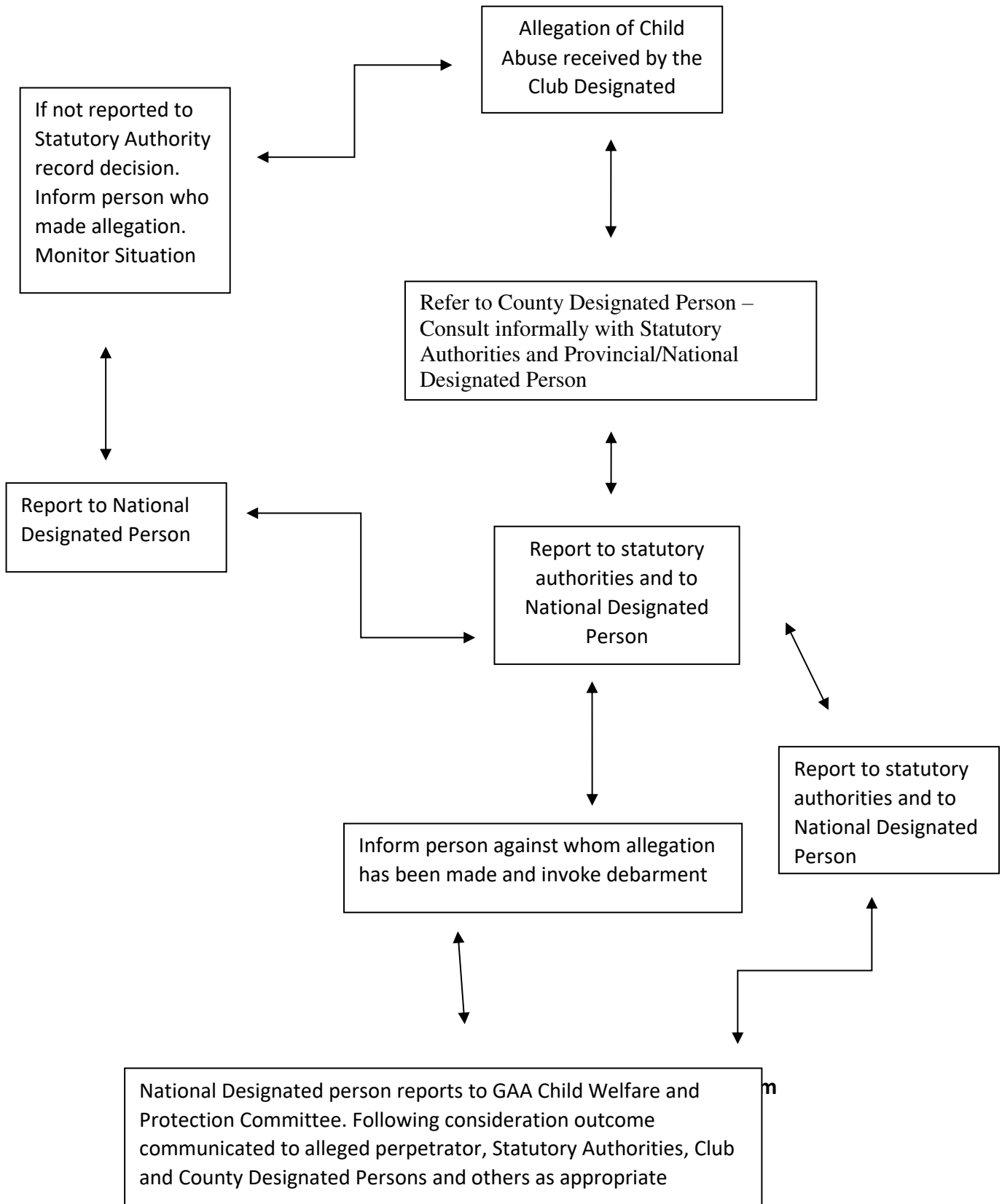
In an emergency, or in the event of a Club or County Designated Persons (or Deputy Designated Person) being unavailable to assist, reports and/or allegations of abuse may be made directly to Social Services or to the PSNI by a member of the GAA or by any member of the public.



