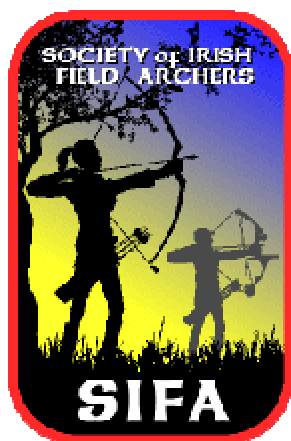


SOCIETY OF IRISH FIELD ARCHERS



CODE OF CONDUCT

FOR

CHILDREN'S SPORT

SOCIETY OF IRISH FIELD ARCHERS

Policy Statement

The SOCIETY OF IRISH FIELD ARCHERS 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's Sport.

It is SOCIETY OF IRISH FIELD ARCHERS policy that that all children under the age of seventeen should be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian, at all times, at all SIFA and club events. Events include social gatherings, training, practice, competitions, and any travelling involved with such events.

SOCIETY OF IRISH FIELD ARCHERS

CODE OF CONDUCT

The guidance given in this code of conduct is based on the principles set out in the following publications:

- **"Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport", Irish Sports Council.**
- **"Children First" National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children.**
- **"Our Duty to Care" (DHSS) 2000, Child Care NI**
- **"Our Duty to Care" Department of Health, 2002.**

The aim of this code is to promote good practice by everyone involved in the sport of archery and to provide a safe, healthy, enjoyable environment for young members

SOCIETY OF IRISH FIELD ARCHERS

Core Values

In

Young People's Sport

Integrity in relationships:

Adults interacting with 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, open working relationships. 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 with 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. (European Sports Charter and Code of Ethics, Council of Europe 1993).

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. 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 sport.

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.

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 steps necessary to ensure that positive and healthy experiences are provided.

The SOCIETY OF IRISH FIELD ARCHERS wishes to provide the best possible environment for all young people involved in the sport. Young Archers deserve to be given enjoyable, safe sporting opportunities, free from abuse of any kind. These Archers have rights, which must be respected, and responsibilities, which they must accept.

Young Archers are entitled:

- To be treated with dignity and respect
- To be safe and to feel safe
- To get help against bullies
- To say **No**
- To be listened to
- To be believed
- To protect their own bodies
- To refuse inappropriate touches

Young Archers should always:

- Treat all coaches, managers, selectors, club and tournament organisers and officials with respect.
- 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.

Young Archers should never:

- Use unfair or bullying tactics to gain advantage.
- Use bullying tactics to isolate another Archer.
- Pass on gossip about another Archer or adult.
- Make false allegations against other Archers or adults.

SIFA Policy Guidelines for Parents:

The SOCIETY OF IRISH FIELD ARCHERS is committed to providing a safe and fair environment for all juvenile Archers. Our first priority is the welfare of young Archers and we are committed to providing an environment, which will allow participants to perform to their best ability, free from bullying and intimidation. The SOCIETY OF IRISH FIELD ARCHERS also has a duty of care for volunteers working with juveniles on behalf of the organisation.

The SIFA asks Parents to:

- o Be a role model for your child and maintain the highest standards of conduct when interacting with children, other parents, with officials and organisers.
- o Encourage your child to play by the rules.
- o Always behave responsibly and do not seek to unfairly affect the outcome.
- o Take care not to expose any junior Archer, intentionally or unintentionally, to embarrassment or disparagement by the use of flippant or sarcastic remarks.
- o Always recognise the value and importance of the volunteers who provide sporting/recreational opportunities for your child.
- o Respect trainers, coaches, organisers and others participants.
- o Do not publicly question the judgement or honesty of trainers, coaches or organisers.
- o Teach your child that honest endeavour is as important as winning and do all you can to encourage good sportsmanship.
- o Set a good example by applauding good play on both sides.
- o Encourage mutual respect for teammates and opponents.

Parents should support all efforts to remove abusive and bullying behaviour in all its forms:

Child to Child - includes physical aggression, verbal bullying, intimidation, or isolation.

Adult to Child - includes the use of repeated gestures or expressions of a threatening or intimidating nature, or any comment intended to degrade the child.

Adult to Adult - includes verbal aggression towards other adults in order to achieve a beneficial outcome for own self or own child.

Child to Adult - includes repeated gestures or expressions of a threatening or intimidating nature by an individual child or a group of children.

SOCIETY OF IRISH FIELD ARCHERS: Coaches/Selectors/Team Managers:

The SOCIETY OF IRISH FIELD ARCHERS recognises the key role coaches, selectors, and team managers play in the lives of children in sport. The SIFA has adopted the principles in the Irish Sports Council's "Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport".

