



Guides & Scouts of Europe - Ireland

International union of Guides & Scouts of Europe

CHILD SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT

CONTENTS

SECTION 1: GUIDES AND SCOUTS OF EUROPE- IRELAND	3
SECTION 2: PRINCIPLES TO SAFEGUARD CHILDREN FROM HARM	5
SECTION 3: RISK ASSESSMENT	6
SECTION 4: POLICIES AND PROCEDURES	11
1. Chiefs Education Policy	11
1.1 The FSE Pedagogy	11
1.2 Best Practice for Scooters	12
1.3 Adult–Youth Relationships.....	15
1.4 Substance Abuse	16
1.5 Work-Life Balance	16
1.6 Communication	16
1.7 Dealing with Challenging / Disruptive Behaviour.....	18
1.8 Bullying.....	19
1.9 Risk Management	21
1.10 Accidents/Incidents.....	21
1.11 Transport.....	21
1.12 Medication and Medical Conditions	21
1.13 Camps and overnight activities	22
1.14 Exchange Visits / Home Hospitality	22
1.15 Electronic devices	22
1.16 Use of Email and Social Networking Sites	23
1.17 Photographs and Images	23
2. Reporting Procedure	26
2.1 Recognising Child Abuse and Responding to Disclosure	26
2.2 Categories of child abuse	26
2.3 Reasonable grounds for Concern	27
2.4 How to respond to a disclosure	28
2.5 Other forms of unacceptable behaviour	29
2.6 Child Protection Reporting Procedures.....	29
2.7 Recommendations for improvement in practices and procedures.....	33
3. Recruiting Policy.....	36
3.1 Recruiting Criteria.....	36
3.2 Recruitment Process	36
3.3 Induction Process for new adult members	37
4. Complaints and Disciplinary Procedure	38

Section 1: Guides and Scouts of Europe- Ireland

Guides and Scouts of Europe -Ireland is a scouting organisation based in Cork and operating throughout the Republic of Ireland. It provides an educational and religious service to families and children, through the means of traditional scouting according to the method created by Lord Baden Powell, the founder of scouting, and enriched by the Venerable Fr Jacques Sevin.

The movement Guides and Scouts of Europe – Ireland belongs to the *Union Internationale des Guides et Scouts d'Europe – Fédération du Scoutisme Européen* (U.I.G.S.E.-F.S.E.), an international organisation federating more than 67,000 members in Europe, North and South America.

European Scouting, which is practised by the associations belonging to U.I.G.S.E.-F.S.E.:

- Is complementary to the family, the natural primary and fundamental unit group of society.
- Wants to educate man and woman in all aspects of their being: mind, body and soul.
- Gives a fundamental importance to the religious education, and spiritual life, of each child.
- Looks after the personal education of each scout, including their social and civic formation.
- Encourages each scout to be an active agent in their own education, in a context that acknowledges and respects different levels of competence and understanding.

Guides and Scouts of Europe – Ireland is committed to ensuring that children under its care are safe from harm and considers the welfare of the child of paramount importance.

The U.I.G.S.E.-F.S.E. in general, and Guides and Scouts of Europe – Ireland in particular, aims to contribute to the religious, moral, civic and physical formation of youth by using the scout method, according to the spirit of Lord Baden Powell, with a Christian interpretation and fully welcoming the inheritance of the founders of Christian scouting, most particularly Father Jacques Sevin, Lord Mario di Carpegna, Professor Jean Corbisier, respectively founders of Catholic scouting in France, Italy and Belgium. The texts of the Law, the Promise, the Principles and the Ceremonial belong to this inheritance.

Guides and Scouts of Europe - Ireland wishes to develop and maintain friendly and fraternal relationships with the other associations, federations or movements of scouts and guides, be they Christian or not, in order to work together and establish, according to Baden Powell's spirit and within his original educational project, a more just and fraternal society.

Guides and Scouts of Europe - Ireland wishes to inculcate young people with a European vision, favouring their knowledge of the peoples and the cultures that compose Europe. This wish is based on the conviction that the future of Europe relies on the deep and responsible unity of all its citizens, a Europe based on the conscience of a common religious, Christian, moral, cultural, and social conscience. The organisation extends this open-mindedness and international perspective to all the peoples of the world.

Guides and Scouts of Europe - Ireland also fosters young people of national associations which are not European. Through this open-mindedness and the expression of an inter-relationship between peoples and cultures, it encourages a similar vision of educational vocation on common bases.

GLOSSARY

Adult Member: For the purposes of this code, an ‘adult member’ is any member (chief or volunteer) of the organisation who is not a child.

Chief: Adult member in direct contact with child (see below).

Child: For the purposes of this code, a ‘child’ means anyone who is under 18 years of age, excluding a person who is or who has been married.

Child Protection Officer: The Child Protection Officer (CPO) is the title given to the person in the organisation appointed to respond to child protection concerns reported by volunteers, employees or young people or others.

Designated Liaison Person (DLP): a person in each unit with responsibility to report to the CPO.

Mandated Person (MP): Person named under Schedule 2 of Children First Act 2015. They have a legal responsibility to report concerns or allegations that reach or exceed the threshold of harm or abuse to TUSLA.

Statutory Authorities: These are An Garda Síochána and TUSLA (Child and Family Agency). They are obliged under the law to investigate and assess in child abuse cases.

Statutory Guidelines:

- Children First – National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017.
- A Guide to the Implementation of Children First in the Youth Work Sector 2021.
- Safeguarding Guidance for Children and Young People in Sports.

Volunteers: Unpaid voluntary workers in the Association

Youth or Scout: A youth, or a Scout, is a uniformed youth member of the organisation. For ease, the word “Scout” is used in a general sense in this document for Beaver, Wolfcub, Wolvet, Scout, Guide and under-aged Rover and Wayfarer.

Section 2: Principles to Safeguard Children from Harm

The following Principles to Safeguard Children from Harm are adhered to by GSE-Ireland, in accordance with Sports Ireland Safeguarding Guidance:

- Importance of childhood
 - Needs of the Child
 - Integrity in Relationships
 - Fair Play
 - Quality Atmosphere and Ethos
 - Competition Equality
- 1) These Principles are fully developed, articulated, and implemented through the FSE Pedagogy, which is common to all members of the UIGSE_FSE, including GSE-Ireland. The Chiefs Education Policy (see Section 4 *infra*) details the pedagogical requirements applied by GSE-Ireland.
 - 2) The welfare and safety of its youth members is the paramount priority of Guides and Scouts of Europe – Ireland. Our adult members endeavour to ensure that children and young people are protected and kept safe from harm (including neglect, physical, sexual, and emotional harm or abuse) while taking part in our programmes of activities. GSE-Ireland implements this approach through: Child Safeguarding training, the Chiefs Education Policy, the GSE-Ireland Recruitment Policy, The Reporting Procedure. The overarching approach is explained in the UIGSE-FSE Roadmap to guide national associations on how to establish procedures and structures for the protection of minors and vulnerable children against abuse (Annex 1).
 - 3) The Reporting Procedure and contact details of the Designated Liaison Person are visible and made known to all in the organisation. The Reporting Form is inserted in the present CSS (See Section 4 *infra*).
 - 4) A Risk Assessment was conducted, and accordingly, risk-mitigation measures were adopted and implemented.
 - 5) Guides and Scouts of Europe – Ireland provides policies to its adult members to help them understand various risks of harm, mitigation measures to reduce the occurrence or the impact of harm, what situations might constitute **reasonable grounds** for concern and **procedures** on how to respond to disclosure, including (see *infra* Section 4):

Policies:

- Chiefs Education Policy.
- Recruitment Policy.
- Complaints and Disciplinary Policy.
- Child Safeguarding Training.
- Procedures: Reporting Procedure.