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**Reporting Allegations of Child Abuse in the GAA**







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## **Allegations of Child Abuse relating to an employee in the GAA**

Where the GAA, at Club, County, Provincial or National level has entered into an employer/employee arrangement with an individual the 'employer' must ensure that employees are aware of the internal line management reporting procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse. These procedures should clarify how allegations of abuse are processed when such allegations are made against fellow employees, volunteers or young people. Employers should be aware of employment legislation and any other employee relations policies when dealing with allegations involving paid employees.

Similarly as to cases involving allegations of abuse made against a volunteer, should any allegations of abuse be made against an employee the safety and welfare of the child must be of paramount concern to all members of the GAA. Any steps deemed necessary to protect the child should be implemented as a matter of urgency while also being careful that the person against whom the allegation has been made is not unreasonably penalised.

### **Employer's procedural responsibilities**

It is recommended that the same person should not have responsibility for dealing with the issues surrounding the reporting of allegations and the employment/contractual issues. The Designated Person will normally have responsibility for the volunteer or young person while a person acting in the capacity of employer or on behalf of the employer e.g. a Chief Executive Officer, County Secretary, Human Resources Manager or equivalent senior person will have responsibility for dealing with allegations made against an employee.

Staff and indeed volunteers may be subject to erroneous or malicious allegations.

Therefore any allegations of abuse should be dealt with sensitively and relevant supports provided, within the resource capabilities of the Association and following legal and statutory authority advice.



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The principal aim however is to protect the child while taking care to treat the employee fairly. Organisations need to identify how they can best fulfil this objective.

Action taken in reporting an allegation of abuse against an employee should be based on an opinion formed reasonably and in good faith. When an allegation is received it should be assessed promptly and carefully. It will be necessary to decide whether a formal report should be made to the statutory authorities and this decision should be based on reasonable grounds for concern.

**When an allegation has been made against an employee the following steps should be taken:**

- ✓ All actions shall be guided by agreed GAA reporting procedures, as outlined elsewhere in these Guidelines, by the employees contractual arrangements and by the rules of natural justice
- ✓ The Chief Executive Officer, County Secretary, Human Resources Manager or equivalent senior person shall be informed of the allegation as soon as possible and shall take responsibility for processing the matter on behalf of the employer
- ✓ The first priority should be to ensure that no child is exposed to unnecessary risk. The employer should, as a matter of urgency, take any necessary protective measures. These measures should be proportionate to the level of risk and should not unreasonably penalise the employee financially or otherwise, unless this action is deemed necessary to protect children. Where protective measures do penalise the employee, it is important that early consideration be given to the case
- ✓ The agreed recording and reporting procedures, as outlined in these Guidelines should be adhered to at all times in respect of the young person and the employee
- ✓ The CEO/HR Manager or equivalent senior person should advise the employee of the
- ✓ any other organisation working with children with which the person against whom the allegation is made may be involve
- ✓ If the allegation is against the CEO, the allegation should be referred to the Chairperson of the Board/Management Committee or an equivalent senior person

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- ✓ The parents/guardians of the young person should be informed immediately of the complaint against the employee unless by doing so you endanger the young person. Advice should be taken from the statutory authorities as to how this might best be done
- ✓ Any follow up on an allegation of abuse against an employee should be made in consultation with the relevant statutory authorities. An immediate meeting should be arranged for this purpose
- ✓ After the consultations referred to above have taken place, and when pursuing the question of the future position of the employee the CEO/HR Manager or equivalent senior person on behalf of the employer should advise the employee of the situation and should follow the agreed procedures
- ✓ Employers should ensure that any actions taken by them do not undermine or frustrate any investigations being conducted by the statutory authorities.
- ✓ Employers must keep comprehensive records of any allegations made, details of how the allegations were managed and details of any action taken and decisions reached. These records must be stored confidentially and a copy given to the individual concerned. This information must be retained on file, including information on those who may leave the employment of the organisation for further possible reference.

