

# Irish Pipe Band Association

## Child Protection Policy

Updated January 2018

Next review Date: January 2019

### Responsibilities

The IPBA will:

- Promote the health and welfare of children by providing opportunities for them to take part in the activities of the association safely.
- Respect and promote the rights, wishes and feelings of children.
- Promote and implement appropriate procedures to safeguard the well-being of children and protect them from abuse.
- As a condition of membership, the IPBA requires registered bands to
  - Appoint a Designates Liaison Person for dealing with Child Protection
  - Adhere to the IPBA Child Protection Policy
  - Adopt its own Child Protection Policy which should be reviewed annually
- As a condition of membership, the IPBA requires Associate Members to sign a Declaration that they adhere to the IPBA Child Protection Policy.
- Respond to any allegations of misconduct or abuse of children in line with this Policy and these Procedures as well as implementing, where appropriate, the relevant disciplinary and appeals procedures.
- The IPBA requires that all members of the organisation who are considered be involved in “relevant work” with children and/or vulnerable adults as defined in the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 are Garda Vetted.
- The Designated Liaison Person will act as the Garda Vetting Officer of the IPBA.

### Principles

The welfare of children is everyone’s responsibility, particularly when it comes to protecting them from abuse. Children have a lot to gain from participation in the pipe band world. It provides an excellent opportunity for them to learn new skills, become

more confident and maximise their own unique potential. This Policy and these Procedures are based on the following principles:

- The welfare of children is the primary concern.
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, socio-economic status, religious belief , sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.
- It is everyone's responsibility to report any concerns about abuse.
- All incidents of alleged poor practice, inappropriate behaviour , misconduct and abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

### Designated Liaison Person

#### IPBA Designated Liaison Person

A Designated Liaison Person will be nominated by the IPBA each year. The Designated Liaison Person has the main responsibility for managing child protection issues within the Irish Pipe Band Association. The role and responsibilities of the Designated Liaison Person are detailed below.

The Designated Liaison Person will:

- Implement and promote the IPBA's Child Protection Policy and Procedures.
- Act as the main contact within the Irish Pipe Band Association for the protection of children.
- Provide information and advice on the protection of children.
- Support and raise awareness of the protection of children.
- Communicate with members on issues of child protection.
- Keep abreast of developments and understand the latest information on data protection, confidentiality and other legal issues that impact on the protection of children.
- Encourage good practice and support of procedures to protect children.
- Maintain confidential records of reported cases and action taken and liaise with the statutory agencies and ensure they have access to all necessary information.
- Review the IPBA's Child Protection Policy and Procedures on an annual basis and report on same to the AGM.

#### Member Band Designated Liaison Person

Each member band of the IPBA will be required to nominate a Designated Liaison Person on its Annual Registration Form.

Within Member Bands of the Irish Pipe Band Association the Designated Liaison Person will:

- Implement and promote the Irish Pipe Band Association's Child Protection Policy and Procedures.
- Act as the main contact within the band for the protection of children.
- Encourage good practice and support of procedures to protect children.
- Keep abreast of developments and understand the latest information on data protection, confidentiality and other legal issues that impact on the protection of children.
- Communicate with the IPBA's Designated Liaison Person.
- Maintain confidential records of reported cases and action taken and liaise with the statutory agencies and ensure they have access to all necessary information.
- Monitor Child Protection Procedures for their band.

Recommended Characteristics of the Designated Liaison Person:

- Have an understanding of the issues affecting children and the sensitive way in which they must be managed.
- Be able to communicate the implications of protecting children to all members.
- Be able to communicate with children.
- Be supportive of the introduction of the Child Protection Policy.
- Have an understanding and appreciation of the need to respect confidentiality.
- Be able to follow procedures and recognise when to seek advice and not rely solely on their own judgement.
- Be willing to challenge members who do not comply with the Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children

This code of conduct details the types of practice required by all members of the Irish Pipe Band Association when in contact with children. The types of practice are categorised into good practice; practice to be avoided and practice never to be engaged in.

