



DCU SPORT



Child Protection  
&  
Safeguarding Policy

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2025

***The Executive Summary guide for easy access use only***

***Full details of the DCU Sport Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy  
is available at***

***[www.dcu.ie/dcusport](http://www.dcu.ie/dcusport)***

Date of next Policy Review – by or before 1<sup>st</sup> March, 2026

# DCU SPORT CHILD SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT 2025

**Spoirt DCU**  
Ollscoil Chathair  
Bhaile Átha Cliath,  
Baile Átha Cliath 9  
Éire

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## DCU Sport Policy – No. 10

### Child Safeguarding Statement 2025

DCU Sport provides sporting activities and opportunities for children and young people through several of our programmes and facility services.

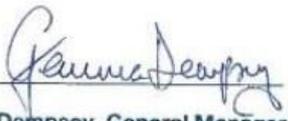
DCU Sport is committed to safeguarding children and young people. All staff members and volunteers working with children throughout the organisation, seek to create a safe environment for children and young people to participate in sporting activities. We have created a Safeguarding Risk Assessment that indicates the areas of potential risk of harm for children on our premises, the likelihood of the risk occurring, the required policy and guidance or process documents required to alleviate the risk.

We have the following procedures in place as part of DCU Sport Safeguarding Code in addition to our Risk Assessment outlined above:

- Procedures for management of allegations of abuse or misconduct by staff or volunteer against a child availing of our facility.
- Procedure for the safe recruitment of staff and volunteers to work with children in our activities through Garda Vetting.
- Procedure for access to child safeguarding training and information for staff members and in house child protection training, including the identification of the occurrence of harm.
- Procedure for the reporting of child protection or welfare concerns to the Statutory Authorities.
- Appointment of Mandated Personnel who are the point of contact in respect to Safeguarding for this statement.

The DCU Sport Mandated Staff who under the Children's First Act 2015 has a legal obligation to report harm of children is - Gemma Dempsey Email: [gemma.dempsey@dcu.ie](mailto:gemma.dempsey@dcu.ie) Phone: (01) 700 6111

DCU Sport recognise that implementation is an on-going process and are committed to the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement and procedures involved. For queries on this Child Safeguarding Statement, please contact DCU Sports' Mandated Person outlined above. The Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed every year alongside our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Signed:   
Gemma Dempsey, General Manager

Date: 01/03/2025  
1<sup>st</sup> March 2025

Review No. 7 Next Review March 2026



## PRINCIPLE ONE - PREAMBLE



### 1.1 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE AND INTENT

The DCU Sport Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy aims to ensure its core values, ethos and the good reputations of DCU Sport are maintained by the highest standards, positive behaviours and attitudes. The DCU Sport Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy shall assist and enable DCU Sport & its Staff in ensuring that every child, young person or adult involved in any sport activity, whether competitive or social within DCU Sport and its facilities is treated with respect and dignity, and is safe and protected from all forms of abuse.

DCU Sport Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy applies to the following, without exemption whether they are in a paid or unpaid/voluntary capacity:

- i. Board members of DCU Sport;
- ii. DCU Sport Staff – Full-time; Part-time and volunteers;
- iii. DCU Sport Support personnel (e.g. Physiotherapists, Masseurs);
- iv. DCU Sport Coaches, Assistant Coaches, Managers and Trainers;
- v. Players and participants;
- vi. Guest Referees, Adjudicators, Assessors and other officials;
- vii. Members of DCU Sport facilities;
- viii. DCU Sport Clubs and associated organisations;
- ix. Other invited guest organisations or associations using DCU Sport facilities;
- x. Any other person(s); groups; organisation or associations that may rent or pay for the use of DCU Sport facilities on a casual or formal basis;
- xi. Parents, guardians, carers; spectators and sponsors to the full extent that is possible.

### 1.2 STATEMENT OF EQUALITY, VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

DCU Sport and DCU Sport Staff affirms and commits to uphold the principle of equality as set out in Section 1.7 of the Irish Sports Council's "Code of Ethics & Good Practice for Children's Sport" (2000) namely:

1. *"All children should be valued and treated in an equitable and fair manner regardless of ability, age, gender, religion, social and ethnic background or political persuasion.*
2. *Children, irrespective of ability or disability should be involved in sports activities in an integrated and inclusive way, whenever possible, thus allowing them to participate to their potential alongside other children.*
3. *Sports Leaders should be aware of and seek to gain competence in addressing the needs of young people with disabilities or any other additional needs."*

DCU Sport and DCU Sport Staff affirms and commits to the Values and Principles as set out in Paragraph 1.4 of Sport Ireland 'Safeguarding Guidance for Children and Young People in Sport' by:

- i. Creating and maintaining an environment that does not discriminate, directly or indirectly, on grounds of gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, political opinion, disability, age, race or ethnic origin, and membership of the traveller community.
- ii. Respecting and valuing the broad diversity of persons within DCU Sports and reflective of society at large and, is committed to treating all persons in an equitable and fair manner.
- iii. Involving persons with disabilities in DCU Sports activities in an integrated way, thus allowing them to participate to their potential alongside others.

### 1.3 TYPES AND DEFINITIONS OF CHILD ABUSE

Child abuse can be categorised into four different types:

1. Physical abuse
2. Emotional abuse,
3. Neglect
4. Sexual abuse.

A child may be subjected to one or more forms of abuse at any given time.

The following are the definitions of each form of abuse as per the “*Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children*” (2017):

**Physical Abuse** is defined as:- *“Physical abuse is when someone deliberately hurts a child physically or puts them at risk of being physically hurt. It may occur as a single incident or as a pattern of incidents.”*

**Emotional Abuse** is defined as:- *“Emotional abuse is the systematic emotional or psychological ill-treatment of a child as part of the overall relationship between a caregiver and a child. Once-off and occasional difficulties between a parent/carer and child are not considered emotional abuse. Abuse occurs when a child’s basic need for attention, affection, approval, consistency and security are not met, due to incapacity or indifference from their parent or caregiver.”*

**Neglect** is defined as:- *“Neglect occurs when a child does not receive adequate care or supervision to the extent that the child is harmed physically or developmentally. It is generally defined in terms of an omission of care, where a child’s health, development or welfare is impaired by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, medical care, intellectual stimulation or supervision and safety.”*

*\*Harm can be defined as the ill-treatment or the impairment of the health or development of a child. Whether it is significant is determined by the child’s health and development as compared to that which could reasonably be expected of a child of similar age.*

**Sexual Abuse** is defined as:- *“occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or sexual arousal, or for that of others.”*

Other forms of abuse within sport include

- Verbal Abuse
- Hazing

**Please** refer to Principle 1.3 DCU Sport Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy & Procedure Handbook and, Appendix 1a and 1b DCU Sport Child Protection & Safeguarding Appendices Handbook for more comprehensive details on each type of abuse including signs & symptoms.

