



**Child Protection Policy**

*Review March 2016*

# Irish Surfing Association

The guidelines in this document are based on the national guidelines as outlined in the following documents

Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport, Irish Sports Council and Sports Council Northern Ireland, 2000, (reviewed in 2006).

Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children, Dept. of Health & Children 1999

Our Duty to Care, Dept. of Health & Children 2002

Children (NI ) Order, 1995

Co-operating to Safeguard Children, 2003

*Area Child Protection Committee Regional Policy and Procedures, 2005*

# Irish Surfing Association

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Core Values</b>	4
<b>Policies &amp; Guidelines</b>	
Policy Statement	5
Codes of Conduct for Young People	6
Codes of Conduct for Parents	7
Codes of Conduct for Sports Leaders	8-9
<b>Policies</b>	
Disciplinary Procedures	10
Recruitment Policy for Sports Leaders / Volunteers	10
General Safety Guidelines	11
Bullying Policy	16
<b>Child Protection Procedures</b>	
Responding to disclosure	22
Reporting Procedures	23
Allegations against Sports Leaders	24
Confidentiality/Anonymous Complaints & Rumors	25
Appendix 1 New Leader Application	26
Appendix 2 Disclosure Form	27
Appendix 3 Existing Leader Form	29
Appendix 4 Confidential Reference Form	31
Appendix 5 Sample Junior Membership Form	33

# Irish Surfing Association

## **CORE VALUES IN SPORT F PEOPLE OR YOUNG**

The work of Irish Surfing Association is based on the following principles that will guide the development of sport for young people in this organisation, (as outlined in page 9, *Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport*). Young People's experience of sport should be guided by what is best for the young person. The stages of development and the ability of the young person should guide the types of activity provided within the sport. Adults will need to have a basic understanding of the needs of young people, including physical, emotional and personal.

### **Integrity in relationships:**

Adults interacting with young people in sport should do so with integrity and respect for the child. There is a danger that sporting contexts can be used to exploit or undermine children. All adult actions in sport should be guided by what is best for the child and in the context of quality, open working relationships. Verbal, physical, emotional or sexual abuse of any kind is unacceptable within sport.

### **Quality atmosphere and ethos**

Sport for young people should be conducted in a safe, positive and encouraging atmosphere. A child-centred ethos will help to ensure that competition and specialisation are kept in their appropriate place.

### **Equality**

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

### **Fair Play:**

Fair play is the guiding principle of the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport.

All children's sport should be conducted in an atmosphere of fair play. Ireland has contributed and is committed to the European Code of Sports Ethics, which defines fair play as: "much more than playing within the rules". It incorporates the concepts of friendship, respect for others and always playing with the right spirit. Fair play is defined as a way of thinking, not just behaving. It incorporates issues concerned with the elimination of opportunities, excessive commercialisation and corruption.

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

### **Competition**

# Irish Surfing Association

A balanced approach to competition can make a significant contribution to the development of young people, while at the same time providing fun, enjoyment and satisfaction. However, often competitive demands are placed on children too early, which results in excessive levels of pressure on them. This can contribute to a high level of dropout from sport. Leaders should aim to put the welfare of the child first and competitive standards second. A child-centred approach will help to ensure that competition and specialisation are kept in their appropriate place. **POLICY STATEMENT**

The Irish Surfing Association is fully committed to safeguarding the well being of its members. Every individual in the Irish Surfing Association should at all times, show respect and understanding for members rights, safety and welfare and conduct themselves in a way that reflects the principles of the organisation and the guidelines contained in the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport.

In the Irish Surfing Association our first priority is the welfare of the young people and we are committed to providing an environment which will allow participants to perform to the best of their ability, free from bullying and intimidation.

# Irish Surfing Association

## **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**

The Irish Surfing Association aspires to provide a safe environment for young people involved in surfing. Their surfing experience should be enjoyable, safe and free of abuse of any kind. Young people have rights, which must be respected, and responsibilities that they must accept.

### **Young people are entitled to:**

Be happy, have fun and enjoy the sport  
Be listened to  
Be believed  
Be safe and feel safe  
Be treated equally with dignity, sensitivity and respect  
Participate at a level appropriate to their age and stage of development  
Have a voice in the running of the club and association  
Experience competition at a level at which they feel comfortable  
Make complaints and have them dealt with  
Get help against bullies  
Say No  
Confidentiality

### **Young players should always:**

Respect leaders and their decisions.  
Respect other young people involved in the sport.  
Respect their parents and the parents of other young people involved in the sport.  
Take care of equipment, facilities and their surfing environment.  
Respect safety and etiquette guidelines.  
In competition participate fairly, respect the rules and opponents. Be modest in victory and gracious in defeat  
Talk to the children's officer if they have any problems.  
Behave in a manner that brings credit to their club, the Irish Surfing Association and the sport of surfing.

### **Young players should never:**

Shout, argue with or disrespect leaders, fellow surfers or opponents  
Cheat, use violence or physical force  
Harm leaders, fellow surfers, opponents or their property  
Bully or use bullying tactics to isolate another surfer  
Use unfair or bullying tactics to gain advantage  
Use alcohol, tobacco or drugs or use banned substances/methods to improve performance  
Keep secrets  
Tell lies about others  
Spread rumours

# Irish Surfing Association

## **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR PARENTS**

Parents should work in partnership with the club and the Irish Surfing Association to ensure their child's experience in surfing is a positive one. They should be encouraged to become a member and to participate where possible. Comments and suggestions made by parents should always be considered and their complaints should not be ignored.

