



# CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

# SKIF-IRELAND POLICY DOCUMENT

## SKIF Ireland Child Protection Policy



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Rev 3

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## 1. DEFINITIONS

**Organisation:** For the purposes of this document, it shall be taken to refer to Shotokan Karate-Do International Federation Ireland (SKIF Ireland).

**Club:** For the purposes of this document, it shall be taken to refer to an Affiliated Club within the organisation.

**Karate-ka:** For this document's purposes, it shall be taken to refer to a Person Participating in karate-do.

**Member:** For this document's purposes, it shall be taken to refer to a Licensed member of the organisation.

**Instructor:** For this document's purposes, it shall be taken to refer to an Instructor within an affiliated club.

**Club Instructor:** For the purposes of this document, it shall be taken to refer to the head instructor of an affiliated club.

**Child/Young/Young People:** For the purposes of this document, it shall be taken to refer to any individual under 18.

**Volunteer:** For the purposes of this document, it shall be taken to refer to any individual who is not a licensed member of an affiliated club but who has been appointed by the organisation to work with young people.

**Parent:** For this document's purposes, it shall be taken to refer to a parent, legal guardian or carer of a child.

**National Child Welfare Officer (NCWO):** For the purposes of this document, it shall be taken to refer to an Individual designated responsible for dealing with matters concerning the protection and safeguarding of young people within the organisation. The NCWO shall have the appropriate training for the role.

**Club Child Welfare Officer (CWO):** For the purposes of this document, it shall be taken to refer to an individual designated to deal with matters concerning the protection and safeguarding of young people within the club. All SKIF Ireland affiliated clubs shall have an appointed CWO; this individual cannot be the club instructor but may also fulfil the Designated Liaison Officer role. The CWO shall have the appropriate training for the role.

**National Designated Liaison Officer (NDLO):** For the purposes of this document, it shall be taken to refer to a person at the organisation level responsible for reporting allegations or suspicions of child abuse to the Statutory Authorities.

**Designated Liaison Officer (DLO):** For the purposes of this document, it shall be taken to refer to a person in a club responsible for reporting allegations or suspicions of child abuse to the statutory authorities. All skif ireland affiliated clubs shall have an appointed designated liaison officer; this individual may also fulfil the cwo role. Ideally, the club instructor should not be the designated liaison officer, but in instances where this is unavoidable, the CWO role should be fulfilled by another individual. The designated liaison officer shall have the appropriate training for the role.

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## 2. POLICY STATEMENT

SKIF Ireland is fully committed to safeguarding the well-being of its young members. Every individual in any club affiliated to SKIF Ireland should always show respect and understanding for young members rights, safety and welfare and conduct themselves in a way that reflects the principles of the organisation and the guidelines contained in the Child Protection policy and Code of Conduct.

In SKIF Ireland, our first priority is the welfare of our young members. We are committed to providing an environment that will allow young people to perform to the best of their ability, free from bullying and intimidation. SKIF Ireland will issue guidance to club instructors in relation to their responsibilities for the welfare of young people.

This guidance (contained in but not limited to this policy) will be related to codes of conduct, supervision of young people, safety, reporting procedures for child welfare and protection, appropriate training and Garda vetting.

Club instructors must ensure any individuals working with young people in their club have the appropriate Sport Ireland Safeguarding training and are Garda vetted.

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### **3. NATIONAL CHILD WELFARE OFFICER**

The National Child Welfare officer is responsible for ensuring clubs have access to the latest revision of the Child Protection Policy.

The current National Child Protection Officer is:

Jamie Conroy  
Tel: 0857054999  
Email: cwoskofireland@gmail.com

### **4. NATIONAL DESIGNATED LIASON OFFICER**

The National Designated Liaison Officer is responsible for dealing with any concerns about the protection of children and is responsible for reporting allegations or suspicions of child abuse to the Statutory Authorities.

The current National Designated Liaison Officer is:

Kathleen Byrne  
Tel: 0863797946  
Email: kathleenbyrne@email.com

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## 5. CORE VALUES IN KARATE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

The work of SKIF Ireland is based on the following principles that will guide the development of karate for young people in this organisation. Young People's karate experience should be guided by what is best for the young person. The stages of development and the young person's ability should guide the types of activity provided within the group. 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 karate should do so with integrity and respect for the child. There is a danger that karate contexts can be used to exploit or undermine young people. All adult actions in karate 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 karate.

