

2nd September 2016

INCHICORE
CHESS
CLUB

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY



Amended by	Date	Reason

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Section 1 - Guidelines for Chess Organisers

Chess organisers who play a key role in the lives of children involved in the game should strive to create a positive environment for them. They have an overall responsibility to take the necessary steps to ensure that positive and healthy experiences are provided. All organisers should have as their first priority the children's safety and enjoyment of chess and should adhere to the guidelines and regulations set out in this Code.

Organisers should respect the rights, dignity and worth of every child and must treat everyone equally, regardless of gender, age, disability, social class, ethnic background, religion, etc.

Organisers working with children in chess should have the appropriate experience or hold the necessary qualifications. Organisers will be expected to go through appropriate recruitment and selection procedures, whether paid or unpaid. Vetting procedures **must** be followed. For those 'new' to the organisation references will be needed and will be followed up.

There will be a 'sign-up' procedure, whereby the appointed/reappointed Organisers agree to abide by this Code.

Once appointed the Organisers should act as a role model and promote the positive aspects of chess and maintain the highest standards of personal conduct. Organisers should develop an appropriate relationship with children, based on mutual trust and respect. Remember your behaviour with players, other officials and opponents will have an effect on the players in your care.

Being a role model

- You will be required to display high standards of language, manner, punctuality, preparation and presentation;
- Ensure that children in your care respect the rules of the game. Insist on fair play and ensure they are aware that you will not tolerate cheating or bullying behaviour;
- Encourage the development of respect for opponents and other Organisers and avoid criticism of them;
- Organisers should avoid the use of alcohol and tobacco products during events and generally while children are in their care;

Protection for Organisers

- Organisers are responsible for setting and monitoring the boundaries between a working relationship and friendship with children. It is advisable for Organisers not to involve children in their personal life i.e. visits to Organisers' homes or overnight stays;

- Avoid working alone and ensure there is adequate supervision for all activities;
- Care must be taken not to expose a child intentionally or unintentionally to embarrassment or disparagement by use of sarcastic or flippant remarks about the child or his/her family;
- Physical punishment or physical force must never be used. Never punish a mistake - by physical means or exclusion;

A positive environment

- Be generous with praise and never ridicule or shout at children for making mistakes or for losing a game. All children are entitled to respect;
- Be careful to avoid the “star system”. Each child deserves equal time and attention;
- Remember that children play for fun and enjoyment and that skill development and personal satisfaction have priority over highly structured competition. Never make winning the only objective;
- Set realistic goals for the participants and do not push young players. Create a safe and enjoyable environment;
- It is advisable to get agreement from a parent/guardian when children are invited onto adult teams. Boundaries of behaviour in adult groups are normally different from the boundaries that apply to junior groups/squads;
- An organiser who is provided with any information of a personal or medical nature must keep this information strictly confidential unless the welfare of the child requires that it be passed on to other parties;
- The nature of the relationship between Organisers and a child can often mean that an Organiser will learn confidential information about him/her and/or his/her family. This information must be regarded as confidential and, except where abuse is suspected, must not be divulged to a third party without the express permission of the child/family.

Section 2 - Code of Conduct for Organisers (Coaches, Committee Members etc)

Organisers should familiarise themselves with the terms of the Code of Conduct below and agree to abide by them.

As an Organiser in chess I agree that I should:

- Be positive during sessions and competitions, praise and encourage effort as well as results;
- Put the welfare of the child first, strike a balance between this and winning/results;
- Encourage fair play and treat participants equally;
- Recognise developmental needs, ensuring activities are appropriate for the individual;
- Plan and prepare appropriately;
- Be committed to the values and guidelines of this Code of Ethics for Chess for Young People;
- Involve parents where possible and inform parents when problems arise;
- Keep a brief record of problem/action/outcomes, if behavioural problems arise;
- Report any concerns in accordance with this Code's reporting procedures.

I will not:

- Take children to my home without parental supervision;
- Take children on journeys alone in my car without another adult present;
- Spend time with a child or children away from other children or adults;
- Take coaching sessions alone without the presence of another adult;
- Constantly communicate with individual children by mobile phone or email;
- Use any form of physical punishment or physical force on a child;
- Exert undue influence over a participant in order to obtain personal benefit or reward;
- Engage in rough physical games, sexually provocative games or allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any kind, and/or make sexually suggestive comments about, or to a child. This includes innuendo, flirting or inappropriate gestures and terms.