### **Parents are entitled to:**

- Know their child is safe.
- Be informed of problems or concerns relating to their children.
- Be informed if their child is injured.
- Have their consent sought for activities.
- Contribute to decision making.
- Complain if they have concerns and have their complaint dealt with.

### **Parents should always:**

- Respect the policies and procedures of the club and the Irish Surfing Association.
- Support all efforts of the club and the Irish Surfing Association to protect young people involved in the sport.
- Be aware of leaders and their roles within the club and the Irish Surfing Association.
- Show respect, appreciation and be supportive of leaders and their decisions.
- Encourage their child to respect other participants, their parents and leaders.
- Respect Safety and Etiquette rules and encourage their child to follow these rules.
- Remember the child is involved in surfing for their enjoyment and not that of their parent.
- Focus on their child's efforts rather than their performance. Be realistic.
- Be a role model for their child and maintain the highest standards of conduct when interacting with young people, other parents and leaders.
- Deliver and collect children punctually to and from activities.
- Disclose medical conditions and any other information relevant to their child.
- Behave responsibly as spectator at activities.

### **Parents should never:**

- Ignore safety
- Ignore rules
- Ignore complaints expressed by their child relating to their involvement in the sport.
- Put undue pressure on their child to perform, including forcing their child to perform while ill or injured.
- Demonstrate threatening or abusive behaviour or use foul language.
- Intentionally expose any young participant to embarrassment or disparagement.
- Treat the club or Irish Surfing Association as a "child minding service"

# Irish Surfing Association

## **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR LEADERS**

Leaders include all adults involved in the club and Irish Surfing Association from Instructors to event officials, team management, club & ISA committee members, officers & directors and employees etc.

### **Leaders are entitled to:**

Recognition, support and respect for their role in the provision of opportunities for young people to participate.

Protection from abuse by young people, other adult and parents.

Access to training and other supports.

Complain if they have concerns and have their complaint dealt with.

Provision of adequate supervision to avoid vulnerable situations.

### **Leaders should always:**

Strive to create a positive environment for the young surfers in their care.

Promote fair play, fun and enjoyment.

Place enjoyment and safety of the young surfer above performance.

Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback, encouraging achievements rather than negative criticism.

Follow the rules of the club and the Irish Surfing Association.

Maintain the highest standards of personal conduct and appearance.

Respect the rights, dignity and worth of the young surfer.

Treat everyone equally.

Be aware that abuse does happen and the forms that it takes, the indicators, and the appropriate response where abuse is revealed or suspected.

Report any disclosures, suspicions or accusations of abuse.

Challenge bullying in any form.

Have appropriate qualifications for the activities they undertake.

Ensure activities are suitable to the age and ability of participants.

Involve parents wherever possible communicating with them regularly and encouraging their participation.

Work in an open environment avoiding private or unobserved situations.

Avoid physical contact, don't do what a child can do for themselves.

### **Leaders should never:**

Criticise or undermine other leaders, the club or Irish Surfing Association in the presence of young surfers.

Engage in horseplay or rough, physical or sexually provocative games.

Allow children to use foul, sexualised or discriminatory language.

Make sexually suggestive comments to a child.

Reduce a child to tears.

Engage in any form of inappropriate touching.

Take personal responsibility for child.

Spend time alone with a child.

Take a child to your home.

# Irish Surfing Association

Share a room, shower, changing facilities.

Smoke, drink alcohol or take drugs in the company of young people.

Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.

Expose a child intentionally or unintentionally to embarrassment or disparagement by use of sarcastic or flippant remarks about the child or his/her family.

Condone rule violations.

Push a child against their will or expose them to excessive training/ competition.

# Irish Surfing Association

## **DISCIPLINARY, COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS PROCEDURE**

See ISA Disciplinary Policy and ISA Complaints Policy

## **RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION POLICY FOR LEADERS**

The following recruitment and selection process will be applied when recruiting voluntary or paid leaders in clubs and the Irish Surfing Association.

- The responsibilities of the role and the level of experience/qualifications required will be drawn up and clearly stated before recruitment or selection.
- Applicants will be requested to complete a written application form which will include a self-declaration section. (See Appendix 1 for sample).
- References and qualifications will be verified by the club/ISA. A record must be kept of verification.
- Prior to appointment applicants will be requested to undergo Garda/ Access NI Vetting.
- The Code of Conduct for Leaders will be signed by applicants on appointment, pledging their committee to the code.
- New leaders will be obliged to attend the ISC 3hr Code of Ethics and Awareness workshop.
- A probationary period will be advised by the club/ ISA which can be used to assess the leader's commitment and interest to the club/ ISA.
- Every effort should be made to manage and support appointed Sport Leaders, including awareness of the code of conduct, supervision should be provided, and a leader should not have to work alone.
- A decision to appoint a Leader is the responsibility of the club / ISA and not of any one individual within it. The club committee/ ISA Executive should ratify all recommendations for appointment.
- Information gathered during the application process should be treated sensitively and confidentially. It should be kept in a secure place with restricted access. See Data Protection Policy

# Irish Surfing Association

## **GENERAL SAFETY GUIDELINES**

The guidelines outlined in ISA policies and below should be adhered to at all times to ensure a safe and enjoyable environment for young people participating in surfing. In particular, Safe Surfing And Etiquette must be continuously promoted to young people in the club/ ISA.

