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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Netball Ireland (NI) expects its members and volunteers to act in a manner that reflects the objectives and principles of NI. All young people have the right to participate in sport in a fair, safe and quality atmosphere free from abuse or exploitation.

Anyone under the age of 18 is considered a young person for the purpose all NI child protection and safeguarding policies.

Young people have a lot to gain from sport and all experiences should be guided by what is best for the young person. Netball provides an excellent opportunity for young people to learn new skills, become more confident and maximise their unique potential. These benefits will be increased through a positive and progressive approach to the involvement in netball in an atmosphere that prioritises a young person's needs over competition outcomes. NI recognises its responsibility to help safeguard the welfare of young people participating in netball by protecting them from harm.

NI is committed to increasing the participation of young people in netball in the Republic of Ireland (ROI) and to providing a safe, positive, and nurturing environment where young people can develop and enhance their physical and social skills.

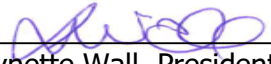
Clear practices and procedures facilitate the protection of young people participating in netball. The key principles underpinning this policy are that:


- A young person's welfare is, and must always be, the primary concern.
- All young people have a right to be protected from abuse regardless of their age, gender, ability, culture, language, racial origin, religious beliefs or sexual identity.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to appropriately.

## 2.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy is to ensure that all necessary steps are taken to safeguard and protect from harm all young people who participate in the sport of netball in the ROI.

NI acknowledges the evolving nature of this policy, and the need to develop and amend existing policies/procedures when required.

Prepared by: Mary Kelly, Child Protection Officer	Date: 10/05/2021
Approved by:  Lynette Wall, President	Date: 03/06/2021

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### 3.0 SCOPE

Adults interacting with young people in sport are in a position of trust and influence. They should always ensure that young people are treated with integrity and respect and ensure that the self-esteem of young people is at all times enhanced.

This policy provides guidance and clarifies what is expected from NI –

- Members
- Clubs
- Coaches and Team Management
- Umpires
- Volunteers

– interacting with young people participating in netball activities under the auspices of NI. This includes NI as an Association and all clubs, schools and persons affiliated to or working for NI (in either a paid or unpaid capacity).

As per NI’s membership obligations, all clubs, individual members, coaches, umpires and volunteers are expected to observe all child protection and safeguarding policies of NI, and the guidelines contained in Sport Ireland’s *Safeguarding Guidance for Children and Young People in Sport* and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs’ *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children*.


### 4.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

NI is an entirely volunteer led organisation. Every individual and club within the ROI netball community has a role and responsibility to help ensure the safety and welfare of young people. For the avoidance of doubt, this includes all affiliated NI members and anyone working within the sport of netball (including in a voluntary capacity).

Working in partnership with young people and their parents/guardians is essential for the future of netball in the ROI, and the protection and safeguarding of young people is a priority. All NI clubs and volunteers providing opportunities for young people in netball must accept that they are required to fulfil their duty of care – namely, that they must do everything that can be reasonably expected to help safeguard and protect young people from any foreseeable harm.

NI is committed to supporting all clubs in complying with and positively promoting NI’s child protection and safeguarding policies.

The Department of Children and Youth Affairs have statutory responsibility to ensure the welfare of children and young people, as outlined in their document *Children First – National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children*. NI recognises the role and

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responsibilities of statutory agencies and is committed to working in accordance with the procedures and guidelines of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.

