

# Boyne Hockey Club

## Child Protection Policies

### Children First Act 2015

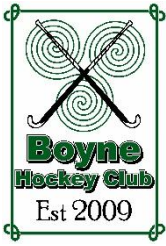
An Act for the purposes of making further and better provision for the care and protection of children and for those purposes to require the preparation, by certain providers of services to children, of child safeguarding statements; to require certain persons to make reports to the Child and Family Agency in respect of children in certain circumstances; to require certain persons to assist the Child and Family Agency in certain circumstances; ... [19th November, 2015]

Following the publication by the government of the Children’s First Act (2015) Boyne Hockey Club policy is responsible for ensuring that all coaches/volunteers/mandated persons and designated liaison persons have completed relevant courses to support them in their role.

To facilitate the successful and sustainable operation of Boyne Hockey Club and to provide for a safe and enjoyable environment of children, parents/guardians, sports leaders and all involved in the club, the following policies are in place:

Child Safeguarding Statement .....	2
Creating A Child Friendly Environment .....	3
Role of Relevant Persons .....	4
Child Welfare and Protection .....	7
Allegations of Abuse Against Sports Leaders .....	9
Communication within Boyne HC.....	11
Overnight & Away Trips.....	12

Boyne HC policies relating to protecting children and the community from COVID-19 are documented in the COVID Policies document available separately.



# Boyne Hockey Club

## Child Safeguarding Statement

Hockey Ireland provides various sporting activities and opportunities for young people through participation in clubs, regional/provincial events and through our national teams.

**Boyne Hockey Club** (BHC) is committed to safeguarding children and by working under the guidance of Hockey Ireland Safeguarding Policies our staff, both volunteers and employed, working with our young people, throughout the organisation, seek to create a safe environment for young people to grow and develop.

This Club's (**Boyne Hockey Club**) written Risk Assessment document indicates the areas of potential risk of harm, the likelihood of the risk occurring, and gives the required policy, guidance or process documents require to alleviate these risks. The list of risks identified are contained in the following categories: Club and Coaching Practices; Complaints & Discipline; Reporting Procedures; Use of Facilities; Recruitment; Communications; and General Risk of Harm. The Risk Assessment was undertaken on 06<sup>th</sup> Sept 2019

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. 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 our activities.

**Boyne Hockey Club** 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

We recognise that implementation is an ongoing process. Our Club 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.

This Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed by September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

The Relevant Person for *BHC* is **Sonya Collier, Club President**

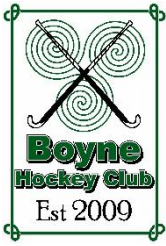
Signed:

Date:

(On behalf of *Boyne Hockey Club*)

Name: Sonya Collier

Phone no: 086 8939121



# Boyne Hockey Club

## Creating A Child Friendly Environment

### Introduction

Team sports provide children with opportunities to learn many life skills, e.g. communication, co-operation, friendship, team work. Through participation in sport children's physical, social and personal skills can develop. Those opportunities can materialise if a child friendly environment is created. The Sports Council ([www.irishsportsCouncil.ie](http://www.irishsportsCouncil.ie)) has identified core values and principles that are essential in children's sport. These are based on what research has identified as benefitting the development of children and on the UN Charter of the Rights of the Child (<http://www.childrensrights.ie/childrens-rights-ireland/un-convention-rights-child>). When working with children in sport it is essential to take account of the following:

### The importance of play and fun in childhood

Opportunities to play, enjoy themselves and have fun are essential for healthy child development. Sport is an activity where play, fun and enjoyment can be integral to it. However, this must be consciously planned for. Children's sport needs to use this as a guiding principle.

### The needs of the child

It is always essential to keep in mind the stage of development and the ability of the child. Account needs to be taken of the concentration levels and the language skills of the child, so instructions should be given in a way that the child can readily understand and follow, and activities may need to be short and varied.

