

# Safeguarding Policies

Me and the water.

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**SWIM  
IRELAND**

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## Glossary

**Athletes** – this term includes swimmers, water polo players, divers and synchronised swimmers usually meaning young people and children under 18. Some individuals remain involved as athletes past the age of 18, and these athletes are still subject to certain authorities within a club, region or nationally.

**Children’s Officer (CO)** – this person has specific roles and responsibilities in a club or region as described in the People section of this document. Every club and region are required to have at least one CO. The club CO is known as the Club Children’s Officer (CCO) and the regional CO is known as the Regional Children’s Officer (RCO).

**Child Safeguarding Statement (CSS)** – this is a declaration of safeguarding policies and their implementation as required by the Children First Act 2015 (ROI) and is a requirement for all Swim Ireland affiliated clubs.

**Child/Young person** – the term child/children and young person/young people means the same throughout this document and refers to those under the age of 18. Legally, all young people under the age of 18 are children.

**Club** – this refers to a Swim Ireland affiliated club.

**Club Mark** – this is a measure of good governance practice for Swim Ireland clubs.

**Coach** – this is a person involved in the practice of coaching any of the aquatic disciplines.

**Committee member** – this means any person appointed to a club, regional or national committee; including any subcommittee formed by a club, region or national committee.

**Designated Liaison Person (DLP)** – this person responsible for reporting and liaising with Statutory Authorities where there is a concern that young people are at risk of harm. This is a role of the Children’s Officer.

**Leader** – this is a general term used for any person, whether paid or unpaid, in a role with responsibilities. Examples of roles include but not limited to children’s officers, supervisors, team manager, sports science personnel, chaperone, helpers, committee members, tutors, coaches and teachers.

**Country of origin** – reference is made to legislation or documents throughout. For legislation and documents relevant to Ireland (ROI) will be added after the act or document; if relevant to Northern Ireland (NI) will be added.

**Liaison Person** – this is a named person registered with the National Vetting Bureau to manage the vetting process on behalf of Swim Ireland.

**Mandated Person** – this is a named person with a legal obligation to report a young person at risk of harm to the Statutory Authorities (as defined by the Children First Act 2015 (ROI)).

**Member** – this refers to any person affiliated to Swim Ireland or acting as a representative of a member of Swim Ireland as explained in Swim Ireland rules. Categories of membership are defined by the Swim Ireland Articles of Association.

**National Children’s Officer (NCO)** – this is the person employed by Swim Ireland with responsibility for safeguarding policy, procedures, implementation and review at a national level. The NCO is an advisor to the organisation on safeguarding and child protection at every level.

**Parent** – this refers to the person who has been given parental responsibility for a child, i.e. the parent and/or carer.

Person in charge – this refers to a person who is in charge at an event e.g. a coach, team manager or referee etc.; appointed to be responsible for the well-being of participants and to make sure acceptable behaviour is supported by everyone involved.

Provider – this is a legal term from the Children First Act 2015 (ROI) meaning any the person or unit providing a Relevant Service to children; Swim Ireland, each regional committee and each club committee (where the club has under 18 members) are providers.

Region – this refers to the four regions in Swim Ireland: Connaught, Leinster, Munster or Ulster.

Registered body/organisation – this is Swim Ireland, as registered with Access NI and the National Vetting Bureau for vetting purposes.

Regulated activity – this is the term used to define the type of work that requires a person to not be on the barred list held by the Disclosure and Barring Service (NI).

Relevant Person (RP) – this is a term used in the Child Safeguarding Statement (CSS) referring to the person appointed by the provider to be the first point of contact regarding the CSS.

Relevant Service – this is a term from the Children First Act 2015 (ROI) meaning any work/activity which consists of providing educational, research, training, cultural, recreational, leisure, social or physical activities to children (see Children First Act 2015: Part 2 and Schedule 1 (ROI)). Clubs and regions working with U18s are providing a relevant service.

Relevant work – this is the term used to define the type of work that requires an individual to obtain a National Vetting Bureau disclosure.

Risk Assessment (RA) – this is a written record of the risk of harm in each club, region and nationally as required for the completion of a CSS. The RA identifies risks specific to a provider and requires the implementation of policy to alleviate recorded risks.

Signatory – this is a named person registered with Access NI to manage the vetting process on behalf of Swim Ireland.

Sport Ireland – the sports council in Ireland (ROI).

