



CODE OF ETHICS & GOOD PRACTICE FOR WORKING WITH CHILDREN

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Irish Muaythai Council

The guidelines in this document are based on the national guidelines as outlined in the following documents: -

- Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport, Irish Sports Council, 2000.
- Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children, Dept. of Health & Children 1999
- Our Duty to Care, Dept. of Health & Children 2002

For Northern Ireland Clubs and organisations reference should also be made to: -

Children Act NI and Safeguarding Children



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Core Values in Working with for Young People

The work of ***Irish Muaythai Council*** is based on the following principles that will guide the development of activities for children/young people in this council and its club members. Young People's experience of organised activities should be guided by what is best for the children/young person. The stages of development and the ability of the child/young person should guide the types of activity provided within the council/club. Adults will need to have a basic understanding of the needs of young people, including spiritual, physical, emotional and personal.

Integrity in relationships

Adults interacting with children/young people in events/clubs should do so with integrity and respect for the child. There is a danger that activities can be used to exploit or undermine children. All adult actions in these activities should be guided by what is best for the child and in the context of quality, open working relationships. Verbal, physical, emotional or sexual abuse of any kind is unacceptable within these activities.

Quality atmosphere and ethos

Activities for children/young people should be conducted in a safe, positive and encouraging atmosphere. A child-centred ethos will help to ensure that competition and specialisation are kept in their appropriate place. Too often competitive demands are placed on children too early and results in excessive levels of pressure on them and as a consequence, high levels of dropout from activities.

Equality

All children should be treated in an equitable and fair manner regardless of age, ability, sex, religion, social and ethnic background or political persuasion. Children with disability should be involved in sports activities in an integrated way, thus allowing them to participate to their potential alongside other children.

Fair Play

Fair play is the guiding principle of the Code of Ethics. All children's activities should be conducted in an atmosphere of fair play. Ireland has contributed and is committed to the European Code of Sports Ethics, which defines fair play as: "much more than playing within the rules". It incorporates the concepts of friendship, respect for others and always playing with the right spirit. Fair play is defined as a way of thinking, not just behaving. It incorporates issues concerned with the elimination of opportunities, excessive commercialisation and corruption.

Competition

A balanced approach to competition can make a significant contribution to the development of child/young people, while at the same time providing fun, enjoyment and satisfaction. However, often competitive demands are placed on children too early, which results in excessive levels of pressure on them. This can contribute to a high level of drop out from activities. Instructors/Leaders should aim to put the welfare of the child first and competitive standards second. A child-centred approach will help to ensure that competition and specialisation are kept in their appropriate place.

Policy Statement

Irish Muaythai Council (IMC)

Is committed to safeguarding the well being of all its members. Every individual in the **IMC** should at all times, show respect and understanding for their rights, safety and welfare, and conduct themselves in a way that reflects the principles of **IMC**.

Child Protection Statement.

To ensure that best practice is followed in **IMC** we will operate within the Governments Child Protection and Welfare Guidelines “Children First 1999”. Training will be offered to all members of **IMC** in the area of Child Protection and Welfare. All instructors are required to do a child protection course within first year of membership and each club should have a children’s officer in place.

Once the policy statement is approved and put into the constitution it can guide all other rules and regulations for activities for children/young people within the council/club. The following pages provide sample codes of conduct, rules for travelling away, supervision of young people, recruitment and selection and reporting procedures for child welfare and protection. They can be used to form rules and policies arising out of the inclusion of the policy statement in the constitution. The pages overleaf can be modified to suit each club and should be approved by the **IMC**, and their legal advisors.

Code of Conduct for Young People

The Irish Muaythai Council wishes to provide the best possible environment for all young people involved in the activities. Young people deserve to be given enjoyable, safe opportunities, free of abuse of any kind. These participants have rights, which must be respected, and responsibilities that they must accept. Young people should be encouraged to realise that they have responsibilities to treat other participants and leaders with fairness and respect.

