



Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

Policy Statement of Mountaineering Ireland

Mountaineering Ireland aims to promote and foster the sport of mountaineering in all its forms. Mountaineering Ireland recognises the benefits of all people participating in sport. Our sport offers benefits for both physical and mental well-being, and the opportunity for active participation throughout life.

Similar to all adventure sports, mountaineering is a sport with risks. It can be dangerous, and participation may result in personal injury or death. Participants should be aware of and accept these risks and be responsible for their own actions and involvement. Where children are participating it is critical that parents explicitly give written informed consent for their children to participate. Where consent has not been given a child will not be allowed to continue until consent has been provided.

Within this context, Mountaineering Ireland is determined to provide a positive environment for children where risk is managed appropriately. Mountaineering Ireland is committed to promoting and organising recreational and competitive activities and events throughout Ireland; and to select and train competitors to represent Ireland at national and international events.

Every individual in Mountaineering Ireland should show respect and understanding for each member's rights, development, safety and welfare by conducting themselves in accordance with the ethos and principles of Mountaineering Ireland and this document.

All adults involved in Mountaineering Ireland should be aware of their responsibility and obligations in protecting and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable people involved in the sport to enable safe participation for fun and in the spirit of fair play. Mountaineering Ireland will issue separate guidance for those working with or support opportunities for vulnerable adults to participate.

We encourage an open environment where children feel free to speak out about their concerns in the knowledge that they will be listened to, in a respectful way and their concerns taken seriously. This is a key pillar in our safeguarding policy.

Mountaineering Ireland recognises and acknowledges the following documentation as guidance for the Mountaineering Ireland Safeguarding Policies and Procedures:

- Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport (Sport Ireland, 2006)
- Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection of Children, (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2011)
- Cooperating to Safeguard Children 2003.
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007.
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012.

The following staff were implemented to undertake safeguarding operational policy.

National Children's Officer
Mountaineering Ireland
March 2015

National Designated Liaison Person
Mountaineering Ireland
March 2015

Chairperson
Mountaineering Ireland
March 2015

Legislative notes to this document Revised – September 2020:

Republic of Ireland

1. National Vetting Bureau (CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE PERSONS) Act 2012
2. Children Act (2015).

Northern Ireland

1. The Children's Services Co-operation Act (Northern Ireland) 2015
2. The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995
3. Under Section 5 of the Criminal Law Act (Northern Ireland) 1967, it is an offence not to report a 'relevant offence' to the police. This includes offences against children.

The best practice policy set out in this document is expected to require little change on the commencement of the pieces of legislation where some stated requirements will become statutory obligations. Mountaineering Ireland will continue to review the policy on a regular basis in line with legislative change and best practice guidance.

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Section 1 – Glossary and Abbreviations

Glossary

The glossary explains terms used throughout this document to clarify and set out the meaning of the various terms used.

Access NI - is a criminal history and relevant non-conviction information disclosure service in Northern Ireland.

Adult/Leader/Volunteer – any person, whether paid or unpaid, who acts in a position with responsibility for children; this can include, but not limited to, supervisor, team manager, sports science personnel, chaperone, helpers and/or others who may be acting within the definition of a specified role with the required recognised qualification and for the purpose of this document this term may also include all specified roles otherwise referenced here e.g. children’s officer, coach, committee member, instructor. Adults are over 18 years of age.

Mountaineering Ireland – is the National Governing Body for the mountaineering as recognised by the Sport Ireland and Sport Northern Ireland.

Child and Family Agency – is the authority with the statutory responsibility for the protection and welfare of children in Ireland since 1st January 2014.

Child – for the purposes of this document an individual under the age of 18 is considered a child.

Club – refers to a Mountaineering Ireland registered club, required to operate under this policy.

Coach / Instructor – refers to an individual who holds a Mountaineering Ireland recognised award or (coaches) by way of experience is recognised by Mountaineering Ireland or his/her club as a coach.

Committee member – refers to any person appointed to a club or Mountaineering Ireland Committee.

Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU) - The Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU) is a partnership between the NSPCC (UK), Sport England, Sport Northern Ireland and Sport Wales. The CPSU works to help achieve the NSPCC mission to end child abuse.

Health Services Executive – is the organisation providing health services in Ireland; formally responsible for the statutory protection of children in Ireland.

Leader – see definition under Adult/Leader/Volunteer

Member – any person affiliated to Mountaineering Ireland or acting as a representative of a member of Mountaineering Ireland; categories of membership as defined by the Mountaineering Ireland Memorandum and Articles of Association (M&A).

National Vetting Bureau (Central Garda Vetting Unit) – is the statutory body responsible for providing vetting services to Mountaineering Ireland in the Republic of Ireland; it will, when the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Adults) Act 2012 comes into operation, be known as the National

Vetting Bureau.

Parent/Guardian – refers to an individual who has parental responsibility for a child.

Sport Ireland (Sport Ireland) - The statutory sports agency responsible for the promotion, development and coordination of sport in the Republic of Ireland.

Sport Northern Ireland - The statutory sports agency responsible for the promotion, development and coordination of sport in Northern Ireland.

Statutory Authority/Authorities – this refers to the government department/agency tasked with receiving reports or concerns relating to child abuse, including the Child and Family Agency, the Garda Síochana, Health and Social Services Trusts (NI) and the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

Volunteer – see definition under Adult/Leader/Volunteer

Vulnerable person – this is any person over the age of 18 years who has a restricted capacity to guard himself or herself against harm by another person.

Working – refers to any individual working within sport whether paid or in a voluntary capacity; for those individuals who are employed the requirements of this document need to be observed in conjunction with any employment contract in place.

Abbreviations

These are commonly used terms that have been abbreviated in this document:

CFA / TUSLA – Child and Family Agency

CGVU – Central Garda Vetting Unit

CCO – Club Children’s Officer

CDP – Club Designated Liaison Person

CO - Children’s Officer (referring to both Club and National)

Code of Ethics – Code of Ethics & Good Practice for Children’s Sport (Sport Ireland, 2006)

CPSU - Child Protection in Sport Unit

DLP – Designated Liaison Person (referring to both Club and National)

Garda – Garda Síochána

HSE – Health Services Executive

ISC – Sport Ireland

NCO – National Children’s Officer

NDLP – National Designated Liaison Person

PSNI – Police Service of Northern Ireland

Sport NI – Sport Northern Ireland

This document – Mountaineering Ireland’s Safeguarding Children Policies and Procedures 2014 (or updated version)

Section 2 – Safeguarding in Mountaineering Ireland

Structure of Mountaineering Ireland

Mountaineering Ireland is recognised by the Sport Ireland and Sport Northern Ireland as the National Governing Body for the sport of mountaineering in Ireland. Mountaineering Ireland is a voluntary membership organisation governed according to its stated aims and objectives by a Board of elected members. Membership of Mountaineering Ireland is available to individuals, member clubs and associated organisations. Mountaineering Ireland also has a staff team who are responsible for day to day management.

Mountaineering Ireland and affiliated clubs with youth members must each appoint a representative with the responsibility to safeguard the welfare of young participants, ensuring Mountaineering Ireland and clubs operate in an environment that welcomes and encourages children in the sport – this role is carried out by the Children’s Officer. Mountaineering Ireland and affiliated clubs also appoint a person to liaise and report directly to the Statutory Authorities where there is a concern or allegation of abuse involving a child – this role is carried out by the Designated Liaison Person.

Every club acknowledges this document and associated policies within their constitutions and handbooks as a requirement for protecting the welfare of children in Mountaineering Ireland.

The Club Children’s Officer must be recorded on Mountaineering Ireland’s member management system on the Club Details page.

Annual Self-declaration

An annual self-declaration must be completed for all adults in existing positions (as outlined in Table 1 on page 16). If the adult is working or volunteering in a club it is the club’s responsibility to ensure the annual requirement is met; registration is an ideal time to ensure this is done. Where an adult is working for Mountaineering Ireland it is the responsibility of the NCO. The responsibility for the club and Mountaineering Ireland extends to ensuring all other aspects of safeguarding requirements e.g. vetting, child protection training and relevant experience or award(s) are met.

Safeguarding Ethos

Sport provides children an opportunity to be part of a team and to learn and develop skills and can have a powerful and positive influence on their development. Any sporting environment should be regarded by children as a safe space. Adults involved with children in sport must have a basic understanding of their physical, emotional and personal needs to make sure their chosen sport provides the right balance to meet these needs.

Integrity in relationships

An adult working in sport is often in a position of trust and influence, and their actions should be guided by what is best for the child and carried out in the context of respectful and open relationships. All children should be treated with integrity and respect. It is unacceptable to use a position of trust to exploit or undermine children.

Quality atmosphere and ethos

Sport for children should be fun, and be conducted in a safe, challenging and encouraging atmosphere. Adults should ensure a child-centred ethos that recognises standards of behaviour are as important as standards of performance.

Participation and 'Fair Play'

All sport for children should be conducted in an atmosphere of fair play. Ireland has contributed and 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 with 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 commercialisation and corruption.”

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

The importance of participation, best effort and enjoyment should be stressed. Competition should emphasise the need for being open and fair. Any behaviour by adults or children which encourages or tolerates cheating must be discouraged; such behaviour is viewed as a breach of the code of conduct.

Equality

All children should be treated in an equitable and fair manner regardless of age, ability, sex, religion, economic, social or 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.

Participation and competition

A balanced approach to participation and competition can make a significant contribution to the development of a child, while at the same time providing fun, enjoyment and satisfaction. Children should not be subjected to excessive pressure to perform in either training or competitions.

Participation in competition and specialisation in any sport should be in response to a child's age, ability and development, where performance is not the central ethos. Adults should aim to put the welfare of the child first and performance standards second, finding the balance between the child's desire to excel and the right to participate irrespective of ability.

Section 3 – Understanding Confidentiality

The welfare of the child is paramount. No guarantees of secrecy or confidentiality can be given to information regarding a child as the child's welfare and safety supersedes all other considerations. Information should only be passed to individuals who are in appropriate positions to safeguard a child's welfare and safety. Information concerning children should be treated in a respectful, professional and purposeful manner.

Where there are concerns of abuse about a child or where a complaint or allegation has been made, the rights of both the child and the person involved should be protected with consideration given to the following points:

- Sensitive information shall be disclosed to certain persons who need to know in order to provide a safe and secure environment for the child. It is necessary to pass on information about poor practice and/or an allegation of abuse to the appropriate persons in order to provide protection for a child. Such a person may include a children's officer, designated liaison person, complaints committee, and/or statutory authorities.
- Any person who does not have a role in providing a safe environment should not need to be involved.
- The parent/guardian must be informed where there is a concern for their child unless to do so would endanger that child. In cases of an allegation or disclosure of abuse this information is best passed on to a parent/guardian by the statutory authorities. Advice should be taken from the statutory authorities if there is any doubt.

Adults involved with children in sport may be aware of or be told personal details and/or information relating to a child. It is important for an adult to recognise the difference between sharing information with the aim to safeguard the welfare of a child and sharing information which breaches confidentiality.

Confidentiality means:

- Making sure information that helps protect or safeguard the welfare of a child is passed on to the appropriate specified individuals who need to know i.e. CO, DLP or statutory authorities.
- Do not share sensitive information with other people who have no involvement in safeguarding the welfare of a child i.e. other parents, spectators, general committee members; this should be considered a disciplinary offence.

Further advice can be sought from the National Children's Officer and/or the National Designated Liaison Person.

Section 4 – Safeguarding Requirements

Safeguarding Requirements

This section sets out the requirements for each area within Mountaineering Ireland.

