

Athlone Golf Club Safeguarding Policy Statement

Athlone Golf Club is fully committed to safeguarding the wellbeing of its members.

Every individual in golf should at all times, show respect and understanding for member's 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 and Golf's Safeguarding Policy*.

In working with young people in golf 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.

Disciplinary, Complaints & Appeals Procedure for Designated Liaison Person (DLP), Club Children's Officer (CO)

Non-safeguarding concerns may be dealt with under the 'disputes' rule contained within the Club's Constitution. Any such complaints received in relation to PGA members will be referred to the PGA for consideration.

- If any party does not agree with the disciplinary finding 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
- The appropriate disciplinary committee should hear the case of all parties involved and decide if a rule or regulation 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

Safeguarding Complaints

The majority of concerns will be poor practice issues and should be dealt with by the club, but for those complaints that cause serious grounds for concern the National DLP should be contacted for further advice and the Golf Safeguarding Policy reporting procedures will be followed.

Any safeguarding concerns within golf clubs should be made to their CCO or DLP.

Complaints should be received in writing/email by the National DLP of the union, CGI or the PGA Lead Compliance Officer. (See appendix 11 for contact details)

The complaint should outline all relevant details about the parties involved

If the complaint involves the possibility of a criminal offence, the DLP will follow the Policy's reporting procedure. The DLP is responsible for reporting any allegations to the statutory authorities.

The DLP may convene a disciplinary committee (including 3 members involved with junior golf at club level).

While maintaining confidentiality, the appropriate disciplinary committee with safeguarding knowledge, should hear the case of all parties involved and decide if behaviour has breached Golf's Safeguarding Policy.

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 of poor practice complaints should be kept on file by the club until the young person concerned becomes a full member within golf. The PGA will hold appropriate case management records in relation to their own members and staff at their national headquarters in accordance with data protection legislation.

Recruitment & Supervision Policy for Golf Leaders/Volunteers

Athlone Golf Club will take all reasonable steps to ensure that adults representing them and working with juniors are suitable to do so and are appropriately qualified, experienced and motivated.

Recruitment and/or supervision procedures will apply to all persons with substantial access to juniors, whether paid or unpaid.

A decision to appoint a Leader is the responsibility of the Club and not of any one individual within it. The relevant committees will ratify all recommendations for appointment.

The responsibilities of the role and the level of experience/qualifications required should be drawn up and clearly stated

Once voted / nominated to an elected position the Leader should be made aware of the code of conduct as it relates to juniors and any related guidelines within this document. This involves newly recruited volunteers and all volunteers assigned by the Club for that season. Existing Leaders will sign the appropriate code of conduct, including the self- declaration questions, (see appendix 3). Leaders will also be requested to undergo Garda Vetting in the Republic of Ireland.

Safeguarding 1 course must be completed, firstly on a face to face basis and then an online refresher course every 3 years until the 9th year which will require the face to face course being completed again.

New Leaders should fill in an information form, giving names of two referees that can be contacted and answering the self-declaration questions. (See appendix 1). For regulated position (i.e. working directly with children) you will also be asked to undergo Garda vetting

Where possible there should be an induction, this can be done in an informal manner with members of the junior committee, perhaps on a junior competition day. Following this, a probationary period is advisable.

Adequate supervision should always be provided; a Leader should not have to work alone

Every effort should be made to manage and support appointed Leaders. Coaching courses and workshops will be provided; codes of conduct will be made available and Garda Vetting will be implemented.

Athlone Golf Club's Anti-Bullying Policy Statement

Bullying can occur between an adult and young person and young person to young person. In either case, it is not acceptable within Golf. The competitive nature of golf 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 player who intimidates another or an official who places unfair pressure on a person.

Golf's Anti-Bullying Policy and Guidance (appendix 8) applies to all – juniors, adults, parents, coaches and any others who help and assist within golf and golf activities.

Code of Conducts

The codes of conduct are for junior members, parents and leaders involved in activities organised by Athlone Golf Club. The welfare of the child is paramount.

Juniors Code of Conduct

Athlone Golf Club wishes to provide the best possible environment for all juniors involved in the sport. Juniors 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. Juniors have responsibilities to treat other participants and Golf Leaders with fairness and respect.

