



**Pulse Triathlon Club**  
**Safeguarding Code for Young People**  
Updated January 2019

## Table of Contents

	<b>Page</b>
<b>Glossary</b>	3
<b>Core Values</b>	4
<b>Statements: Policy / Safety / Equality</b>	5
<b>Guidelines &amp; Codes of Conduct</b>	
• Code of Conduct for Young People	6
• Guidelines for Parents	7
• Guidelines for Sports Leaders (Including coaches, team managers, support staff, etc)	8-9
• Code of Conduct for Sports Leaders	10
<b>Policies</b>	
• Disciplinary, Complaints and Appeals Procedure	11
• Recruitment and Supervision Policy for Sports Leaders / Volunteers	12
• General Guidelines with Children	13-17
<b>Child Welfare and Protection Procedures</b>	
• Response to a Child Disclosing Abuse	18
• Reporting Suspected or Disclosed Child Abuse	19
• Allegations against Sports Leaders	20
• Confidentiality, Anonymous Complaints & Rumours	21

## **Glossary**

### **Child/Young Person**

For the purposes of this document all individuals under the age of 18 are considered as children.

### **Club**

Club refers to Pulse Triathlon Club.

### **Coaches**

Where specified refers to any individual, including teachers, involved in the practice of teaching and coaching any of the triathlon disciplines.

### **Junior Athletes**

Refers to swimmers, cyclists, runners and for the purposes of the Triathlon Ireland Safeguard Code and Good Practice, refers to those individuals who are under 18 year of age unless otherwise specified.

### **Lead Officer**

An adult, who holds a supervisory role in relation to junior athletes and, who has the added responsibility for coordinating the implementation of the Code of Conduct at the appropriate level, that is, local club. In addition they are responsible for ensuring liaison with statutory authorities as necessary.

### **Leader**

Any person, whether paid or unpaid with responsibility for children; roles include but not limited to children's officer, designated persons, supervisor, team manager, sports science personnel, volunteers, committee members, tutors, coaches and teachers.

### **NCO**

National Children's Officer who is overall Lead Officer at Triathlon Ireland.

### **Parent**

Parent shall mean parent, guardian or carer.

### **Safeguarding Code**

Triathlon Ireland Safeguarding Code for Young People – this document, which is based on guidelines of the ISC and Sport NI and those listed at front of document.

### **Sport Ireland**

The sports council in Ireland

### **Sport NI (previously SCNI)**

Sport Northern Ireland – the sports council in Northern Ireland

### **Statutory Authorities**

Refers to those who have statutory responsibility for the welfare and protection of young people in Ireland, namely An Garda Síochána / PSNI, Tusla and the Health Services Executive (HSE) / Social Services NI.

## **Core Values in Sport for Young People**

Triathlon Ireland is based on the following principles that will guide the development of young people within triathlon, (as outlined in page 9, *Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport*). Young People's experience of sport should be guided by what is best for the young person. The stages of development and the ability of the young person should guide the types of activity provided within the club/organisation. Adults will need to have a basic understanding of the needs of young people, including physical, emotional and personal.

Pulse Triathlon Club is guided by the principles laid down by Triathlon Ireland, and the legislation pertaining to the welfare of children involved in triathlon and sport, and the policies set out in this document.

### **Integrity in relationships:**

Adults interacting with young people in sport should do so with integrity and respect for the child. There is a danger that sporting contexts can be used to exploit or undermine children. All adult actions in sport should be guided by what is best for the child and in the context of quality, open working relationships. Verbal, physical, emotional or sexual abuse of any kind is unacceptable within sport.

### **Quality atmosphere and ethos**

Sport for young people should be conducted in a safe, positive and encouraging atmosphere. A child-centred ethos will contribute to a safe and enjoyable atmosphere within the organisation.

### **Equality**

All children should be treated in an equitable and fair manner regardless of age, ability, sex, religion, social and ethnic background or political persuasion. Children with disability should be involved in sports activities in an integrated way, thus allowing them to participate to their potential alongside other children.

### **Fair Play:**

Fair play is the guiding principle of the *Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport*. All sport for young people should be conducted in an atmosphere of fair play. Ireland has contributed and is committed to the European Code of Sports Ethics, which defines fair play as: "much more than playing within the rules". It incorporates the concepts of friendship, respect for others and always playing with the right spirit. Fair play is defined as a way of thinking, not just behaving. It incorporates issues concerned with the elimination of opportunities, excessive commercialisation and corruption.

(European Sports Charter and Code of Ethics, Council of Europe, 1993).