### Quality Atmosphere and Ethos

Karate 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 young people should be treated equitably and fairly regardless of age, ability, sex, religion, social and ethnic background or political persuasion. Young people with disabilities should be involved in karate activities in an integrated way, thus allowing them to participate to their potential alongside other young people.

### Fair Play

Fair play is the guiding principle of the *SKIF Ireland Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct*. All young people's karate should be conducted in an atmosphere of fair play. SKIF Ireland 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 concerning eliminating opportunities, excessive commercialisation and corruption. (*European Sports Charter and Code of Ethics, Council of Europe, 1993*).

### Competition

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 young people too early, resulting in excessive pressure. Instructors will aim to prioritise the child's welfare and competitive standards. A child-centred approach will help to ensure that competition and specialisation are kept in their appropriate place.

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## 6. CODE OF CONDUCT FOR YOUNG KARATE-KA

SKIF Ireland wishes to provide the best environment for all young people involved in karate. Young people deserve to be given enjoyable, safe sporting opportunities, free of abuse of any kind. These participants have rights, which must be respected, and responsibilities that they must accept. Young people should be encouraged to realise that they are responsible for treating other participants and karate instructors fairly and respectfully.

Young karateka are entitled to:

- Be listened to
- Be believed
- Be safe and feel safe
- Be treated with dignity, sensitivity and respect
- Participate on an equal basis
- Be happy, have fun and enjoy karate
- Experience competition at a level at which they feel comfortable
- Make complaints and have them dealt with
- Get help against bullies
- Say No
- To protect their bodies
- Confidentiality

Young karateka should always:

- Treat karate instructors with respect, train and compete fairly at all times and do their best
- Obey the rules of the dojo/competition hall
- Respect team/club members, even when things go wrong
- Respect opponents, be gracious in defeat
- Obey the rules set down by team managers/coaches when travelling to away events
- Behave in a manner that avoids bringing karate into disrepute
- Talk to the Child Welfare Officer if they have any problems, experience or witness bullying behaviour

Young karateka should never:

- Cheat
- Use violence or physical contact that is not allowed within the rules
- Shout or argue with instructors, officials, teammates or opponents
- Harm club members, opponents or their property
- Bully or use bullying tactics to isolate another karateka
- Use unfair or bullying tactics to gain an advantage
- Use karate skills outside of the dojo except for self-defence
- Take banned substances
- Keep secrets, primarily if they have caused harm
- Tell lies about adults / young people
- Spread rumours

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## 7. CODE OF CONDUCT FOR PARENTS

SKIF Ireland believes that parents should:

- Acknowledge and adhere to these guidelines and the procedures for complaints/grievances.
- Familiarise themselves with the Child Welfare Officer (CWO) and understand their responsibilities.
- Promptly report inappropriate behaviour to the club's instructor/coach/manager/CWO.
- Encourage their child to follow the dojo rules.
- Show respect towards their child's instructor and offer support to their endeavours.
- Guide their child to treat their instructor and fellow karatekas with respect.
- Motivate their child to compete according to the rules.
- Show respect to referees, coaches, organisers, karate instructors/volunteers, and other karatekas.
- Recognise and appreciate the efforts of karate instructors/volunteers in providing opportunities for their child(ren).
- Refrain from publicly questioning the integrity or decisions of referees, coaches, organisers, or karate instructors/volunteers.
- Foster mutual respect among club mates/teammates and opponents.
- Act as a positive role model for their child and maintain exemplary conduct when interacting with young people, other parents, karate instructors/volunteers, coaches, or organisers.
- Behave responsibly and avoid disrupting classes or competitions unfairly.
- Avoid making flippant or sarcastic remarks that may embarrass or disparage young participants.
- Teach their child the importance of honesty and good sportsmanship, valuing them as much as winning.
- Set a good example by acknowledging and applauding reasonable effort from both sides.
- Refrain from exhibiting threatening or abusive behaviour or using foul language.
- Support initiatives to address and prevent abusive conduct and bullying in all its forms.
- Familiarise themselves with the organisation's bullying policy.
- Ensure timely drop-off and pick-up of their child.
- Ensure that only the official guardian collects the child; any alternative arrangement must be communicated to the relevant instructor.
- Inform the club instructor of their decision regarding using their child's image for promotional purposes. If a parent opts out, the instructor can ensure compliance within the dojo, but the parent remains responsible for managing their child's visibility in other events.
- Ensure their child's hygiene and attire (clean white dogi and correct belt).
- Ensure no jewellery or accessories are worn for safety reasons.
- Ensure only a plain, white tee shirt to be worn underneath the child's dogi.
- Ensure that their child's toes and fingernails are clean and short.



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## 8. CODE OF CONDUCT FOR KARATE INSTRUCTORS

SKIF Ireland recognises the importance of the instructor's role in young people's lives. All instructors have an opportunity to be a positive influence and help build self-esteem in the individual. All instructors should strive to create a positive environment for the young people in their care. They are responsible for taking the necessary steps to provide positive and healthy experiences.

All instructors/volunteers should prioritise the young people's safety and enjoyment of karate. They should adhere to the guidelines and regulations set out in SKIF-Ireland's Constitution and policy's, especially SKIF Ireland Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct.

The following guides instructors/volunteers in relation to how they should behave around young people,

### Instructors and Volunteers

All club instructors/volunteers are expected to go through appropriate vetting and safeguarding approval procedures; this applies to all persons with substantial access to young people.

### Which Safeguarding Courses do I need?

For SKIF Ireland, the approved Safeguarding courses are delivered by Sport Ireland. Specifically, any club affiliated with SKIF Ireland must have a minimum structure of the following vetted roles.

PERSON TYPE	GARDA VETTING	SPORT IRELAND SAFEGUARDING COURSE
Instructor	Yes	Safeguarding 1
Child Welfare Officer	Yes	Safeguarding 1 & 2
Designated Liaison Officer	Yes	Safeguarding 1 & 3

Instructors of any affiliated club must

- Ensure adherence to the Child Protection Policy, Code of Conduct, and all relevant policies and codes.
- Ensure participation in approval/recruiting procedures, including Garda Vetting.
- Ensure exemplary conduct, serving as role models and promoting the positive aspects of karate.
- Ensure respect for every child's rights, dignity, and worth, regardless of sex, ethnic origin, religion, or ability.
- Ensure the development of respect among karateka, opponents, instructors, and coaches, refraining from openly criticising other instructors.
- Ensure avoidance of involving young karateka in personal affairs, such as visits to the instructor's home or overnight stays.
- Ensure strict confidentiality of any personal or medical information unless necessary for the child's welfare.
- Ensure avoidance of training alone with a child and ensure adequate supervision for all activities.
- Ensure obtaining suitable and appropriate training.
- Ensure generous praise and create a safe and supportive environment for young people.
- Ensure reliability, encouragement, and exemplary behaviour as role models.
- Ensure a zero-tolerance policy towards bullying or abusive language.
- Ensure working and training in an open and transparent environment.
- Ensure that young people under their care enjoy their karate experience.
- Ensure refraining from ridiculing or shouting at karateka for mistakes.
- Ensure recognition and respect for the entitlement of all young people.

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- Ensure avoidance of favouritism and equal distribution of time and attention among all children.
- Ensure caution to avoid embarrassing or disparaging remarks towards children.
- Ensure refraining from punishment through verbal, physical, or exclusionary means.
- Ensure insistence on respecting rules and promoting fair play among karateka.
- Ensure discouragement of drug, alcohol, and tobacco use, promoting a healthy approach to karate activity.
- Ensure refraining from alcohol use before coaching, during events, or on trips with young karateka.
- Ensure setting realistic goals and avoiding pushing young karateka beyond their capabilities.
- Ensure parental agreement is obtained before inviting a young karateka to adult training sessions/squads.
- Ensure avoidance of behaviour that could be interpreted as inappropriate by young people or other adults.
- Ensure professionalism in ending any previous coach-student relationships with new young karateka.
- Ensure brief records of injuries, actions taken, and behavioral problems are maintained.
- Ensure recognition and addressing of developmental needs.
- Ensure avoidance of spending excessive time alone with young people.
- Ensure avoidance of taking young people on journeys alone in their car.
- Ensure refraining from resorting to punishment or physical force on a child.
- Ensure refraining from exerting undue influence over a participant for personal benefit.
- Ensure avoidance of engaging in rough physical or sexually provocative games, inappropriate touching, or making sexually suggestive comments.
- Ensure avoidance of taking measurements or engaging in certain types of fitness testing without the presence of other adults.
- Ensure avoidance of providing any form of therapy in the training of young people.
- Ensure appropriate insurance coverage for all club activities.

