



WSKF
IRELAND

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY: Guidelines and Procedures



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Child Protection Statement

At WSKF Ireland the care and safety of all children and young people when they are at training with a WSKF Ireland club or participating in a WSKF event is our primary concern. WSKF Ireland is committed to creating a safe, friendly and conducive environment which inspires confidence and creativity in the children and young people who participate in WSKF Ireland. We believe it is especially important that all people who work with children and young people are aware of the issues of good practice and their responsibility to safeguard the welfare of children and young people. Our guidelines have been developed bearing the in mind the karate ethos within the dojo.

To this end, all our instructors and volunteers will receive compulsory training in the principles of best practice in child protection, as set out in the Children First, National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children.

WSKF Ireland:

- Recognises that all children and young people have the right to freedom from abuse.
- Ensures that all our instructors and volunteers are carefully selected and accept responsibility for helping to prevent the abuse of children and young people in their care.
- Ensures all our instructors and volunteers are Garda Vetted and trained in Safeguarding 1.
- Responds swiftly and appropriately to all suspicions or allegations of abuse and provides parents and children with the opportunity to voice any concerns they may have.
- Assigned a Club Children's Officer who takes specific responsibility for child safety and acts as the main point of contact for parents, children, young people and outside agencies.
- Ensures access to confidential information is restricted to the Club Children's Officer and the Designated Liaison person or appropriate external authorities.



Duties of the Club Children's Officer

Each WSKF Ireland club has appointed a Club Children's Officer to support the implementation of best practice, to act as a liaison with children, parents and outside agencies when dealing with any child protection issues. This Officer acts as a resource to any staff instructor or volunteer who has child protection concerns and is responsible for reporting allegations or suspicions of child abuse to the Designated Liaison Person and TUSLA or An Garda Síochána, if deemed necessary. He/she must have completed Club Children's Officer training and be Garda Vetted.

Duties of the Club Children's Officer include:

- To operate within the guidelines set by the appropriate authorities.
- Reports suspicions and allegations of child abuse to the Designated Liaison Person and the National Child Protection Officer.
- Liaises between the young people, instructors, volunteers and adults.
- Creates and maintains links with the statutory authorities and other relevant agencies and resource groups.
- Facilitates the provision of support to any victim making a referral.
- Advises on good practice.
- Should be child centred in focus and maintain a child focused ethos within the club.
- Organises/facilitates training and workshops on guidelines in child protection.
- Maintains proper records on all cases referred to him/her in a secure and confidential manner. All records are to be collated and sent for confidential storage to the National Child Safety Officer.
- Keeps up to date on current developments regarding provision, practice, support services, legal obligations/requirements and policy.

Designated Liaison Person:

The DLP must have completed the Designated Liaison Person training, be Garda vetted and have completed Safeguarding 1 training. A club may appoint the same person to be the CCO and DLP, or they may be separate roles.

Responsibilities of Designated Liaison Person:

- Report allegations or suspicions of child abuse to Tusla Child and Family Agency and/or An Garda Síochána.
- Liaise with the Club Child Officer.
- Keep confidential documentation
- Inform the National Child Protection Officer of any suspicions or allegations of abuse.



Code of practice for instructors and volunteers

In devising the following code, consideration has been given to the needs and circumstances of WSKF Ireland. The aim is to ensure that the creativity and individuality of each child is accommodated, while acknowledging the right of each child to be able to train and learn in a relatively disruption-free environment.

This code of practice must be adopted by anyone working with children and young people instructing or helping to instruct within WSKF Ireland.

Every effort will be made by all instructors and volunteers to adopt a positive approach to the question of behaviour. The following code of behaviour offers a framework within which positive techniques of motivation and encouragement are utilised by WSKF Ireland instructors and volunteers.

It is agreed that a high standard of behaviour requires a strong sense of community within WSKF Ireland and a high level of cooperation among instructors, volunteers, users and parents.

The following guidelines must be followed by all working with children/young people at WSKF Ireland

- Be sensitive to the risks involved in participating in contact games and exercises.
- Be sensitive to the fact that jokes of a sexual or religious nature may be offensive to others and should never be told in the presence of children.
- Be sensitive to the possibility of becoming over involved or spending a great deal of time with any one young person. They need to be clear about the purpose and nature of their relationship with any young person, e.g., whether the relationship is constructive in building up the independence and confidence of the young person or is being used to satisfy some need or desire of the instructor/volunteer. All students should be treated equally.
- Children/young people should be encouraged to report cases of bullying behaviour to either the Child Safety officer or an instructor of their choice.
- Never meet alone with a young person. Be sensitive to the potential risk to personal safety and false allegations which may arise. If required to speak privately to a young person, do so in a public space, i.e. corridor, foyer, and inform another instructor that you are so doing.
- All students should be encouraged by their instructors to respect the personal space, safety and privacy of their peers.
- Instructors and volunteer are not permitted to give lifts in their cars to individual young people. In exceptional cases, permission may be granted by parent/guardian by telephone or note.
- While physical contact of a comforting and reassuring nature is a valid way of expressing concern and care for children, where such contact is acceptable to all persons concerned; However, instructors and volunteers should be aware of what physical contacts are inappropriate, what actions might be misunderstood and what situations might render them vulnerable. If a child or young person discloses an abusive situation, it is not advised to have any physical contact with the person.
- Instructors and volunteers must never physically punish or be in any way verbally abusive to a young person.



- Instructors will keep a handwritten record of all instances of serious misbehaviour as well as a record of improvements in the behaviour of disruptive students. Parents will be involved at an early stage, rather than as a last resort.
- Children should not be left unattended or unsupervised, at any time while at a WSKF Club.
- Each club must allocate appropriate strategies for the use of toilets and changing rooms depending on the layout of each dojo. If possible, toilets and changing areas should be specifically allocated for children. If this is not possible, children should be chaperoned to toilets and changing rooms by an appropriate adult, or an instructor or volunteer who has been vetted and attended child protection training.
- Photographs: in the interest of privacy and child protection, the use of photographic equipment and video cameras is not permitted within WSKF Ireland or at WSKF Ireland activities without the prior consent of the senior instructor of each club. A signed consent form will be required, before any photography or recording is allowed (see Appendix 2)

Implementation of the code

- All instructors and volunteers who work with children and young people will be informed of WSKF Ireland's Child Protection Policy and requested to sign up to same.
- All instructors and volunteers must undergo Garda Vetting and Safeguarding 1, Child Protection Training.
- Child Safety Officers must attend Safeguarding 2, Club Children's Officer Training.
- A Designated Liaison Person will be appointed for each region. (Clare and Dublin).

Code of behaviour for children & young people

- Always arrive in plenty of time for your class.
- Always consider the instructors and volunteers working with WSKF Ireland: do not run or shout in the corridors, stairs, lift, toilets/changing areas, reception area.
- Always place rubbish in the bins provided.
- Always listen to instructors and volunteers and respect them when they are talking.
- Always tell an instructor if you are involved in or witness an accident.
- Always tell an instructor if you have, or witness any problems.
- Always respect property.
- With the exception of water, food and drink are not permitted in the dojos.
- Always be sensitive to the fact that jokes or a sexual or religious nature may be offensive to others.
- You should not bring your valuables to WSKF Ireland's dojos and events. WSKF Ireland is not responsible for any loss or damage to goods which are left at the owner's own risk.
- The possession, use or distribution of alcohol, tobacco or illegal substances while in the dojo or at WSKF Ireland events is not permitted, and will qualify as gross misbehaviour, and may result in expulsion.



Safe Recruitment and Selection Policy Statement

We will ensure that our instructors and volunteers are carefully selected, trained and supervised to provide a safe environment for all children and young people.

We undertake that:

- Clearly defined roles and responsibilities will be outlined for every instructor and volunteer.
- Instructors and volunteers will be asked to sign a declaration form.
- The factors that would exclude an applicant are as follows: any child related convictions, refusal to attend child protection training, refusal to sign the application form and declaration form, insufficient documentary evidence of identification, concealing information on one's suitability to working with children.
- All instructors and volunteers will undergo Garda Vetting and attend Safeguarding 1 Training.

Dealing with allegations against instructors/volunteers:

If a child abuse case is suspected or alleged, the following steps should be taken by the Club Children's Officer:

1. Report the incident to the Designated Liaison Person and the National Child Protection Officer.
2. With support from the National Child Protection Officer, a report should be made to TUSLA in person, by telephone or in writing. Reports may be made to the Child Care Manager or directly to the Social Worker.

Each Health Board has a Social Worker on duty for a certain number of hours each day. The duty Social Worker is available to meet with, or talk on the telephone to persons wishing to report Child Protection Concerns.

3. It is generally most helpful if persons wishing to report child abuse concerns make personal contact with the duty Social Worker. This will facilitate the Social Worker in gathering as much information as possible about the child and his or her situation. If a third person, such as a Club Children's Officer makes the report, it is likely that the Social Worker will wish to speak to the person who first witnessed the incident, received the disclosure, or felt the concern.
4. In the event of an emergency, or the non-availability of HSE staff, the report should be made to An Garda Síochána. This may be done at any Garda station. Under no circumstances should a young person be left in a dangerous situation pending the intervention of the TUSLA.
5. This procedure should be followed even where the suspicion arises in another organisational context but is disclosed to an instructor/volunteer who is delivering a class in another setting. In this instance s/he should report to the Club Children's Officer.



6. In the event of allegations being made against an instructor or volunteer, the protection of the child/young persons is the first and paramount consideration. WSKF Ireland has a dual responsibility in respect of both the child/young person and the instructors and volunteers.

7. If reasonable grounds for concern exist a formal report to TUSLA should be made. WSKF Ireland should ensure actions taken by them do not undermine or frustrate any assessment or investigation by the TUSLA or An Garda Síochána.

8. WSKF Ireland should take protective measures that are appropriate to the level of risk and not unreasonably penalize the instructor or volunteer unless necessary to protect the child/young person, i.e., increased supervision, assigned different duties, suspension.

Procedures for dealing with allegations against instructors/volunteers:

- If allegations are made against the Club Children's Officer, this should be dealt with by the National Child Protection Officer and Chairman of the organisation.
- The instructor/volunteer involved should be informed as soon as possible that an allegation has been made against them and the nature of the allegation.
- Parents and guardians and the child/young person should be informed of actions planned and taken.
- The instructor/volunteer should be given an opportunity to respond.
- The Designated Liaison Persona and the National Child Protection Officer should be informed as soon as possible.
- Any action against an instructor/volunteer should be taken in consultation with TUSLA and An Garda Síochána.
- After consultation the Club Children's Officer will advise the accused and agreed procedures will be followed.
- The National Child Protection Officer will inform the Chairperson of WSKF Ireland.

Dealing with a disclosure

- **Stay calm and listen** to the child/young person, allowing them enough time to say what s/he needs to say.
- **Do not** ask leading questions or prompt details.
- Reassure the child/young person **but do not promise to keep anything secret.**
- Do not make the child/young person repeat the details unnecessarily.
- Explain to the child/young person what will happen next (explanation should be age appropriate).

Anonymous complaints can be difficult to deal with but should not be ignored. In all cases the safety and welfare of the child or young person is paramount. Any such complaints relating to inappropriate behaviour should be brought to the attention of the Club Children's Officer. This information should be checked out and handled in a confidential manner.