Good Practice

The Irish Pipe Band Association supports and requires the following good practice by members when in contact with children:

- All volunteers working with children should be vetted by the national vetting authority.
- It is the responsibility of each member band to ensure that vetting guidelines are followed within their own band.
- Always work in an open environment e.g. avoid private or unobserved situations and encourage an open environment for activities.
- Treat all children equally, with respect and dignity.
- Put the welfare of each child first before winning or achieving performance goals.
- Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Ensure that if any form of manual or physical support is required for a child, it is provided openly, the child is informed of what is being done and their consent is obtained.

For taking and transporting children away from home:

If it is necessary to provide transport or take children away from home the following good practice must be followed:

- Always tell parents and where possible another member that you are transporting a child ; give details of the route and the anticipated length of the journey.
- Ensure all vehicles are correctly insured.
- Ensure that all reasonable safety measures are taken, e.g. children in the back seat, seatbelts are worn, drive carefully, etc.
- When staying overnight, ensure, where possible, that a male volunteer and female volunteer accompany mixed groups of children. These adults should be familiar with and agree to abide by the IPBA's Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

Practice To Be Avoided by adult members of the IPBA

- Avoid having 'favourites' - this could lead to resentment and jealousy by other children and could lead to false allegations.
- Avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others.

- Ensure that when children are taken away from home, adults avoid entering their rooms unless in an emergency situation or in the interest of health and safety. If it is necessary to enter rooms, the door should remain open, if appropriate.
- Avoid taking children to your home, unless in groups.

#### Practice never to be sanctioned by adult members

- Never encourage, allow, or condone, the use of alcohol or drugs by underage band members.
  - Never engage in sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- Never engage in rough or physical contact.
- Never form intimate emotional or physical relationships with children.
- Never allow or engage in touching a child in a sexually suggestive manner.
- Never allow children to swear or use sexualised language unchallenged.
- Never make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun.
- Never reduce a child to tears as a form of control.
- Never allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Never share a room with a child for sleeping accommodation.
- Never invite or allow children to stay with you at your home.
  - Do not become friends with children under the age of 18 on Facebook or via other social media.
  - Do not send text messages to children other than as part of normal band information sent to all members of groups of members.
  - Do not allow young band members (under age 14) to link to a band Facebook page or other social media.

#### Reporting

If members have concerns about an incident involving a child that seems untoward or unusual they must report their concerns as soon as possible to the Designated Liaison Person. Parents should also be informed of the incident as soon as possible unless it is not in the child's interests to tell them.

Report, record and inform if the following occur:

- If you accidentally hurt a child.
- If a child seems distressed in any manner.
- If a child misunderstands or misinterprets something you have said or done.
- If a child needs to be restrained.
- If a child is the victim of bullying behaviour or is involved in bullying behaviour.

### **Children in Publications and on the Internet**

Websites , blogs, Facebook, and other social media sites provide excellent opportunities to broadcast achievements of bands and individuals to the world and to provide a showcase for the activities of young people. In some cases, however, displaying certain information about children could place them at risk. The following procedure must be followed to ensure the Irish Pipe Band Association publications and the Irish Pipe Band Association or member band information on the Internet do not place children at risk.

- Publications or information on an Internet site must never include personal information that could identify a child e.g. home address, e-mail address, telephone number of a child. Any contact information must be directed to either the Irish Pipe Band Association or member band's address.
- Before publishing any information about a child, written consent must be obtained from the child's parent/guardian.
- Juvenile members may appear in band photos but they should not be named.
- Any concerns or enquiries about publications or Internet information should be reported to the IPBA's Designated Liaison Person.