#### **4.1 Child Protection Officer (CPO)**

NI shall appoint a CPO with responsibility for promoting NI's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. The role of the CPO includes:

- Ensuring all committee and sub-committee members are aware of their duties in line with NI's child protection and safeguarding policies.
- Being available to all members for support and advice on compliance with NI's child protection and safeguarding policies.
- Ensuring all NI members that have regular supervisory contact with young people have undergone an approved Garda vetting procedure.
- Development and maintenance of NI's child protection and safeguarding policies.
- Prepare a Child Safeguarding Statement (NI-1021) in accordance with legislative requirements, currently as set out in the following documents:
  - the Children First Act 2015; and
  - the Children's First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017); and
  - Tusla's *Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice 1995*
- Review of NI's Child Safeguarding Statement every 2 years.
- Ensure they are the named Mandated Person for NI in the Child Safeguarding Statement.
- Providing, as necessary, training and/or information pertaining to NI's child protection and safeguarding policies.
- Providing information to coaches, volunteers and NI members working with young people pertaining to training workshops on child safeguarding.
- Monitoring and auditing any safeguarding training completed by coaches, volunteers and NI members.
- Ensuring that all relevant people complete and return (to CPO) the Child Safeguarding Declaration form (NI-3002).
- Development and maintenance of the procedure map illustrating the NI Garda vetting process.
- Continual development and maintenance of an appropriate pathway for reporting concerns.
- Receiving information from NI members, including young people and/or their parents/guardians, and volunteers who have concerns relating to the welfare of any young person. Appropriate records of such information must be documented.
- Reporting all relevant concerns in line with Children First Act 2015.

#### **4.2 Mandated Person/s**

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Under Schedule 2 of the Children First Act 2015 the CPO is classed as a Mandated Person for the purpose of the Act and must be clearly identified by name in the Child Safeguarding Statement.

Mandated persons have two main legal obligations:

1. To report the harm of children above a defined threshold to Tusla.
2. To assist Tusla, if requested, in assessing a concern which has been the subject of a mandated report.

Tusla can provide advice to the CPO as to whether a concern reaches the legal definition of harm for the purpose of making a mandated report.

Club Children's Officers, or other persons in a child welfare function may be a Mandated Person under the Act. For the purpose of this policy, a Mandated Person (other the CPO) is one who is in a paid safeguarding role.

#### **4.3 Designated Liaison Person (DLP)**

The role of the DLP is as follows:


- To ensure that reporting procedures within NI are followed, so that child welfare and protection concerns are referred promptly to Tusla and/or An Garda Síochána.
- Record all concerns or allegations of child abuse brought to his or her attention, as well as the actions taken in relation to a concern or allegation.
- Is the resource and liaison person for any NI volunteer who has child protection concerns and will liaise with outside agencies.
- Should be knowledgeable about child protection and undertake any necessary training.
- Should familiarise themselves with the statutory and support services within their locality.
- Have knowledge of the relevant safeguarding policies and child protection legislation – Children First Act 2015, and National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012-2016.

In keeping with best practice in child safeguarding NI shall appoint a Designated Liaison Person (DLP). If the role of NI DLP is not filled, it will be appointed by default to the CPO.

#### **4.4 Club Children's Officer (CCO)**

All clubs affiliated to NI that have any participant under 18 years of age must appoint a CCO. It is the responsibility of the CCO to:

- inform NI CPO of their appointment.
- educate themselves on NI's child protection and safeguarding policies.
- complete the relevant child safeguarding training (as per NI-1024 Safeguarding Training Policy) as soon as is practicable and send (by email) a copy of their safeguarding training Certificate to the NI CPO.

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- ensure club coaches and members working with young people are Garda Vetted and have completed safeguarding training.
- ensure all relevant people, including themselves, have completed (and returned to NI CPO) a NI Child Safeguarding Declaration form.

#### **4.5 Coaches/Team personnel working with young people**

Any coach and other team personnel working with young people within NI – including those appointed to work with NI national squads or a club affiliated to NI – must undertake relevant Safeguarding training.

It is the responsibility of such people to:


- educate themselves on NI’s child protection and safeguarding policies.
- return a completed NI Child Safeguarding Declaration form directly to NI CPO or CCO (as relevant) by September 30<sup>th</sup> each season.
- complete safeguarding training as soon as is practicably possible and send (by email) a copy of the safeguarding training Certificate to the NI CPO and/or CCO as required.

