



Kilkenny Arch Club

Kilkenny Arch Club Policies and Procedures

Contents

1. Child Protection Statement
2. Confidentiality Statement
3. Safe Practices
4. Code of Behaviour
5. Anti-Bullying Code
6. Recruitment Procedures
7. Role of Child Protection Officer
8. Complaints Procedure
9. Dealing with Disclosures
10. Reporting Procedure
11. Allegations against Volunteers
12. Accidents Procedures
13. Procedures on Trips Away

Appendix:

Definitions of Child Abuse (per Children First)

1. CHILD PROTECTION STATEMENT

It is the policy of the Arch Club Kilkenny to safeguard the well being of all children by protecting them from physical, sexual, emotional harm and neglect.

The wellbeing of our children in all situations is of paramount importance. To this end our Child Protection Policy provides guidelines for good practice and procedures in the following areas:

1. Safe Practices
2. Code of Behaviour
3. Anti Bullying Code
4. Recruitment Procedure
5. Accidents and Complaints Reporting
6. Dealing with Disclosures
7. Reporting Procedures

2. CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

Confidentiality is about managing information in a respectful, professional and purposeful manner. Confidentiality should be maintained in respect of all issues and people involved in concerns about the welfare of a child or bad practice within a club. It is important that the rights of both the child and the person about whom the complaint has been made are protected.

1. Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned.
2. All information regarding concern of child abuse should be shared on a “need to know” basis in the interests of the child.
3. No undertaking regarding secrecy can be given.
4. Giving information to others for the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality.
5. Information that is gathered for one purpose must not be used for another without consulting the person who provided that information.
6. Any records of concerns, complaints, or disclosures will be kept in a confidential file in a secure place with access only to designated people i.e. child protection officer and/or club chairperson.

Parents, volunteers and all club members will be made aware that all such records are kept strictly confidential.

3. SAFE PRACTICES

For the safe day to day running of the club and to minimise opportunities for accidents or harm to happen to the children the following are club policy:

Good Management:

1. Careful attention is given to application of criteria for admission of new members, volunteers or workers. (ie supply of Atlanto-axial clearance, volunteer Garda vetting etc., before admission to club.)
2. Careful attention is given to the gathering, recording and sharing of necessary information about children's needs, abilities, medical conditions etc., (ie parents or carer must attend club and should a parent/carer need to leave the club during session it must be notified in advance to the group leader and an emergency number given.)
3. Careful attention is given to the necessary preparation, support or training of all workers/volunteers (people rostered for duty will have been given orientation training with necessary information about children, activities, emergency information, first aid box etc.)

Supervision of Children:

1. Activities will be chosen that are age and ability appropriate.
2. Children should not be left unattended.
3. Adults on duty know at all times where children are and what they are doing.
4. Adults on duty are clearly identifiable.
5. Where needed and subject to the number of volunteers available the Club will try to operate a 1:1 adult: child ratio. This may be altered going forward subject to the number of volunteers available and the needs of the children e.g. where reduced attendance requires fewer as per constitution. Some children will indefinitely require one to one supervision and this need will be reviewed and identified before a meeting/outing.

Attention to Health and Safety:

1. Attention is paid to the general condition and safety of the physical environment, equipment and transport used during club activities.
2. Access to areas that may be considered unsafe (i.e. kitchen), may be restricted.
3. Administration of Medicines. Adults/Volunteers are not authorised to administer medicines.

4. CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

It is important that our behaviour reflects the child-centred ethos of our club.

1. All parents, workers, volunteers and children will be given guidance on what is expected and what is not accepted with respect to behaviour within the club.
2. Physical contact is a valid way of comforting, reassuring and showing concern for children but it should only take place when it is acceptable to all concerned.
3. Workers/Parents/Volunteers should be sensitive to the risks involved in participating in

- contact sports or other activities.
4. Workers/Parents/Volunteers should never physically punish or be in any way verbally abusive to a child. All members, i.e. children and parents are requested to note club policy of no slapping, shouting, name calling or ridiculing of any sort.
 5. Workers /Parents/Volunteers should not use language of a sexual nature in the presence of children.
 6. Workers/Parents/Volunteers should encourage children to report cases of bullying to either a designated person or a worker of their choice.
 7. No child should be left alone with any volunteer or no child should be taken alone in a car.
 8. No child should be left alone at the end of the club day. In the event the parent/carer is unable to remain for the duration of the club session, two workers should stay with the child until the designated parent/person collects the child.

