



*Motorsport  
Ireland*

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR  
**CHILDREN'S SPORT**

THE  
IRISH SPORTS  
COUNCIL



AN CHOMHAIRLE SPÓIRT

Second Edition  
Published 2007



# MOTORSPORT IRELAND'S CODE OF CONDUCT FOR CHILDREN'S SPORT

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# MOTORSPORT IRELAND'S POLICY STATEMENT

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

The purpose of this code is to ensure that children can strive to achieve in competition and still be protected from the vulnerabilities of childhood.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

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For the purposes of this code, a child/young person is defined by the Irish Sports Council as any person under 18 years of age.

The guidance given in this code of conduct is based on the principles set out in the following publications:

- “Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children’s Sport”, Irish Sports Council.
- “Children First” National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children.
- “Our Duty to Care” Dept. of Health & Children, April 2002.

The aim of this code is to promote best practice by everyone involved in Motorsport and to provide a safe, healthy, enjoyable environment for young members.

# MOTORSPORT IRELAND'S CORE VALUES

## IN YOUNG PEOPLE'S SPORT

### **INTEGRITY IN RELATIONSHIPS:**

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

### **FAIR PLAY:**

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

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

### **QUALITY ATMOSPHERE AND ETHOS:**

Children's sport should be conducted in a safe, positive and encouraging atmosphere. A Child centred ethos will help to ensure that competition and specialisation are kept in their appropriate place. Too often competitive demands are placed on children too early and results in excessive levels of pressure on them and as a consequence, high levels of dropout from sport.

### **EQUALITY:**

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

**Leaders in children's sport should strive to create a positive environment for the children in their care. They have an overall responsibility to take the steps necessary to ensure that positive and healthy experiences are provided.**

## MOTORSPORT IRELAND GUIDELINES FOR YOUNG COMPETITORS:

Motorsport Ireland wishes to provide the best possible environment for all young people involved in the sport. Young competitors deserve to be given enjoyable, safe sporting opportunities, free of abuse of any kind. These competitors have rights, which must be respected, and responsibilities, which they must accept.

### YOUNG COMPETITORS ARE ENTITLED TO:

- Be treated with dignity and respect.
- Be safe and to feel safe.
- To get help against bullies.
- To be listened to.
- To be believed.
- To protect their own bodies.
- To be free from inappropriate touches.
- To be happy, have fun and enjoy sport.
- To experience competition and the desire to win as a positive and healthy outcome of striving for best performance.

### YOUNG COMPETITORS SHOULD ALWAYS:

- Abide by the rules of the sport.
- Treat all coaches, team managers/owners, selectors, club and event organisers and officials with respect.
- Avoid behaviour, conduct or language that may bring the sport into disrepute.
- Abide by the rules set down by team managers/owners when travelling to away events.
- Take responsibility for their own safety and the safety of others while driving a competition vehicle.

### YOUNG COMPETITORS SHOULD NEVER:

- Use unfair or bullying tactics to gain advantage on or off the track.
- Use bullying tactics to isolate another competitor.
- Pass on gossip about another competitor or adult.
- Make false allegations against other competitors or adults.
- Use drugs, alcohol or tobacco at Motorsport Ireland activities.

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**Definition:**

“Bullying is repeated aggression (verbal, psychological or physical) conducted by an individual or group against others.”

It thrives in an atmosphere of uncertainty and secrecy, where the victim feels a sense of hopelessness against the power of the bully.

