



DBS INTERNATIONAL SOCCER ACADEMY

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Introduction

DBS International Soccer Academy is committed to ensuring that all necessary steps will be taken to protect and safeguard the welfare of children who participate in football. This Policy document clearly demonstrates the importance placed by DBS International Soccer Academy on their protection and safety. All children who participate in football should be able to do so in a safe and enjoyable environment. While doing so they should be protected from any form of abuse be it physical, emotional, sexual, neglect or bullying. The responsibility for protecting children lies with all adults involved in this company / academy and in football in general.

DBS International Soccer Academy recognizes and accepts its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children by protecting them from physical, emotional or sexual harm and from neglect or bullying.

These policy and procedures document, in addition to offering relevant training programs, will ensure that everybody in DBS International Soccer Academy, knows exactly what is expected of them in relation to protecting children. It is vital that children who participate in DBS International Soccer Academy activities can do so in a safe, enjoyable and quality environment.

In pursuit of this goal DBS International Soccer Academy will:

- (a) Advise all members of DBS International Soccer Academy (coaches, players, parents and spectators) of their responsibilities in relation to the welfare and protection of children while participating in football.
- (b) Operate within the recommended Football Association of Ireland codes of conduct and best practice guidelines.
- (c) Appoint a Company / academy Children's Officer in line with Football Association of Ireland requirements.
- (d) Provide a child protection and welfare module in staff induction and development Programs



DBS International Soccer Academy (CPO)

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The Aim of this policy:

- (i) To develop a positive and proactive position to best protect all children and young people who participate in football, for them to do so in a safe and enjoyable environment.
- (ii) To provide appropriate guidance and advice to all company / academy members (players, coaches, volunteers, spectators and parents) in all matters concerning child welfare and protection.
- (iii) To demonstrate best practice in child welfare and protection.
- (iv) To promote ethics and best practice standards throughout football.

The key principles underpinning this Policy are that:

- (v) The welfare of the child is the first and paramount consideration.
- (vi) All children and young people have a right to be protected from abuse of any kind regardless of their age, gender, disability, culture, language, racial origin, religious beliefs or sexual identity.
- (vii) All suspicions and allegations of abuse/poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately. It is essential that we work in partnership with children and young people and their parents/carers. The Child and Family Agency Tusla has a statutory responsibility to safeguard and protect the welfare of children and is committed to cooperating fully with them in accordance with procedures as outlined in "Children First" National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011.

This Policy was written having regard to the following:

- Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017
- Children First Act 2015
- National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts (2012-2016)
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child



- Tusla's Guidance on Reporting 2017
- Child Protection and Welfare Practice Handbook, Health Service Executive, 2011
- Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information of Offences against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012
- The Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998
- Criminal Justice Act 2006 Reckless Endangerment of Children
- Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences Against Children & Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012
- Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017
- National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012-2016

All coaches, managers and volunteers have a responsibility to report concerns to the Child Protection Officer (CPO)

Child Protection Officer (CPO): Amanda Mowlds the designated CPO for DBS International Soccer Academy is responsible for implementing and monitoring this policy. Role of the CPO as follows:

To have an in-depth knowledge of child protection and to keep up to date with current legislation and policy on child protection through organisational training and development.

To receive and consider child protection concerns and follow the procedures in this section.

To advise and support Mandated Persons in their role of reporting, doing a joint report or assisting as requested

To advise and support coaches, managers, volunteers with any concern they have regarding a child. To advise and support them with making a report.

To be the central person in the organisation who maintains a record of all concerns

To prepare reports for the Board of Management.

Coaches, Staff, Volunteers and Board of Management. All individuals working and volunteering with children and young people at DBS International Soccer Academy must adhere to this policy and undertake relevant training.

Safeguarding:

Recruitment: All individuals working and volunteering with children and young people at DBS International Soccer Academy will undergo rigorous recruitment checks, including reference checks, Garda Vetting, International Police Vetting, to ensure they are suitable to work with children. Please see Recruitment Policy for more details.

Training: Training on child protection will be provided to all individuals working and volunteering with children and young people at DBS International Soccer Academy



Reporting Concerns: Any concerns about a child's welfare should be reported to the CPO immediately. The CPO will then follow the appropriate procedures to address the concern.