## 1.4 CHILD SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT

Section 11(3) of the Children First Act 2015 requires organisations that are providers of relevant services under Schedule 1 of the Act to prepare a Child Safeguarding Statement. This written statement specifies the service being provided and the principles and procedures to be observed in order to ensure, as far as practicable, that a child availing of the service is safe from **harm**.

The DCU Sport Child Safeguarding Statement has been circulated to all DCU Sport staff members. DCU Sport displays the Child Safeguarding Statement publicly and, it is also available to parents and guardians, TUSLA and members of the public upon request.

The DCU Sport Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed every year, or sooner if there has been a material change in any of the issues to which it refers.

## 1.5 RISK ASSESSMENT

Section 11(1)(a) of the Children First Act 2015 defines risk as “*any potential for harm to a child while availing of the service.*” Section 2 of the Act defines **harm** as follows:

*“harm means in relation to a child –*

- Assault, ill-treatment or neglect of the child in a manner that seriously affects or is likely to seriously affect the child’s health, development or welfare, or*
- Sexual abuse of the child, whether caused by a single act, omission or circumstance or a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances or otherwise.”*

Section 11(1)(b) of the Children First Act 2015 includes a duty to carry out and include written risk assessments within Child Safeguarding Statements **and** to specify the procedures that are in place to manage these risks. Accordingly, DCU Sport has conducted and compiled a written risk assessment. Both it and the procedures that are in place to manage any risks identified can be found in Appendix 13 of the accompanying Appendices Handbook to this Policy Document.



## PRINCIPLE TWO - POLICIES

### 2.1 SUPERVISION AND DEPLOYMENT OF DCU SPORT PERSONNEL

From the associated perspectives of Health & Safety and Child Protection & Safeguarding, to reduce and minimise any potential risk of injury to children and young people while ensuring adequate cover remains in case of an emergency, when working with children and young people and in accordance with the ratio recommended by Irish Sports Council Code of Ethics, DCU Sport will apply the supervision guide ratio standard of:-

Age	No. of Supervisors	No. of Children/Young Persons
Under 12 years	1	8
12 years and over	1	10

Additionally, good practice means that at least one other person shall be present at all activities to safely supervise children and young people.

As a general guide, some examples of factors taken into consideration in determining how many persons are required to safely supervise children:

- The number of children and young people involved in the activity;
- The age, ability and experience of the children and young people participating in the activity;
- Any disabilities or special requirements of any child and young person including challenging behaviour;
- The 'risk assessment' associated with the activity being undertaken;
- Where there are mixed gender groups, it is preferably to have one male and one female as supervisors.

### 2.2 BULLYING

DCU Sport is fully committed to fostering a caring, friendly and safe environment for everyone whether they are competitively or socially involved in any sports activity so they can participate within a relaxed, safe and secure atmosphere. Accordingly, bullying of any kind is unacceptable in sports & its environments and, it will not be tolerated under any circumstances at DCU Sport. Examples of a bully in sport can be:

- a **parent** who pushes too hard
- a **coach** who adopts a 'win at all costs' philosophy
- a **fellow sportsperson** who intimidates or ridicules a peer
- a **club official** who places unfair pressure on a person
- a **spectator** who constantly shouts abuse or gestures at players; coaches; club or facility officials and other spectators

In the event where bullying does occur, all participants; DCU Sport coaches; DCU Sport Staff and volunteers or parents should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with

promptly and effectively. Reporting of any bullying incidents may be made by any child or young person or, on their behalf by their Parent or Guardian to a member of DCU Sport Staff or Volunteer or, directly to the Mandated Person / Deputy Mandated Person / Designated Liaison Person / Deputy Designated Liaison Person.

**Please refer to Principle 2.2, DCU Sport Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy and Procedure Handbook for the full DCU Sport Anti-Bullying Policy which incorporates Reporting, Responding & Prevention procedures.**

## 2.3 CHANGING ROOM

Where practicable, children and young people shall be appropriately supervised at all times in the changing rooms by two members of DCU Staff. Where there are mixed gender groups/teams, separate changing room facilities will be utilised and supervised accordingly. DCU Sport Staff of the opposite gender shall **NOT** be present whilst children or young people are showering or changing.

If a child or young person is uncomfortable changing or showering in public, no pressure should be placed on them to do so and they should be encouraged to do this at home. Children or young people with disabilities shall be involved with their parents/carers/guardians and DCU Sport in deciding how they should be assisted and ensure they are able to consent to the assistance that is offered.

In line with Principle 2.7, all children/young people; parents/guardians; DCU Sport Staff and any other persons who may be present, should be aware that **NO** photographic equipment includes cameras, video cameras, mobile phones with photographic capabilities etc. should be used in the changing rooms.

## 2.4 TOILETING

When DCU Sport is facilitating or has organised a series of activities or camps for children or young people, to facilitate the smooth operation of rest breaks and/or toilet breaks, DCU Sport Staff shall operate a supervised toileting system.

Where a child or young person is considering attending at or participating at any activities or sports camps organised by DCU Sport, has specific toileting/intimate care needs, it may be necessary that prior to such attendance or participation, that a meeting is held between all parties concerned where the needs of the child should be addressed and agreement reached if DCU Sport can meet those needs.

## 2.5 EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

1. Accident procedure:
  - i. A Safety Statement has been prepared and is reviewed on an annual basis.
  - ii. All DCU Sport Staff must be familiar with the Safety Statement.