**Some Types of Bullying:**

- Physical aggression
- Damage to property
- “Slagging” involving personal remarks
- Extortion
- Intimidation
- Abusive phone calls, texts or internet messages.
- Isolation
- Name-calling
- Sarcasm
- Humiliation
- Threatening behaviour

**Bullying of any kind is unacceptable within motorsport.**

## MOTORSPORT IRELAND GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS:

*Motorsport Ireland is committed to providing a safe and fair environment for all juvenile competitors. MI's duty of care and jurisdiction only extends from 8.00am on the day of the event for which we have issued a Permit, until the end of the event when the competition has finished. Parents/guardians must understand that they have the ultimate responsibility for the safety of their children. Travel and overnight accommodation does not come under the jurisdiction of the Motorsport Ireland Permit and so parents/guardians must be careful and have confidence in those they charge with the minding of their children. Our first priority is the welfare of young competitors and we are committed to providing an environment, which will allow participants to perform to their best ability, free from bullying and intimidation. Motorsport Ireland believes that parents/guardians should....*

- Be a role model for your child and maintain the highest standards of conduct when interacting with children, other parents, with officials and organisers.
- Encourage your child to abide by the rules of the sport.
- Always behave responsibly on the sidelines and do not seek to unfairly affect the competition or a competitor in the event.
- Take care not to expose any junior competitor, intentionally or unintentionally, to embarrassment or disparagement by the use of flippant, sarcastic or abusive remarks.
- Always recognise the value and importance of the volunteers who provide sporting/recreational opportunities for your child.
- Respect stewards, scrutineers, organisers, coaches and other competitors.
- Do not publicly question the judgement or honesty of stewards, scrutineers, organisers or coaches.

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- Teach your child that honest endeavour is as important as winning and do all you can to encourage good sportsmanship.
  - Set a good example by applauding good competition by all competitors.
  - Encourage mutual respect for team-mates and opponents.

Parents should support all efforts to remove abusive and bullying behaviour in all its forms:

**CHILD TO CHILD** – includes physical aggression, verbal bullying, intimidation, isolation, abusive phone, text or internet messages.

**ADULT TO CHILD** – includes the use of repeated gestures or expressions of a threatening or intimidatory nature, or any comment intended to degrade the child.

**ADULT TO ADULT** – includes verbal aggression towards other adults in order to achieve a beneficial outcome for own self or own child.

**CHILD TO ADULT** - includes repeated gestures or expressions of a threatening or intimidatory nature by an individual child or a group of children.

## PARENTS' / GUARDIANS' DECLARATION FORM:

1. I will respect the rules and procedures set down in Motorsport Ireland's (MI) Code of Conduct for Children in Sport.
2. I will respect my child's fellow competitors, their parents, team managers/owners and coaches.
3. I will give encouragement and applaud only positive accomplishments whether from my child, his/her fellow competitors or the officials.
4. I will respect my child's coach and support his/her efforts.
5. I will respect MI and club officials and their authority during events.
6. I will never demonstrate threatening or abusive behaviour or use foul language.
7. I will encourage my child to treat other participants, coaches, selectors, team managers/owners, MI officials, club officials and event organisers with respect.
8. I have read and accept the guidelines for travelling with children contained in MI's Code of Conduct for Children's Sport.

Parent/s and/or guardian/s must sign this form as appropriate.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
PLEASE PRINT IN BLOCK CAPITALS

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
PLEASE PRINT IN BLOCK CAPITALS

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of competitor: \_\_\_\_\_  
PLEASE PRINT IN BLOCK CAPITALS

Licence No. \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## MOTORSPORT IRELAND'S POLICY - ENTRANTS/COACHES/TEAM MANAGERS/TEAM OWNERS:

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Motorsport Ireland recognises the key role entrants, coaches and team managers/owners play in the lives of children in sport. Motorsport Ireland has adopted the principles Irish Sports Council's "Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's sport.

All entrants/coaches/team managers/owners should have as their first priority the children's safety and enjoyment of the sport and should adhere to the guidelines and regulations set out in Motorsport Ireland's Code of Practice.

All entrants/coaches/team managers/owners must respect the rights, dignity and worth of every child and must treat everyone equally, regardless of sex, ethnic origin, religion or ability.

There must be a "sign-up" procedure, whereby the appointed/reappointed entrant/coach/team manager/owner, agrees to abide by the "Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children in Sport" and to the policies and code of Motorsport Ireland.