Mandated Persons: The mandated person is a person named under schedule 2 of Children First Act 2015 (ROI). They have a legal responsibility to report concerns or allegations that reach or exceed the threshold of harm of abuse to the Tusla

As a mandated person, under the Children First Act 2015 you are required to report any knowledge, belief or reasonable suspicion that a child has been harmed, is being harmed, or is at risk of being harmed.

If you are satisfied that this threshold of harm (Appendix A) has been reached, you should clearly identify when reporting that you are making a mandated report made under the Children First Act 2015.

If you are in doubt whether your concern reaches the legal definition of harm for making a mandated report, Tusla can provide advice in this regard by contacting the designated Tusla Social Worker for the area.

Section 14 of the Children First Act 2015 requires mandated persons to report a mandated concern to Tusla "as soon as practicable". Tusla's Web Portal allows users to securely submit child protection and welfare concerns to Tusla online.

Mandated persons can now access Tusla's emergency out-of-hours social work service. If as a mandated person you have a concern about a child you can contact our out-of-hours social work service on 0818 776 315 between 6pm and 6am every night and between 9am and 5pm on Saturdays, Sundays and bank holidays.

If you cannot contact Tusla and have an immediate concern about the safety of a child, please contact An Garda Síochána without delay.

Joint reporting

As a mandated person you may make a report jointly with another person, whether that person is also a mandated person or not.

There is nothing in the Act to prevent you from either making a mandated report jointly with a designated liaison person or providing a copy of the mandated report you have submitted to Tusla for the information of the designated liaison person.



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 with the designated liaison person.

What if my concern does not meet the threshold for a mandated report?

If your concern does not reach the threshold for mandated reporting, but you feel it is a reasonable concern about the welfare or protection of a child, you should report it to Tusla under the Children First Guidance.

Duty Social Worker Details: Child and Family Agency Unit 9 Nutgrove Retail Park, Churchtown
Dublin 14

Telephone number: 01 9213400

Firstly, recognizing Abuse

Abuse can take many forms, including physical, emotional, sexual, and neglect. It is important to recognize the signs and symptoms of abuse to protect children effectively. Please see types of abuse (Appendix A).

How to respond to allegations

React calmly

Listen carefully and attentively

Take the child/young person seriously

Reassure the child/young person that they have taken the right action in talking to you

Do not promise to keep anything secret

Ask questions for clarification only.

Do not ask leading questions

Check back with the child/young person that what you have heard is correct and understood

Do not express any opinions about the alleged abuser

Ensure that the child/young person understands the procedures that will follow



Make a written record of the conversation as soon as possible, in as much detail as possible. Treat the information confidentially, subject to the requirements of this Guidance and legislation. Share this information with the Child Protection Officer, who will if required put in a child protection

All information regarding child protection concerns will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and shared only on a need-to-know basis.

Recognizing Child Abuse

The following are important factors to be considered regarding the identification of abuse: No one single indicator by itself is conclusive of abuse. Any one sign may indicate conditions other than child abuse. A pattern or cluster of signs is likely to be more indicative of abuse. Most indicators are non-specific and must be viewed, not in isolation, but rather in the total context of the child's situation and family circumstances. Signs of abuse exist mainly in the relationships between children and parents, between children and other family members and, less frequently, between children and strangers. You may become aware of abuse if a child discloses it or communicates it in some way. However, in the case of sexual abuse in particular, secrecy imposed by the offending adult may often be part of the abuse pattern, so the child may not readily disclose what is happening. It is important to be always open to alternative explanations.

Procedure for Dealing with Child Abuse Concerns or Allegations

The investigation of suspected child abuse is the responsibility of statutory authorities (An Garda Síochána and Tusla the Child and Family Agency).

Reasonable Grounds for Concern:

- Specific indication from a child
- Statement from a witness
- Illness, injury, or behaviour consistent with abuse
- Symptom supported by corroborative evidence of deliberate harm or negligence
- Consistent signs of neglect over time

Guiding principles regarding handling and reporting disclosures or suspected abuse:

Our role in recognizing and responding to alleged incidents of child abuse is a supportive, not an investigative role. It is the job of Tusla, the Child and Family Agency and An Garda Síochána to investigate any allegation or suspicion of abuse that may be brought to the notice of coaches/managers/volunteers.

The rule as to whether to report a suspected case of abuse is having 'reasonable grounds' for concern for non-mandated people and threshold of harm for mandated people. The one thing you must not do is NOTHING. Remember that the consequences of failing to report an allegation or suspicion could far outweigh the risk of being wrong and could result in the continued harm, or even fatality, of a child. We have a moral and legal responsibility to report any suspected incident of child abuse. 18. 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 Tusla, the Child and Family Agency or to any member of An Garda Síochána.