### **Competition**

A balanced approach to competition can make a significant contribution to the development of young people, while at the same time providing fun, enjoyment and satisfaction. However, competitive demands are often placed on children too early, which results in excessive levels of pressure on them. This can contribute to a high level of drop out from sport. Sports leaders should aim to put the welfare of the child first and competitive standards second. A child-centred approach will help to ensure that competition and specialisation are kept in their appropriate place.

## **Pulse Triathlon Club Mission Statement**

Our mission is to promote all levels of triathlon participation in a competitive yet friendly, supportive and enjoyable environment. You do not have to be super fit or have a super bike to join in our training sessions. For our members we aim to make the sport of triathlon as accessible as possible.

## **Pulse Triathlon Club Policy Statement**

Pulse Triathlon Club is fully committed to safeguarding the well being of their members. Every individual in Pulse Triathlon Club should at all times, show respect and understanding for members rights, safety and welfare and conduct themselves in a way that reflects the principles of the organisation and the guidelines contained in the *Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport*.

In working with young people in triathlon our first priority is the welfare of the young people and we are committed to providing an environment that will allow participants to perform to the best of their ability, free from bullying and intimidation.

## **Pulse Triathlon Club Safety Statement**

Pulse Triathlon Club recognises and accepts its responsibility to maintain, in so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety and health of its members, and of other persons who may be affected by its activities.

## **Code of Conduct for Young People**

Pulse Triathlon Club wishes to provide the best possible environment for all young people involved in the sport. Young people deserve to be given enjoyable, safe sporting opportunities, free of abuse of any kind. These participants have rights, which must be respected, and responsibilities that they must accept. Young people should be encouraged to realise that they have responsibilities to treat other participants and sports leaders with fairness and respect.

### **Young athletes are entitled to:**

- Be safe and to feel safe
- Be listened to
- Be believed
- Have fun and enjoy triathlon
- Have a voice in relation to their activities within triathlon
- Be treated with dignity, sensitivity and respect
- Participate in an equitable and fair manner, irrespective of ability, disability, gender, religion, social class, etc.
- Experience competition at a level at which they feel comfortable
- Make complaints and have them dealt with
- Get help against bullies
- Say No
- Protect their own bodies
- Confidentiality

### **Young athletes should always:**

- Treat Sports Leaders with respect, (including supervisor, team manager, sports science personnel, volunteers, technical officials, committee members, tutors, coaches and teachers etc.)
- Look out for themselves and the welfare of others
- Play fairly at all times, do their best
- Be organised and on time, tell someone if you are leaving a venue or competition
- Respect fellow club members, even when things go wrong
- Respect opponents, be gracious in defeat
- Abide by the rules set down by team managers when travelling to away events, representing the club, school, province or country, etc.
- Behave in a manner that avoids bringing Pulse Triathlon Club into disrepute
- Talk to the Lead Officer within the club if they have any problems

### **Young athletes should never:**

- Cheat
- Use violence or engage in irresponsible, abusive, inappropriate or illegal behaviour
- Shout or argue with officials, team mates or opponents
- Harm fellow club members, opponents or their property
- Bully or use bullying tactics to isolate another player or gain advantage
- Take banned substances, drink alcohol, smoke or engage in sexual behaviour
- Keep secrets, especially if they have been caused harm
- Tell lies about adults / young people

- Spread rumours
- Discriminate against other athletes on the basis of gender, age, disability, social class, religion, race, etc.
- Use social media inappropriately, or post comments, photographs or videos of other junior athletes without their consent and the consent of the junior athlete's parent/guarding

### **Guidelines for Parents**

Pulse Triathlon Club believes that parents should:

Be a role model for your child and maintain the highest standards of conduct when interacting with young people, other parents, officials and organisers.

Always behave responsibly and do not seek to unfairly affect an athlete or the outcome of a race.

Never intentionally expose any young participant to embarrassment or disparagement by the use of flippant or sarcastic remarks.

Always recognise the value and importance of the officials and volunteers who provide sporting and recreational opportunities for your child. Do not publicly question the judgement or honesty of technical officials, coaches or organisers. Respect professionals, coaches, organisers and other athletes. Parents are welcome to attend events and coaching sessions but should not interfere with the coach while working with the athlete.

Encourage your child to play by the rules. Teach your child that honest endeavour is as important as winning and do all you can to encourage good sportsmanship.

Set a good example by applauding good play on both sides. Encourage mutual respect for clubmates and opponents.

Parents should support all efforts to remove abusive behaviour and bullying behaviour in all its forms. Please refer to bullying policy within these guidelines.