When travel/overnight travel is involved, the parents of children are advised to abide by the guidelines as set out in this Code of Conduct.

## GUIDELINES FOR COACHES:

A coach of juvenile competitors has a duty of care, which is more onerous than that of a coach to an adult competitor.

A coach must act as a role model and promote the positive aspects of sport and of Motorsport Ireland and maintain the highest standards of personal conduct.

The use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco must be actively discouraged as being incompatible with a healthy approach to sporting activity.

Remember your behaviour to competitors, other officials, and opponents will have an effect on the competitors in your care.

Be generous with praise and never ridicule or shout at competitors for making mistakes or for losing a competition. All young competitors are entitled to respect.

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

Care must be taken not to expose a child intentionally or unintentionally to embarrassment or disparagement by use of sarcastic, flippant or abusive remarks about the child or his/her family.

Physical punishment or physical force must never be used. Never punish a mistake - by verbal means, physical means, or isolation.

Insist that competitors in your care respect the rules of the sport. Insist on fair play and ensure that your competitors know that you will not tolerate cheating or bullying behaviour.

Remember that young competitors participate for fun and enjoyment and that skill and competing for fun have priority over highly structured competition.

Never make winning the only objective.

Encourage the development of respect for fellow competitors, MI and club officials.

## GUIDELINES FOR COACHES: *cont.*

It is important to realise that certain situations or friendly actions could be misinterpreted by the competitor or by outsiders.

Motorsport Ireland coaches are responsible for setting and monitoring the boundaries between a **working** relationship and **friendship** with competitors. It is inadvisable for coaches to involve young competitors in their personal life i.e. visits to coaches home or overnight stays.

When approached to take on a new competitor, ensure that any previous coach-student relationship has been ended by the student/others in a professional manner.

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

Motorsport Ireland coaches who become aware of a conflict between their obligation to their competitors and their obligation to their governing body must make explicit the nature of the conflict and the loyalties and responsibilities involved, to all parties concerned.

Coaches should communicate and co-operate with medical and ancillary practitioners in the diagnosis, treatment and management of their competitors' medical and psychological problems.

Set realistic goals and do not push young competitors. Create a safe and enjoyable environment.

Do not criticise other officials, coaches, and selectors. You are the role model for the children in your care.

Avoid giving advice of a personal or medical nature – if you are not qualified to do so. Any information of a personal or medical nature must be kept strictly confidential unless the welfare of the child requires the passing on of this information.

## GUIDELINES FOR COACHES: *cont.*

***It is advisable to:***

- Record attendance at coaching sessions.
- Keep a brief record of injury(s) and action taken.
- If behavioural problems arise and a young competitor has to be disciplined, keep a brief record of problem/action/outcomes.

The nature of the relationship between coach and competitor can often mean that a coach will learn confidential information about a competitor or competitor'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 competitor/family.

Coaches must refrain from drinking alcohol in the presence of young people and be particularly careful about their use of alcohol before coaching, during events and on trips with young competitors.

Coaches should familiarise themselves with the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport and with Motorsport Ireland's Code of Conduct and follow the procedures if they suspect or receive complaints of abuse of any sort.

Coaches must refrain from drinking alcohol in the presence of young people and be particularly careful about their use of alcohol before coaching, during events and on trips with young competitors.

Coaches should familiarise themselves with the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport and with Motorsport Ireland's Code of Conduct and follow the procedures if they suspect or receive complaints of abuse of any sort.