Section 3: Risk Assessment

This risk assessment considers the potential for harm to come to children whilst they are in Guides and Scouts of Europe – Ireland’s care. This risk assessment precedes the Child Safeguarding Statement (Section 11(1b) Children First Act 2015), which is developed following this risk assessment process. In accordance with the requirements of Section 11(1) of the Children First Act 2015, the risk is of abuse and not general health and safety risk (covered under a separate H&S policy and risk assessment).

Section 11(1) of the Children First Act 2015 states that where a person proposes to operate as a provider of a relevant service, he or she shall, within 3 months from the date on which he or she commences as such a provider –

Undertake an assessment of any potential for harm to a child while availing of the service (in this section referred to as “risk”).

RISK ASSESSMENTS

Potential Risks (What hazards have you identified?)	Who is at Risk?	Risk Matrix	Risk Mitigation action/Measure	Comments & Risk Matrix post mitigation action
Scouting practise				
Chiefs not trained in scouting techniques.	Adult members chiefs, and youth/scout.	High	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Chiefs' education policy. Implementing recruitment policy. 	Low
Chiefs not trained in scouting pedagogy.	Adult members chiefs, and youth/scout.	High	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Chiefs' education policy. Implementing recruitment policy. Pedagogical training for chiefs. 	Low
Behavioural issues.	Chiefs and youth/scouts.	High	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Chiefs' education policy. Safeguarding training. Complaints and disciplinary policy. 	Low
No guidance for travelling and away/overnight trips.	Chiefs and youth/scouts.	Medium	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Child safeguarding training Chiefs' education policy. Recruitment policy. 	Low
Lack of adherence with GSE-Ireland procedures and policies.	Adult members chiefs, and youth/scout.	High	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Child safeguarding training Recruitment policy. Complaints and disciplinary policy. 	Low
Unauthorised photography & recording activities.	Youth/scout.	High	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Child Safeguarding training. Chiefs' education policy. 	Low

Potential Risks (What hazards have you identified?)	Who is at Risk?	Risk Matrix	Risk Mitigation action/Measure	Comments & Risk Matrix post mitigation action
Complains and discipline				
Lack of awareness of Complaints & Disciplinary policy.	Chiefs and youth/scouts.	Medium	1. Complaints and Disciplinary procedure. 2. Communications procedure.	Low
Difficulty in raising an issue by child and/or parents.	Chiefs and youth/scouts.	High	1. Complaints and Disciplinary procedure. 2. Communications procedure.	Low
Complaints not being dealt with seriously.	Chiefs and youth/scouts.	High	1. Complaints and Disciplinary procedure.	Low
Lack of knowledge of organisational and statutory reporting procedures.	Adult members chiefs, and youth/scout.	High	1. Complaints and Disciplinary procedure. 2. Reporting procedures. 3. Chiefs' education policy.	Low
Concerns of abuse or harm not reported.	Youth/scout.	High	1. Reporting procedure. 2. Child Safeguarding training.	Low
Not clear who a young person should talk to or report to.	Adult member chiefs, and youth/scout.	High	1. Chief's education policy. 2. Child Safeguarding training.	Low

Potential Risks (What hazards have you identified?)	Who is at Risk?	Risk Matrix	Risk Mitigation action/Measure	Comments & Risk Matrix post mitigation action
Outings, Location/Facilities				
Unauthorised access to designated scouting locations.	Chiefs and youth/scouts.	Medium	Chiefs' education policy.	Low
Unauthorised exit from designated scouting locations.	Chiefs and youth/scouts.	High	Chiefs' education policy.	Low
Unauthorised photography, filming, or recording.	Adult member chiefs, and youth/scout.	High	Chiefs' education policy.	Low
Missing or found child on scouting locations.	Adult member chiefs, and youth/scout.	High	Chiefs' education policy.	Low
Children sharing facilities with adults (showers, tents, etc).	Youth/scouts.	Medium	1. Chiefs' education policy. 2. Child Safeguarding training.	Low
Recruitment				
Recruitment of inappropriate persons.	Adult member and youth/scouts.	High	1. Recruitment policy. 2. Chiefs' education policy. 3. Child Safeguarding training.	Low
Lack of clarity on roles.	Adult member chiefs, and youth/scout.	High	1. Recruitment policy. 2. Chiefs' education policy. 3. Child Safeguarding training.	Low
Unqualified or untrained people in role.	Adult member chiefs, and youth/scout.	High	1. Recruitment policy. 2. Chiefs' education policy. 3. Child Safeguarding training.	Low

Potential Risks (What hazards have you identified?)	Who is at Risk?	Risk Matrix	Risk Mitigation action/Measure	Comments & Risk Matrix post mitigation action
Communication & Social media				
Lack of awareness of 'risk of harm' with members and visitors.	Adult member chiefs, and youth/scout.	High	1. Child safeguarding training. 2. Chiefs' education policy.	Low
No communication of Child Safeguarding Statement or Code of Conduct to members of visitors.	Adult member chiefs, and youth/scout.	High	1. Child safeguarding training. 2. Chiefs' education policy.	Low
Unauthorised photography & recording activity.	Adult member chiefs, and youth/scout.	High	1. Child safeguarding training. 2. Chief's education policy.	Low
Inappropriate use of social media and communications by under 18s.	Youth/scout.	High	1. Child safeguarding training. 2. Chiefs' education policy.	Low
General				
Harm not being recognised.	Youth/scout.	High	1. Chiefs' education policy. 2. Child Safeguarding training.	Low
Harm caused by: A child to a child. A chief to a child. A volunteer to a child. A visitor to a child.	Youth/scout.	High	1. Chiefs' education policy. 2. Child Safeguarding training.	Low
General behavioural issues.	Chiefs, and youth/scout.	High	1. Chiefs' education policy. 2. Child Safeguarding training. 3. Code of Conduct. 4. Vetting of chiefs/volunteers.	Low

Section 4: Policies and Procedures

1. Chiefs Education Policy

1.1 The FSE Pedagogy

Guides and Scouts of Europe – Ireland is the Irish representative of the Union Internationale des Guides et Scouts d'Europe- Fédération de Scoutisme Européen (UIGSE-FSE), and as such it subscribes to and adheres to the terms of:

- *“Presentation and Educational Project of the Union Internationale des Guides et Scouts d'Europe Fédération du Scoutisme Européen, “U.I.G.S.E – F.S.E”.* This document explains the nature of European scouting, its Scout Law, Principles, and ethos.
- *UIGSE-FSE Roadmap to Guide National Associations to establish Procedures and Structures for the Protection of Minors and Vulnerable Children against Abuse (Appendix)*

Guides and Scouts of Europe – Ireland seeks to realise its purpose through a system of progressive self-education, known as the FSE Pedagogy:

“The FSE method has been proven for over 50 years to contribute greatly to helping children and teenagers, young adults, chiefs, and older adults to fully grow into responsible, autonomous and above all, free Christian citizens. It is now practised in 22 countries, in an international dynamic spirit of education of the youth by the youth.” (UIGSE-FSE Roadmap, p.8)

The principal elements of the FSE Pedagogy are:

- Voluntary membership of a small group, guided by adults, that is increasingly self-governing in its successive age groups.
- Commitment to a code of living as expressed in the Scout Promise and the Scout Law, the meaning of which is expanded as the member grows towards maturity.
- The provision of a wide range of attractive, constructive, and challenging activities, including opportunities for adventure and exploration outdoors (activities take place indoors only occasionally and for exceptional reasons).
- The provision of opportunities for leadership and responsibility.
- Learning by doing.
- Encouragement of activity in small groups.
- An award scheme that encourages participation in its full range of activities and provides recognition of individual and group achievements.

Central to the Scouting method is the notion that young people naturally form groups and from within these groups emerges a leader for the group.

Adult members are involved to support young people to take responsibility appropriate to their age in the running of their unit. It is the adult member's responsibility to guide the children under their control and help them to take up these responsibilities. This can be a challenging and fulfilling role providing a wonderful opportunity to positively contribute to the overall development of the young person.

Involvement in scouting should be part of a broader healthy adult lifestyle that balances commitments to one's personal/family/work life, and scouting. Such a lifestyle should include social engagement with adults of one's own age so that scouting does not dominate your life.

As an adult member some behavioural limits are different from those outside of scouting e.g., some language that is acceptable in a workplace would not be acceptable within a group of young people.

An adult member must act, and be seen to act, appropriately always. Scouting enjoys widespread respect in the community because of its positive contribution to the lives of young people. It is important that this respect is maintained by exercising the correct personal behaviour that society expects of adults working with young people.

It is the responsibility of all adult members to ensure that:

- Their behaviour is always appropriate.
- They observe the guidelines established for the safety and security of young people (GSE-Ireland Health and Safety Policy).
- They follow the GSE-Ireland Reporting Procedure following suspicion, disclosure, or allegation of child abuse.
- They recognise the position of trust in which they have been placed and maintain a policy of transparency with the members of Guides and Scouts of Europe – Ireland and their parents/guardians.

1.2 Best Practice for Scouters

1.2.1 General Principles

By their behaviour Scouters should always ensure that they:

- Can fulfil their responsibilities to provide a safe secure environment for the young people in their care.
- Do Provide a safe and secure environment for young people to enjoy and benefit from scouting.
- Always conform to Best Practices and Guidelines contained in the organisation's Health and Safety Policy.

Adult members should be familiar with the various forms of child abuse and know how to respond to a disclosure made to them. They have a duty to bring any child protection concerns to the attention of the organisation's Child Protection Officer and should be aware of its Reporting Procedures.

Adult members by their example should be a positive influence on the behaviour of young people in respecting themselves, other scouts, parents and youth members and the property of themselves and others. Youth members should treat their superiors with dignity and respect, recognising the time and input that is being contributed to their personal development.

1.2.2 Code of Behaviour

Actions such as comforting a distressed child should be guided by the needs of the child. Adults need to be aware that actions if taken out of context could be negatively interpreted and may allow unfounded accusations of impropriety to be raised against them.

Scouters need to be aware of the dangers of a too casual and unthinking familiarity with the young people in their charge and ensure that their attitudes and actions will at all times:

- Never lead to a betrayal of the trust of young people, parents, and fellow scouts.
- Never impart inappropriate knowledge or interact with a child in a manner that is unwanted and will result in hurt to the child.
- Never seek to control and create dependence in a child.
- Respect the personal boundaries of others.
- Do not engage in sexually provocative games, talk or actions.
- Do not engage in inappropriate touching of any form.
- Never make sexually suggestive comments, even for fun.

1.2.3 Six points of behavioural awareness

1.2.3.1 Act in an open and visible manner

When working with young members, adult members should ensure that an open environment exists. If a situation arises where a certain amount of privacy is required (e.g.: a disciplinary issue or treatment of an injury) always try to have someone with you or make sure that others are within the vision and, preferably, within earshot. The recommended adult-child ratio is 1 adult for 8 children under the age of 12, and 1 adult for 10 children over the age of 12.

1.2.3.2 Sometimes it's better not to join in

There is, and always has been, the situation where adult members join in games 'to make up the numbers to greater encourage participation or to add to the novelty of the game or activity. While everyone is having fun and no harm is done, there is a certain element of risk associated with such an activity. All it takes is for a young person to be hurt or suggest that they had been inappropriately touched for the 'fun' to be taken as 'serious. Adult members should not engage in horseplay with youth members. So, the simple advice is – to organise, supervise, or monitor and enjoy watching the fun!

1.2.3.3 Be positive in your conversation

The way you speak to young people about themselves, or others can create a positive and supportive atmosphere. Improper comments, suggestions or inappropriate humour can result in creating hurt and confusion in a child. Under no circumstances should you make suggestive or salacious remarks in the presence of young people. Keeping your conversation at the appropriate level for the age of the child will help avoid causing hurt and misinterpretation of your intentions and will provide a positive example to the child.

1.2.3.4 Be alert to your own emotions and the feelings of others

Young people can sometimes 'hero-worship' an adult member or develop a 'crush' on them. The situation needs to be handled sensitively without causing a feeling of rejection. Use the support of other adult members to deal with such situations, as this will help to avoid any perception of encouragement on your part. Our emotions can fluctuate due to trauma, stress, bereavement, and many other causes. If support is required talk things through with another other trusted adult. Avoid involving young people in your emotional problems.

1.2.3.5 Consider the situation

This may be the most important point of all: consider each situation. While your intentions may be based on the most innocent and altruistic of motives: If in doubt about how your actions might be interpreted then adopt a safer course of action.

1.2.3.6 Protect your good name

While your good work as an adult member may have earned, you respect this will provide little defence in the event of any allegation of improper conduct being made against you. It is therefore important that your motives are understood to be guided by the needs of the child and that your actions are open and positive.

1.2.4 Some Do's and Don'ts

DO:

- Ensure that the minimum ratio of adult members to children is always present at all activities. Ratios may vary depending on the age of the group, the level of ability and the nature of the activity. Additional trained instructors will be necessary for some activities but must not be included in Scouter to Scout ratios.
- Be aware of what is appropriate physical contact and engage in this contact only.
- Respect the personal and sexual boundaries of others.
- Discuss any uncertainties with the Child Protection Officer.
- Remember that scouting is a hobby and maintain proper balances between your personal and work commitments and scouting activities.

DON'T:

- Spend time alone with a young person if it can be avoided, especially in sensitive circumstances.
- Give car lifts on your own to youth members unless it is unavoidable.
- Make jokes of a sexual nature in the presence of young people, even in fun.
- Become over-involved with one young person.
- Tolerate favouritism, exclusion, or harsh disciplinary regimes.

1.3 Adult – Youth Relationships

The FSE Pedagogy is delivered on an age-appropriate basis. The programme age structure ensures the young members can achieve the challenges of the programme without placing themselves in a position that is beyond their abilities.

Adult members should ensure that the young members' age, abilities, and potentials are measured against the event or activity, allowing the young member to operate in a safe and secure environment.

The emotional, social, and spiritual development of young people are key aims of the organisation. It is important that adult members are aware of the responsibility they have, within their role, of helping young people who are developing relationships. The key Scouting principle that adult members should emphasise when talking about relationships is respect for others and for oneself.

The Pedagogy of the Council, as exemplified in the UIGSE-FSE Roadmap, is key in implementing this principle. "The council pedagogy is core to Guides and Scouts of Europe. It is deployed at every level, in every branch, and it is the principal decision-making mechanism. It ensures that each child and the young person learns gradually to speak freely and to acquire the trust to be heard during the scouting activities in which they take part. It contributes to developing their sense of responsibility and autonomy, by gradually building up their confidence and their capacity for decision-making. It is adapted [...] in each branch:" (UIGSE-FSE Roadmap, p.10)

An adult member holds a position of trust. Consequently, they have responsibilities in respect of their relationships with and behaviour towards youth members of all ages. In addition, these responsibilities extend towards parents and Guides and Scouts of Europe – Ireland.