Board of Mountaineering Ireland

The Board of Mountaineering Ireland and the CEO shall appoint a National Designated Liaison Person (normally the CEO) and a National Children’s Officer to safeguard the well-being and interests of children within Mountaineering Ireland. Please visit the below link to view Mountaineering Ireland’s Child Safety Statement at: <https://www.mountaineering.ie/membersandclubs/GardaVettinginClubs/default.aspx>

The National Designated Liaison Person and the National Children’s Officer will work together to represent the best interests of children in Mountaineering Ireland. Advice should be sought from the National Children’s Officer where children are impacted by national policy and for guidance on implementation and monitoring of safeguarding policy.

Mountaineering Ireland Board members are required to maintain an appropriate safeguarding policy and abide by the appropriate code of conduct.

Mountaineering Ireland Clubs

Each club registered with Mountaineering Ireland with members under the age of 18 shall appoint a Club Children’s Officer, and a Club Designated Liaison Person. The description and duties for these roles are described in *Section 5 – People involved in Mountaineering Ireland*. All clubs are also required to have a safety statement and risk assessment adopted. Please visit the below link to view Mountaineering Ireland’s Child Safety Statement at:

<https://www.mountaineering.ie/membersandclubs/GardaVettinginClubs/default.aspx>

Please visit the link below to view the Sport Ireland template for Sports Clubs on having their own Risk Assessment at: <https://www.sportireland.ie/ethics>

Each club will acknowledge and adopt this document within their constitution. All club personnel working with children in the club will sign the appropriate code of conduct for their position within the club, undertake the basic child protection training as recommended and be successfully vetted by Mountaineering Ireland.

Members of Mountaineering Ireland (outside the above categories)

A member of Mountaineering Ireland who may not be involved with the board, a sub-committee or as a member of a club is still required to fulfil certain requirements where his/her role involves working with children.

Any person working in this capacity is required to sign a code of conduct for their position as a leader/coach, undertake the basic child protection training as recommended and be successfully vetted by Mountaineering Ireland.

Awareness of safeguarding requirements (see Table 1 for individual requirements)

All adults should have an awareness of the safeguarding risks and requirements to protect children participating in sporting activities. Mountaineering Ireland is committed to raising such awareness

through communication, education and training, and by monitoring the implementation of this document.

Communication

It is important that each club communicates to members and potential members the safeguarding requirements for children. This document should be available to all Mountaineering Ireland members, either as a printed copy or via the Mountaineering Ireland website. Clubs should provide a link to this document on their websites.

Children must know how to access help and information concerning their welfare and this is the responsibility of the Club Children's Officer of each club. The club website and, where applicable, noticeboard should also display the names and contact details of the Club Children's Officer and the Club Designated Liaison Person in a way that is appropriate and accessible for children. Clubs are encouraged to include photographs of people in these roles.

Education and Training

Adults working with children should be suitably competent either by way of the appropriate award(s) or by appropriate experience. Instructors and coaches should hold the appropriate award.

All adults working with children are also required to undertake a suitable child protection course. The specified workshop, mandatory for some roles in Mountaineering Ireland, raises awareness of sport policy to protect and safeguard children who are involved in our sport. The following child protection training/awareness workshops are accepted by Mountaineering Ireland:

Basic awareness workshops

Safeguarding 1 - Children Awareness & Protection Basic Awareness Course (Code of Ethics) – Sport Ireland

Safeguarding Children and Young People in Sport – Sport NI

Advanced workshops

Safeguarding 2 - Club Children's Officer Workshop (CCO) – Sport Ireland

Designated Liaison Person (DLP) Workshop – Sport Ireland

Designated Safeguarding Children Officer course – Sport NI

Safeguarding 3 – Designated Liaison Person (DLP) Workshop

Safeguarding Refresher Online Course

Safeguarding 1 Refresher – Sport Ireland – online:

<https://apps.ineqe.com/apps/sportireland/coaches/introduction.php>

Sport NI safeguarding e-learning refresher module available under Online Courses at:

<http://www.sportni.net/resources/>

The Sport Ireland training/awareness workshops are available locally through the Local Sports Partnership network and the Sport NI training is available through a number of approved. Mountaineering Ireland can support clubs with training arrangements, can have staff trained to deliver Safeguarding Level 1. It is important for adults with responsibility for children to have a basic understanding of how to ensure the safety and well-being of all participants in sport. Other courses offered outside sport may be accepted only on application to the National Children's Officer.

Monitoring

Mountaineering Ireland will monitor the implementation of this document through the registration process and audit checks to ensure the requirements are being met within clubs. For example: clubs will be required to appoint the required roles for safeguarding and these should be recorded by clubs on the

Mountaineering Ireland membership management system. Any specific requirement for each role, i.e. vetting, child protection training must be checked by the club on appointment. Clubs are required to ensure their club documentation acknowledges this document.

Identifying responsibilities for safeguarding children

It is the responsibility of all adults, including parents and guardians, to ensure that these safeguarding requirements are in place and to respond appropriately to issues of poor practice, breaches of the codes of conduct and concerns or allegations of abuse. Where any of these safeguarding requirements are not being met they should be reported to the National Designated Liaison Person and/or the National Children's Officer as they may be breaches of the codes of conduct requiring disciplinary action.

Advice and guidance on all the requirements for Mountaineering Ireland clubs and members can be sought from the National Children's Officer, safeguarding@mountaineering.ie.

Table 1: Mandatory requirement for Mountaineering Ireland roles

Role	Requirements	Training	Vetting	Code of Conduct
National Children’s Officer	One	Basic and Advanced child protection courses	Successful vetting as policy	Adult/ Leader/ Volunteer code of conduct
National Designated Liaison Person	One (usually CEO)	Basic and Advanced child protection courses	Successful vetting as policy	Adult/ Leader/ Volunteer code of conduct
Club Children’s Officer	One per club (where the club has U18 members)	Basic and Advanced child protection course	Successful vetting as policy	Adult/ Leader/ Volunteer code of conduct
Club Designated Liaison Person (can be the same person as Club Children’s Officer)	One per club (where the club has U18 members)	Basic child protection and Advanced course	Successful vetting as policy	Adult/ Leader/ Volunteer code of conduct
Mountaineering Ireland Board	Mountaineering Ireland policy, awareness and education in	Where involved in coaching children vetting as policy	Where involved in coaching children vetting as policy	Committee code of conduct
Club Committee (where club has U18 members)	Mountaineering Ireland policy adopted within the club. All clubs must have a child safeguarding statement and risk assessment adopted	Where involved in coaching children vetting as policy	Where involved in coaching children vetting as policy	Committee code of conduct
Club Instructor/ Coach	All in club (where working with U18 members)	Basic child protection course Experience / Award(s)	Successful vetting as policy	Instructor code of conduct
Other adults supporting the development of children	Where working with U18 members	Basic child protection course	Successful vetting as policy	Adult/ Leader/ Volunteer code of conduct
Course Providers / Freelance Instructors	Individual contract where working with children	Basic child protection course Experience / Award(s)	Successful vetting as policy	Instructor code of conduct

Please note, all members in the roles above are required to complete an Annual Declaration. This should be facilitated by clubs when members are renewing and online by Mountaineering Ireland for individual members as part of the renewal process.

Section 5 – Roles and Responsibilities

Introduction

People working in a sporting environment can have wide and varied roles and responsibilities. Some adults have regular contact with children; other roles are responsible for decisions that affect children and some adults help on an ad-hoc basis whenever it is needed. The role of any adult involved can depend on the type and nature of the activity. Both on the mountain or at the climbing wall, it is normal for adults and children to participate closely together; clubs need to recognise how to ensure the well-being and safety of children in an environment that accommodates all ages.

Anyone who is appointed to a position in a club must understand the role and their responsibility within that role and abide by the safeguarding measures that are required by Mountaineering Ireland. The responsibility for meeting the requirements lie with the body making the appointment, e.g. for a club trip, the club committee is responsible for ensuring all the helpers and volunteers for the trip meet the safeguarding requirements.

Safeguarding Roles in Mountaineering Ireland

The detailed roles described here are specific to safeguarding children within Mountaineering Ireland:

- National Children's Officer
- National Designated Liaison Person
- Club Children's Officer
- Club Designated Liaison Person
- Adult volunteers – all levels

Other roles with different core responsibilities are briefly described from a safeguarding relevance, e.g. Instructor, committee member; however such roles are fully described in the appropriate documentation e.g. the club constitution.

The mandatory safeguarding requirements for each role are detailed in [Table 1: Mandatory requirements for Mountaineering Ireland roles](#).

National Designated Liaison Person

The National Designated Liaison Person is normally the CEO of Mountaineering Ireland. The NDLP is responsible for liaising with the statutory authorities regarding any areas of concern that arise at a national level. In the absence of the CEO (during leave periods or any other extended periods of absence) a member of staff (normally the Membership Development Officer) will act as a replacement NDLP for the duration.

Skills and Attributes

The NDLP must

- Understand and promote the ethos of being child centred throughout Mountaineering Ireland
- Be able to communicate with statutory authorities
- Attend the basic and advanced recommended child protection courses; be successfully vetted and sign the appropriate code of conduct

Responsibilities of the National Designated Liaison Person

- Be familiar with and carry out the reporting procedure as contained in this document

- Be aware of the local and national contacts and services available in relation to child protection
- Consult informally with the local duty social work department to clarify areas of concerns regarding children
- Inform/report concerns about individual children to the local duty social worker in the Child and Family agency or Garda/ PSNI (in emergency) or the relevant Health and Social Care Trust in Northern Ireland and follow up communications with the authorities and/or a child's parent/guardian.
- Implement the procedure where a member of Mountaineering Ireland is required to step aside through concerns regarding the welfare or safety of a child.
- Maintain records of action taken by Mountaineering Ireland regarding any concern or allegation of abuse made to the statutory authorities
- Liaise with the National Children's Officer on matters of concern regarding child welfare and safety at national level
- Support the NCO with the implementation of procedures within Mountaineering Ireland to deal with persistent poor practice
- Where required act as an Authorised Signatory for the purposes of vetting members through the Central Garda Vetting Unit and Access NI.

National Children's Officer

The National Children's Officer shall normally be a volunteer with the appropriate skills set to support the CEO and the Board of Mountaineering Ireland develop, implement, review and renew Mountaineering Ireland's Safeguarding Policy. The National Children's Officer will ensure the promotion of values, attitudes and structures for our child members to enjoy participation in Mountaineering Ireland.

Skills and Attributes

The NCO should

- Understand and promote the ethos of being child centred throughout Mountaineering Ireland.
- Be able to communicate with children and to represent their views in an honest and open manner
- Attend the basic and advanced recommended child protection courses; be successfully vetted and sign the appropriate code of conduct

Responsibilities of the National Children's Officer

- Act at all times with the welfare and protection of children as paramount
- Ensure children have a voice and their views are represented in Mountaineering Ireland.
- Support Club Children's Officers to represent children's views at committee level.
- Review and revise, where required, the Mountaineering Ireland policies and procedures for safeguarding children
- Act as an Authorised Signatory for the purposes of vetting members through the Central Garda Vetting Unit and Access NI.
- Work with the National Designated Liaison Person, advise and guide the Mountaineering Ireland's CEO and Board on changes to legislation relevant to children where this has an impact on the structure and provision of safeguarding children policies and procedures in Mountaineering Ireland.
- Advise on any complaints committees to ensure a safe environment and fair treatment for any child involved in a complaints or disciplinary process.
- Guide and advise sub-committees on the impact of development of training programmes on the participation of children
- Provide guidance and advice for squads with members under 18 years of age at national level
- Be a point of contact for child welfare and protection enquiries generally for Mountaineering Ireland and members, and especially for Club Children's Officers. Provide updated information on relevant safeguarding information and policies for Mountaineering Ireland

members.

