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# CHILD SAFEGUARDING

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Policy



2019



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## INTRODUCTION

This child safeguarding policy is in line with *Children First, The National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017 and Our Duty to Care*, the principles of good practice for the protection of children and young people.

This Child Safeguarding Policy will be implemented through induction and ongoing training of management, and all trainers/volunteers. The policy is one part of a process to develop good practice. Lakewood AFC has given a commitment to implement it rigorously and regular reviews will take place to ensure the policy is working.

Throughout this document:

**Abuse** - refers to all aspects of abuse, i.e. neglect, physical, emotional and sexual.

**Child** - refers to children, students and young people less than 18 years of age.

**Volunteer** – refers to people who volunteer to run and manage the club and to people who work voluntarily to undertake activities as directed by the Management Committee

**Parent** refers to parent, guardian and caregiver.

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## CHILD PROTECTION STATEMENT

We at Lakewood AFC believe that every child should have the best possible start in life and wish to work with every parent in aspiring to achieve this. All staff/volunteers have a responsibility to safe-guard all children in our care in line with the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989*. The service also undertakes to protect the personal integrity, safety, and wellbeing of each child in the service in line with the provisions of the *National Child Protection Guidance-Children First 2017 and the Child Care Act 2006*.

Within our club the welfare of the child is of paramount importance and no other concern, issue or activity will take precedence over the promotion of the welfare of the child. Children will be consulted, in accordance with their age and ability to reason, in matters concerning their welfare.

We have a range of procedures in place to support this Child Protection Statement.

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## CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

All Club volunteers undertake to treat as confidential any information provided to us by individuals or others, subject to the obligations under law, including *Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017* and the *Data Protection Acts*. Lakewood AFC is required to maintain absolute confidentiality in respect of matters which comes to their knowledge in the course of their work. We will consult with parent/guardian before making a request under the *Freedom of Information Act* involving sensitive information that they may have supplied.

All volunteers must ensure they only discuss confidential material with the **appropriate person/s**. Any issue or information that the club is made aware of is kept confidential. However, there are certain incidents, for example within the context of child safeguarding, where all relevant information is shared on a 'need to know basis'.



**However, the welfare of the child is paramount. Therefore, the Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017 has precedence over our Confidentiality Policy when concerns regarding a child's welfare become evident and needs to be addressed.**

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#### DESIGNATED LIASON OFFICER

Designated persons within the Project must have all received training

- **Designated Liaison Officer: Gary O' Brien**

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#### ROLE OF DESIGNATED LIASON OFFICER

Provide information, advice and support in dealing with any issues that may arise for volunteer in the reporting or witnessing of any incidents of concern.

Ensure that child safeguarding, and child welfare policies are carried out in the Recruitment process.

Ensure new volunteers are made aware of and implement this Child Safeguarding Policy by partaking in an induction process, and through ongoing support and Supervision

- Receive and consider child protection concerns
- Consult/Liaise with Tusla (Relevant Agencies)
- Make a formal referral if and when required
- To ensure that records of all notes, logs and correspondence both informal (telephone conversations etc) or formal are dated, signed and maintained in a secure file accessed only by relevant personnel.
- Maintain confidential records
- Inform parents/guardians. **Unless this puts the child at further risk.** Sensitive handling will be required based on advice from the Tusla etc
- Engage in all areas of the club where children/young people are involved. (Including planning of outside activities)

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#### REASONABLE GROUNDS FOR REPORTING

- A disclosure from a child in relation to abuse by an adult or child / adolescent
- An account by a person who witnessed the abuse of a child
- Evidence of an injury or behaviour which indicates abuse, and is unlikely to be caused any other way
- Evidence of injury or behaviour which is consistent with abuse, but also where another or innocent explanation is given, however other factors and indicators are present to support significant concerns
- Consistent indication over a period of time, that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect or lack of adequate supervision
- A disclosure by an adult that they were abused as a child by someone who now has contact with children.

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#### RETROSPECTIVE DISCLOSURE



Should an adult disclose that he/ she was abused in their childhood/youth and it becomes apparent that the alleged abuser is still in contact with/ responsible for children then the volunteer needs to talk to the Designated Liaison Officer about this so he/ she may consult the Tusla duty social worker.

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#### PROCEDURE FOR SUSPECTED ABUSE

- If any volunteer has any concerns about a child being neglected, physically, emotionally or sexually abused, or if a child discloses abuse to an adult within the club this should be raised immediately with the Designated Liaison Officer
- Following the raising of concerns, or disclosure, a record will be kept of conversations, what has been observed and any action.