Children and Young people are entitled to: -

- Be safe and to feel safe
- Be listened to
- Be believed
- Be treated with dignity, sensitivity and respect
- Have a voice in the club
- Participate on an equal basis
- Have fun and enjoy the activities.
- Experience competition at a level at which they feel comfortable
- Make complaints and have them dealt with
- Get help against bullies
- Say No
- To protect their own bodies
- Confidentiality

Children/Young people should always: -

- Treat Leaders with respect – list appropriate people in your activities, e.g. coaches, managers, instructors, club officials etc.
- Play fairly at all times, do their best
- Respect team members, even when things go wrong
- Respect opponents, be gracious in defeat
- Abide by the rules set down by leaders when travelling to away events.
- Behave in a manner that avoids bringing the council/club into disrepute
- Talk to children's officer if they have any problems – list title of person in council/club that children can talk to

Children/Young people should never: -

- Cheat
- Use violence or physical contact that is not allowed within the rules
- Shout or argue with officials, team mates or opponents – list appropriate in your club
- Harm team members, opponents or their property
- Bully or use bullying tactics to isolate another child/young person.
- Use unfair or bullying tactics to gain advantage
- Take banned substances
- Keep secrets.
- Tell lies about adults/young people
- Spread rumours

Guidelines for Parents

Irish Muaythai Council believes that parents should: -

- Be a role model for your child and maintain the highest standards of conduct when interacting with children, other parents, with officials and organisers
- Always behave responsibly and do not seek to unfairly affect the activity/event.
- Never intentionally expose any child/young person to embarrassment or disparagement by the use of flippant or sarcastic remarks
- Always recognise the value and importance of the volunteers who provide activity/opportunities for your child. Do not publicly question the judgement or honesty of instructors/leaders, coaches or organisers.
- Respect referees, coaches/instructors, organisers.
- 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 behaviour.
- Set a good example by applauding good play on both sides. Encourage mutual respect for team-mates and opponents.
- Parents should support all efforts to remove abusive behaviour and bullying behaviour in all its forms.
- Please read bullying policy within the Councils guidelines.

Parents Code of Conduct: -

1. I will respect the rules and procedures set down in ***Irish Muaythai Council*** Code of Ethics for Working with Children.
2. I will respect my child's, team mates, instructors, leaders, coaches, officials, judges, etc. and parents, as well as instructors, leaders, players, parents and coaches from opposing clubs. I will encourage my child to treat other participants, coaches, instructors, and managers with respect.
3. I will give encouragement and applaud only positive accomplishments whether from my child, his/her team-mates, their opponents or the officials.
4. I will respect my child's instructor(s) and support his/her efforts
5. I will respect the officials and their authority during sessions and events.
6. I will never demonstrate threatening or abusive behaviour or use foul language.

Name: _____ Name of Child (ren) _____

Date _____

Instructor/Leaders/Coaches Code of Conduct

Instructors/Leaders/Coaches should familiarise themselves with the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport and with the ***Irish Muaythai Council*** Code of Conduct and follow the procedures if they suspect or receive complaints of abuse of any sort.

Instructors/Leaders should be: -

- Positive during activities, praise and encourage effort as well as results
- Plan and prepare appropriately
- Put welfare of young person first, strike a balance between this and winning/results
- Encourage fair play, treat participants equally
- Recognise developmental needs
- Qualified and up-to-date with knowledge and skill of activity for children/young people
- Involve parents where possible and Inform parents when problems arise
- Keep record of attendance.
- Keep a brief record of injury(s)/incidents and action taken
- Keep a brief record of problem/action/outcomes, if behavioural problems Arise

Guidelines for Instructor/Leaders/Coaches

Instructor/Leaders in children's activities should strive to create a positive environment for the children in their care. They have an overall responsibility to take the necessary steps to ensure that positive and healthy experiences are provided.

Irish Muaythai Council recognises the key role leaders play in the lives of children.