- iii. DCU Sport maintains an up-to-date register of the contact details of all children/young people involved in any activities associated with DCU Sport.
  - iv. Children's/young people's details should be cross-referenced between the Incident/Accident Book and files.
  - v. DCU Sport has public liability insurance.
  - vi. External organisations with which DCU Sport has dealings must provide proof of public liability insurance.
  - vii. First Aid boxes are readily available and their locations are known to DCU Sport Staff.
  - viii. First Aid boxes shall be regularly checked to ensure that they are fully equipped by a designated member of DCU Sport Staff to ensure that any out of date or missing items are replaced. Substances, which may cause allergies, are not to be included in the First Aid box.
  - ix. Availability of First Aid is in accordance with DCU Sport Health and Safety guidelines.
  - x. Incident/Accident Report Sheets shall be located beside First Aid boxes.
  - xi. Children and young people are supervised by adults at all times.
  - xii. Care is taken to ensure no child can leave the venue undetected.
  - xiii. Where feasible, DCU Sport Staff must know which children and young people are present at any given time, while there are at least two adults supervising activities at all times.
  - xiv. Notwithstanding, the nature of activities that takes place under the auspices of DCU Sport, DCU Sport shall regularly conduct a risk assessment and record details of risky equipment and/or exercises used and, take appropriate steps to minimise risk.
  - xv. Additionally, all furniture and equipment are laid out to minimize safety risk
  - xvi. Only suitable and age appropriate objects are available to children
2. Fire Safety Procedure:
- i. All fire safety recommendations are arrangements implemented in accordance from instructions arising from discussions with the local Fire Chief and Fire service
  - ii. All Staff, adults and children are to be made aware of the evacuation procedures at each venue in the event of a fire
  - iii. DCU Sport Staff are to be informed as to what procedures to follow in the event of a fire
  - iv. Assembly points should be marked clearly
  - v. Fire safety equipment should be checked to make sure that the annual check has been carried out and that the records support this by recording inspection dates

**Please refer to Principle 2.5, DCU Sport Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy and Procedure Handbook for the full Emergency Procedures incorporating Accident procedures in the event of an accident and Fire Safety procedures in the event of an evacuation or discovery of a fire.**

## 2.5 LOST / MISSING CHILDREN OR YOUNG PEOPLE

In the unlikely event that a child or young person participating at activities/sessions/camps at DCU Sport, gets lost or goes missing going to & from or during such activities/sessions/camps, with due regard for the immediate safety and welfare of the

child or young person, DCU Sport shall ensure that all other children or young people involved in the activity/session/camp are fully accounted for and continue to be supervised appropriately while a search for the child concerned is immediately carried out in line with the procedure as set out in Principle 2.6.1 of the DCU Sport Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy.

## 2.6 VIDEO RECORDING AND PHOTOGRAPHY

In order to reduce the risk of images of children being used inappropriately, unsolicited or illegally by any person(s), DCU Sport has adopted a policy in respect the taking and usage of images of children and young people via video recording, photography or any other recording device. This is not to avoid or discourage parents/guardians from taking photographs of their children or young people participating in their activities but to ensure that

1. Best practice is put in place wherever and whenever photographs and recorded images may be taken and subsequently stored.
2. All video recording and/or photographing is appropriate and non-intrusive.
3. Whenever possible, only those who have a right to take videos and/or photographs, do so provided that before taking any recording or image of a child or young person that is not their own, they obtain written permission from a child's parent/guardian and ensure that the parent/guardian knows the way the image will be used.
4. The privacy of others is to be respected at **ALL** times and accordingly, the use of camera phones, videos and cameras inside changing areas, showers and toilets or First Aid areas is strictly prohibited.
5. Videoing as a coaching aid: Video equipment can be used as a legitimate coaching aid. However, permission should first be obtained from the child or young person and/or the child or young person's Parent/Guardian.

**Please refer to Principle 2.7, DCU Sport Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy and Procedure Handbook for the full DCU Sport Video Recording & Photography Policy.**

## 2.8 DISABLED CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

In accordance with domestic legislation and international obligations, disabled children and young people are entitled to the same rights to protection as any other child or young person. Despite this, research informs that children and young people who have a learning, communication or physical disability are increasingly more vulnerable and accordingly, are at a higher risk of being a victim of some form of abuse. Therefore, particular care shall be taken by all DCU Sport Staff and volunteers when working with children and young people affected by a learning, communication or physical disability

## 2.9 ETHNICITY OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Children and young people from minority cultural or ethnic groups are additionally vulnerable to all forms of abuse because they may be:

- Experiencing or subjected to ongoing racism and racist attitudes.

- Experiencing racism and prejudices through being ignored by people in authority.
- Afraid of exacerbating abuse to higher levels if they challenge or report their abuse and abuser to others.
- Subjected to myths and stereotyping, e.g. all people of a particular culture are good with or hit their children or young people.
- Wanting to fit in and not make a fuss.
- Using or learning English as a second language

In line with Codes of Conduct as per Principle 4 of the DCU Sport Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy, particular care shall be taken by children; young people; parents; guardians and all DCU Sport Staff when working with children and young people from minority, cultural or ethnic groups.

## 2.10 ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE OF CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE AT DCU SPORT CAMP ACTIVITIES

### 1. Arrival and Departure:

Where children or young people are present at the DCU Sport facilities, participating at activities or camps organised by DCU Sport other than occasions where they may be present under the care and control of their parents/guardians, the designated arrival and collection point for children and young people during such activities or camps shall be the entrance to the back offices of the DCU Sport Complex. Members of DCU Sport Staff shall be in place at the designated point and times set out in the Camp Brochure, namely

Each morning:-

- (i) for early drop off option of free play ahead of camp activities,
- (ii) to assist and facilitate their registration and logging in, and

Each evening:-

- (i) with conclusion of camp activities,
- (ii) to assist and ensure each child or young person has their personal property, logging out and supervise the collection process.

Parents/guardians should be advised that under no circumstances

- i. is a child or young person permitted to arrive at or depart from an entrance point other than the designated point.
- ii. is a child or young person permitted to walk unaccompanied and unsupervised across DCU campus having been dropped off at the Collins Avenue main entrance or Collins Avenue main entrance **unless** with written consent from parents/guardians
- iii. In the event that a person other than the child's or young person's parents/guardian, shall be accompanying to or collecting the child or young person, DCU Sport should be notified in writing from the parent/guardian giving signed authority and consent identifying the person.

### 2. Late collection:

While DCU Sport accepts that there may be extenuating circumstances or occurrences beyond the control of parents/guardians resulting in the late collection of children or young people at DCU Sport, the issue of late collection of children presents DCU Sport Staff with a potentially difficult supervisory situation. In such circumstances, it is **not** the responsibility of DCU Sport Staff to transport or make alternative arrangements to transport any child or young person home on behalf of parents who may have been delayed.