In adolescence, young people become increasingly aware of their own bodies and their sexuality, and emotional attachments can begin. It is important for adult members to help young people to understand the nature of public and private behaviour, and the need to respect other people's privacy and personal space. When giving advice Scouters must uphold the law.

Friendships form an important part of scouting for young people, and it would not be uncommon that these friendships to develop into more personal relationships. There may be occasions however when adult members will need to advise and explain to young people that how they conduct personal relationships in scout settings may be inappropriate. Should a difficulty persist in this regard parents may need to be informed and their support enlisted.

Because of the position of trust and authority that they hold, it is inappropriate for an adult member to form, be or seek to be in a personal relationship with a youth member, who is under or over the legal age of consent. Adult members should be aware that if they break this trust their suitability to work in the organisation may be called into question. It is a criminal offence in the Republic of Ireland for anyone to engage in, or attempt to engage in, sexual activity with anyone under the legal age of consent. The legal age of consent to sexual activity in the Republic of Ireland is 17 years (Criminal Law (Sexual Offences Act) 2006).

1.4 Substance Abuse

The use of drugs by adult members, within our outside of scouting activities is totally prohibited.

The consumption of alcohol and the use of tobacco are totally prohibited during scouting activities, by adult and youth members. Adult members are free to consume alcohol outside of scouting activities, in a reasonable and occasional manner. They must always remember that they are a role model for youth members and that they are in charge of their souls. They must act accordingly and implement the principle of unity of life in their own life. Adult members should never smoke in front of youth members.

1.5 Work-Life Balance

The first principle of FSE Scouting is: A Scout's duty starts at home.

Accordingly, an adult member's first responsibility is to his/her family. Scouting can become very consuming, and the time commitment can grow rapidly. Adult members need to take care that Scouting doesn't negatively impact their family or employment. Sometimes this will happen without the adult member noticing, and other adult members should be alert to the danger of this situation arising in respect of one of their colleagues. While it is appropriate that an adult member would help out in another section for a very short period of time e.g., 3-4 weeks, their superior should be mindful of the impact that such double/triple jobbing can have on their work-life balance.

1.6 Communication

In our social interaction with others, the words we use to express ourselves and the way we express those words in both tone and emphasis lets others sense our sincerity and respect for them and their views. When speaking with young people an adult member should maintain the conversation at the appropriate level for the age of the young member. This provides a positive experience to the young person and helps avoid causing misinterpretation of your intentions. Scouters should speak respectfully of other Scouts and Scouters and not involve young people in conversations that are critical of others.

A positive relationship between Chiefs and parents/guardians should be nurtured and maintained through open communication in both directions. Ongoing good communication with parents develops a better understanding by parents of the positive benefits of scouting for their child and of what is expected of both their child and them to improve their experience of Scouting. Ensuring that parents feel comfortable talking with Scouters will provide the opportunity to get a better insight into the young person as well as allow parents to openly voice any concerns or queries that they may have.

1.6.1 *Communication with young people*

When speaking with young people an adult member should maintain the conversation at the appropriate level for the age of the young member. This provides a positive experience to the young person and helps avoid causing misinterpretation of your intentions.

All scouts should speak respectfully of other scouts and adult members and not involve young people in conversations that are critical of others.

1.6.2 *Communications with parents*

The communication process with parents begins at the start of the young person's journey with Guides and Scouts of Europe – Ireland, and it is fostered and built upon as that young person progresses. When a young person joins their parents should be made aware of how the group operates and what they can expect in terms of communication from the group in relation to their child and to group activities. They should also be made aware of policies and procedures that operate in the movement.

The relationship with parents needs continuous attention. The following pointers are helpful:

- Adult members should appreciate the trust which parents place in them.
- They should listen carefully to what parents say about their children.
- If parents are expressing a concern, don't be defensive, try to understand the situation from the parents' perspective and seek to establish a common ground.
- Inform parents of any accidents and how they happened. Parents are understanding and accept scrapes and bumps occur.
- Should a difficult issue or misunderstanding arise with a parent always use calm, respectful, and supportive language when communicating with them to avoid the situation becoming confrontational. Small issues can easily turn into a stand-off situation and, when this occurs, it is the young person who is caught in the middle and who loses out.
- Issue parents with a copy of this document.
- Hold an open night/induction meeting to brief parents of aspiring members before they officially sign up for the movement.
- Ensure that anything you distribute to parents in writing is accurate and clearly stated. Be accurate on times, dates and locations and avoid the use of jargon.
- For notes, requests, and explanations of Scout activities, use a form of reproduction that is easy to read.
- Official Guides and Scouts of Europe – Ireland forms should be used where appropriate, e.g., membership forms.
- Send communications to the parents far enough in advance so that they can consider it and act if you expect a response.
- Keep a copy of written communications.
- Share the good news about activities.
- Hold an annual meeting open to all adult members and parents at which all matters relating to the organisation can be discussed.

A positive relationship between adult members and parents/guardians should be nurtured and maintained through open communication in both directions. Ongoing good communication with parents develops a better understanding by parents of the positive benefits of scouting for their child and of what is expected of both their child and them to improve their experience of scouting. Ensuring that parents feel comfortable talking with adult members will provide the opportunity to get a better insight into the young person as well as allow parents to openly voice any concerns or queries that they may have.

1.7 Dealing with Challenging / Disruptive Behaviour

1.7.1 *Creation of a positive environment through discipline*

Young people in scouting need to learn to become responsible for themselves and to accept themselves and others. Discipline should always be positive in focus, providing the structure that allows young people to learn to set their own goals and strive for them. Where possible the main form of discipline should be through encouragement and acknowledgement for:

- a. Effort; and
- b. social skills; and
- c. Traditional Scout skills

Youth members must be helped to understand the responsibilities and implications of the freedom to make choices and decisions. Expectations of behaviour should be positively stated, agreed upon, and communicated clearly to all involved in any activity.

1.7.2 *Sanctions*

Sanctions are an important element in maintaining discipline. All members should have a clear understanding of where and when sanctions are appropriate. Sanctions should be used in a corrective way designed to help young people improve now and in the future. Adult members should always invoke the spirit of the Scout Law to justify and underpin the application of sanctions. Sanctions should never be used as a form of retaliation.

Sanctions should be fair, and in the case of persistent offences should be progressively applied. The following steps are suggested:

- Teach youth members about the Scout Law (youth aged 12-17), and the Pack Law (youth aged 8-12). Warning or sanction (e.g., temporary exclusion from the activity) if the Scout or Pack Law is broken, or other bad behaviour.
- A Council if the Law is broken again. In formal cases Youth members can request a parent or another Member to be present. Record the date, those in attendance and the outcome of the interview.
- Longer term exclusion for continued breaking of the Law and involvement of parents /guardians.

Sanctions should:

- Be avoided where other mechanisms of enforcing appropriate behaviour are available.
- Be applied fairly.
- Be used sparingly.
- Be administered consistently.
- Never take the form of corporal punishment or involve the use of physical force.
- Not expose a young person to embarrassment or disparagement by use of negative remarks about the young person or his / her family.

The safety of each member of Guides and Scouts of Europe – Ireland is paramount. Adult members must therefore ensure:

- The activity being planned, or undertaken is suitable for the age, experience and ability of the member(s) concerned.
- That activities are led by suitable persons with the necessary skills and abilities.
- That the policies and procedures of Guides and Scouts of Europe – Ireland are followed for all activities.
- That youth members leading activities are competent and are supported in doing so.
- By emphasising the Scout Law and Promise, adult members should create an environment in which youth members are valued as individuals with rights and are encouraged and affirmed.