## **5.0 PRINCIPLES**

### **5.1 Safeguarding and Protecting Young People**

- The safety and welfare of young people is paramount.
- All young people, regardless of age, ability, sex, race, religion or belief, ethnic origin, social status or sexual orientation, have the right to be protected from harm.
- The rights, dignity and worth of all young people should always be respected.
- NI promotes a TELLING culture – everyone within netball must report all concerns in accordance with NI reporting procedures. It is everyone’s responsibility in netball to report concerns, as per NI’s Child Safeguarding and Child Abuse Policy (NI-1023).
- Bullying and harassment of any kind is not acceptable and will not be tolerated at any netball activity/event under the jurisdiction of NI. See NI’s Anti Discrimination, Harassment, Bullying and Victimisation Policy (NI-1013).
- The roles and responsibilities of statutory agencies safeguarding young people must be recognised and their procedures complied with.
- Even though NI is dependent entirely on volunteers it is fully committed to the protection and safeguarding of young people. Everyone within NI must recognise and regard as essential the effective and safe recruitment of all individuals working with young people in netball. See NI’s Garda Vetting Policy (NI-1025) and Safe Recruitment Policy (NI-1029).
- All those working in netball, including in a voluntary capacity, must abide by NI’s Code of Conduct (NI-1011).

### **5.2 Care of Young People - General Principles and Good Practice Guidelines**

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NI acknowledges that good practice when dealing with young people is essential. All people caring for young people are expected to adhere to the following:

- Always be public and open when working with young people. Whenever possible ensure that there is more than one adult present during activities with young people, or at least that you are within sight or hearing of others.
- Physical support is rarely required in the sport of netball. If an adult feels that it is necessary the reasons should be clearly explained to the young person (and, if possible, the parents/guardians) and their consent gained. Be aware that any physical contact with a young person may be misinterpreted – see NI’s Code of Conduct.
- Where possible, parents/guardians should be responsible for their own child in changing rooms.
- Treat all young people with respect.
- Provide an example of good conduct you wish others to follow – be a role model.
- Respect a young person’s right to personal privacy. Encourage young people and adults to feel comfortable and caring enough to respectfully point out attitudes or behaviour that they do not like.
- Be aware that someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well intentioned, and try mitigating against possible misunderstandings.
- Respectfully challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations/suspensions of abuse.


All people caring for young people during NI-related activities should avoid:

- spending time alone with young people away from others;
- taking young people alone on car journeys, however short; and
- inviting young people into your home where they will be alone with you.

All people caring for young people during NI-related activities should never:

- engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games;
- allow or engage in any inappropriate physical or verbal contact with young people;
- allow young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged;
- make sexually suggestive comments to a young person, even in jest;
- allow allegations of a young person to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon;
- do things of a personal nature for young people that they can do for themselves;
- invite or allow young people to stay with you at your home unsupervised;
- allow bullying or bad behaviour towards or by young people;
- allow yourself to be drawn into inappropriate behaviour or make suggestive or derogatory remarks or gestures in front of young people;
- make conclusions about others without first checking facts;
- exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues;
- show favouritism to any individual;



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- believe the “it could never happen to me” adage.

A NI Incident form (NI-3003) should be completed if

- you accidentally hurt a young person;
- a young person seems distressed in any manner;
- a young person appears to be sexually aroused by your actions; or
- a young person misunderstands or misinterprets something you have said/done.

Firstly, report any such incident as soon as possible to another relevant person (coach/team management/CPO/CCO/NI representative), and then record the incident using the NI Incident Form. Parents/guardians should be informed of the incident.

### **5.3 Supervision of Young People**

To ensure that young people can be safely supervised during netball activities, the coach/team management should ensure that there is an adequate ratio of coaches/team management/volunteers to players. There should be a minimum of two adults, at least one of whom must be Garda vetted, and a (recommended) ratio of one coach to twelve young people.

Enlist the support of others – e.g. volunteers, parents/guardians – to assist in this manner. Every effort will be made by NI to support appointed coaches and team management by ensuring adequate supervision is available. It is the responsibility of those planning or providing sessions/activities to ensure that those involved are suitably vetted and/or informed of their individual responsibility to safeguard young people.