### **Transport (See Driving For Work Policy)**

There is extra responsibility on leaders when they transport young people.

They should:

- Ensure that there is adequate insurance cover on their car, they follow the rules of the road, including legal use of seat belts
- Not carry more than the permitted number of passengers
- Avoid being alone with one participant, have central drop off locations, clearly state times of pick-up and drop off. In unavoidable circumstances put the passenger in the back seat.
- Parents should check with young people about the plans and be happy transport arrangements.

### **General Supervision**

Make sure there is an adequate supervision.

- Leaders should try to have more than one adult present. A1:8 ratio is recommended.
- Where there are mixed groups there should be leaders of both genders
- Avoid being alone with one participant, if you need to talk separately do so in an open environment, in view of others
- In changing rooms, ask parents to take responsibility and supervise in pairs of appropriate gender
- Leaders should not need to enter the changing rooms unless children are very young or need special assistance, where supervision should be in pairs of appropriate gender
- Clearly state time for start and end of club sessions or competitions, leaders should not be left alone with young people at the end of sessions. If there are late collections leaders should remain in pairs until all participants have left.
- Keep attendance records and records of any incidents / injuries that arise
- Ask parents to stay and supervise sessions, (for safety and supervision, not necessarily for their 'technical' expertise)

### **Overnight & Away trips with in Ireland**

The club/ ISA will ensure groups are led by experienced and responsible individuals of mixed genders with the ability and skills to ensure a safe and enjoyable trip. Roles will be clearly defined at the outset.

- A team manager should be appointed with overall responsibility for arrangements.
- Adequate transport, accommodation, food and insurance must be arranged.
- A 1:8 leader child ratio will apply.
- Surfers under 12 should be constantly supervised. Surfers over 12 may be permitted some degree of freedom at the discretion of the manager. In this situation participants will be required to inform management of their whereabouts at all times, eg where they are going/

# Irish Surfing Association

when they will return. The manager will clearly establish supervision guidelines at the start of the trip. After dark full supervision will be applied to all

- Mixed genders will be accommodated in separate rooms. Beds will not be shares. Leaders will not share rooms with junior surfers.
- Parental consent including emergency contacts will be required prior to travel.
- Prior to travel management will meet with parents/ surfers to provide details of travel and offer an opportunity for questions or concerns.
- The team manager will ensure medical access and will carry a first aid kit.
- The team manager should provide a written report as soon as possible following the trip
- Use of alcohol, smoking and illegal substances by junior surfers will not be tolerated and leaders have a particular responsibility to set a good example.

## **International Trips**

The club/ ISA will ensure teams are led by experienced and responsible individuals of mixed genders with the ability and skills to ensure a safe and enjoyable trip. Roles will be clearly defined at the outset.

- A team manager should be appointed with overall responsibility for arrangements.
- Only surfers over 12 years old will be considered for selection for trips abroad.
- Adequate transport, insurance, accommodation and food (breakfast, lunch and dinner) must be arranged.
- When traveling abroad a 1:8 leader child ratio applies. However the distance from home and safety of destination should be considered. An additional leader is recommended when traveling outside Europe for emergency situations (eg where one leader would have to accompany a child home prior to the end of the event).
- Surfers over 12 may be permitted some degree of freedom at the discretion on the manager, depending on the location. In this situation participants will be required to inform management of their whereabouts at all times, eg where they are going/ when they will return. The manager will clearly establish supervision guidelines at the start of the trip. After dark full supervision will be applied to all
- Mixed genders will be accommodated in separate rooms. Beds will not be shares. Leaders will not share rooms with junior surfers.
- Parental consent including emergency contacts will be required prior to travel.
- Prior to travel management will meet with parents/ surfers to provide details of travel and offer an opportunity for questions or concerns.
- Surfers will be notification of selection, cost, and travel arrangements by letter at the earliest date possible.
- The team manager will ensure medial access, will carry a first aid kit and where appropriate will provide information health precautions and inoculations required for travel.
- The team manager should provide a written report as soon as possible following the trip
- Use of alcohol, smoking and illegal substances by junior surfers will not be tolerated and leaders have a particular responsibility to set a good example.
- Surfers and leaders will be expected to sign our Code of Conduct for trips abroad.
- The team manager will research the security and safety situation in the country they plan to travel to and will put in place appropriate security and safety in response.

# Irish Surfing Association

## **Physical Contact**

Physical contact during sport should always be intended to meet the child's needs, NOT the adult's. The adult will may 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

- Physical contact is not necessary in surfing.
- Where any contact is required it should 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

## **Competition**

Junior surfing contests should aim to encourage safety, fun and fair play offering young surfers an opportunity to develop their surfing and contest skills.

- A junior surfer should never be pushed against their will or expose to excessive training or competition.
- The surfer's performance should never take precedence over safety, fun or fair play.
- Junior surfers will compete only within their age category at junior surfing events and in no more than one event.
- Surfers U12 will not be considered for selection for international events. Surfers U18 will not be considered for selection to senior international events.
- Parents and competitors should familiarize themselves with event rules and complaints procedures.
- When organizing a junior event additional consideration should be given to safety, location and the development stage of expected participants (See Event Health And Safety Policy)

## **Photography and Media Guidelines**

Our Photography Guidelines are in place to protect young surfers from the risk of inappropriate and unsolicited attention from potential abusers. Photographs, when used with personal information, can be used as a means of identifying children. This practice can make a child vulnerable to an individual who may wish to "groom" that child for abuse. Furthermore the content of the photo can be used or adapted for inappropriate use. There is evidence of this adapted material finding its way onto child pornography sites.