Guidelines for Parents

To help your child have a positive experience remember to:

- Focus on what your child wants to get out of golf
- Be the best role model you can be
- Help your child achieve their potential

- Be respectful of other children and coaches
- Communicate with the coach and club

Parents are expected to co-sign their child's code of conduct form (appendix 4 and the specific parental code of conduct form/guidelines for parent's appendix 6)

Leaders Code of Conduct

Leaders should familiarise themselves with Athlone Golf Club's Safeguarding Policy, in particular this code of conduct. Leaders should read and agree to abide by these terms. Leaders must complete this Code of Conduct (appendix 3) annually.

Guidelines: for Golf Leaders. (Including professional, coach, convenor etc.)

Athlone Golf Club recognises the key role leaders (professionals, coaches, convenors, captains, selectors and team managers, etc.) play in the lives of juniors in sport. Leaders in golf 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 golf and should adhere to the guidelines and regulations set out in the Golf's Safeguarding Policy.

Leaders should respect the rights, dignity and worth of every junior and must treat everyone equally, regardless of gender reassignment, age, sex, race, ability, religion or belief, social and ethnic background or political persuasion etc.

Leaders working with juniors in golf should have the appropriate experience or hold the necessary qualifications. Leaders will be expected to go through an appropriate recruitment and a selection procedure, whether paid or unpaid. Vetting checks must be undertaken to comply with legislation, for those in ROI Garda Vetting should be successfully completed every 3 years for all those working with or in contact with juniors on a regular and continuous basis. For those 'new' to the organisation references will be required and will be followed up.

There will be a 'sign-up' procedure, whereby the appointed/reappointed leaders agree to abide by Athlone Golf Club's Safeguarding policy.

The Leaders Code of Conduct must be completed annually. You should know and understand the junior protection policies and procedures in Golf's Safeguarding Policy.

Once appointed the Leader should act as a role model and promote the positive aspects of golf and maintain the highest standards of personal conduct. Leaders should develop an appropriate relationship with juniors, based on mutual trust and respect. Remember your behaviour to players, other officials, and opponents will influence the players in your care. You should report any concerns you have to the DLP in the Club.

Being a role model

- You will be required to display high standards of language, manner, punctuality, preparation and presentation
- Ensure that players in your care respect the rules of the game. Insist on fair play and ensure players are aware you will not tolerate cheating or bullying behaviour
- Encourage the development of respect for opponents, officials, selectors and other leaders and avoid criticism of fellow professionals 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 juniors and providing a duty to care

Reducing Risk

It is important that leaders build a good working relationship with juniors they are coaching but ensure this relationship remains professional and in accordance with the Club's Safeguarding Policy and the Leaders Code of Conduct. (appendix 3)

- Leaders are responsible for setting and clearly stating the boundaries between a working relationship and friendship with players. It is advisable for leaders not to involve juniors in their personal life i.e. visits to leaders' homes to ensure that they reduce the risk of their behaviour being misinterpreted by the participant or others
- Avoid working alone and ensure there is adequate supervision for all activities
- Where possible work in an open environment and ensure that physical contact is appropriate and has the permission or understanding of the junior
- Care must be taken not to expose a junior intentionally or unintentionally to embarrassment or disparagement by use of sarcastic or flippant remarks about the junior or his/her family
- Physical punishment or physical force must never be used. Never punish a mistake - by verbal means, physical means, or by exclusion

A positive environment

Be generous with praise and never ridicule or shout at players for making mistakes or for losing a game. All juniors are entitled to respect.

Be careful to avoid the "star system". Each junior deserves equal time and attention

Remember that juniors play for fun, enjoyment and competition. Never make winning the only objective.

Set realistic goals for the participants and do not push juniors. Create a safe and enjoyable environment .

When approached to take on a new player, ensure that any previous coach- participant relationship has been ended in a professional manner

When juniors are invited into adult groups, it is advisable to get agreement from a parent/guardian. Boundaries of behaviour in adult groups are normally different from the boundaries that apply to junior groups.

