

## **TENNIS IRELAND SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

This policy applies to all those involved in Tennis Ireland including, but not limited to, coaches, administrators, officials, volunteer drivers, members, parents and young people.

### **SAFEGUARDING POLICY STATEMENT**

Tennis Ireland is fully committed to safeguarding the well-being of its members. Every individual in the organisation 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 Tennis Ireland and the guidelines contained in this policy

#### **Safeguarding or Child Protection**

The term child protection has been expanded to safeguarding as it reflects the wider responsibility for health and safety and prevention as well as just protection from abuse. The word safeguarding has been used with increasing frequency over the last few years in a wide range of settings and situations, going well beyond the world of children and child protection. It may be defined as “Doing everything possible to minimise the risk of harm to children and young people.”

Safeguarding is about being proactive and putting measures in place in advance of any contact with children to ensure that children are going to be kept safe and this is what Tennis Ireland wish to have in place.

This could include:

- Ensuring staff / volunteers are properly checked when they are recruited;
- Guidelines for people who come into contact with children as part of their role to ensure they know what they need to do to keep children safe; and
- Guidelines for planning an event or activity with children and putting measures in place to minimise the risk of safeguarding issues occurring.

#### **Code of Conduct**

Tennis Ireland supports the view that all children’s sport should be conducted in an atmosphere of fair play. In this context the NGB undertakes to adopt the definition of fair play as set out in the European Sports Charter and Code of Ethics, Council of Europe (1993).

“Fair play is much more than playing within the rules. It incorporates the concepts of friendship, respect for others and always playing within the right spirit. Fair play is defined as a way of thinking, not just a way of behaving. It incorporates issues concerned with the elimination of cheating, gamesmanship, doping, violence (both physical and verbal), exploitation, unequal opportunities, excessive commercialism and corruption.”

In order to promote the best practice in children’s sport, Tennis Ireland has adopted and implemented the guidelines as set out in Section 2.7 of the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children’s Sport as follows:

[http://www.irishsportsCouncil.ie/Participation/Code\\_of\\_Ethics/Downloads/people.pdf](http://www.irishsportsCouncil.ie/Participation/Code_of_Ethics/Downloads/people.pdf)

In order to ensure best practice throughout the Association the Board of Directors disseminates its code of conduct, including the disciplinary, complaints and appeals procedures in operation within the NGB to all its members.

Link here:

<https://www.tennisireland.ie/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/59-Disciplinary-Code-Final-Version.pdf>

Tennis Ireland's code of conduct is posted prominently on the Organisation's Website and around their premises. We require all coaches with a Tennis Ireland coaching award to have signed our code of conduct.

Tennis Ireland is operated under its Memorandum of Articles. This document has been approved and adopted by the members of the Association at various Annual and Extraordinary General Meetings of the members of the Association.

Any changes to the Memorandum of Articles has to be approved by the members of Tennis Ireland at a General Meeting of the members.

The Board of Directors of Tennis Ireland is elected by the members of the Company (The Clubs) at the Annual General Meeting in accordance with the procedures set out in the Memorandum of Articles.

## **Safe Recruitment**

Tennis Ireland has adopted and consistently applies a safe and clearly defined method of recruiting and selecting Volunteers, Officials, Coaches and any other Employees or Contractors who have contact with children.

Link here:

<https://www.tennisireland.ie/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/45-Appendix-5-Club-Recruitment-Procedure.doc>

Tennis Ireland expects all affiliated clubs/organisations to adhere to our safe recruitment requirements

The roles of the committee members, all Sports Leaders and parents/ guardians have been clearly defined.

## **Reporting Procedures**

Tennis Ireland has a National Children's Officer and four Provincial Children's Officers appointed by the Board of Directors and Provincial Branches.

### ***Tennis Ireland National Children's Officer and four Provincial Children's Officers Contacts:***

***National Children's Officer: Roger Geraghty – Email: [roger.geraghty@tennisireland.ie](mailto:roger.geraghty@tennisireland.ie) Mob: 087 2316478***

***Connacht Children's Officers – Mary Ward - email: [wardbeltane@gmail.com](mailto:wardbeltane@gmail.com) Mob: 087 1345496***

***Ciara Jennings – email: [ciara\\_jennings@hotmail.com](mailto:ciara_jennings@hotmail.com) Mob: ph 086 8337805***

***Munster Children's Officer – Mary Power - Email: [marypower274@gmail.com](mailto:marypower274@gmail.com) Mob: 085 1565155***

***Leinster Children's Officer – Rory Wilson - Email: [rwilson@iol.ie](mailto:rwilson@iol.ie) Mob: 087 6776142***

***Ulster Children's Officer – Valerie Rowan - Email: [pvalerierowan@hotmail.com](mailto:pvalerierowan@hotmail.com) Mob: 0048 7803187256***

***Designated Liaison Officer - Richard Fahey - Email: [richard.fahey@tennisireland.ie](mailto:richard.fahey@tennisireland.ie) Mob: 087-2352198***

The Board of Directors appoints a Child Welfare Committee and one of the Board's Directors is tasked to act as the Designated Liaison Person to liaise with the Statutory Authorities in relation to the reporting of allegations or suspicions of child abuse. Any such reports are made in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Tennis Ireland procedures.