1.8 Bullying

Bullying behaviour may take place in any setting. In the first instance, it is the responsibility of adult members to deal with bullying which may take place within the organisation. Such members should be aware of Scouts who become quiet, withdrawn or who wish to leave the unit. Adult members should maintain attendance sheets and note patterns of irregularity. Chiefs need to be alert for signs of any physical, behavioural, or indirect signs that may indicate some of the above abuses. The more extreme forms of bullying behaviour would be regarded as physical or emotional abuse and are reportable to the statutory authorities.

Bullying incidents should be dealt with immediately and not tolerated under any circumstances. Bullying contains 7 key features:

- i An intention to be hurtful.
- ii The intention is carried out.
- iii The behaviour harms the target.
- iv The bully overwhelms the target with his or her power.
- v There is often no justification for the action.
- vi The behaviour repeats itself again and again.
- vii The bully derives a sense of satisfaction from hurting the target.

It is important for adult members to take a proactive role in investigating whether bullying is occurring because many child members will not tell. However, a scout may confide in anyone so everyone should be aware of how to handle such confidence.

What can you do if a Scout tells you she/he is being bullied?

I. Listen:

Calmly and accept what is said. If possible, there should be two adult members present (but this should be informed by the needs of the child), if not leave the door open so passers-by can see the adult member but not the child.

II. Reassure:

That help is available, action will be taken, the Scout was right to tell, it is not his or her fault and it could happen to anyone.

III. Negotiate confidentiality:

Be clear you'll only tell people who need to know.

IV. Ensure the Scout's safety:

The adult member must be aware that the safety of the youth member is paramount, and this can be maintained through appropriate supervision. Liaise with the parents/guardians in relation to a solution and possible actions.

V. Tell the Scout that you'll keep her/him informed and how you intend to proceed.

VI. Take notes following the conversation:

Keep on file as these notes will form the basis of the bullying report. Notes should include the nature of the incident, date, time, location, names of those involved, witnesses, relevant history and adult member's response.

VII. Make an intervention:

All actions should be guided by the needs of the child:

- Inform the Section Leadership team of your concerns.
- Decide whom to consult with Troop/Company chief, Patrol chief, Pack chief, CPO, parents, and guardians.
- Decide whom to interview witnesses, alleged bullies, and uninvolved scouts.
- Find out: what, where, when, who, how, and why? Act in a non-confrontational manner.
- Resolve the problem: Make bullying the responsibility of the group – follow the 'No Blame'.
- Alternatively, approach the target and alleged bully (explain why their behaviour is wrong, how it makes the victim feel and request an apology); parents and alleged bully (if sanctions linked to the behaviour are to be employed request the parents to reinforce these).
- Keep the Group Chief informed and updated.

VIII. Make a record:

Of facts rather than opinions. Include details from the bullying report (i.e., nature of the incident, date, time, location, names of those involved, witnesses, relevant history and adult member's response), details recounted by others involved, any agreements made, an account of action taken and suggestions for follow up and monitoring.

1.9 Risk Management

The management of risk and safety must be a priority of all members engaged in scouting activities. Risk assessments should be carried out for activities in order to eliminate (or reduce to an acceptable level) the potential risks to all members. The risk assessment template can be found in GSE- Ireland Health and Safety policy.

The assessment of risk involves several steps in the planning of an activity some of which include:

- Looking for hazards,
- Determining the level of risk involved
- Deciding who might be harmed and how,
- Putting in place measures that can eliminate or at least minimise any identified risk,
- Reviewing and risk assessment on a continuing basis throughout the activity.

1.10 Accidents/Incidents

All scouts beyond induction level are expected to have knowledge of First Aid and ideally should hold a suitable qualification in First Aid. Should an accident/incident occur, all the facts, contact details of all concerned and medical/other intervention (if such was necessary) must be accurately recorded and forwarded to the CPO as soon as possible.

1.11 Transport

As a general rule, the responsibility for getting children to and from scout activities lies with parents /guardians. However, at times the group may take responsibility for organising transport to events or activities. It is always preferable that a reputable bus company be engaged on these occasions.

Since 31st October 2011, it is a legal requirement that all buses involved in the organised transport of children be fitted with appropriate safety belts. Also, see www.rsa.ie.

1.12 Medication and Medical Conditions

Parents/guardians have primary responsibility for the medical needs of their children.

All youth members under the age of 18 years must have a Consent Form completed for them by their parents/guardians who should be made aware of why the medical information requested on the form is needed, and of the importance of giving full and accurate medical details on their children.

It is probable that some children involved in Guides and Scouts of Europe – Ireland take medication on a long-term basis as a treatment for an ongoing condition or have to take it for a defined period of time to treat a transient condition. Young people who have

severe asthma may need daily inhalers but may also need additional doses in the event of an attack.

The procedures for handling medicines in these and similar cases should be developed in partnership with parents and take into account the comfort level of adult members in taking on such a role as well as the level of training or expertise required for more complex interventions (e.g. administering injections).

1.13 Camps and overnight activities

On camps and overnight activities, all adult members must ensure that:

- Adults and children are separately and suitably accommodated; if a Chief is under the age of 18, she or he must be given a choice of whether they prefer being accommodated with the Youth or with the Chiefs.
- Appropriate sleeping and washing arrangements are in operation to protect personal and gender boundaries.
- There are always an adequate number of adult members and/or trained instructors (as may be necessary) present.
- The personal gear used by the scouts is adequate for the programme activity.
- The food is adequate for the programme and dietary requirements of the participants.
- Relevant medical information relating to Scouts has been obtained from parents/guardians.
- Written parental consent is obtained.

Campfire singing is an intrinsic and enjoyable part of any Scout Camp. The content and performance of songs sung by adult and child members on any Scout activity should be in keeping with the values and ethos of scouting.

1.14 Exchange Visits / Home Hospitality

When participating in exchange visits/home hospitality, be they national or international, adult members should take special care to vet the suitability of the programme, arrangements, host group, host families and host leaders (i.e., anyone with access to or authority or association with young people). Such adult members should be familiar with the child protection reporting procedures of Guides and Scouts of Europe – Ireland and those of the partner association. Adult members must obtain written parental consent prior to departure.

1.15 Electronic devices

The strict policy in Guides and Scouts of Europe – Ireland is that all electronic devices are forbidden during scouting activities. The youth should leave them at home or hand them over to the adult members. Adult members keep a mobile phone and are always contactable.

Adult members need to be aware of the potential difficulties associated with communicating with a young person via the young person's personal mobile phone.

There is always a potential for phone calls or text messages to be misinterpreted by the young person or by their parents.

Young people should not be contacted directly on their mobile phones unless specifically agreed by their parent/guardian.

1.16 Use of Email and Social Networking Sites

- It is advised that adult members do not email youth members as individuals when disseminating information in relation to events but do so as part of a disclosed list, having received prior permission to disclose in a group email. Disclosed lists should be used for sending group information via a designated, registered and vetted adult member. Group emails should give recipients the opportunity to have their contact details removed from the list by including a statement such as: “If you wish to be removed from this email list, please contact the administrator”.
- Adult members should not contact young people through chatrooms or social networking sites and they should not give young people access to their personal social network accounts/pages/blogs.

1.17 Photographs and Images

1.17.1 General rules

Adult members and youth shall not send or post pictures that are obscene, indecent or menacing and should be sensitive about other people’s personal backgrounds.

