



SQUASH LINK CHILD PROTECTION POLICY 2017-18

1. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 Squash Link works with all age groups and is committed to enhancing the future of our participants through personal development and enrichment, after-school educational support, weekend and holiday sporting and educational programmes and extracurricular activities including community engagement initiatives. The learning environment that Squash Link embraces is critical to our delivering a quality experience for participants, staff and volunteers alike. The protection of children engaging with our service is a vital component and of paramount importance to Squash Link.
- 1.2 Squash Link will put measures in place, overseen by a **Safeguarding Committee**, to ensure the holistic wellbeing of participants and to take all reasonable measures to provide an environment that is safe and has fully considered all potential areas of harm. This Policy runs parallel with and is referenced in other relevant policies and procedures, such as Squash Link's Health & Safety Policy.
- 1.3 Squash Link defines the need for Child Protection as its duty to safeguard the holistic health of young people it works with in terms of their physical, mental, emotional, spiritual and developmental wellbeing and to prevent any abuse or opportunities for significant harm happening or advantage being taken of participants in any way. If parents accompany children on activities, responsibility and welfare of the child will be discussed and agreed with the parent(s).

1.4 This will be delivered as follows:

2. DELIVERY – STAFF & VOLUNTEERS

2.1 Our staff recruitment procedures include mandatory vetting in respect of any work or activity which is carried out by a person, a necessary or regular part of which consists mainly of the person having access to, or contact with, children.

2.2 All staff and volunteers will receive support and compulsory training on Child Protection matters, including refresher training annually.

2.3 Induction training for all staff and volunteers will include signing a Code of Behaviour detailing practical measures to identify and prevent abuse or harm to children and measures dealing with reporting suspected abuse or disclosure of abuse. Supervision/training logs will be maintained.

3. DELIVERY – PROCEDURES RELATED TO ANY CHILD PROTECTION ISSUE ARISING

3.1 A designated Child Protection Liaison Officer within Squash Link has prime responsibility for implementing procedures. Any allegation or concern related to childrens' safety is required to be immediately reported to the designated Child Protection Liaison Officer and is to be treated as strictly confidential with information being shared only with appropriate authorities.

3.2 The designated Child Protection Liaison Officer within Squash Link is: **Mark Kelly** Contact +353 (0)831001314.

3.3 Parental/Guardian consent is required for *all activities* that Children take part in with Squash Link. This is operationalized using the Squash Link 'Participant Form', a completed version of which must be surveyed by the lead instructor before any initial activity can take place.

3.4 Clear instructions will be issued to all parents and participants as part of the consent process on what specific Child Protection procedures to expect, how to use them and how any inquiries or concerns from parents/guardians

relating to a child's welfare will be dealt with.

- 3.5 In the case of an issue arising, no investigation or questioning is to be undertaken that might jeopardize any future enquiry. All allegations/suspicions are to be referred, no matter how insignificant they seem to be or when they occur.
 - 3.6 All issues will be reported by the Designated Child Protection Liaison Officer to another Director who will decide, with the Child Protection Liaison Officer, to refer to a) Garda Siochana b) DSP- Social Services c) ISPCC
4. **PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOING**
 - 4.1 Squash Link is aware of the sensitivity of taking and publishing pictures and video footage of children and commits itself to responsible use of imagery based on prior parental consent and vigilance relating to appropriate imagery and suitability of the context in which any image/s is used.
 - 4.2 In respect of images and/or footage of young people participating in Squash Link activities, these will only be captured if a parent or guardian consents in writing in advance of the activity taking place. If consent is declined, this will be respected.
 - 4.3 No full names of subjects will be published in conjunction with such images and Squash Link recognises the right of parents, guardians and subjects to withdraw consent at any time prior to or post publication.
5. **CODE OF BEHAVIOUR**
 - 5.1 Squash Link's Code of Behaviour for staff and volunteers is intended to detail practical measures to help them identify and prevent abuse or harm to children and vulnerable adults, and outline how to deal with and report suspected abuse or disclosure of abuse.
 - 5.2 All Squash Link personnel (staff, volunteers, consultants) must familiarize themselves with the Code of Behaviour to protect children, to have read and

signed it, to undergo training in it and to follow it in their daily working practice.

5.3 By signing the Code of Behaviour, our personnel commit to the following practices in working with children and vulnerable adults:

- Treat everyone, including children, with absolute respect and equally at all times in your actions and communication
- Model respectful behaviour you would like to see children maintain
- Intervene and proactively challenge any peer activities that discriminate against any individual (bullying)
- Staff/volunteer awareness should carefully consider touch and proximity at all times to avoid misunderstanding or misinterpretation.
- Do not indulge in or condone unsafe, abusive or illegal behaviour
- Ensure travel with any child is accompanied by at least one other adult
- Ensure telephone or email contact in respect of a child includes their parent/guardian
- Ensure residential accommodation caters for separate, age appropriate and adequately supervised sleeping arrangements for children
- Promote a caring and supportive environment, conducive to the ethos of Squash Link, which permits children and young people to talk through any concerns they might have

5.4 *What should you do if you suspect a young person is being abused?*

- Ensure no situation arises which could cause any further concern/harm
- Ensure the young person has access to an independent adult
- Immediately tell the designated Child Protection Liaison officer, or if unavailable, a Squash Link / ISEA Director
- Record the facts as you know them including the young person's name, address and, where possible, information about a parent/guardian, and give a copy to the designated Child Protection Liaison Officer

5.5 *What should you do if a young person discloses to you abuse by someone else?*

- Allow the young person to speak without interruption, accepting what is said
- Alleviate feelings of guilt and isolation, while passing no judgment

- Advise that you will try to offer support, but that you must pass on the information
- Same steps as detailed in point 3.1 (above) as in suspecting a young person is being abused

5.6 *What should you do if you receive an allegation about any adult or about yourself?*

- Immediately tell the Child Protection Liaison Officer, or if unavailable, a Squash Link / ISEA Director
- Record the facts as you know them and give a copy to the designated Child Protection Liaison Officer
- Try to ensure no one is placed in a situation that could cause further compromise

5.7 Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection training provided by Squash Link will assist staff and volunteers in examining scenarios that can occur in the course of the delivery of activities, including how to identify signs of possible abuse or ill-treatment.

Signed (staff member or volunteer):

Print:

Date:

Signed: (Designated Liaison Officer):

Print:

Date: