

BALLYMENA & ANTRIM ATHLETICS CLUB

“People Protect Children..... NOT Policies”

Child Safety & Welfare Guidelines for Coaches and Volunteers

All children and young people should enjoy club activities without fear of physical, sexual or emotional abuse and neglect. These guidelines are designed to help protect our young athletes.

- 1) **No adult should be left alone with a child/young person in a situation where the activity cannot be observed by others.** Ensure small groups of young athletes work where they can be seen by other groups.
- 2) **It is advisable that two or more adults be involved in any activity involving groups of children/young people.** A supervision ratio of 1:8 is a guide.
- 3) Groups of children/young people will not be taken away from the Forum with less than two adults. **Three is preferable.** The ratio of 1:8 applies.
- 4) (a) When children/young people are to be transported by car, adults should ensure that they are not left transporting only one child/young person (unless he/she is their own).
(b) Where club members intend to use their own vehicle to transport children/young people to an activity, they have the responsibility to ensure that their vehicle:
 - is in a fit state for such use,
 - with seat belts fitted and used,
 - booster seats fitted as appropriate,
 - with appropriate insurance cover (best to get it in writing).

Health & Safety.

It is of paramount importance that premises and equipment to be used by club coaches, volunteers and athletes comply with recognised safety standards for the activities being undertaken. All areas and any equipment being used must be checked before training sessions begin.

Risk assessments must have been carried out.

Remember;

- no athlete should be given the opportunity to use any piece of equipment unless under supervision and only for the activity for which it is intended,
- all activities, including track work, should be appropriately supervised,
- activities must be appropriate to the facilities being used, the age of the athlete and their individual athletic skill.

If an accident occurs, the activity leader should take immediate care of the child/young person (as outlined in the First Aid Policy). As soon as possible, the parent/carer should be contacted, an accident report completed and a copy of the report sent to the parent/carer with another to the Activity Leader.

A register of all athletes (children/young people and adults), coaches and volunteers should be taken at every club session. The register will contain details of emergency contact names, telephone numbers and addresses for each person involved and kept as a record.

Guidelines for Managing Suspected Child Abuse Situations.

Accept what the child/young person says (however credible the story may sound).

- Keep calm.
- Look directly at the child/young person.
- Be honest.
- Let the child/young person know that you will need to tell someone else – do not promise confidentiality.
- Never push for information.

Helpful Things to Say include;

I believe you. I am glad you have told me. It is not your fault. I will help you.

Do NOT say:

Why did you not tell anyone before? I cannot believe it! Are you sure this is true? Why? How? When? Who? Where?

Do not stop the child/young person from talking in order to take notes.

Never make false promises and never make a statement such as “I am shocked, don’t tell anyone else.”

Immediately refer the matter to the Designated Child Welfare Officer/Deputy Designated Officer. If neither is available, or if either of them is implicated, speak to the Club Chairperson or another Senior Club Official.

Make notes as soon as possible, preferably within an hour of the interview. Write down exactly what the child/young person said, when he/she said it and what was happening immediately prior to the incident. Record dates and times of these events as well as the date and time of your record. **Keep all hand-written notes**, even if these have been typed subsequently.

Signs of Child/Young Person Abuse.

Look out for

1. **Physical Abuse** – deliberate infliction of physical injuries (i.e. a non-accidental injury) to a child/young person, including poisoning.
2. **Sexual Abuse** – involves a child/young person or adolescent in sexual activities.
3. **Neglect** – the persistent or severe neglect of a child/young person, sufficient to seriously endanger health or development. For example, failure to provide adequate food, shelter, supervision, etc.
4. **Emotional Abuse** – the persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment or rejection of a child/young person by having no feeling of warmth, care or concern for the child/young person. This will include ridiculing, verbal bullying and e-bullying. All abuse involves some emotional ill-treatment.

If you have any questions or concerns about anything in these guidelines, please contact;

Graham Moffett, Designated Child Welfare Officer

Gerard McDonald, Deputy Designated Child Welfare Officer