Children should be advised to not, under any circumstance, send or post a picture or video of themselves to others they don’t know very well. Apart from not being sure what that person will do with it, a picture may contain something that could help them trace or find out more about the child. Clues in the picture may be in the background – number or front of a house, a street name, school uniform and these snippets of information may help those who want to harm children.

Camera phones can be used to make children safer. Older children, for example using a taxi, can send a picture of the car’s registration to a friend before they begin the trip, or can simply use the phone to show parents where they are.

1.17.2 Photographs and Images of Children

Guidelines in relation to the use of images of Scouts on websites and publications are outlined below. Adult members should be aware of them and apply them as and when necessary. Where possible try to use illustrations when promoting an activity and avoid using the first name and surname of individuals in the photograph. This reduces the risk of inappropriate, unsolicited attention directed at children appearing in photographs.

On occasions, national or local newspapers may request that the names of young people accompany photographs to be published. Such requests should only be granted at the discretion of, and with the permission of, the adult member in

charge of the activity, who, in turn, must have obtained the prior permission of the relevant parent/guardian. In such circumstances, the relevant adult member should ensure that no other identifiers are printed and that all other guidelines as set out below are followed.

1.17.3 Rules to guide the use of Photography.

- If the Scout is named, avoid using their photograph.
- If a photograph is used, avoid naming the Scout.
- Ask for the Scouts' parents' permission to use their image.
- Parents must also seek the permission of the relevant adult member for the use of Scout images containing young people.
- Only use images of Scouts in an appropriate dress to reduce the risk of misuse.
- The content of the photograph should focus on the activity, not on a particular child.
- Avoid using the names of young members when posting photographs on a website.
- The inappropriate use of images should be reported to the CPO.
- Amateur photographers and film or video operators (including members, non-members and parents/ guardians) wishing to record an event or activity should seek accreditation from the adult member-in-charge, who should also provide them with a clear brief on what is considered appropriate image content and the behaviour expected of them while taking images and following their production.
- If a Scout Group or County is setting up a social network or site, it must be in accordance with these guidelines.
- When commissioning professional photographers or inviting the press to an activity the adult member-in-charge should ensure they are clear about Guides and Scouts of Europe – Ireland's expectations of them in relation to child protection. Professional photographers/film/video operators wishing to record an activity should seek accreditation from the adult member-in-charge by producing their professional identification for the details to be recorded. This adult member should then:
 - i Provide a clear brief about what is considered appropriate in terms of content and behaviour.
 - ii Issue the photographer with identification.
 - iii Keep a record of accreditations.
 - iv Inform Scouts and parents that a photographer will attend the activity.
 - v Check that scout & parents consent to both the taking and publication of films or photographs.
 - vi Not allow unsupervised access to Scouts or one-to-one photo sessions.
 - vii Not approve/allow photo sessions outside the activity or at a Scout's home.

- Anyone concerned about any photography taking place should discuss his or her concerns with the adult member in charge or the CPO.

2. Reporting Procedure

2.1 Recognising Child Abuse and Responding to Disclosure

The safety and welfare of the Scout must always be the paramount consideration for adult members.

All scouting experiences and contexts must be guided by what is best for young people. It is not always easy to acknowledge that child abuse may take place in youth organisations or within families. It is important that adult members, professional workers and other approved adults within Guides and Scouts of Europe – Ireland are aware of the possibility that abuse may take place within and outside the organisation. Adult members must be familiar with and implement the Chiefs Education Policy. In addition, it is essential that adult members, professionals, and other approved adults are aware that mechanisms exist to address Child Protection concerns.

Every adult in the organisation of Guides and Scouts of Europe – Ireland has a duty to convey any child protection concerns that they have to the CPO who in turn will report to TUSLA if appropriate. Any individual or organisation, in the Republic of Ireland, reporting child protection concerns in good faith cannot be sued in a civil action. Adult members must promote an environment that encourages young people to convey their concerns. All necessary measures to protect youth members from unnecessary risk should be taken.

2.2 Categories of child abuse

Child Abuse can be categorised into 4 types:

- I. Neglect
- II. Emotional Abuse
- III. Physical Abuse
- IV. Sexual Abuse

A child may be subjected to more than one form of abuse at any given time.

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 and developmental care
- Intellectual stimulation
- Supervision and safety
- Attachment to and affection from adults
- Medical care.

Whether the harm caused is 'significant' is determined by the child's development as compared to that which could reasonably be expected of a child of similar age.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE occurs when an individual suffers harm as a result of being intimidated, being exposed to degradation or verbal attacks or when their needs for affection, approval, consistency and security go unmet.

Examples of emotional abuse are as follows:

- Inappropriate “initiation” practices.
- Inappropriate “rite of passage”.
- Persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility, or blaming.
- Exposure to domestic violence and /or overexposure via media and technology
- Unsupported, unrealistic or inappropriate expectations of a child’s capacity to understand something or to behave and control him/herself in a certain way.

PHYSICAL ABUSE is any form of non-accidental injury that causes significant harm to a child, or injury that results from wilful or neglectful failure to protect a child.

Examples of physical abuse are as follows:

- Shaking.
- Use of excessive force in handling.
- Hitting, kicking and slapping.
- Deliberate poisoning.
- Suffocation.
- Allowing or creating a substantial risk of significant harm to a child.
- Observation of violent behaviour.
- Reckless endangerment.
- Creating a substantial risk of serious physical injury to another person.
- Exhibiting a culpable disregard of foreseeable consequences to others.
- Making actual or imminent danger to the rights or safety of others, even though not intentionally causing harm.

Risk assessments should be carried out prior to activities to eliminate or minimise the potential risks to children.

SEXUAL ABUSE occurs when a child is used by another person for his/her gratification or sexual arousal, or for that of others. Every child has a basic right to be cared for and always protected. Adult members should also be alert to the possibility that abuse can take place in the context of peers or that it may be organised.

2.3 Reasonable grounds for Concern

It is important that adult members are alert to the possible signs of abuse, or indicators, which constitute reasonable grounds for concern. Examples of these include:

- Disclosures by the child in question or someone else.
- Age-inappropriate sexual play or knowledge.
- Injuries or patterns of injuries that lack an adequate explanation.
- Consistent indication over time of neglect, for example, failure to gain weight appropriate to age, withdrawal or behaviour out of character.

Possible indicators of inappropriate behaviour by Scouters or other adults:

- Paying an unusual amount of attention to children and providing them with presents, money or 'favours'.
- Seeking out vulnerable children.
- Seeking opportunities to spend significant amounts of time alone with a single child or a small group of children on a regular basis.
- Encouraging secretiveness about their activities and time spent with children.
- Taking a child/children into his/her own home;
- Being vague about previous employment and or hobbies/clubs
- Having an unusual amount of physical contact with a child or children.
- Touching children in an inappropriate manner.
- Talking to children in an inappropriate manner.
- Avoid close supervision and management of work.

2.4 How to respond to a disclosure

If a young person discloses a child protection concern to an adult member or to another young person:

DO:

- React calmly and listen carefully.
- Reassure that it is right to tell.
- Try to record the exact words expressed and the demeanour of the individual.
- Ask questions only for the purpose of clarification.
- Be mindful to differentiate between the person and the behaviour - they may be close to the young person e.g., Family.
- Sign and date the record.
- Pass the information to the CPO of Guides and Scouts of Europe-Ireland.

When talking to young people

- Explain what may happen next to the child – age appropriately.
- Let the young person talk at their own pace and in their own words.
- Listen actively without asking leading questions.
- Accept what the young person has to say.
- Agree on measures to protect the young person.
- Maintain appropriate need-to-know confidentiality.
- Continue to offer a supportive relationship with the young person, normal activities etc.