**Where 'Reasonable Grounds for Concern' may not exist**

There will be occasions where certain instances of alleged abuse may be suspected, or there may be doubts as to the substantive nature of an allegation or suspicion. A suspicion which is not supported by any objective indication of abuse or neglect would not constitute a reasonable suspicion or reasonable grounds for concern. Where there may be insufficient grounds for establishing or substantiating such concerns the following course of action is recommended but should be proceeded with carefully and confidentially while ensuring the welfare of the child remains paramount:

- ✓ The issue, as it may relate to a volunteer or young person in the Association, should be subject to clarification of facts and updating where appropriate between the Club and County Designated Person. In the case of an employee the matter should be subject to updating by the CEO/HR Manager or equivalent senior person previously involved in the initial reporting of the allegation or suspicion of abuse.

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- ✓ Advice on the matter may be sought from the National Designated Person and/or from the relevant statutory authority
- ✓ The conduct of the person that caused such concerns should be monitored and recorded as appropriate
- ✓ A formal review of the matter should be agreed between the Club Designated Person and the County Designated Person as it relates to a volunteer or young person and the CEO/HR Manager or equivalent senior person in consultation with the National Designated Person, as it relates to an employee
- ✓ Should reasonable grounds for concern be established, following the commencement of this course of action, the formal reporting procedures should be enacted
- ✓ At all times the welfare of any child involved in such matters should be of paramount concern and the Association through the appointed Designated Persons or while acting in the capacity of an employer should act accordingly.

**When an allegation is not referred to the statutory authorities**

In situations where the Designated Person, following consultations (perhaps with the relevant statutory authority) subsequently decides that an allegation received or concerns relayed to them will not be formally reported to the relevant statutory authorities the individual (whether it is an adult or a child) who raised the concerns or made the allegations should be given a clear written statement of the reasons why the reported concern are not being reported to the statutory authorities. The individual should be advised that, if they remain concerned about the situation, they are free to consult with, or report to, the statutory authorities themselves.

All report of alleged abuse made against members of the GAA **must** be forwarded to the National Designated Person, regardless of whether it has or has not been reported to the relevant statutory authorities. Where a decision is made not to refer reported concerns to statutory authorities this decision and the reasons contained therein must be recorded and subsequently brought to the attention of the GAA National Designated Person.

The above directions also apply to situations where an allegation received or concerns relayed against an employee are not being reported to the relevant statutory authorities.



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## **False Allegations**

The making of a false allegation by a member of the GAA shall be deemed to be a serious breach of the GAA Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport. Any allegation made which is subsequently found to be false or of a malicious nature, shall also be deemed to be a serious breach of these Guidelines and subsequent disciplinary action may follow.

It should be noted that an individual who reports concerns in 'good faith' is not deliberately attempting to slander another person's name., **The Criminal Law Act (NI) 1967** exists in the six counties and places the responsibility on everyone to report offences or to forward information to the police by emphasising the, 'duty of every other person, who knows or believes,

(a) that the offence or some other arrestable offence(s) have been committed: and

(b) that they have information which is likely to secure, or to be material assistance in securing, the apprehension, prosecution or conviction of any person for that offence

- ✓ Coaches should avoid leaving off after a match or training session but if this is necessary coaches / volunteers should alternate which child is dropped off last. Ideally two child would be left off at an agreed point i.e. one of their family homes.
- ✓ The person who leaves children home should be alternated; this would reduce the risk of any one individual from always being alone with the child.
- ✓ The driver should have a point of contact and mobile phone should they break down.
- ✓ Vehicles should be equipped with a First Aid Kit
- ✓ Our club must ensure that children are aware of their rights and they have someone to turn to or report any concerns they may have. If a culture of safety is created within our club then the child is more likely to talk to another person if they are feeling uncomfortable about a situation.
- ✓ Children should wear seatbelts at all times. The driver is legally responsible to ensure that a child under 14 wears a seatbelt (i.e. the adult would have to pay any fine) but morally responsible to ensure all passengers wear seatbelts.

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- ✓ In the instance of late collections these can present the club and coaches with particular difficulties. Parents/guardians will be provided with reminders addressing the issue and outlining their responsibility and the consequences of late collections. This issue will be addressed through the youth newsletters. Our club through the membership forms have contact numbers for parents/guardians and if possible be provided with an alternative contact number. Parents/guardians have a contact number for the club/coach to inform them of emergencies and possible late collections.
- ✓ Appropriate action will be agreed on an individual basis if children are continually collected late. Each individual case will be discussed and the Youth Committee will agree appropriate action.