Taking photographs

To ensure that only those who have a right to take photographs do so anybody taking photographers/film/video at club/ ISA activities must seek permission to do so.

When publishing photographs

- Use group photos where the club or team is identified rather than individuals.
- If the athlete is named, avoid using their photograph.
- If a photograph is used, avoid naming the athlete or giving other personal details eg where the individual lives, go to school etc.

# Irish Surfing Association

- Ask for the athlete's permission to use their image to ensure that they are aware of the way the image is to be used to represent the sport.
- Ask for parental permission to use the athlete's image to ensure that parents are aware of the way the image is to be used to represent the sport.
- Only use images of athletes in suitable dress. The content of the photograph should focus on the activity not on a particular child

## **Mobile Phones**

Mobile phones are often given to children for security, enabling parents to keep in touch and make sure they are safe. Young people value their phones highly as it offers them a sense of independence. In addition mobile phones allow quick and easy contact, which can make a safe and efficient way to carry out club business. However such technology has also allowed an increase in direct personal contact with young people, in some cases used to cross personal boundaries and cause harm to young people. In order to encourage responsible and secure use of mobile phones by adults and young people in the club/ ISA the following should be adhered to.

### Young Surfers

- If you receive an offensive photo, email or message, do not reply, save it, make a note of times and dates and tell a parent or children's officer/designated person within the club.
- Be careful about who you give your phone number to and don't respond to unfamiliar numbers
- Change your phone number in cases of bullying or harassment
- Don't use the phone in certain locations; inappropriate use of your camera phone may cause upset or offence to another person, e.g. changing rooms
- Treat your phone as you would any other valuable item so that you guard against theft

### Leaders

- Use group texts for communication with young surfers and inform parents of this system of communication at the start of the season
- It is not appropriate to have constant communication for individual athletes
- Don't use the phone in certain locations; inappropriate use of your camera phone may cause upset or offence to another person, e.g. changing rooms
- If you receive an offensive photo, email or message from a young surfer, do not reply, save it, make a note of times and dates and tell the children's officer/designated person within the club/ISA.

## **Internet and Social Media**

Why use the internet/ social media?

The internet/ social media are a very efficient way to communication with members, to share information, notifications and updates. However care must be taken, while the internet/ social media offers a host of benefits it also involves risks providing opportunity for bullying, harassment and grooming of young people.

# Irish Surfing Association

It is essential the club/ ISA internet/ social media is managed by a responsible adult who has been briefed on the organisation's policy,

- When using the internet/ social media, remember it is an extension of the club/ ISA, think before you post.
- Use the internet responsibly; maintain professional boundaries, behaviours and language.
- Don't target underage children (for most social networking sites, 13 years in the minimum).
- Don't accept 'friend' requests from underage children.
- Avoid taking personal details of young people and do not ask users to divulge any personal details online.
- Be careful how you use images of young people on the internet. Photographs and videos of young people make them vulnerable to people who wish to groom them for abuse. If a child is named, avoid using their image. If an image is used, avoid naming the child. Obtain parental consent.
- Encourage users to protect their privacy, make sure they are aware of the risks.
- Promote safe and responsible social networking.
- Provide links to safety and support information

# Irish Surfing Association

## **BULLYING**

Bullying can be directed at anybody in the club/ ISA including young surfers, leaders and parents. The possibility of bullying should be discussed openly within the club and everybody should be made aware of our views on bullying, what bullying is and how it can be stopped.

Bullying will not be tolerated or condoned.

We all must take a stand to stop bullying

Bullying must be reported

Bullying will result in disciplinary action.

## **Types of Bullying**

Bullying can occur:

- Child to child - includes physical aggression, verbal bullying, intimidation, damage to property and isolation
- Adult to child - includes the use of repeated gestures or expressions of a threatening or intimidatory nature, or any comment intended to degrade the child
- Child to adult – includes the use of repeated gestures or expressions of a threatening or intimidatory nature by an individual child or a group of children

## **The Individual**

- Respect every child's need for, and rights to, a play environment where safety, security, praise, recognition and opportunity for taking responsibility are available
- Respect for every individual's feelings and views
- Recognise that everyone is important and that our differences make each of us special
- Show appreciation of others by acknowledging individual qualities, contributions and progress
- Ensure safety by having rules and practices carefully explained and displayed for all to see

## **Bullying**

- Bullying will not be accepted or condoned. All forms of bullying will be addressed. Bullying can include:
  - physical pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching etc
  - name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing and emotional torment through ridicule, humiliation and the continual ignoring of individuals
  - sectarian/racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
  - sexual comments and /or suggestions
  - unwanted physical contact
- Children from ethnic minorities, disabled children, young people who are gay or lesbian, or those with learning difficulties are more vulnerable to this form of abuse and may well be targeted.