These roles include: -

1. All Instructor/Leaders should have as their first priority the children's safety and enjoyment of the activity and should adhere to the guidelines and regulations set out in the council/club's Code of Ethics.
2. Instructors/Leaders must respect the rights, dignity and worth of every child and must treat everyone equally, regardless of sex, ethnic origin, religion or ability.
3. Instructors/Leaders working with young people in ***Irish Muaythai Council*** should be suitable and appropriately qualified. Instructors/Leaders will be expected to go through appropriate recruitment and selection procedures that apply to all persons with substantial access to young people, whether paid or unpaid. References will be needed and will be followed up.
4. There will be a 'sign-up' procedure, whereby the appointed/reappointed instructors/leaders agree to abide by the *Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Working with Children*, and to the policies and code of the council/club.
5. Instructor/Leaders will be given a copy of the council/clubs code of ethics and they should be made aware of the procedures contained within them.
6. Once appointed the Instructor/Leader must act as a role model and promote the positive aspects of the council/club and maintain the highest standards of personal conduct.
7. The use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco must be actively discouraged by all concerned.
8. Remember your behaviour to the child/young person, other officials, and opponents will have an effect on the child/young person in your care.
9. Be generous with praise and never ridicule or shout at the child/young person for making mistakes or for losing a game. All children/young people are entitled to respect.
10. Be careful to avoid the "star system". Each child deserves equal time and attention.

11. 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.
12. Physical punishment or physical force must never be used. Never punish a mistake - by verbal means, physical means, or exclusion.
13. Insist that the child/young person in your care respect the rules of the activity. Insist on fair play and ensure players are aware you will not tolerate cheating or bullying behaviour.
14. Remember that young players play for fun and enjoyment and that skill development and personal satisfaction have priority over highly structured competition. Never make winning the only objective.
15. Encourage the development of respect for opponents, officials, instructors and other coaches and avoid criticism of fellow coaches.
16. When travel/overnight travel is involved, the instructor/Leaders travelling with children must sign a separate agreement. Parents and participants will also be asked to sign permission forms in these instances.
17. Instructor/Leaders are responsible for setting and monitoring the boundaries between a working relationship and friendship with players. It is advisable for instructors/leaders not to involve children/young people in their personal life i.e. visits to leaders home or overnight stays.
18. Avoid working alone and ensure there is adequate supervision for all activities.
19. It is important to realise that certain situations or friendly actions could be misinterpreted by the participant or by outsiders.
20. When approached to take on a new child, ensure that any previous instructor/leader -child relationship has been ended by the child/others in a professional manner.
21. When children/young people are invited into adult groups, it is advisable to get agreement from a parent/carer. Boundaries of behaviour in adult groups are normally different from the boundaries that apply to junior groups.
22. Instructors/Leaders that become aware of a conflict between their obligation to their child/young person and their obligation to their council/club must make explicit the nature of the conflict and the loyalties and responsibilities involved, to all parties concerned.
23. Instructors/Leaders should communicate and co-operate with medical and ancillary practitioners in the diagnosis, treatment and management of their Childs/young person's medical or related problems. Avoid giving advice of a personal or medical nature if you are not qualified to do so. Any information of a personal or medical nature must be kept strictly confidential unless the welfare of the child requires the passing on of this information

24. The nature of the relationship between instructor/leader and a child/young person can often mean that an instructor/leader will learn confidential information about a child/young person or their 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/young person/family
25. Set realistic goals for the participants and do not push children/young people. Create a safe and enjoyable environment
26. Do not criticise other instructors, leaders, officials, coaches, etc. You are the role model for the children in your care
27. Instructors/Leaders should avoid the use of alcohol, before coaching, during events, on trips with children/young people.