- Leaders who become aware of a conflict between their obligation to their players and their obligation to the club 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 players' 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 junior 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 a player or player'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 player/family

Photographic Image Guidelines

Athlone Golf Club has adopted guidelines (appendix 9) for consideration in relation to the use of images of junior Golfers on its website and in other publications as part of its commitment to providing a safe environment to juniors. Golf will take all necessary steps to ensure that juniors are protected from the inappropriate use of their images in resource and media publications, on the internet and elsewhere.

This guidance is for anyone with responsibility for the publication of official photography (including videos) of children involved in golfing activities or events.

Golf benefits from using images of young participants to promote and celebrate activities, events and competitions. Parents and children generally welcome opportunities to celebrate or publicise their achievements. Some leaders/ coaches may want to use photographs or videos as a tool to support a young athlete's skill development.

However, the use of photos and videos on websites and social media, and in posters, the press or other publications, can pose direct and indirect risks to children and young people if not managed correctly.

Clubs wishing to use or permit the use of images of children involved in their activities must therefore follow the good practice guidelines outlined in appendix 9 to safeguard children.

What are the risks?

- Children may be identified, located, groomed or contacted
- Taking or producing inappropriate or illegal images of children

Video recording as a coaching aid: Video equipment can be used as legitimate coaching aid. However, permission should first be obtained from the player and the player's parent.

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

General Guidelines with Juniors

Travelling

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

- Inform parents who will be transporting their child, why and how long the journey will take.
- Attempt to have more than one child in the car.
- Alternate drivers if possible and which child is dropped off last.
- Ensure the driver has a point of contact/mobile phone.
- Have a person other than the planned driver talk to the child about transport arrangements to check they are comfortable about the plans.
- Ensure that they have insurance to carry others.
- Ensure drivers representing and volunteering on behalf of a club are vetted through Garda Vetting Bureau if driving regularly, and therefore meeting the regulated activity criteria.
- Consider the need for booster seats.
- Parents and coaches can also download Sport Ireland's Safeguarding App.

http://irishsportsCouncil.ie/Participation/Code_of_Ethics/Code-Of-Ethics-App/. One of the features of the App is a 'Travel Tracker' function. This allows parents and coaches who are driving someone

else's child/children home for example after a training session, to permit the child's parent or guardian to view and have oversight of their journey

Booster Seats

From 2006, the law in Europe requires all children in cars, vans and other goods vehicles to be carried using an appropriate child restraint until either they have reached the age of 12 years or are 150cm (5' in Republic of Ireland) or whichever comes first with very few exceptions. The European law allowed countries to opt for minimum height of between 135cm and 150cm.

For more information visit;

www.rsa.ie

Supervision

- Make sure there is an adequate adult: child ratio. This will depend on the nature of the activity, the age of the participants and any special needs of the group. As a guide, use a ratio of 1:8 for under 12 years of age and 1:10 for participants over 12 years of age. This is only a guide and will change depending on the circumstances, e.g. players with special needs or away trips
- Where there are mixed groups 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
- Leaders should not need to enter the changing rooms unless juniors are very young or need special assistance, where supervision 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 records 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 and any other relevant information.
- Young participants should sign a Code of Conduct agreement
- Appoint a group leader who will make a report on returning home to the club committee who organised the trip.

- 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
- Rooming arrangements – adults should not share rooms with juniors. Juniors 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)
- Alcohol, smoking or any illegal substances are not permitted to players
- There must be at least one adult of each gender with a mixed party, there should be a good adult – child ratio, 1:5/6
- Lights out times should be enforced
- Juniors should be under reasonable supervision at all times and should never leave the venue or go unsupervised without prior permission

Safety

Athlone Golf Club has a safety statement, including specific risk assessments linked to the activity. They also have procedures in place for safeguarding against such risks.

In addition, the club should:

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 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
- Officials (convenors and referees, etc.) should ensure good conduct at all times.
- Participants should know and keep the etiquette guidelines of golf, keeping in mind that many rules are there for safety.