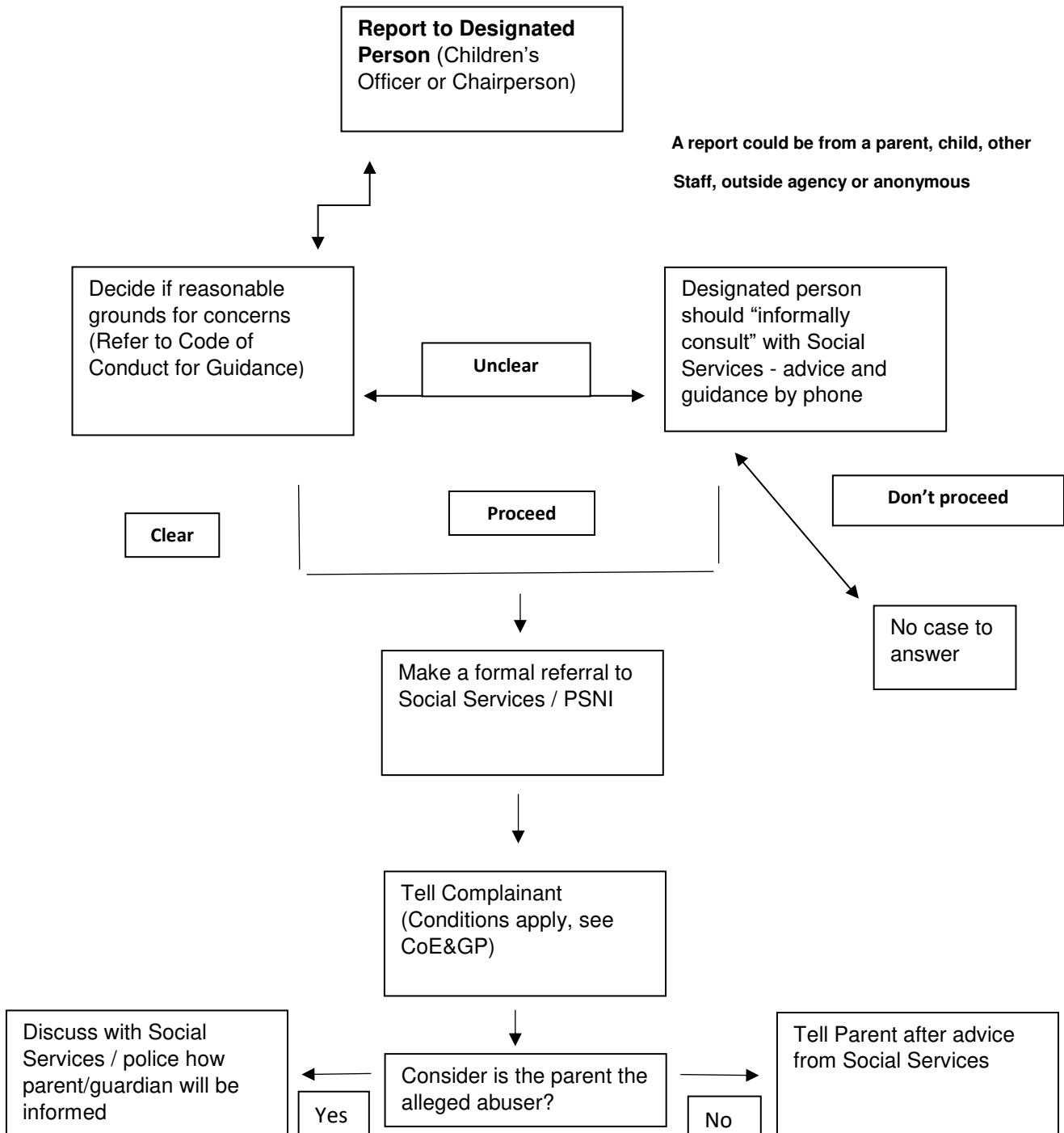
**Like all advice these procedures will only reduce the risk and still the best advice is to avoid transporting children alone in a car.**