## 9. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION POLICY

All individuals, including existing club instructors, must undergo the formal vetting procedure as applicants. Newly approved club instructors, assistant club instructors, and volunteers will receive support, including initial supervision for newly appointed assistants or volunteers. The decision to appoint new assistant club instructors or volunteers lies with the club instructor. Information about applicants will be handled with utmost sensitivity and confidentiality, stored securely.

## 10. ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

**Sub Policy Document:** SKIF Ireland Anti-Bullying Policy

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## 11. GUIDELINES ON GENERAL ISSUES

### Transport

SKIF Ireland recommends that young people should be transported to events by their parent/guardian. Where this is not possible, instructors should receive permission directly from the young person's parent/guardian, preferably in writing. Instructors/volunteers have extra responsibility when they transport young people to events.

Instructors/volunteers should:

- Ensure that your car is adequately insured and that you adhere to all road regulations, including the legal requirement to wear seat belts.
- Stay within the permitted number of passengers in your vehicle.
- Avoid being alone with a single young person.
- Obtain parental consent before regularly transporting a young individual, clearly communicating pick-up and drop-off times and placing young individuals in the vehicle's back seat.
- Ensure parents have communicated with young people about transportation plans and are comfortable with the arrangements.

### Travel

- When overnight travel is involved, the parent should accompany the young person. Where this is impractical, the instructor/volunteers travelling with the young person/people must sign a separate agreement. Parents and participants will also be asked to sign permission forms.
- For all foreign travel, the parent should accompany the young person.

SKIF Ireland has provided a Safeguarding checklist for travelling SKIF Ireland individuals & teams as outlined below

- A Child Protection lead for travelling teams/individuals will be the designated CWO for that away trip.
- The Code of Ethics and Best Practices applies to all underage karateka at home or abroad.
- Training shall only commence with a minimum of two coaches.
- All participating coaches must have child protection training and be vetted by SKIF Ireland. If the coach is not an SKIF Ireland member or provides professional services regularly, they should complete a self-declaration form. (Physio, etc.)
- Rooming arrangements should be agreed upon with parents and coaches before departure.
- Coaches should never share with juniors under any circumstances. Parents can share with their own children but not with others.
- Code of conduct: agreed with and signed by junior karateka and coaches.
- Medical: a parent requires a care plan if a child is travelling and suffers from an allergy or illness that may need attention when abroad.
- Travel arrangements should be communicated to all so parents so they are aware of the drop off and collection times.
- All travelling abroad should have their European Health Insurance card allowing access to services in the EU: <http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/1/schemes/EHIC/>.
- Individuals should have their own travel insurance in place.

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### General Supervision

- Make sure there is an adequate adult-to-child ratio. Instructors should try to have more than one adult present. The number of adults needed will depend on the nature of the activity, the age of the young people and any special needs of the group. As a guide, the ratio is 1:8 for participants under 12 years of age and 1:10 for participants over 12 years of age. This is only a guide and will change depending on the circumstances, e.g. karateka with special needs or away trips.
- Where there are mixed groups, ideally, there should be instructors of both genders. It is acknowledged that this is only sometimes achievable.
- Avoid being alone with one young person. If you need to talk separately, do so in an open environment, in full view of others.
- In changing rooms, ask parents to take responsibility and supervise in pairs of appropriate gender.
- Instructors should not need to enter the changing room at the same time as young people unless young people need special assistance; supervision should be in pairs of appropriate gender.
- State time for the start and end of training sessions or competitions; young people should support instructors at the end of sessions. If there are late collections, instructors should remain in pairs until participants have left.
- Keep attendance records and records of any incidents/injuries that arise.