Sport NI – the sports council in Northern Ireland (NI).

Sports leader – this is a general term used for any person, whether paid or unpaid, in a role with responsibilities. Examples of roles include but not limited to children's officers, supervisors, team manager, sports science personnel, chaperone, helpers, committee members, tutors, coaches and teachers.

Statutory authorities – this refers to the government departments tasked with receiving reports or concerns relating to child abuse:

Ireland: Tusla (Child and Family Agency) and An Garda Síochána.

Northern Ireland: Health and Social Care Trusts (HSCT), also known as Gateway Teams, and the Public Protection Units (PPU) of Police Service Northern Ireland (PSNI).

Statutory authority guidelines on child protection – refers to Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, Department of Health and Children 2017 (Ireland) and Northern Ireland - Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People (NI) 2017.

Teacher – a person involved in the practice of teaching any of the aquatic disciplines.

Working – refers to any individual working within sport whether paid or in a voluntary capacity; for those individuals who are employed the requirements of this document need to be observed in conjunction with their employment contract.

Youth Development Director (YD Director) – acts as the Swim Ireland National Children's Officer, the Mandated Person and the Designated Liaison Person.

## Abbreviations

ANI – Access Northern Ireland, organisation responsible for processing vetting checks in Northern Ireland

CCO – Club Children’s Officer

CSS – Child Safeguarding Statement

CWC – Child Welfare Committee

DLP – Designated Liaison Person

This document – Safeguarding Policies, Swim Ireland 2019

HSCT – Health and Social Care Trusts (Northern Ireland)

M&As – Memorandum and Articles of Association

NCO – National Children’s Officer

NGB – National Governing Body

NI – Northern Ireland, also used to identify the source of legislation and legislative requirements

NVB – National Vetting Bureau, organisation responsible for processing vetting checks in Ireland

PC – Swim Ireland Performance Centre (includes all centres in operation)

PPU – Public Protection Units, PSNI sector responsible investigating child abuse allegations

PSNI – Police Service of Northern Ireland

RA – Risk Assessment

ROI – Republic of Ireland, also used to identify the source of legislation and legislative requirements

RP – Relevant Person

YD Director – Youth Development Director, also the Mandated Person and National Children’s Officer

# Swim Ireland: Our values working with young people

## Swim Ireland – Me and the Water

Swim Ireland exists to encourage participation, develop excellence and regulate our sport. Swim Ireland plans to be acknowledged as at the forefront of Irish Sports Bodies in terms of best practice and standards.

The welfare of athletes is acknowledged as an overarching primary aim throughout Swim Ireland in our Strategic Plan. Within our goals as an organisation we recognise the right of young people to be protected from harm, treated with respect, listened to and have their views taken into consideration in matters that affect them.

1. Education – to become recognised as the leading provider of accredited aquatic qualifications and programmes across the island of Ireland
2. Mass Participation – to Get Ireland Swimming
3. Members' Participation – to further support and develop our aquatic community
4. Performance – to provide an environment that helps our athletes perform to their best and produces Olympic and World medals
5. Leadership – to be an organisation that leads with integrity and seeks to operate to high standards in all areas

## Youth Development Strategy

The Youth Development Strategy supports the development of our athletes from 8 years old to 25 years old valuing young people enjoying their sport, voicing their views and feeling safe.

### Our Young People's Vision:

“We want to participate in a sport that: allows us to enjoy it, helps us learn and develop, enables us to make friends and makes us feel safe and comfortable”

### Our Mission

Our mission is to foster a fun life-long involvement in aquatic sport. To provide an environment where young people have a voice and are heard. It is our aim to provide the safest child-centred environment for young people to participate in sport.

## Our commitment to young people

We are committed to providing an athlete centred environment fully compliant with legislation, policy and good practice standards (or latest updated versions). This Safeguarding Policy 2019 reflects our commitment to establishing a safer environment whilst advocating that young people are listened to and can enjoy their sport.

## Recognising the rights of young people

Swim Ireland Safeguarding Policy 2019 recognises the rights of young people in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) 1989 by incorporating the principles of the UNCRC in our core values and throughout this document.

The main principles of the UNCRC fundamental to this document are:

- that all the rights guaranteed by the UNCRC must be available to all children without discrimination of any kind (Article 2)
- that the best interests of the child must be a primary consideration in all actions concerning children (Article 3)
- that children's rights must be respected, protected and fulfilled with an environment where they can grow and reach their potential (Article 4)
- that every child has the right to life, survival and development (Article 6)
- that the child's view must be considered and taken into account in all matters affecting him or her (Article 12)
- that every child is properly cared for and protected from harm or mistreatment (Article 19)
- that children should be protected from all forms of exploitation (Articles 34 and 36)

(taken from Children's Rights Alliance website, 2017)

## **Safeguarding Policy 2019**

The main documents guiding the development of this policy are:

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

Children First Act 2015 (ROI)

Children (NI) Order 1995 (NI)

Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People (NI) 2017 (NI)

Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 (NI)

Safeguarding Guidance for Children and Young People in Sport 2019 (Sport Ireland and Sport NI)

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007 (NI)

Standards for Safeguarding Children in Sport (SSCS) (NI)

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989

Further relevant documents and legislation of interest is listed separately.

# Swim Ireland Structure and Requirements

## National

Swim Ireland is the National Governing Body for Aquatics (diving, swimming and water polo) and is overseen by a voluntary board of directors with an operational staff working throughout the island of Ireland. The board is elected by the Swim Ireland membership at an AGM and the operational staff are led by the CEO. There are five main departments in Swim Ireland: Corporate, Education, Membership, Participation and Performance.

The Youth Development department, sitting within the Corporate department, is overseen by the Youth Development Director who has responsibility for this document and the Youth Development Strategy. Both these documents are incorporated into the governance and operations of Swim Ireland where safeguarding is an overarching priority for Swim Ireland. The scope of the work undertaken by the Youth Development Department is set out in the Youth Development Strategy.

The Youth Development Director is also the National Children's Officer (NCO), the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and the Mandated Person (MP) for Swim Ireland, as required safeguarding roles.

The National Children's Officer (NCO) has the responsibility to ensure this document and best practice is adhered to within Swim Ireland and affiliated bodies. The Mandated Person is required by the Children First Act 2015 (ROI) with a legal responsibility to report to the statutory authorities where there is a concern or belief that a child has been harmed, is being harmed or is at risk of being harmed. The Designated Liaison Person is responsible for advising on and reporting concerns of harm to young people. At national level the DLP role to report concerns of harm is superseded by the MP's legal obligation to report.

All Children's Officers in Swim Ireland also take on the role of the DLP, a role designated by the statutory requirements in Children First Guidance 2017 (ROI) and safeguarding standards in Swim Ireland. The DLP, at the relevant level, has the responsibility to advise and guide on child protection matters and to report to the statutory authorities any concerns, disclosures and allegations of abuse in line with the required reporting process. The national DLP should be consulted on all concerns, allegations and disclosures of harm to a young person.

Contact details for staff in Swim Ireland can be found on the Swim Ireland website: <https://www.swimireland.ie/about/meet-the-team/staff>

## Regions and National Committees

Swim Ireland regions and national committees operate under Swim Ireland as sub groups of the national organisation and are subject to Swim Ireland M&As, rules, this document and statutory requirements. Regions operate with a management committee or board and run regional aquatic squads and competitions. The regional and national committees are elected in accordance with the Swim Ireland M&As.

Water polo, as one of the aquatic disciplines, operates nationally as Water Polo Ireland, a sub-committee of Swim Ireland. Water Polo Ireland and its regions are subject to Swim Ireland M&As, rules, this document and any relevant statutory requirements as well as having rules for some specific areas of the sport.

Any other associated or affiliated body to Swim Ireland will operate according to the service level agreement or contract in force.

A Regional Children's Officer (RCO) is appointed in each region and has a similar role as the Club Children's Officer (CCO), albeit at regional level. The RCOs work together as the Child Welfare Committee as well as oversee safeguarding practices at regional level.



### **The Child Welfare Committee (CWC)**

This CWC is a national committee comprising of the four RCOs. The CWC operates according to the approved terms of reference working with the YD Director as a liaison between national level and the regions. The RCO will also advise the regional management committees in terms of good practice and oversee the completion of a risk assessment and child safeguarding statement for the region.

### **Clubs**

Each club is affiliated to Swim Ireland and is governed by this document, the Swim Ireland rules, M&As and any statutory requirements. Each club has a constitution and, ideally, a specific club handbook or rule book. However, no club document may be in breach of the Swim Ireland rules and this document. The club may offer a variety of aquatic disciplines and all are subject to the same requirements.

