

SUPERVISION POLICY



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Mountaineering Ireland Version Control			
Version	Author	Date	Amendments
1.0	Catherine Hibbitt	August 2023	Reviewed
Approved by Board: 04/09/23			



NGB: Mountaineering Ireland

Club Name:

Introduction



This supervision policy is based on the Child Protection in Sport (CPSU) briefing for Supervising Children and Young People's Sports and Activities and is designed to ensure the smooth running of Juvenile Mountaineering in all affiliated clubs and highlights the various duties and roles of mentors, along with tips and guidelines on how best to perform those duties. Mountaineering Ireland requires that all mountaineering activities involving children and young people must be supervised. An individual should avoid being alone with a child and it is the responsibility of adults to ensure adequate supervision is provided for any activities in accordance with best practice requirements as described in these procedures. For any activity the welfare and safety of the child must be put first.

Young people are left at clubs by parents/guardians who expect this to be a safe environment. A safe environment can only be created when everybody works together to put safeguards in place for everyone's protection. Parents/guardians/supervisors must also understand that they have an important role in implementing safe practices for their children and be willing to volunteer. All coaches and volunteers working with children and young people under 18 years of age must receive Garda Vetting/Access NI through Mountaineering Ireland (Refer to **Mountaineering Ireland Vetting Policy and Procedures**).

Where there are very young players, they need to be supervised at all times by their parents. It is essential that there is a practice of children being signed-in and signed-out by parents/guardians where parents/guardians cannot stay for the duration of an activity.

Parents should not let small children have free reign to run around during mountaineering activities. Clubs should ensure they are providing adequate levels of protection to all involved in such circumstances. If you need advice in this regard, please contact the National Children's Officer.

Why are Supervision Ratios Important?

Supervision ratios form part of a club/organisations duty of care to safeguard and protect children and young people. They need to form part of the planning and risk assessment for any activity in order to:

- ✚ Minimize the risks to participants.
- ✚ Enhance the benefits children and young people draw from the activity.
- ✚ Help deliver the activity safely and appropriately.
- ✚ Ensure there is enough appropriate adult support should any issues arise.
- ✚ Reassure parents.

Key Considerations

Due to the number of potential variables, it is not possible to recommend one-size-fits-all guidance to cover all activities involving children and young people. There are, however, many key considerations that are recommended as good practice.

What makes an individual suitable to supervise children?

It's the responsibility of those commissioning, planning, or providing sessions and activities to ensure the suitability of those running the activity. This includes:

- ✚ Being appropriately qualified for the role in the activity
- ✚ Being subject to a safe recruitment process, including criminal record checks for eligible roles.
- ✚ Having insurance appropriate to their activity.

- ✚ Signing up to comply with the code of conduct.
- ✚ Understanding their responsibility to safeguard children and young people.

What factors inform appropriate supervision levels?

In the planning of all activities, and regardless of any other assessments that may be required, for example for health and safety purposes, a risk assessment should be undertaken that specifically informs decision making about appropriate supervision levels.

Key factors to assess include:

- ✚ Ages of children and young people
- ✚ Additional supervision and support needs of some or all participants, for example, due to disability or age.
- ✚ As far as is possible, include input from children and their parents in risk assessments to ensure the child's needs are met.
- ✚ Ensure competent and experienced staff are involved, including at least one with first aid.
- ✚ Consider the competence and experience of participants for the specific activity.
- ✚ Consider the nature of the activity, for example, climbing may require higher levels of supervision than a football match.
- ✚ Nature of the venue – whether it is a closed or open venue. And whether private and exclusive to the group or open and accessible to the public.
- ✚ Consider what types of equipment children may have access to.
- ✚ Whether there needs to be appropriate ratio of male or female adults.
- ✚ If the activity is being delivered using a drop-in model.
- ✚ Ensure adults who do not meet the criteria for vetting and barring checks are supervised at all times.

Recommended Minimum Supervision Ratios

While your risk assessment may well indicate the need for an enhanced level of supervision and staffing for a particular activity, this table shows recommended adult to child ratios and would be suitable for most organizations and clubs working with children and young people.