## Responding to Disclosures

Information you receive about or from a child may fall into one of the following categories:

- 1 Suspicion or allegation of misconduct or inappropriate behaviour against a member of the IPBA.
- 2 Suspicion or allegation of child abuse against a member of the IPBA.
- 3 Suspicion or allegation of inappropriate behaviour against someone who is not a member of the IPBA.
- 4 Suspicion or allegation of abuse against someone who is not a member of the IPBA

If unclear about the nature of the information (and therefore which category the disclosure falls into) advice must be sought from the Designated Liaison Person or the Gardai or Social Work Department of the HSE.

Allegations or reports of inappropriate behaviour by a member of the IPBA towards a child member of the association must be reported in the first instance to the band's Designated Liaison Person who, in turn, must report to the Designated Liaison Person of the IPBA.

Abuse of a Child is considered a criminal offence so in every case where abuse is alleged or suspected, a report must be made to the Gardai or to Túsla and the DLP of the IPBA informed of the fact.

It is not the responsibility of anyone from the Irish Pipe Band Association to decide whether or not a child has been abused. It is, however, everyone's responsibility to report concerns.

It is very important that the Irish Pipe Band Association members understand what is meant by the term 'abuse'. The different types of abuse are:

- Emotional Abuse
- Neglect
- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Negative Discrimination (including racism)
- Bullying (includes bullying by gangs; bullying by family members; physical bullying; verbal bullying; teasing; and harassment)

## How to Listen to a Disclosure

It is important to listen carefully to the information a child discloses. When listening to a disclosure the following good practice is required:

- React calmly so as not to frighten the child/vulnerable adult.
- Listen to the child/vulnerable adult.
- Do not show disbelief.
- Tell the child/vulnerable adult that he/she is not to blame and that he/she was right to tell.
- Take what the child/vulnerable adult says seriously, recognising the difficulties inherent in interpreting what a child/vulnerable adult says, especially if they have a speech disability and/or differences in language.
- Do not pre-suppose that the experience was bad or painful - it may have been neutral or even pleasurable.
- Always avoid projecting your own reactions onto the child or vulnerable adult.
- If you need to clarify, keep questions to the absolute minimum to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said.
- If you need to clarify or the statement is ambiguous, use open-ended, non-leading questions.
- Do not introduce personal information from either your own experiences or those of other children.
- Reassure the child or vulnerable adult.

### When receiving a disclosure:

- Avoid panic.
- Avoid showing shock or distaste.
- Avoid probing for more information than is offered.
- Avoid speculating or making assumptions.
- Avoid making negative comments about the person against whom the allegation has been made.
- Avoid approaching the individual against whom the allegation has been made.
- Avoid making promises or agreeing to keep secrets.
- Avoid giving a guarantee of confidentiality.



## Responding to a Suspicion or Allegation of Abuse against a Member of the IPBA

The feelings caused by the discovery of potential abuse or inappropriate behaviour by a member will raise different issues.

It is not the responsibility of a member to take responsibility or to decide whether or not a child has been abused or has been the victim of inappropriate behaviour. However, as with allegations against non-members, it is the responsibility of the individual to act on any concerns.

Any information that raises concern about the behaviour of a member towards a child must be passed on as soon as possible that day to the band's own DLP, who, in turn, will inform the Association's DLP and the Gardaí/ Túsła if it is suspected that a crime has been committed . No member in receipt of such information shall keep that information to himself/ herself or attempt to deal with the matter on their own.

These Procedures aim to ensure that all suspicions and/or allegations of abuse / inappropriate behaviour against a member are taken seriously and are dealt with in a timely and appropriate manner.

On receiving information about a member that leads to a suspicion or allegation of abuse or inappropriate behaviour :

- Listen to the child as detailed in the section on 'How to Listen to Disclosures'.
- Pass your concerns to the Designated Liaison Person on the day and if a crime is suspected , to the Gardaí / Túsła in the area where the abuse is alleged to have occurred .
- Act on any advice given.
- Make a full written record of what has been seen, heard and/or told as soon as possible in the child/vulnerable adult's own words.
- Sign and date the record including what you have seen, heard or been told, that day.

Important Note: Where the concern is about the Designated Liaison Person it must be reported to the Chairman of the IPBA.