# Irish Surfing Association

- Everybody has the responsibility to work together to stop bullying – the child, the parent, the coach, the youth worker, the sport's official
- Appropriate forums should be established within the organisation, including children, parents, youth workers and other agencies, to address, monitor and stop bullying
- Commitment to the early identification of bullying and prompt, collective action to deal with it
- Policy and practice should be agreed through consultation with clubs, parents and children
- Children should be encouraged to take a role in stopping bullying in their club
- Policy and practice should be reviewed regularly in the light of changing needs and changes adopted by other agencies (e.g. schools)

## **Support to the Child**

- Children should know who will listen to and support them
- Any advice and assistance should be given by an appropriately trained and experienced worker
- Children should have access to Helpline numbers
- Children should be told what is being recorded, in what context and why
- **Systems should be established** to open the door to children wishing to talk about bullying or any other issue that affects them. Barriers to talking need to be broken down to enable children to approach adults
- Anyone who reports an incident of bullying will be listened to carefully and be supported, whether the child being bullied or the child who is bullying
- Any reported incident of bullying will be investigated objectively and will involve listening carefully to all those involved
- Children being bullied will be supported and assistance given to uphold their right to play and live in a safe environment which allows their healthy development
- Those who bully will be supported and encouraged to stop bullying
- Sanctions involving long periods of isolation, or which diminish and make individuals look or feel foolish in front of others, should be avoided

## **Support to the Parents/Guardians**

- Parents/Guardians should be advised on local policy and practice about bullying

# Irish Surfing Association

- Any incident of bullying will be discussed with the child's parent(s)/guardians
- Parental/Guardian advice on action will be sought and agreements made as to what action should be taken
- Information and advice on coping with bullying will be given

Support should be offered to the parent(s) including information on other agencies or support lines.

## **What is Bullying?**

Bullying can be defined as repeated aggression be it verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against others.

It is behaviour that is intentionally aggravating and intimidating and occurs mainly in social environments such as schools, clubs and other organisations working with children and young people. It includes behaviours such as teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting and extortion by one or more children against a victim.

## **Is bullying harmful?**

Persistent bullying can have a devastating effect on a child's self-esteem. They may feel it's somehow their fault, or that there's something wrong with them, they may become withdrawn and insecure, more cautious, and less willing to take any sort of risk.

Being victimised in this way can cause days of mental anguish and leave lifelong emotional scars. It has driven some young people to try to murder their tormentors and others to suicide. A child who has suffered bullying often needs professional counselling to let out their feelings and rebuild their self-confidence. Bullying also affects any child who witnesses it.

What do children get bullied about?

Some of the factors involved in bullying include:

- Puberty
- Peer pressure
- Gender differences
- Stereotypes / prejudice
- Structure of the group – hierarchy of dominance
- Family background of victims and bullies

*Bullying can be distinguished from bossiness and boisterous play. A bossy child will boss whoever is around. So often it is due to lack of self-control or skills of negotiation or compromise. Boisterous play can be dangerous but it does not involved young people wilfully setting out to hurt or victimise. Young people often grow out of this kind of behaviour as they grow older. What distinguishes bullying from bossiness or boisterousness is that the bully always picks on someone less powerful and more vulnerable. Persistent 'slagging', which has the same, devastating effects as bullying, shouldn't be ignored.*

# Irish Surfing Association

## **How would you know if a child is being bullied?**

All bullies operate using furtiveness, threats and fear. Bullying can therefore only survive in an environment where the victim does not feel empowered to tell someone who can help or in which it is not safe to do so.

The following indicators are warning signs that a young person might be getting bullied.

- Reluctance to come to a centre or take part in activities
- Physical signs (unexplained bruises, scratches, or damage to belongings)
- Stress-caused illness – headaches, and stomach aches which seem unexplained
- Fearful behaviour (fear of walking to scout meeting, going different routes, asking to be driven)
- Frequent loss of 'subs' or shortage of money with vague explanations
- Having few friends
- Changes in behaviour (withdrawn, stammering, moody, irritable, upset, distressed)
- Not eating
- Attempting suicide or hinting at suicide
- Anxiety (shown by nail-biting, fearfulness, tics)

*There are other possible reasons for many of the above*

## **What makes a person bully others?**

Bullies are often making a plea for help through their violent behaviour, which may reflect a sense of insignificance. Bullies whose activities go un-addressed often fail socially and academically in later life. They need to be taught all important negotiation and co-operative skills, working with others rather than competing.

## **Who should deal with bullying?**

While the more extreme forms of bullying would be regarded as physical or emotional abuse and are reported to the health board or An Garda Síochana, dealing with bullying behaviour is normally the responsibility of the organisation where it is taking place.

## **How can it be prevented?**

Modules on raising awareness and developing techniques for dealing with bullying should be included in training.

An Anti-Bullying Policy and Code should be drawn up and enforced and procedures should be clearly established to deal with any incidents. While it is important to have rules about bullying, a whole group policy is the best solution. This means not 'bullying the bully' but working with bullies and the group of young people, helping them to understand the hurt they are causing, and so make the problem a 'shared concern' of the group. Group discussion methods have a big advantage over punishment in that they do not drive the problem underground or escalate it by making the bully more excluded or more of a social failure. This is known as the "No blame approach" (see below)

## **Are there any practical steps that can be used to counter bullying?**

- Use young people as a positive resource in countering bullying and to change the culture of the group to a permission to tell culture rather than a 'might is right' one

# Irish Surfing Association

- Teach young people to negotiate, co-operate and help others, particularly new or different children
- It's a good idea to run poster campaigns and have stories and role-plays on how to deal with a bully included in ordinary group activities
- Offer the victim immediate support and put the 'no blame approach' into operation
- Never tell a young person to ignore bullying, they can't ignore it, it hurts too much
- Never encourage a young person to take the law into their own hands and beat the bully at their own game
- Tell the victim there is nothing wrong with them and it is not their fault

## **What is the 'No Blame' Approach?**

### **Step 1 – Interview with the victim**

If you find that there has been an incident of bullying, first talk to the victim. At this stage find out who was involved and what the victim is now feeling. Try asking the following questions:

- Was it verbal or physical intimidation?
- How hurt is the victim
- Was it within his/her own peer group?
- Ensure the victim that his/her name will not come out in the investigation
- Actively listen

### **Step 2 – Meet with all involved**

Arrange to meet with all those involved; this should include some bystanders, those who may have colluded, those joined in and those who initiated the bullying.