Never

1. Engage in rough physical games that make a child uncomfortable, including horseplay, even in structured sports activities.
2. Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form.
3. Allow children or adults to use inappropriate language unchallenged (subject to how the child's diagnosis presents).
4. Allow children or adults to use inappropriate physical force unchallenged (as above, subject to diagnosis).
5. Let allegations made by a child go unchallenged or unrecorded.
6. Do things of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves.
7. Show favouritism.

Behaviour Management

Unacceptable or inappropriate behaviour by a child will be discussed with parents and suitable/necessary behaviour management will be decided upon in accordance with our constitution.

Signed:..... Date:

5. ANTI-BULLYING CODE

The Arch Club Kilkenny shall:

1. Provide a place where every member can feel secure
2. Provide a place where it is known that bullying is not acceptable behaviour
3. Provide a place where name calling is not tolerated
4. Provide a place where no one suffers abuse of any nature
5. Provide a place where no one is victimised
6. Provide a place where each member is supported and listened to
7. Provide a place where it is each member's responsibility to ensure that all are treated equal
8. Provide a place where solutions to problems are the concern of all

Children are Entitled to:

1. Be treated with dignity and respect and be valued as individuals.
2. Be safe and to feel safe, be listened to and be believed.
3. Get help against bullies.
4. Say NO, protect their own bodies, refuse inappropriate touch.
5. Be involved in decision-making, as appropriate.
6. Be encouraged, praised and empowered.

6. RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES

The majority of people who apply to work in the Kilkenny Arch Club are either parents or people interested, well motivated and suitable for the various tasks involved. It is, nonetheless, essential that we, as a group, take all reasonable steps to ensure that only suitable people are recruited to work with young people. Unfortunately, persons with a propensity to child abuse are frequently attracted to positions and organisations that offer them access and the opportunity to spend time with children and young people. We therefore need to have a proper selection procedure as follows:

Each new applicant should

1. Complete an appropriate application form which will include personal details, past and current work/volunteering experience and any qualifications or skills relevant to the post. It will also include a declaration relating to past criminal records. It will also list references which may be followed up with a telephone call.
2. Be required to sign a declaration stating that there is no reason why they would be unsuitable to work with young people.
3. Be briefed on their duties and responsibilities. They must be given a copy of our Child Protection Policy and they must sign up to our Code of Behaviour.
4. Documentation must be received confirming the identity of the applicant, such as a long birth cert or a passport or driving licence.
5. All applicants will be called for an informal interview to explore information contained in the application form and to check out attitudes.

7. THE ROLE OF THE CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER

Role

The role of the Child Protection Officer is to:

1. Provide information and advice on child protection within the club.
2. Ensure that the club's child protection policy and procedures are followed and, particularly, to inform the Health
3. Service Executive of reasonable concerns about individual children.
4. Ensure appropriate information is available at the time of referral and that the referral is confirmed in writing, under confidential cover.
5. Liaise with HSE/Garda Síochána and other agencies as appropriate.
6. Keep relevant people informed within the organisation, particularly the chairperson of the club.
7. Ensure that an individual case record is maintained of the action taken by the club, the liaison with other agencies and the outcome.
8. Advise the club of child protection needs. The Child Protection Officer must be clear, familiar and at ease discussing any issues relating to child protection.

Responsibility

The Child Protection Officer is responsible for acting as:

1. A source of advice on child protection matters and should develop contacts with HSE and remain up to date on issues, training etc.,
2. For co-ordinating action within the club, and
3. For liaising with HSE and An Garda Síochána and other agencies about suspected or actual cases of child abuse.
4. Child Protection Officer (see Committee listing).

8. COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Who can make a complaint?

1. Children involved with the Kilkenny Arch Club
2. Their parents/carers.
3. Youth Workers/Volunteers.

How to make a Complaint:

1. If the complaint is in relation to the safety and welfare of children the complaint should be made to the Child Protection Officer.
2. Complaints of any other nature should be made to a committee member, and/or Child Protection Officer.
3. If a complaint is made about a club member/volunteer that person will be informed by the chairperson.

Information you need to Provide:

1. The name and address of the child affected.
2. If the complaint is being made by a parent/guardian or other adult the name and address of the parent/guardian or other adult.
3. Exactly what you are dissatisfied with.
4. The names of the Official(s) who dealt with you.
5. If your complaint is complicated, you may find it best to put it in writing so that no important detail is overlooked. Remember to send in copies of all relevant documentation/correspondence that you have.

Our Standards for Dealing with Complaints:

1. If the complaint relates to the safety and welfare of a child, it will be examined in accordance with good practice in relation to the safety and welfare of children.
2. We will treat your complaint properly, fairly and impartially and in the best interests of the child.
3. We promise that making your complaint will have no implications for your dealings with the Arch Club Kilkenny.
4. An official other than those originally involved will examine your complaint.
5. We will examine and review your complaint and send a reply to you within 20 working days of the receipt of your complaint. Where it is not possible to meet this target, we will inform you and continue to do so until the matter is resolved.
6. We will apologise for any mistreatment of the child, explain what happened and put it right wherever possible.
7. We will, where Committee agrees, change the way we do things to avoid making the same mistakes in future.

9. DEALING WITH DISCLOSURES

The following Actions should be taken:

1. Deal with any allegation of abuse in a sensitive and competent manner through listening to and facilitating the child to tell about the problem.
2. Stay calm and do not show any extreme reaction to what the child is saying and take it seriously.
3. Permit the child to speak without interruption, accepting what is said.
4. Reassure the child that they have taken the right action in telling.
5. Ask questions only for the purpose of clarification. Be supportive, but do not ask leading questions or seek intimate details beyond those volunteered by the child. Detailed investigative interviews will, if necessary, be carried out by HSE staff or members of an Garda Síochána.
6. Explain and ensure that the young person understands the procedures which will follow.
7. Any and all consultations with others should be entirely confidential and should not involve investigative procedures.
8. Record the conversation as soon as possible, in as much detail as possible and in the

child's own words. Sign, date and pass to Child Protection Officer (who will complete Standard Report Form and forward it to the duty social worker in the Health Service Executive).

9. Do not panic.
10. Do not make a judgement or make negative comments about the alleged abuser.
11. Do not promise to keep secrets.
12. Do not interview the child – do not probe for more information than is offered.
13. Do not make the child repeat the story unnecessarily.
14. Do not delay.

10. REPORTING PROCEDURE

Reasonable Grounds for Concern (per Dept of Health & Children)

The following examples would constitute reasonable grounds for concern:

1. A specific indication from a child that he/she was abused.
2. A statement from a person who witnessed abuse.
3. An illness, injury or behaviour consistent with abuse.
4. A symptom, which may not in itself be totally consistent with abuse, but which is supported by corroborative evidence of deliberate harm or negligence.
5. Consistent signs of neglect over a period of time.

Everyone must be alert to the possibility that children with whom we are in contact may be being abused. Concerns should be reported as follows:

1. Observe and note dates, locations and contexts in which the incident occurred or suspicion was aroused, together with any other relevant information.
2. Report the matter as soon as possible to the Child Protection Officer.
3. The Child Protection Officer should raise the matter immediately to the Chairperson of the Committee, and subsequently it will be jointly agreed the nominated person to speak to the parents, and other relevant parties.
4. If the Child Protection Officer and Chairperson has reasonable grounds for believing that the child has been abused or is at risk of abuse, he/she will make a report to the Duty Social Worker in the child's local HSE office, who have a statutory responsibility to investigate and assess suspected or actual child abuse. (Reasonable Grounds for Concern per Children First)
5. If the Child Protection Officer and Chairperson is unsure whether reasonable grounds for concern exist or not, s/he should informally consult with the local duty social worker. /he will be advised whether or not the matter requires a formal report.
6. In cases of emergency, where a child appears to be at immediate and serious risk and the Child Protection Officer and Chairperson 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.
7. A Child Protection Officer and Chairperson reporting suspected or actual child abuse to the HSE should first inform the parents of their intention to make such a report, unless doing so would endanger the child or undermine an investigation.
8. A report should be made to the HSE in person or by phone, and in writing without delay.

The Standard Reporting Form will be completed by the Child Protection Officer and the person who raised the issue/concern. A copy will be kept safely and securely.

9. It is best to report child abuse concerns by making personal contact with the relevant personnel in the HSE and follow up with the written report.
10. If the Child Protection Officer decides that a concern raised does not warrant reporting to the HSE our policy is that the concern should be recorded, dated and filed securely.
11. Any concern raised at club level will be brought to the attention of the child/young person's parent/caregiver.
12. If the person raising the concern is not satisfied he/she can report their concern to HSE. In this case the Child Protection Officer must provide a written account of why he/she decided against reporting.

The Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998 provides protection to anyone making a report of child abuse "reasonably and in good faith" to Designated Officers of the HSE or to a member of the Gardaí.

11. ALLEGATIONS AGAINST VOLUNTEERS

There are two procedures to be followed when allegations of abuse are made against volunteers:

1. The reporting procedure in respect of the child
2. The procedure for dealing with the alleged abuser
3. The Child Protection Officer will deal with the procedure in respect of the child as already outlined on page 3.
4. The Chairperson/Designated other will deal with the procedures in respect of the Volunteer.

Where an allegation is made against the Child Protection Officer, who is a volunteer, the allegation should be made to the Chairperson, or to the HSE.

1. The standard procedure for reporting allegations to the Health Service Executive should be followed.
2. This action should be based on an opinion formed reasonably and in good faith.
3. When an allegation is received it should be assessed promptly and carefully.
4. A decision will need to be made whether a formal report should be made to the HSE. This decision will be made by the Child Protection Officer.
5. At no time will child/young person be left in immediate danger or at risk of abuse and suspension of volunteer/worker may be necessary pending investigation
6. The Volunteer should be informed in private by the Club Chairperson that an allegation has been made against him/her and the nature of the allegation.
7. He/she should be afforded the opportunity to respond. His/her response should be noted and passed on to the HSE if a formal report is being made.
8. The Volunteer should be afforded appropriate respect, fairness, support and confidentiality at all stages of the procedure.
9. An allegation against another child/ young person or volunteer under 18 must be dealt with as 2x Child Protection cases/issues.

12. ACCIDENTS PROCEDURE

1. Emergency Numbers of Parents/Carers to be kept in the Attendance Book in the club. Parents/carers who unexpectedly have to leave their child must advise the group leader in advance of their departure and provide an emergency contact number which should be noted in the Attendance Book.
2. First Aid Box must be kept in the kitchen.
3. An incident book will be kept with the First Aid Box in the kitchen.
4. All accidents must be recorded in the Incident Book – Date, time, nature of accident, procedures followed etc.
5. All Parents/Carers must submit a list of persons, with contact numbers, authorised to collect their child/children in the event they are unexpectedly called away and the parent/carer is unable to stay on the premises. This list will be kept with the Attendance Book.

13. PROCEDURE ON TRIPS AWAY

1. Full list of all in attendance (Including volunteers and parents).
2. Contact details for parents of children.
3. Contact details of venue given to parents.
4. Medical details of children.
5. First Aid Box must be at hand.

Appendix

Definition and Recognition of Child Abuse

Introduction

Child abuse can be categorised into four different types: neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse. A child may be subjected to more than one form of abuse at any given time. The National Guidelines have adopted the following definitions of child abuse:

Neglect

Neglect is normally defined in terms of 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, or medical care.