Children need to feel that they matter in the club/ team so that they can develop a sense of belonging. This can be particularly important for a child who does not know many of the other children in the club. They need to feel secure for them to develop.

### Adult / Child Relationships

Sports leaders are in a position of trust and influence and should be positive role models in how they treat all the members of the group. Leaders need to treat all the children with respect, dignity and sensitivity. Children need to feel able to give their opinions, ask for help and be listened to. The interactions should encourage the children and build their self- esteem. Abuse of any kind is totally wrong and unacceptable.

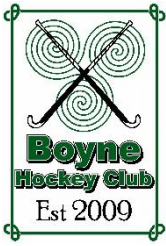
### Equality

Children should be treated equitably and in a fair manner, regardless of ability, family background, or ethnicity. Particular sensitivity needs to be shown to children with disabilities to ensure that they have opportunities to participate. We need to strike a balance between children's desire to win and children's right to participate regardless of ability. Other children's attitudes to a child with a disability will be influenced by the leader's attitude.

### Fair Play

The principle of fair play should be emphasised. Each child should feel a part of the team and know that they will have chances to fairly participate. Participation, effort and enjoyment should be stressed rather than winning.

Children should be encouraged to play in a fair way. The European Code of Sports Ethics defines fair play as "much more than playing within the rules. It incorporates concepts of friendship, respect for others and always playing within the right spirit".



# Boyne Hockey Club

## Role of Relevant Persons

### CLUB CHILDREN'S OFFICER (CCO)

Club Children's Officers should be child centred in focus and have as the primary aim, the establishment of a child centred ethos within the club. S/he is the link between the children and the adults in the club. S/he also takes responsibility for monitoring and reporting to the Club Management Committee on how club policy impacts on young people and Sports Leaders.

The Children's Officer should be a member of or have access to, the Club Management Committee. The Children's Officer should have the following role:

- To ensure the principles of the Children's First Act are enshrined in all roles undertaken by CCO, Designated Liaison Person (DLP), Mandated Person (MD), Board Members, Parents & Coaches.
- To promote awareness of the code within Boyne Hockey Club, among young members and their parents/guardians.
- To influence policy and practice within the club in order to prioritise children's needs
- Establish contact with the National Children's Officer with Hockey Ireland.
- To ensure that children know how to make concerns known to appropriate adults or agencies.
- To encourage the appropriate involvement of parents/guardians in the club activities
- To act as an advisory resource to Coaches/Volunteers on best practice in children's sport
- To report regularly to the Club Management Committee
- To ensure that the children have a voice in the running of their club and ensure that there are steps young people can take to express concerns about their sports activities / experiences.
- Establish communication within the club regarding child protection, e.g. facilitate parent's information sessions at the start of the season
- Keep records on each member on file, including junior members, their contact numbers and any special needs of the child that should, in the context of hockey, be known to leaders.
- Ensure each member signs up to the code of conduct annually.
- Ensure that the club rules and regulations include:
  - Child safety statement
  - Risk Assessment
  - Garda Vetting Procedures
  - Coach Education Policy
  - Complaints, disciplinary and appeals procedures
  - An anti-bullying policy
  - Rules in relation to traveling with children
  - Supervision and recruitment of coaches/volunteers

### DESIGNATED LIAISON PERSON (DLP)

Boyne Hockey Club has designated a person to be responsible for dealing with any concerns about the protection of children. The designated person is responsible for reporting allegations or suspicions of child abuse to Health Services Executive/Tusla and An Garda Síochána. It is recommended that this person is a senior club person. However, if there is difficulty identifying a separate individual to take this role, the Children's Officer can be appointed as designated person once the club/organisation is clear about the responsibilities of each role.

The organisation's child protection policy and procedures should include the name and contact details of the designated person and the responsibilities attached to the role.