- Understand and advise on confidentiality for all sensitive information concerning children and their families

Club Designated Liaison Person (CDLP)

If a club has members under 18 years¹ of age, the club must appoint a Club Designated Liaison Person. The Club Designated Liaison Person must be an appointed committee member and can be the same person who is the Club Children's Officer. The CDLP may hold another committee role and ideally is one of the officers of the club. The CDLP is an essential role responsible for liaising with statutory authorities in the case of suspected or disclosed abuse. The role of the CDP also provides support to the CCO and helps link the CCO with the committee. The contact details for the CDP must be available with those of the CCO for all members.

Skills and Attributes

The CDLP should

- Understand the safeguarding requirements contained in this document for the protection of children.
- Must be able to communicate effectively with the National Children's Officer, National Designated Liaison Person and, if required, with statutory authorities.
- Must be able to support the Club Children's Officer.

Responsibilities in the club

The CDP should

- Ensure that the Club has adopted Mountaineering Ireland's Safeguarding Policy
- Know the local contact details for duty social workers / Guards / Police Service (statutory authorities)
- Understand statutory reporting procedures and be familiar with the reporting form
- Consult informally with National Children's Officer to understand how to present and act on any information of concern
- Communicate with parents and/or report concerns to the statutory authorities where a child is at risk from harm
- Acts as a support to the CCO in ensuring best practice operates in the club and those working/volunteering in the club
- Report persistent poor practice to National Designated Liaison Person and/or the National Children's Officer
- Ensure the club maintains confidentiality when dealing with sensitive information concerning children and their families, advise on record keeping and data protection matters involving children.
- Work confidentially with all sensitive information concerning children and their families.

Club Children's Officer (CCO)

The Club Children's Officer creates a child centred ethos within a club ensuring children have a voice in the running of their club. The CCO name and contact details must be easily and clearly available for all members.

If a club has members under 18 years¹ of age, the club must appoint a Club Children's Officer. At least one Club Children's Officer is required in each club that has junior membership, two are recommended for clubs with large junior memberships where one CCO may not be able to engage with all the children. Where the junior members are mixed genders it is recommended that a CCO of each gender is appointed.

Skills and Attributes

The Club Children's Officer should

- Understand the safeguarding requirements contained in this document for the protection of

children.

- Be able to relate to and convey the views of children, being a good listener and approachable – the CCO must be comfortable being the link between children and adults
- Understand and be dedicated to the creation of a child centred environment

Responsibilities in the club

The Club Children's Officer should

- Act at all times in the interests of children – this includes ensuring the club operates within all Mountaineering Ireland safeguarding policies and procedures e.g. attendance records, supervision, parent involvement, training, vetting, record keeping, annual sign up to codes, etc.
- Attend club committee meetings to guide the committee in putting safeguarding policies in place.
- Make sure the safeguarding requirements for the committee and all adults working in the club on behalf of or selected by the committee are met
- Ensure children have a voice in the running of the club by providing ways for children to express their views and to be represented at all levels within the club. The CCO should meet with the children to get their feedback and comments on the practices in the club
- Act on any welfare matters affecting the well-being of children in the club, e.g. behaviour difficulties, bullying, or lack of supervision.
- Ensure children know how to raise their concerns or worries. The CCO should be available for children to talk to if needed.
- Ensure parents, leaders and other club volunteers understand to pass on any concerns they may have about a child.
- Develop relationship with other roles to represent and prioritise children's welfare e.g. Designated Liaison Person, committee, instructors and other roles involved with children in the club.
- Guide and be an advocate for children, including helping them seek advice they may need, e.g. from instructors, coaches etc.
- Monitor changes in membership where children have either been absent for a period of time or have left the club completely; the CCO should examine the reasons for this and follow up with the committee to address any problems highlighted
- Ensure the environment is safe and the process is fair for any child involved in a complaints and disciplinary procedure regardless of the complaint/disciplinary action
- Act on any concerns of risk or danger to a child, liaising with the Designated Liaison Person or statutory authorities if required
- Work confidentially with all sensitive information concerning children and their families

Designated Liaison Persons and Children's Officers can seek advice from the National Children's Officer or the National Designated Liaison Person. It is not the remit of either role to investigate or validate child abuse concerns originating from within or outside the club and they have no counselling or therapeutic role. These functions are filled by the statutory authorities, as outlined in *Children First* and *Our Duty to Care*.

Other adults supporting the development of children

Adults helping or working with children either by request or through volunteering are very valuable to the running of Mountaineering Ireland clubs – without these people clubs would find it difficult to provide the activities for children. However, every adult helping in a club or at national level that has responsibility for, or is in a supervisory role with children also has a responsibility to create a safe and fun environment for children.

Skills and Attributes

- Understand the safeguarding requirements contained in this document for the protection of

children.

- Be dedicated to the creation of a child centred environment within the area of their work

Role description

- Understand the work that is required and know who to report to if any concern or issue arises
- Work with the club/Mountaineering Ireland to implement a safe and fun environment for children
- Feedback to the Children's Officer any views or issues raised by children
- Report concerns of poor practice to the Children's Officer
- Understand the need for confidentiality with any sensitive information concerning children and their families that may come to their attention.

Codes of Conduct and Poor Practice

The codes of conduct identify a standard of behaviour to be applied to individuals working with children in sport that is based on recognised best practice for safeguarding children. Everybody has a duty to behave and work in a safe and responsible manner, including children; to ensure that the best possible environment is provided and children have the opportunity to grow and develop; and to allow their sport to become an integral part of their lives into the future.

Understanding poor practice is important in identifying the extent of any risk to children and the vulnerability of certain environments. This can provide a basis for training and up-skilling programmes to create an environment safe for children.

Codes of conduct help to create an environment where children are motivated and encouraged based on their needs and ability. Children should be inspired to establish and achieve their goals, with adults as good role models.

Poor Practice

Breaches of the code of conduct may be considered issues of poor practice, where the behaviour of leaders and members towards children in Mountaineering Ireland is not acceptable. Poor practice is dealt with through Mountaineering Ireland's complaints process and procedures, either informally or formally and where a child is involved the Children's Officer must be involved to help resolve the behaviour. If the poor practice behaviour is severe, on-going or becomes a concern of abuse the procedures in *Section 9 - Protection for reporting concerns to the statutory authorities for investigation* should be followed.

Indicators of poor practice would include the following:

- Bullying behaviour e.g. leader is repeatedly criticising a child
- Unfair treatment e.g. an instructor regularly leaving a member out of a group/squad/meet although the child is meeting the criteria/reaching the standard required
- No recognition for particular skills / needs e.g. not providing adequate instruction according to a child's ability
- Lack of supervision e.g. an instructor regularly not attending sessions
- Lack of encouragement for children with weaker skills
- Not listening to children's views and opinions
- Deliberate exclusion e.g. a coach is deliberately not allowing a child to have a go

It would also be considered poor practice not to address these issues; advice can be sought from the National Children's Officer or the Club Children's Officer as often poor practice behaviour is due to a lack of understanding of a child centred environment. It is important to help and support adults working with children to ensure they receive the training and up-skilling needed to create a child centred environment. In extreme cases the Designated Liaison Person may consider taking an informal consultation with the local Duty Social Worker to help with the determination of the situation (see Section 9 – Protection).

The Codes

The codes of conduct included in this document cover the number of different roles in Mountaineering Ireland, and anyone working in a number of different roles must sign up to all codes of conduct relevant to their various positions. Each code of conduct, whilst promoting the safe, fun and spirit of fair play ethos in sport, does recognise the different responsibilities each role brings. Adults should strive to create a positive environment for the children in their care. They have an overall responsibility to ensure that sport is a positive and healthy experience for children.

The relevant code of conduct must be signed annually by everyone involved in Mountaineering Ireland, whether nationally or at a club level. The completed declarations should be held by the secretary of the committee/club. It is presumed that by either submitting membership to Mountaineering Ireland or a club that every member has signed the appropriate code of conduct.

Code for Children

This code is predominantly for children under 18, however, the same minimum level of behaviour is expected of adults.

Code for Parents/Guardians

Parents/guardians are recognised as those with the primary responsibility for the care and welfare of their own children, and as representatives of their child/children are subject to and should be aware of the policies and procedures of their club and Mountaineering Ireland. This code is for parents/guardians regardless of their membership status, although they are encouraged to become members of their club. Mountaineering Ireland supports parents/guardians to encourage their children to participate in sport for fun and enjoyment ensuring their child's experience of sport is a positive one.

Code for Other adults supporting the development of children

This code of conduct is for all other adults, members, helpers and volunteers working with children in a voluntary or employed capacity within Mountaineering Ireland, including but not limited to club officials, helpers, Children's Officers, Designated Liaison Persons, team managers.

Code for Committees

This code of conduct is for a group tasked with the specific responsibility for the management of clubs in Mountaineering Ireland; there may be other groups given charge of a particular area i.e. a sub-committee or working group to which this code of conduct should apply. Where a sub-committee is working directly on matters pertaining to children advice can be sought from the National Children's Officer.

Code for Course Providers/Freelance Instructors

This code of conduct applies to all people with the role of instructor or coach who are given the responsibility for training, instructing or coaching children; where the instructor or coach is in a position of trust and authority over children.

Section 6 – Policies

Introduction

Mountaineering Ireland has a number of policies setting out best practices for our sport. These policies guide members and club to implement the best practices in relation to keeping children safe. Some policies are published as separate documents and may be subject to review and update at different times. Each of these are summarised below with reference given to the full documentation and where it can be located. The summaries are a brief outline and should not be relied on in the event of putting any of these policies in place. It is not the intention here to replace or alter anything that might be contained currently or in the future within any of the detailed policy documents. The full policy and procedure should always be referenced and used.

Anti-Bullying Policy

This Anti-Bullying policy sets out the definition and types of behaviour seen in incidences of bullying. Bullying behaviour can occur between anyone, child to child, adult to child, child to adult and adult to adult. This document is mainly concerned with bullying behaviour that involves children, either between child and child or between adult and child. Adult to adult bullying behaviour may be regarded as poor practice and a breach of the code of conduct but will be dealt with by clubs through a complaints process in the first instance.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying can be defined as repeated use of power, by one or more persons, intentionally to harm, hurt or adversely affect the rights or needs of another or others.

Bullying Behaviour

Bullying behaviour is intentionally aggravating and intimidating behaviour and can occur in any social environments where groups of people interact. It includes behaviour such as exclusion, gossiping, teasing, taunting, threatening, and hitting and extortion by one or more persons against a victim or target. The target of the bullying behaviour may be an individual or a group of people.

Bullying can occur and will continue in an environment where codes of conduct are not implemented and the target of the bullying behaviour does not feel able to tell someone who can help or they are in a situation where it is not safe to do so. Each case of bullying must be dealt with as soon as the symptoms are apparent or bullying is suspected.

Preventing Bullying Behaviour

Bullying behaviour can be prevented by making sure everyone is aware of their code of conduct and breaches of behaviour are dealt with as soon as possible. It is also important to ensure children know who they can talk to, and be taken seriously where they have any concerns. The Children's Officer should be aware of any times that might be cause for difficulty between children and others; the Children's Officer can intervene and help the group deal with such situations.

Causes for dropping out of sport

There are various reasons why people leave sport, e.g. financial constraints, a move away from the area, or they dislike the sport. Some of the reasons for drop-out, especially in children, may be a cause for concern and these must be monitored. Examples include bullying, school work, not feeling included in activities or competitions, not achieving their own goals within the sport, being shouted at, or that their friends left.

A healthy environment and attitude to sport can be fostered in children by ensuring their views are

listened and heard, that there is an emphasis on the development of their skills rather than winning and effort is rewarded whilst being allowed to participate in age appropriate activities.

Anti-Doping and Substance Misuse

Mountaineering Ireland has fully adopted the SI Anti-Doping policy and guidance. Mountaineering Ireland believes and supports the policy that any form of substance misuse is contrary to the spirit of sport. Children should be educated regarding the effects of long and short term effects of substances taken to enhance performance and the charges that may occur with the use of illegal or banned substances.