### **Parents Code of Conduct:**

1. I will respect the rules and procedures set down by Pulse Triathlon Club.
2. I will respect my child's teammates and leaders as well as other athletes, parents and coaches. I will encourage my child to treat other participants, coaches, technical officials and organisers with respect.
3. I will give encouragement and applaud only positive accomplishments whether from my child, his/her teammates, their opponents or the officials.
4. I will respect my child's leader(s) and support his/her efforts.
5. I will respect the officials and their authority during sessions and events within the Club and under the auspices of Pulse Triathlon Club.

6. I will never demonstrate threatening or abusive behaviour or use foul language.

### **Guidelines for Sports Leaders (including coaches, tri leaders, support team)**

Pulse Triathlon Club recognises the key role leaders (coaches, tri leaders, sports science personnel, support team, volunteers, children's officer, designated persons, committee members and teachers, etc.) play in the lives of young people in sport. Leaders in triathlon should strive to create a positive environment for the children in their care. They have an overall responsibility to take the necessary steps to ensure that positive and healthy experiences are provided. All Leaders should have as their first priority the children's safety and enjoyment of triathlon and should adhere to the guidelines and regulations set out in the *Pulse Triathlon Club Safeguarding Code*.

Leaders should respect the rights, dignity and worth of every child and must treat everyone equally, regardless of gender, age, ability, disability, social class, race, religion, etc.

Leaders working with young people in triathlon should have the appropriate experience or hold the necessary qualifications. Leaders will be expected to go through appropriate recruitment and selection procedures, whether paid or unpaid. Garda Vetting procedures should be followed for all those with regular access to young people. For those 'new' to the organisation references will be needed and will be followed up.

There will be a 'sign-up' procedure, whereby the appointed/reappointed leaders agree to abide by *Pulse Triathlon Club's Safeguard Code* and to the policies and code of the conduct of Pulse Triathlon Club. You should know and understand the child protection policies and procedures in the Safeguard Code for Pulse Triathlon Club for Young People.

Once appointed the Leader should act as a role model and promote the positive aspects of triathlon and maintain the highest standards of personal conduct. Leaders should develop an appropriate relationship with young people, based on mutual trust and respect. Remember your behaviour to athletes, other officials and opponents will have an effect on the athletes in your care. You should report any concerns you have to the lead officer in your organisation, contacts at back of this document.

### **Being a role model**

- You will be required to display high standards of language, manner, punctuality, preparation and presentation
- Ensure that athletes in your care respect the rules. Insist on fair play and ensure athletes are aware you will not tolerate cheating or bullying behaviour
- Encourage the development of respect for opponents, officials and other leaders and avoid criticism of fellow leaders and coaches. Do not criticise other leaders.
- The use of illegal drugs, alcohol and tobacco must be actively discouraged as they are incompatible with a healthy approach to sporting activity. Leaders should avoid the use of alcohol and illegal substances before coaching, during events, while supervising trips with young athletes and providing a duty to care.
- Leaders should never smoke in front of junior athletes



- Leaders should never use bad language in front of junior athletes

### **Protection for leaders**

- Leaders are responsible for setting and monitoring the boundaries between a working relationship and friendship with athletes. It is advisable for leaders not to involve young athletes in their personal life i.e. visits to leaders' homes or overnight stays. It is important to realise that certain situations or friendly actions could be misinterpreted by the participant or by outsiders.
- Avoid working alone and ensure there is adequate supervision for all activities.
- Where possible, work in an open environment and ensure that any physical contact is appropriate and has the permission or understanding of the young person. Physical contact should only occur where it is necessary and is of benefit and assistance to the athlete
- Care must be taken not to expose a child intentionally or unintentionally to embarrassment or disparagement by use of sarcastic or flippant remarks about the child or his/her family.
- Physical punishment or physical force must never be used. Never punish a mistake - by verbal means, physical means, or exclusion.

### **A positive environment**

- Be generous with praise and never ridicule or shout at athletes for making mistakes or for losing a race. All young athletes are entitled to respect.
- Be careful to avoid the "star system". Each child deserves equal time and attention.
- Remember that young athletes participate for fun and enjoyment and that skill development and personal satisfaction have priority over highly structured competition. Never make winning the only objective.
- Set realistic goals for the participants and do not push young athletes. Create a safe and enjoyable environment.
- When approached to take on a new athlete, ensure that any previous coach-participant relationship has been ended in a professional manner.
- It is advisable to get agreement from a parent/guardian when young athletes are invited into adult groups/squads. Boundaries of behaviour in adult groups are normally different from the boundaries that apply to junior groups/squads.
- Leaders who become aware of a conflict between their obligation to their athletes and their obligation to the club/organisation must make explicit to all parties concerned the nature of the conflict and the loyalties and responsibilities involved.
- Leaders should communicate and co-operate with medical and ancillary practitioners in the diagnosis, treatment and management of their athletes' medical or related problems. Avoid giving advice of a personal or medical nature if you are not qualified to do so. Any information of a personal or medical nature must be kept strictly confidential unless the welfare of the child requires the passing on of this information.
- The nature of the relationship between leader and a participant can often mean that a leader will learn confidential information about an athlete or athlete's family. This information must be regarded as confidential and, except where abuse is suspected, must not be divulged to a third party without the express permission of the athlete/family.