The Designated Liaison Person should have the following role:

- Have knowledge of the Children's First Act (2015)
- Have knowledge of the Code of Ethics and statutory guidelines
- Have a knowledge of categories and indicators of abuse
- Undertake training in relation to child protection (Safeguarding 2 Training).
- Be familiar with and able to carry out reporting procedures as outlined in the code
- Communicate with parents and/or agencies as appropriate
- Assist with the ongoing development and implementation of the organisation's child protection training needs
- Liaise with the national children's officer in relation to child protection training needs
- Be aware of local contacts and services in relation to child protection, i.e. principal and duty social workers and their contacts
- To inform local duty social worker in the Health Services Executive Local Area Board / local Social Services and/or An Garda Síochána/PSNI of relevant concerns about individual children, using the Standard Reporting Form, (see Appendix 6). Keep a copy of this form and ensure acknowledgement of receipt of this form
- Report persistent poor practice to the National Designated Person
- Advise club administrators on issues of confidentiality, record keeping and data protection.

## **MANDATED PERSON (MP)**

From 11<sup>th</sup> December 2017, The Children's First Act 2015 places a legal obligation on certain people, many of whom are professionals, to report child protection concerns at or above a defined threshold to Tusla - the Child and Family Agency. The Department of Children and Youth Affairs and Tusla have developed a suite of resources to support the full implementation of the Act.

Mandated Persons have 2 legal objectives under the Act:

- To report the harm of children to Tusla;
- To assist Tusla, if requested, in assessing a concern which has been the subject of a mandated report.

## **Mandated Reporting**

Mandated Persons have a legal responsibility to report if a child is being harmed, has been harmed or is at risk of being harmed, to the point where the child's health, development or welfare have been or are being seriously affected, or are likely to be seriously affected, or where a child believes that he/she has been harmed, is being harmed, or is at risk of being harmed, and discloses this belief to a Mandated Person.

'Harm' is defined in the Children First Act 2015 as:

- assault, ill-treatment or neglect of the child in a manner that seriously affects, or is likely to seriously affect the child's health, development or welfare, or,
- sexual abuse of the child.

Mandated reports should be submitted to Tusla using the required report form, on which you should indicate that your report is a mandated report. If your concern does not reach the above threshold for mandated reporting, but you still have reasonable grounds for concern about the welfare or protection of a child, you should still report that concern to Tusla but do not tick the mandated report box.

As a mandated person, you should be aware that the legal obligations under the Children First Act 2015 to report mandated concerns rest with you and not anyone else. You may make a report jointly with any other person who has concerns about the same child.

## **Mandated Assisting**

Tusla may request assistance from mandated persons when assessing a concern which has been the subject of a mandated report, regardless of who made the report.

Assistance will be relevant where a mandated person's existing knowledge of a child and/or their family are essential to the assessment or where a mandated person's professional expertise is required to ensure that the child's best interests are met. It may be that a verbal telephone report is sufficient or that the mandated person is asked for copies of existing reports, records or correspondence. Tusla may also request that a mandated person contributes their own professional report to the overall social work assessment.

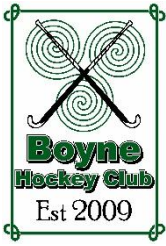
## **SHARING INFORMATION**

If you are required to share information with Tusla when assisting in the assessment of risk to a child, you are protected from civil liability under Section 16 (3) of the Children First Act 2015.

Section 17 of the Children First Act 2015 provides that information shared by Tusla must not be disclosed to a third party unless authorised by Tusla in writing.

All Mandated Persons must read chapter 3 of [Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017](#).

Children's Officers/Designated Persons do not have the responsibility of investigating or validating child protection concerns within the club/organisation and have no counselling or therapeutic role. These roles are filled by the Statutory Authorities as outlined in Children First and Our Duty to Care. It is, however, possible that child protection concerns will be brought to the attention of the Children's Officer. In this event, it is essential that the correct procedure is followed.



# Boyne Hockey Club

## Child Welfare and Protection

Boyne Hockey Club accepts that organisations, which include young people among its members, are vulnerable to the occurrence of child abuse and neglect. 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.

### Definitions of the 4 categories of abuse:

**Neglect** – an omission, where a child suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults, medical care.

**Emotional abuse** – occurs when a child's need for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met and is normally found in the relationship between care-giver and a child rather than a specific event or pattern of events.

**Physical abuse** – any form of non-accidental injury or injury which results from wilful or neglectful failure to protect a child.

**Sexual abuse** – occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or sexual arousal or for that of others.

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 certain behaviours are abusive and therefore reportable, should contact the club Designated Person, unless the concern is about that individual. In that case they should contact the Branch or Hockey Ireland Designated Person. If they are not happy with the response, they can contact the duty social worker directly. Grounds for concern include a specific indication of physical, emotional, sexual abuse or neglect from a child, a statement from a person who witnessed abuse/neglect or an illness, injury or behaviour consistent with abuse.

A report may be made by any member in the club but should be passed on to the Designated Person, who may in turn have to pass the concern to the local Statutory Authorities. It is not the responsibility of anyone working within Boyne HC, in a paid or voluntary capacity, to decide whether child abuse is taking place. That is the responsibility 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/NEGLECT

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

- Respond in a sensitive way to abuse through listening to and facilitating the child to tell about the problem, rather than interviewing the child about details of what happened.
- Stay calm and not show any extreme reaction to what the child is saying. Listen compassionately and take what the child is saying seriously.
- 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/assessment

- Be honest with the child and tell them that it is not possible to keep information a secret.
- Make no judgmental statements against the person against whom the allegation is made
- 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”.
- Give the child some age appropriate indication of what would happen next, such as informing parents/guardians, HSE or social services. If you don’t know what would happen next, don’t say anything. It should be kept in mind that the child may have been threatened and may feel vulnerable at this stage.
- Carefully record the details. Pass on this information to the Designated Person within your club.
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you.

## **REPORTING SUSPECTED OR DISCLOSED CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT**

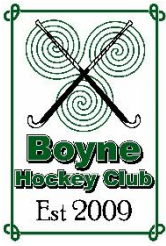
The following steps should be taken in reporting child abuse/neglect to the statutory authorities:

- Observe and note dates, times, locations and contexts and any action taken in which the incident occurred, or suspicion was aroused, together with any other relevant information.
- Report the matter as soon as possible to the Designated Person within the club who has responsibility for reporting abuse.
- The most appropriate person should check out the concerns with the parents/guardians before making a report unless doing so would endanger the child.
- If the Designated 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 HSE/Social Services who have statutory responsibility to investigate and assess suspected or actual child abuse.
- Report can be made verbally initially and followed up in writing using the standard reporting form.
- In cases of emergency, where a child appears to be at immediate and serious risk and the Designated 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.
- If the Designated Person is unsure whether reasonable grounds for concern exist s/he can informally consult with the HSE/Social Services. S/he will be advised whether the matter requires a formal report. If a decision is made not to report the concern this should be recorded with reasons for not reporting.
- A Designated 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** includes:

- The provision of immunity from civil liability to anyone who reports child abuse “reasonably and in good faith” to designated officers of Health Service Executive or any member of An Garda Síochána.
- The provision of significant protection for employees who report child abuse. These protections cover all employees and all forms of discrimination up to and including dismissal.
- 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.





# Boyne Hockey Club

## Allegations of Abuse Against Sports Leaders

Boyne Hockey Club has agreed procedures to be followed in cases of alleged child abuse against Leaders. For the purpose of this document the definition of Sports Leaders includes, but is not limited to, BHC club officers, coaches, volunteers, umpires or designated persons. If such an allegation is made against a Boyne Hockey Club Sports Leader, two procedures should be followed:

- The reporting procedure in respect of the young person (reported by the Designated Person)
- The procedure for dealing with the Sports Leader (carried out by the club chair or Children's Officer, or a person not already involved with the child protection concern)

The safety of the child making the allegation or the child for whom there is concern should be the first and paramount consideration and the safety of any other children who may be at risk. Boyne Hockey Club should take any steps necessary to protect children in its care. The protection should be in proportion to the level of risk.