General considerations

The use of drugs, illegal substances and performance enhancing substances are forbidden.

Smoking in Ireland is banned fully in the general workplace, enclosed public places, restaurants, education facilities and sports facilities. An adult should never encourage or condone the smoking of tobacco by a minor. An adult must never purchase tobacco for a minor.

Where adults are consuming alcohol they should do so in a responsible manner. When working with children adults must avoid using alcohol when they are in a position of responsibility, e.g. instructing, supervising or driving. An adult should never encourage or condone the consumption of alcohol by a minor. An adult must never purchase alcohol for a minor.

Sponsorship from alcohol and/or tobacco companies should be avoided.

Further information can be found in the Irish Sport Council's Anti-Doping Programme available at www.sportireland.ie

The full Anti-Doping Policy is available from the Mountaineering Ireland website

Complaints Procedures

Mountaineering Ireland has a Complaints Process and Procedures.

General

Any complaint or issue concerning suspected child abuse is not covered by the complaints process and procedures and must be referred to the relevant authorities in accordance with the reporting procedure detailed in this document – see Section 9 – Protection.

The Complaints Process and Procedures should be regarded as part of the safeguarding requirements within this document recognising the need for all children to be treated fairly and consistently.

The full Complaints Process and Procedures is available from the Mountaineering Ireland website.

Inclusion Policy

Mountaineering Ireland operate an inclusion policy that means that no child should be discriminated because of their age, ability, sex, religion, economic, social or ethnic background or political persuasion. The safeguarding and welfare procedures for all children are the same regardless of any particular vulnerability. Consideration should be given to children who may have increased needs relating to a physical, sensory, cognitive and/or communication impairment, and attention given to promoting and maintaining the highest standards of care and training.

Vulnerability – Children

There are reasons that contribute to some children being more vulnerable to abuse than others, e.g. a

lack of language skills or cultural differences. Children with a disability may be more vulnerable to abuse. They may also have challenges communicating their concerns to others.

Vulnerability – Adults

In Ireland we consider an adult a Vulnerable Person if the adult has a restricted capacity to guard himself/herself against harm or exploitation or to report such harm or exploitation. This may arise as a result of emotional physical or intellectual impairment and risk of abuse may be influenced by both context and individual circumstances. Some adults may be more vulnerable than others, for example an adult with a disability or learning difficulties may have a different understanding of danger, risk or even instructions being given. Adults with previous negative experiences will also be vulnerable. Adults in a leader role should ensure that they understand how to keep such vulnerable adults safe and free from harm. Teaching and training can be provided in accordance with the recommendations given in the Instructor training programmes.

Inclusion in Mountaineering Ireland activities for vulnerable children and adults is guided by education and recommendations within Leader and Coach training – see the Mountaineering Ireland website for details.

Recruitment Policy

Most opportunities for children to participate in sport require the time and commitment of volunteers; such volunteers are often motivated by a desire to give something back to a sport. In order to ensure the experience is positive and safe for children, volunteers wishing to take on a role and responsibility for children should undergo a clear and consistent recruitment procedure. This is required for all positions within Mountaineering Ireland and registered clubs as good practice.

This policy sets out the recruitment of existing persons and the recruitment of new volunteers into positions responsible for children.

New Leaders/Volunteers

All adults working as volunteers or employed with access to or involved in the management of policies concerning children should be recruited and selected for their position. Such positions would include, but not limited to:

- Club Children's Officer
- Club Designated Liaison Person
- Instructor/Coach
- Club volunteers
- Committee members

Specific Safeguarding Rules

All members must comply with the mandatory sections of this document, as amended from time to time. An individual convicted of any charges relating to the abuse of a child will be immediately and permanently excluded from membership of Mountaineering Ireland in any capacity. Visit our Vetting Process for full details on:

<https://www.mountaineering.ie/membersandclubs/GardaVettinginClubs/default.aspx> .

Where the Director of Public Prosecutions seeks to charge a member for a serious crime, this is above the threshold of risk considered acceptable by Mountaineering Ireland. Such a disclosure will result in the immediate suspension of that individual from membership of Mountaineering Ireland.

Vetting Process - Summary

The Mountaineering Ireland Vetting Policy is concerned with the provision of Garda / Access NI vetting

for those in Mountaineering Ireland. The Vetting Process requires any personnel working with children to undergo a vetting check to assist in the decision making process to ensure suitability for their role or position.

General Information

The policy requires that all existing and new personnel in identified positions undergo a check. The positions requiring vetting are (also see Table 1):

- Mountaineering Ireland employees (responsible for the coaching or instruction of under 18's or managing individuals in these role)
- Instructors, coaches and other adults involved in national delivery of instruction / coaching and events, e.g. Course Providers, Squad Coaches, etc.
- Children's Officers
- Designated Liaison Persons
- All people instructing or coaching
- All club volunteers with direct responsibility for children

Garda/ Access NI vetting is an important part of a recruitment process. The responsibility for ensuring the relevant people are vetted is as follows:

- People appointed to positions in a club should only be appointed following confirmation with the club committee and though the recruitment process may be administered by the Club Children's Officer they are not the sole responsibility of this person
- Instructors, coaches and other Leadership / Coaching award roles are the responsibility of Mountaineering Ireland prior to awarding the candidate
- The vetting process for people appointed to positions at national level are the responsibility of the National Children's Officer, but the Mountaineering Ireland board must be informed of any possible new appointments to ratify them.

The full Vetting Policy is available on the Mountaineering Ireland website

Safety and Risk Assessment Policies

Sport should provide a safe, positive nurturing environment for children to develop and enhance physical and social skills. A child centred ethos will assist in identifying and eliminating practices that impact negatively on safe and enjoyable participation for children. By being aware of safety requirements and identifying risks to children their sporting environment will provide a better experience.

Mountaineering Ireland and clubs should have a safety statement and a risk assessment that includes specific and potential risks and the procedures put in place for safeguarding against such risks.

General Safety considerations

General safety considerations are:

- All instructors and leaders must have the appropriate award(s) / experience for the activity
- Access to emergency numbers for each child must be readily available
- Any medical condition that might affect the participation of a child must be recorded (it is the responsibility of parent/guardian to notify club/organiser)
- Adequate supervision must be provided for all activities
- Activities should be suitable for age and stage of development of participants
- Any necessary protective gear is used
- A First Aid kit, kept well stocked, is close at hand with access to a qualified first-aider
- All events should be run safely including an awareness of the codes of conduct
- Participants should know the any rules and safety requirements
- Adequate insurance cover for the activity/event must be provided/covered by Mountaineering

Ireland

- Parents/guardians must make themselves aware of start and finish times and should always try to make themselves part of, volunteer for and become a member of the club / Mountaineering Ireland
- Sensitive information i.e. emergency number and medical information should be kept confidential and available to those that need it.

General Risk considerations

An awareness of some of the risk's children are exposed to within sports is required to ensure protection against harm. Such risk areas for children:

- Lack of supervision and understanding of the safe use of equipment and/or facilities
- Abuse e.g. constant criticism, sarcasm, rejection, threatening behaviour or pressure to perform or achieve; any non-accidental injury or other form of significant harm
- Bullying e.g. lack of awareness, understanding and interaction from adults resulting in poor intervention and resolution
- Poor practice. Allowing poor practices to continue (e.g. such as bullying) may be a potential risk to children's well-being
- Children's own vulnerabilities e.g. children who are vulnerable for a number of reasons: parental separation, children with a disability, social isolation or exclusion
- Level of participation may lead to psychological stress, burn out and drop outs, where the expectations of others is overwhelming
- Substance misuse e.g. lack of education on the risks of drugs, tobacco and/or alcohol

In the event of an incident

If an incident occurs the details must be recorded together with the problem or issue, any action taken and the final outcome or resolution. This should be recorded in a hard copy book and the details notified to Mountaineering Ireland. For any incident concerning a child contact should be made with their parent/guardian who should be kept informed of all details. For other individuals their nominated emergency contact person should be informed.

Section 7 – Full Procedures

Changing facilities

Mountaineering Ireland and clubs need to inform members, including children, about any changing facilities provided, whether this is in an open area, at a climbing wall, a hut, etc. The parent/guardian should discuss the various changing facilities with their child/children ensuring their child has the opportunity and is aware of who to talk to if any issues arise in unsupervised areas.

If supervision is provided in a specific changing area this 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. Club helpers should not have to enter the changing rooms unless part of the supervision rota. There may be circumstances where children need extra assistance or there is an issue, in which case supervision in pairs of the appropriate gender should be provided where this is a regular occurrence. In an emergency circumstance the safety and well-being of a child is paramount, and a common sense approach should be taken, i.e. this may mean entering a changing area when helping a child at risk.

Open changing areas

In mountain areas or at crags children may be changing outside, e.g. at a campsite. Again children and their parents must be made aware of the absence of changing facilities in order to ensure they are fully aware of the circumstances. Parent/guardian should involve themselves in their child's sport and, wherever possible, be present.

Climbing Wall Sessions

Parents/guardians should be made aware by the club that climbing walls may not have designated changing areas or changing areas may be shared with the general public, in common with most leisure facilities; it therefore may not be possible to provide specific supervision in these areas or to prevent other adults from entering the changing areas as these are public areas.

If the changing area is open to the public, parents can choose to remain with their child in the appropriate (gender dependant) changing area. Where family or communal rooms are provided parents/guardians should check their use with the facility. A club must decide on their changing room policy in a climbing wall environment and clearly communicate this to all members and parents/guardians who should ensure their children are aware of it also.

Away Trips

The involvement of children at camps, competitions and other squad or group activities helps with their motivation and supports their prolonged participation in sport. Travelling and staying together for an event or activity helps develop a team spirit that fosters an open, honest and inclusive team atmosphere.

There are a number of options for clubs to consider when staying away. The options are dependent on clear boundaries of responsibility for the trip arrangements for children involved, as follows:

- Parent responsibility – parents are responsible solely for their own children
- Club responsibility – whereby the club agrees to undertake all the arrangements
- Parent and club responsibility – a combination of club and parent responsibilities
- Use of host families – where local families are used for accommodating children

The Mountaineering Ireland procedure for Away Trips covers the requirements for groups travelling away

together where by the arrangements are made either in conjunction with or solely by the club. The protocol provides detailed procedures for all children, instructors, team managers and associated helpers to adopt and adhere to for away events including all camps and competition (for both day and overnight trips) in order to safeguard the well-being of all participants.

Camping / Bivying

On trips away / expedition camping is a frequent form of accommodation. This may vary from large tents to small tents to bivying under the open sky. Children will be advised on environmentally suitable areas to afford privacy for toileting and changing.

Mixing Junior and Senior Members

Sport is an ideal environment for fostering long term friendships regardless of age, race, community background, ability or gender. This includes ages under 18 and over 18 mixing and taking part in sport for the benefit of each other. Any supervising adult should ensure that a child is comfortable in their role and environment. It is also important that all children know to raise any issues or queries with their Children's Officer or other such trusted adult.

Accommodation

These measures are to protect both the under 18s and the adult in accommodation circumstances.

- To ensure privacy, it would be appropriate to consider accommodation needs appropriate to age, needs of the young person/child and gender.
- Under 18s should not be expected to share a room with an instructor/coach or person in authority (unless this is with their parent). In some areas, e.g. an alpine hut, accommodation is on an open plan basis.

*Please note that this measure does not apply to parents and their own children or to sharing by siblings.

Guidance can be sought from Mountaineering Ireland's National Children's Officer

Travelling

Travelling guidance deals with the everyday transport arrangements that parents and clubs may encounter and describes the basic transport regulations that should be observed for the safety of children.

Making travel arrangements

Clubs and parents must be clear about any travel arrangements; often clubs will expect parents to take this responsibility and therefore the parent should take the necessary precautions when arranging any transport for their child.

