



DEALING WITH ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE

The Gaelic Athletic Association is committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for all young people who participate in our Gaelic Games and activities. We shall take all practical steps to protect young people from discernible forms of abuse - from harm, discrimination or degrading treatment and shall respect their rights, wishes and feelings.

The GAA believes that the welfare of the child is paramount and recognises that all children have the right to be safe and that this fundamental principal takes precedence over all other considerations.

'Children have the right to be protected from all forms of violence; they must be kept safe from harm, and they must be given proper care by those looking after them' (Article 19: UN Convention on the Rights of the Child).

The GAA Designated Person

All Clubs and County Boards shall appoint a Designated Person who on behalf of the Club or County shall be responsible at an initial stage for dealing with any concerns relating to the possible abuse of children as reported or made known to them.

Birr GAA Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is

Conor Mooney

Email: conormooney@outlook.ie

These appointments form an essential part of the GAA Child Welfare and Protection strategy to ensure that in so far as is practically possible we provide a safe environment for children, young people and also for the adults who assist our underage members at Gaelic Games and other Association activities.

The GAA is committed to taking appropriate action where allegations or suspicions of abuse are made known to us and to sharing such information with the relevant statutory authorities in accordance with legislation and relevant guidelines.

In our work with children and young people we are directed by appropriate legislation within the jurisdiction in which we operate. Within the GAA our Guidelines for Dealing with Allegations of Abuse and our Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport act as further guidance in all such matters.

Children First Act

[The Children First Act 2015](#) was enacted on 19th November 2015. It is important to note that although this Act has been enacted, it has not been fully commenced. Part 5 of the Act "Miscellaneous" was commenced on the 11th of December 2015.

The responsibilities and principles outlined in "Children First, National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children" 2011 and any additional guidance issued by the Minister continue to apply to all in relation to the safeguarding of children. The policy intent is that the legislation will operate side-by-side with the existing non-statutory obligations provided for in Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2011).

Children First, National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children" 2011, is currently being revised and updated to reflect the legislation. This is to ensure that the Guidance will continue as a primary reference for all citizens to report concerns and includes the new legislative obligations. This will provide clarity between the legislation and the existing non-statutory obligations which will continue to operate for all sectors of society.

Young People

As a young person you have the right to be kept safe from harm, and it is the responsibility of your parents and guardians to make sure that they protect you. We here in the GAA also have a responsibility to ensure, as far as is practically possible, that we provide safe and enjoyable surroundings for you while you play our games or attend our events.

This is one of the many rights that you have as a young person, and Ireland has made a promise to the United Nations to promote these rights for all young people in Ireland.

The Children First: National Guidance was developed to help protect children and young people where there are abuse and/or welfare concerns. It explains what abuse is and tells everyone who is involved in the lives of young people - like parents, teachers, doctors, Gardaí, and social workers - what they must do if they think a child or young person is being abused.

'A child means a person under the age of 18 years, excluding a person who is or has been married'
(Children First, 2.1.2)

Regrettably there are people who hurt children. In some cases, you may be at risk of harm from someone you know or love. This could be your parent(s), grandparent(s), Aunt or Uncle, cousin, boyfriend/girlfriend, school friends or someone else in your life. It could be someone who is under 18 themselves.

If you are being harmed or abused by someone you know it could be hard for you to tell.

However, it is very important that you do tell so that you can get help.

As a young person if I am concerned or wish to report possible abuse what can I do?

As a young person you have a right to be protected from harm. If you believe you are being abused, at risk of being abused or worried that someone you know is being harmed you should talk to an adult you can trust. This could be a parent, another family member, a teacher or someone involved in your life who will listen. In the GAA you may wish to discuss your concerns or seek advice from a Coach, your Children's Officer or another trusted person in your Club/County.

As a young person you are entitled to talk to your [local Duty Social Worker](#) in the Child and Family Agency. The Duty Social Worker has a legal responsibility to protect you and keep you safe.

Offaly is located in a Tusla Area comprising of Laois, Offaly, Longford and Westmeath. The duty social work office covering Offaly is located in Westmeath.

Child and Family Agency,
Primary Care Centre,
Harbour Road,
Mullingar,
Co Westmeath

Phone: 044 9353997

Email: childfamily.midlands@tusla.ie

If at any stage you are scared and believe you are in danger you should talk to your local Gardaí by calling 999. An Garda Síochána also have a special legal responsibility to keep you safe.

Downloads

Guidance for Dealing with & reporting allegations or concerns of abuse www.gaa.ie/api/pdfs/image/upload/uoag5ceovsiof0nslguc.pdf