It is recommended that these adult to child ratios are the minimum numbers to keep children safe. However, remember that regardless of the overall ratio, a **minimum of two supervisors** is recommended.

Child's Age	Number of Adults	Number of Children
0-2	1	3
2-3	1	4
4-8	1	6
9-12	1	8
13-18	1	10

Toilet Supervision

If the group has both boys and girls, there should be at least one male and one female responsible adult supervising visits to the toilet. In larger groups of children, encourage groups to take a comfort break together with one responsible adult while the other adult(s) supervise the remaining children.

Young People as Supervisors

Some clubs may provide opportunities for under eighteens to coach, officiate, volunteer, or organise events for other children, including achieving qualifications and awards. These opportunities allow young people to develop skills, experience and confidence but should not mean that clubs should depend on them to take full responsibility for managing groups of children. Under 18's in coaching or other roles should only be in a supporting role to the adult with overall responsibility for the supervising activity. Therefore, they must be not to be counted as adults when calculating supervision ratios.

Parents as Supervisors

Parents are encouraged to accompany children to activities. We do not recommend that those planning are providing activities include parents in supervision calculations unless the parents

are acting in a formal volunteering or other capacity during activities. In these circumstances, this should mean that those parents will meet all the appropriate requirements in terms of:

- ✚ Clarity about their role.
- ✚ Appropriate background checks suitable to their role.
- ✚ Undertaking relevant safeguarding training.
- ✚ Who has overall responsibility for the group.
- ✚ What is acceptable practice.

Supervision Role

People working with children and young people should never be left in a vulnerable position. They should ensure that the following set of guidelines are adhered to:

- ✚ Avoid being left alone with any child or young person.
- ✚ If there is a need to talk to children and young people, then this should be done in an open environment.
- ✚ Not enter or be in the changing rooms with underage participants unless in the event of an emergency.
- ✚ If organising an away trip then to ensure adequate adults are available to assist who have followed the recruitment procedures in place within Mountaineering Ireland, such as vetting etc.
- ✚ Clearly advise parents/guardians of start/finish times of activities and always give an informed timetable relating to any away trips that you have organised.
- ✚ Keep records relating to children's attendance and any injuries or accidents that may have occurred during the activity.
- ✚ Where a team consists of mixed genders, there should be a person of both genders with shared responsibility, while male only groups should have at least one male coach, and female groups should have at least one female coach.
- ✚ Affiliated clubs should adopt a practice of getting information on any medical issues a juvenile member may have, and an emergency contact number. This should be done at the start of a season or prior to a juvenile participating in an activity, depending on the circumstance.

Changing Rooms

Changing facilities may be shared by Mountaineering Ireland members and members of the general public and therefore may not be possible to provide supervision in these areas. Parents and young people must be aware of the changing facilities before taking part, whether for a training session, competition, or any other activity. The parent should discuss the changing facilities available and ensure that any young person is aware of who to talk to if any issues arise in unsupervised areas.

Facilities may have requirements for parents attending changing areas with their children; generally, this means may only attend in the changing area of their gender, i.e., adult men in the male changing area and adult women in the female changing area. Where family or communal rooms are provided parents should check with the facility before use.

Any supervision of a changing area must be by adults in pairs of the appropriate gender, i.e., only adult males can supervise male only changing areas and only adult females can supervise female only changing areas. Supervision provided by leaders appointed by a club or region must be vetted and attend safeguarding training as this role comes under the remit of a relevant activity. Leaders should not enter changing rooms unless part of a supervision rota. In emergency circumstances the safety and well-being of a child must be considered above all else.

Supervising Away Trips

Groups travelling away overnight or longer must ensure that they have adequate numbers and gender of adults to supervise the group of young people during the trip or activity. For all away trips or activities any person in charge, supervising or involved in training/coaching must meet the Mountaineering Ireland safeguarding requirements i.e., attended approved safeguarding training, vetted, qualified for the role and be a member of Mountaineering Ireland. Further details can be found in the separate **Traveling Policies**.