Club officials point out that clubs cannot operate without the goodwill of parents taking on roles as volunteer drivers. There is an extra responsibility on the club when asking someone to volunteer to provide transport on behalf of the club.

Adults in clubs should:

- ensure there is adequate insurance on their car and that they follow the rules of the road;
- ensure they do not carry more than the permitted number of passengers;
- avoid being alone with one passenger, put young passengers in the back seat, have central drop

- off locations and seek parental permission when transporting on a regular basis;
- inform parents with children about the transport plans, listen to what the children have to say and be sure they are happy with the transport arrangements;
- keep parents informed who will be transporting their child, why and how long the journey will take;
- alternate the drivers and which child is to be dropped off last;
- ensure the driver should have a point of contact/mobile phone;
- ensure seatbelts are worn at all times and booster seats are used when required;
- make sure there is supervision in the rear of minibuses and coaches.

Supervision requirements

Children participating in any form of mountaineering expect to have adventurous experiences but also expect to be appropriately managed. Adequate supervision is required for activities in accordance with best practice. Volunteers / coaches should not generally be working one to one with a child.

Communication and Social Media

Leaders / coaches / organisers should in the first instance communicate information about trips and activities with parents rather than directly to children.

The aim of the Communication and Social Media Policy to give guidance on conveying messages and information safely and securely to intended recipients and on the safe use of social media without exposing children to risk of harm. It also ensures that children have the means to communicate with adults without needing to seek help from others or use technology. The procedure also specifies the safe use of social media sites for children and what is considered acceptable interaction between adults and children (see below).

Communication

Good communications is an essential component of running and effective club and clubs should have a clear form of communication with parents and children, e.g. club news, regular training session updates.

While we recognise the benefits of technology as a means to send easy, cost effective mass communications we also need to recognise that some people have used such technology to exploit access to children. Within clubs there is a need to encourage responsible and secure use of communication by adults and children.

Types of Communication available

Clubs have a variety of communication options available and they should consider the most appropriate methods that cater for young and old members. Such options are:

- Noticeboards (at meeting points, climbing walls, etc)
- Email
- Phone/mobile phone including the use of text
- Internet and websites including the interactions on social media sites

Social Media

Social media is now a widely used form of communications. Mountaineering Ireland has a youth page (www.facebook.com/mountaineeringirelandyouthclimbing). The following represents current good practice advice:

- Club page - Set up a Club profile rather than leader / coach / volunteer profiles. This avoids access from members to individual's profiles. Keep sections of the club's profile on "private" – allowing only club members access to it (the club can monitor this and accept or decline requests to join. Requests to join should only be accepted from members over the age of 13. This is to ensure clubs

follow the international best practice and Facebook guidelines). The club should have fans/followers not friends and have a moderator in place.

- Individuals should lock down page to non-friends, those in authority should not have children as their friends, do not comment on individual children. The rationale for this is to ensure that children do not have direct access to your adult world, some information/discussions you may have you may not wish for them to see.
- Respond to online bullying - what is said online should be treated as if said in real time
- Stop and think first before you post. Consider the potential impact your comments may have on your reputation and that of your club. It can take years to build up a reputation but only moments to destroy it.

Photography and Media images

Where photographs of children are going to be published Mountaineering Ireland should seek written consent from the young people and parents to do so. This consent contained within Mountaineering Ireland's consent form.

Parental/guardian permission is required for children to appear in individual or group photographs and/or in video footage taken for training, competition and/or promotional purposes. Mountaineering Ireland has adopted a policy where at national events and activities it is accepted that by being a member children may be filmed or photographed. Clubs should ensure that children are aware of the policy within the club – permission should be sought at membership registration.

Mountaineering Ireland does not seek to prevent adults, parents or children from taking pictures or video within climbing settings. To do so is impractical in a world of modern instant communications; however, we would ask adults and children to respect the privacy of individual children before posting the photographs on a web site or on social media.

At national events, e.g. Youth Climbing Series finals, Mountaineering Ireland will appoint an official photographer. This person will be covered in our general volunteering policy.

Physical Contact

It is important that sport promotes appropriate physical contact between adults and children. Misleading or inaccurate information relating to what is acceptable physical contact can undermine the confidence of adults working with our children and in some instances there may be serious safety implications for children.

Physical contact should be in response to the needs of a child in accordance with the child's age and stage of development; in other words adults should not do what a child can do for themselves. Any physical contact should be in an open environment and preferably with the permission of the child.

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.

There are a number of principles that should be followed when the activity involves physical contact.

The adult should only use physical contact if their aim is:

- to develop sports skills or techniques;
- to treat an injury;
- to prevent an injury or accident from occurring;
- to meet the requirements of the sport;
- To deal with distress and success situations.

The adult should seek to explain the nature and reason for the physical contact to the child reinforcing the teaching or coaching skill. Unless the situation is an emergency, the adult should ask the child for permission.

Any form of physical punishment of children is unlawful, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour unless it is by way of physical intervention to prevent a child from:

- harming themselves;
- harming others;
- damaging property.

It is particularly important that adults understand this to ensure the safety of their youth members and to protect their own position as well as the overall reputation of the organisation in which they are involved.

Section 8 – Protection

Understanding poor practice

Breaches of the code of conduct may be considered issues of poor practice, where the behaviour of leaders towards children in Mountaineering Ireland is not acceptable. If the poor practice behaviour is severe, ongoing and reaches a level where there is a concern the behaviour is becoming abusive the procedures in this section for reporting concerns to the statutory authorities for investigation should be followed.

Definitions and recognising abuse

This section outlines the principal types of child abuse and offers guidance on how to recognise such abuse. Child abuse can be categorised into four different types: neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse, including child sexual exploitation. A child may be subjected to one or more forms of abuse at any given time and children may be abused online and through the form of social media. Children may be abused by someone other than an adult in the immediate family. This may happen where the child is in contact with a member of the extended family, a friend, an acquaintance or a person whose professional activity brings them into contact with the child. More detail on each type of abuse can be found in Children First, National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children (Department of Health and Children, 2011) or Cooperating to Safeguard Children (DHSPS 2003)

Significant Harm

Any assessment of abuse is determined by the significant harm suffered by that child. Harm can be defined as the ill-treatment or the impairment of the health or development of a child. Whether it is significant is determined by the child's health and development as compared to that which could reasonably be expected of a child of similar age.

Definition of Neglect

Neglect can be defined in terms of persistent omissions, where the child suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults, and/or medical care. Neglect generally becomes apparent in different ways over a period of time rather than at one specific point. For example:

- Wears soiled clothing or clothing that is significantly too small or large, or is often in need of repair
- Seems inadequately dressed for the weather
- Always seems to be hungry, hoards, steals or begs for food, comes to activity / club with little or no food
- Demonstrates poor hygiene, smells of urine or faeces, has dirty or decaying teeth
- Seems emaciated or has a distended stomach (indicative of malnutrition), often appears listless and tired, with little energy

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.

Definition of emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is normally to be found in a persistently negative relationship between a parent/carer and a child rather than in a specific event or pattern of events. It occurs when a child's developmental need for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met.

Emotional abuse can be identified by the following examples:

- Persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming
- Conditional parental-level of care contingent on child's behaviours or actions
- Emotional unavailability of parent or carer
- Premature imposition of responsibility on child
- Unrealistic or inappropriate expectations of the child

The threshold of significant harm is reached when abusive interactions dominate and become typical of the relationship between the child and the parent/carer.

Definition of physical abuse

Physical abuse is that which results in actual or potential deliberate physical harm from an interaction or lack of interaction, which is reasonably within the control of a parent or person in a position of responsibility, power or trust

Examples of physical abuse are:

- Severe physical punishment
- Beating, slapping, hitting or kicking
- Pushing, shaking or throwing
- Pinching, biting, choking or hair-pulling
- Terrorising with threats
- Observing violence

Physical abuse can occur in single or repeated incidents.

Definition of 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.

Examples of sexual abuse are:

- Exposure of sexual organs/any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of a child
- Intentional touching or molesting of the body of a child
- Sexual intercourse with the child
- Sexual exploitation of a child, which includes inciting, encouraging, propositioning, requiring or permitting a child to solicit for, or to engage in, any sexual act.
- Exposing a child to pornographic material.

It should be noted that the definition of child sexual abuse presented in this section is not a legal definition and is not intended to be a description of the criminal offence of sexual assault.

Grooming

Sports with robust safeguarding policies should be able to create a safe environment for children by having the barriers in place to prevent anyone joining with the intention of gaining access to children for alternative motives. It is important to recognize that whilst many Clubs have very effective safeguarding practices, an increasing number of safeguarding incidents involving grooming often occur online.

Clubs must ensure children are protected in a club environment against potential abusers by:

- Ensuring a recruitment and selection process for all adults involved with children
- Provide adequate supervision of activities involving children
- Supporting new volunteers and mentoring/supervising them in their role
- Avoid circumstances where an adult is alone with a child
- Implementing robust codes of codes for all stakeholders

Recognising Child Abuse

Indicators or signs of abuse

Child abuse can often be difficult to identify and may present in many forms. There may be developmental, physical or behavioural indicators and any signs that cause concern should be noted. It is important to remember also that there may be different reasons for such changes e.g. change in behaviour could be an indication of having difficulty with school work or upset about a family bereavement. The concern should still be noted, remembering as well that no one indicator should be seen as conclusive evidence of abuse.

Concerns should be passed to the Children's Officer, who will be supported by the National Children's Officer, who may speak with the child and/or parents. The Children's Officer, in conjunction with the Designated Liaison Person, may consider seeking an informal consultation with a social worker on the basis that the list of indicators is not exhaustive and some indicators may not be obviously apparent. Any information passed to the duty social worker will be examined in the total context of the child's situation and family circumstances.

Guidelines for recognition of abuse

The ability to recognise child abuse can depend as much on a person's willingness to accept the possibility of its existence as it does on their knowledge and information.

There are commonly three stages in the identification of child abuse:

- I. Considering the possibility;
- II. Awareness of the possible signs of abuse;
- III. Recording of information.

Stage 1: Considering the possibility

The possibility of child abuse should be considered if a child appears to have suffered a suspicious injury for which no reasonable explanation can be offered. It should also be considered if the child seems distressed without obvious reason, displays persistent or new behavioural problems or unusual or fearful responses to parents/carers or older children.

Stage 2: Awareness of the possible signs of abuse

Signs of abuse can show as physical injuries or behavioural or developmental changes. It is also important to consider that abuse is more common in relationships between children and parents/ carers or between children and other family members/other persons known to a child. A cluster or pattern of signs is likely to be more indicative of abuse. Children who are being abused may hint that they are being harmed or can make a direct disclosure. Disclosures from a child should always be believed and acted on.

Some signs are more indicative of abuse than others including:

- disclosure of abuse and neglect by a child;
- age-inappropriate or abnormal sexual play or knowledge;
- specific injuries or patterns of injuries;
- absconding from home or a care situation;
- a suicide attempt;
- underage pregnancy or sexually transmitted disease;
- signs in one or more categories at the same time, e.g. developmental delay, physical injury and behavioural signs together may indicate a pattern of abuse.

Most signs of abuse are non-specific and will be considered in the child's social and family context. It is important to always be open to alternative explanations for physical or behavioural signs of abuse. Sometimes, social workers will request a specialist assessment to clarify if particular concerns constitute

abuse. Care should be taken as to how such information is stored concerning a child and to whom it is made available.

Stage 3: Recording of information

If abuse is suspected, it is important to establish the grounds for concern by recording as much detailed information as possible. Observations should be accurately recorded and should include dates, times, names, locations, context and any other information that may be relevant (see Appendix 2 - sample reporting form).