## 2.11 COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL MEDIA

DCU Sport acknowledge the significant impact that communication and social media technologies have for all children, young people and adults and, because of various formats available, DCU Sport advocates & encourages they are used at all times safely, sensibly, securely and responsibly for their positive benefits and to minimise the potential negative or harmful uses for which they can be used.

**Please** refer to Principle 2.11, DCU Sport Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy and Procedure Handbook for the full DCU Sport Communication and Social Media Policy addresses the use of:

- |                           |                             |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| a) Mobile & Camera phones | b) Texting                  |
| c) Email                  | d) Websites & Social Media. |

## 2.12 SAFETY STATEMENT

In conjunction with DCU Sport statutory obligation under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, it is the policy of DCU Sport to promote the health, wellbeing and personal safety of all children; young people and adults involved in all activities associated with DCU Sports.

For that purpose, a Safety Statement has been prepared as required under the Safety, Health and Welfare Act, 2005 and it includes matters such as

- i. Roles and Responsibilities
- ii. Identification specific and potential risks.
- iii. Procedures in place for safeguarding against such risks.
- iv. Accident procedures and fire safety procedures.

The Safety Statement can be located at DCU Sport Complex Reception and may be inspected on request.

The Health and Safety Officer for DCU Sport as required under the Act is:

**Gemma Dempsey**

She may be contacted at (01) 700 6111 or at [gemma.dempsey@dcu.ie](mailto:gemma.dempsey@dcu.ie)

## PRINCIPLE THREE - PERSONAL

*\*Applicable to DCU Sport organised activities*

### 3.1 DCU SPORT STAFF - FULL TIME/PART-TIME AND VOLUNTEER PERSONNEL

DCU Sport is fully committed that all reasonable steps are taken to prevent unsuitable people from working with children and young people within its organisation and its onsite or offsite facilities. This commitment applies equally to those currently working in roles and positions, either paid (full-time/part-time) or unpaid (voluntary) within DCU Sport and, any potential personal who may recruited into either paid (full-time/part-time) or unpaid (voluntary) positions within DCU Sport in the future.

### 3.2 RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF DCU SPORT PERSONNEL

DCU Sport has a duty and responsibility for having safe and careful recruitment processes in place in respect of all roles within its organisation. Reference checking, interviewing, attitude and aptitude testing, relevant experience and qualifications are important components of this Recruitment and Selection process.

### 3.3 GARDA VETTING OF DCU SPORT PERSONNEL

In addition, recruitment will be subject to the process of vetting by the National Vetting Bureau in order to establish whether applicants have any criminal convictions or other past behaviour that suggests they are unsuitable to work with children or young people, or may present a risk to children or young people.

Under Section 13(6) of the National Vetting Bureau (Children & Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 - 2016, a person under 18 years of age may undergo the Garda Vetting process with the of their parent/guardian. While a person under 16 years of age cannot undergo Garda Vetting under the National Vetting Bureau (Children & Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 - 2016, DCU Sport will not consider any person under 17 years for any appointment as a staff member.

To ensure compliance to the requirements of DCU Sport's Garda Vetting Policy, DCU Sport shall use the services of 'Ireland Active' to carry out its staff vetting obligations.

**Please refer to Principle 3.3, DCU Sport Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy and Procedure Handbook. The DCU Sport Garda Vetting Policy can be found in Appendix 15 of the accompanying DCU Sport Child Protection & Safeguarding Appendices Handbook.**

### 3.4 MANAGEMENT OF DCU SPORT PERSONNEL

Management at DCU Sport will ensure that

- i. DCU Sport Staff are fully supported through responsible management,
- ii. Procedures are in place to cover training, induction, supervision and the review of work practices.
- iii. DCU Sport Staff members receive induction training including awareness of policies and procedures under DCU Sport Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy and Child Safeguarding Statement,
- iv. DCU Sport Staff shall be provided with a Staff handbook pertaining to (iii)

Where DCU Sport retains the services of freelance staff, such person(s) must agree to abide by the DCU Sport Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy, in particular to uphold the Code of Conduct pertaining to DCU Sport Staff.

### 3.5 INDUCTION AND TRAINING OF DCU SPORT PERSONNEL

DCU Sport is fully committed to the education and training of all DCU Sport Staff on all aspects of Child Protection, Child Safeguarding Statement and the DCU Sport Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy. In accordance with Chapter 4 of the “Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children” (2017), DCU Sport shall carry out this training as part of a comprehensive Training and Induction programme for all existing and new DCU Sport Staff that come within the remit of Principle 3.2 in order to

- i. substantially reduce potential risk to children and young people and,
- ii. help create positive child safe environment within DCU facilities.

### 3.6 SUPERVISION AND MONITORING OF DCU SPORT PERSONNEL

DCU Sport will continuously monitor and appraise all Staff at regular intervals (or following particular programme or events) to ensure that

- a) they are carrying out their duties in accordance with their obligations under the Code of Conduct,
- b) fulfilling their role to the highest possible standards, and
- c) with due regard to their ‘duty of care’

to each child or young person that they may come in contact with during the course of their work.

### 3.7 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN LEADERSHIP ROLES

While DCU Sport encourage children and young people to avail of the opportunity of taking on leadership roles within the variety of activities available at DCU Sport campus and intends it to be an enjoyable and positive learning experience in life-skills development for a child or young person, it remains conscious that the child or young person acting in such a leadership role is under 18 years of age **AND** is still legally a child.

DCU Sport acknowledge their role and responsibility to such young people who take on such roles and shall ensure that all officials; players/participants, parents/spectators is cognisant of this and that they behave appropriately towards young people taking on such roles.



## PRINCIPLE FOUR - PREVENTION

*\*Applicable to DCU Sport organised activities*

### 4.1 CODES OF CONDUCT

In order to further reduce the potential for risk of harm to any child or young person while using, visiting or otherwise present within the DCU Sport facilities & amenities, as a preventative measure DCU Sport has introduced a series of Code of Conduct which are applicable and unique to particular groups.

A Code of Conduct is a set of rules outlining the responsibilities of or best practices for an individual or organisation. In this particular instance, it sets out clear guidance on the expected standards of behaviour of an individual person within particular groups whether employed by, using, visiting or otherwise present within the DCU Sport facilities & amenities by requiring them to:

- a) Be responsible and accountable for their conduct; and
- b) Abide by the relevant Role-Specific Codes of Conduct as outlined

### 4.2 CODE OF CONDUCT – CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

DCU Sport acknowledges and embraces the importance of the role that children and young people play in our activities through a spirit of fairness and respect. Accordingly, each child or young person is invited to read and agree to abide by the Code of Conduct for Children and Young People as set out in Appendix 3 of the DCU Sport Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy Appendices Handbook by signing as indicated and having a Parent/Guardian as a co-signatory.