## GUIDELINES FOR ADULT COMPETITORS (18 YEARS AND OVER):

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- Adult competitors should act as role models promoting the positive aspects of sport and Motorsport Ireland while maintaining the highest standards of personal conduct.
- The use of drugs and alcohol should be actively discouraged as being incompatible with Motorsport.
- Remember your behaviour to competitors, other officials, and opponents may have an effect on young competitors.
- Care must be taken not to expose a child intentionally or unintentionally to embarrassment or disparagement by use of sarcastic, flippant or abusive remarks about the child or his/her family.
- Physical punishment or physical force must never be used. Never punish a mistake - by verbal means, physical means, or isolation.
- It is important to realise that certain situations or friendly actions could be misinterpreted by a competitor or by outsiders.
- Adult competitors should familiarise themselves with this Code of Conduct and follow the procedures at the back of this booklet if they suspect or receive complaints of abuse of any sort.

## GUIDELINES FOR ENTRANTS/TEAM MANAGERS/TEAM OWNERS:

An Entrant/Team Manager/Team Owner must act as a role model and promote the positive aspects of sport and of Motorsport Ireland and maintain the highest standards of personal conduct.

The use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco must be actively discouraged as being incompatible with a healthy approach to sporting activity.

Remember your behaviour to competitors, other officials, and opponents will have an effect on the competitors in your care.

Be generous with praise and never ridicule or shout at competitors for making mistakes or for losing a competition. All young competitors are entitled to respect.

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

Care must be taken not to expose a child intentionally or unintentionally to embarrassment or disparagement by use of sarcastic, flippant or abusive remarks about the child or his/her family.

Physical punishment or physical force must never be used. Never punish a mistake - by verbal means, physical means, or isolation.

Insist that competitors in your care respect the rules of the sport. Insist on fair play and ensure that your competitors know that you will not tolerate cheating or bullying behaviour.

Remember that young competitors participate for fun and enjoyment and that skill and competing for fun have priority over highly structured competition.

Never make winning the only objective.

Encourage the development of respect for fellow competitors, MI and club officials.

It is important to realise that certain situations or friendly actions could be misinterpreted by the competitor or by outsiders.

## GUIDELINES FOR ENTRANTS/TEAM MANAGERS/TEAM OWNERS cont:

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Set realistic goals and do not push young competitors. Create a safe and enjoyable environment.

Do not criticise other officials, coaches, team managers/owners. You are the role model for the children in your care.

Avoid giving advice of a personal or medical nature – if you are not qualified to do so. Any information of a personal or medical nature must be kept strictly confidential unless the welfare of the child requires the passing on of this information.

### ***It is advisable to:***

- Record attendance at practice or testing sessions.
- Keep a brief record of injury(s) and action taken.
- If behavioural problems arise and a young competitor has to be disciplined, keep a brief record of problem/action/outcomes.

Entrants/Team Managers/Team Owners should refrain from drinking alcohol in the presence of young people and should be particularly careful about their use of alcohol before and during events and on trips with young competitors.

Entrants/Team Managers/Team Owners should familiarise themselves with the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport and with Motorsport Ireland's Code of Conduct and follow the procedures if they suspect or receive complaints of abuse of any sort.

## GUIDELINES FOR CLUB AND MOTORSPORT IRELAND OFFICIALS AT ALL MI EVENTS:

- Young competitors must not be interviewed unless in the presence of a Children's Officer and/or the child's Entrant /Parent.
- Young competitors must be treated with dignity and respect.
- No matter how serious an allegation may be, the young competitor concerned must not feel bullied or intimidated.
- Officials must listen carefully to the explanation given by a young competitor.
- Avoid behaviour or conduct that could be deemed as being offensive.
- Understand that young competitors will naturally be nervous in the presence of officials.
- Officials must explain to the young competitor why their presence is required and explain to them as clearly as possible what regulation, if any, has been breached.
- Officials should act as role models promoting the positive aspects of sport and Motorsport Ireland while maintaining the highest standards of personal conduct.
- The use of drugs and alcohol should be actively discouraged as being incompatible with Motorsport.
- Remember your behaviour to competitors, other officials, and opponents may have an effect on young competitors.
- Care must be taken not to expose a child intentionally or unintentionally to embarrassment or disparagement by use of sarcastic, flippant or abusive remarks about the child or his/her family.
- Physical punishment or physical force must never be used. Never punish a mistake - by verbal means, physical means, or isolation.
- It is important to realise that certain situations or friendly actions could be misinterpreted by a competitor or by outsiders.
- Officials should familiarise themselves with this Code of Conduct and follow the procedures at the back of this booklet if they suspect or receive complaints of abuse of any sort.