In planning activities, the following key factors will inform decisions about appropriate supervision levels:

- The age of the young people participating.
- Any additional supervision/support needs of specific individuals.
- The competence/experience of participants.
- Nature of activity.
- Nature of location.

The co-operation and support of parents/guardians is vital to the effective operation of this policy.

### **6.0 CODE OF CONDUCT**

The promotion of respect, good sportsmanship, high standards of behaviour and ethics are fundamental to NI's overall objectives. Please refer to NI's Code of Conduct which outlines the standards and expectations applicable to every member and connected participant involved in the delivery of netball under the auspices of NI.

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## **7.0 COMMUNICATION WITH YOUNG PEOPLE**

For direction pertaining to communicating with young people within NI, please refer to NI's Electronic Communication with Young People Policy (NI-1026).

## **8.0 SOCIAL MEDIA**

For direction pertaining to the use of Social Media within NI please refer to NI's Social Media Policy (NI-1030).

## **9.0 PHOTOGRAPHIC IMAGES OF YOUNG PEOPLE**

For direction pertaining to the taking, storage and use of photographic images of young people within NI please refer to NI's Photographic/Video Images of Young People Policy (NI-1027) and Storage of Competition Photographs Policy (NI-1031).

## **10.0 TRAVELLING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE**

There are situations – such as training camps, residential tournaments, matches and tours – where coaches/team management/volunteers are placed in positions of trust. Travelling to away games and competitions should be both safe and fun for young people. When travelling with young people all NI coaches, team management, and volunteers must read and comply with NI's Travelling with Young People policy (NI-1028).

## **11.0 SAFE RECRUITMENT**


NI's policy regarding the safe recruitment of coaches, team management, and volunteers provides guidance on the appropriate procedures for recruiting adults to roles that interact with young people and enable their participation in netball. Please refer to NI's Safe Recruitment Policy.

## **12.0 GARDA VETTING**

Garda Vetting is the process by which National Vetting Bureau (NVB) gives a statement on whether an applicant has any convictions, pending or completed, recorded against their name (subject to an administrative filter which allows for certain convictions to become spent).

Under the NVB Acts 2012-2016 it is an offence for NI to allow any appointee or volunteer to perform 'relevant work' on its behalf without first completing the vetting process. Accordingly, the Garda Vetting policy and procedures of NI must be strictly adhered to by all members and volunteers.



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Garda Vetting (eVetting) is available through NI. The aim is to assist in the recruitment of suitable candidates to positions within NI. The system has been structured to:

1. Protect children and vulnerable persons.
2. Identify if candidates for a position/role have convictions or have been prosecuted for crimes which may mean that they are unsuitable for the position.
3. Protect the rights of the candidates.
4. Protect NI.

For further direction please refer to NI's Garda Vetting Policy.

### **13.0 CONFIDENTIALITY**

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

However, the legal principle that 'the welfare of the child is paramount' means that considerations of confidentiality should not be allowed to override the right of young people to be protected from harm. Everyone in NI must be aware that they can never promise to keep secrets.

Confidential information will only be communicated to relevant persons where necessary to appropriately report and process allegations or suspicions.

In any situation where there is an allegation or suspicion of abuse, it is important that the rights of both the alleged victim and the alleged offender are protected by ensuring that only those who need to know are given the relevant information.


This will mean, at the very least, informing:

- The relevant DLP, CCO, and/or the NI CPO, responsible for protection and safeguarding of young people within NI.
- Where relevant, a statutory child protection organisation.
- The parents/guardians of the young person.
- The alleged offender.

Informing the parents/guardians of a young person about whom you are concerned will need to be handled in a sensitive way and should only be undertaken in consultation with NI's CPO or, where necessary, a statutory agency.

