



DRUIDS HEATH

Safeguarding Policy

The Safeguarding Policy for Druids Heath Golf Club is based on the policy drafted by the GUI, ILGU, PGA in Ireland and CGI.

Druids Heath Golf Club is fully committed to safeguarding the wellbeing of its members. Every individual in golf should always, show respect and understanding for members' rights, safety and welfare and conduct themselves in a way that reflects the principles of the Club and the guidelines contained in the *Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport & Code of Ethics for Golf for Young People*.

In working with young people in golf our priority is the welfare of the young people and Druids Heath Golf Club is committed to providing an environment that will allow participants to perform to the best of their ability, free from bullying and intimidation.

Safeguarding concerns within Druids Heath Golf Club should be made to the Designated Liaison Person (DLP). The current DLP is Colin Devlin. A notice to this effect is displayed in the Club.

The DLP is responsible for ensuring the reporting procedures within the Club are followed so that child welfare and protection concerns are referred promptly to the Statutory Authorities. The DLP records all concerns or allegations of child abuse brought to his/her attention and the actions taken following receipt of a concern or allegation of child abuse. The DLP does not have the responsibility of investigating or validating child protection concerns within the Club and has no counselling or therapeutic role. These roles are filled by the Statutory Authorities as outlined in *Children First* and *Our Duty to Care*.

Child Welfare and Protection Procedures

Child welfare and the protection of juniors is always the concern of all adults, irrespective of their role within the Club. If there are grounds for concern about the safety or welfare of a junior, a member should react to the concern. Persons unsure about whether certain behaviors are abusive and therefore reportable, should contact the DLP where they will receive advice.

The DLP should always be informed when there are reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been abused, or is being abused, or is at risk of abuse. The following examples would constitute reasonable grounds for concern:

- A specific indication from the child that he or she was abused (disclosure)
- An account by a person who says the child is being abused
- Evidence, such as an injury or behavior that is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused in another way
- An injury or behavior that is consistent both with abuse and with an innocent, explanation, but where there are corroborative indicators supporting the concern that it may be a case of abuse e.g. a pattern of injuries, an implausible explanation, and other indications of abuse and/or dysfunctional behavior

- Consistent indication, over a period that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect

It is not the responsibility of any member or anyone working within Druids Heath Golf Club, in a paid or voluntary capacity, to take responsibility or decide whether child abuse is taking place. That is the job of the local Statutory Authorities. However, there is a responsibility to protect juniors by assisting the appropriate agencies so that they can then make enquiries and take any necessary action to protect the junior.

If a junior discloses information of suspected abuse you should:

- Deal with any allegation of abuse in a sensitive and competent way through listening to and facilitating the junior to tell you about the problem, rather than interviewing the junior about details of what happened
- Stay calm and don't show any extreme reaction to what the junior is saying. Listen compassionately, and take what the junior is saying seriously
- Understand that the junior has decided to tell something very important and has taken a risk to do so. The experience of telling should be a positive one so that the junior will not mind talking to those involved in the investigation
- Be honest with the junior and tell them that it is not possible to keep information a secret and you will need to tell the appropriate authorities
- Make no judgmental statements against the person whom the allegation is made
- Do not question the junior unless the nature of what s/he is saying is unclear. Do not use leading questions. Open, non-specific questions should be used such as "Can you explain to me what you mean by that"
- Carefully record the details
- Indicate to the junior that you will contact the DLP who will look after matters from that point
- Convey details of the disclosure to the DLP.
- Parents/guardians will be advised that the statutory authorities will be contacted unless doing so would possibly place the child at any further risk.

Reporting Suspected or Disclosed Child Abuse to the Statutory Authorities

If the DLP is unsure whether reasonable grounds for concern exist s/he can informally consult with the National Children's Officer of the Golf Unions and the local health board/Statutory Authorities. S/he will be advised whether the matter requires a formal report.

If the DLP has reasonable grounds for believing that the junior has been abused or is at risk of abuse, s/he will make a report to local Statutory Authorities who have statutory responsibility to investigate and assess suspected or actual child abuse.

The DLP will first inform the family of the intention to make such a report, unless doing so would put the child at further risk or undermine an investigation.

In a case of emergency, where a junior appears to be at immediate and serious risk and the DLP or the Deputy DLPs cannot be contacted, an individual should contact the Duty Social Worker in the HSE or An Garda Síochána to make a report. Under no circumstances should a junior be left in a dangerous situation pending intervention.

The Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998 provides immunity from civil liability to persons who report child abuse 'reasonably and in good faith' to the Tulsa Child and Family Agency or An Garda Síochána. The act also covers the offence of 'false reporting'.

Allegations against Golf Leaders

Golf has agreed procedures to be followed in cases of alleged child abuse made against Golf Leaders. If such an allegation is made against a Golf Leader working within the Club, two procedures should be followed:

- The reporting procedure in respect of suspected child abuse
- The procedure for dealing with the Golf Leader.

The reporting procedure: If DLP and the National Children's Officer have reasonable grounds for concern, the matter should be reported to the Statutory Authorities following the standard reporting procedure.

The procedure for dealing with the Golf Leader: The DLP and the National Children's Officer make the report to the Statutory Authorities and seek advice about how and when to inform the person the allegation is made against.

The Leader may be asked to step aside pending the outcome of the investigation. When a person is asked to step aside it should be made clear that it is only a precautionary measure and will not prejudice any later disciplinary proceedings.

Disciplinary action on the Leader should be considered but only if this does not interfere with the investigation of the Statutory Authorities. It is important to consider the outcome of the investigation and any implications it might have. The fact that someone an allegation has been made against has not been prosecuted or been found guilty does not automatically mean that they are appropriate to work with juniors in the future.

Irrespective of the findings of the Statutory Authorities, the Golf Unions & PGA Disciplinary Committees will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer should be reinstated and if so how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision, especially where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the Statutory Authorities. In such case the Golf Disciplinary Committees must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on the balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true, and the implications of this for the safety of juniors. The welfare of the junior should remain of paramount importance throughout. The Unions and PGA may need to disclose information to ensure the protection of juniors in its care.

Anonymous Complaints and Rumours

Anonymous complaints can be difficult to deal with but should not be ignored. In all cases the safety and welfare of the junior/juniors is paramount. Any such complaints relating to inappropriate behaviour should be brought to the attention of the DLP and the National Children's Officer. The information should be checked out and handled in a confidential manner.

Rumours should not be allowed to hang in the air. Any rumours relating to inappropriate behaviour should be brought to the attention of the DLP.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality should be maintained in respect of all issues and people involved in cases of abuse, welfare or poor practice. It is important that the rights of both the junior and the person about whom the complaint has been made are protected.

All information should be treated in a careful and sensitive manner and should be discussed only with those who need to know. All persons involved in a child protection process (the child, his/her parents/guardians, the alleged offender, his/her family, Leaders) should be afforded appropriate respect, fairness, support and confidentiality at all stages of the procedure.

Information should be stored in a secure place, with limited access only to designated people and/or the DLP and the National Children's Officer. The requirements of Data Protection legislation should be followed.

Ratification of Policy

This policy was ratified by the Committee in May 2018.

The Safeguarding Policy will be displayed on the Club's website. A copy of the policy will also be available from the Office.