## **Code of Conduct for Leaders**

Leaders should familiarise themselves with the Code, in particular this Code of Conduct. Leaders should read below and agree to abide by these terms.

### **As a leader in triathlon I agree that I should:**

- Be positive during sessions and competitions, praise and encourage effort as well as results.
- Put the welfare of young person first, strike a balance between this and winning / results.
- Encourage fair play and treat participants equally.
- Recognise developmental needs, ensuring activities are appropriate for the individual.
- Plan and prepare appropriately.
- Be committed to values & guidelines of this Safeguarding Code for Pulse Triathlon Club and / or hold up-to-date qualifications.
- Involve parents where possible and inform parents when problems arise.
- Keep a record of attendance at training and competitions.
- Keep a brief record of injury(s) and action taken.
- Keep a brief record of problem/action/outcome, if behavioural problems arise.
- Report any concerns in accordance with this Code's reporting procedures.

### **Where possible I will avoid:**

- Spending excessive amounts of time with children away from others.
- Taking sessions alone.
- Constant communication with individual athletes by mobile phone or email.
- Taking children to my home.
- Taking children on journeys alone in my car.

### **Sports Leaders should not:**

- Use any form of physical punishment or physical force on a child.
- Exert undue influence over a participant in order to obtain personal benefit or reward.
- Engage in rough physical games, sexually provocative games or allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any kind, and /or make sexually suggestive comments about, or to a child. This includes innuendo, flirting or inappropriate gestures and terms.
- Take measurements or engage in certain types of fitness testing without the presence of another adult.
- Undertake any form of therapy (hypnosis etc.) in the training of children.

## **Disciplinary, Complaints and Appeals Procedure for Pulse Triathlon Club**

Complaints in relation to young people, their coaches and their parents involved in any of Pulse Triathlon Club events may be dealt with under the “Section 3 - Competition Rules” contained within the Triathlon Ireland Manual of Guidance ‘disciplinary action’ contained in part 3.13.

- Complaints should be received in writing by the Children’s Officer of Pulse Triathlon Club.
- The complaint should outline all relevant details about the parties involved.
- The complaint should be brought to the attention of the Club Chairperson, who may convene a disciplinary committee.
- If the complaint involves the possibility of a criminal offence, the Children’s Officer and/or Designated Liaison Person will follow the reporting procedure in the Sport Ireland Code of Ethics, Chapter 5 (in particular 5.10 – 5.12). The statutory authorities will then be informed
- The appropriate disciplinary committee should hear the case of all parties involved and decide if a rule or regulation of the Code has been infringed.
- They should, in writing, inform those involved of the sanctions to be imposed. Written notification should be given to parents if the complaint is against a junior member.
- Records should be kept on file by Pulse Triathlon Club in accordance with data protection legislation. The appropriate case management records will be held by the Children’s Officer of Pulse Triathlon Club.
- If any party does not agree with the disciplinary findings the appropriate appeals process can be invoked.
- The appeals committee shall have the power to confirm, set aside or change any sanction imposed by the disciplinary committee.

If, after the disciplinary process, a person is to be suspended, the Club will carry out a risk assessment to decide the level of protection needed for juniors and any future juniors working with any accused persons. The Club will decide if it will terminate any individual’s membership of the Club.

## **Recruitment & Supervision Policy for Sports Leaders/Volunteers**

Pulse Triathlon Club will take all reasonable steps to ensure that adults working with young people are suitable and appropriately qualified. Recruitment and/or supervision procedures will apply to all persons with regular access to young people, whether paid or unpaid. A decision to appoint a Leader is the responsibility of Pulse Triathlon Club and not of any one individual within it. The relevant committees should ratify all recommendations for appointment.