Threshold of harm for a child protection or welfare concern:

It is recommended that a referral to Tusla Child and Family Agency should always be made by Child Protection Officer or Mandated Person in the following circumstances. Evidence, for example an injury or behaviour, that is consistent with abuse and is unlikely to have been caused in any other way. Please see Appendix A for more details.

Steps to Follow:

Step One: Initial Reporting

1. Report any allegations to the Child Protection Officer Amanda Mowlds.
2. If unsure about the grounds for concern, the Child Protection Officer may consult informally with the local Tusla duty social worker for advice.
3. Handle allegations sensitively, providing appropriate support for the accused, including counselling if necessary.

Step Two: Informing the Accused

1. If an allegation is made against a coach/volunteer, the Child Protection Officer will privately inform them of:
 - The fact that an allegation has been made
 - The nature of the allegation
2. If an allegation is made against a parent/guardian, the Child Protection Officer will privately inform them of:
 - The fact that an allegation has been made
 - The nature of the allegation
 - That a report will have to be made to the statutory authorities who will take it from there. Remind the parent/guardian this matter will remain confidential and will be handled with sensitivity as it is distressing for all involved.

****** The only time a parent/guardian will not be informed is if it will be putting the child/young person at further harm or if by doing so it could impair Tusla’s ability to carry out a risk assessment.

Step Three: Responding to Allegations against coach/manager/volunteer

1. Allow the accused coach/manager/volunteer to respond.
2. Document the response and include it in the formal report to Tusla.
3. The report should include observations, dates, times, locations, and other relevant information.
4. In emergencies, if a child is at immediate risk and a duty social worker is unavailable, contact An Garda Síochána.



5. Ensure no child is left in a dangerous situation pending intervention by authorities.

Step Four: Coordination with Authorities

1. All actions following an allegation will be in consultation with Tusla and Gardai.
2. Arrange an immediate meeting with these agencies.
3. Seek support and advice from the FAI National Children's Officer.

Step Five: Suspension During Investigation

1. Notify the FAI National Children's Officer of any formal notification to authorities.
2. Any coach/volunteer under investigation must stand down from soccer activities until the investigation is complete.
3. Clarify that standing down is precautionary and does not prejudice later proceedings.
4. Ensure the accused is treated with respect and fairness and that all information is handled sensitively and confidentially.

Step Six: Post-Investigation Actions

1. Assess the outcome of the statutory investigation.
2. Determine if there are any disciplinary issues under company / academy rules or FAI guidelines.
3. Internal disciplinary proceedings will only commence after the statutory investigation is completed.

This streamlined procedure ensures clarity and compliance with statutory requirements while prioritising the welfare of the child and the rights of the accused.

Review: This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains up-to-date and effective in protecting children.

Date of Last Review	12th August 2025
Signature:	<i>Darren Scully</i>
Name:	Darren Scully
Position:	Head of Operations



Appendix A: Definition of Harm

The threshold of harm for each category of abuse at which Mandated Persons have a legal obligation to report concerns is outlined below.

“Harm” means, in relation to a child:

- 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
- Sexual abuse of the child

Four Main Types of Abuse:

Neglect

Neglect occurs when a child does not receive adequate care or supervision to the extent that the child is harmed physically or developmentally. It is generally defined in terms of an omission of care, where a child’s health, development, or welfare is impaired by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, medical care, intellectual stimulation, or supervision and safety. Emotional neglect may also lead to the child having attachment difficulties. The extent of the damage to the child’s health, development, or welfare is influenced by a range of factors, including the extent, if any, of positive influence in the child’s life, the age of the child, and the frequency and consistency of neglect. Neglect is associated with poverty but not necessarily caused by it. It is strongly linked to parental substance misuse, domestic violence, and parental mental illness and disability.

A reasonable concern for the child’s welfare would exist when neglect becomes typical of the relationship between the child and the parent or carer. This may become apparent where you see the child over a period of time, or the effects of neglect may be obvious based on having seen the child once.

The threshold of harm is reached when the child’s needs are neglected to the extent that their well-being and/or development is severely affected.

