

Laois Archery

Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children and Vulnerable People in Sport



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Definitions

Abuse:	Any form of intentional harm.
Adult:	Any person over the age of 18.
Allegation:	Any accusation, either true or untrue.
Bullying:	Constant, persistent, or repeated behaviours performed with the goal of causing another person emotional or physical hurt or discomfort.
Chair:	The head of the committee.
Child:	Any person under the age of 18.
Core Values:	The key aspects of sport which provide value and enjoyment to participants.
Committee:	The group of individuals responsible for governing and running the club.
Guidelines:	Recommendations from the club or other authorities on proper conduct. These are not rules, but failure to abide by them could have negative implications for the club and roles within the club.
IFAF:	The Irish Field Archery Federation
Parent:	The officially appointed guardian of any child.
Photography:	Any kind of recording, either still-frame or video.
Rumour:	Any untrue story which is told with the intention of deceiving or causing harm to another person.
Sports/Archery Leader:	Any coach, instructor, committee member, or adult member of the club who is in an active position of responsibility.
Vulnerable Adult:	Any adult considered at a heightened risk of any of the potential events outlined within this statement.

Policy Statement

Laois Archery 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 members' rights, safety and welfare and conduct themselves in a way that reflects the principles of the organisation and the guidelines contained in the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children and Vulnerable Adults in Sport.

The guidance given in this policy is compiled with reference to:

- Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport, Irish Sports Council and Sports Council Northern Ireland, 2000, (reviewed in 2006).
- 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
- Our Duty to Care, (DHSS) 2002
- Children (NI) Order, 1995
- Co-operating to Safeguard Children, (NI), 2003
- Area Child Protection Committee Regional Policy and Procedures, (NI), 2005

The aim of this code is to promote good practice by everyone involved in the sport of archery and to provide a safe, healthy, and enjoyable environment for all members. Although the code makes specific reference to children, it is important to note that vulnerable adults are also at risk and that precautions should be taken to benefit them as well. Any complaints or concerns relating to the treatment of vulnerable adults should follow the same process as those relating to children.

Core Values in Young People's Sport

Laois Archery's approach to children's sport is based on the following principles that will guide the development of sport for young people. Young people's experience of sport should be guided by what is best for them. The stages of development and the ability of the young person determine the types of activity provided within the club. Adults must have a basic understanding of the needs of young people, including their physical, emotional, and personal needs. In Laois Archery, our first priority is the welfare of the young people, and we are fully committed to providing an environment which will allow participants to perform to the best of their ability, free from bullying and intimidation. In order to achieve this, it is important to promote and foster the core values of sport in an accessible way. Those core values are:

Integrity in Relationships

Adults interacting with young children in sport should do so with integrity and respect for the child. There is a danger that sporting contexts can be used to exploit or undermine children. All adult actions in sport should be guided by what is best for the child and in the context of quality, equality, and an open working relationship. Verbal, physical, emotional, or sexual abuse of any kind is unacceptable within sport.

Fair Play

All children's sport 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 for excessive commercialisation and corruption.

Quality Atmosphere and Ethos

Children's sport 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. Leaders in children's sport 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.

Equality

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

Competition

A balanced approach to competition can make a significant contribution to the development of young people, while at the same time providing fun, enjoyment and satisfaction. Often however, competitive demands are placed on children too early, which can result in excessive levels of pressure being put on them. This can contribute to a high level of drop out from sport. 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.

Guidelines for Young Archers

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

Young archers are entitled to:

- be listened to.
- be believed.
- be safe and to feel safe.
- be treated with dignity, sensitivity, and respect.
- have a voice in the club.
- participate on an equal basis.
- be happy, have fun and enjoy the sport.
- experience competition at a level at which they feel comfortable.
- make complaints and have them dealt with.
- Get help and advice when dealing with bullying.
- be able to say no.
- protect their own bodies.
- confidentiality.

Young archers should always:

- treat all sports leaders with respect, e.g. coaches, managers, selectors, club officials etc.
- play fairly at all times and do their best.
- respect team members, even when things go wrong.
- respect opponents and be gracious in defeat.
- abide by the rules set down by team managers when travelling to away events.
- behave in a manner that avoids bringing the sport of archery into disrepute.
- talk to the designated person or children's officer if they have any problems.

Young archers should never:

- cheat.
- use violence or physical contact.
- shout or argue with officials, teammates, or opponents.
- harm team members, opponents, or their property.

- bully or use bullying tactics to isolate another player.
- use unfair or bullying tactics to gain advantage.
- take banned substances.
- advise others to take banned substances.
- keep secrets, especially if they have been caused harm.
- tell lies about adults or other young people.
- spread rumours.