Children with special vulnerabilities

Certain children are more vulnerable to abuse than others including children with disabilities, those who are homeless and those who, for one reason or another are separated from their parents or other family members and depend on others for their care and protection. The same categories of abuse – neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse – are applicable, but may take a slightly different form e.g. deprivation of basic rights, harsh disciplinary regimes or inappropriate use of medications or physical restraints.

Points to remember

- The severity of a sign does not necessarily equate with the severity of the abuse
- Neglect is as potentially fatal as physical abuse
- Child abuse is not restricted to any socio-economic group, gender or culture
- Challenging behaviour by a child should not render them liable to abuse
- It is sometimes difficult to distinguish between indicators of child abuse and other adversities suffered by children
- The child's welfare must be the primary consideration
- The aim of child protection services is to promote positive and enduring change in the lives of children and families
- Society has a duty of care towards children

Basis for reporting concerns

This section offers guidance to all people, both professional and voluntary, working with or in direct contact with children who may be concerned or who suspect that children are being abused or at risk of abuse. It outlines the standard reporting procedure to be used in passing information to the statutory authorities about child protection concerns.

Responsibility to report child abuse

Anyone working with children should be alert to the possibility that children may be being abused and be aware of their responsibility to report these concerns to a Duty Social Worker in the Child and Family Agency (ROI) and in Northern Ireland the Local Health and Social Care Trust Gateway Team or NSPCC 24 hr helpline 0808 800 5000. This responsibility is particularly relevant to adults in clubs who have regular contact with children, i.e. coaches, instructors, children's officers.

If any Children's Officer has any doubts they can in the first instance contact the National Children's Officer who may be able to provide them with advice and support.

Concerns about an adult whose behaviour appears to be a potential risk to children, even if the children are unidentifiable, should also be reported to the Child and Family Agency (TUSLA) or : Health and Social Services Trusts (NI).

Grounds for concern

The Child and Family Agency / Social Services 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 (disclosure)
- 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 the Child and Family Agency / Social Services, not with the people working in our clubs or in Mountaineering Ireland. However, all adults have a responsibility to protect children by reporting grounds for concern.

Responding to a disclosure

If a child discloses information of suspected abuse you should:

- Be sensitive and listen to and allow the child to tell about the problem, this should not be done in an interview style, let the child tell the details of what happened
- Stay calm and not show any extreme reaction to what the child is saying
- Take what the child is saying seriously
- Understand that the child has decided to tell something very important and has taken a risk to do so
- Be honest with the child and tell them that it is not possible to keep that information a secret but you will maintain confidentiality and explain what you mean by this
- Make no judgmental statements about the person against whom the allegation is made
- Do not question the child unless what she or he is saying is unclear; any questions should be open and non-specific such as "Can you explain to me what you mean by that"
- Give an indication of what would happen next, such as informing the Child and Family Agency/ Social Services gateway team; take care if the child has been threatened as they may be feeling vulnerable, if you are not sure do not say anything about what will happen next
- Carefully record the details
- Pass on this information to the relevant authority – this can either be directly or through the Designated Liaison Person
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you.

Retrospective disclosures by adults

An increasing number of adults are disclosing abuse that took place during their childhood. Such disclosures can often come to light when adults attend counselling. It is essential to establish whether there is any current risk to any child who may be in contact with the alleged abuser revealed in such disclosures. If there is any potential risk to any child, the disclosure must be reported to the relevant authority immediately.

Details about counselling services are available in Appendix 3.

Reporting Procedure

Any person reporting a child abuse concern should do so without delay to the relevant authority. A report can be made in person, by telephone or in writing, and contact details for the local services can be found in Appendix 1.

Recording information

Observe and note dates, times, locations and contexts in which the incident occurred or suspicion was aroused, together with any other relevant information.

Informing the Designated Liaison Person

Report the matter as soon as possible to the Designated Liaison Person with responsibility for reporting abuse. If the Designated Liaison Person has reasonable grounds for suspecting that the child has been abused or is at risk of abuse, the report should be submitted to the relevant authority, who has statutory responsibility to investigate and assess suspected or actual child abuse.

Informal Consultation

If the Designated Liaison Person, or appointed person, is unsure whether there are reasonable grounds for concern s/he can informally consult with the National Children's Officer giving an outline of the concerns (it is not necessary to give the details of those involved at this stage).

It is essential that no investigation of child abuse is carried out by anyone other than the statutory authorities.

Making the report

If a formal report is required then it should be given by the Designated Liaison Person to the statutory authorities in person or by phone and always followed up in writing, on the standard Reporting Form (see Appendix 2), with a copy being securely kept by the Designated Liaison Person.

Emergency Situations

Under no circumstances should a child be left in a situation that exposes him or her to significant harm or to risk of harm. In the event of an emergency where you believe a child is in immediate danger and you cannot get in contact with the relevant authority, you could make contact with the police (Garda/PSNI) and discuss your concerns directly. (In Northern Ireland, Social Services operate a regional out of Hours Social Work Service, see contact details in appendices.) Club officers however must bear in mind that they have no statutory or legal powers to remove a child from their legal parent or guardian. They should not investigate, as it is the responsibility of statutory authorities to conduct any assessment and subsequent decisions.

See contact details in appendix 3.

Informing the family

The Designated Liaison Person should let the social worker know if the family are aware of the report being submitted.

The social worker should advise who is best placed and when to inform the parents/carers if a report has been submitted to the Child and Family Agency/Gateway team or to An Garda Síochána/ Police Service of Northern Ireland to ensure doing so does not place the child in further danger.

The Child and Family Agency/Gateway Team cannot guarantee that someone who makes a report concerning a child will remain anonymous but all efforts to protect the person disclosing will be made. The information may be sought and given within judicial proceedings. There is some privacy under the Data Protection Acts, however if the information is sought directly within legal proceedings there is no

guarantee of remaining anonymous.

Submitting the Reporting Form

The standard Reporting Form (Appendix 2) should be used by all volunteers when reporting child welfare and protection concerns to the relevant authority. If the report is made by telephone, this form should be completed and forwarded subsequently to the appropriate authority. A copy must be kept by the Designated Liaison Person in a secure location.

Information required when completing a Reporting Form

The ability of the duty social worker to assess suspicions or allegations of child abuse will depend on the amount and quality of information conveyed to them by the people reporting concerns. As much detail on the form should be provided without needing to search out information or interview the family or others e.g. the child's school. It is sufficient to give the details available to the club at the time.

Internal Allegations of Abuse against Mountaineering Ireland members

The same reporting process must be followed. See the *Responsibility to report child abuse* section above.

The welfare of the child is paramount, and consideration must be given to all other children that the individual may have been in contact with. All children should be protected. The Designated Liaison Person should following consultation with the statutory authorities (if the matter is potential abuse) inform the adult concerned confidentially that (a) that an allegation has been made against him/her and (b) the nature of the allegation.

The member should be asked to step aside from any involvement with children pending the outcome of the investigation as a precautionary measure. This action will not prejudice any later disciplinary proceedings. All matters involving this case can only continue once the statutory authorities' investigation into the concern/ complaint is complete.

The National Designated Liaison Person should be informed in confidence by the Designated Liaison Person of the club that a member has been asked to stand aside. They should keep in touch until there is a definite outcome from the statutory authorities. The NDLP will inform the Board of Mountaineering Ireland that they are liaising with statutory authorities about a safeguarding issue while maintaining confidentiality.

The issue of confidentiality is very important. Information is on a need to know basis and must follow the requirements of GDPR, informing only those people for the necessity of protecting children. The leader should be treated with respect and fairness. It is important that the rights of both the child and the person about whom the allegation has been made are protected.

Following the outcome of the investigation by the statutory authorities Mountaineering Ireland will need to follow up with a formal procedure depending on the outcome of the investigation. If there is no further action by the statutory authorities then the matter should be considered under poor practice and be subject to a disciplinary process. If the statutory authorities proceed with action the position of the person the allegation is against will be guided by advice from statutory authorities.

All contact with the leader throughout the process must be confirmed in writing and all information should be stored in a secure place, with access restricted to authorised personnel.

External Allegations of Abuse against Mountaineering Ireland members

If an allegation of abuse/concern is made against a Mountaineering Ireland member where matter is external to Mountaineering Ireland the person will still be required to step aside from their position

within Mountaineering Ireland. The following points should be considered:

- The details must be passed on to the NCO or the NDLP. It will be the responsibility of the NCO/NDLP to liaise and verify the information with the organisation/body responsible for raising the concern.
- The adult against whom the allegation has been made will be contacted by the NDLP and asked to step down in accordance with above process and following advice from statutory authorities.
- In order to safeguard and protect children the Designated Liaison Person of any club in which the person is working should be informed that the member is stepped aside, to ensure the club do not engage the adult until the matter has been resolved.
- Vigilance should be observed in any group that the adult may have been in contact with, to ensure there has been no impact.

As with the procedure above all contact with the individual should be confirmed in writing and any information should be stored in a secure place with access restricted to authorised personnel.

Exclusion from Mountaineering Ireland membership

If a person is expelled from any position in a club or in Mountaineering Ireland due to child protection concerns, the Designated Liaison Person should make a report of the action taken and the concerns reported to the Child and Family Agency or Health and Social Care Trust (NI). All child welfare or protection concerns must be reported.

Referring someone to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

In Northern Ireland Mountaineering Ireland and our NI clubs have a legal duty to refer someone to the DBS (www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-referrals-form-and-guidance) if they have followed their organisations disciplinary procedures and:

- sacked or removed the person from their voluntary/paid role because they harmed a child or vulnerable adult;
- sacked them or removed them from working in regulated activity (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-check-eligible-positions-guidance>) because they might have harmed a child or adult otherwise; or
- where planning to sack or remove them for either of these reasons, but the person resigned first.

For further information or help referring someone to the DBS, contact the DBS referrals helpline. Telephone: 01325 953795. Any NI clubs removing someone for safeguarding concerns should seek advice from MI Designated Liaison Person.

An employer or voluntary club/organisation is breaking the law if they don't refer someone to the DBS in any of the above circumstances.

Common impediments to adults reporting child abuse

Adults remain disbelieving at times that abuse towards children actually occurs and there may be some reluctance to report:

- There is a disbelief that a parent/guardian or person given the responsibility to care for children would actually hurt or neglect them
- It can be difficult to distinguish between abusive situations and other social problems
- The family or alleged perpetrator is known to you
- There is an uncertainty or fear around the reporting process or repercussions
- Lack of confidence in the services to provide for the child

Confidentiality

The effective protection of a child often depends on sharing and exchanging relevant information. It is therefore critical that there is a clear understanding of responsibilities with regard to confidentiality and the exchange of information.

All information regarding concern or disclosure of child abuse should be shared on 'a need to know' basis in the interests of the child.

No undertakings regarding secrecy can be given. Those working with a child and family should make this clear to all parties involved, although they can be assured that all information will be handled confidentially taking full account of legal requirements.

Ethical and statutory codes concerned with confidentiality and data protection provide general guidance. The provision of information to the statutory agencies for the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality or data protection.

It must be clearly understood that information that has been received for one purpose (i.e. concerning the abuse of a child) must not be used for another without consulting the person who provided that information.

Legal protection

In Ireland the Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998 makes provision for the protection from civil liability of persons who have communicated child abuse 'reasonably and in good faith' to designated officers of the Child and Family Agency or to any member of An Garda Síochána. This protection applies to organisations as well as to individual, meaning that even if a communicated suspicion of child abuse proves unfounded, a complainant who took an action would have to prove that the person who communicated the concern had not acted reasonably and in good faith in making the report.

A person who makes a report in good faith and in the child's best interests may also be protected under common law by the defence of qualified privilege. A full list of the relevant legislation concerning child welfare and protection is provided in Appendix 4.