False disclosures are rare. Be open-minded and do not judge. If needed reassure the young person that your feelings towards him/her have not been adversely affected by the disclosure.

It is not necessary to write as a child speaks - more important to listen carefully, avoid interruptions and record immediately afterwards. Detail the context in which the disclosure arose, who was there and what type of questions were asked.

If an adult member fears that a young person might be in immediate danger, they should directly contact An Garda Síochána as a matter of urgency. And following this, report to the CPO or the out-of-hours Child Protection phone service (01) 5547840 (ROI)

DON'T:

- Promise to keep the information a secret.
- Ask leading questions or seek intimate details beyond those who volunteered.
- Express any judgmental opinion on the alleged abuser.

Investigate- When a child protection concern arises it is important that everyone follow closely the agreed reporting procedure as outlined below.

Confidentiality- Anyone with a child protection concern should remember that the safety of the child is paramount and that the alleged abuser is innocent until proven otherwise. They should treat the information confidentially and share it only with those people that need to know. Information should be stored in a safe and secure location.

Bullying- Bullying behaviour can be defined as repeated aggression, be it verbal, psychological, or physical that is conducted by an individual or group against others. Examples of bullying include teasing, taunting, threatening, shouting, hitting, and extortion.

Records- All records pertaining to matters of child abuse are kept with the utmost confidentiality and under the responsibility of the Child Protection Officer.

2.5 Other forms of unacceptable behaviour

Other forms of unacceptable behaviour for which Scouters should be on the alert that may be harmful to or undermine the confidence of young people include:

VERBAL ABUSE can include name-calling, sarcasm and criticism, making reference to some physical characteristic, destructive criticism, derogatory remarks and gestures. This is the least recognised form of harm done to young people, yet the long-term psychological effects may be traumatic to the individual.

2.6 Child Protection Reporting Procedures

Responsibilities of adult members and CPO

- Anyone, child, adult member or parent/guardian can and must be facilitated in raising a child protection concern with Guides and Scouts of Europe - Ireland.
- The onus is on everyone involved with Guides and Scouts of Europe - Ireland to raise any child abuse concern or suspicion that they have to the CPO. This should be done in writing. A completed Guides and Scouts of Europe - Ireland internal reporting form should follow. Discussing any such concerns with the CPO is not regarded as making an accusation against another person.

- Any member of Guides and Scouts of Europe - Ireland, who receives or knows of an allegation of child abuse in relation to a youth member, must report this to the CPO without delay.

Any allegation, suspicion, or concern of child abuse that gives rise to reasonable grounds for concern must be reported to the TUSLA Child and Family Agency. If a member fears that a young person might be in immediate danger, they must directly contact An Garda Síochána as a matter of urgency, following this, report to the CPO.

- The CPO has the responsibility to manage Child Protection concerns so as to:
- Ensure that no child is left at unnecessary risk.
- Seek advice from the TUSLA Child and Family Agency.
- Liaise, where deemed necessary, with the appropriate volunteer at the local level.
- Keep a factual record.

He/she consults the TUSLA Child and Family Agency on whether a formal report to them is necessary and on the appropriate actions to take.

If, following consultation with the TUSLA Child and Family Agency, it is deemed that a formal report is not required, the CPO must inform the person who first raised the concern of the decision not to make a formal report and the reason(s) supporting this decision. The person must also be advised that if they wish they can pursue their concerns with the TUSLA Child and Family Agency.

If a formal report to the TUSLA Child and Family Agency or Social Services Trust is required, the CPO will be responsible for ensuring that a Standard Reporting Form for the relevant statutory agency is completed and submitted without delay. He/she will inform the parents of the child unless doing so might place the child at greater risk. The manner in which this is done will be based on the advice of the statutory agency. Responses will be noted and included in the formal report.

The designated individual should also be responsible for keeping the parents/guardians updated on the progress of the procedure in Guides and Scouts of Europe - Ireland.

Where an allegation is made, or a concern is raised against an adult member.

Any allegation, suspicion, or concern of child abuse against an adult member /employee that gives rise to reasonable grounds for concern will be reported to TUSLA Child and Family Agency.

If any member of Guides and Scouts of Europe - Ireland fears that a young person might be in immediate danger they should directly contact An Garda Síochána as a matter of urgency, following this, report to the CPO.

If a concern is raised or an allegation/disclosure of child abuse is made against any member of Guides and Scouts of Europe - Ireland who is over 18 years of age they will be required to abstain, with a presumption of innocence, from participation in all Scouting activities until such time as the matter has been investigated, and a decision taken as to whether further action is required on the part of state agencies.

Adults in Guides and Scouts of Europe - Ireland may feel vulnerable to accusations of abuse. If an allegation is made, the adult should:

- Stay calm.
- Co-operate with the investigation.
- Abstain from Scouting activities, under the presumption of innocence, while the allegation is being investigated.
- Seek advice from, where appropriate, a professional organisation, family, or friends.
- Keep clear records of any meetings attended, discussions or correspondence about the allegations.
- Not discuss the allegation with the person who has made the allegation.
- Information on appropriate counselling services should be made available if requested by either or both parties.

If an allegation of abuse is made against you, it is essential that you agree to abstain from all Scouting Activities. This allows space for all parties to reflect while facts are established, and while any investigations by the authorities take place.

Guides and Scouts of Europe - Ireland looks at 'Scouting Activities' under three headings:

- **Access:** You must not have access to youth members of any programme section. The protection of children is our policy and is the law. Please understand that Guides and Scouts of Europe - Ireland is obliged to follow set procedures, even if you feel that allegations against you are unfounded.
- **Authority:** You must not pursue any appointment or position, or any role with authority or apparent authority at any level of Guides and Scouts of Europe - Ireland. Young members are encouraged to respect all adult members. They are entitled to expect that adults against whom allegations have been made be not able to make decisions on their behalf.
- **Association:** You should refrain from 'dropping by' during or after scouting activities. Young people are encouraged to trust the adult members of the organisation and associate such trust with people they see associating with their adult members. In addition, those who have made allegations are entitled to expect equal treatment from Guides and Scouts of Europe - Ireland without any hint of bias.

Those with families, partners or close friends in scouting should discuss their difficulties with the CPO. There is no doubt that this will be a difficult time for you. The CPO will help you to maintain contact with Guides and Scouts of Europe - Ireland and help you understand what is happening.

Guides and Scouts of Europe - Ireland accepts the 'paramount principle' i.e., that the best interests of the child are the primary concern. We also understand that the term 'child protection' includes a duty to support our adult members.

Guidance on nominating an independent link person for an adult member against whom an allegation is made.

This Reporting Procedure prioritises the safety and welfare of children, promotes best practices to all and advises adult members on how to avoid putting themselves at risk of an allegation of improper conduct. Such allegations can have a negative and isolating impact and can be compounded by Guides and Scouts of Europe – Ireland’s necessary policy that the Scouter abstains while statutory bodies investigate to reduce further risk to youth members and adults.

The appointment of an independent Link Person during this process can be a key factor in satisfactory resolution and can play a vital role in supporting the accused adult throughout this process. This appointment can only be by mutual agreement between the adult member, the said Link Person, and the CPO.