Where possible Instructor/Leaders should avoid: -

- Spending excessive amounts of time with children away from others
- Taking activities alone
- Taking children to your home
- Taking children on journey's alone in their car

Instructor/Leaders should not: -

- Use any form of punishment or physical force on a child
- Exert undue influence over a child/young person 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
- Take measurements or engage in certain types of fitness testing without the presence of another adults
- Undertake any form of therapy – hypnosis, etc. – with children

I have read and agree to abide by the above guidelines

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Disciplinary, Complaints and Appeals Procedure

- Complaints may be lodged by all members of the **IMC**.
 - They should be received in writing by the designated person of the **IMC**.
 - The complaint should outline all relevant details about other parties involved.
 - The complaint should be brought to the attention of the *IMC committee* who will convene a meeting.
 - If the complaint involves a criminal offence the *IMC committee* should inform the statutory authorities.
 - The *IMC committee* should hear the case of all parties involved and decide if a rule or regulation has been infringed.
 - They should, in writing, inform those involved of the sanctions to be imposed. Written notification should be given to parents if the complaint is against a junior member.
 - Keep all records on file.
 - If any party does not agree with the *IMC committee* they can appeal the decision in writing within 10-day period.
 - The appeals committee is convened, and this committee should be made up of those who have not been on the original disciplinary committee if possible.
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- ◆ The Irish Muaythai Council complaints committee is made up of 3 senior members of the council, these members will consist of the President, Vice President and Chairman.
 - ◆ An appeals committee will be made up of two other senior members of the IMC (not consisting of the original committee) and one neutral person outside the IMC agreed by both parties.

Recruitment and Selection Policy for Leaders/Volunteers

The Irish Muaythai Council will take all reasonable steps to ensure that people working with children/ young people are suitable and appropriately qualified. Recruitment and selection procedures are therefore necessary and these procedures apply to all persons with substantial access to young people, whether paid or unpaid.

1. All adults taking responsibility for children should undergo a recruitment process. The responsibilities of the role and the level of experience/qualifications required should be drawn up and clearly stated beforehand.
2. Instructors/Leaders should fill in an application form – see sample – giving names of two referees that can be contacted.
3. Where possible there should be an interview.
4. A probationary period is advisable. The IMC recommend 2 year probation.
5. There will be a “sign-up” procedure, whereby the newly recruited Instructors/Leaders, agree to abide by the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Working with Children and to the council/club Code and policies.
6. Every effort should be made to manage and support appointed Instructors/Leaders. Adequate supervision should always be provided; an instructor/leader should not have to work alone.
7. A decision to appoint an Instructor/Leader is the responsibility of the council/club and not of any one individual within it. If an individual club is appointing an Instructor/Leader, the club must apply the procedures laid down by the IMC Code of Ethics. It will be up to the IMC committee to ratify all recommendations for appointment.
8. Only Instructors/Leaders who's clubs have sent their vetting forms to the IMC for ratification will be accessed and if passed accepted as an Instructor/Leader with-in that club. Vetting form is enclosed with IMC information pack.
9. The Irish Martial Arts Commission (IMAC) have a Garda vetting process which all IMC instructors/Leaders will be screened through eventually.

Anti-Bullying Policy

What is Bullying?

Bullying can be defined as repeated aggression, be it verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against others. It is behaviour that is intentionally aggravating and intimidating and occurs mainly in social environments such as schools, clubs and other organisations working with children and young people. It includes behaviours such as teasing, taunting, threatening, and hitting and extortion behaviour by one or more children against a victim.

How would you know if a child is being bullied?

All bullies operate using secrecy, threats and fear. Bullying can therefore 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 following indicators are warning signs that a young person might be getting bullied: -

- Reluctance to come to a venue or take part in activities
- Physical signs – unexplained bruises, scratches, or damage to belongings
- Stress-caused illness – headaches, and stomach aches which seem unexplained
- Fearful behaviour – fear of walking to a meeting, going different routes, asking to be driven
- Frequent loss of, or shortage of, money with vague explanations
- Having few friends
- Changes in behaviour –withdrawn, stammering, moody, irritable, upset, distressed
- Not eating
- Attempting suicide or hinting at suicide
- Anxiety – shown by nail-biting, fearfulness, tics

There are other possible reasons for many of the above

Who should deal with bullying?

