

# **IRISH DRAGON BOAT ASSOCIATION LIMITED**

## **Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Persons Policy**

Revision: C – May 2021 (JD)

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## **SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE PERSONS POLICY 2021**

This safeguarding policy is based on guidelines and legislation outlined in the following documents:

- Code of Ethics Good Practice for Children's Sport – Sport Ireland.
- Article 30 of the UN Convention on Rights of the Child, which recognizes the "right to participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport".

Reference should also be made to:

- Children First, National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011.
- National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012
- Children First Bill 2014
- Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012

### **Glossary**

For the purpose of this glossary and guidance the following terms are given the stated meaning:

**Children and young people** means people under the age of 18 years.

**Vulnerable person** means vulnerable people aged 18 or over and includes older people, people with a learning, physical or sensory disability and people with mental illness or dementia. It also includes informal carers, who provide personal assistance on an unpaid basis.

**Vulnerable groups** includes all children and young persons and all vulnerable persons, unless specifically stated.

**Safeguarding:** the term child protection has been extended to safeguarding as it reflect the wider responsibility for health and safety and prevention as well as just protection of vulnerable groups from abuse. It may be defined as:

***Doing everything possible to minimize the risk of harm to children, young people and vulnerable persons.***

Safeguarding is about being proactive and putting measures in place in advance of any contact with participants to ensure that children and vulnerable persons are going to be kept safe. This could include:

- Ensuring volunteers are properly checked when they are recruited.
- Guidelines for people who come into contact with children and vulnerable persons as part of their role to ensure they know what they need to do in order to keep participants safe.
- Guidelines for planning an event or activity with children and vulnerable persons and putting measures in place to minimize the risk of safeguarding issues occurring.

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

Children, young people and vulnerable persons have the right to live their lives to the fullest potential, to be protected, and to be able to participate and enjoy activities and to be treated with dignity and respect.

We at Irish Dragon Boat Association are committed to good practice, which protects children and vulnerable persons from harm. Volunteers accept and recognize their responsibility to provide an environment which promotes safety at all times.

To achieve this we will:

- Develop an awareness of the issues which may lead to children and vulnerable persons being harmed.
- Create an open environment by identifying a “Designated Person” who will act as the Safeguarding/ Children’s Officer to whom people can turn if they need to talk.
- Adopt child/vulnerable person centred and democratic coaching styles.
- Adopt Safeguarding guidelines through codes of conduct for members and all adults in Irish Dragon Boat Association.
- Ensure complaints, grievance and disciplinary procedures are available and included in our governance documents.
- Share information about concerns with children, vulnerable persons, parents and others who need to know.
- Provide information as required to the Irish Dragon Boat Association board and club contacts.
- Ensure good and safe training and sporting practices.
- Be involved in safeguarding training.
- Keep Safeguarding policies under regular review (every 3 years minimum).

The legislation in the Republic of Ireland is based on a clear and consistent set of principles designed with the common aim of promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable persons.

Children and vulnerable persons have the right to be safe. All coaches should ensure this fundamental principle takes precedence over all other considerations.

This policy applies to all in the Irish Dragon Boat Association, including coaches, administrators, officials, volunteers, parents and participants.

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## **EQUALITY STATEMENT**

The Irish Dragon Boat Association (IDBA) is committed to ensuring that equity is incorporated across all aspects of its development. In doing so it acknowledges and adopts the following definition of sports equity:

***Sports equity is about fairness in sport, equality of access, recognizing inequalities and taking steps to address them. It is about changing the culture and structure of sport to ensure it becomes equally accessible to everyone in society.***

- IDBA respects the rights, dignity and worth of every person and will treat everyone equally within the context of their sport, regardless of age, ability, gender, race, ethnicity, religious belief, sexuality or social/economic status.
- IDBA is committed to everyone having the right to enjoy their sport in an environment free from threat of intimidation, harassment and abuse.
- IDBA participants have a responsibility to oppose discriminatory behavior and promote equality of opportunity.
- IDBA will deal with any incidence of discriminatory behavior seriously. To reduce the additional vulnerability of children with a disability, coaches will seek guidance on working with children with a disability from external agencies, parents / guardian and the children themselves.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT**

We at the IDBA will never promise to keep any secrets. However, information of a confidential nature will only be communicated on a “need to know” basis, with the welfare of the child or vulnerable person always being paramount.

Considerations of confidentiality will not be allowed to override the rights of children and vulnerable persons to be protected from harm.

## **AWARENESS OF THE ISSUES**

Background knowledge in relation to harm that children and vulnerable persons may suffer, the general principles of /safeguarding and the ability to recognize and respond to abuse and poor practice are important issues. Of primary concern for the IDBA is the issue of Safeguarding our members within the operation of the sport. However, being cognizant of the indicators of abuse or harm in respect of participants caused by others outside the sport, are of a equal importance fir the safety and well being of that person.

**There are four formally recognised types of abuse relevant to children and vulnerable persons.**

- Neglect
- Emotional abuse
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse

Definitions are available from “Children First”.

In addition to these the IDBA recognizes that we have a responsibility to challenge any form of bullying which is defined as:

“The 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 can take many forms, but the three main types are:

- Physical (hitting, kicking)
- Verbal (E.g. Racist or sectarian remarks, threats, name-calling)
- Emotional (E.g. Isolating an individual from the activities and social acceptance of his peer group).

Bullying can be done face to face but equally a person can experience bullying through online activity or texting. Bullying is not an accepted behavior towards anyone in the IDBA be they child, coach, volunteer or parent.

### **RESPONDING TO DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE**

#### **Always**

- Record what has been said ASAP.
- Remain sensitive and calm.
- Reassure the person that they are safe, were right to tell, are not to blame and are being taken seriously.
- Let them talk...don't interview, give the person time to say what they want.
- Ensure the experience is as positive as it can be.
- Explain that you must tell others to ensure action is taken to increase their safety, but will maintain confidentiality.
- Tell the person what will happen next.
- Involve appropriate individuals immediately.
- Stay calm.
- Reassure them that they have done the right thing in telling and that it will be dealt with appropriately.

#### **Never**

- Question unless for clarification.
- Make promises you cannot keep.
- Rush into actions that may be inappropriate.
- Make / pass a judgment on alleged abuser.
- Take sole responsibility, consult the designated officer so you can begin to protect the person and gain support for yourself.

**THE DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING / CHILDRENS OFFICER WITHIN  
THE IRISH DRAGON BOAT ASSOCIATION IS:**

**PATRICIA SALMON: [patriciasalmonroe@gmail.com](mailto:patriciasalmonroe@gmail.com)**

**GUIDELINES FOR REPORTING ALLEGATIONS / INCIDENTS**

- Record all incidents reported or observed.
- Inform the Designated person ASAP.
- 1 copy of the record made to the designated person within 24 hours.
- Ensure confidentiality – only on a “need to know” basis (reference confidentiality statement).
- Inform parents / carers, unless to do so may put the person at further risk.
- The designated person will be responsible for storing the reports in a safe and secure manner.

The Designated Officer will have responsibility for consulting with TUSLA and/or An Garda Siochana on a formal or informal basis, depending on the nature of allegations.