# ASSESSMENT / APPLICATION QUESTIONS FOR MI COACHES

Position applied for: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Any surname previously known by: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Present address: \_\_\_\_\_

Current occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of organisation: \_\_\_\_\_

Previous experience of working with young children in a voluntary or professional capacity:

Sporting/ Motorsport Ireland Qualifications:

Reason for Applying:

Have you ever been asked to leave a sporting organisation:

Yes

No

If you have answered yes, we will contact you in confidence.

Name and address of two people who know you (but who are not related to you) and who would have experience of you working with children, whom we can contact and who would provide you with a reference.

Name and Address of Referee 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Name and Address of Referee 2: \_\_\_\_\_

I agree to abide by the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport and Motorsport Ireland's Code of Conduct.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## SAMPLE LETTER TO PERSON GIVING A REFERENCE

Name & Address of Referee

Re: Name & Address of Coach

Dear

Motorsport Ireland is the National Governing Body of four-wheeled motor sport in Ireland. Under the umbrella of the Irish Sports Council and the National Coaching and Training Centre (NCTC), we are involved in training Motorsport Coaches. We have a "Code of Conduct for Children's Sport" and in line with this and the Irish Sports Council's "Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport", we are required to seek references for all of our registered coaches.

(Name of Coach) has trained as a Level 1 Motorsport Coach and has given us your name as a referee. If you are satisfied that this person is suitable to work with children in a sporting capacity, we would be very much obliged if you would please complete the bottom of this page and return this letter to us at your earliest convenience.

If you have any queries about this, please do not hesitate to contact me.

With many thanks,

Yours faithfully,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Motorsport Ireland

.....  
How long have you known this person?

In what capacity?

Are you satisfied that (Name of Coach) is suitable to work with children in a sporting capacity?

Yes  No

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please Note: This is a standard request issued in line with Motorsport Ireland's "Code of Conduct for Children's Sport" and the Irish Sports Council's "Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport".  
Thank you.*

# MOTORSPORT IRELAND POLICY

## – Travelling with children

### Guidelines for Parents / Guardians / Coaches / Entrants / Team Managers / Team Owners.

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Motorsport Ireland recognises the extra responsibilities taken on by coaches/entrants/team managers and team owners when they travel with children to events. This responsibility is even more onerous when overnight stays are involved.

Parents/guardians must understand that they have the ultimate responsibility for the safety of their children. Travel and overnight accommodation does not come under the jurisdiction of the Motorsport Ireland Permit and so parents/guardians must be careful and have confidence in those they charge with the minding of their children.

**Cars used to transport competitors/teams:** Those who use their own vehicles to transport competitors must ensure that they have adequate insurance cover and be careful not to carry more than the permitted number of passengers.

- Avoid being alone with one competitor (e.g. travelling to a venue or consulting/ advising in closed off room – If necessary leave the door open and be in earshot of others.
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact outside the normal coaching, technical area. Certain types of coaching may require a “hands on approach” i.e. it may be necessary to support a child in order to physically demonstrate a particular technique. This should only occur when necessary and in an open and appropriate way with the knowledge, permission and full understanding of the child concerned and his/her parents/guardians.
- Remember casual comment can be open to misconstruction.