All persons involved in a child protection process (the child, his/her parents/guardians, the alleged offender, his/her family, Sports Leaders) should be afforded appropriate respect, fairness, support and confidentiality at all stages of the procedure. Parents should be informed.

### The Reporting Procedure

The Designated Person may consult with the local HSE/Social Services informally to seek confirmation that there is reason for concern. If the Designated Person has reasonable grounds for concern, the matter should be documented and reported to the local HSE / Social Services, following the standard reporting procedure and the parents should be informed. Refer to the Child Welfare and Protection Policy.

### Procedure for Dealing with the Sports Leader

Before the Designated Person refers the report to the local HSE/Social Services, the Club President should deal with the Leader in question. Unless there is an immediate risk to the child and/or other young people in which case the Leader in question will be informed at the earliest opportunity which may be after the concern has been reported to the Statutory Authorities.

- When the concern is connected to the actions of a sports leader in the club, the person should be asked to stand aside pending the outcome of any investigation by the Statutory Authorities.
- Where there is an allegation against a Sports Leader representing BHC, the BHC President will deal with the Leader in question, unless the allegation is against the BHC President. In that case the Children's Officer will deal with the Leader in question.
- The person should be treated with respect and fairness. The BHC President should inform the person privately that an allegation has been made against him/her and provide the nature of the allegation.
- The person should be asked to stand aside pending the outcome of any investigation by the Statutory Authorities. 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.
- (S)he should be afforded an opportunity to respond. His/her response should be noted and passed on to the Statutory Authorities. The Sports Leader is entitled to natural justice i.e. an entitlement to a fair and reasonable hearing within a reasonable time by an independent and impartial tribunal.

Disciplinary action on the Leader should be considered but this should not interfere with the investigation of the Statutory Authorities. The follow up on an allegation of abuse against a sports leader should be in consultation with the Statutory Authorities. If it is deemed not to be a concern reportable to the Statutory Authorities but instead an incident of poor practice, the complaints procedure as outlined in Complaints and Appeals Procedure should be followed. It is important to consider the outcome of the investigation and any implications it might have. 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.

### **Anonymous Complaints**

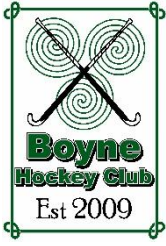
Anonymous complaints can be difficult to deal with but should not be ignored. In all cases the safety and welfare of the child/children is paramount. Any such complaints relating to inappropriate behaviour should be brought to the attention of the Designated Person. The information should be checked out and handled in a confidential manner.

### **Rumours**

Rumours should not be allowed to hang in the air. Any rumours relating to inappropriate behaviour should be brought to the attention of the Children's Officer or the Designated Person and checked out without delay.

### **Other Complaints**

For all other complaints, not related to abuse or suspected abuse of children or vulnerable people, please refer to the Complaints and Appeals policy (see Club Administration Policies document).



# Boyne Hockey Club

## Communication within Boyne HC

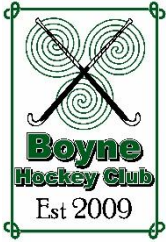
Boyne Hockey Club (BHC) is committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for all young people who wish to participate in our Club. We aspire to ensuring that our coaches, volunteers, parents, child protection officer(s), mandated persons and Board members have the adequate skills, knowledge and confidence to carry out their role in a competent manner.

Communication amongst Coaches, Volunteers, Parents, Club Children's Officer, Mandated Persons, Designated Liaison Person and Board Members is crucial to ensure that children's safety remains central.

BHC is committed to ensuring the Children's First Act (2015) is implemented in a meaningful manner with coaches and parents that are competent and informed in their role.

