



# Portrane Hockey Club

## Role of Relevant Persons Policy

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# Children First Act 2015

*An Act for the purposes of making further and better provision for the care and*

*protection of children and for those purposes to require the preparation, by certain providers of services to children, of child safeguarding statements; to require certain persons to make reports to the Child and Family Agency in respect of children in certain circumstances; to require certain persons to assist the Child and Family Agency in certain circumstances; to provide for the establishment of the Children First Inter- Departmental Implementation Group; to make provision for the preparation of sectoral implementation plans by departments of State; to provide for the abolition of the common law defence of reasonable chastisement and, for that purpose, to amend the Non-Fatal Offences Against the Person Act 1997; and to provide for related matters.*

[19th November, 2015]

Following the publication by the government of the Children's First Act (2015) Portrane Hockey Club policy is responsible for ensuring that all coaches/volunteers/mandated persons and designated liaison persons have completed relevant courses to support them in their role.

## CLUB CHILDREN'S OFFICER (CCO) ROLE

Club Children's Officers should be child centred in focus and have as the primary aim, the establishment of a child centred ethos within the club. S/he is the link between the children and the adults in the club. S/he also takes responsibility for monitoring and reporting to the Club Management Committee on how club policy impacts on young people and Sports Leaders.

**Responsibilities of CCO:** The Children's Officer should be a member of or have access to, the Club Management Committee. The Children's Officer should have the following role:

- To ensure the principles of the Children's First Act (2015) are enshrined in all roles undertaken by CCO, Designated Liaison Person (DLP), Mandated Person (MD), Board Members, Parents & Coaches in PHC.
- To promote awareness of the code within PHC club, among young members and their parents/guardians.
- To influence policy and practice within the club in order to prioritise children's needs
- Establish contact with the National Children's Officer with Hockey Ireland..
- To ensure that children know how to make concerns known to appropriate adults or agencies.
- To encourage the appropriate involvement of parents/guardians in the club activities
- To act as an advisory resource to Coaches/Volunteers on best practice in children's sport
- To report regularly to the Club Management Committee
- To ensure that the children have a voice in the running of their club and ensure that there are steps young people can take to express concerns about their sports activities / experiences.
- Establish communication with other branches of the club, e.g. facilitate parent's information sessions at the start of the season
- Keep records on each member on file, including junior members, their contact numbers and any special needs of the child that should be known to leaders
- Ensure each member signs an annual membership form that includes signing up to the code of conduct

- Ensure that the club rules and regulations include:-
  - child safety statement
  - Risk Assessment
  - Garda Vetting Procedures
  - Coach Education Policy
  - Complaints, disciplinary and appeals procedures
  - an anti-bullying policy
  - Rules in relation to traveling with children
  - Supervision and recruitment of coaches/volunteers

## DESIGNATED LIAISON PERSON (DLP) ROLE

PHC has designated a person to be responsible for dealing with any concerns about the protection of children. The designated person is responsible for reporting allegations or suspicions of child abuse to Health Services Executive/Tusla and An Garda Síochána.. It is recommended that this person is a senior club person. However, if there is difficulty identifying a separate individual to take this role, the Children’s Officer can be appointed as designated person once the club/organisation is clear about the responsibilities of the each role.

The organisation’s child protection policy and procedures should include the name and contact details of the designated person and the responsibilities attached to the role.

The Designated Liaison Person should have the following role:

- Have knowledge of the Children’s First Act (2015)
- Have knowledge of the Code of Ethics and statutory guidelines
- Have a knowledge of categories and indicators of abuse
- Undertake training in relation to child protection (Safeguarding 2 Training).
- Be familiar with and able to carry out reporting procedures as outlined in the code
- Communicate with parents and/or agencies as appropriate
- Assist with the ongoing development and implementation of the organisation’s child protection training needs
- Liaise with the national children’s officer in relation to child protection training needs
- Be aware of local contacts and services in relation to child protection, i.e. principal and duty social workers and their contacts
- To inform local duty social worker in the Health Services Executive Local Area Board / local Social Services and/or An Garda Síochána/PSNI of relevant concerns about individual children, using the Standard Reporting Form, (see Appendix 6). Keep a copy of this form and ensure acknowledgement of receipt of this form
- Report persistent poor practice to the National Designated Person
- Advise club administrators on issues of confidentiality, record keeping and data protection.

## Role of the Mandated Person

From 11<sup>th</sup> December 2017, The Children’s First Act 2015 places a legal obligation on certain people, many of whom are professionals, to report child protection concerns at or above a defined threshold to Tusla - the Child and Family Agency.

The Department of Children and Youth Affairs and Tusla have developed a suite of resources to support the full implementation of the Act.

Mandated Persons have 2 legal objectives under the Act.

1. To report the harm of children to Tusla;
2. To assist Tusla, if requested, in assessing a concern which has been the subject of a mandated report.

## Mandated Reporting

Mandated Persons have a legal responsibility to report if a child is being harmed, has been harmed or is at risk of being harmed, to the point where the child's health, development or welfare have been or are being seriously affected, or are likely to be seriously affected, or where a child believes that he/she has been harmed, is being harmed, or is at risk of being harmed, and discloses this belief to a Mandated Person.

'Harm' is defined in the Children First Act 2015 as -

- (a) assault, ill-treatment or neglect of the child in a manner that seriously affects, or is likely to seriously affect the child's health, development or welfare, or,
- (a) sexual abuse of the child.

Mandated reports should be submitted to Tusla using the required report form, on which you should indicate that your report is a mandated report. If your concern does not reach the above threshold for mandated reporting, but you still have reasonable grounds for concern about the welfare or protection of a child, you should still report that concern to Tusla but do not tick the mandated report box.

As a mandated person, you should be aware that the legal obligations under the Children First Act 2015 to report mandated concerns rest with you and not anyone else. You may make a report jointly with any other person who has concerns about the same child.

## Mandated Assisting

Tusla may request assistance from mandated persons when assessing a concern which has been the subject of a mandated report, regardless of who made the report.

Assistance will be relevant where a mandated person's existing knowledge of a child and/or their family are essential to the assessment or where a mandated person's professional expertise is required to ensure that the child's best interests are

met. It may be that a verbal telephone report is sufficient or that the mandated person is asked for copies of existing reports, records or correspondence. Tusla may also request that a mandated person contributes their own professional report to the overall social work assessment.

## Sharing Information

If you are required to share information with Tusla when assisting in the assessment of risk to a child, you are protected from civil liability under Section 16 (3) of the Children First Act 2015.

Section 17 of the Children First Act 2015 provides that information shared by Tusla must not be disclosed to a third party unless authorised by Tusla in writing.

***All Mandated Persons must read chapter 3 of Children First:***

***National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017***

<https://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/publications/20171002ChildrenFirst2017.pdf>

***Children's Officers/Designated Persons do not have the responsibility of investigating or validating child protection concerns within the club/organisation and have no counseling or therapeutic role. These roles are filled by the Statutory Authorities as outlined in Children First and Our Duty to Care. It is, however, possible that child protection concerns will be brought to the attention of the Children's Officer. In this event, it is essential that the correct procedure is followed.***