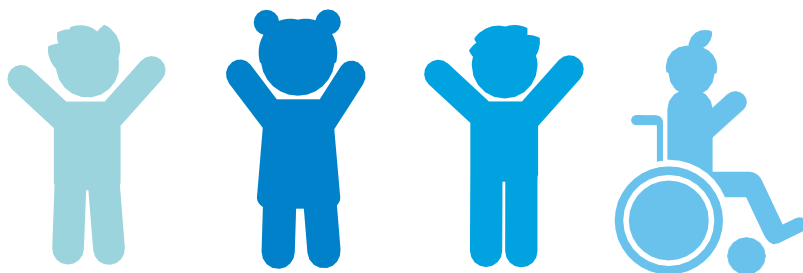


# Safeguarding & Wellbeing Considerations during Covid-19

The following safeguarding considerations are intended to act as a child protection support to Sporting Organisations, Young People, Parents & Guardians.

The guidance provided in this document is for general information only.



## KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

### Safeguarding children & young people in a distance learning environment

It is important that Sporting Organisations maintain safe use of the internet during distance learning and assist parents & guardians to be aware of their role also. Sporting Organisations may wish to review their Social Media Policy so that it contains some guidance on remote or distance learning activities.

### Engaging with children & young people online

Engagement in the form of learning opportunities and coaching sessions may help to establish a sense of routine in a persons day-to-day activities. It is important to implement sufficient measures to ensure children and young people are safeguarded when engaging in these online activities. Consider what security measures are available on the platform being used - password protection, screen sharing, recording, controlling access, number of participants etc.

### Keeping in touch with parents & guardians

Communicate clearly to clubs/coaches about the need to obtain parental consent for engaging in online sessions. It is important to recognise that in the current climate parents & guardians may be experiencing a particularly challenging time. Many will have a number of factors to consider from caring for older or vulnerable family members while also being concerned about how their children may not be getting enough physical activity.

### Clubs & NGB's working together to safeguard young people

Organisations may wish to provide information and support to parents & guardians who may not be familiar with online learning environments. Maintaining regular contact via Email, phone calls/text message & social media channels between National Children Officers and their Club Childrens Officers will ensure clubs feel supported in dealing with new challenges which may arise during this time.

### Supporting Wellbeing

Children who have positive early experiences of sport are more likely to continue to some degree of lifelong participation. This contributes to their ongoing physical and emotional wellbeing in adulthood. Sport, therefore, has a lot to offer children – provided it takes place in an environment that is safe, promotes enjoyment, and respects the physical and emotional health and wellbeing of each individual young person.

### Maintaining communication on Safeguarding matters/ issues

Maintaining communication to provide support & best practice guidance in the area of Safeguarding is key to ensuring that clubs and their members are fully supported on all the necessary elements of Safeguarding. This will serve to motivate Club Childrens Officers to continue the important work they are carrying out within their clubs.

**NGB's & clubs may also wish to review their Children First Risk Assessment so that it reflects any new risks that may have occurred due to the Covid-19 outbreak.**

## Safeguarding

### National Children's Officers can maintain support for their clubs/members by continuing to:

- Provide regular and timely responses to any Safeguarding query they may receive from a club or member
- Give clear advice on next steps involved once a Child protection concern has been received.
- Encourage clubs to ensure their members are aware of who their CCO/DLP is and how to contact them.
- Collaborate between NGB's which could include communicating with individuals (NCO's) outside of their own organisation to provide support and advice, and to share good Safeguarding practices with one another.
- Advise clubs of the important role parents & guardians can play in supervising the use of online platforms by their children.
- Encourage NGBs/Clubs to be conscious of the level of engagement/expectations they are having/ placing with their affiliates/members – too much can be as much a problem as too little.

## Wellbeing

- The recently launched #InThisTogether initiative encourages people to pick a new activity, which could help them to feel a little healthier or a little better as we deal with Covid-19. Sporting Organisations may wish to raise awareness on this initiative which will help look after their members physical and mental wellbeing.
- Where possible Sporting Organisations may wish to nominate a Health and Well-being representative (if appropriate to your organisation). A National Childrens Officer may wish to take up this role on an interim basis.
- Engaging with parents, guardians & young people by phone and email or by any means that the National Governing Body deems as appropriate.
- Hosting online Q&A forums for clubs using various online mediums.
- Providing coaching/skills development guidelines using email, NGB/LSP websites, & online tools.
- Where possible encourage parents & guardians to engage with any sporting/physical activity where appropriate to the child. This could include skill development & cardio based activities - 60 minutes every day at a moderate to vigorous level (HSE.ie)

*\*In the case of an emergency, where a child appears to be at immediate and serious risk, and it is not possible to make contact with Tusla, An Garda Síochána should be contacted immediately.*

## USEFUL LINKS:

- Sport Ireland Safeguarding Guidance for Children & Young People: <https://www.sportireland.ie/ethics/safeguarding-guidance-for-children-and-young-people-in-sport>
- Sport Ireland SafeSport App: <https://www.sportireland.ie/ethics/safesport-app>
- Sport Ireland Safeguarding 1 On-Line Refresher: <https://www.sportireland.ie/ethics/safeguarding-1-online-refresher>
- Sport Ireland Staying Safe Online: <https://www.sportireland.ie/ethics/staying-safe-online>
- Department of Children and Youth Affairs: <https://www.dcy.gov.ie/viewdoc>
- Children First: <https://www.tusla.ie/children-first/publications-and-forms/>
- Tusla Child & Family Agency: <https://www.tusla.ie/>
- Tusla online web portal: <https://www.tusla.ie/children-first/web-portal/>
- An Garda Síochána: <https://www.garda.ie/en/>
- Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST): <https://teachercpd.ie/mod/page/view.php?id=11798>
- Webwise: <https://www.webwise.ie/>
- #InThisTogether: <https://www.rte.ie/news/2020/0424/1134638-mental-health-launch/>
- Parents Centre: <https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/parents-centre/>



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