



Policy	Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
Version	1.0
Approval Date	December 2024
Review Date	June 2026

1. Introduction and Purpose

Olympic Handball Ireland (OHI) is committed to safeguarding the welfare of all young people involved in its activities. This policy outlines the OHI's approach to ensuring a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment for children and young people, promoting their physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

2. Core Principles and Values

- **Child-Centred Focus:** Prioritize the safety, welfare, and development of young participants.
- **Equality and Respect:** Ensure fair treatment irrespective of race, gender, ability, or background.
- **Transparency:** Promote open communication with participants, parents, and officials.
- **Accountability:** Maintain a culture of vigilance and responsiveness in safeguarding.

3. Legal and Regulatory Framework

This policy complies with:

- **Republic of Ireland:** Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017); National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act (2012–

2016); Data Protection Act (2018).

- **Northern Ireland:** Safeguarding Board Act (NI) 2011; Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (2017).
- International guidance including the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)**.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSOs)

- DSOs will serve as the primary contact for safeguarding concerns.
- DSOs will ensure safeguarding policies are communicated and implemented at all levels.

DSOs will liaise with statutory authorities (TUSLA, PSNI, HSC) as necessary.

Coaches, Volunteers, and Officials

- Coaches, Volunteers and Officials will complete mandatory safeguarding training (e.g., Safeguarding 1, 2, and 3).
- Coaches, Volunteers and Officials will promote a safe and positive environment for all participants.
- Coaches, Volunteers and Officials will report any concerns or breaches of this policy to the DSO.

Clubs and Teams

- OHI Clubs with participants under 18 will appoint a Club Safeguarding Officer.
- OHI Clubs with participants under 18 will monitor compliance with this policy at all levels.
- OHI Clubs with participants under 18 will ensure volunteers and staff are appropriately vetted and trained.

5. Code of Conduct

For Young People

Young participants are expected to:

- Show respect for teammates, opponents, and officials.
- Refrain from bullying, cheating, or harmful behaviour.
- Follow the rules of the game and respect decisions made by officials.

For Parents/Guardians

Parents should:

- Model respectful and supportive behaviour at games and events.

- Communicate concerns through appropriate channels.
- Encourage their children to enjoy the sport and prioritize effort over results.

For Sports Leaders

Sports Leaders must:

- Prioritize the safety and welfare of all participants.
- Avoid one-on-one situations with young people.
- Refrain from using physical punishment, inappropriate language, or unprofessional behavior.

Young Athletes' Participation Rights

Young people have the right to:

- Be treated with dignity, respect, and fairness.
- Enjoy a safe and supportive environment.
- Have a voice in decisions affecting their sporting experience.
- Receive appropriate coaching and support for their developmental stage.

6. Holistic Development of Young Athletes

OHI recognizes the importance of balancing competitive goals with the personal growth and enjoyment of young participants. To support holistic development, OHI commits to:

- **Age-Appropriate Training:** Designing training programs suited to the developmental stages of young athletes.
- **Mental and Emotional Well-Being:** Providing resources and support to help young athletes manage stress and challenges.
- **Avoiding Early Specialization:** Encouraging young people to participate in multiple sports to reduce burnout and overuse injuries.

7. Safeguarding Practices

Recruitment and Vetting

- All personnel interacting with those under 18 must undergo Garda Vetting (ROI) or Access NI checks (NI).
- Applicants must complete an interview, reference checks, and an induction process.

Training and Continuous Development

- All staff and volunteers must renew safeguarding training every three years.
- Specialised training is required for roles with significant safeguarding responsibilities.

8. Child Protection Procedures

The following procedures will be followed by all OHI staff, volunteers and coaches.

Responding to Concerns and Disclosures

- **Listen:** Remain calm, listen attentively, and reassure the child.
- **Document:** Record the disclosure using the Incident Report Form (Appendix 1).
- **Report:** Inform the Designated Safeguarding Officer immediately.

Reporting Procedures

- Concerns should be reported to the DSO, who will liaise with statutory authorities.
- Serious concerns should be escalated to TUSLA, PSNI, or local health services.

Managing Allegations Against Personnel

- Any staff member accused of misconduct may be temporarily suspended pending investigation.
- Investigations will adhere to principles of confidentiality, fairness, and statutory compliance.

9. Anti-Bullying Policy

Bullying of any form (verbal, physical, psychological, or online) is strictly prohibited within OHI.

Complaints of bullying will be addressed using a "No-Blame" approach, focusing on resolution and education.

10. Inclusion and Diversity Policy

All children, including those with disabilities and from minority backgrounds, must have equal access to opportunities.

OHI will provide reasonable accommodations to ensure inclusivity.

11. Digital and Online Safety Policy

All communication with young participants must occur through approved group channels.

Sharing of personal contact details between coaches and participants is prohibited.

Cyberbullying incidents will be addressed under the anti-bullying policy.

12. Photography and Videography Policy

Written consent will be obtained from parents/guardians before capturing images of children.

Images will focus on group activities and depict participants in appropriate attire.

13. Transport and Supervision Guidelines

OHI will maintain an adult-to-child ratio of 1:8 for children under 12 and 1:10 for older participants in its program activities. Where delivering handball activities in a school environment, the policy of the school regarding supervision will supersede OHI guidelines.

OHI will ensure two adults are present during activities.

14. Overnight Stays and Away Trips

OHI will obtain signed consent forms from parents/guardians, including medical and emergency details, for all overnight stays and away trips.

OHI will ensure rooming arrangements respect privacy and gender considerations.

15. Recognition and Transition Support

OHI will recognize young athletes' contributions and achievements beyond competition results.

OHI will provide appropriate support/s for transitions, such as moving into adult sports or discontinuing participation.

16. Incident Reporting and Record Keeping

OHI will use the standardised form (Appendix 1) to record all incidents.

OHI will maintain records securely for at least seven years, in compliance with GDPR.

17. Whistleblowing Policy

Staff and volunteers of OHI are encouraged to report safeguarding concerns without fear of retaliation or retribution.

Reports will be handled confidentially and investigated thoroughly by OHI.

18. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Policy Review

Annual safeguarding audits will be conducted at the club and national levels.

This policy will be reviewed biennially or as legislative updates require.

19. Appendices

Appendix 1: Incident Report Form

Appendix 2: Consent Form for Participation and Media

Appendix 3: Recruitment and Vetting Form

Appendix 4: Safeguarding Audit Checklist

Appendix 5: Contact Information for Key Authorities



+35316251165
+353851848194
ohi@olympichandball.org

Irish Sport HQ,
National Sports Campus,
Blanchardstown, Dublin 15