

Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA) Corporate Child Safeguarding Statement

1. Name of Service being provided

IWA provides a range of services to children and young people in our Community Support Services, Assisted Living Services, Motoring Assessment, Advice and Tuition Service, Holiday Service and IWA-Sport Clubs and Sports Sections. These services operate primarily across the Republic of Ireland with some IWA-Sport activities taking place in Northern Ireland and internationally.

2. Principles to Safeguarding Children from Harm or Abuse

The safety, welfare and development of every child and young person are core objectives and key priorities for IWA. Everyone in IWA has a responsibility and duty of care to ensure that each child/young person availing of our services is safe and protected from all types of harm or abuse including but not limited to physical/emotional/sexual abuse or neglect. The following set of principles should be adhered to;

- **Importance of childhood** - The importance of childhood should be understood and valued by everyone involved in IWA.
- **Requirements of the child** - A child's experiences should be guided by what is best for them. This means that adults should have a basic understanding of the emotional, physical and personal requirements of each child and young person they work with.
- **Integrity in relationships** - Adults interacting with children in IWA are in a position of trust and influence. They should always ensure that every child is treated with integrity and respect, and the self-esteem of each child and young person is enhanced.
- **Fair Play** - All children's activities should be conducted in an atmosphere of fair play. The principles of fair play in IWA should always be emphasised. Everyone organising and managing children's services/activities must adhere to our guidelines regarding acceptable standards of behaviour.
- **Quality atmosphere & ethos** - Children's services/activities must be conducted in a safe, positive and encouraging atmosphere.
- **Competition** – Competition in IWA-Sport is an essential element of sport and should be encouraged in an age-appropriate manner. A child centred ethos will help to ensure that competition and specialisation are kept in their appropriate place.
- **Equality** - Every child and young person should be valued and treated in an equitable and fair manner regardless of ability, age, gender, religion, social and ethnic background or political persuasion.

The IWA Corporate Child Safeguarding Statement (CSS) and the policies and procedures outlined below applies to all IWA employees, volunteers and external contractors/facilitators and any person performing any role or function in, or on behalf of, IWA. IWA has a 'NO TOLERANCE' approach to any forms of abuse.

3. Risk Assessment

The IWA Corporate CSS states the corporate perspective on how the Association prevents harm to any child availing of our services and activities. IWA services are required to implement a Subsidiary CSS that demonstrates how each service prevents harm to children who avail of their services. The Subsidiary CSS' are informed by the subsidiary risk assessment processes that were undertaken. Table 1.1 outlines the key areas that are subject to the risk assessments and the procedures in place to manage the identified risks.

Table 1.1

	Areas of Risk	Procedure in place to manage identified risk
1	Recruitment and selection	HR Recruitment Policies and Procedures. Standard operating procedures setting out clear mandatory requirements for recruiting for children's services/activities.
2	Induction and training of IWA personnel working with children	HR Recruitment Policies and Procedures. Mandatory Children First Awareness Training. Standard operating procedures setting training requirements and standards.
3	Safeguarding awareness among all IWA personnel	IWA Mandatory Training Policy, Child Protection Policy, Code of Behaviour for Working with Children. Standard procedures for implementing policies.
4	Communications	Implementation of safeguarding policies, standards and protocols to all key stakeholders. Child friendly versions of key policies being made available to children and their parents. Photography Policy, Social Media Policy.
5	Complaints	Customer Care Policy including formal procedures for reporting and responding to complaints. Training of all personnel to respond to complaints.
6	Reporting and responding to safeguarding concerns	Child Protection Policy providing protocol for reporting concerns. Sharing of information and collaboration with statutory agencies implemented throughout the Child Protection Policy and Procedures. Child Protection Policy communicated to all IWA personnel and readily available through IWA Sharepoint system.
7	Ensuring Safe Services	Standard Operation Manuals in place setting out the requirements for working with children including ratios, gender balance, trips and travel, accommodation, use of facilities etc. Code of Behaviour for Working with Children provides clear instruction and guidance for wide range of scenarios. Communication processes in place ensuring all personnel are informed of their responsibilities when working with children. Line management function in place ensuring supervision and support of all personnel who work with children.

4. Procedures

IWA's Corporate CSS has been developed in line with requirements under the Children First Act 2015. In addition to the risk assessment documents described above, there are further procedures that support our intention to safeguard children while they are availing of our activities/services.

IWA's policies and procedures aim to promote safe environments for every child and young person; to lessen the potential for risk to arise; and to manage it safely where it does. In addition to the procedures outlined in the Subsidiary CSS Risk Assessments, the following policies and procedures support our intention to safeguard every child and young person availing of any IWA service/activity:

- Recruitment policies and procedures to ensure the recruitment and selection of employees and volunteers who are suitable to work with children, including the IWA Garda vetting policy;
- Mandatory Safeguarding Training for all staff incorporating face-to-face and e-learning programmes;
- HR Policies and Procedures to investigate an allegation of abuse or misconduct made against employees or volunteers;
- Child Protection Policy and Procedure outlining the recognition and reporting procedures;
- Health and Safety Policy and Procedure to ensure all risks are identified and controlled to reduce the likelihood and impact of accidents or incidents;
- Services and activities are managed through Operations Manuals, policies and procedures and standard operating procedures to ensure a high standard of service is provided;
- IWA implements a process for maintaining a list of Mandated Persons in the Association;
- IWA has appointed a relevant person to be the first point of contact for the Corporate CSS. Each Subsidiary CSS is required to appoint a Relevant Person to be the first point of contact for the service specific Subsidiary CSS.

Implementation

The Senior Management Team is responsible for ensuring that the policies and procedures outlined in this Corporate CSS are in place and operating effectively. The Subsidiary CSS' are being implemented by the management teams who oversee those services. In IWA-Sport; each Sports Club and Sports Section that works with junior athletes/players completes the risk assessment and Subsidiary CSS process which is being managed by the Club/Section Committee Officials and they are required to submit completed documentation to IWA-Sport as the National Governing Body.

This Corporate Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed on 01/11/2025, or as soon as practicable if there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

For further information please contact Daragh Kennedy, National Safeguarding Officer (Relevant Person for the IWA Corporate Child Safeguarding Statement) on 087-9975444 or daragh.kennedy@iwa.ie.



Signed by:

Chris Hoey, Acting CEO

Date:

15th November 2023