Any individual under suspicion has a right to be notified of the cause of concern. This is another matter that will need careful consideration and should only be undertaken in consultation with NI's CPO or, where necessary, a statutory agency.

Depending on the outcome of initial enquiries, volunteers and other agencies that have contact with the alleged victim and/or alleged offender may need brief details of the incident and subsequent action. The statutory agency will confirm who should be told, when they should be told, and what information is appropriate to share.

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#### **14.0 GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION (GDPR)**

The NI association and its subsidiaries are, for the purposes of data protection legislation, the data controller.

All data collected and stored by NI with regard to child protection and safeguarding is protected in line with NI's GDPR Policy (NI-1007).

#### **15.0 DOCUMENT HISTORY**

Version 01: NI Child Protection Policy 2015

Version 02: Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

#### **16.0 ABBREVIATIONS & DEFINITIONS**

NI	Netball Ireland
ROI	Republic of Ireland
CPO	Child Protection Officer
DLP	Designated Liaison Person
CCO	Club Children's Officer
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
NVB	National Vetting Bureau


Young people/person: any person under 18 years of age

Garda vetting: a background check completed by the NVB. When they receive a vetting application, the NVB will check to see if the person has a criminal record.

An Garda Síochána: the national police service of the ROI, headed by the Garda Commissioner who is appointed by the Irish Government.

#### **17.0 REFERENCE**

- NI-1007 GDPR Policy
- NI-1011 Code of Conduct
- NI-1013 Anti Discrimination, Harassment, Bullying and Victimisation Policy
- NI-1021 Child Safeguarding Statement
- NI-1023 Child Safeguarding and Child Abuse Policy
- NI-1024 Safeguarding Training Policy
- NI-1025 Garda Vetting Policy
- NI-1026 Electronic Communication with Young People Policy
- NI-1027 Photographic/Video Images of Young People Policy

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NI-1028 Travelling with Young People policy  
NI-1029 Safe Recruitment Policy  
NI-1030 Social Media Policy  
NI-1031 Storage of Competition Photographs Policy  
NI-3002 Child Safeguarding Declaration  
NI-3003 Incident form

ROI Children First Act 2015  
ROI NVB (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012-2016

Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017)

Sport Ireland – Safeguarding Guidance for Children and Young People in Sport

Tusla – Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice 1995

## **18.0 USEFUL CONTACTS**

\*\*Ask for Duty Social Worker

### **Eastern Region Health Services Executive: East Coast Area**

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

### **Eastern Region Health Services Executive: South Western Area**

Dublin South City District, D2 - 01 6486555  
Dublin South West District, D24 - 01 4520666  
Dublin West District, Dublin 10 - 01 6206387  
Kildare/West Wicklow District -  
Naas - 045 882400  
Athy - 059 8633535  
Celbridge - 01 6303155

### **Health Services Executive: Mid-Western Community Care Area**

Limerick East - 061 483711  
Limerick West - 061 483996  
Clare - 065 6863907/08  
North Tipperary, Nenagh - 067 41934  
North Tipperary, Thurles - 0504 23211



**Health Service Executive: Western Community Care Area**

Galway - 091 546325/546366  
Mayo - 094 9042283 / 9042284  
Roscommon - 090 6637528/29

**Health Services Executive: North-Eastern Community Care Area**

Cavan - 049 4377305 / 06  
Monaghan - 047 30426 /30427  
Louth - Drogheda, 041 9833163  
Louth - Dundalk, 042 9392220  
Meath - Navan, 046 9078830

**Eastern Region Health Services: Executive Northern Area**

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

**Health Services Executive: Southern Area Community Care Area**

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

**Health Services Executive: South-Eastern Community Care Area**

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

**Health Services Executive: North-Western Community Care Area**

Sligo/Leitrim - 071 9155133  
Donegal - 074 9123739

**Health Service Executive: Midland Area Community Care Area**

**Longford/Westmeath:**

Athlone - 0906483106  
Longford - 043 50584  
Offaly - 0506 22488  
Laois - 0502 92567/8