The Coaches/Selectors/Team Managers 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 the SOCIETY OF IRISH FIELD ARCHERS Code of Conduct.

Coaches must respect the rights, dignity and worth of every child and must treat everyone equally, regardless of sex, ethnic origin, religion or ability.

The SIFA 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 apply to all persons, paid or unpaid, with substantial access to young people.

There must be a "sign-up" procedure, whereby the appointed/reappointed coach/selector/team manager, agrees to abide by the "Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport" and to the policies and code of the SOCIETY OF IRISH FIELD ARCHERS

When travel/overnight travel is involved, the Coach/Selector/Manager/Volunteer travelling with children must sign a separate agreement. Parents will also be asked to sign permission forms in these instances.

All adults taking responsibility for children in sport should undergo a recruitment process. Before recruitment, terms of reference should be drawn up and these should clearly state:

- a. The responsibilities of the role,
- b. The level of experience/qualifications required
- c. The SOCIETY OF IRISH FIELD ARCHERS commitment.

Potential coaches/selectors/team managers must complete an Application/Assessment form. - See samples attached.

References will be needed and will be followed up.

Potential appointees should be given a copy of:

- a) Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport;
- b) SOCIETY OF IRISH FIELD ARCHERS Code of Conduct, and
- c) Be made aware of the following publications, which will be available in the SIFA office.

- Children First - Irish Gov. Publication
- Duty to Care - N.I. Gov. Publication

Guidelines for Coaches:

A coach of juvenile teams has a duty of care, which is more onerous than that of a coach to an adult team.

A coach must act as a role model and promote the positive aspects of sport and of Archery and maintain the highest standards of personal conduct.

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

Remember your behaviour to Archers, other officials, and opponents will have an effect on the Archers in your care.

Be generous with praise and never ridicule or shout at Archers for making mistakes. All young Archers are entitled to respect.

Be careful to avoid the "star system". Each child deserves equal time and attention.

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.

Physical punishment or physical force must never be used. Never punish a mistake - by verbal means, physical means, or exclusion.

Insist that Archers in your care respect the rules of the game. Insist on fair play and ensure that your Archers know that you will not tolerate cheating or bullying behaviour.

Remember that young Archers 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.

It is important to realise that certain situations or friendly actions could be misinterpreted by the participant or by outsiders.

Archery coaches are responsible for setting and monitoring the boundaries between a **working** relationship and **friendship** with Archers. It is unadvisable for coaches to involve young Archers in their personal life i.e. visit to coach's home or overnight stays.

When approached to take on a new Archer, ensure that any previous coach-student relationship has been ended by the student/others in a professional manner.

When young Archers are invited into adult groups/squads, 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/squads. Archery coaches who become aware of a conflict between their obligations to their Archers and their obligation to their governing body must make explicit the nature of the conflict and the loyalties and responsibilities involved, to all parties concerned.

Archery coaches should communicate and co-operate with medical and ancillary practitioners in the diagnosis, treatment and management of their Archers' medical and psychological problems.

Set realistic goals for the team and for the individual Archers and do not push young Archers. Create a safe and enjoyable environment.

Do not criticise other officials, coaches, and selectors. You are the role model for the children in your care.

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.

It is advisable to:

- Record attendance at training.
- Keep a brief record of injury(s) and action taken.
- If behavioural problems arise and a young Archer has to be disciplined, keep a brief record of problem/action/outcomes.

The nature of the relationship between coach and Archer can often mean that a coach will learn confidential information about an Archer or Archers 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 Archer/family.

Coaches must be particularly careful about their use of alcohol, before coaching, during events, on trips with young Archers.

Coaches should familiarise themselves with the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport and with the SOCIETY OF IRISH FIELD ARCHERS Code of Conduct and follow the procedures if they suspect or receive complaints of abuse of any sort.

Responding to Disclosure, Suspicions & Allegations

The SIFA accepts that organisations, which include children as members, are vulnerable to the occurrence of child abuse and therefore there is a need for policies and procedures to deal with this issue. The safety of young people is everyone's responsibility.

False allegations of abuse can occur. However, if a young person says or indicates that he/she is being abused, or information is obtained which gives concern that a young person is being abused, you should react immediately.

The Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998 provided immunity from civil liability to persons who report child abuse "**reasonably and in good faith**" to the Health Board or the Gardai (see 5.13.1 - ISC. Code). The act also covers the offence of "**false reporting**". This Act came into operation on 23rd January 1999. 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 Siochana;
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 new criminal offence designed to protect innocent persons from malicious reports.

