



Overview of the Mountaineering Ireland Children's Policy

Why?

We all feel more comfortable and secure when we know where we stand and when we are operating within known parameters. This applies to the person leading a group of friends and family along the Wicklow Way as much as to instructors with a mixed group of teenagers on a 5-day trip in the Reeks.

The last decade has seen a changing environment for all involved with children. Mountaineering Ireland has been working with the Sport Northern Ireland (Sport NI) & the Irish Sports Councils' (ISC) combined 'Safe Sport' directives to formulate a Children's Policy (CP) (now an essential criterion for all applications made to ISC / Sport NI). This will provide appropriate guidance for our members, and the wider mountaineering populace, allowing us the confidence to facilitate safe, enjoyable & stress-free U18 participation in our sport.

What?

Mountaineering Ireland's Children's Policy is similar to those found in schools, crèches, youth centres and the other sporting NGB's. It has been drafted from information supplied by the ISC & Sport Northern Ireland, NSPCC, Department of Health & Children, Youth Sport NI and the Criminal Records Bureau. The CP sets the scene whereby leaders, instructors, helpers, parents, and the children they're with can feel reassured and protected.

Its contents include

Introduction & Statement of Policy; Code of Good Practice; Guidelines for Use of Photographic; Filming Equipment at Sporting Events; Dealing with Bullying; What happens if? (making a Disclosure, also called a Referral); Incident Flow Chart; If an Mountaineering Ireland Volunteer / Staff Member is the Subject of a Disclosure ; Sample Incident Record Form; Mountaineering Ireland Volunteer Application Form; Mountaineering Ireland Volunteer Reference Reply Form; Useful Reading & Sources of Information.

How will it be rolled out to the Mountaineering Ireland?

Mountaineering Ireland Children's Policy is available on Mountaineering Ireland's website www.mountaineering.ie and from Mountaineering Ireland's office. The policy document is of course worthless unless implemented. To aid this Mountaineering Ireland members interested in taking the lead within their clubs can be offered certified Child Protection training (clubs may find that such a person already exists).

Mountaineering Ireland clubs have been asked and supported to nominate a Children's Officer and to abide by the advice and actions contained within the CP as well as promoting its existence within their members.

As questions and situations arise we will post advice updates on the website in the form of FAQ's. The most common of these may be; "How will it affect our club?" Well, to most it will be a godsend, as far as dealing with U18's it should reduce the should I?, can I?, what happens if? scenarios. It should allow clubs to confidently integrate activities for young persons into their programme. Those who approach it with a 'we don't need this' mindset can only be reminded of how they would like to have been treated when they were young or how they wish their children to be looked after. Of course there will be apprehension, grey areas and changes to be made, but that's what we are here for.

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www.mountaineering.ie