- Just have a maximum of six to eight in the group – keep the number controllable
- Make a point of calling a 'special' meeting
- Ensure the severity of the topic is understood by all
- Speak only of the hurt caused in general terms with no reference to the victim
- Play on the conscience of all – ask questions like: How would you feel? Would you like it done to you?

### **Step 3 – Explain the problem**

The distress being suffered as a result of the bullying incident is explained. At this stage the details of the incident or the allocation of the blame is not discussed. Explain the feelings of loneliness, feeling left out, rejected, laughed at. Try asking questions:

- Would they like it if it happened to them
- "Someone here in this group was bullied by someone within the group, what could we do to see it does not happen again?"
- Listen, watch out for reactions, and pick up on any without isolating anyone

# Irish Surfing Association

## ***Step 4 – Share the responsibility***

Explain what steps / controls may have to be introduced to prevent further incidents and how everyone will lose out as a result

## ***Step 5 – Ask the group for their ideas***

At this stage the group is encouraged to suggest ways that would make the victim feel happier. All positive responses are noted. Use phrases “if it were you” to encourage a response. Listen to all suggestions and note them

## ***Step 6 – Leave it to them***

Now the problem has been identified, solutions suggested, the problem is now handed over to the group to solve. Arrange to meet again in a week’s time. Pass responsibility over to the group and give a time frame within which something must be done

## ***Step 7 – Meet them again***

Each member of the group, including the bully, discuss how things are going, who is doing what and have there been other incidents. This allows for continual monitoring and also keeps all involved in the process.

Again enforce the idea of the ‘team’ looking after each other at regular intervals to ensure it is know that bullying or intimidating behaviour will not be tolerated.

# Irish Surfing Association

## CHILD WELFARE AND PROTECTION PROCEDURES

The Irish Surfing Association accepts that, by including young people among its members, it is vulnerable to the occurrence of child abuse. Below are the procedures for dealing with any welfare or protection issue that may arise. Child welfare and the protection of young people is the concern of all adults at all times, irrespective of their role within the organisation.

If there are grounds for concern about the safety or welfare of a young person you should act. Persons unsure about a concern can contact a social worker for advice. In the local health service executive or social services department where they will receive advice. Grounds for concern include a specific indication from a child, a statement from a person who witnessed abuse or an illness, injury or behaviour consistent with abuse.

A report may be made by any member in the club but should be passed on to the Designated Person / Children's Officer who may in turn have to pass the concern to the local Statutory Authorities. It is not the responsibility of anyone working within the club/ ISA, in a paid or voluntary capacity, to take responsibility or decide whether or not child abuse is taking place. That is the job of the statutory authorities. However, there is a responsibility to protect children by assisting the appropriate agencies so that they can then make enquiries and take any necessary action to protect the young person. Everyone should follow both procedures outlined below, firstly the procedure for responding to a child in distress and secondly the procedure for reporting the concern.

### **Response to a Child Disclosing Abuse (see Code page 46)**

When a young person discloses information of suspected abuse you should:

- deal with any allegation of abuse in a sensitive and competent way through listening to and facilitating the child to tell about the problem, rather than interviewing the child about details of what happened
- stay calm and not show any extreme reaction to what the child is saying. Listen compassionately, and 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. The experience of telling should be a positive one so that the child will not mind talking to those involved in the investigation
- be honest with the child and tell them that it is not possible that keep information a secret
- make no judgmental statements against the person whom the allegation is made
- not question the child unless the nature of what s/he is saying is unclear. Leading questions should be avoided. Open, non-specific questions should be used such as "Can you explain to me what you mean by that"
- check out the concerns with the parents/guardians before making a report unless during so would endanger the child or compromise an investigation
- give the child some indication of what would happen next, such as informing parents/guardians, health service executive or social services. It should be kept in mind that the child may have been threatened and may feel vulnerable at this stage.
- Carefully record the details
- Pass on this information to the Designated Person (name this person here)
- **Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you**

# Irish Surfing Association

## Reporting Suspected or Disclosed Child Abuse

The following steps should be taken in reporting child abuse to the statutory authorities:

- Observe and note dates, times, locations and contexts in which the incident occurred or suspicion was aroused, together with any other relevant information
- Report the matter as soon as possible to the designated person with responsibility for reporting abuse (name of the designated person). If the Designated Person has reasonable grounds for believing that the child has been abused or is at risk of abuse, s/he will make a report to the health service executive/social services who have statutory responsibility to investigate and assess suspected or actual child abuse
- In cases of emergency, where a child appears to be at immediate and serious risk and the Designated Person is unable to contact a duty social worker, the police authorities should be contacted. Under no circumstances should a child be left in a dangerous situation pending intervention by the Statutory Authorities
- If the Designated Person is unsure whether reasonable grounds for concern exist s/he can informally consult with the local health board/social services, (see code page 47).S/he will be advised whether or not the matter requires a formal report.
- A Designated Person reporting suspected or actual child abuse to the Statutory Authorities will first inform the family of their intention to make such a report, unless doing so would endanger the child or undermine an investigation

The Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998 provides immunity from civil liability to persons who report child abuse 'reasonably and in good faith' to the Health Service Executive or the Gardai (See 5.13.1 – ISC. Code). The act also covers the offence of 'false reporting'. The main provisions of the Act are:

- The provision of immunity from civil liability to any person who reports child abuse "reasonably and in good faith" to designated officers of Health |Service Executive or any member of An Garda Síochána;
- The provision of significant protections for employees who report child abuse. These protections cover all employees and all forms of discrimination up to and including, dismissal;
- The creation of a new offence of false reporting of child abuse where a person makes a report of child abuse to the appropriate authorities "knowing that statement to be false". This is a new criminal offence designed to protect innocent persons from malicious reports.