While the more extreme forms of bullying would be regarded as physical or emotional abuse and are reported to the health board or An Garda Síochana, dealing with bullying behaviour is normally the responsibility of all Instructors/Leaders within the council/club.

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 young people, helping them to understand the hurt they are causing, and so make the problem a ‘shared concern’ of the group, (see below)
- Reinforce that there is ‘a permission to tell’ culture rather than a ‘might is right’
- Encourage young people to negotiate, co-operate and help others, particularly new or different children
- Offer the victim immediate support and put the ‘no blame approach’ into operation
- Never tell a young person to ignore bullying, they can’t ignore it, it hurts too much
- Never encourage a young person to take the law into their own hands and beat the bully at their own game
- Tell the victim there is nothing wrong with them and it is not their fault

What is the ‘No Blame’ Approach?

Step 1 – Interview with the victim

If you find that there has been an incident of bullying, first talk to the victim. At this stage find out who was involved and what the victim is now feeling. Try asking the following questions:

- Was it verbal or physical intimidation?
- How hurt is the victim
- Was it within his/her peer group?
- Ensure the victim that his/her name will not come out in the investigation
- Actively listen

Step 2 – Meet with all involved

Arrange to meet with all those involved; this should include some bystanders, those who may have colluded, those who joined in and those who initiated the bullying.

- Have a maximum of six to eight in the group – keep the number controllable
- Make a point of calling a ‘special’ meeting
- Ensure the severity of the topic is understood by all
- Speak only of the hurt caused in general terms with no reference to the victim
- Play on the conscience of all – ask questions like: How would you feel?
Would you like it done to you?

Step 3 – Explain the problem

The distress being suffered as a result of the bullying incident is explained. At this stage the details of the incident or the allocation of the blame is not discussed. Explain the feelings of loneliness, feeling left out, rejected, laughed at. Try asking questions:

14.

- ❖ Would they like it if it happened to them
- ❖ “Someone here in this group was bullied by someone within the group, what could we do to see it does not happen again?”
- ❖ Listen, watch out for reactions, and pick up on any without isolating anyone

Step 4 – Share the responsibility

Explain what steps / controls may have to be introduced to prevent further incidents and how everyone will lose out as a result

Step 5 – Ask the group for their ideas

At this stage the group is encouraged to suggest ways that would make the victim feel happier. All positive responses are noted. Use phrases “if it were you” to encourage a response. Listen to all suggestions and note them

Step 6 – Leave it to them

Now the problem has been identified, solutions suggested, the problem is now handed over to the group to solve. Arrange to meet again in a week’s time. Pass responsibility over to the group and give a time frame within which something must be done

Step 7 – Meet them again

Each member of the group, including the bully, discuss how things are going, who is doing what and have there been other incidents. This allows for continual monitoring and also keeps all involved in the process.

Again enforce the idea of the ‘team’ looking after each other at regular intervals to ensure it is known that bullying or intimidating behaviour will not be tolerated.

Guidelines on Supervision

Travelling with children

There is extra responsibility taken on by instructors/leaders when they travel with children to events. When travelling with young people you should:

- Ensure that there is adequate insurance cover
- Not carry more than the permitted number of passengers
- Ensure use of safety belts
- Avoid being alone with one participant, put passenger in the back seat, drop off at central locations or seek parental permission to transport an individual participant on a regular basis and clearly state times of pick- up and drop off