Communication is crucial in the successful running of BHC and communication processes can be done in the following ways:

- Talking to the coaches, volunteers, parents, relevant persons & board members. We encourage frequent and open face to face communication with players and parents / guardians. In this way, the identification and discussion about potential child protection issues will be more successful.
- The Club website (<https://boynehockey.ie/>) is available to all members and non-members. Club documents, policies, forms are stored there, and news of club activities will appear on the site. The names of the people filling key roles, including those relating to child protection, are available via the website.
- The names and contact information for the Club Children's Officer and the Designated Person are displayed on the notice board in the club house.
- WhatsApp groups used to communicate updates on training activities, blitz's and matches and other team and club news. It is also used to communicate between coaches, committees, etc. WhatsApp communication should be with parents or guardians and not directly with players under 18 playing within the Junior hockey groups. WhatsApp is not a suitable communication medium to discuss potential child protection issues.
- The club also provides updates via social media on club news, matches, etc. Social media, such as Facebook, is not an appropriate place to share information or discuss potential child protection issues.
- Members may contact the club via email to [boynehockeyclub@gmail.com](mailto:boynehockeyclub@gmail.com). If the subject specifically relates to child protection, please contact the Club Children's Officer or Designated Person directly. If necessary, email [boynehockeyclub@gmail.com](mailto:boynehockeyclub@gmail.com) requesting contact with the Club Children's Officer or Designated Person without providing details of the specific concern.



# Boyne Hockey Club

## Overnight & Away Trips

### Introduction

All BHC coaches/volunteers/parents have a responsibility to ensure the safety of the players with whom they work as far as possible within the limits of their control. There are additional responsibilities placed on adults accompanying teams in relation to the organisation of away trips and overnights.

### The following general guidelines should be followed:

All adults who travel on away trips with responsibility for children on behalf of Boyne Hockey Club should be carefully chosen and appropriately vetted. Written permission of parents/guardians shall be required for all overnight trips.

A meeting with parents and participants is useful to communicate travel times, competition details, other activities, gear requirements, medical requirements, special dietary needs and any other necessary details. Ground rules and behavioural expectations can also be discussed.

- The roles and responsibilities of adults participating in away trips should be clearly defined. Participants should sign a behaviour agreement.
- Any group socialisation should take place in communal areas (i.e. no boys in girls' rooms and vice versa). Lights out times should be enforced.
- Alcoholic drink, smoking and other illegal substances/activities shall be forbidden, and adults are expected to act as appropriate role models in this respect.
- BHC should appoint a team manager/head of delegation for all away trips having overall responsibility for the children's well-being, behaviour and sleeping arrangements. Children should be informed at the outset to whom they can report any concerns they might have and shall be clearly encouraged to tell anybody if they should have a concern.
- On away trips, coaches should be accountable to the appointed team manager/head of delegation in all non-performance related matters. Where there are mixed teams there should be at least one female in the management/coaching structure.
- Adults should never share a room with a child (unless it is their own). Where the presence of an adult is absolutely necessary due to accommodation arrangements this should be agreed with parents/guardians in advance and arrangements made to ensure there should be an agreed number of children in the room with the adult. If children are sharing, it should be with those of the same age and sex. Adults should respect children's privacy and knock before entering rooms.
- Best practice is to ensure two coaches are on site for each team. Adequate child ratios should always be maintained (this can depend on the ages of the children, the nature of the activity or any special needs of the group) Guide 1:12. Ensure adequate supervision at all times. Avoid being alone with one child. If talking separately, do so in an open environment, in view of others.
- Ensure that there is adequate insurance cover for the trip and that any incidents are correctly reported. The team manager / head of delegation should submit a report as soon as possible after the trip recording any incidents/accidents or simply recording that no incidents arose.
- Parents/Guardians should be informed as soon as possible if their child suffers any significant injury, accident or becomes unwell.