### 4.3 CODE OF CONDUCT – PARENTS/GUARDIANS

DCU Sport acknowledge that Parents/ Guardians have an influential role to play in assisting their children & young people to adopt positive attitudes through participation in sporting activities, including encouraging them to maintain an ongoing involvement in sport. Accordingly, Parents/Guardians are invited to read and agree to abide by the Code of Conduct for Parents/Guardians as set out in Appendix 4 of the DCU Sport Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy Appendices Handbook by signing as indicated.

### 4.4 CODE OF CONDUCT – DCU SPORT STAFF, COACHES AND VOLUNTEERS.

All DCU Sport Staff, Coaches and Volunteers should familiarise themselves with all Codes of Conduct as set out in the DCU Sport Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, in

particular this Code of Conduct. Accordingly, each member of DCU Sport Staff, Coaches and Volunteers are invited to read and agree to abide by the Code of Conduct for DCU Sport Staff, Coaches and Volunteers as set out in Appendix 5 of the DCU Sport Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy Appendices Handbook by signing as indicated.

#### 4.5 OFF DUTY CONDUCT – DCU SPORT STAFF AND CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE.

At all times, members of DCU Sport staff must maintain a professional relationship with children and young people in particular during any off-duty contact, accordingly, should follow the guidelines and policies as set out in the DCU Sport Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy and Procedures Handbook.

**Please** refer to Principle 4 DCU Sport Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy and Procedure Handbook and Appendices 3, 4 & 5, DCU Sport Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy Appendices Handbook for the full DCU Sport Codes of Conduct Policy.

## PRINCIPLE FIVE - PROTECTION

### 5.1 MANDATED PERSON

DCU Sport shall, in accordance with Chapter 3.3.1 of the 'Children First - National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children' (2011), select and appoint a Mandated Person.

The Mandated Person for DCU Sport is:

**Gemma Dempsey**

She may be contacted at (01) 700 6111 or at [gemma.dempsey@dcu.ie](mailto:gemma.dempsey@dcu.ie)

In the event that the Mandated Person is unavailable, the Deputy Mandated Person is:

**To be appointed**

He/She may be contacted at (01) 700 5759

In brief:-

Mandated persons have two main legal obligations under the Children First Act 2015. These are:

1. To report the harm of children above a defined threshold to Tusla (See Appendix 1b, DCU Sport CP&S Policy 2025 - Handbook B - Appendices);
2. To assist Tusla, if requested, in assessing a concern which has been the subject of a mandated report

### 5.2 DESIGNATED LIAISON PERSON

Notwithstanding the selection and appointment of a person in the role of Mandated Person as set out in Section 5.1, DUC Sports shall appoint a Designated Liaison Person in accordance with Chapter 4 of the 'Children First - National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children' (2017).

The persons selected and appointed to act as Mandated Person or Designated Liaison Person (including their respective Deputies) may be the same person.

In brief, the DCU Sport Designated Liaison Officer will:

- i. Act as a source of advice on child protection and safeguarding matters;
- ii. Co-ordinate action within DCU Sport and with any other Child Protection Liaison Officers;
- iii. Liaise with the Child and Family Agency and An Garda Síochána and other agencies about suspected or actual cases of child abuse;
- iv. Be accessible to all DCU Sport staff;
- v. shall ensure that s/he is knowledgeable about child protection and safeguarding and, that s/he undertakes any training considered necessary to keep updated on new developments including advising DCU Sport of child protection and safeguarding training needs and where necessary, organise and/or facilitate training and workshops on the guidelines for child protection and safeguarding.

### 5.3 RELEVANT PERSON

In accordance with Section 14 of the Children's First Act 2015 and Chapter 3 of the 'Children First - National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children' (2017), the Relevant Person in respect of the DCU Sport Child Safeguarding Statement is:

#### **Gemma Dempsey**

She may be contacted at (01) 700 6111 or at [gemma.dempsey@dcu.ie](mailto:gemma.dempsey@dcu.ie)

In the unlikely event that the Mandated Person / Deputy Mandated Person / Designated Liaison Person / Deputy Designated Liaison Person / Relevant Person are unavailable, please contact the Head of Sport, DCU Sport:

#### **James Galvin**

He may be contacted at (01) 700 5259 or at [james.galvin@dcu.ie](mailto:james.galvin@dcu.ie)

**Please** refer to Principle 5, DCU Sport Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy and Procedures Handbook for the Roles and Responsibilities of the Mandated Person / Deputy Mandated Person / Designated Liaison Person / Deputy Designated Liaison Person / Relevant Person.

## PRINCIPLE SIX - PROCEDURES

### 6.1 REASONABLE GROUNDS FOR REPORTING SUSPICIONS OR CONCERNS.

Child abuse can often be difficult to identify and may present in many forms. The ability to recognise child abuse depends as much on a person's willingness to accept the possibility of its existence as it does on their knowledge and information. It is important to stress that no singular indicator should be seen as conclusive in itself of abuse.

Mindful of reporting obligations under the Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences Against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Bill, 2012 the Statutory Authorities should always be informed when a person has reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been abused, or is being abused, or is at risk of abuse.

**Please refer to Principle 6.1, DCU Sport Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy and Procedures Handbook for more comprehensive details on Reasonable Grounds.**

### 6.2 IMPEDIMENTS FOR REPORTING SUSPICIONS OR CONCERNS.

Despite the welfare and protection of the child or young person being of the paramount concern, impediments can exist that inhibit the early notification personal and/or organisational to the relevant authorities, for example;

1. Unfamiliarity with the Signs and Symptoms of Abuse and/or Neglect
2. Social and Cultural concerns
3. Personal concerns (Uncertainty and fear)
4. Agency or organisational barriers
5. Reporting
6. Concerns regarding outcomes of filing a Report

### 6.3 RESPONDING TO, REPORTING & RECORDING OF DISCLOSURES.

DCU Sport affirms that **all** allegations of abuse shall always be taken seriously. False allegations of abuse from children or young people are very rare so if a child or young person discloses or indicates they have been/are being abused or, information is obtained which gives concern that a child or young person is being abused, the disclosure/information must be acted on as soon as possible in line with the following procedures;