This law does not exist in Northern Ireland, but an individual who reports a concern in 'good faith' is not deliberately attempting to slander another person's name. In Northern Ireland there is legislation, the Criminal Law Act (NI) 1967 which places the responsibility on everybody 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 offences has been committed; and
b) that he has information which is likely to secure, or to be material assistance in securing, the apprehension, prosecution or conviction of any person for that offence.'

Freedom of information (Ireland)

There is a requirement in child welfare and protection cases to share relevant information, but records are nevertheless confidential. This information does not belong to individuals (except for independent practitioners) and is the property of the organisations that keep them. Under the Freedom of Information Act, 1997, members of the public have a right of access to records concerning them held by any public body and a right to have official information about themselves amended where it is incorrect, incomplete or misleading. Members of the public also have a right to be given reasons for decisions made concerning them. Requests to see records are processed in the first instance through the public body that holds the records. In the event of refusal of access, the decision may be appealed

and the ultimate arbiter is the Information Commissioner.

The Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003 afford similar rights to individuals to access personal data held about them by any entity whether in the public or private sector. The right to access applies to records held by An Garda Síochána. However, the right to access does not apply in a range of circumstances that may be relevant in a child welfare context. Equally, the right of access does not extend to any information that identifies a third party where that third party had an expectation of confidence. Accordingly, it would not be necessary to provide any information that would identify a person making child welfare report in response to a request under the Data Protection Acts.

A full list of the relevant legislation concerning child welfare and protection is provided in Appendix 4.

Concerns or cases not reported

In those cases where Mountaineering Ireland or a club cannot find reasonable grounds for concern and decides not to report to matter to the statutory authorities, the individual who raised the concern should be given a clear written statement of the reasons why the organisation or club is not taking such action. The person should be advised that if they remain concerned about the situation, they are free as individuals to consult with, or report to the statutory authorities. The provisions of the Protections for Persons reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998 apply once they communicate 'reasonably and in good faith' where applicable (i.e. in Ireland).

Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints can be difficult to deal with but should not be ignored. In all cases the safety and welfare of the child/children is paramount. Any such complaints relating to inappropriate behaviour should be brought to the attention of the Designated Liaison Person. The information should be checked out (not an investigation) and handled in a confidential manner.

Rumours

Rumours should not be allowed to hang in the air. Any rumours relating to inappropriate behaviour should be brought to the attention of the Designated Liaison Person who should decide whether there is substance to the rumours. They can seek advice from the National Children's Officer.

Appendix 1 – Codes of Conduct and Annual Declarations

Code for children and young people (under 18 years of age)

As a child/young person you have a great deal to gain from sport in terms of your personal development and enjoyment and you have rights which must be respected and responsibilities which you must accept. As part of these rights your sporting environment should be safe and enjoyable. Your responsibilities are to treat others with fairness and respect whilst behaving in a safe manner.

If you are not sure what this means ask your parent or your Club Children's Officer to explain.

My Code of Conduct

I should:

- Be able to have fun, be happy and enjoy taking part and being involved in my sport
- Be treated fairly by everyone, adults and other youths
- Feel safe and secure when taking part in my sport
- Be listened to and allowed to reply
- Be treated with dignity, sensitivity and respect
- Have a voice in the decisions that affect me within my club and Mountaineering Ireland
- Be comfortable that any personal details about me are treated with confidentiality

I will:

- Give my friends a second chance if they do something wrong
- Welcome new members to the club/sport
- Say no to something which makes me feel uncomfortable
- Have opportunities to participate, train and compete at a level that is suitable for my age, development and ability
- Be loyal and be part of the team supporting other team members when they do well and when things go wrong
- Treat fellow club youth members, other climbers and hillwalkers, instructors, leaders, other adults and parents with respect
- Be fair at all times, do my best to achieve my goals; be gracious if I do not achieve my goals
- Understand the policies of my sport and not cheat; I will not allow others to force me to cheat
- Listen to and respect decisions made by others

I agree to:

- Never behave in a bullying manner or hurt other team members, other people or my opponents by my actions including:
 - Not making or sending upsetting comments or images about others via social media means
 - Not taking/damaging other people's property
 - Not spreading rumours or telling lies about other children or adults
- Never use violence or bad language; not to shout or argue with others including team mates or opposing participants
- Never try or take banned substances to improve my performance

I know I can:

- Talk to my instructor or coach, children's officer, my parents or a trusted Mountaineering Ireland member if I do not understand something or if someone has caused me harm or made me feel upset

Code for Parents/Guardians

As a parent/guardian I will work in partnership with my child's/children's club to create and support a safe environment promoting good practice and measures stated in this code and safeguarding document to prevent poor practice and all forms of abuse. My child/children will be treated with fairness, respect and understanding.

I understand that as a parent/guardian I will:

- Abide by the safeguarding measures contained in this document, Mountaineering Ireland /the club constitution, policies and rules, respecting these are in place for the welfare and protection of all children in the club and Mountaineering Ireland
- Understand and ensure my child/children abide by The Code for Children
- Promote fair play and the positive aspects of sport by being a role model for my child/children and other children in maintaining the highest standards of personal conduct and respectful behaviour
- Contribute time and effort in the daily running of the club, have the opportunity to put forward comments and suggestions and be available for specified duties if and when required; clubs need the help of volunteers to operate successfully to ensure the environment is safe and enjoyable for my child/children
- Be aware of the roles of others in the club and respect their position, including those working in Mountaineering Ireland, the club committee and understand decisions made are in the best interests of all children in Mountaineering Ireland / the club
- Understand and respect the process for dealing with complaints and disciplinary measures, ensuring the confidentiality of such process is also respected;
- Be responsible for dropping off and picking up my child/children from training and/or competitions on time. Children should not be left waiting unsupervised at any time

In respect to my child/children I will:

- Ensure appropriate leaders/instructors are informed regarding any absenteeism, medical conditions or other relevant matters
- Ensure the focus is on achieving their goals and ambitions rather than the main objective of success being winning
- Request an appropriate time for discussing any matter with their instructor or the leader and not to distract from any instruction or supervision of children
- Provide an emergency contact number/information and any relevant medical information; I will be reasonably available in case of an emergency

Code for Adults/Leaders/Volunteers

I understand that as an adult working with children I will:

- Abide by the safeguarding measures contained in this document, the club rules and constitution, respecting these are in place for the welfare and protection of all children in the club and Mountaineering Ireland
- Promote fair play and the positive aspects of sport by being a role model for children in maintaining the highest standards of personal conduct and respectful behaviour
- Avoid the use of alcohol at all times while responsible for children e.g. events, on trips; and acknowledging that the use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco is incompatible with a healthy approach to sporting activity and must be discouraged
- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every child and treat everyone equally, regardless of sex, ethnic origin, religion or ability
- Be aware of the roles of others in Mountaineering Ireland /the club and respect their position, including those working nationally for Mountaineering Ireland, the club committee and that decisions made are in the best interests of all children in Mountaineering Ireland /the club
- Understand and respect the process for dealing with complaints and disciplinary measures, ensuring the confidentiality of such process is also respected
- Not allow any child to be subject to favouritism, criticism, hostility or sarcasm nor allow others to swear at, unnecessarily shout, at, ridicule or argue with a child
- Not use or allow verbal or physical punishment or physical force to be used on children; not allow such actions or exclusion to be used where a child has made mistakes
- Not allow or engage in bullying behaviour, rough physical games, sexually provocative games, inappropriate physical contact of any kind or make sexually suggestive comments about or to a child
- Ensure that parents/guardians and children are aware of and given consent for the activities being undertaken within Mountaineering Ireland /the club

In respect of my position I will

- Understand the role I have been selected for and contribute my time and effort as agreed with the club and/or Mountaineering Ireland
- Ensure I have obtained the required qualifications and specified safeguarding requirements for my position and only work in the areas I am qualified to do so
- Carry out my duties and responsibilities understanding that the welfare of children is paramount
- Ensure any conflict of obligation or interest is set aside and the welfare of any child is placed first
- Ensure, where relevant, the activities are adequately planned and prepared for, inclusive and age appropriate,
- Ensure activities are safely supervised and attendance records are kept,
- Inform the parent/guardian where an issue or problem arises with their child/children,
- Keep any personal or medical information relating to a child strictly confidential unless the welfare of the child requires the passing on of this information,
- Ensure I maintain a healthy, positive and professional relationship with all youth members. As a leaders/volunteer in a positions of authority and trust in relation to youth members aged 16 and 17 years I will not engage in any sexual relationships with them while that unequal power relationship exists,
- I will be a role model, displaying consistently high standard of behaviour and appearance (disciplined/committed/time keeping), remembering children learn by example,
- Never exert undue influence over a participant for personal benefit or reward including abusing the trust of my position with children.

Code for Committees

Committee members will:

- Promote fair play and the positive aspects of sport by being role models for children in maintaining the highest standards of personal conduct and respectful behaviour
- Ensure the club ethos respects the rights, dignity and worth of every child and treat everyone equally, regardless of sex, ethnic origin, religion or ability
- Not allow any child to be subject to favouritism, criticism, hostility or sarcasm including comments on their height or weight; nor allow others to swear at, unnecessarily shout, at, ridicule or argue with a child
- Not use or allow verbal or physical punishment or physical force to be used on children; not allow such actions or exclusion to be used where a child makes mistakes
- Not allow or engage in bullying behaviour, rough physical games, sexually provocative games, inappropriate physical contact of any kind or make sexually suggestive comments about or to a child
- Ensure the safeguarding measures contained in this document are adopted by club/committee and any governing constitution and rules for the welfare and protection of children; club or committee rules should not contravene those of Mountaineering Ireland.

The committee shall particularly:

- Ensure and approve the appointment of a Children's Officer(s) and Designated Liaison Person as required (see Table 1 for specific requirements) and make sure Children's Officer reports regularly to committee meetings
- Ensure all other safeguarding requirements (see Table 1) including proper recruitment and induction process for those working and volunteering on the committee and in the club
- Ensure all the policies and practices are in place for activities for children, e.g. supervision, away trips, photography etc.
- Put in place effective communication methods for making members aware of club activities and ensure parental consent is obtained
- Understand and follow the process for dealing with complaints and disciplinary measures, ensuring the confidentiality of such process is also respected
- Ensure rumours are not ignored and they are dealt with appropriately, taking action where there is a risk to children
- Keep and store securely all documentation with respect to children, especially where sensitive information is obtained e.g. medical records and or personal contact details
- Monitor, with the Children's Officer, any changes in membership and any unusual dropout, absenteeism or movement of people in and out of the club; ensure these are followed up to determine any trend

Code for Course Providers / Freelance Instructors

As a Course Providers / Freelance Instructors I will:

- Abide by the safeguarding measures contained in this document, respecting this is in place for the welfare and protection of all children in the club and Mountaineering Ireland
- Promote fair play and the positive aspects of sport by being a role model for children in maintaining the highest standards of personal conduct and respectful behaviour
- Avoid the use of alcohol at all times while responsible for children e.g. events, on trips; and acknowledging that the use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco is incompatible with a healthy approach to sporting activity and must be discouraged
- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every child and treat everyone equally, regardless of sex, ethnic origin, religion or ability
- Be aware of the roles of others in Mountaineering Ireland /the club and respect their position,

including those working nationally for Mountaineering Ireland, club committees and that decisions made are in the best interests of all children in Mountaineering Ireland /the club

- Understand and respect the process for dealing with complaints and disciplinary measures, ensuring the confidentiality of such process is also respected
- Not allow any child to be subject to favouritism, criticism, hostility or sarcasm including comments on their height or weight; nor allow others to swear at, unnecessarily shout, at, ridicule or argue with a child
- Not use or allow verbal or physical punishment or physical force to be used on children; not allow such actions or exclusion to be used where a child makes mistakes
- Not allow or engage in bullying behaviour, sexually provocative games, inappropriate physical contact of any kind or make sexually suggestive comments about or to a child or any other member

In respect of my position I will

- Understand the role I have been selected for and contribute my time and effort as agreed with the club and/or Mountaineering Ireland
- Ensure I have obtained the required award(s)/experience and specified safeguarding requirements for the areas in which I work and, if not qualified, refrain from any medical testing, giving advice of a personal or medical nature or undertaking any form of therapy (hypnosis etc.)
- Carry out my duties and responsibilities understanding that the welfare of children is paramount and recognising the developmental needs of children and how a child may be psychologically or physically affected by their involvement in the sport
- Ensure any conflict of obligation or interest is set aside and the welfare of any child is placed first
- Ensure activities are adequately planned and prepared for, inclusive and age appropriate and with positive encouragement, praise and feedback for children; skill development and personal satisfaction takes priority over highly structured competition
- Ensure activities are safely supervised and attendance records are kept
- Inform the parent/guardian where an issue or problem arise with their child/children
- Keep any personal or medical information relating to a child strictly confidential unless the welfare of the child requires the passing on of this information
- Never exert undue influence over a participant for personal benefit or reward including abusing the trust of my position with children
- Co-operate with the recommendations from medical and ancillary practitioners in the management of a child's medical or related problems, and request a certificate of medical fitness to ensure safe continued participation
- Ensure that parents/guardians and children are aware of and give consent for the activities being undertaken
- Ensure I maintain a healthy, positive and professional relationship with all youth members. As a leaders/instructor in a positions of authority and trust in relation to youth members aged 16 and 17 years I will not engage in any sexual relationships with them while that unequal power relationship exists,
- I will be a role model, displaying consistently high standard of behaviour and appearance (disciplined/committed/time keeping), remembering children learn by example.