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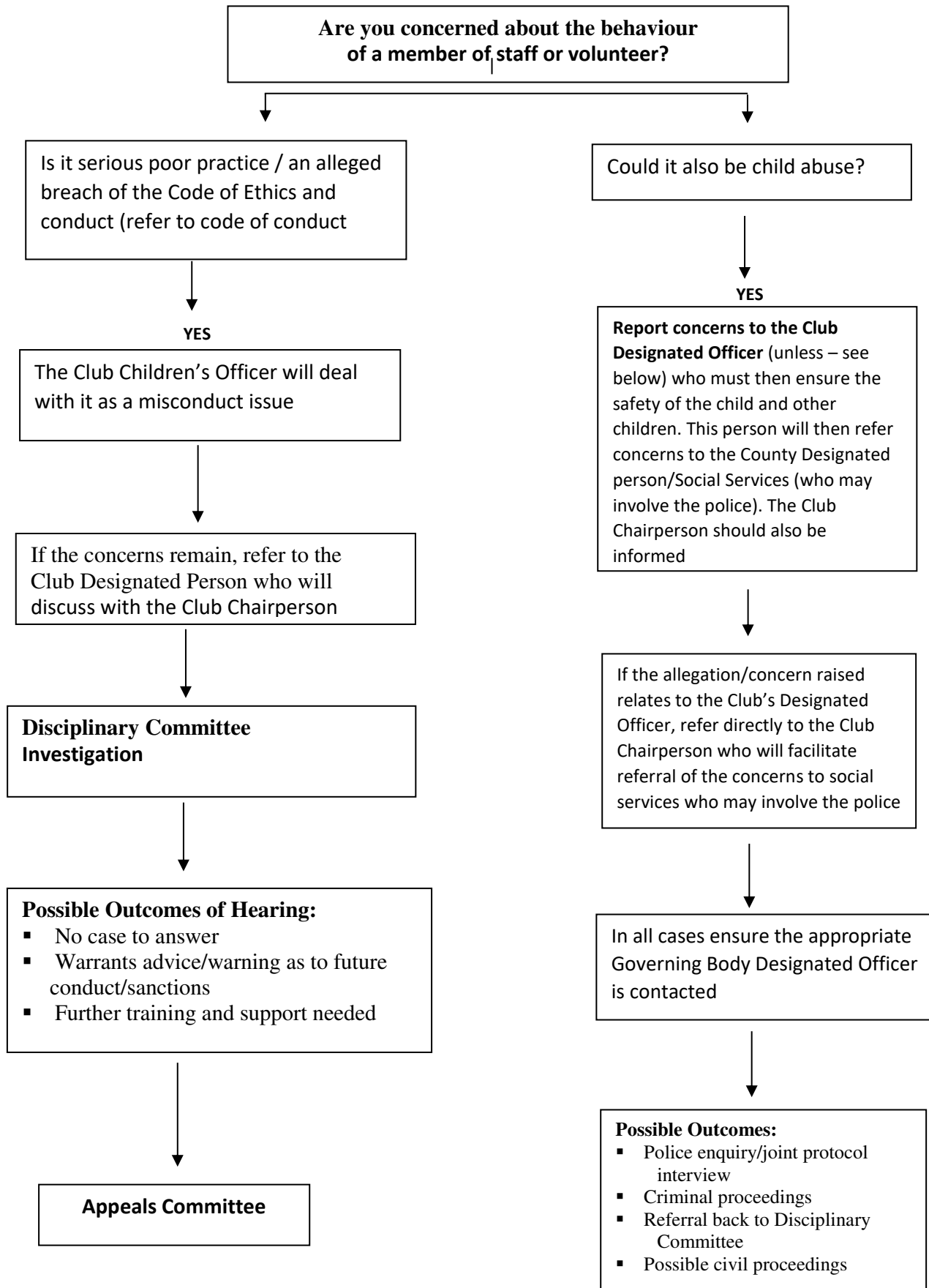


**When the complaint is about possible abuse outside the organisation**





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## **PHOTOGRAPHS AND IMAGES OF CHILDREN**

At **St. Joseph's GAC** we feel it is important to recognise the achievements and successes of our youth and of the club as a whole. One of the ways to do this is to publish photographs and details of achievements in our local press. As a club we would like to use pictures of our youth members in the local press and at times, on the club website.

