



Irish Amateur Fencing Federation

Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport in Ireland

You will already be aware of the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport in Ireland, published by the Government in 1996. The Code is designed to cover sporting activities involving children and young people up to 18 years of age. In many ways it simply sets out what many of you will recognise as good practice for individuals working with children in sport.

You are requested to study the Code and bring its recommendations to the attention of all persons in your club who have contact with children, whether it be in competitive sport or non-competitive physical recreation. Adults have a crucial leadership role to play in sport, whether as coaches, instructors, administrators, competitors, parents and guardians. All clubs affiliated to the IAFF and all individuals licensed by the IAFF will be required to comply with the recommendations set out in the Code.

For your assistance I am attaching a note which deals with some of the more important and relevant points referred to in the Code. I suggest that this note be copied and made available to all of your club members.

Nuala McGarrity
Hon. Secretary

For the complete Irish Sports Council document please click [here](#)

Extracts from: "Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children in Sport in Ireland"

The Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport in Ireland has been adopted by the Irish Amateur Fencing Federation. The Code is designed to cover sport activities involving children and young people up to the age of 18 years. The provisions of the Code should be studied by all adults who have contact with children in the context of fencing, whether in clubs, at competitions, during travel or otherwise.

For convenience, we draw to your attention a number of specific points which are set out in the Code.

Core Values

- The importance of childhood must be understood and valued by everyone in sport.
- All children's sport experiences and contexts must be guided by what is best for children.

- Adults interacting with children in sport should do so with integrity and respect for the child.
- All children's sport should be conducted in an atmosphere of fair play.
- Children's sport should be conducted in a safe, positive and encouraging atmosphere.
- All children should be treated in an equitable and fair manner.

Education and Training

A three-tier approach to ethics and child protection is recommended:

- Implementation of the Code of Ethics and Good Practice.
- Specific education in child protection.
- Education as part of training programmes for sport leaders.

Selection and Screening

It is recommended that adults taking responsibility for children in sport, whether on a professional or voluntary basis should undergo a selection and screening process. Sports leaders should:

- Be competent and qualified, be positive, enthusiastic and cheerful.
- Reinforce principles of fair play.
- Give feedback in a constructive and encouraging manner.
- Encourage an active and healthy lifestyle.
- Involve parents/guardians as much as possible.
- Recommend that they themselves are human and will not get it right all of the time.

Behaviour of Leaders

Sports leaders must maintain the highest standards of personal conduct, respecting the rights, dignity and worth of each child. They must be careful to avoid any situation which might result in harm being caused to the child.

Child Abuse

Care should be taken to avoid harm to children either by direct acts or by failure to provide proper care or both. Such acts include physical injuries, severe neglect and sexual and emotional abuse. The detection and prevention of this abuse depends on the collaborative effort of everyone concerned. Central to this effort are:

- Knowledge of the behavioural and physical indicators of various forms of abuse.
- Knowledge of the appropriate response and action to be taken where abuse is revealed or suspected.
- Vigilance and avoidance of all situations conducive to risk.
- Open, trusting and co-operative relationship.

Children's Rights

Children have the right to be protected from abuse. Within sport the following children's rights should be upheld:

- To be safe.
- To feel safe.
- To protect their own bodies.
- To refuse inappropriate touches.
- To get help against bullies.
- To not keep secrets.
- To say no.
- To tell.
- To be believed.

(adapted from Kidscape - ISPCC)

Reporting of Child Abuse

Responsibility for investigatory child abuse cases (suspected or otherwise) lies with the Health Boards and the Gardai. It is not appropriate for individuals, clubs or sporting organisations to carry out internal investigations into cases where child abuse is suspected. The Code provides that any person who knows or suspects that a child is being harmed or is at risk of harm has a duty to convey his/her concern to the local Health Board. It may, however, be appropriate for a person to discuss concerns he/she may have with another person in the club. This could be with the Children's Liaison Officer (who is recommended to be appointed in each club) or with an appropriate officer in the club, if this is considered necessary.

Confidentiality must be maintained in respect of all issues and people involved in concerns about abuse.

Conclusion

The above summarises some of the more important provisions of the Code of Ethics and Good Practice. The Code outlines the major issues which need to be addressed if children's sport is to be developed to the highest standards of quality and respect for the needs and dignity of the children. The adult members of each club and coaches have the responsibility to act on the recommendations which have been included in the Code and to work co-operatively in helping make children's sport a happy safe and rewarding experience for all.

***Nuala McGarrity
Honorary Secretary
Irish Amateur Fencing Federation***