### **Pulse Triathlon Club will use the following as a suitable procedure:-**

- The responsibilities of the role and the level of experience/qualifications required should be drawn up and clearly stated.
- Once voted / nominated to a position the Leader should be made aware of the Code of Conduct as it relates to young people and any related guidelines within this document. This involves newly recruited volunteers and all volunteers assigned by the club/Triathlon Ireland for that season.
- Existing Leaders will sign the appropriate code of conduct (form 10), including the self-declaration questions (form 8). Leaders will also be required to undergo Garda vetting.
- New Leaders should fill in an information form, giving names of two referees that can be contacted and answering the self-declaration questions. Leaders will also be required to undergo Garda vetting.
- Where appropriate there will be an induction process, this will be done in an informal manner with members of Pulse Triathlon Club, perhaps at a junior event. Following this, a probationary period is most likely.
- Adequate supervision will be combined with good recruitment, avoiding the Leader having to work alone.
- Vetting forms are available in the Safeguarding section of the Triathlon Ireland website <http://triathlonireland.com/Resources/Safeguarding/GV-EVET-Invite-ID-Validation.pdf>
- Positive disclosures or information received about an individual through vetting does not necessarily effect the Leaders recruitment. Each disclosure is managed on a case-by-case basis with the Leader and through the organisation. A risk assessment will be carried out. The organisation will record all decisions in a fair manner and natural justice will apply.
- Failure to comply with the above recruitment procedure can disqualify the Leader from selection or appointment to a position.

Every effort will be made to manage and support appointed Leaders. Coaching courses and workshops will be provided, codes of conduct will be made available and vetting procedures will be implemented.

## **General Guidelines with Children**

### **Travelling**

There is extra responsibility taken on by leaders when they travel with children to events. When travelling with young people you should:

- Ensure that there is adequate insurance cover.
- Not carry more than the permitted number of passengers.
- Ensure use of safety belts.
- Avoid being alone with one participant. Put the passenger in the back seat, drop off at central locations or seek parental permission to transport an individual participant on a regular basis and clearly state times of pick- up and drop off.

### **Supervision**

- Make sure there is an adequate adult:child ratio. This will depend on the nature of the activity, the age of the participants, any special needs of the group and away trips. As a guide a ratio of 1:8 for under 12 years of age and 1:10 for participants over 12 years of age.
- Where there are mixed groups on a regular basis there should be leaders of both genders.
- Avoid being alone with one participant, if you need to talk separately do so in an open environment, in view of others.
- Supervision of changing rooms if necessary, (where children are very young or need special assistance), should be in pairs of appropriate gender.
- Clearly state time for start and end of training sessions or competitions, leaders should remain in pairs until all participants have been collected.
- Keep attendance records and record of any incidents / injuries that arise.
- Facilitate parents who wish to stay and supervise sessions, (for safety and supervision, not necessarily for their 'technical' expertise).

### **Away trips / Overnight stays**

- Separate permission forms should be signed by parents and participants, containing emergency contact number(s).
- Young participants should sign a behaviour agreement.
- Appoint a group leader who will make a report on returning home.
- A meeting with parents and participants may be used to communicate travel times, competition details, other activities, gear requirements, medical requirements, special dietary needs and any other necessary details.
- Rooming arrangements – adults will not share rooms with children. Children should share rooms with those of same age and gender and adults should knock before entering rooms.
- All group socialisation should take place in communal areas (i.e. no boys in girls' rooms and vice versa).
- Alcoholic drink, smoking or any illegal substances are forbidden to athletes.
- There should be at least one adult of each gender with a mixed party, there should be a good adult – child ratio, 2:10, and proper access to medical personnel.
- Lights out times should be enforced.
- Young athletes should be under reasonable supervision at all times and should never leave the venue or go unsupervised without prior permission.

## **Safety**

Please refer to Pulse Triathlon Club's Safety Statement, including specific and potential risks attached to triathlon, for further detail. In addition Pulse Triathlon Club will:

- Ensure activities are suitable for age and stage of development of participants.
- Keep a record of any specific medical conditions of the participants.
- Keep a record of emergency contact numbers for parents / guardians.
- Ensure any necessary protective gear is used.
- Ensure First Aid kit is close at hand with access to qualified first-aider.
- Know the contact numbers of emergency services.
- Keep first aid kit appropriately stocked.
- Ensure easy access to medical personnel if needed and have an emergency plan.
- If an incident occurs, make a brief record of injury and action taken. Make a brief record of the problem/action/outcome. Contact the participant's parents and keep them informed of all details.
- Expect officials (technical/organisers, etc.) to ensure the conduct of the race.
- Expect participants to know and keep the etiquette guidelines of triathlon, keeping in mind that many rules are in place for the safety and enjoyment of the race.
- Check that Leaders hold appropriate qualifications required by the governing body.
- Ensure there is adequate insurance cover for all activities.
- Ensure parents / guardians are present at finishing time of sessions or events.