Guidelines for Parents

Laois Archery is fully committed to providing a safe and fair environment for all juvenile players. Our first priority is the welfare of young archers. We are fully committed to providing an environment which will allow participants to perform to their best ability, free from bullying and intimidation. Laois Archery also has a duty of care for volunteers working with juveniles on behalf of the club. Parents, whether active members of the club or not, are also a key part of this policy, and there are expectations on parents of young members to do their part in order to help children get the most that they can out of the sport.

Laois Archery believes that parents should:

- be a role model for your child and maintain the highest standards of conduct when interacting with children, other parents and with officials or 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 sportsmanship.
- always behave responsibly and do not seek to unfairly affect the outcome.
- take care not to expose any junior archer, intentionally or unintentionally, to embarrassment or disparagement by the use of flippant or sarcastic remarks.
- always recognise the value and importance of the volunteers who provide sporting or recreational opportunities for your child.
- respect referees, coaches, organisers and other participants.
- not publicly question the judgement or honesty of referees, coaches or organisers or other archers.
- set a good example by applauding good play and achievement on both sides.
- encourage mutual respect for team-mates and opponents.
- support all efforts to remove abusive behaviour and bullying behaviour in all its forms

Guidelines for Sports Leaders

Laois Archery recognises the key roles coaches, selectors and team managers play in the lives of children in sport and has fully adopted the principles of the Irish Sports Council's "*Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport.*" Leaders in children's sport must strive to create a positive environment for the children in their care. They have an overall responsibility to take all necessary steps to ensure that positive and healthy experiences are provided.

A coach of juvenile teams has a duty of care which is more onerous than that of a coach to an adult team and must act as a role model and promote the positive aspects of the sport and maintain the highest standards of personal conduct at all times.

Leaders must respect the rights, dignity and worth of every child and must treat everyone equally, regardless of gender, ethnic origin, religion, or ability. They should have as their first priority the children's safety and enjoyment of the sport and should adhere to the guidelines and regulations set out in this policy document.

The use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco must be actively discouraged as being incompatible with a healthy approach to sporting activity.

When travel is involved, sports leaders travelling with children must have written permission (either in electronic/digital or physical form) from the parents of those children. This includes travel to and from competitions and events.

Sports Leaders should always:

- remember your behaviour to players, other officials, and opponents will have an effect on the players in your care.
- be generous with praise and never ridicule or shout at players for making mistakes or for losing. All young players are entitled to respect.
- be careful to avoid the "star system". Each child deserves equal time and attention.
- take care not to expose a child intentionally or unintentionally to embarrassment or disparagement by use of sarcastic or flippant remarks about the child or his or her family.
- abstain from the use of physical punishment or physical force. Never punish a mistake by verbal means, physical means, or exclusion.
- insist that players in your care respect the rules of the game. Insist on fair play and ensure that your players know that you will not tolerate cheating or bullying behaviour.

- remember that young players play for fun and enjoyment and that skill and playing for fun have priority over highly structured competition. Never make winning the only objective.
- encourage the development of respect for opponents, officials, selectors, and other coaches and avoid criticism of fellow coaches.
- avoid working alone and ensure there is adequate supervision for all activities. It is important to realise that certain situations or friendly actions could be misinterpreted by the participant or by outsiders.
- set realistic goals for the participants and not push young players. Create a safe and enjoyable environment.
- do not criticise other leaders, officials, coaches, and selectors. You are the role model for the children in your care.
- avoid the use of alcohol, before coaching, during events and on trips with young players.

Sports Leaders are responsible for setting and monitoring the boundaries between a working relationship and friendship with players. It is inadvisable for coaches to involve young players in their personal lives and a visit to the coach's home or overnight stays are strongly discouraged by Laois Archery.

When approached to take on a new player a Coach must ensure that any previous coach-student relationship has been ended by the student or others in a professional manner.

When young players are invited into adult groups or squads it is advisable to get agreement from a parent, guardian, or carer. Boundaries of behaviour in adult groups are normally different from the boundaries that apply to junior groups or squads.

Sports Leaders who become aware of a conflict between their obligations to their players and their obligation to Laois Archery must make explicit the nature of the conflict and the loyalties and responsibilities involved to all parties concerned.

Laois Archery members should avoid giving advice of a personal or medical nature if 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.

The nature of the relationship between leader and a participant can often mean that a leader will learn confidential information about a player or player's 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 player/family.