Section 3 - Code of Conduct for Young People

Chess organisations wish to provide the best possible environment for all children involved in the game. Children deserve to be given enjoyable, safe sporting opportunities, free of abuse of any kind. They have rights, which must be respected, and responsibilities that they must accept. Children should be encouraged to realise that they have responsibilities to treat other players and Organisers with fairness and respect.

Young players are entitled to:

- Be safe and to feel safe;
- Be listened to;
- Be believed;
- Have fun and enjoy chess;
- Have a voice in relation to their activities within chess;
- Be treated with dignity, sensitivity and respect ;
- Participate on an equitable and fair manner, irrespective of ability, disability, gender, religion, social class, ethnic background etc;
- Experience competition at a level at which they feel comfortable;
- Make complaints and have them dealt with;
- Get help against bullies;
- Say No;
- Protect themselves;
- Confidentiality.

Young players should always:

- Treat Organisers and volunteers with respect, (including coaches, club officials, etc.);
- Look out for themselves and the welfare of others;
- Play fairly at all times, do their best;
- Be organised and on time, do not leave a venue or competition without written parental approval;
- Respect team members, even when things go wrong;
- Respect opponents, be gracious in defeat;
- Abide by the rules set down by team captains when travelling to away events, representing the club, school, province or country, etc;
- Behave in a manner that avoids bringing chess into disrepute;
- Talk to the Lead Officer within the organisation if they have any problems.

Young players should never:

- Cheat;
- Use violence or engage in irresponsible, abusive, inappropriate or illegal behaviour;
- Shout or argue with arbiters, team mates or opponents;
- Harm team members, opponents or their property;
- Bully or use bullying tactics to isolate another player or gain advantage;
- Take banned substances, drink alcohol, smoke or engage in sexual behaviour;
- Keep secrets, especially if they have been caused harm;
- Tell lies about adults/children;
- Spread rumours;
- Discriminate against other players on the basis of gender, age, disability, social class, religion, ethnic background, etc.

Section 4 - Guidelines for Parents

The Irish Chess Union believes that a parent should:

- Be a role model for your child and maintain the highest standards of conduct when interacting with children, other parents, officials and organisers;
- Think about your child's safety and put their safety and interests first when participating in chess events;
- Do not put another parent or organiser under obligation to transport your child to chess events or to look after him/her as a refusal could cause embarrassment to both parties;
- Always behave responsibly and do not seek to unfairly affect a player or to affect the outcome of a game;
- Never intentionally expose any child to embarrassment or disparagement by the use of flippant or sarcastic remarks;
- Always recognise the value and importance of the officials and volunteers who provide recreational opportunities for your child. Parents are welcome to attend events and coaching sessions but should not interfere with the coach while working with the player;
- Encourage your child to play by the rules. Teach your child that honest endeavour is as important as winning and do all you can to encourage good sportsmanship;
- Set a good example by acknowledging good play and encouraging mutual respect for other children, teammates and opponents;
- Parents should support all efforts to remove abusive behaviour and bullying behaviour in all its forms.

Parents Code of Conduct:

1. I will respect the rules and procedures set down by the Irish Chess Union and other chess organisations;
2. I will respect my child's teammates and Organisers as well as players, parents and coaches from opposing teams. I will encourage my child to treat other players and organisers with respect;
3. I will give encouragement and acknowledge positive accomplishments whether from my child, his/her teammates or their opponents;
4. I will respect my child's Organiser and support his/her efforts;
5. I will respect the officials and their authority during events within the organisation and those run by the Irish Chess Union and other event organisers;
6. I will never demonstrate threatening or abusive behaviour or use foul language.

Section 5 -General Guidelines in relation to working with Children

Travelling

There is extra responsibility taken on by Organisers when they travel with children to events. When travelling with young people organisers should:

- Not travel with children unless accompanied by another adult;
- Ensure that there is adequate insurance cover;
- Not carry more than the permitted number of passengers;
- Ensure use of safety belts;

Supervision

- Where there are mixed groups on a regular basis there should be Organisers of both genders;
- Avoid being alone with one child, if you need to talk separately do so in an open environment, in view of others;
- Clearly state the time for the start and end of coaching sessions or competitions, Organisers should remain in pairs until all participants have been collected;
- Ensure that at least one parent is present at a coaching session or a chess event, (for safety and supervision purposes) so that an organiser is never alone with children.