Supervision

- Make sure there is an adequate adult: child ratio. This will depend on the nature of the activity, the age of the participants and any special needs of the group. As a guide a ratio of 1:8 for under 12 years of age and 1:10 for participants over 12 years of age. This is only a guide and will change depending on the circumstances, e.g. water sports or adventure sports, athletes with special needs or away trips
- Where there are mixed groups there should be instructors/leaders of both genders
- Avoid being alone with one participant, if you need to talk separately do so in an open environment, in view of others
- In changing rooms, ask parents to take responsibility and supervise in pairs of appropriate gender
- Instructors/Leaders should not have to enter the changing rooms unless children are very young or need special assistance, where supervision should be in pairs of appropriate gender
- Clearly state time for start and end of activities, instructors/leaders should remain in pairs until all participants have been collected
- Keep attendance records and record of any incidents / injuries that arise
- Ask parents to stay and supervise sessions, (for safety and supervision, not necessarily for their 'technical' expertise)

Away trips/Overnight stays

- Separate permission forms should be signed by parents and participants, containing emergency contact number
- Young participants should sign a behaviour agreement
- Appoint a group leader who will make a report on returning home
- A meeting with parents and participants is useful to communicate travel times, competition details, other activities, gear requirements, medical requirements, special dietary needs and any other necessary details
- Rooming arrangements – adults should not share rooms with children, children share rooms with those of same age and gender and adults should knock before entering rooms
- All group socialisation should take place in communal areas (i.e. no boys in girls' rooms and vice versa).
- Alcoholic drink, smoking or other illegal substances are forbidden.
- There must be at least one adult of each gender with a mixed party, there should be a good adult – child ratio, 1:5/6, and proper access to medical personnel
- Lights out times should be enforced
- Children/Young people should be under reasonable supervision at all times and should never leave the venue or go unsupervised without prior permission

Safety

All clubs should have a safety statement, including specific and potential risks attached to their activities. They should also have procedures in place for safeguarding against such risks. In addition clubs should:

- Ensure activities are suitable for age and stage of development of participants
- Keep a record of any specific medical conditions of the participants
- Keep a record of emergency contact numbers for parents/guardians
- Ensure any necessary protective gear is used
- Ensure First Aid kit is close at hand with access to qualified first-aider
- Know the contact numbers of emergency services
- Keep first aid kit stocked up
- Ensure easy access to medical personnel if needed and have a emergency plan

- If an incident occurs, make a brief record of injury and action taken. Make a brief record of the problem/action/outcome. Contact the participants parents and keep them informed of all details
- Officials – judges, referees, etc. – should ensure the conduct of the sport
- Participants should know and keep the rules of their activity, keeping in mind that many rules are there for safety
- Instructors/Leaders should hold appropriate qualifications required.
- Ensure there is adequate insurance cover for all activities
- Ensure parents/guardians are present at finishing time of sessions or events

17.

Touching

Some activities may require a ‘hands on approach’, especially in a teaching or coaching situation, e.g., it may be necessary to support a child learning a new move in gymnastics but the following should be taken into consideration

- ❖ Avoid unnecessary physical contact
- ❖ Any necessary contact should be in response to the needs of the child and not the adult
- ❖ It should be in an open environment with the permission and understanding of the participant
- ❖ It should be determined by the age and developmental stage of the participant – Don’t do something that a child can do for themselves
- ❖ Never engage in inappropriate touching

Permission Form

Travelling with Underage Participants

EVENT: _____

VENUE: _____

DATES: _____

Travelling Instructor/Leader/Volunteer

I hereby agree to abide by the guidelines and regulations contained in the *IMC Code of Ethics* Code of Conduct

Name: _____ Role: _____

Date: _____

Parent/Guardian of Participant

I have read and accept the conditions and rules set down by *IMC Code of Ethics* for children travelling to events.

Parent/Guardian: _____ Date: _____

Emergency Contact Number(s): _____

Young Participant

I have read and accept the conditions and rules set down by the *IMC Code of Ethics* for children travelling to events. I agree to abide by the rules.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Working with Children Use of Photographic and Filming Equipment

Irish Muaythai Council has adopted a policy in relation to the use of images of children/young people on their websites and in other publications, as there have been concerns about the risks posed directly and indirectly to children and young people through the use of photographs on websites and other publications. Where possible we will try to use models or illustrations when promoting an activity and avoid the use of the first name and surname of individuals in a photograph. This reduces the risk of inappropriate, unsolicited attention from people within and outside the council/club.