# Irish Surfing Association

This law does not exist in Northern Ireland, but an individual who reports concerns 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 everyone to report offences or to forward information to the police by emphasizing 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'* **Allegations Against Sports Leaders**

The Irish Surfing Association has agreed procedures to be followed in cases of alleged child abuse against Sports Leaders. If such an allegation is made against Sports Leader working within the club, two procedures should be followed:

- The reporting procedure in respect of suspected child abuse (reported by the designated person / children's officer), see previous page
- The procedure for dealing with the Sports Leader (carried out by the club Chair or senior officer, or a person not already involved with the child protection concern)

The safety of the child making the allegation should be considered and the safety of any other children who may be at risk. The club should take any necessary steps that may be necessary to protect children in its care

The issue of confidentiality is important. Information is on a need to know basis and the Sports Leader should be treated with respect and fairness.

The reporting procedure

If the designated person has reasonable grounds for concern, (page 44, Section 5.10, Code), the matter should be reported to the local health board / social services, following the standard reporting procedure, (Section 5.12.1, page 45).

The Sports Leader

While the designated officer makes the report to the local health board, the Chair of the club should deal with the Sports Leader in question.

The Chair should privately inform the leader that (a) an allegation has been made against him / her and (b) the nature of the allegation. He / she should be afforded an opportunity to respond. His / her response should be noted and passed on to the health board / social services.

The leader should be asked to step aside pending the outcome of the investigation. When a person is asked to step aside it should be made clear that it is only a precautionary measure and will not prejudice any later disciplinary proceedings.

The governing body should be informed by the Designated Person that the leader has been asked to stand aside

## Irish Surfing Association

Governing bodies can consider disciplinary action on the leader but should ensure that this does not interfere with the investigation of the Statutory Authorities. It is important that governing bodies consider the outcome of the investigation and any implications it might have. The fact that the alleged abuser has not been prosecuted or been found guilty does not mean that they are appropriate to work with young people in the future.

# Irish Surfing Association

## Confidentiality

Confidentiality should be maintained in respect of all issues and people involved in cases of abuse, welfare or bad practice. It is important that the rights of both the child and the person about whom the complaint has been made are protected.

The following points should be kept in mind:

A guarantee of confidentiality or undertakings regarding secrecy cannot be given, as the welfare of the child will supersede all other considerations

All information should be treated in a careful and sensitive manner and should be discussed only with those who need to know

Information should be conveyed to the parents / guardians of the child in a sensitive way

Giving information to others on a 'need to know' basis for the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality

All persons involved in a child protection process (the child, his/her parents/guardians, the alleged offender, his/her family, Sports Leaders) should be afforded appropriate respect, fairness, support and confidentiality at all stages of the procedure.

Information should be stored in a secure place, with limited access only to designated people.

The requirements of the Data Protection laws should be adhered to.

Breach of confidentiality is a serious matter.

## 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 Person. The information should be checked out 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 Person and checked out without delay.

# Irish Surfing Association

## Appendix 1

### New Leader Information Form:

*Applicants should also complete Appendix 2*

Full Name:

Any surname previously:

Current Address:

Date of Birth:

List all other previous addresses:

Place of Birth:

Telephone No.(s):

National Insurance No: / PPSI

List previous experience / involvement in any other club. Include experience of working with young children in a voluntary or professional capacity.

### Sporting/ NGB Qualifications:

Do you agree to abide by the guidelines contained in the Code of Ethics for \_\_\_\_\_ (name of sport\_ for Young People?                      Yes      No

Have you ever been asked to leave a sporting organisation?      Yes      No  
*(If you have answered yes, we will contact you in confidence)*

### References:

*Please supply the name and address of two people who we can contact and who, from personal knowledge, are willing to endorse your application. One of these names should be, where possible, the name of an administrator / leader in your last club / place of involvement*

Name and Address of Referee 1:

Name and Address of Referee 2:

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

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

# Irish Surfing Association

## **Appendix 2**

DISCLOSURE OF CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS & PERMISSION FOR STATUTORY CHECKS FOR THOSE WORKING WITH CHILDREN *(Please read this information carefully)*

Statement of non-discrimination:

\_\_\_\_\_ (name of sport) is committed to equal opportunity for all applicants including those with criminal convictions. Information about criminal convictions is requested to assist the selection process and will be taken into account only when the conviction is considered relevant to the post. Any disclosure will be seen in the context of the job criteria, the nature of the offence and the responsibility for the care of existing clients\customers and employees.

For the purposes of your application for the post of:

\_\_\_\_\_ it is our policy to ask for a check to be carried out by the statutory organisation responsible for this task in the jurisdiction in which you are working/volunteering

Advice to Applicants:

Please complete this form as accurately as possible and return it marked “**Confidential**” in the envelope provided. An arrangement will be made with you to discuss any clarification if required. Thank you for your co-operation.