Code of Conduct Annual Declaration

Child and Parent/Guardian Annual Declaration

I have read, understood and agree to abide by the Code of Conduct for Children and the rules for participating in Mountaineering Ireland and my club _____ (club name).

Signature of Child: _____ Date: _____

Please print name: _____

I have read, understood and agree to abide by the Code of Conduct for Parents/Guardians, this document and the rules for participating in Mountaineering Ireland and my child's/children's club and give my permission for my child to be involved in club activities. My child understands the Code of Conduct for Children.

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____ Date: _____

Please print name: _____

For all codes of conduct visit the Mountaineering Ireland website: www.mountaineering.ie

Adult role Annual Declaration

- Adult/Leader/Volunteer – this includes members working with children
- Committee
- Course Provider / Freelance Instructor

I have read, understood and agree to abide by the Code of Conduct for the role(s) indicated above, this document (or latest updated version) and the policies of Mountaineering Ireland and _____
_____ (enter club and/or committee name)

Have you ever been asked to leave a sporting organisation?
Yes No

ROI instructor/volunteer statement - Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence or been the subject of a caution, a Bound-Over Order and/ or are you at present the subject of criminal investigations?
Yes No (If you have answered yes to either questions above we will contact you in confidence)

NI instructor/volunteer statement - Do you have any convictions/cautions that are not "protected" as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Exceptions) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) Order 2014. Been barred by the Disclosure and Barring Service (formally the Independent Safeguarding Authority) which would prevent you from working with children and/or vulnerable adults or the subject of an investigation alleging that you were the perpetrator of adult or child abuse?
Yes No (If you have answered yes to either questions above we will contact you in confidence)

If an allegation of abuse is made against me, I agree to step aside until the results of the investigation are completed.

Signature of Adult: _____ Date: _____

Please print name: _____

Position: _____

For all codes of conduct visit the Mountaineering Ireland website: www.mountaineering.ie

Appendix 2 – Standard Reporting Form

INCIDENT RECORD FORM : CHILD PROTECTION	
Name of Club	
Record completed by	
Position:	Date:
Child/Young Person's Name	
Child/Young person's Address	
Child/Young Persons Date of Birth	
Parents/Carer's Names and Address	

Date and time of any incident	Date:	Time:
Your Observations:		
Detail exactly what the child/ young person said and what you said (Remember do not lead the child/young		

<p>person – record actual details. Continue on a separate sheet if necessary)</p>	
<p>Action taken so far:</p>	
<p>Designated Safeguarding Children Officer informed? Yes No</p>	
<p>External Agencies contacted</p>	
<p>Gardaí / Police</p> <p>Yes No</p> <p>Branch contacted:</p> <p>Name:</p> <p>Contact no:</p>	<p>Details of advice received:</p>
<p>Social Services</p> <p>Yes No</p> <p>Unit / Branch contacted:</p> <p>Name:</p> <p>Contact number:</p>	<p>Details of advice received:</p>
<p>Mountaineering Ireland</p> <p>Yes No</p> <p>Name:</p> <p>Contact number:</p>	<p>Details of advice received:</p>
<p>Other agency</p> <p>Yes No</p> <p>Name:</p> <p>Contact number:</p>	<p>Details of advice received:</p>

Signature

Date

Remember to maintain confidentiality on a need to know basis – only if it will protect the child/young person. Do not discuss this incident with anyone other than those who need to know.

Appendix 3 – Useful Contacts

Republic of Ireland

Sport Ireland, The Courtyard, National Sports Campus, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15

Tel No. 01-8608800 www.sportireland.ie

ISPCC

20 Molesworth Street

Dublin 2

01 6794944 ispcc@ispcc.ie

ISPCC Childline 1800 666666 (Freephone)

Volunteering Ireland

Coleraine House Coleraine Street Dublin 7 01 8722622 info@volunteeringireland.com

Ombudsman for Children

Millennium House

52-56 Great Strand Street Dublin 1

1890 654 654 / 01 865 6800 oco@oco.ie

Child and Family Agency

<http://www.tusla.ie/>

Northern Ireland

Child Protection in Sport Unit NSPCC

Jennymount Business Park North Derby Street Belfast BT 15 3HN

02890 351135 www.thecpsu.org.uk

NSPCC Helpline 0808-800 5000 (Freephone) Childline (UK) 0800 1111

Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children & Children,

Telephone (028) 9031 1616 www.nickey.org

The National Adults Counselling Service

Freephone 1800 477 477 Northern Ireland 00800 477 477 77

www.connectcounselling.ie

Health and Social Care Trusts

Regional Emergency Social Work service (out of hours). Available 5.00 PM - 9.00 AM Monday to Thursday and 5.00 PM on Friday to 9.00 AM on Monday. There is a 24 hour cover over public holidays. 028 9504 9999

Each trust has a Gateway team to deal with reports of abuse and also more local contacts for ongoing professional liaison for advice on particular concerns. Contacts during office hours are;

Northern HSC Trust Tel: 03001234333

South Eastern HSC Trust Tel: 03001000300

Southern HSC Trust Tel: 08007837745
Belfast HSC Trust Tel: 028 90 507000
Western HSC Trust Tel: 028 71314090

PSNI Public Protection Units

PSNI Child Abuse and Rape Enquiry Unit 028 9065 0222
Ask for your local PPU

Sport Northern Ireland

Sport NI 028 9038 1222
www.sportni.net

Volunteer Now

Volunteer Now 028 9023 6100

www.volunteernow.co.uk Access NI

Access NI 0300 200 7888

www.nidirect.gov.uk/accessni Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre

(CEOP) 020 7238 2391
www.ceop.gov.uk

Other useful websites

www.childline.org.uk – a confidential advice website for young people

www.nspcc.org.uk

www.parentsadvicecentre.org

www.kidscape.org.uk

www.bullying.co.uk

www.endbullyingnow.org

Appendix 4 – Legislation

Republic of Ireland

Children Act 2001

The Children Act 2001 replaced provisions of the Children Act, 1908 and associated legislation with a modern comprehensive statute.

Child Care Act, 1991

The purpose of the Child Care Act, 1991 is to 'update the law in relation to the care of children who have been assaulted, ill-treated, neglected or sexually abused, or who are at risk'.

Criminal Justice Act 2006

Section 176 of the Criminal Justice Act 2006 introduced the criminal charge of 'reckless endangerment of children'.

Domestic Violence Act, 1996

The Domestic Violence Act, 1996 introduced major changes in the legal remedies for domestic violence.

Protections for Persons reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998

This Act came into operation on 23 January 1999.

Data Protection Act, 1988

The Data Protection Act, 1988 applies to the automatic processing of personal data.

Education Act, 1998

The Education Act, 1998 places an obligation on those concerned with its implementation to give practical effect to the constitutional rights of children as they relate to education.

Education (Welfare) Act 2000

The Education (Welfare) Act 2000, which was fully commenced in July 2002, replaced previous school attendance legislation.

Non-Fatal Offences against the Person Act, 1997

The two relevant provisions of this Act concern the physical chastisement of pupils and describe circumstances in which the use of reasonable force may be justifiable.

Freedom of Information Act, 1997

The Freedom of Information Act, 1997 enables members of the public to obtain access to information in the possession of public bodies.

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989

Some of the sections highlighting the rights of children would have specific relevance to children involved in sport. This covers both Northern Ireland and Ireland.

Legislation for 2014

National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012 Children First Bill 2014

Northern Ireland Legislation

The Children (NI) Order 1995

There are five practice principles relating to children within this legislation.

Co-operating to Safeguard Children (2003)

This provides child protection guidelines and outlines the roles and responsibilities of all agencies in Northern Ireland.

Criminal Law Act (NI) 1967

This Act states that anyone with direct knowledge or information about an arrestable offence is required to inform the police within a reasonable time.

Data Protection Act 1998

This Act ensures that personal data shall be processed fairly and lawfully.

Legislation and Information relating to Access NI checks:

- Access NI Code of Practice
- Part V of the Police Act 1997
- Rehabilitation of Offenders (Exceptions) Order (NI) 1979
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007
- Disqualification and Barring Scheme
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012

Our Children and Young People – Our Pledge DHSSPS 2006

This strategy is to ensure that by 2016 all children and young people are fulfilling their potential.

Sexual Offences (NI) Order 2008

This Order brings NI legislation in line with legislation in England and Wales, focussing on convicted individuals and their management, plus establishing the age of consent.

The Criminal Justice (NI) Order 2008

This legislation has created public protection sentences within an overall new sentencing framework for Northern Ireland. The new legislation also places the Public Protection Arrangements on a statutory footing.

The Sexual Offences Act 2003

This legislation means that people who have been cautioned or convicted for sexual offences on or after 1 September 1997, or who have been released from prison on or after that date, having been convicted for sexual offences must notify the police of certain details.

Rehabilitation of Offenders (Exceptions) Order (NI) 1979

Exceptions are made under this legislation to the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Northern Ireland) Order 1978, which lists the circumstances in which an employer may apply for a full criminal record disclosure.

Police Act (What is known as Part 5 of the Police Act 1996)

This was not initially implemented in Northern Ireland, but the Northern Ireland Office has now enacted this piece of the legislation.

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007

This Order introduced an Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA), who is currently responsible for making barring decisions.

Appendix 5 – References and sources

- Code of Ethics & Good Practice for Children’s Sport (Sport Ireland and Sport Northern Ireland, 2006)
- Children First - Draft (Department of Health and Children, 2011) – Ireland
- Children First (Department of Health and Children, 1999) – Ireland
- Co-operating to Safeguard Children (Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety, 2003) – Northern Ireland
- Our Duty to Care (Volunteer Development Agency supported by the Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety, 2007) – Northern Ireland
- Our Duty to Care (Department of Health and Children, 2001) - Ireland
- Getting it Right (Volunteer Development Agency supported by the Department of Health Social Services and Public safety, August 2005) – Northern Ireland
- Child Protection for the Youth Work Sector, (Department of Education & Science) 2003 Sportscheck –
- Child Protection in Sport Unit 2002
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 The Child Care Act, 1991
- The Children’s Act, 2001
- Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (NI) Order 2003
- Safeguarding Disabled Children – Practice Guidelines (2003)