## **Physical Contact**

Triathlon on occasion requires a 'hands on approach', especially in a teaching or coaching situation, e.g., it may be necessary to assist a young person with instruction on swim technique but the following will be taken into consideration:

- Leaders will avoid unnecessary physical contact.
- Any necessary contact should be in response to the needs of the child and not the adult.
- It should be in an open environment with the permission and understanding of the participant.
- It should be determined by the age and developmental stage of the participant – A Leader won't do something that a child can do for themselves.
- Leaders should not engage in inappropriate touching.

## **Late Collection**

If a parent is late to collect a child Pulse Triathlon Club will contact the parent using the emergency contact number. If there is no answer Pulse Triathlon Club will ask the child if there is another family member to contact. The Leaders will wait with the young person at the club or venue, preferably with other staff or volunteers. The Leaders will remind parents of the policy in relation to good practice and supervision. Continual later collection will be dealt with under the parents' code of behaviour.

## **Guidelines on use of Photographic and Filming Equipment**

Pulse Triathlon Club has adopted a policy in relation to the use of images of athletes on their websites and in other publications as part of its commitment to providing a safe environment to young people. Pulse Triathlon Club will take all necessary steps to ensure that young people are protected from the inappropriate use of their images in resource and media publications, on the internet and elsewhere. This is not to avoid parents/guardians taking photographs of their children but to ensure that best practice is put in place wherever and whenever photographs and recorded images are taken and stored. Pulse Triathlon Club requests that all parents/guardians sign a Waiver in respect of the use of photographs and videos taken or made by the club's designated photographers, who have been garda vetted.

Pulse Junior Members and parents/guardians also agree to adhere to our photograph/video policy and agree not to post photographs/videos of other junior members on social media, without the consent of the other junior member and his/her parent/guardian.

### **Pulse Triathlon Club will endeavour to:**

- Inform athletes and parents that a photographer may be in attendance at a training session or an event and ensure they consent to both the taking and publication of films or photographs.
- Ask for parental permission to use the athlete's image and consult with the athlete about its usage.
- Ensure the content of the photograph focuses on triathlon and not on a particular child.
- Not approve/allow photo sessions outside the events or at an athlete's home.

Videoing as a coaching aid: Video equipment can be used as a legitimate coaching aid. However, permission will first be obtained from the athlete and the athlete's parents.

Anyone concerned about any photography taking place at events or training sessions can contact the Lead Officer and ask them to deal with the matter.

## **Mobile Phones**

Young people value their mobile phones as it gives them a sense of independence. They can often be given to young people for security to enable parents to keep in touch. However, technology has enabled direct personal contact between adults and young people and in some cases adults have used this to cross personal boundaries and cause harm. Pulse Triathlon Club has agreed the following guidelines to encourage safe usage of mobile phones:

### As a leader:

- Use group texts for communication among athletes and teams and inform parents of this at the start of the season, tournament or event.
- It is not appropriate or acceptable to have constant contact with an individual athlete.

- Do not use your phone in inappropriate locations, such as changing rooms, especially if your phone has a camera.

As a young athlete:

- If you receive an offensive message, email or photo DO NOT reply to it. Save it, make a note of times and dates and tell a parent, lead officer or responsible adult that you trust.
- Be careful about whom you give your number or email address to and DO NOT respond to unfamiliar numbers/addresses.
- Don't use your phone in inappropriate locations, such as changing rooms, especially if your phone has a camera.
- Treat your phone as you would any valuable item so that you can guard against theft.

## **Social Media**

Young People are becoming increasingly sophisticated in their use of communication tools on the internet such as social networking sites, internet enabled camera phones and video and photograph sharing websites. Social media/networking refers to online communities where people from all over the world can meet and share common interests.

The information posted to any of these types of sites can be public and viewed by anyone. This should encourage individuals to only post information they are comfortable with sharing with strangers. However often young people do not recognise the dangers of this and will treat the site as a means of personal interaction where they expose detailed information about themselves.

Children must be encouraged to be careful with the type of information they post to such sites. Where a site is public it should be used to transmit very general information only and not to become a personal conversation. Pulse Triathlon Club encourages the safe use of social media sites, especially the Pulse Triathlon Club Facebook page.

Any information posted to social media sites should not contain any personal facts or details. Even networking sites viewed by invitation only can be infiltrated by potential abusers; parents should understand the need for monitoring content and any public interactions involving children to be moderated. Young people must be actively discouraged from entering into private exchanges with unknown individuals. Leaders in *Pulse Triathlon Club* should not interact with an U18 in any inappropriate manner. This form of communication would not be suitable to discuss performances.