Archery Leaders should:

- be positive during session, praise and encourage effort as well as results.
- plan and prepare appropriately.
- put the welfare of the young person first and strike a balance between this and winning or results.
- encourage fair play and treat all participants equally.
- recognise personal and developmental needs.
- be qualified and up to date with knowledge and the skill of the sport for young people.
- involve parents where possible and inform parents when problems arise.
- keep record of attendance at training.
- keep a brief record of injury(s) and action taken.
- keep a brief record of problem/action/outcomes, if behavioural problems arise.

Where possible Archery Leaders should avoid:

- spending excessive amounts of time with children away from others.
- taking sessions alone.
- taking children to their home.
- taking children on journeys alone in their car.

Archery Leaders must never, under any circumstances:

- use any form of 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 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 adult of the appropriate gender.
- undertake any form of therapy (hypnosis etc.) in the training of children.

Physical Contact

Physical contact during the sport should always be intended to meet the child's needs, NOT those of the adult. If at all possible, physical contact should be avoided.

An adult should only use appropriate contact when the aim is to assist in development of the skill or activity or for safety reasons, e.g., to prevent or treat an injury. This should be in an open environment with the permission and understanding of the participant. In general:

- Contact 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 such as touching of groin, genital areas, buttocks, breasts, or any other part of the body that might cause a child distress or embarrassment.

This code of behaviour also extends to any adult member of Laois Archery acting in proximity to children, even if they do not hold a Sports Leader role. The safety and mental wellbeing of a child does not stop at their Sports Leader, and the actions of other adults in the club will have an effect on them. It is important that all adult members of the club endeavour to treat children with respect and adhere to child safety rules.

Recruitment of Sports Leaders

Laois Archery will take all reasonable steps to ensure that people working with young people in archery are suitable and appropriately qualified. Assessment procedures are therefore necessary, and these procedures shall apply to all persons with substantial access to young people.

Leaders will be expected to go through appropriate recruitment and selection procedures which shall include the Garda vetting of the applicant.

A decision to appoint a Sports Leader is the responsibility of the club, or Laois Archery, and not of any one individual within it. The club must ensure that all Sports Leaders are properly Garda vetted and are familiar with this policy. The club must also ensure that the Sports Leader has undergone any necessary training and holds the appropriate certifications for carrying out their specific role within the club. This includes full qualifications for coaches and instructors.

It is not necessary for adults who are not Sports Leaders to be Garda Vetted or hold any certification. However, they must still observe this policy and apply it at all times while acting as part of Laois Archery.

Travelling With Children

Laois Archery recognises the extra responsibilities taken on by coaches, instructors, and authorised volunteers when travelling with children to archery events.

- Avoid being alone with one player (e.g., travelling to a venue or consulting, training or advising in closed off room). If necessary, leave the door open and be in earshot of others.
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact.
- Remember casual comment can be open to misconstruction.

Those who use their own vehicles to transport players must:

- ensure that they have adequate insurance cover and be careful not to carry more than the permitted number of passengers.
- ensure they follow the rules of the road including the legal use of seat belts.
- avoid being alone with one participant.
- put passengers in the back seat.
- have central drop off locations.
- seek parental permission to transport an individual participant on a regular basis and clearly state times of pick- up and drop off.

General Supervision Guidance

- Make sure there is an adequate adult to child ratio. Leaders should always try to have more than one adult present. The number of adults will depend on 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 is advised.
- Where there are mixed groups there should be leaders of both genders.
- Leaders should avoid being alone with a single individual. If a Leader needs to talk separately, it should be done in an open environment, in view of others.
- Clearly state time for start and end of training sessions or competitions. If there are late collections Leaders should remain in pairs until all participants have left.
- Leaders should keep attendance records and records of any incidents or injuries that arise.
- Leaders should ask parents to stay at training sessions or at competition where possible and involve them in the activities of their child where appropriate.

Bullying Policy

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, exclusion, physical aggression, and extortion behaviour by one or more aggressors against a victim.

How would you know if a child is being bullied?

All bullies operate using furtiveness, 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)
- 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 Leaders within Laois Archery.

How can bullying 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?

- 1) Step 1 – Interview with the victim
 - a) 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:
 - i) Was it verbal or physical intimidation?
 - ii) How hurt is the victim?
 - iii) Was it within his or her own peer group?
 - iv) Ensure the victim that his or her name will not come out in the investigation.
 - v) Actively listen.

2) Step 2 – Meet with all involved

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

3) Step 3 – Explain the problem

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

4) Step 4 – Share the responsibility

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

- 5) Step 5 – Ask the group for their ideas
 - a) 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.

- 6) Step 6 – Leave it to them
 - a) 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.

- 7) Step 7 – Meet them again
 - a) 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. 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.