Safety

All organisations involved with children should have a safety statement. The Statement should commit the organisation to:

- Ensuring activities are suitable for the age and stage of development of players;
- Keeping a record of any specific medical conditions of the children that parents/guardians have advised of;
- Keeping a record of emergency contact numbers for parents/guardians;
- Ensuring children know and keep the etiquette guidelines for chess;
- Ensuring that organisers hold appropriate qualifications and/or have relevant experience;
- Ensuring there is adequate insurance cover for all activities;
- Informing parents/guardians of finishing times of sessions or events and ask them to be present at that time.

Physical Contact

Chess does not require direct physical contact between organisers and young players. The only physical contact during a chess game is the requirement to shake hands with an opponent at the start of a game. According, organisers:

- Should avoid physical contact; and
- Where physical contact is necessary it should be in response to the needs of the child and not the adult.

Late Collection

It is important to have some clear and easy guidelines if a parent is late to collect a child, such as, contact the parent using the emergency contact number. If there is no answer ask the child if there is another family member to contact. Wait with the young person at the club or venue, with other staff or volunteers. Remind parents of the policy in relation to good practice and supervision.

Photographic and Filming Equipment

Chess organisations should adopt a policy in relation to the use of images of children on their websites and in other publications as part of its commitment to providing a safe environment for children. All necessary steps should be taken to ensure that young people are protected from the inappropriate use of their images in media publications, on the internet and elsewhere. This is not to avoid parents/guardians taking photographs of their children but to ensure that best practice is put in place wherever and whenever photographs and recorded images are taken and stored.

When using photographs of children you should:

- Inform children and parents that a photographer may be in attendance at an event and ensure they consent to both the taking and publication of films or photographs;
- Ask for parental permission to use the child's image and consult with the person about its usage;
- Ensure the content of the photograph focuses on the chess not on a particular child;
- Not approve/allow photo sessions outside the events or at a child's home.

Anyone concerned about photography taking place at events should contact the organisers of the event and ask them to deal with the matter.

Mobile Phones

Young people value their mobile phones as it gives them a sense of independence and they can often be given to them for security to enable parents to keep in touch. However, technology facilitates direct personal contact between adults and young people and in some cases adults have used this to cross personal boundaries and cause harm. The following guidelines should be followed:

As Organisers:

- Use group texts for communication among players and teams and inform parents of this at the start of the season, tournament or event;
- Avoid constant contact with an individual player over and above whatever is reasonably necessary to keep the player informed of dates of fixtures, details of tournaments etc.

As a young chess player:

- If you receive an offensive message, email or photo don't reply to it, save it, make a note of times and dates and tell a parent, event organiser, club committee member or another responsible adult that you trust;
- Be careful about whom you give your number or email address to and don't respond to unfamiliar numbers;
- Treat your phone as you would any valuable item so that you can guard against theft;
- Fully comply with the rules about turning off mobile devices during chess matches.

Bullying

Bullying can occur between an adult and child, and between children. In either case it is not acceptable within Chess. The competitive nature of chess can create an environment that provides opportunities for bullying. The bully may be a parent who pushes too hard, a coach who adopts a win-at-all costs philosophy, a child who intimidates another child or an official who places unfair pressure on a person.

Bullying can only survive in an environment where the victim does not feel empowered to tell someone who can help or in which it is not safe to do so. The

damage inflicted by bullying can frequently be underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to children, to the extent it effects their health and development, or at the extreme, causes them significant harm.

How can it be prevented?

- Ensure that all members follow the **Code of Conduct**, which promotes the rights and dignity of each member;
- Deal with any incidents as they arise;
- Use a whole group policy or 'no-blame approach', i.e. not 'bullying the bully' but working with bullies and the group of children, helping them to understand the hurt they are causing, and so make the problem a 'shared concern' of the group;
- Reinforce that there is 'a permission to tell' culture rather than a 'might is right';
- Encourage children to negotiate, co-operate and help others, particularly new or children with specific needs;
- Offer the victim immediate support and put the 'no blame approach' into operation;
- Never tell a child to ignore bullying, they can't ignore it, it hurts too much;
- Never encourage a child to take the law into their own hands and beat the bully at his/her own game;
- Tell the victim there is nothing wrong with them and it is not their fault.