We take the issue of child safety very seriously and this includes the images of the children in our care. Our duty to our young members is paramount and this form of publicity must be carefully monitored to ensure that it is consistent with our Child Protection Policy and the Data Protection Legislation.

For this reason we have put the following guidelines into place:

- ✓ We ask parental consent for the club to take and use photographs of their children and for permission to use the press and media to promote the youth programme (Appendix 6).
- ✓ Photographs and interviews will at all times take place in the presence of a coach.
- ✓ We will only use team photographs and action photographs on our website.
- ✓ Action and individual photographs will only be used, with individual parental consent, prior to the inclusion on the club website or in the local press.
- ✓ No personal details relating to the young person should be revealed as accompanying materials to the photograph or recorded image.

The guidelines for use of photography and filming, as previously stated above also apply to those that maintain a club website with regards to uploading photographs and recorded images.

The Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU) also recommends the following practices which we shall adopt;

- ✓ Provide a clear brief to the photographer about what is considered appropriate in terms of content and behaviour.
- ✓ At the beginning of each year ensure that parents are asked to sign a photograph consent form for their child/children.
- ✓ Inform children 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

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- ✓ Do not allow unsupervised access to children or one to one photo sessions at events.
- ✓ Do not approve/allow photo sessions outside the events or at a child's home. ©Children and parents should be informed that if they have concerns they could report these to the organiser.
- ✓ Concerns regarding inappropriate or intrusive photography should be reported to the event organiser or official and recorded in the same manner as any other child protection concern.

### **USE/MISUSE OF MOBILE PHONES**

**St. Joseph's GAC** understands and respects the importance that parents/guardians place on the use of mobile phones as a means of contacting their children when away from the home setting. However, there are times that the use of mobile phones must be limited in order to protect all children within the club.

For this reason we have placed the following limitations on the use of mobile phones in our club activities:

- ✓ It is recommended that children are discouraged from bringing mobile phones to training sessions to avoid loss and damage.
- ✓ It is the responsibility of parents and children to ensure that mobile phones are kept in a safe and secure place at all times.
- ✓ The club holds no responsibility for mobile phones lost or stolen while on club premises or while away from club premises attending away games.
- ✓ Children are forbidden to use mobile phones, and, in particular, picture/video phones in dressing rooms while on club grounds or while attending away games.
- ✓ The misuse of mobile phones will be taken seriously by all club members and persistent misuse will be brought to the attention of the Child Protection Officer to be actioned.
- ✓ Coaches should not use internet chat sites e.g. MSN, Bebo, and Facebook etc, to communicate with young players.
- ✓ It is strongly recommended that when information is passed on regarding games, training or other activities for under age players that it is done via group texts and that these group texts **should be sent to the parents of underage players**. Coaches and /or the Club Rúnaí should obtain these relevant contact numbers when an underage player is being registered. This recommendation only applies to underage players i.e. under 18 year of age.

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- ✓ If, for whatever reason, a parent/guardian insists or requests that the information is sent directly by the club to their child and gives this request in writing the club may, if they so wish, accede to this request. However, if the club accedes to the request the information can only be sent as part of a group text and cannot be communicated individually to the underage player.
- ✓ The GAA would regard the individual texting of an underage player by their coach or mentor as being inappropriate and unnecessary. We do not wish to compromise the role of the coach but deem it best not to communicate by mobile in such instances where the coach would have the personal mobile telephone number of a child and the child or young person could equally have access to the coaches telephone number as well.
- ✓ If an underage player is on the club's senior panel, the same recommendation applies and parental/guardian permission must be sought if you wish to directly communicate with the young person as part of a group text scheme.

This document has been approved by the Club Executive Committee and serves as the working Child Protection policy of St. Joseph's GAC.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Cathaoirleach

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Rúnaí

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Children's Officer