#### **These confidential records will include:**

- Name, address and age of child.
- Time and date of observations.
- A factual description of the child's behaviour/appearance, without any personal assumptions or interpretation.
- Circumstances in which the concern arose.
- The exact words spoken by the child.
- Signature/date/time of the recorder and any other witnesses.
- Having built up good relationships with parents/guardians from the start, the Designated Liaison Officer should be in a position to check out sensitively about any changes in behaviour or unexplained bruises/marks. Unless doing so could put the child at risk. A second person may be present at such meetings. All meetings and or conversations will be documented in full.
- Contact the duty Social Worker in the social work department for advice and support, All meetings and or conversations will be documented in full.

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#### DEALING WITH DISCLOSURE OR SUSPECTED ABUSE

- Do stay calm. You have been approached because you are trusted by the child.
- Listen to the child.
- Do not pressurise the child for information.
- Avoid leading questions or assumptions which would complicate an official investigation.
- Do not ask the child to repeat the story unnecessarily to you or other adults.
- Do accept what the child has told you and reassure the child that you have listened.
- Do not condemn the alleged abuser to the child. Feelings of love and loyalty towards the abuser may exist.
- It is important for all volunteers to be aware of the sensitive nature of these matters but do not make any promises that cannot be kept, for example that the family will stay together.
- Do not delay and report immediately to the Designated Liaison Officer , who is responsible for reporting on to Tusla.



- Do record in writing, report and record your report.
- Staff to be aware of our confidentiality policy.
- Following disclosure by a child it is important that the staff member continues with a supportive relationship with the child.
- Also to continue to welcome the child and family to the service throughout the assessment and support as much as possible.

### **The one thing you MUST NOT DO IS NOTHING**

#### PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING CONCERNS OF CHILD ABUSE

Once a concern has been raised with the Designated Liaison Officers/he will;

- Listen and take note of volunteer concerns/Affirm, support and take charge of situation by outlining the behaviour expected of volunteers whilst the matter is under investigation.
- Ensure all reports are contained in a secure file.
- Consult concerns in relation to child welfare to the duty Social Worker of Tusla
- Parents will be informed that a child protection concern has been reported to Tusla **unless doing so would put the child at further risk.**
- An out of hour's emergency situation will be referred to the Gardaí by the Designated Liaison Officer.
- Having consulted with the duty Social Worker, the Designated Liaison Officer will forward all verbal and written reports to Tusla without delay. The Designated Liaison Officer signs the standard reporting form.
- Receives communication from Tusla and secures same.

#### PROCEDURE FOR ADDRESSING ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST VOLUNTEERS

If an allegation is made or observed against a volunteer, Lakewood AFC will ensure that everyone involved gets a proper response. Two separate procedures will be followed:

- The reporting procedure in respect of the child
- The procedure for dealing with the volunteer.
- These issues will be separated and managed independently by different people.
- The Designated Liaison Officer for dealing with child welfare concerns will address the reporting procedure while a member, (Chairperson) will put in place the procedure to deal with the volunteer.

#### REPORTING TO THE STATUTORY AUTHORITY

When an allegation against a volunteer is received by the Designated Liaison Officer it will be assessed promptly and carefully. The decision to make a formal report will be based on reasonable grounds for concern and in consultation with the Duty Social Worker. The decision to make a formal report will be done in accordance with the role of Designated Liaison Officer in the reporting procedure as already detailed in this document.

In the case of a volunteer being accused of abuse the Designated Liaison Officer will inform the volunteer of the following:



- The fact that the allegation has been made against him/her
- The nature of the allegation.
- The volunteer will be afforded an opportunity to respond and the response will be noted in the report Tusla or the Gardaí.
- The Designated Liaison Officer will inform the person against whom the allegation is made that Lakewood will be following agreed procedures laid out in the organisation's Child Safeguarding reporting procedure. The Designated Liaison Officer will then complete the Standard Reporting Form and send it to Tusla.

Where an allegation of abuse is made against the Designated Liaison Officer, then the Chief Instructor will be charged with dealing with the allegations that will ensure allegations are addressed immediately and according to agreed policies and procedures.

Action taken in reporting an allegation of child abuse against a volunteer will be based on an opinion formed reasonably and in good faith. An investigation will take place into the allegation as soon as possible and the Designated Liaison Officer on behalf of the club will inform the person against whom the allegation is made of the findings of an investigation.

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#### REPORTING TO THE VOLUNTEER AND OTHERS

Lakewood AFC recognises that the possible reactions of other member's and other volunteers within the organisation may include anger, disbelief, doubt, fear, guilt, shock, anxiety and confusion. The Designated Liaison Officer of the club will ensure that volunteers are facilitated and supported to address their reaction to allegations against their colleague/s in a manner that protects children in the club, facilitates a fair investigation into the allegation and outlines the behaviour expected of volunteers whilst the matter is under investigation.