Rules to guide the use of photography: -

- If the child/young person is named, avoid using their photograph.
- If a photograph is used, avoid naming the child/young person.
- Ask for the child/young person's permission to use their image. This ensures that they are aware of the way the image is to be used to represent the council/club.
- An athlete's permission form is one way of achieving this.
- Ask for parental permission to use their image. This ensures that they are aware of the way the image is to be used to represent the council/club.
- A parental permission form is one way of achieving this.
- Only use images of children/young people in suitable dress to reduce the risk of inappropriate use. The content of the photograph should focus on the activity not on a particular child
- Create recognised procedures for reporting the use of inappropriate images to reduce the risks to children/young people. Follow the child protection procedures, ensuring either the designated person or, if necessary, the social services and/or police are informed.

Amateur photographers/film/video operators wishing to record an event or practice session should seek accreditation with the children's officer, instructor/leader and/or event organiser of session. The council/club will display the following information prior to the start of an event to inform spectators of the policy: -

“In line with the recommendation in the *Irish Muaythai Council* Code of Conduct, the promoters of this event request that any person wishing to engage in any video, zoom or close range photography should register their details with the organisers. Children and young people should only be photographed or filmed with their permission and/or the permission of their parents/guardian”.

When commissioning professional photographers or inviting the press to an activity or event we will aim to ensure they are clear about our expectations of them in relation to child protection. Professional photographers/film/video operators wishing to record an event or practice session should seek accreditation with the children's officer or event organizer by producing their professional identification for the details to be recorded.

We will then: -

- Provide a clear brief about what is considered appropriate in terms of content and behaviour
- Issue the photographer with identification which must be worn at all times
- Keep a record of accreditations
- Inform children/young people and parents that a photographer will be in attendance at an event and ensure they consent to both the taking and publication of films or photographs
- Not allow unsupervised access to children/young people or one to one photo sessions at events
Not approve/allow photo sessions outside the events or at a child's/young person's home

Videoing as a coaching aid

Video equipment can be used as a legitimate coaching aid.

However, permission should first be obtained from the child/young person and the parent/guardian.

Anyone concerned about any photography-taking place at events or training sessions can contact the children's officer/designated person and ask them to deal with the matter.

Child Welfare and Protection Procedures

Irish Muaythai Council accepts that organisations, which include young people among its members, are vulnerable to the occurrence of child abuse. Below are the procedures for dealing with any welfare or protection issue that may arise. Child welfare and the protection of young people is the concern of all adults at all times, irrespective of their role within the organisation.

If there are grounds for concern – see Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Working with Children – about the safety or welfare of a young person you should react to the concern. Persons unsure about whether or not certain behaviours are abusive and therefore reportable should contact the duty social worker in the local health board or social services department where they will receive 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 Designated Person/Children's Officer *of that club or the IMC* who may in turn have to pass the concern to the local Statutory Authorities. It is not the responsibility of anyone working within *that club or the IMC*, in a paid or voluntary capacity, or those working in affiliated organisations, to take responsibility or 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 young person.

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 Abuse

When a young person 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 not 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 them that it is not possible that keep information a secret
- (e) make no judgmental statements against the person whom the allegation is made
- (f) 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 during so would endanger the child

- (h) Give the child some indication of what would happen next, such as informing parents/guardians, health board or social services. 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 Designated Person (*Brigid Ruane Irish martial arts Commission*)
- (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 child abuse to the statutory authorities: -

- (a) Observe and note dates, times, locations and contexts in which the incident occurred or suspicion was aroused, together with any other relevant information
- (b) Report the matter as soon as possible to the designated officer, Brigid Ruane IMAC with responsibility for reporting abuse. If the Designated Person 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 health board/social services who have 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 Designated Person is unable to contact a duty social worker, the police authorities should be contacted. Under no circumstances should a child be left in a dangerous situation pending intervention by the Statutory Authorities
- (d) If the Designated Person is unsure whether reasonable grounds for concern exist s/he can informally consult with the local health board/social services. S/he will be advised whether or not the matter requires a formal report.