This Law does not exist in Northern Ireland where any person wrongly accused can seek recourse under the laws of slander, libel or malicious prosecution.

Each Junior Archery Club affiliated to the SOCIETY OF IRISH FIELD ARCHERS should have clear procedures for responding to reports or concerns relating to the welfare and safety of children. All involved adults, children and parents/guardians should be aware of how to report, and to whom concerns should be reported, within the club/organisation. Copies of the Statutory Authority guidelines should be available in each club and copies are held at the SOCIETY OF IRISH FIELD ARCHERS office. Everyone involved in child protection matters should be aware of their responsibility to work in co-operation with the statutory child protection authorities.

The term "**Sports Leader**" means all adults; in a paid or voluntary capacity e.g. club helpers, tournament officials, coaches, team managers, and camp managers.

REPORTING OF SUSPECTED OR ACTUAL CHILD ABUSE

If a Sports Leader or a parent/guardian is uneasy or suspicious about a child's safety or welfare the following response should be made:

RESPONSE TO A CHILD REPORTING ANY FORM OF ABUSE

The following actions should be taken:

- React calmly
- Listen compassionately and carefully - keep the questions to an absolute minimum, facilitating the child to tell about the problem
- Take what the child is saying seriously
- Remember the child has decided to tell about something very important and has taken a risk to do so
- Reassure the child
- If the nature of what the child is saying is unclear, use open, non-specific questions such as "Can you explain to me what you mean by that".
- The child should be given some indication of what happens next - 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
- Carefully record the details.

The following actions should be avoided:

- Do not make promises of confidentiality - it may not be possible to keep that promise
- Do not make a judgement or make negative comments about the alleged abuser
- Do not speculate or make assumptions
- Do not interview the child - do not probe for more information than is offered
- Do not approach the alleged abuser
- Do not allow your shock or distaste to show.

Reporting Child Abuse

It is not the responsibility of anyone working under the auspices of the SOCIETY OF IRISH FIELD ARCHERS, 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.

However, there is a responsibility to protect children in order that appropriate agencies can then make enquiries and take any necessary action to protect the young person.

Action to Take:

- 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 person designated for reporting abuse (*the senior office holder, normally the Chairperson*). If the Chairperson has reasonable grounds (See 5.13.1 of ISC code) for believing that the child has been abused or is at risk of abuse, he/she will make a report to the health board/social services who have statutory responsibility to investigate and assess the 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 police authorities should be contacted. **Under no circumstances should a child be left in a dangerous situation pending intervention by the Statutory Authorities.** Make a record of the report.
- If the designated person is unsure whether reasonable grounds for concern exist or not, he/she should informally consult with the local health board/social services. He/she 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 should first inform the family of their intention to make such a report, **unless doing so would endanger the child or undermine an investigation.**
- A report should be given by the designated person to the Statutory Authorities in person or by phone, and in writing.
- It is best to report child abuse concerns by making personal contact with the relevant personnel in the Statutory Authorities.

ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST SPORTS LEADERS

Each club/group affiliated to the SIFA should have agreed procedures to be followed in case of alleged child abuse against Sports Leaders. If such an allegation is made, two procedures should be followed:

- The reporting procedure as outlined in "Reporting Child Abuse".
- The procedure for dealing with the Sports Leader (below).

The following points should be considered:

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

If a Sports Leader is the subject of concern he/she should be treated with respect and fairness.

Steps to be taken within the Sports Organisation

Where reasonable grounds for concern exist the following steps should be taken by the club/organisation:

Advice should be sought from the local health board/social services with regard to any action by the club deemed necessary to protect the child/children who may be at risk.

The matter should be reported to the local health board/social services following the standard reporting procedures outlined above.

In the event that the concern is connected to the actions of a Sports Leader in the club, the Sports Leader involved in the concern should be asked to stand aside pending the outcome of any investigation by the Statutory Authorities. *It is advisable that this task be undertaken by the appointed committee member other than the Chairperson who takes the responsibility for reporting.*

The Sports Leader should be informed, in private,

- That an allegation has been made against him/her,
- 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 personnel.

All persons involved in a child protection process (the child, his/her parents/guardians, the alleged offender, his/her family, Sports Leaders) should be afforded appropriate respect, fairness, support and confidentiality at all stages of the procedure.

Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned.

Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only.

Information should be stored in a secure place, with limited access 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 Chairperson. 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 Chairperson and checked out without delay.