

CHILD SAFEGUARDING

Essential information for Club Officers

INTRODUCTION

Child Safeguarding is governed by Legislation and Rules in the GAA and is applicable to those who are under 18 years of age, those who work with them and for any person under 18 years of age who may be playing on an adult's team.

Our Child Safeguarding Codes, Policies and Procedures are all in place to ensure that as far as is practicable that children are safe from harm while using our services

Clubs under the guidance of their Officers and the Executive must ensure that :

- Legislation and GAA Rules require that all Clubs and County Boards must agree and adopt a Child Safeguarding Statement that outlines the policies and procedures which are in place to manage the risks of harm to children when participating in our various activities. - <https://www.gaa.ie/the-gaa/child-welfare-and-protection/children-first>
- The Statement shall be agreed following completion of a risk assessment, i.e. assessing the risk to harm of a child when participating in your activities. The Statement must be displayed on Club property or where you carry out your activities. - <https://www.gaa.ie/the-gaa/child-welfare-and-protection/children-first>
- They appoint a Club Children's Officer and a Designated Liaison Person.
- That the Club adopts and adheres to the Code of Behaviour (Underage) <https://www.gaa.ie/the-gaa/child-welfare-and-protection/code-of-behaviour>
- That all coaches who work with children have been vetted, have attended child safeguarding training and have a minimum coaching qualification.

WHAT'S IN THE CHILD SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT?

- How we manage any risk of harm as identified.
- Procedures for investigating any allegations against volunteers/staff.
- Selection and Recruitment procedures.
- The training programmes provided for volunteers and staff.
- A commitment to report allegations and concerns of abuse to Tusla/Gateway Teams & the GAA.
- It names the GAA Mandated Person.
- It names the Club Children's Officer.
- It commits the Club to the Code of Behaviour (Underage).

The GAA provide templates for both the Risk Assessment process and the Child Safeguarding Statement - <https://www.gaa.ie/the-gaa/child-welfare-and-protection/children-first>

VETTING IN THE GAA

In accordance with legislation any person whose work or activity involves access to children or vulnerable persons must be vetted.

In the GAA the work of coaches, trainers, mentors, caretakers and referees is described as a 'regulated role' and therefore they are subject to vetting prior to commencing their role. Thereafter, each Club shall decide if other roles merit a person being vetted.

Vetting is carried out via the GAA E-Vetting online procedure at gaa.ie. Once an applicant fulfils the proof of identity form with their Club, they then complete the E-Vetting process.

The Club Secretary* of the Applicant's Club automatically receives an update as each processing stage of the vetting is completed. When the applicant receives their GAA Vetting Acceptance letter so also does the club secretary who should pass this on to the Children's Officer as soon as possible so as to enable them maintain a list of vetted personnel in the Club. Vetting once completed is valid for three years only. If an applicant is being refused the Club Chairperson shall be informed in confidence.

Once all Club Children's Officers avail of their GAA email address this process of notification will transfer to them rather than to the Club Secretary

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Designated Liaison Person acts as a resource and is responsible for ensuring that reporting procedures within your organisation are followed at Club and County level. All Clubs and County Boards must appoint a DLP. The Club or County Chairperson automatically assumes the role of DLP unless another person is chosen to undertake the role. The DLP must ensure that allegations of abuse are reported to the relevant statutory authority and to the GAA, without delay.

Children's Officer The primary role of the Children's Officer is to ensure full adherence by those working with children to the Code of Behaviour (Underage) which includes being vetted, attending safeguarding training, completing a coaching qualification and also assisting members with general queries on the Code.

The Mandated Person in the GAA is Gearóid Ó Maoilmhichíl mandatedperson@gaa.ie. The person in this role has a legal obligation to report the harm of children to Tusla and to assist Tusla, if requested, in assessing a concern which has been the subject of a mandated report.

Training is provided by the GAA for all of the above roles.