### Safety

SKIF Ireland recommends that the club/organisation will:

- Ensure activities are suitable for the age and stage of development of participants.
- Keep a record of any specific medical conditions of the participants.
- Keep a record of emergency contact numbers for parents/guardians.
- Ensure any necessary protective gear is used.
- Ensure the First Aid kit is close at hand with access to a qualified first-aider.
- Know the contact numbers of emergency services.
- Keep the first aid kit stocked up. If an incident occurs, record the injury and action taken. Make a brief record of the problem/action/outcome. Contact the young person's parents and keep them informed of all details.

At competitions and gradings, it is the responsibility of the organiser to ensure:

- Instructors, officials (judges, referees, etc.) know the rules and appropriately conduct the contests.
- The safeguarding of young people is the primary concern.
- Karate-ka should know and keep the rules of their karate, keeping in mind that many rules are there for safety.
- Instructors hold the appropriate qualifications required by SKIF-Ireland.
- There is adequate insurance coverage for all activities.

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### Physical Contact

Physical contact during karate should always be intended to meet the child's needs, NOT the adult's. The adult shall only use appropriate physical contact when the aim is to assist in the 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 young person.

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 the groin, genital areas, buttocks, breasts or any other part of the body that might cause a child distress or embarrassment.

## 12. USE OF PHOTOGRAPHIC AND MOBILE EQUIPMENT

### Photography

SKIF-Ireland wishes to reduce the risk of inappropriate, unsolicited attention from people within and outside of karate. Group photographs where the club is identified rather than individuals are good for publicity without creating a risk to those in the photographs.

Remember the following:

- If the karateka is named, avoid using their photograph.
- If a photograph is used, avoid naming the karateka.
- Get parental permission to allow the use of the young karateka's image or confirmation of a parents decision to opt-out of allowing the use of their child's image. This should form part of parental consent when a young person joins a club.
- Suppose a parent does not want a young person's photo taken. In that case, the parent is responsible for attending events and managing their child's visibility to cameras.
- The photograph's content should focus on the activity, not on a particular child.
- Talk to the CWO if you are worried about the use of images.
- Photographs, when used with personal information, can be used to identify young people. This practice can make a child vulnerable to an individual who may wish to cause them harm.
- Anyone concerned about photography at events or training sessions should contact the young people's officer/ Designated Liaison Officer with said concerns.

### Mobile Phones

Mobile phones are often given to young people for security, enabling parents to keep in touch and ensure they are safe. Young people value their phones highly, offering them a sense of independence. In addition, mobile phones allow quick and easy contact, making a safe and efficient way to conduct 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.

Within clubs, there is a need to encourage responsible and secure use of mobile phones by adults and young people.

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As a young person, remember:

- 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 CWO/Designated Liaison Officer within the club.
- Be careful about who you give your phone number to, and don't respond to unfamiliar numbers.
- That in cases of bullying or harassment, block the number of the harasser.
- 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.
- Treayourou phone as you would any other valuable item so that you guard against theft.

As an instructor/volunteer, remember:

- Use group texts for communication.
- It is not appropriate to have the direct contact details of young members; all communication should be via their guardian rather than directly to the young person themselves.
- It is not appropriate to have constant communication with individual karateka.
- Don't use the phone in specific locations; inappropriate use of your camera phone may cause upset or offence to another person, e.g. changing rooms.

### 13. CHILD WELFARE AND PROTECTION PROCEDURES

SKIF Ireland is conscious that organisations, which include young people among its members, are 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 (as set out below) about the safety or welfare of a young person, you should react to the concern. Persons need clarification about whether or not certain behaviours are abusive and therefore reportable should contact the duty social worker in the local health service executive or social services department where they will receive advice.

Any organisation member may make a report. Still, it should be passed on to the Designated Liaison Officer/ club CWO, who may, in turn, have to pass the concern to the local Statutory Authorities. It is not the responsibility of any member of SKIF Ireland or its affiliated clubs to take responsibility or decide whether or not child abuse is taking place. That is the job of the local statutory authorities. However, there is a responsibility to protect young people 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.