A Designated Person reporting suspected or actual child abuse to the Statutory Authorities will first inform the family of their intention to make such a report, unless doing so would endanger the child or undermine an investigation

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 Board or the Gardaí.

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 Health Boards or any member of An Garda Síochana;
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 new criminal offence designed to protect innocent persons from malicious reports.

This law does not exist in Northern Ireland, but an individual who reports concerns in 'good faith' is not deliberately attempting to slander another person's name. In Northern Ireland there is legislation, the Criminal Law Act (NI) 1967 which places the responsibility on everyone to report offences or to forward information to the police by emphasizing the, "duty of every other person, who knows or believes, (a) that the offence or some other arrestable offences has been committed: and (b) that he has information which is likely to secure, or to be material assistance in securing, the apprehension, prosecution or conviction of any person for that offence"

Allegations against Leaders

Irish Muaythai Council has agreed procedures to be followed in cases of alleged child abuse against Instructors/Leaders. If such an allegation is made against Instructor/Leader working within the council/club, two procedures should be followed: -

- The reporting procedure in respect of suspected child abuse (reported by the designated person/ children's officer), see previous page
- The procedure for dealing with the Instructor/ Leader (carried out by the IMC president, or a person not already involved with the child protection concern)

The safety of the child making the allegation should be considered and the safety of any other children who may be at risk. The club should take any necessary steps that may be necessary to protect children in its care

The issue of confidentiality is important. Information is on a need to know basis and the Instructor/Leader should be treated with respect and fairness.

The Reporting Procedure

If the designated person has reasonable grounds for concern the matter should be reported to the local health board/social services, following the standard reporting procedure.

The Instructor/Leader

While the designated officer makes the report to the local health board, the President of the IMC should deal with the Instructor/Leader in question: -

- The President should privately inform the instructor/leader that (a) an allegation has been made against him/her and (b) the nature of the allegation. He/she should be afforded an opportunity to respond. His/her response should be noted and passed on to the health board/social services.
- The instructor/leader 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 IMC committee should be informed by the Designated Person that the instructor/leader has been asked to stand aside. The IMC committee can consider disciplinary action on the instructor/leader but should ensure that this does not interfere with the investigation of the Statutory Authorities. It is important that the IMC committee consider the outcome of the investigation and any implications it might have. The fact that the alleged abuser has not been prosecuted or been found guilty does not mean that they are appropriate to work with young people in the future.

Confidentiality

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

The following points should be kept in mind: -

- 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, Instructors/Leaders) 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 designated people
- The requirements of the Data Protection laws should be adhered to
- Breach of confidentiality is a serious matter

Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints can be difficult to deal with but should not be ignored. In all cases the safety and welfare of the child/children is paramount. Any such complaints relating to inappropriate behaviour should be brought to the attention of the Designated Person, (*Brigid Ruane IMAC*). The information should be checked out and handled in a confidential manner.

Rumours

Rumours should **not** be allowed to hang in the air. Any rumours relating to inappropriate behaviour should be brought to the attention of the Designated Person, (*Brigid Ruane IMAC*), and checked out without delay.



IRISH MUAYTHAI COUNCIL
Email: irishmuaythaicouncil@gmail.com



I agree to abide by the rules and regulations of the IMC.

Signed

Instructor: -----

Club: -----

I agreed to abide by the IMC Code of Ethics and best practice for working with children as laid out in this document.

Signed

Instructor: -----

Club: -----

For official use only

Received by: _____

Position: _____ *Date:* / /20