Safety

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

- Ensure all 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 or guardians.
- Ensure any necessary protective gear is used.
- Ensure a 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.
- Participants should know and keep the rules of the sport, keeping in mind that many rules are there for safety.
- Leaders should hold appropriate qualifications required by IFAF.
- Ensure that activities organised are not in breach of IFAF rules regarding training or competition and that they are therefore covered by the insurance policy of IFAF.
- Ensure parents or guardians are present at finishing time of sessions or events.

Guidelines on the use of Photographic and Filming Equipment

Laois Archery has adopted a policy in relation to the use of images of athletes on their websites and other publications. Adults and sports leaders need to work together to prevent those wishing to cause harm to young people. Remember having photographic and filming guidelines is not about preventing parents from taking pictures, it is to ensure that only those who have a right to take photographs do so. Anyone concerned about photography taking place at events or training sessions can contact the children's officer/ designated person and ask them to deal with the matter.

The purpose is to reduce the risk of inappropriate, unsolicited attention from people within and outside the sport. Group photographs where the club is identified rather than individuals are good for publicity without creating a risk to those in the photographs. As a guide try to remember the following:

- If the child is named, avoid using their photograph.
- If a photograph is used, avoid naming the child.
- Ask for the child's permission to use their image to ensure that they are aware of the way the image is to be used to represent the sport.
- Ask for parental permission to use the child's image to ensure that parents are aware of the way the image is to be used to represent the sport.
- To reduce the risk of inappropriate use, only use images of children in suitable dress. The content of the photograph should focus on the activity not on a particular child.
- Talk to children's officer/designated person if you are worried about use of images
- Amateur photographers/film/video operators wishing to record an event or practice session should seek accreditation with the children's officer, event organiser or leader of session.
- To ensure spectators and participants are informed of the policy, the organisers should display the following information prior to the start of an event and make an announcement to the same effect.

"In line with Laois Archery's Code of Conduct, the organisers 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. It is not advisable that children are photographed or filmed without their permission and, or the permission of their parent or guardian".

Working in Partnership to Protect Young People

Photographs, when used with personal information, can be used as a means of identifying children. However, photographs can be used or adapted for inappropriate use. Adults and sports leaders need to work together to prevent those wishing to cause harm to young people.

Mobile Phones

Mobile phones are often given to children for security, enabling parents to keep in touch and make sure they are safe. Mobile phones allow quick and easy contact, which can make a safe and efficient way to carry out club business. However, such technology has also allowed an increase in direct personal contact with young people, in some cases used to cross personal boundaries and cause harm to young people. Within clubs there is a need to encourage responsible and secure use of mobile phones by adults and young people.

As a young person remember:

- If you receive an offensive photo, email, or message, do not reply. Save it, make a note of times and dates, and tell a parent or children's officer/designated person within the club.
- Be careful about who you give your phone number to and don't respond to unfamiliar numbers.
- Change your phone number in cases of bullying or harassment.
- Don't use the phone in certain locations; inappropriate use of your camera phone may cause upset or offence to another person, e.g., changing rooms.
- Treat your phone as you would any other valuable item so that you guard against theft.

As a Leader remember:

- Use group texts for communication among athletes and teams and inform parents of this at the start of the season
- It is not appropriate to have constant communication for individual athletes.
- Don't use the phone in certain locations; inappropriate use of your camera phone may cause upset or offence to another person, e.g., changing rooms.

Video as a coaching aid

Video equipment can be used as a legitimate coaching aid. However, permission should first be obtained from the child and the child's parent or guardian.

Anyone concerned about any photography taking place at events or training sessions should contact the organisers and ask them to deal with the matter.

Responding to Disclosure, Suspensions and Allegations

Laois Archery 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 about the safety or welfare of a young person you should always 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 Service Executive 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, who may in turn have to pass the concern to the local Statutory Authorities. It is not the responsibility of anyone working within Laois Archery to take responsibility or 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 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:

- 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.
- stay calm and not show any extreme reaction to what the child is saying. Listen compassionately and take what the child is saying seriously.
- 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.

- be honest with the child and tell them that it is not possible that keep information a secret.
- make no judgmental statements against the person whom the allegation is made.
- not question the child unless the nature of what he or she 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?”
- check out the concerns with the parents or guardians before making a report unless doing so would endanger the child or compromise an investigation.
- give the child some indication of what would happen next, such as informing parents or guardians, the Health Service Executive or Social Services. It should be kept in mind that the child may have been threatened and may feel vulnerable at this stage.
- carefully record the details.
- pass on this information to the Designated Officer of Archery Ireland.
- 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:

- Observe and note dates, times, locations and contexts in which the incident occurred or suspicion was aroused, together with any other relevant information.
- Report the matter as soon as possible to the designated person with responsibility for reporting abuse within Archery Ireland. If the Designated Person has reasonable grounds for believing that the child has been abused or is at risk of abuse, he or she will make a report to the Health Service Executive or Social Services who have statutory responsibility to investigate and assess suspected or actual child abuse.
- 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 Gardai or police authorities should be contacted. Under no circumstances should a child be left in a dangerous situation pending intervention by the Statutory Authorities

If the Designated Person is unsure whether reasonable grounds for concern exist, they can informally consult with the local health board or social services. The Designated Officer of 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 Service Executive or the Gardai. The act also covers the offence of 'false reporting'.