#### Reasonable Ground for Concern

The statutory authorities should always be informed if reasonable grounds for concern exist that a child may have been abused, or is being abused or is at risk even if the suspected abuse or risk is happening outside of the club/organisation (e.g. in the child's home or school or at another activity) the responsibility to report remains. A suspicion not supported by any objective indicator of abuse or negligence would not constitute reasonable grounds.



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Reasonable grounds for concern include:

- A specific indication or complaint from a young person if she/he has been abused
- A report or an account by a person who saw the young person being abused
- Evidence, such as injury or behavioural changes which are consistent with abuse and that it is unlikely that the injuries and or behavioural changes could have been caused in any other way
- An injury or injuries and /or behavioural changes which are consistent with abuse and which are being explained away by an innocent excuse or explanation, but where there is evidence and indications to support the concern that it may be the result of abuse. For example, A pattern of injuries, an implausible excuse or explanation, other evidence or indications of abuse, dysfunctional behaviour
- Consistent evidence or indications, over a period of time, that a child is suffering from physical and or emotional abuse/neglect

### Procedure for Responding to a Child Disclosing Abuse

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

- Deal with any allegation of abuse sensitively and competently through listening to and facilitating the child to talk about the problem. Do not interview 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 say something very important and has taken a risk. The telling experience should be positive so that the child will not mind talking to those involved in the investigation.
- Be honest with the child and tell them it is impossible to keep such information a secret.
- Make no judgmental statements against the person about whom the allegation is made.
- Do not question the child unless the nature of what he/she is saying is unclear. Leading questions should be avoided. Open, non-specific questions, such as "Can you explain to me what you mean by that?" should be used.
- Check out the concerns with the parents/guardians before making a report unless doing so would endanger the child or compromise an investigation (if in doubt, consult with Statutory Authorities first).
- Give the child some indication of what would happen next, such as informing parents/guardians, health service executives 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 club's Designated Liaison Officer.
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you.

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### Procedure for 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 to the club's Designated Liaison Officer responsible for reporting abuse as soon as possible. Suppose the Designated Liaison Officer has reasonable grounds for believing that the child has been abused or is at risk of abuse. In that case, he/she will make a report to the health service executive/social services, who have a statutory responsibility to investigate and assess suspected or actual child abuse.
- In cases of emergency, where a child appears to be at immediate and severe risk and the Designated Liaison Officer cannot 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 Liaison Officer is unsure whether reasonable grounds for concern exist, they can informally consult with the local health board/social services (see Appendix for contact details). He/she will be advised whether or not the matter requires a formal report.
- Designated Liaison Officers 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 Designated Liaison Officer should inform the club instructor of:

- Any reports being made to Statutory Authorities.
- The name of any member being asked to step aside
- Details of the case.
- If the individual being reported is the club instructor, the Designated Liaison Officer should inform the organisation CWO.
- Suppose at any stage in the proceedings, the club's Designated Liaison Officer feels that he/she cannot deal appropriately with any issue. In that case, they should contact the organisation's Senior Child Welfare Officer.

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.



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### 14. ALLEGATIONS AGAINST KARATE INSTRUCTORS / VOLUNTEERS

SKIF Ireland has procedures to be followed in cases of alleged child abuse against Karate Instructors/Volunteers (see Section 13). If such an allegation is made against a Karate Instructor/Volunteer working within the organisation, the following procedures should be followed:

The Reporting Procedure for suspected child abuse should be adhered to if the Designated Liaison Officer has reasonable grounds for concern.

The procedure for dealing with the Karate Instructor/Volunteer is set out below and carried out by the Club Designated Liaison Officer/SKIF Irelands Senior CWO unless they are already involved with the child protection concern.

The safety of the child making the allegation should be considered, as well as the safety of any other young people who may be at risk. The club should take any necessary steps that may be required to protect young people in its care.

The issue of confidentiality is essential. Information is on a need-to-know basis, and the Karate Instructor should be treated with respect and fairness.