## Actions for the Designated Liaison Person when Concerns are Reported

1. It is the Designated Liaison Person's responsibility to pass on any information regarding child abuse (physical/emotional/sexual) to the appropriate authorities for investigation. (HSE/Gardai)
2. It is not the role of the DLP to investigate an incident/alleged incident.
3. It is the duty of the DLP to inform the NEC of the IPBA of any allegation or incidence of abuse or inappropriate behaviour at the earliest opportunity.

## IPBA Disciplinary Procedure

1. Where a member of the IPBA has been accused of child abuse or inappropriate behaviour towards a child, the member shall be suspended from all IPBA activities involving children pending the outcome of an investigation. Suspension from such activity is not a form of disciplinary action but it is a precautionary measure.
2. Where a member of the IPBA is found guilty of an offence involving a young person or where a member of the IPBA is deemed to have behaved inappropriately towards a young person , the NEC will institute a disciplinary hearing.

## Disciplinary Hearing

- A Disciplinary Sub-Committee will be established involving the Designated Liaison Person, the Chairman of the IPBA , and the Secretary of the IPBA.
- The Disciplinary Sub-Committee will invite the member to make a verbal and/or written submission.
- The Disciplinary Sub-Committee will invite the parents/guardians of the young person concerned to make a verbal and/or written submission.
- Having ascertained the type and nature of the inappropriate behaviour, the Disciplinary Sub-Committee will make a recommendation to the NEC regarding an appropriate sanction.

## Sanctions may include:

1. Temporary expulsion from the IPBA
2. Permanent expulsion from the IPBA
3. Permanent exclusion from any role involving the teaching or care of young people within member bands or within the activities of the IPBA. ( This sanction

MUST be applied in any case where a criminal offence or inappropriate behaviour against a young person is proven to have taken place .)

4. Exclusion from membership of any committee of the IPBA or from holding any office in the IPBA.
5. Apology / Restitution to the child concerned.
6. Other appropriate sanction approved by the NEC.

#### Responding to a Suspicion or Allegation of Abuse against Someone who is Not a Member of the IPBA

All allegations of abuse must be taken seriously.

If a child says or indicates that he/she is being abused or information is obtained which gives concern that a child is being abused, you must react as soon as possible that day in line with the following procedures.

Where there is uncertainty about whether the concern relates to abuse or misconduct, the Designated Liaison Person must firstly be consulted for advice on the appropriate course of action. If the Designated Liaison Person is unavailable, external agencies such as the Gardai / Túsla must be consulted for advice. This is important because they have an overview of child protection issues and they may well have other information that together causes concern.

- On receiving information about a non-member that leads to a suspicion or allegation of abuse:
- Pass your concerns to the Social Work Department or the Gardai in the area where the abuse is alleged to have occurred immediately. Act on any advice given. At the earliest opportunity tell the Designated Liaison Person about the action taken.
- Make a full written record of what has been seen, heard and/or told as soon as possible in the child/vulnerable adult's own words. The information must, where known, include the following:
  - *Name of child/vulnerable adult.*
  - *The nature of the allegation in the child/vulnerable adult's own words.*
  - *Any times, dates or other relevant information.*
  - *Whether the person making the report is expressing their own concern or the concerns of another person.*

- *The child/vulnerable adult's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any injuries occurred.*
- *The nature of the allegation (include all of the information obtained during the initial account e.g. time, date, location of alleged incident).*
- *A description of any visible (when normally dressed) injuries or bruising, behavioural signs, indirect signs (do not examine the child/vulnerable adult).*
- *Details of any witnesses to the incident.*
- *Whether the child/vulnerable adult's parents/guardians/carers have been contacted.*
- *Details of anyone else who has been consulted and the information obtained from them.*
- *If it is not the child/vulnerable adult making the report, whether the child/vulnerable adult has been spoken to, if so what was said.*
- *Record, sign and date on the day what you have seen, heard or been told.*

Remember: Listen; Respond; Report and Record