## 1. Responding to Disclosures:

*When a child or young person makes a disclosure or gives information of suspected abuse, it is important that the person receiving the disclosure shall;*

### DO

- ❖ **Stay calm** – *Do not rush into taking rash or inappropriate actions.*
- ❖ **Reassure the child** – *That they are not to blame*
- ❖ **Listen sympathetically** – *To what the child says*
- ❖ **Be compassionate** – *Understand that the child or young person has decided to tell something that is very important to them*
- ❖ **Be honest** – *Tell the child or young person that it is not possible to keep this information secret*
- ❖ **Keep questions to minimum** – *Only ask questions to clarify what the child or young person has said.*
- ❖ **Ensure you clearly understand what the child or young person has said** – *In order that the information can be recorded carefully and accurately*
- ❖ **Consult with** – *The Mandated Person ensuring that all the information is communicated accurately.*
- ❖ **Maintain Confidentiality** – *All incidents will be treated with an open mind and handled in a fair and equitable manner. Information will only be shared on a 'need to know' basis.*
- ❖ **Ensure the safety of the young person** – *if urgent medical attention is required then call an ambulance, inform the attending medical staff/nurses/doctors of the concerns and making them aware that it is a child protection issue.*

### DON'T

- ❖ **Don't panic** – *or allow your feelings to be evident.*
- ❖ **Don't make promises you cannot keep or agree to keep secrets** – *explain that you will need to tell other people*
- ❖ **Don't make the child or young person repeat the story unnecessarily.**
- ❖ **Don't probe for more information than is offered**
- ❖ **Don't speculate, make assumptions or make any judgmental statements against the person whom the allegation is made.**
- ❖ **Don't approach the alleged abuser.**
- ❖ **Don't delay** – *in making the report to the Mandated Person.*
- ❖ **Don't speculate or make assumptions.**
- ❖ **Don't take sole responsibility.**

If a person fears that a child or young person might be in immediate danger, they should directly contact the Child and Family Agency (TUSLA) immediately.

If the Child and Family Agency (TUSLA) cannot be contacted/is unavailable or, in case of out-of-hours times, contact An Garda Síochána.

2. Sharing concerns with parents/guardians:

Where there are reasonable causes for concerns that the parent(s)/guardians of the child or young person may be responsible for or, have knowledge of the abuse, sharing concerns with the parent(s)/guardian **may** place the child or young person at further significant risk or harm.

3. Recording to Disclosures:

It is important that a written record of all the information about the alleged abuse whether disclosed/observed/suspected is made as soon as possible using the Standard Reporting Form This record should be done irrespective of whether the report is subsequently forwarded on to the Child and Family Agency or An Garda Síochána. The advice or assistance of the Mandated Person should be sought if necessary.

4. Reporting of Disclosures: *(See Figure 1)*

The completed Standard Reporting Form shall be forwarded to the appropriate authorities through the Mandated Person or in their absence, the Deputy Mandated Person. In case of emergency, the Report can be made verbally by the informer initially to the relevant statutory authority and then, followed up in writing using the Standard TUSLA Reporting Form.

#### 6.4 LEGAL OBLIGATIONS TO REPORTING SUSPICIONS AND CONCERNS.

The Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences against Children and Vulnerable Adults) Act 2012 created an offence of withholding information in relation to specified offences committed against a child or vulnerable person, and arises where a person;

- i. knows or believes that a specified offence has been committed against a child or vulnerable person, and
- ii. he or she has information which would be of material assistance in securing the apprehension, prosecution or conviction of another person for that offence, and fails without reasonable excuse to disclose that information as soon as it is practicable to do so to a member of the Garda Síochána.

#### 6.5 LEGAL PROTECTION FOR REPORTING SUSPICIONS OR CONCERNS.

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 designated officers of the Child and Family Agency (TUSLA) or An Garda Síochána. The act also covers the offence of ‘false reporting’. The main provisions of the Act are:

1. The provision of immunity from civil liability to any person who reports child abuse “reasonably and in good faith” to designated officers of Child and Family Agency (TUSLA) or any member of An Garda Síochána;
2. The provision of significant protection for employees who report child abuse. These protections cover all employees and all forms of discrimination up to and including, dismissal;
3. 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.

Children's First Act 2015:

Section 16(3) of the Children's First Act 2015 provides for protection from civil liability for Mandated Persons reporting suspicions or concerns if required to share information with TUSLA when assisting in the assessment of risk to a child.

## 6.6 CONFIDENTIALITY.

DCU Sport is committed to ensuring people's right to confidentiality and, that it should be maintained in respect of all issues and people concerned in cases of abuse, welfare or bad practice. Accordingly, the rights of both the child and the person about whom the complaint has been made are protected.

Notwithstanding, guarantee of total confidentiality or undertakings regarding secrecy **cannot** be given, as the best interests and welfare of the child or young person will supersede all other considerations.

## 6.7 ALLEGATIONS AGAINST DCU SPORT STAFF, COACHES OR VOLUNTEERS.

In the event of an allegation(s) being made against a member or members of DCU Sport Staff, the protection of the child/young person is the first and paramount consideration, and to ensure that no child or young person is exposed to unnecessary risk. (*See Figure 2*)

DCU Sport, in having a dual responsibility to both the child or young person and the staff member(s) shall as a matter of urgency take any necessary protective measures or actions that shall;

- i. be proportionate to the level of risk and
- ii. where an allegation of child abuse against a staff member is received, it will be assessed promptly and carefully.
- iii. consider any action to be taken following the report shall be based on an opinion formed 'reasonably and in good faith'.
- iv. not unreasonably penalise the staff member, financially or otherwise, unless necessary to protect children.
- v. if it so decides that, based on reasonable grounds for concern, as outlined in Principle 6.1 DCU Sport Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy and Procedure Handbook and Appendix 1b and 1c of the DCU Sport Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy, such grounds do exist, a formal report shall be made to the Child and Family Agency (TUSLA).

DCU Sport and its designated personal will take care to ensure that any actions taken by them do not undermine/compromise/frustrate any investigations and/or assessments being carried out by the Child and Family Agency (TUSLA) or An Garda Síochána. Accordingly, DCU Sport shall maintain a close liaison with the statutory authorities to achieve this.