You **should** tell us now if you have a case pending or if you have ever been convicted of a criminal offence, or cautioned by the police, or bound over. You **should** include all offences, even minor matters such as motoring offences, and ‘spent’ conviction, that is, things which happened a long time ago. If you leave anything out it may effect your application. The disclosure of a criminal record or other information will not debar you from registration / appointment unless the NGB considers that the conviction renders you unsuitable. In making this decision the sport will consider the nature of the offence, how long ago it was committed and what age you were at the time and other factors which may be relevant.

**Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence or been the subject of a caution; a Bound Over Order; or are you at present the subject of criminal investigations?**

Yes

No

If so, please state below the nature, date(s) and sentence of the offence(s)

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**Please provide any other information you feel may be of relevance such as:**

the circumstances of the offence

a comment on the sentence received

any relevant developments in your situation since then

# Irish Surfing Association

whether or not you feel the conviction has relevance to this post.

I declare that all answers are complete and correct to the best of my knowledge and I will inform the designated person of any future convictions or charges. I consent to the check being made via the statutory authorities in which I intend to work/volunteer. I am also aware that the umbrella organisation carrying out the check, may, following discussion with myself, share the information returned with the designated person.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Print Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Please return completed forms to: \_\_\_\_\_

# Irish Surfing Association

## Appendix 3

### Existing Leaders Information Form

Leaders should familiarise themselves with the Code, in particular the code of conduct, page 9. Leaders should read below and agree to abide by these terms. Leaders should update the self-declaration questions annually.

As a leader in \_\_\_\_\_ I agree that I should

Be positive during sessions and competitions, praise and encourage effort as well as results

Put welfare of young person first, strike a balance between this and winning / results

Encourage fair play and treat participants equally

Recognise developmental needs, ensuring activities are appropriate for the individual

Plan and prepare appropriately

Have experience relevant to working with young people or hold up-to-date qualifications and be committed to the guidelines in this Code

Involve parents where possible and inform parents when problems arise

Keep a record of attendance at training and competitions

Keep a brief record of injury(s) and action taken

Keep a brief record of problem/action/outcomes, if behavioural problems arise

Report any concerns in accordance with this Code's reporting procedures

*Where possible I will avoid:*

Spending excessive amounts of time with children away from others

Taking sessions alone

Taking children on journeys alone in my car

*Sports Leaders should not:*

Use any form of physical punishment or physical force on a child

Exert undue influence over a participant in order to obtain personal benefit or reward

Take children to their home

Engage in rough physical games, sexually provocative games or allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any kind, and /or make sexually suggestive comments about, or to a child. This includes innuendo, flirting or inappropriate gestures and terms

Take measurements or engage in certain types of fitness testing without the presence of another adult

Undertake any form of therapy (hypnosis etc.) in the training of children

### Self-Declaration

Do you agree to abide by the guidelines contained in the Code of Ethics for \_\_\_\_\_ (name of sport) for Young People?                      Yes      No

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

*(If you have answered yes, we will contact you in confidence)*

## Irish Surfing Association

Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence or been the subject of a caution; a Bound Over Order; or are you at present the subject of criminal investigations?

Yes      No

*(If you have answered yes, we will contact you in confidence)*

Signed:

Dated:

# Irish Surfing Association

## Appendix 4

### Confidential Reference Form

*(this form can be used as a telephone reference or used as a written reference)*

The following person: \_\_\_\_\_ (list name) has expressed an interest in working with \_\_\_\_\_ (name club / organisation) as \_\_\_\_\_ (list position)

*If you are happy to complete this reference, any information will be treated with due confidentiality and in accordance with relevant legislation and guidance. Information will only be shared with the person conducting the assessment of the candidate's suitability for the post, if he/she is offered the position. We appreciate you being extremely candid, open and honest in your evaluation.*

How long have you known this person?

In what capacity?

What attributes does this person have that would make them suited to this work?

Please rate this person on the following (tick one box for each statement)

	Poor	Average	Good	Very Good	Excellent
Responsibility					
Maturity					
Self-motivation					
Can motivate others					
Energy					
Trustworthines s					
Reliability					

This post involves substantial access to young people. As an organisation committed to the welfare and protection of young people, we are anxious to know if you have any reason at all to be concerned about this applicant being in contact with children and young people

Yes                      No

*If you answer yes, we will contact you in confidence*

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

# Irish Surfing Association

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

Position in organisation: \_\_\_\_\_

*Name of club / organisation:* \_\_\_\_\_

# Irish Surfing Association

## Appendix 5

### Sample Application Form for New Junior Members

#### CONTACT INFORMATION

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Male / Female

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone – Home \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone - Mobile (in case of emergency) \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

#### MEDICAL HISTORY INFORMATION (details of any know allergies, conditions, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

In the event of illness, having parental responsibility, I give permission for medical treatment to be administered where considered necessary by a nominated first aider, or by suitably qualified medical practitioners. If I cannot be contacted and my child needs emergency hospital treatment, I authorize a qualified medical practitioner to provide emergency treatment or medication.

#### Other information

Any other special needs, requirements or directions that would be helpful for leaders to know about

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

#### PARENTAL/GUARDIAN CONSENT

I am the Parent/Guardian of \_\_\_\_\_

#### Photographs

I understand that photographs will be taken during or at sport related events and may be used in the promotion of sport