The ability of the statutory authorities to investigate and assess a case of potential or actual child abuse will depend on the quality of information available to them. Different levels of information will be available to persons reporting who may or may not be familiar with the young person's

personal situation. Within these constraints, every effort should be made to clarify the grounds for concern and assist the statutory authorities to decide how far and in what manner to pursue an investigation. When completing a report form, factual detail is required, not opinions or impressions. Check the details against the first record made of the incident or concern to ensure accuracy. Sign the form and date it when completed. While the information in some cases will be limited, as much as possible the following details should be included in a Reporting Form (see appendix I).

Where reasonable grounds for concern are not immediately apparent

Where an instructor/volunteer has a suspicion of abuse and there may be insufficient evidence to substantiate it, s/he should continue to monitor the situation. The following steps are recommended:

- The instructor/volunteer should, as soon as possible, discuss this situation with the Child Protection Officer. All discussions should be restricted to those with an obligation to know.
- Alternatively, s/he may contact the TUSLA Child Care Manager or Social Worker for advice. Any communication of a suspicion of abuse, provided it is not made maliciously, is legally privileged and protected under The Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998.
- The instructor/volunteer may continue to observe the behaviour of the young person and the suspected abuser, recording any information which may be relevant using the guidelines for completing the Reporting Form as contained in this policy under the section on Recording and Retention of Information. Your role is NOT to investigate, but to report.
- The instructor/volunteer should endeavour to be available to the young person involved. This must be done in a sensitive manner. It is not proper for the instructor/volunteer to intimate or suggest to a person that s/he may have suffered an abuse.

Confidentiality

We at WSKF Ireland are committed to ensuring people's rights to confidentiality. However, in relation to child protection and welfare we undertake that:

- Information will only be forwarded on a need to know basis in order to safeguard the child/young person.
- Giving such information to others for the protection of a child or young person is not a breach of confidentiality;
- We cannot guarantee total confidentiality where the best interests of the child or young person are at risk.
- Primary carers, children and young people have a right to know if personal information is being shared and/or a report is being made to the HSE, unless doing so could put the child/young person at further risk.
- Images of a child/young person will not be used for any reason without the consent of the parent/carer.
- Procedures will be put in place in relation to the use of images of children/young people.
- Procedures will also be put in place for the recording and storing of information in line with our confidentiality policy.



Appendix 1: Report Form

Name of child/young person	
Name of the person who allegedly caused harm to the child/young person	
A full account of the current concern about the child/young person's safety or welfare. (from a parent, concerned adult, instructor, volunteer, club member)	
Dates of any incidents being reported	
Circumstances in which the incident /concern arose	
The child/young person's own statement, if relevant	



Reporter's own involvement with the child/young person and their parents/carers	
Details of any action already taken in relation to the child/young person's safety and welfare	
Name and addresses of any agency or key person involved with the family	
Name of the child/young person's GP	
Identity of person reporting	Name: Address: Phone number: Role in the club:
Details of contact with outside agencies if relevant. (TUSLA, An Garda Síochána)	Sent to: _____ Date: _____ Sent to: _____ Date: _____
Copt of report	Sent to: _____ Date: _____ Sent to _____ Date: _____



Appendix 2: Consent Form for photography:

At times during classes and events photographs and video may be taken of members training and/or competing. This is done in order to promote and encourage healthy sportsmanship. Images and video may be shared on WSKF Ireland and individual Club's social media. It is not the intention to share inappropriate images/video. It is not the intention to share images/video with the wider public.	
Name of child/young person	
Name of consenting parent/guardian	
Name of photographer / recording person	
Purpose / use of image NB: image can only be used for that purpose	
Declaration: We/I, the undersigned, permit use of the image of _____ for public dissemination purposes. Signed: _____ Date: _____	

- It is suggested that the Photography Consent Form be obtained when a child/young person joins WSKF Ireland



References:

Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children & Young People in the Arts Sector, The Arts Council of Ireland, Dublin, 2006

Child Protection Policy, Guidelines and Procedures, Dance Ireland, Dublin 2008

Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2011

Clare Sports Partnership (2018). www.claresports.ie. Last accessed: 28/04/2018