## **MOTORSPORT IRELAND POLICY** – *Travelling with children* *Guidelines for Parents / Guardians* */ Coaches / Entrants / Team Managers* */ Team Owners. cont.*

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**At Hotels, Guesthouses, Campsites etc. the following rules should apply:**

- Adults should not enter a competitor's room without first knocking.
- All group socialisation should take place in communal areas (i.e. no boys in girls' rooms and vice versa).
- Alcoholic drink, smoking or other illegal substances are forbidden to competitors.
- The behaviour of the group should at all times be such that the good name of Motorsport Ireland is upheld.
- There must be at least one authorised adult of each gender with a mixed party.
- Lights out times should be enforced.
- Young competitors should be under reasonable supervision at all times and should never be allowed to leave the accommodation or event venue without prior permission.

**Injury(s):** Make a brief record of injury and action taken.

**Behavioural Problems:** Make a brief record of the problem/action/outcome. Submit report to parents/guardians on return home.

# MOTORSPORT IRELAND GUIDELINES ON USE OF PHOTOGRAPHIC AND FILMING EQUIPMENT AT COMPETITIONS & PRACTICE SESSIONS

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Amateur photographers/film/video operators wishing to record an event or practice session should seek accreditation with the event organiser.

Amateur photographs/film/video should be restricted to dummy grid, on-track, parc ferme, podium and the confines of that competitor's work place in the paddock.

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

## RESPONDING TO DISCLOSURE, SUSPICIONS & ALLEGATIONS

Motorsport Ireland accepts that organisations, which include children as members, are vulnerable to the occurrence of child abuse and therefore there is a need for policies and procedures to deal with this issue. The safety of young people is everyone's responsibility.

If a young person says or indicates that he/she is being abused, or information is obtained which gives cause for concern that a young person is being abused, you should react immediately. False allegations of abuse can occur but are very rare.

The Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998 provides immunity from civil liability to persons who report child abuse "**reasonably and in good faith**" to the Health Board or the Gardai. The act also covers the offence of "**false reporting**". This Act came into operation on 23rd January 1999. The main provisions of the Act are:

1. The provision of immunity from civil liability to any person who reports child abuse "reasonably and in good faith" to designated officers of Health Boards 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.

*This Law does not exist in Northern Ireland where any person wrongly accused can seek recourse under the laws of slander, libel or malicious prosecution.*

## RESPONDING TO DISCLOSURE, SUSPICIONS & ALLEGATIONS *cont.*

Each Motor Club affiliated to Motorsport Ireland should have clear procedures for responding to reports or concerns relating to the welfare and safety of children. All involved adults, children and parents/guardians should be aware of how to report, and to whom concerns should be reported, within the club/organisation. Copies of the Statutory Authority guidelines should be available in each club and copies are held at Motorsport Ireland's Office. Everyone involved in child protection matters should be aware of his/her responsibility to work in co-operation with the statutory child protection authorities.

The term "**Sports Leader**" means all adults, in a paid or voluntary capacity e.g. club helpers, event officials, MI officials, coaches, entrants, team managers, team owners.

## REPORTING OF SUSPECTED OR ACTUAL CHILD ABUSE

If a Sports Leader or a parent/guardian is uneasy or suspicious about a child's safety or welfare the following response should be made:

### RESPONSE TO A CHILD REPORTING ANY FORM OF ABUSE

The following actions should be taken:

- React calmly.
- Listen compassionately and carefully – keep the questions to an absolute minimum, facilitating the child to tell about the problem.
- Take what the child is saying seriously.
- Remember the child has decided to tell about something very important and has taken a risk to do so.
- Reassure the child.
- If the nature of what the child is saying is unclear, use open, non-specific questions such as "Can you explain to me what you mean by that".
- The child should be given some indication of what happens next - informing parents/guardians, health board or social services. It should be kept in mind that the child may have been threatened and may feel vulnerable at this stage.
- Carefully record the details.

The following actions should be avoided:

- Do not make promises of confidentiality – it may not be possible to keep that promise.
- Do not make a judgement or make negative comments about the alleged abuser
- Do not speculate or make assumptions
- Do not interview the child – do not probe for more information than is offered
- Do not approach the alleged abuser
- Do not allow your shock or distaste to show.

## REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

It is not the responsibility of anyone working under the auspices of Motorsport Ireland, in a paid or voluntary capacity, or those working in affiliated organisations, to take responsibility or decide whether or not child abuse is taking place.

However, there is a responsibility to protect children in order that appropriate agencies can then make enquiries and take any necessary action to protect the young person.

### Actions to Take:

- › Observe and note dates, times, locations and contexts in which the incident occurred or suspicion was aroused, together with any other relevant information;
- › Report the matter as soon as possible to the person designated for reporting abuse (*the National Children's Officer (NCO), the COC or the Club Chairperson*). If the NCO, COC or Club Chairperson 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 health board/social services who have statutory responsibility to investigate and assess suspected or actual child abuse.
- › 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.** Make a record of the report.
- › If the designated person is unsure whether reasonable grounds for concern exist or not, s/he should informally consult with the local health board/social services. S/he will be advised whether or not the matter requires a formal report;
- › A designated person reporting suspected or actual child abuse to the Statutory Authorities should first inform the family of their intention to make such a report, **unless doing so would endanger the child or undermine an investigation;**
- › A report should be given by the designated person to the Statutory Authorities in person or by phone, and in writing;
- › It is best to report child abuse concerns by making personal contact with the relevant personnel in the Statutory Authorities.

## ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST SPORTS LEADERS

Each club affiliated to Motorsport Ireland should have agreed procedures to be followed in cases of alleged child abuse against Sports Leaders. If such an allegation is made, two procedures should be followed:

- The reporting procedure as outlined in "Reporting Child Abuse".
- The procedure for dealing with the Sports Leader (below)

### **The following points should be considered:**

The safety of the child making the allegation and any others who are/may be at risk should be ensured and this should take precedence over any other consideration. In this regard, the club should take any necessary steps that may be immediately necessary to protect children.

If a Sports Leader is the subject of the concern s/he should be treated with respect and fairness.

### **Steps to be taken within the Sports Organisation**

Where reasonable grounds for concern exist the following steps should be taken by the club:

Advice should be sought from the local health board/social services with regard to any action by the club deemed necessary to protect the child/children who may be at risk

The matter should be reported to the local health board/social services following the standard reporting procedure outlined above

In the event that the concern is connected to the actions of a Sports Leader in the club, the Sports Leader involved in the concern should be asked to stand aside pending the outcome of any investigation by the Statutory Authorities. *It is advisable that this task be undertaken by an appointed committee member other than the Chairperson if they take the responsibility for reporting.*

## ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST SPORTS LEADERS *cont.*

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The Sports Leader should be informed, in private,

- That an allegation has been made against him/her,
- The nature of the allegation,

S/he should be afforded an opportunity to respond. His/her response should be noted and passed on to the health board/social services personnel.

**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.**

## CONFIDENTIALITY

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned.

Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only.

Information should be stored in a secure place, with limited access to designated people.

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 child/children is paramount. Any such complaints relating to inappropriate behaviour should be brought to the attention of the Chairperson. 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 Chairperson and checked out without delay.

## SAMPLE DECLARATIONS

### **Entrants/Coaches/Team Owners/Team Managers**

I hereby agree to abide by the guidelines and regulations contained in Motorsport Ireland's Code of Conduct for Children's Sport.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Role: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Authorised Officials**

I hereby agree to abide by the guidelines and regulations contained in Motorsport Ireland's Code of Conduct for Children's Sport.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Role: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **All Competitors**

I hereby agree to abide by the guidelines and regulations contained in Motorsport Ireland's Code of Conduct for Children's Sport.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Licence No: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Motorsport Ireland Affiliated & Recognised Clubs**

We hereby agree to abide by the guidelines and regulations contained in Motorsport Ireland's Code of Conduct for Children's Sport.

Name of Club: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

CHAIRPERSON

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