Leaders should 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

Golf on occasion requires a 'hands on approach', especially in a teaching or coaching situation, e.g., it may be necessary to assist a junior when learning how to grip the club for the first time, but the following should be taken into consideration

Avoid unnecessary physical contact

- Any necessary contact should be in response to the needs of the junior and not the adult
- It should be in an open environment with the permission and understanding of the participant and parent/guardian.
- It should be determined by the age and developmental stage of the participant - Don't do something that a child can do for themselves
- Never engage in inappropriate touching

Late Collection

It is important to have some clear and easy guidelines if a parent is late to collect a junior, such as, contact the parent using the emergency contact number. If there is no answer, ask the junior if there is another family member to contact. Wait with the junior at the club or venue, preferably with other staff or volunteers. Remind parents of the policy in relation to good practice and supervision.

Adults and Juniors playing together

One of the reasons for the popularity of golf is that the game is not restricted either competitively or socially by skill, age or gender. Golf can be enjoyed and keenly contested by players from and between any number and/or apparently diverse groups. That this diversity, almost unique to golf, is encouraged is essential to ensure the continuity of one of the most endearing traditions of the game. Every effort must be made to promote this mix of physical and technical ability.

Responsible interaction between adults and juniors helps bring mutual respect and understanding and helps the standards of the club to be understood and maintained. Nevertheless, when playing golf with a junior, the adult should always be aware that certain age-related differences do exist and should conduct themselves in a manner that recognises this.

Juniors playing on the course without adults

Athlone Golf course has a number of unmanned access and egress points which limits the control of juniors playing alone or with another junior, but this in itself should not preclude the club from attempting to minimise potential problems involving juniors playing together. Athlone Golf Club should endeavour to have procedures in place for juniors to register in and out when using the golf club. This is to help ensure that they are aware when juniors are playing or on club premises.

If possible, it is advisable to have some method for juniors playing on their own or with another junior to sign in and out. If it is not practicable to hold a register, then at least permission should be gained from parents for their children to be on the club's premises by including this in their Code of Conduct. (appendix 4)

The Club is not responsible for providing adult supervision of juniors, except for formal junior golf coaching, matches or competitions

Changing Rooms

As golf clubs are seen as a recreational facility, members, visitors and juniors are entitled to the use of the changing rooms, this means that often people of all ages regularly need to change and shower during the same period.

Therefore, the following guidance in relation to adults and juniors using the changing rooms should be followed:

- Adults should exercise care when in the changing rooms at the same time as juniors
- Parents/guardians should be made aware that adults and juniors may need to share the changing facility. The parent/guardian should discuss this with their child ensuring their child is aware of who to talk to if any issues arise in unsupervised areas.
- Parents can choose to supervise their child while they change.
- If juniors are uncomfortable changing or showering in public, no pressure should be placed on them. Encourage them to do this at home.

Mobile Phones

Young people value their mobile phones as it gives them a sense of independence and they can often be given to young people for security to enable parents to keep in touch. However, technology has given direct personal contact between adults and juniors and in some cases adults have used this to cross personal boundaries placing themselves and young people at risk.

The following guidelines should be followed:

As a Leader

- Use group texts for communication among players 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 junior golfer.
- Don't use your phone in inappropriate locations, such as changing rooms, especially if your phone has a camera.

Do not send messages late at night

- Remember the principles of the "Leaders Code of Conduct" apply to social media communication as well and consider your digital footprint before posting.

As a Junior golfer

- If you receive an offensive message, email or photo don't reply to it, save it, make note of times and dates and tell a parent, children's officer or responsible adult you trust.
- Be careful about whom you give your number or email address to and don't respond to unfamiliar numbers.
- 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.

Child Welfare and Protection Procedures

The following are the procedures for dealing with any welfare or protection issue that may arise. Child welfare and the protection of juniors is the concern of all adults at all times, irrespective of their role within the club.

If there are grounds for concern about the safety or welfare of a junior, 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 Statutory Authorities department where they will receive advice.

Reasonable Grounds for concern

The TUSLA-Health Board or Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT) should always be informed when there are reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been abused, or is being abused, or is at risk of abuse.

The following examples would constitute reasonable grounds for concern:

- A specific indication from the child that he or she was abused (disclosure)

- An account by a person who says the child is being abused
- Evidence, such as an injury or behaviour that is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused in another way
- An injury or behaviour that is consistent both with abuse and with an innocent, explanation, but where there are corroborative indicators supporting the concern that it may be a case of abuse e.g. a pattern of injuries, an implausible explanation, and other indications of abuse and/or dysfunctional behaviour
- Consistent indication, over a period of time that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect

A report may be made by any member in the Club but should be passed on to the club Children's Officer & DLP, who may in turn have to pass the concern to the local Statutory Authorities. It is not the responsibility of anyone working within golf, in a paid or voluntary capacity, 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 juniors by assisting the appropriate agencies so that they can then make enquiries and take any necessary action to protect the junior.

