



Child Safeguarding Statement

Special Olympics Ireland offers sports training and competition for children and young people with an intellectual disability on an all island basis. Special Olympics recognise the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. The organisation is committed to ensuring our safeguarding practices reflect statutory and legal responsibilities, government guidance with best practice and Special Olympics requirements.

Our Special Olympics Clubs are committed to the ongoing implementation of our Code of Ethics and Good Practice which aims to foster a culture of understanding and compliance for all and to create a safe child-centred environment for young people to grow and develop within sport.

- **Importance of childhood** - The importance of childhood should be understood and valued by everyone involved in sport.
- **Needs of the child** - All children's sport experiences should be guided by what is best for children. This means that adults should have a basic understanding of the emotional, physical and personal needs of young people.
- **Integrity in relationships** - Adults interacting with children in sport are in a position of trust and influence. They should always ensure that children are treated with integrity and respect, and the self-esteem of young people is enhanced.
- **Fair Play** - All children's sport should be conducted in an atmosphere of fair play. The principles of fair play should always be emphasised, and organisers should give clear guidelines regarding acceptable standards of behaviour.
- **Quality atmosphere & ethos** - Children's sport should be conducted in a safe, positive and encouraging atmosphere.
- **Competition** - Competition 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** - All children should be valued and treated in an equitable and fair manner regardless of ability, age, gender, religion, social and ethnic background or political persuasion.
- **Awareness of Intellectual Disability** – All our children and young people also have an intellectual disability and we are committed to ensuring our volunteers understand that this can create an additional vulnerability and that we may need to support additional needs.

The organisation has a confidential safeguarding support structure to provide guidance and support for individuals with concerns about the safety and welfare of children and young people.

National
Children's Officer
Regional
Director
Club
Safeguarding Officer



This Special Olympics Ireland written Risk Assessment document indicates the areas of potential risk of harm, the likelihood of the risk occurring, and gives the required policy and relevant procedures, guidance or process documents require to alleviate these risks (*Safeguarding Policies – a Guide to Best Practice, Policy and Procedure*). The list of risks identified and procedures to manage these risks are contained in the following categories:

Risk Identified	Policy/Procedure in place to manage risk identified
<p>Club and Coaching Practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Lack of coaching qualification. — Supervision issues. — Unauthorised photography & recording activities. — Behavioural Issues. — Lack of gender balance amongst coaches — No guidance for travelling & away trips — Lack of adherence with misc. procedures in Safeguarding policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Coach Education Policy/Recruitment Policy. — Supervision Policy/Coach Education Policy — Photography & Use of Images Policy — Code of Conduct / Safeguarding 1 / Complaints Policy/Disciplinary Policy. — Coach Education Policy / Supervision Policy. — Travel/Away Trip Policy / Child Safeguarding Training. — Safeguarding Policy / Complaints Policy/ Disciplinary Policy
<p>Complaints & Discipline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Lack of awareness of a Complaints Policy/ Disciplinary Policy. — Difficulty in raising an issue by child or parent — Complaints not being dealt with seriously 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Complaints Policy/Disciplinary Policy / Communications Policy. — Complaints Policy/Disciplinary Policy / Communications Policy. — Complaints Policy/Disciplinary Policy.

<p>Reporting Procedures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Lack of knowledge of organisational & statutory reporting procedures — No DLP appointed. — Concerns of abuse or harm not reported. — Not clear who young people should talk to or report to. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Reporting procedures/Policy / Coach Education Policy / Code of Conduct — Reporting procedures/Policy. — Reporting procedures/Policy / Child Safeguarding Training – Level 1 — Post the names of Regional Safeguarding Officer, Programme Safeguarding Officer
<p>Use of Facilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Unauthorised access to designated children's play & practice areas & to changing rooms, showers, toilets etc..... — Unauthorised exit from children's areas. — Photography, filming or recording in prohibited areas. — Missing or found child on site. — Children sharing facilities with adults e.g. dressing room, showers etc.... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Supervision Policy / Coach Education Policy. — Supervision Policy / Coach Education Policy. — Photography Policy and use of devices in private zones. — Missing or Found Child Policy. — Safeguarding Policy.
<p>Recruitment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Recruitment of inappropriate people. — Lack of clarity on roles. — Unqualified or untrained people in role. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Recruitment & Selection Policy. — Recruitment & Selection Policy. — Recruitment & Selection Policy.



<p>Communications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Lack of awareness of 'risk of harm' amongst members and visitors. — No communication of Child Safeguarding Statement of Code of Behaviour to members of visitors. — Unauthorised photography & recording of activities. — Inappropriate use of social media & communications by under 18's — Inappropriate use of social media & communications with under 18's. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Child Safeguarding Statement / Child Safeguard Training. — Child Safeguarding Statement (display) / Code of Behaviour (distribute). — Photography & Use of Images Policy — Communications Policy / Code of Conduct — Communications Policy / Code of Conduct
<p>General Risk of Harm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Harm not being recognised. — Harm caused by: Child to Child. Coach to Child. Volunteer to Child. Member to Child. Visitor to Child. — General behavioural issues. — Issues of Bullying. — Vetting of staff/volunteers. — Issues of Online Safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Safeguarding Policy / Child Safeguarding Training. — Safeguarding Policy / Child Safeguarding Training. — Code of Conduct/ Code of Ethics — Anti-Bullying Policy. — Recruitment & Selection Policy. — Social Media & Online Safety policy.

The Risk Assessment will be undertaken on regular designated dates.

Our Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed in line with requirements under the Children First Act 2015, (the Children First: National Guidance, and Tusla's Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice, Safeguarding Guidance for Children and Young People in Sport- Sport Ireland and the guidelines produced by Gateway NI). In addition to our Risk Assessment document described above, there are further procedures that support our intention to safeguard children while they are availing of Special Olympics activities.

Special Olympics Ireland has the following procedures in place as part of our Safeguarding Policies:

Procedures for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct by staff or volunteers against a child availing of our activities.

- Procedures for the safe recruitment of staff and volunteers to work with children in our activities.
- Procedures for access to child safeguarding training and information, including the identification of the occurrence of harm.
- Procedure for reporting of child protection or welfare concerns to statutory authorities.
- Procedure for maintaining a list of the Designated Liaison Persons in the relevant regions and the mandated person for the programme.
- Procedure for appointing a relevant person.

Please note that all procedures listed are available on request.

We recognise that implementation is an ongoing process. Special Olympics Ireland is committed to the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement and the procedures that support our intention to keep children safe from harm while availing of our activities.

Please note the following:

- That all staff have been furnished with a copy of this statement.
- This statement is available to parents/guardians, the Agency and members of the public on request.
- This statement will be displayed in a prominent place by Special Olympics Ireland.

This Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed on 01 September 2027.

Chief Executive Officer:

Signed: 

Date: 26-8-25

Relevant Person/National Children's Officer:

Signed: 

Date: 26 August 2025