## 6.8 'WHISTLE-BLOWING'

'Whistle-blowing' is a warning system whereby concerns or suspicions can be raised regarding allegations of abuse; inappropriate conducts or practices within an organisation, its facilities or by individual(s) associated with it. There may be circumstances where individual Staff members of DCU Sport; children and young people feel that they are unable to raise concerns or suspicions regarding alleged incidents of abuse within DCU Sport and its environment, on the grounds that they believe or have a reasonable doubt that these concerns or suspicions would not be taken seriously or dealt with adequately. Accordingly, DCU Sport shall:

1. remind all members of DCU Sport Staff that, in accordance with their statutory obligation under the Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences Against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act, 2012, they have a legal duty and obligation to raise their concerns or suspicions with the appropriate authorities where they believe that a child or young person is being abused or is at serious risk of harm.
2. fully support and protect any member of DCU Sport Staff who, in good faith, reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be abusing a child or young person.
3. remind DCU Sport Staff of the legal protection accorded to them under the Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998 (*Principle 6.11, DCU Sport Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy and Procedure Handbook*)

## 6.9 DISCIPLINE.

DCU Sport has its own complaints and disciplinary procedure (Appendix 10) for dealing with breaches of the DCU Sport Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and will take disciplinary action against any person/organisation/bookey that are found to have breached the DCU Sport Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy including the making of false and malicious allegations. Possible sanction measure(s) that may be taken include:

- ❖ verbal and/or written warning;
- ❖ additional training and/or mentoring to address behaviour and conduct;
- ❖ suspension or termination of DCU Sport membership rights, privileges or benefits;
- ❖ suspension or cancellation of any contractual agreement between DCU Sport and organisation/bookey;
- ❖ suspension from participation or involvement in any role or activity at DCU Sport for a period of time or permanent termination;
- ❖ any other form of discipline that DCU Sport considers to be reasonable and appropriate.

## 6.10 ANONYMOUS COMPLAINTS.

Anonymous complaints can be difficult to deal with but under no circumstances, shall they be ignored as the safety and welfare of the child/children is the paramount consideration in all cases. Therefore, any such complaints relating to possible abuse or inappropriate behaviour should be brought to the attention of the Mandated Person.

Rumours can have a detrimental effect to a safe environment for children and young people and, potentially compromise the smooth and efficient running of activities. Accordingly, any member of DCU Sport Staff should bring any rumours (including insinuations or innuendos) relating to possible abuse or inappropriate behaviours to the attention of the Mandated Person

## 6.11 VEXATIOUS COMPLAINTS & VICTIMISATION

DCU Sport strives to ensure its complaints procedure is conducted with the utmost integrity and on the principle of natural justice. However, if at any point during the complaint process, the Mandated Person or in their absence, the Deputy Mandated Person or, the Designated Liaison Person or in their absence, the Deputy Liaison Person considers that a complainant has knowingly made an untrue complaint or, that the complaint made is vexatious or malicious, the matter may be referred to the Head of Sport, DCU Sport.

Having regards to all the circumstances of the matter, the Head of Sport, DCU Sport may consider the matter to be of such gravity that it should be referred to An Garda Síochána for their consideration if a person has knowingly made an untrue complaint or, that the complaint made is vexatious or malicious.

## 6.12 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION.

Under the Freedom of Information Acts 1997 and 2003, members of the public have a right of access to records concerning them held by any public body and a right to

- i. have official information about themselves amended where it is incorrect, incomplete or misleading,
- ii. be given reasons for decisions made concerning themselves.

Requests to see records are processed in the first instance through the public body that holds the records. In the event of refusal of access, the decision may be appealed, and the ultimate arbiter is the Information Commissioner.

The Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003 afford similar rights to individuals to access personal data held about them by any entity whether in the public or private sector. The right to access applies to records held by the Child & Family Agency (TUSLA) and An Garda Síochána. However, the right to access does not apply in a range of circumstances that may be relevant in a child welfare context.

Notwithstanding, Section 17 of the Children First Act 2015 makes it an offence for a Mandated Person to disclose information to a third party which has been shared by Tusla during the course of an assessment, unless TUSLA has given written authorisation to do so.

## 6.13 RECKLESS ENDANGERMENT OF CHILDREN.

The Criminal Justice Act 2006 provides for an offence of “reckless endangerment of children”. This offence may be committed by a person who has authority or control over a child or an abuser and who intentionally or recklessly endangers a child by:

- a) Causing or permitting any child to be placed or left in a situation which creates a substantial risk to the child of being a victim of serious harm or sexual abuse or,
- b) failing to take reasonable steps to protect a child from such a risk while knowing that the child is in such a situation.

#### 6.14 REASONABLE CHASTISEMENT OF CHILDREN.

Section 28 of the Children's First Act 2015 has removed the defence of 'reasonable chastisement' from the common law which means that if any parent / guardian / carer who administers corporal punishment to a child or young person, s/he will no longer be able to rely on a defence of 'reasonable chastisement' should the matter end up in a court of law.

**Please** refer to Principle 6, DCU Sport Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy and Procedure Handbook for the more comprehensive details on **ALL** procedures.

**FIGURE 1**

**EXTERNAL CONCERNS**

**IF YOU HAVE A SUSPICION OR CONCERN THAT A CHILD / YOUNG PERSON AT DCU SPORT IS BEING OR HAS BEEN ABUSED OR NEGLECTED BY SOMEONE OUTSIDE DCU SPORT, YOU SHOULD...**

Report to the DCU Sport Mandated Person / Deputy Mandated Person who will follow the process below

Are there reasonable grounds for concerns?

*(Refer to Principle 1.3 of DCU Sport CP & SP Policy & Procedures Handbook and Appendices 1a; 1b and 1c of DCU Sport CP & SP Appendices Handbook for guidance)*

Yes

Unclear

DCU Sport Mandated Person / Deputy Mandated Person will 'informally consult' with the Child and Family Agency (TUSLA) for advice and guidance by phone.

Yes

Are the parent(s) / guardian(s) / carer(s) considered to be the alleged abuser?

Does the Child and Family Agency (TUSLA) advise to proceed with the matter?

No

Yes

No

Discuss with the Child and Family Agency (TUSLA) and/or An Garda Síochána how parent(s) / guardian(s) / carer(s) will be notified.

Subject to the advice from the Child and Family Agency (TUSLA), parent(s) / guardian(s) / carer(s) are informed.

Make a formal referral using the TUSLA Standard Reporting Form to the Child and Family Agency (TUSLA).

Ensure the child / young person is appropriately supported while maintaining confidentiality.