Further information on the safe use of the internet, email and social media sites can be found on the website: [www.internetsafety.ie](http://www.internetsafety.ie)



## **Bullying**

Bullying can occur between an adult and young person and young person to young person. In either case it is not acceptable within Pulse Triathlon Club. The competitive nature of triathlon can create an environment that provides opportunities for bullying. The bully may be a parent who pushes too hard, a coach who adopts a win-at-all costs philosophy, a young athlete who intimidates another or an official who places unfair pressure on a person.

Bullying can only survive in an environment where the victim does not feel empowered to tell someone who can help or in which it is not safe to do so. The damage inflicted by bullying can frequently be underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to young people, to the extent it affects their health and development, or at the extreme, causes them significant harm. Pulse Triathlon Club has agreed the following guidelines to help prevent bullying:-

### **Pulse Triathlon Club will**

- Encourage all members to follow the **Code of Conduct**, which promotes the rights and dignity of each member.
- Deal with any incidents as they arise.
- Use a whole group policy or 'no-blame approach', i.e. not 'bullying the bully' but working with bullies and the group of young people, helping them to understand the hurt they are causing, and so make the problem a 'shared concern' of the group.
- Reinforce that there is 'a permission to tell' culture rather than a 'might is right'.
- Encourage young people to negotiate, co-operate and help others, particularly new or children with specific needs.
- Offer the victim immediate support and put the 'no blame approach' into operation.
- Never tell a young person to ignore bullying, they can't ignore it. It hurts too much.
- Never encourage a young person to take the law into their own hands and beat the bully at his/her own game.
- Tell the victim there is nothing wrong with them and it is not their fault.

For further information on bullying and the 'no-blame' approach see website, [www.sportireland.ie](http://www.sportireland.ie)

The guidelines above are those of Pulse Triathlon Club.

The guidelines below are in relation to an incident that cannot be dealt with within Pulse Triathlon Club as there may be risk of harm to a young person. In such cases statutory guidelines will be followed for dealing with a concern in relation to the welfare and protection of a child.

## **Child Welfare and Protection Procedures**

Pulse Triathlon Club accepts that organisations, which include young people among its members, are vulnerable to the occurrence of child abuse. Below are the procedures for dealing with any welfare or protection issue that may arise. Child welfare and the protection of young people is the concern of all adults at all times, irrespective of their role within the organisation.

If there are grounds for concern about the safety or welfare of a young person you should react to the concern. Persons unsure about whether or not certain behaviours are abusive and therefore reportable, should contact the duty social worker in the local health services executive or social services department where they will receive advice. Grounds for concern include a specific indication from a child, a statement from a person who witnessed abuse or an illness, injury or behaviour consistent with abuse.

A report may be made by any member in the organisation but should be passed on to the Designated Liaison Person, who may in turn have to pass the concern to the local Statutory Authorities. It is not the responsibility of anyone working within Pulse Triathlon Club to take responsibility or decide whether or not child abuse is taking place. That is the job of the local statutory authorities. However, there is a responsibility to protect children by assisting the appropriate agencies so that they can then make enquiries and take any necessary action to protect the young person.

Everyone should follow both procedures outlined below, firstly the procedure for responding to a child in distress and secondly the procedure for reporting the concern.

### **Response to a Child Disclosing Abuse**

When a young person discloses information of suspected abuse you should:

- (a) Deal with any allegation of abuse in a sensitive and competent manner through listening to and facilitating the child to tell about the problem, rather than interviewing the child about details of what happened.
- (b) Stay calm and don't show any extreme reaction to what the child is saying. Listen compassionately and take what the child is saying seriously.
- (c) Understand that the child 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 child will not mind talking to those involved in the investigation.
- (d) Be honest with the child and tell them that it is not possible to keep information a secret.
- (e) Make no judgmental statements against the person whom the allegation is made.
- (f) Do not question the child unless the nature of what s/he is saying is unclear. Leading questions should be avoided. Open, non-specific questions should be used such as "Can you explain to me what you mean by that".
- (g) Check out the concerns with the parents/guardians before making a report unless doing so would endanger the child.
- (h) Give the child some indication of what would happen next, such as informing parents/guardians, police or social services. It should be kept in mind that the child may have been threatened and may feel vulnerable at this stage.
- (i) Carefully record the details.
- (j) Pass on this information to the Designated Liaison Person.
- (k) Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you.