For further information on bullying and the 'no-blame' approach see website, www.irishsportcouncil.ie

Section 6 - Child Welfare and Protection Procedures

The procedures for dealing with any child welfare or protection issues that may arise in organisations are set out in this section. Child welfare and the protection of children is the concern of all adults at all times, irrespective of their role within the organisation.

If there are grounds for concern about the safety or welfare of a child, chess organisations should react urgently to the concern. Persons unsure about whether or not certain behaviours are abusive and therefore reportable, should contact the duty social worker in Tusla (The Child and Family Agency) and the Garda Síochána to seek advice. Grounds for concern include a specific indication from a child, a statement from a person who witnessed abuse or an illness, injury or behaviour consistent with abuse.

A report may be made by any member in the club but should be passed on to the Lead Officer, who may in turn have to pass the concern to the local Statutory Authorities. It is not the responsibility of anyone working within chess organisations to decide whether or not child abuse is taking place. That is the job of the local statutory authorities. However, there is a responsibility to protect children by assisting the appropriate agencies so that they can then make enquiries and take any necessary action to protect the child.

Everyone should follow both procedures outlined below, firstly the procedure for responding to a child in distress and secondly the procedure for reporting the concern.

Response to a Child Disclosing Alleged Abuse

When a child discloses information of suspected abuse you should:

- (a) Deal with any allegation of abuse in a sensitive and competent way through listening to and facilitating the child to tell about the problem, rather than interviewing the child about details of what happened;
- (b) Stay calm and don't show any extreme reaction to what the child is saying. Listen compassionately and take what the child is saying seriously;
- (c) Understand that the child has decided to tell something very important and has taken a risk to do so. The experience of telling should be a positive one so that the child will not mind talking to those involved in the investigation;
- (d) Be honest with the child and tell him/her that it is not possible to keep information a secret;
- (e) Make no judgmental statements against the person whom the allegation is made;

- (f) Do not question the child unless the nature of what s/he is saying is unclear. Leading questions should be avoided. Open, non-specific questions should be used such as “Can you explain to me what you mean by that?”;
- (g) Check out the concerns with the parents/guardians before making a report unless you take the view that doing so might endanger the child;
- (h) Give the child some indication of what would happen next, such as informing parents/guardians, the Garda Síochána and/or Tusla (the Child and Family Agency). It should be kept in mind that the child may have been threatened and may feel vulnerable at this stage;
- (i) Carefully record the details;
- (j) Pass on this information to the Lead Officer unless that person has been identified by the child as a source of the suspected abuse – in such cases, as the person in whom the child has confided in, you should follow the reporting procedure below;
- (k) Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you.

Reporting Suspected or Disclosed Child Abuse

The following steps should be taken in reporting alleged child abuse to the statutory authorities:

- (a) Observe and note dates, times, locations and contexts in which the alleged incident occurred or suspicion was aroused, together with any other relevant information;
- (b) Report the matter as soon as possible to the Lead Officer within the organisation who has responsibility for reporting abuse. If the Lead Officer has reasonable grounds for believing that the child has been abused or is at risk of abuse, s/he will make a report to the duty social worker in the local office of Tusla. Tusla has statutory responsibility to investigate and assess suspected or actual child abuse;
- (c) In cases of emergency, where a child appears to be at immediate and serious risk and the Lead Officer is unable to contact a duty social worker, the Garda Síochána should be contacted. Under no circumstances should a child be left in a dangerous situation pending intervention by the Statutory Authorities;
- (d) If the Lead Officer is unsure whether reasonable grounds for concern exist s/he can informally consult with the duty social worker in the local office of Tusla and the Garda Síochána. S/he will be advised whether or not the matter requires a formal report;

A Lead Officer reporting suspected or actual child abuse to the Statutory Authorities will first inform the family of their intention to make such a report, unless, in his/her opinion, doing so might endanger the child or undermine an investigation. If a lead officer is unsure about whether or not to inform the family, s/he should report his/her suspicions to the statutory authorities and leave the matter for them to investigate.

The Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998

Provides immunity from civil liability to persons who report child abuse ‘reasonably and in good faith’ to the Health Services Executive (now Tusla) or the Garda Síochána. The Act also covers the offence of ‘false reporting’. The main provisions of the Act are:

1. The provision of immunity from civil liability to any person who reports child abuse “reasonably and in good faith” to designated officers of Tusla or any member of An Garda Síochána;
2. The provision of significant protections for employees who report child abuse. These protections cover all employees and all forms of discrimination up to and including, dismissal;
3. The creation of a new offence of false reporting of child abuse where a person makes a report of child abuse to the appropriate authorities “knowing that statement to be false”. This is a criminal offence designed to protect innocent persons from malicious reports.

Allegations against Organisers

Chess organisations should have agreed procedures to be followed in cases of alleged child abuse complaints concerning Organisers. The safety of the child making the allegation should be considered and the safety of any other children who may be at risk. The organisation should take any necessary steps that may be needed to protect children in its care. The following steps must be taken:

- the reporting procedure set out above should be invoked with the Lead Officer making the report to the local statutory authorities;
- the senior officer of the organisation should deal with the Organiser who is the subject of the allegations as follows:
 - the senior officer will privately inform the Organiser that (a) an allegation has been made against him/her and (b) the nature of the allegation;
 - the organiser should be afforded an opportunity to respond. His/her response should be noted and passed on to Tusla;
 - the Organisers should be asked to step aside pending the outcome of the investigation. When a person is asked to step aside it should be made clear that it is only a precautionary measure and will not prejudice any later disciplinary proceedings;

- the matter should be treated in the strictest confidence with information only being imparted to other officers of the club on a need to know basis; and
- the organiser against whom allegations have been made should be treated with respect and fairness.

Disciplinary Action

If the senior officer considers that the allegations against an organiser warrant a disciplinary investigation, s/he should follow the procedures set out in Appendix VI. The disciplinary process should be carried out independently of whatever steps the statutory authorities are taking in the matter and should proceed to a conclusion unless the organiser against whom allegations have been made:

- indicates that the disciplinary process could be prejudicial to the outcome of any investigations carried out by the statutory authorities; and
- that accordingly, s/he does not intend to cooperate with the process, pending the outcome of those investigations.

The fact that the organiser has not been prosecuted or been found guilty does not automatically mean that s/he is an appropriate person to work with children in the future.

Irrespective of the findings of the Statutory Authorities, the disciplinary committees should assess all individual cases to decide whether an organiser should continue to work with children in the organisation.

This may be a difficult decision, especially where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the statutory authorities and great care and sensitivity is required in reaching an acceptable conclusion. In such a case the disciplinary committee should reach a decision based upon the available information. This could suggest that, on the balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. In such circumstances, it is open to the disciplinary committee to decide to exclude the organiser from contact with children where they are satisfied that this is in the best interests of child safety in the organisation.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality should be maintained in respect of all issues and people involved in cases of alleged abuse or bad practice. It is important that the rights of both the child and the person about whom a complaint has been made are protected.

Organisations should consider the following when discussing concerns:

- A guarantee of confidentiality or undertakings regarding secrecy cannot be given, as the welfare of the child will supersede all other considerations;
- All information should be treated in a careful and sensitive manner and should be discussed only with those who need to know;
- Information should be conveyed to the parents/guardians of the child in a sensitive way;
- Giving information to others on a 'need to know' basis for the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality;
- All persons involved in a child protection process (the child, his/her parents/guardians, the alleged offender, his/her family, Organisers) should be afforded appropriate respect, fairness, support and confidentiality at all stages of the procedure;
- Information should be stored in a secure place, with limited access only to Lead Officers and appropriate personnel;
- The requirements of Data Protection laws should be adhered to;

Anonymous Complaints / Rumours

Anonymous complaints can be difficult to deal with but will not be ignored. Rumours should not be allowed to hang in the air. All concerns relating to inappropriate behaviour should be brought to the attention of the Lead Officer and any such complaints brought to the attention of the Lead Officer should be dealt with. The information should be checked out and handled in a confidential manner. In all cases the safety and welfare of the child/children is paramount. It is also important to note that the person against whom allegations have been made is entitled to a fair and impartial investigative process.