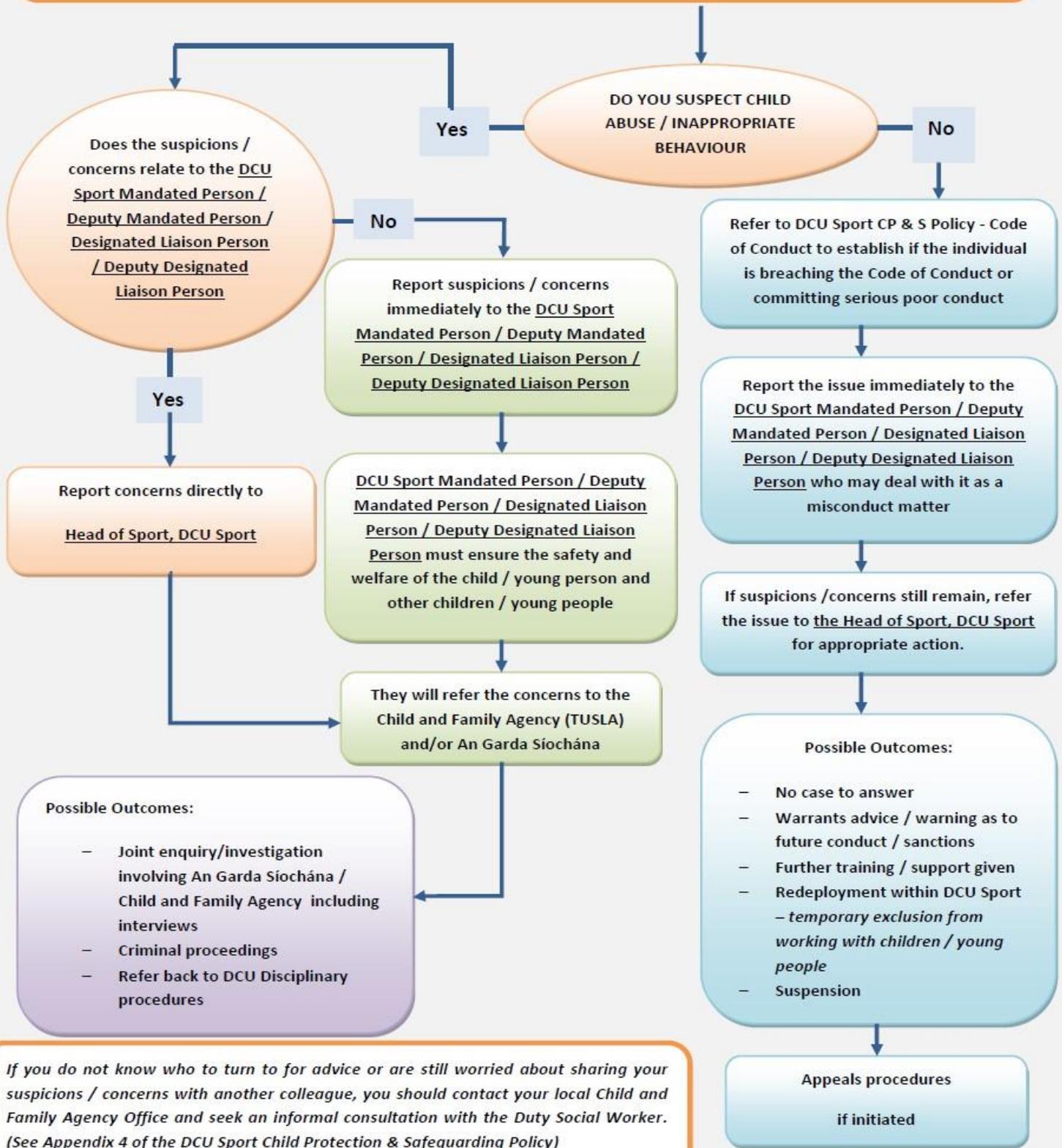
No case to answer

Inform the person who raised the concern that 'following investigation and advice there is no case to answer'



# INTERNAL CONCERNS

ARE YOU CONCERNED ABOUT THE BEHAVIOUR(S) OF DCU SPORT STAFF MEMBER(S)/VOLUNTEER(S)



If you do not know who to turn to for advice or are still worried about sharing your suspicions / concerns with another colleague, you should contact your local Child and Family Agency Office and seek an informal consultation with the Duty Social Worker. (See Appendix 4 of the DCU Sport Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy)



### 7.1 DCU SPORT STAFF

**No member of DCU Sport Staff shall investigate allegations of abuse or decide whether or not a child or young person is/has been abused.**

DCU Sport Staff are reminded that the possibility that someone may be abusing a child or young person, in particular if they suspect that it is someone they know, will raise personal feelings and concerns. Although it can be difficult to report such matters, DCU Sport Staff must remember that:

- ❖ the welfare of the child is paramount
- ❖ being vigilant helps to protect children
- ❖ everyone has a duty of care to report any concerns they have immediately
- ❖ a good reporting structure ensures that concerns are dealt with fairly

Comprehensive flowcharts which illustrate the complete referral process for any concerns/suspicions arising in and outside DCU Sport, are set out in Principle 6 of this Guide.

### 7.2 INVESTIGATIVE PROCESS – STATUTORY AUTHORITIES.

Only An Garda Síochána and the Child & Family Agency (TUSLA) have the responsibilities of investigating allegations of the abuse of children, young people and vulnerable persons in Ireland have very separate and distinct roles with regard to the protection of children, young people and vulnerable persons.

**An Garda Síochána:-** Only Gardaí can investigate allegations of a **criminal** offence against a child, young person or vulnerable person. It is the role of the Child & Family Agency to provide the necessary supports and monitoring of children, young person or vulnerable person at risk. Notwithstanding, in relation to the investigation of criminal offences against a child, young people and vulnerable persons, legislation such as the Criminal Justice (Withholding Information on Offences Against Children and Vulnerable Adults) Act 2012 requires any person who has evidence that a person has committed a serious offence against a child or vulnerable person must provide the Gardaí with that information so that the Gardaí can investigate that alleged crime.

**Child & Family Agency (TUSLA) :-** The Children's First Act 2015 address the role of the Child and Family Agency (TUSLA). It will require that relevant persons in a position to assess children at risk of abuse must provide the Child and Family Agency (TUSLA) with the information necessary to monitor and provide supports to a child, young person or vulnerable person who may have been abused.



# NOTES





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