#### Procedure for dealing with the Karate Instructor/Volunteer

- While the designated officer reports to the local health board, SKIF Irelands Senior CWO should deal with the karate instructor/volunteer about whom the allegation has been made.
- SKIF Irelands Senior CWO should privately inform the instructor/volunteer:
- That an allegation has been made against him/her, the nature of the allegation
- He/she should be allowed to respond. His/her response should be noted and passed to the health board / social services.
- The instructor/volunteer 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 club must consider the outcome of the investigation and any implications it might have. The club can consider disciplinary action against the instructor/volunteer but should ensure that this does not interfere with the investigation of the Statutory Authorities.

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## 15. CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality should be maintained regarding all issues and people involved in abuse, welfare or bad practice cases. The child's rights and the person about whom the complaint has been made must be protected.

The following points should be kept in mind:

- A confidentiality guarantee or undertakings regarding secrecy cannot be given, as the child's welfare will supersede all other considerations.
- All information should be treated carefully and sensitively and discussed only with those who need to know.
- Information should be conveyed sensitively.
- Giving information to others on a 'need to know' 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, Karates Instructors) 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/young person are paramount, and any such complaints relating to inappropriate behaviour should be brought to the attention of the appropriate Designated Liaison Officer. 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 club's child welfare officer or national child welfare officer and checked out without delay.

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## 16. APPENDIX

### CONTACT DETAILS

Irish Sports Council  
Code of Ethics & Good Practice for Children's Sport  
Bernie Priestly  
Ph. 01 8608800  
[bpriestly@irishsportsCouncil.ie](mailto:bpriestly@irishsportsCouncil.ie)

Eastern Region HSE – East Coast Area  
(Ask for Duty Social Worker)

Area 1, Dun- Laoghaire 01 2808403  
Area 2 Clonskeagh 01 2680320/0333  
Area 10 Wicklow 0404 60800  
Bray 01 2744100

Eastern Region HSE- Northern Area  
(Ask for Duty Social Worker)

Area 6 Dublin 11, 01 8567704  
Area 7 North Dublin 1, 01 8014620  
Area 8 Dublin 5 01 8164200.

Eastern Region HSE – South Western Area  
(Ask for Duty Social Worker)

Dublin South City District D2 01 6486555  
Dublin South West District D24 01 4520666  
Dublin West District D10 01 6206387  
Kildare/West Wicklow District 045 882400 (Naas)  
Athy 059 8633535  
Celbridge 01 6303155

Southern Area HSE – Community Care Area  
(Ask for Duty Social Worker)

South Lee Cork 021 4923001  
North Lee Cork 021 4927055  
North Cork Mallow 022 30200  
West Cork Skibbereen 028 40580  
Kerry Tralee 066 7184887.

Mid Western HSE- Community Care Area  
(Ask for Duty Social Worker)

Limerick East 061 483 7111  
Limerick West 061 483996  
Clare 065 6863907/08  
North Tipperary Nenagh 067 41934  
North Tipperary Thurles 0504 23211.

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South Eastern HSE- Ask For Duty Social Worker  
(Ask for Duty Social Worker)

Carlow 059 9136588/7  
Kilkenny 056 7784782  
Waterford 051 842827  
Wexford 053 23522 Ext 222  
South Tipperary 052 77306/02

Midland Area HSE– Community Care Area  
(Ask for Duty Social Worker)

Longford/Westmeath: Athlone 090 6493106  
Longford 043 50584  
Laois/Offaly:  
Offaly 0506 22488  
Laois 0502 92567

ISPCC  
20 Molesworth St., D2 Ph. 01 6794944  
[ispcc@ispcc.ie](mailto:ispcc@ispcc.ie)  
ISPCC Childline 1800 666666 (Freephone)  
Volunteering Ireland  
Coleraine House,  
Coleraine St.,  
Dublin 7  
01 8722622  
[info@volunteeringireland.com](mailto:info@volunteeringireland.com)

## 17. REVISIONS

REV NO	DATE	CHANGES
0	January 2018	Document Created
1	October 2019	Policy Number Updated Appendix: Updated SKIF Ireland Child Welfare Details Added Revisions Section
2	January 2024	Reworked Document
3	March 2024	Reworked Document