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

Response to a Child Disclosing Abuse

When a junior discloses information of suspected abuse you should:

- Deal with any allegation of abuse in a sensitive and competent way through listening to and facilitating the junior to tell you about the problem, rather than interviewing the junior about details of what happened
- Stay calm and don't show any extreme reaction to what the junior is saying. Listen compassionately, and take what the junior is saying seriously
- Understand that the junior has decided to tell something very important and has taken a risk to do so. The experience of telling should be a positive one so that the junior will not mind talking to those involved in the investigation
- Be honest with the junior and tell them that it is not possible to keep information a secret but you will maintain confidentiality
- Make no judgmental statements against the person whom the allegation is made
- Do not question the junior unless the nature of what s/he is saying is unclear. Do not use leading questions. Open, non-specific questions should be used such as "Can you explain to me what you mean by that"

- (g) Check out the concerns with the Golf DLP and then advise the parents/guardians you are contacting the statutory authorities unless doing so would possibly place the child at any further risk.
- (h) Give the junior some indication of what would happen next, such as informing parents/guardians, or Statutory Authorities. It should be kept in mind that the junior may have been threatened and may feel vulnerable at this stage.
- (i) Carefully record the details
- (j) Pass on this information to the Club Children's Officer & DLP
- (k) Reassure the junior 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 Club Children's Officer & DLP within the organisation who has responsibility for reporting abuse. If the Club Children's Officer & DLP has reasonable grounds for believing that the junior has been abused or is at risk of abuse, s/he will make a report to local Statutory Authorities who have statutory responsibility to investigate and assess suspected or actual child abuse
- (c) In cases of emergency, where a junior appears to be at immediate and serious risk and the Club Children's Officer & DLP is unable to contact a duty social worker, An Garda Síochána should be contacted. Under no circumstances should a junior be left in a dangerous situation pending intervention by the Statutory Authorities
- (d) If the Club Children's Officer & DLP is unsure whether reasonable grounds for concern exist s/he can informally consult with the local health board/Statutory Authorities. S/he will be advised whether or not the matter requires a formal report.

A Club Children's Officer & DLP 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 put the child at further risk or undermine an investigation.

The Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998 (ROI only) provides immunity from civil liability to persons who report child abuse 'reasonably and in good faith' to the Tusla Child and Family Agency or An Garda Síochána. 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 Tusla Child and Family Agency 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 Golf Leaders

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

- The reporting procedure in respect of suspected child abuse (reported by the Club Children’s Officer & DLP), see previous page
- The procedure for dealing with the Golf Leader

The safety of the child making the allegation should be considered and the safety of any other children who may be at risk. The club 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 Golf Leader should be treated with respect and fairness.

The reporting procedure

If the Club Children’s Officer & DLP has reasonable grounds for concern, the matter should be reported to the Statutory Authorities, following the standard reporting procedure. See appendix 10

The procedure for dealing with Golf’s leader

The Club Children’s Officer & DLP makes the report to the Statutory Authorities and seeks advice about how and when to inform the person the allegation is made against.

- In golf, the Unions following advice from statutory agencies will 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 Statutory Authorities.

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

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

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

Confidentiality

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

The following points should be kept in mind:

- A guarantee of secrecy cannot be given, as the welfare of the junior will supersede all other considerations but confidentiality will be maintained.
- 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 following consultation with the Golf DLP and statutory agencies
- Giving information to others on a 'need to know' basis for the protection of a junior 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 designated people and/or National Children's Officer & DLP

- The requirements of the Data Protection laws should be adhered to
- Breach of confidentiality is a serious matter

Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints can be difficult to deal with but should not be ignored. In all cases the safety and welfare of the junior/juniors is paramount. Any such complaints relating to inappropriate behaviour should be brought to the attention of the Club Children's Officer & DLP. 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 National Children's Officer & DLP and checked out without delay.