## **Reporting Suspected or Disclosed Child Abuse**

The following steps should be taken in reporting child abuse to the statutory authorities:

- (a) Observe and note dates, times, locations and contexts in which the incident occurred or suspicion was aroused, together with any other relevant information.
- (b) Report the matter as soon as possible to the Designated Liaison Person within the organisation who has responsibility for reporting abuse. If the Designated Liaison Person has reasonable grounds for believing that the child has been abused or is at risk of abuse, s/he will make a report to the local social services that have statutory responsibility to investigate and assess suspected or actual child abuse.
- (c) In cases of emergency, where a child appears to be at immediate and serious risk and the Designated Liaison Person is unable to contact a duty social worker, the police authorities should be contacted. Under no circumstances should a child be left in a dangerous situation pending intervention by the Statutory Authorities.
- (d) If the Designated Liaison Person is unsure whether reasonable grounds for concern exist s/he can informally consult with the local social services. S/he will be advised whether or not the matter requires a formal report

A Designated Liaison Person reporting suspected or actual child abuse to the Statutory Authorities will first inform the family of their intention to make such a report, unless doing so would endanger the child or undermine an investigation

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 Health Services Executive or the Gardaí. The act also covers the offence of 'false reporting'. The main provisions of the Act are:

1. The provision of immunity from civil liability to any person who reports child abuse "reasonably and in good faith" to designated officers of Health Service Executive or any member of An Garda Síochána
2. The provision of significant protections for employees who report child abuse. These protections cover all employees and all forms of discrimination up to and including, dismissal
3. The creation of a new offence of false reporting of child abuse where a person makes a report of child abuse to the appropriate authorities "knowing that statement to be false". This is a new criminal offence designed to protect innocent persons from malicious reports

## **Allegations against Sports Leaders**

Pulse Triathlon Club has agreed procedures to be followed in cases of alleged child abuse complaints concerning Leaders. If such an allegation is made against a Sports Leader working within the organisation, two procedures will be followed:

- The reporting procedure in respect of suspected child abuse (reported by the Designated Liaison Person), see previous page.
- The procedure for dealing with the Sports Leader (carried out by the organisation's chair or senior officer, or a person not already involved with the child protection concern).

The safety of the child making the allegation should be considered and the safety of any other children who may be at risk. The organisation will take any necessary steps that may be needed to protect children in its care.

The issue of confidentiality is important. Information is on a need to know basis and the Sports Leader will be treated with respect and fairness.

While the Designated Liaison Person makes the report to the local statutory authorities, the Club Chairperson should deal with the Leader in question.

- Pulse Triathlon Club will privately inform the Leader that (a) an allegation has been made against him / her and (b) the nature of the allegation. He / she should be afforded an opportunity to respond. His / her response should be noted and passed on to the social services
- The Leader may be asked to step aside pending the outcome of the investigation. When a person is asked to step aside it will be made clear that it is only a precautionary measure and will not prejudice any later disciplinary proceedings

Disciplinary action on the Leader may be considered but this will not interfere with the investigation of the Statutory Authorities. The outcome of the investigation and any implications it might have will be considered. The fact that the alleged abuser has not been prosecuted or been found guilty does not automatically mean that they are appropriate to work with young people in the future.

Irrespective of the findings of the Statutory Authorities, the Pulse Triathlon Club Disciplinary Committee will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member should continue or 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 Pulse Triathlon Club Disciplinary Committee will 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 children. The welfare of the child will remain of paramount importance throughout. Pulse Triathlon Club may need to disclose information to ensure the protection of young people in its care.

## **Confidentiality**

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

Pulse Triathlon Club will consider the following when discussing concerns:

- A guarantee of confidentiality or undertakings regarding secrecy cannot be given, as the welfare of the child will supersede all other considerations.
- All information should be treated in a careful and sensitive manner and should be discussed only with those who need to know.
- Information should be conveyed to the parents / guardians of the child in a sensitive way.
- Giving information to others on a 'need to know' basis for the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality.
- 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 the Designated Liaison Person and appropriate committee members.
- The requirements of Data Protection laws should be adhered to.
- Breach of confidentiality is a serious matter.

## **Anonymous Complaints / Rumours**

Anonymous complaints can be difficult to deal with but will not be ignored. Rumours should **not** be allowed to hang in the air. All concerns relating to inappropriate behaviour should be brought to the attention of the Designated Liaison Person and any such complaints brought to the attention of the Lead Officer will be dealt with. The information should be checked out and handled in a confidential manner. In all cases the safety and welfare of the child/children is paramount.

### **Pulse Triathlon Club Relevant Persons 2019**

Club Chairperson: Niall Byrne 087 2242224

Designated Liaison Person: Jennifer Shorten 083 1051501

Club Children's Officer Liz O'Connor 086 3165006

Junior Welfare Officer: Dee Needham 087 2674171