Procedures have been put in place for dealing with a concern or complaint made to the Statutory Authorities against a Volunteer or Sports Leader.

A Sports Leader who is the subject of an allegation which has been reported to the Statutory Authorities, shall stand aside while the matter is being examined. He/she will be invited to resume full duties following consultation and advice from statutory services and an internal Tennis Ireland assessment to ensure there is no risk to our members.

## **Monitoring**

All groups in charge of Tennis Ireland Children's activities are required to report to the Board of Directors on a regular basis.

Tennis Ireland encourages regular turnover of committee membership while ensuring continuity and experience.

Effective procedures for responding to and recording accidents/ incidents have been put in place.

Tennis Ireland monitors both the use of the facilities and participation in their organised activities to ensure that any unusual activity (high rate of drop-out, transfers, etc.) is identified, checked out and reported by the Designated Liaison Person to the Board of Directors.

All Clubs (The members) are given notice of all General Meetings of the NGB in accordance with the procedures in that regard as set out in the Memorandum of Articles.

The minutes of all Board meetings are recorded, adopted as correct and safely filed.

Tennis Ireland is committed to ensuring that adequate adult supervision of all activities involving children is provided.

## **Training**

Tennis Ireland is committed to ensuring that Sports Leaders are competent to provide safe and rewarding experiences for those in their care and that Sport Leaders are provided with the appropriate training for their activity. They are required to attend safeguarding workshops as part of their coach education and licensing and ensure their knowledge is updated.

Appropriate training and education opportunities will also be made available to officials, non-coaching staff and parents/guardians as appropriate.

## **EQUALITY STATEMENT**

All children should be valued and treated in an equitable and fair manner regardless of ability, age, sex, religion, social and ethnic background or political persuasion. Children, irrespective of ability or disability should be involved in sports activities in an integrated and inclusive way, whenever possible, thus allowing them to participate to their full potential alongside other children (Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport 2000)

[http://www.irishsportsCouncil.ie/Participation/Code\\_of\\_Ethics/Downloads/principles.pdf](http://www.irishsportsCouncil.ie/Participation/Code_of_Ethics/Downloads/principles.pdf)

see 1.7

Tennis Ireland recognises the additional vulnerability of some children and the extra difficulties they may face when seeking help. i.e...

- The increased likelihood of social isolation

- having fewer contacts to disclose to than non-disabled children
- A dependency on others for practical assistance in daily living, including intimate care
- An impaired capacity to resist, avoid or understand abuse
- Their speech and language communication needs may make it difficult to tell others what is happening
- Their particular vulnerability to bullying
- being viewed as a “safe target” for abusers
- Their relative powerlessness physically, psychologically and socially and the opportunities this presents for grooming by potential abusers
- A reluctance to challenge carers who may often be viewed as valiantly coping with the burden of a disabled child and therefore not considered as potential risks
- The denial of the possibility of (particularly sexual) abuse of disabled children
- Disabled children being less likely to be heard or listened to.

To address this vulnerability coaches are encouraged to seek guidance on working with children with a disability from external agencies, parents / guardians and the children themselves.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT**

Tennis Ireland recognises that the legal principle that the welfare of the child is paramount means that consideration of confidentiality should not be allowed to override the right of children to be protected from harm.

Everyone in our organisation, including children, must be aware that they can never promise to keep secrets. Information, however, of a confidential nature will only be communicated on a ‘need to know’ basis.

## **APPENDICES**

Tennis Ireland is committed to continual monitoring and development of this Safeguarding Policy in the light of changing circumstances.

All Coaches, Volunteers and Sports Leaders will be required to read and sign the appropriate Code of Conduct contained in the Appendices to this policy.

The original signed document will be held by Tennis Ireland.

The following Appendices form part of the Safeguarding Policy of Tennis Ireland and they can be downloaded from our Child Protection page on our Website under "Safeguarding Children".

Appendix 1 Children’s Officers

Appendix 2 Guidelines for Sports Leaders, Coaches, Officials etc incl. Code of Conduct

Appendix 3 Code of Conduct for Children

Appendix 4 Code of Conduct for Parents/Guardians

Appendix 5 Recruitment Procedures

Appendix 6 Complaints Procedure

Appendix 7 Roles & Responsibilities of Coaches, Sports Leaders & elected officials

Appendix 8 Member’s Safeguarding Undertaking

Appendix 9 Travel & Hosting Policy

Appendix 10 Adult Supervision of Children's Tennis Activities

Appendix 11 Rules

Appendix 12 Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport

Appendix 13 Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children

Appendix 14 Tennis Ireland Complaints, Objections and Disciplinary Rules and Procedures

Appendix 15 Our Duty to Care

Appendix 16 Child Welfare and Protection Procedures

Appendix 17 Bullying Policy

Appendix 18 Social Media Policy

Appendix 19 Mental Wellbeing Policy

Appendix 20 Forms

**Roger Geraghty**

**NATIONAL CHILDREN'S OFFICER**