**Policies to be reviewed on annual base and with any changes in legislation relevant to Child Safeguarding.**



## APPENDICIES

## **Protection of Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998 (Appendix 1)**

### **1. Protections for Persons Reporting Act**

**The Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998** provides immunity from civil liability to persons who report child abuse “reasonably and in good faith” to the Health Services Executive or the Gardaí. This means that, even if a reported suspicion of child abuse proves unfounded, a plaintiff who took an action would have to prove that the reporter had not acted reasonably and in good faith in making the report.

#### **Its main provisions 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 Health Boards or any member of the Garda Síochána
2. The provision of significant protections for employees who report child abuse. These protections cover all employees and all forms of discrimination up to and including, dismissal
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. However, where a person reports abuse or makes a complaint their anonymity cannot be guaranteed and their identity may be revealed as part of investigations and considerations by the Health Services Executive, the Gardaí and the Courts.

### **2. Definitions of Abuse as in Children First**

#### **Neglect**

- Where the child suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults and or medical care.

#### **Emotional abuse**

- When a child’s need for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met. Emotional abuse is normally to be found in the relationship between a parent/ care-giver and a Child rather than in a specific event or pattern of events.

#### **Physical abuse**

- Which results in actual or potential physical harm from an interaction or lack of interaction which is reasonably within the control of a parent or person in a position of responsibility, power or trust? These maybe single or repeated incidents.

#### **Sexual abuse**

- When a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or sexual arousal or for that of others.





## **Code of Behaviour when working with Children and Young People**

### **Volunteers will:**

- Behave in a respectful manner towards children and young people
- Listen to and value children and young people, their opinions and beliefs
- Include children and young people in appropriate decision making
- Create a safe, inclusive, accessible environment where children and young people feel valued and respected as individuals
- Endeavour to recognise and nurture the individual potential of all children and young people
- Encourage and praise children and young people to positively develop confidence and self-worth

### **Volunteers will not:**

- Bully children and young people
- Shout at or show aggression towards children and young people
- Subject children and young people to any form of verbal/physical/emotional/sexual abuse
- Exclude children and young people from groups/events/activities on the basis of difference
- Show favouritism towards individual children and/or young people
- Have inappropriate physical contact with children and or/young people (see appendix)
- Tell jokes of a racist, sexual or derogatory nature in the presence of children and/or young people
- Refuse to act on a concern they may have regarding the welfare of a child or young person in their care
- Engage in slagging or joking that belittles children or young people or makes them feel uncomfortable

### **When organising and engaging in activities and/or services**

- Volunteers will ensure that children are transported in groups and with parental permission, they will avoid giving lifts in their cars to individual children or young people, especially on long journeys
- Activities will be age appropriate
- There will be registration forms, parental consent forms, attendance sheets and whatever other documentation is necessary for all activities
- There will be incident and accident report forms and procedures in place to ensure the safety and protection of children and young people
- There will be clear lines of communication between organisers and parents/guardians regarding attendance, location, drop-off and pick up, duration of activities, absences etc



### **Touching will:**

- Be in response to the need of the child and not the need of the adult
- Be with the child's permission – resistance from the child should be respected
- Be open and not secretive
- Be governed by the development stage of the child

### **Communication**

- All communication between volunteers and young people will be appropriate
- Communication includes communication by electronic means including e-mail, social network sites and text communications will not contain inappropriate images or text that might be construed as pornographic, racist, derogatory or contain innuendo or material that in any way might be offensive.

### **Tasks of a personal Nature should only be carried out:**

- For very young children or children with disabilities.
- With the full understanding and consent of parents.
- In an emergency situation – parents should be fully informed.

It is not always possible to undertake tasks of a personal nature, in an open environment, or in the presence of other leaders/trainers, e.g. toileting. All tasks of a personal nature are to be undertaken with the utmost discretion and in line with policies.

## **Garda Vetting**

All volunteers are required to undertake Garda Vetting, to ensure the Health, Safety & Welfare of all users and those involved in the club

### **Procedures:**

- All Disclaimer/Garda Vetting forms must be fully completed
- Non-disclosure of relevant information will be dealt with in next section

### **Procedures dealing with disclosure**

Disclosure occurs either through personal disclosure / references/ or as a result of Garda Vetting then following issues will be considered:

- Is disclosure relevant to position?
- Seriousness of disclosure

### **Guidelines on relevance of seriousness of incident and relevance within the role of a volunteer**

- Falsifying records purposely
- Incidents where the person being vetted has been involved in an area of abuse as defined by Child Protection Policy
- Any areas in breach of Policies and Procedures

**References-** will be sought if necessary, to support a volunteer's application to join the club



## 6. Procedures for Reporting

Volunteer  
Report To



Designated Child Protection Officer  
(Gary O' Brien )



Tusla  
Or  
An Garda Síochána



Forward all reports  
To TUSLA  
Social Work Dept



Report from Tusla  
To  
Social Work Dept



(Designated Liaison Officer  
(File Secured)