The main provisions of the Act are:

- The provision of immunity from civil liability to any person who reports child abuse "reasonably and in good faith" to designated officers of Health Service Executive or any member of An Garda Síochána;
- 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;
- 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.

Allegations Against Sports Leaders

Laos Archery has agreed procedures to be followed in cases of alleged child abuse against Sports Leaders. If such an allegation is made against a Leader working within the club, two procedures should be followed:

- The reporting procedure in respect of suspected child abuse (reported by the designated person), see previous page
- The procedure for dealing with the Sports Leader (carried out by the club Chair or senior officer, or a person not already involved with the child protection concern)

The safety of the child making the allegation and any others who are or may be at risk should be ensured and this should take precedence over any other consideration. In this regard, the club should take any steps which may be immediately necessary to protect the child.

The issue of confidentiality is important. Information is on a need-to-know basis and the Archery 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 or social services, following standard reporting procedures.

The Sports Leader

While the Designated Person makes the report to the local health board, the Chair of the club should deal with the Leader in question.

- The Chair should privately inform the leader that (a) an allegation has been made against him or her and (b) the nature of the allegation. He or she should be afforded an opportunity to respond. His or her response should be noted and passed on to the health board or social services.
- The 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 governing body should be informed by the Designated Person that the leader has been asked to stand aside

Laois Archery may consider disciplinary action on the Leader but should ensure that this does not interfere with the investigation of the Statutory Authorities. It is important that consideration be taken of 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 or 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 or her parents or guardians, the alleged offender, his or her family and Archery 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 manner.

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 or children is paramount. Any such complaints relating to inappropriate behaviour should be brought to the attention of the Designated Officer of Archery Ireland. The information should be checked 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 Officer of Archery Ireland and checked out without delay.

Disciplinary, Complaints and Appeals Procedure

This section specifically applies to the disciplinary, complaints and appeals procedure for matters that come under the scope of this policy document. Other policies may have different procedures, and those should be examined individually.

- On receiving a complaint, Laois Archery will appoint a disciplinary committee to resolve problems relating to the conduct of its members. This should include bullying. The complaint should be in writing to the Secretary or Children's Officer and should be responded to within 5 working days. The committee should consist of a representative from the Management Committee, the Children's Officer and ordinary registered members of the club.
- If the complaint involves suspected abuse or a criminal offence the Children's Officer or Designated Person should be consulted and the disciplinary committee disbanded. The statutory authorities will then be informed.
- The disciplinary committee should review any relevant paper-work and hold any necessary meetings with all parties to proceed with complaints into any incident of suspected misconduct that do not relate to child abuse. It should, as soon as possible, inform the Management Committee of the progress of the disciplinary process. This should be done within 10 working days.
- The disciplinary committee should furnish the individual with the nature of the complaint being made against him or her and afford him or her the opportunity of providing a response either verbally or in writing, but usually at a meeting with the disciplinary committee.
- Written confidential records of all complaints should be safely and confidentially kept and club procedures should be defined for the possession of such records in the event of election of new officers.
- Where it is established that an incident of misconduct has taken place, the Disciplinary Committee should notify the member of any sanction being imposed. The notification should be made in writing, setting out the reasons for the sanction. If the member is under 18 years of age, correspondence should be addressed to the parents or guardians
- If the member against whom the complaint was made is unhappy with the decision of the Disciplinary Committee, he or she shall have the right to appeal the decision to an appeals committee (independent of a disciplinary committee). Any appeal should be made in writing within an agreed period after issue, usually 10 days of the decision of the Disciplinary Committee. The chairperson of the appeals committee should be a member of the Laois

Archery Committee. The appeals committee should consult with the Children's Officer in relation to issues of child welfare and codes of conduct. The Appeals Committee should have the power to confirm, set aside or change any sanction imposed by the Disciplinary Committee.

- If any party is not satisfied with the outcome the matter can be referred to the IFAF. However, efforts to resolve the issue at local level should be exhausted before IFAF is engaged in attempts to resolve the matter.