Harm can be defined as the ill treatment or the impairment of the health or development of a child. Whether it is significant is determined by his/her health and development as compared to that which could reasonably be expected of a similar child.

Neglect generally becomes apparent in different ways over a period of time rather than at one specific point. For instance a child who suffers a series of minor injuries is not having his/her needs met for supervision and safety. A child whose on-going failure to gain weight or whose height is significantly below average may be being deprived of adequate nutrition. A child who consistently misses school may be being deprived of intellectual stimulation. The threshold of significant harm is reached when the child's needs are neglected to the extent that his or her well being, and or development, is severely affected.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is normally to be found in the relationship between a caregiver and a child rather than a specific event or pattern of events. It occurs when a child's needs for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met. It is rarely manifested in terms of physical symptoms. Examples of emotional abuse include:

1. Persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming.
2. Conditional parenting in which the level of care shown to a child is made contingent on his or her behaviour or actions.
3. Emotional unavailability by the child's parent/carer.
4. Unresponsiveness, inconsistent or inappropriate expectations of a child.
5. Premature imposition of responsibility on a child.
6. Unrealistic or inappropriate expectations of a child's capacity to understand something or to behave and control himself in a certain way.
7. Under or over protection of a child.
8. Failure to show interest in or provide age appropriate opportunities for a child's cognitive and emotional development.
9. Use of unreasonable or overly harsh disciplinary measures.
10. Exposure to domestic violence.

Children show signs of emotional abuse by their behaviour (for example, excessive clinginess

to, or avoidance of the parents/carer), their emotional state (low self esteem, unhappiness), or their development (non-organic failure to thrive). The threshold of significant harm is reached when abusive interactions become typical of the relationship between the child and parent/carer.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is any form of non-accidental injury that causes significant harm to a child, including:

1. Shaking
2. Use of excessive force in handling
3. Deliberate poisoning
4. Suffocation
5. Munchausen's syndrome by proxy (where parents fabricate stories of illness about their child or cause physical signs of illness)
6. Allowing or creating a substantial risk of significant harm to a child.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or sexual arousal, or for that of others. For example:

1. Exposure of the sexual organs or any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of a child
2. Intentional touching or molesting of the body of a child whether by a person or object for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification
3. Masturbation in the presence of a child or involvement of the child in the act of masturbation
4. Sexual intercourse with the child, whether oral, vaginal or anal
5. sexual exploitation of a child
6. Consensual sexual activity between an adult and a child under 17 years. In relation to child sexual abuse, it should be noted that, for the purpose of criminal law, the age of consent to sexual intercourse is 17 years. This means, for example, that sexual intercourse between a 16-year-old girl and her 17-year-old boyfriend is illegal, although it might not be regarded as constituting child sexual abuse.

Recognising Child Abuse

The ability to recognise child abuse depends as much on a person's willingness to accept the possibility of its existence as it does on knowledge and information. It is important to note that child abuse is not always readily visible, and may not be as clearly observable as the "text book" scenarios outlined in these guidelines suggest. The recognition of abuse normally runs along three stages:

1. Considering the possibility
If a child appears to have suffered an inexplicable and suspicious looking injury, seems distressed without obvious reason, displays unusual behavioural problems or appears fearful in the company of parents/carers.
2. Observing signs of abuse

A cluster or pattern of signs is the most reliable indicator of abuse. Children may make direct or indirect disclosures, which should always be taken seriously. Less obvious disclosures may be gently explored with a child, without direct questioning (which may be more usefully carried out by the health board or An Garda Síochána). Play situations such as drawing or story telling may reveal significant information. Indications of harm must always be considered in relation to the child's social and family context, and it is important to always be open to alternative explanations.

3. Recording of information

It is important to establish the grounds for concern by obtaining as much detailed information as possible. Observations should be recorded and should include dates, times, names, locations, context and any other information which could be considered relevant or which might facilitate further assessment/investigation.