

Allegations of Abuse: Reporting

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

We believe that the welfare of the child is paramount and recognise 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 DSD AC Designated Person

The Club have appointed a Designated Person who on behalf of the Club is responsible at an initial stage for dealing with any concerns relating to the possible abuse of children as reported or made known to them.

This appointment forms an essential part of the Club's 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 events and competition.

The Club 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.

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 in 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.

The full text of the Children First Act 2015 and a background to the Act can be found at dcya.gov.ie

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 DSD AC 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 DSD 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.

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.