### **Other membership categories within Swim Ireland**

Other membership categories are defined by the Swim Ireland Articles of Association. All membership categories are required to abide by the relevant Swim Ireland requirements as specified within their membership rules.

## Section 1: Compliancy

Swim Ireland, regions and clubs must meet certain statutory, legal, Sport Ireland and Sport NI obligations and standards. These are outlined in this section.

### **Audit Policy**

Swim Ireland has a comprehensive audit process for all members, clubs and regions.

### **Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment of Harm**

The Child Safeguarding Statement (CSS) and the Risk Assessment of Harm is based on the Children First Act 20125 (ROI) and is required to be completed by Swim Ireland and all regions and clubs affiliated to Swim Ireland across the island of Ireland.

The need to complete these documents is legally required in Connaught, Leinster and Munster; in Ulster these are required as good practice and part of the Swim Ireland safeguarding standards.

### **Membership Risk Assessment Policy**

The Membership Risk Assessment Policy assesses any risk where there has been an allegation or concern of abuse or poor practice involving a Swim Ireland member.

### **Recognise and Report Policy**

There are different categories of abuse and indicators that may be cause for concern. All allegations, concerns, reports and disclosures of harm to children must be reported to the statutory authorities. This section identifies the categories of abuse, details the reporting process and who should receive a report.

### **Safeguarding Training Policy**

Training is required for specific roles in Swim Ireland. These roles must abide by this document, the Swim Ireland rules, M&As and any statutory requirements. This training policy will deal with only the safeguarding training requirements for roles in Swim Ireland.

### **Vetting Policy**

Vetting is mandatory for members of Swim Ireland, the regions, or clubs wishing to take up specified positions and for any individual applying for certain accredited courses through Swim Ireland. Vetting is one part of the recruitment process for specific roles and must be in place before the position is taken up. There are legislative requirements in each jurisdiction for vetting, and this policy covers Ireland and Northern Ireland.

## Section 2: Working with Young People

All individuals working with young people have a responsibility to keep young people safe and create an environment that allows them to enjoy their sport. There are specific considerations and requirements for those who work with young people in Swim Ireland.

This section describes the principles for those working with young people and takes our members through what is required to meet safeguarding standards and requirements.

### Roles

This is a description of the roles in Swim Ireland with specific responsibility to implement the safeguarding standards and names other significant roles that work with young people in clubs, regions and at national levels.

### Codes of Conduct

The Codes of Conduct stipulate all the behavioural requirements for different roles in Swim Ireland. The codes are mandatory and apply to all persons working with young people in Swim Ireland.

### Recruitment

The recruitment policy and procedures ensure safe recruitment of individuals wishing to work with young people. The compliancy requirements for each role is detailed in Section 1: Compliancy of this document.

**Working together, a series of policy documents detailing safe working and fundamental practices:**

#### Anti-bullying promise and policy

Sets out the policy together with a regional/club promise for zero tolerance and process to use where there is a concern of bullying

#### Communications

Includes the use of social media

#### Inclusion policy

This policy sets out the process for ensuring an inclusive ethos

#### Person on Duty rota

This is a separate document setting out specific guidance for providing a person on duty at every training session to ensure a safe environment

#### Supervision policy

This policy sets out the requirements for working together with young people

#### Getting our heads together

This is the Well-being and Mental Health policy for young people in sport

#### Complaints and Disciplinary procedures

This is a summary of the full Complaints and Disciplinary Procedures which provide the process for dealing with issues or complaints at national, regional and club level.

#### Poor practice and whistleblowing

This document includes an understanding of poor practice and steps to take at national, regional and national level as well as how an individual may report a concern about a practice witnessed where no action has been taken. This ties in with the Reporting Policy in the Compliancy Section where any matter reaching a threshold of concern is reported to the statutory authorities.

## **Section 3: Policies and Information**

All individuals working with young people have a responsibility to keep young people safe and create an environment that allows them to enjoy their sport. Whilst there are the fundamental principles to follow set out in Section 1: Compliancy and Section 2: Working with Young People there are further areas of importance when working with young people.

This section contains policies that provide additional guidance and principles for those working with young people in Swim Ireland.

**Age and Gender Policy**

**Anti-Doping and Substance Misuse**

**Away Trips Policy**

**Filming and Photography Policy**

**Monitoring Movement**

**Physical Contact Policy**

**Social Media Policy**

**Spectator Behaviour Policy**

**Travelling Policy**