The following are features of child neglect:

- Children being left alone without adequate care and supervision
- Malnourishment, lacking food, unsuitable food, or erratic feeding
- Non-organic failure to thrive, i.e., a child not gaining weight due not only to malnutrition but also emotional deprivation
- Failure to provide adequate care for the child’s medical and developmental needs, including intellectual stimulation
- Inadequate living conditions – unhygienic conditions, environmental issues, including lack of adequate heating and furniture



- Lack of adequate clothing
- Inattention to basic hygiene
- Lack of protection and exposure to danger, including moral danger, or lack of supervision appropriate to the child's age
- Persistent failure to attend school
- Abandonment or desertion

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is when someone deliberately hurts a child physically or puts them at risk of being physically hurt. It may occur as a single incident or as a pattern of incidents. A reasonable concern exists where the child's health and/or development is, may be, or has been damaged because of suspected physical abuse.

The threshold of harm is reached when you know, believe, or have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child has been, is being, or is at risk of being assaulted and as a result, the child's health, development, or welfare have been or are being seriously affected, or are likely to be seriously affected.

Physical abuse can include the following:

- Physical punishment
- Beating, slapping, hitting, or kicking
- Pushing, shaking, or throwing
- Pinching, biting, choking, or hair-pulling
- Use of excessive force in handling
- Deliberate poisoning
- Suffocation
- Fabricated/induced illness
- Female genital mutilation

The Children First Act 2015 includes a provision that abolishes the common law defence of reasonable chastisement in court proceedings. This defence could previously be invoked by a parent or other person in authority who physically discipline a child. The change in the legislation now means that in prosecutions relating to assault or physical cruelty, a person who administers such punishment to a child cannot rely on the defence of reasonable chastisement in the legal proceedings. The result of this is that the protections in law relating to assault now apply to a child in the same way as they do to an adult.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the systematic emotional or psychological ill-treatment of a child as part of the overall relationship between a caregiver and a child. Once-off and occasional difficulties between a parent/carer and child are not considered emotional abuse. Abuse occurs when a child's basic need for attention, affection, approval, consistency, and security are not met, due to incapacity or



indifference from their parent or caregiver. Emotional abuse can also occur when adults responsible for taking care of children are unaware of and unable (for a range of reasons) to meet their children's emotional and developmental needs.

Emotional abuse is not easy to recognize because the effects are not easily seen. A reasonable concern for the child's welfare would exist when the behaviour becomes typical of the relationship between the child and the parent or carer.

The threshold of harm has been reached when you know, believe, or have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child has been, is being, or at risk of being ill-treated 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.

Emotional abuse may be seen in some of the following ways:

- Rejection
- Lack of comfort and love
- Lack of attachment
- Lack of proper stimulation (e.g., fun and play)
- Lack of continuity of care (e.g., frequent moves, particularly unplanned)
- Continuous lack of praise and encouragement
- Persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility, or blaming of the child
- Bullying
- Conditional parenting in which care or affection of a child depends on his or her behaviours or actions
- Extreme overprotectiveness
- Inappropriate non-physical punishment (e.g., locking child in bedroom)
- Ongoing family conflicts and family violence
- Seriously inappropriate expectations of a child relative to his/her age and stage of development

There may be no physical signs of emotional abuse unless it occurs with another type of abuse. A child may show signs of emotional abuse through their actions or emotions in several ways. These include insecure attachment, unhappiness, low self-esteem, educational and developmental underachievement, risk-taking, and aggressive behaviour.

It should be noted that no one indicator is conclusive evidence of emotional abuse. Emotional abuse is more likely to impact negatively on a child where it is persistent over time and where there is a lack of other protective factors.

Sexual Abuse

This form of abuse refers to actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child for the purpose of personal gratification or sexual arousal. It includes children being forced to either participate in or observe any form of sexual activity.



Underage Consensual Sexual Activity:

Under the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2006, the legal age of consent is 17 years. While a sexual relationship where one or both parties is under 17 years of age is illegal, when making a mandated report to Tusla, it might not be regarded as child sexual abuse. There are certain exemptions from reporting underage consensual sexual activity under section 14(3) of the Children First Act 2015. If you are satisfied that all the following criteria are met, you are not required to make a report to Tusla:

- The young person(s) concerned are between 15 and 17 years old
- The age difference between them is not more than 24 months
- There is no material difference in their maturity or capacity to consent
- The relationship between the people engaged in the sexual activity does not involve intimidation or exploitation of either person
- The young persons concerned state clearly that they do not want any information about the activity to be disclosed to Tusla