A link person must be:

- ❖ Independent of the situation, ideally outside the adult member’s own troop.
- ❖ Experienced in remaining objective, neutral, non-judgmental, and maintaining confidentiality.
- ❖ A good listener, open-minded, friendly, approachable, and practising good people skills.
- ❖ Aware of the informal nature of the role & the possible time commitment.
- ❖ Accepting of the principles, procedures and boundaries set out herewith for the role.
- ❖ Appointed within a maximum of a week of the adult member abstaining.

Link persons with valuable experience/expertise might be:

- ❖ From a pre-trained panel in agreement with the adult member abstaining.
- ❖ Other adults with detailed experience in Child Protection and Codes of Good Practice.

When appointed, a link person must:

- i If not already acquainted, be introduced to the adult member by the CPO.
- ii Keep regular contact and provide a listening ear to the adult member involved – the expectation is that contact will be maintained twice per week for the first month, once a week for the second month, and alternate weeks thereafter.
- iii Provide practical information on coping – what legal/counselling assistance can be obtained.

After 2 months review whether the support is still appropriate. If support is not accepted initially, repeat the offer, or ask if professional counselling might be considered.

A link person is strongly advised *not* to:

- ❖ Advocate for a Scouter in relation to the allegation - always remain neutral.
- ❖ Be involved in the allegation, any investigation of it or any legal proceedings.
- ❖ Be involved in any process of suspension should this occur.
- ❖ Be liaising with more than one Scouter at a time.

Where an allegation is made, or a concern is raised in relation to Peer Abuse.

Peer abuse is where both the alleged perpetrator and victim of the abuse are children (i.e., under 18yrs). In a situation where child abuse is alleged to have been carried out by another child, the child protection procedures should be adhered to for both the victim and the alleged abuser; that is, it should be considered a childcare and protection issue for both children.

If an allegation, suspicion, or concern of peer abuse is made against a youth member who is a child that gives rise to reasonable grounds for concern, this should be reported to the CPO. The matter will be referred to the TUSLA Child and Family Agency, who will deal with it as a childcare and protection issue for both children.

The onus is on everyone involved with Guides and Scouts of Europe - Ireland to report child protection concerns or suspicions relating to any adult involved in scouting activities to the CPO. This should be done in writing. A completed Internal Reporting Form should follow.

Discussing any such concerns with the CPO is not regarded as making an accusation against another person.

2.7 Recommendations for improvement in practices and procedures

Whether a formal report to the statutory authority is made or not the CPO may make recommendations to the appropriate level of the Association to address any issues identified in the report. Such recommendations could address:

- Shortcomings in training.
- Interpretations of Policies and Procedures.
- Practices not in line with the Reporting Procedure.
- Updating of the Reporting Procedure.
- Suitability of specific adults in leadership roles.

Details of witness/witnesses

Any action taken

Signature:

* This form should be completed with as much detail as is known and returned marked 'confidential' to the CPO.

3. Recruiting Policy

3.1 Recruiting Criteria

Guides and Scouts of Europe - Ireland is committed to taking all reasonable steps to ensure that only suitable adults work with the young people in our organisation. This includes a focused selection procedure, training, consistent management, and support. Guides and Scouts of Europe - Ireland will endeavour to support the essential work of volunteers and their ability to deal with young people in a fair and ethical manner.

Guides and Scouts of Europe - Ireland strongly encourages each group to adopt a proactive attitude and undertake a systematic approach to adult recruitment. When recruiting adults, the role they are expected to undertake should be clearly defined with a job specification.

Attitude and approach are important factors in recruiting people; they can learn the skills and acquire the knowledge required for their role through formal and informal training. Some traits we might look for in our adults include:

- Ability to communicate and interact with young people.
- Interest in the development of young people.
- Understanding acceptable boundaries with young people: conversations, smoking, drugs, alcohol etc.
- Ability to work with other adults as part of a team.
- Good communication skills.
- A commitment to ongoing personal development and training.
- Open and positive approach and attitude.
- A belief in scouting in general, and Guides and Scouts of Europe – Ireland in particular.

3.2 Recruitment Process

The first meeting with the Group Chief is vital in explaining exactly what is expected, the time commitment involved and outlining the formal and on-the-job training which is required.

The current policy on the recruitment of adult members in Guides and Scouts of Europe - Ireland is:

- A potential adult member must be interviewed by a person in authority (Group chief, Officers, National Commissioners, etc) in the organisation and then complete the Adult Application Form.
- The organisation Guides and Scouts of Europe – Ireland exercises due diligence to carry out a background check of the potential adult member, and documents it. Two references must be obtained from the applicant.
- If satisfied, the person in authority signs these forms and returns them immediately to the heads of the organisation.
- If the heads of the organisation are satisfied, the applicant is required to apply for Garda vetting.
- While waiting for successful vetting the potential Chief must complete the TUSLA Children First online training programme, become familiar with the GSE-Ireland

Child Safeguarding Statement, and satisfy the CPO that he or she has understood and is committed to applying all GSE-Ireland all policies and procedures.

- An applicant is not allowed to attend scouting activities with youth until the Garda Vetting process is complete. He or she may attend adult meetings, particularly the induction meetings.
- Once the vetting procedure is finished, the adult member is admitted to the organisation.

The above guidelines are based on the current legislation and may be subject to change in the future.

3.3 Induction Process for new adult members

During the induction process, the applicant learns through the following sessions:

1. The Code of Good Practice, the History of Scouting, the Aims of Scouting.
2. Responsibilities of Adults in Scouting, the outline of structures and support available.

Adult Training

If you take part in a sport, you train to improve your game. It is just the same with being an adult member of Guides and Scouts of Europe - Ireland. Training helps you build on your own strengths as a person and to improve your understanding of the skills and information needed to put the Scout Method into action. It is important that you train to fully understand your role in facilitating and mentoring young people on their personal journey through Scouting. The organisation seeks to provide appropriate training at all levels from local to national, with particular emphasis upon the provisions of this Code and the specific area of Child Protection.

The first training stage is an induction into Guides and Scouts of Europe - Ireland. At this induction, you will be presented with your copy of this Child Safeguarding Statement. If you need any clarification on this CSS, you should speak with your Group Chief.

Stage 2 of training focuses on Guides and Scouts of Europe – Ireland’s Child Protection Programme. The programme provides information and training on the various forms of child abuse, the possible indicators of abuse, the method of dealing with child protection issues of which you may become aware and our reporting mechanisms. You will also be made aware of the appropriate ways for Chiefs to behave when interacting with children, including forms of prohibited behaviour.

All Scouters must read and understand the Guides and Scouts of Europe – Ireland Health and Safety Policy and confirm to its requirements. A Risk Assessment of new outings locations is required before any activity takes place.

Guides and Scouts of Europe – Ireland reserves the right to regularly review their members’ behaviour and to investigate situations that may appear to not follow our Guidelines and Procedures. Following appropriate internal discussions among leaders in authority and including the Child Protection Officer and the Health and Safety Officer, the organisation reserves the right to request an adult member to step down from the organisation, temporarily or permanently.

4. Complaints and Disciplinary Procedure

- Each member of Guides and Scouts of Europe – Ireland shall be informed of the present Complaints and Disciplinary Procedure.
- Complaints should be made in the first place to the relevant Group Chief, who must inform within 24h the General Commissioner Scouts or Guides.
- Upon receiving a complaint, the General Commissioner shall appoint a Disciplinary Committee to resolve problems relating to the conduct of its members. This includes bullying. The Disciplinary Committee consists of a representative from the Board of Directors, the Child Protection Officer, and ordinary registered members of the club.
- An appeals Committee is also appointed, which membership is different from the Disciplinary Committee.
- The complaint must be sent in writing to the Child Protection Officer and must be responded to within 5 working days.
- If the complaint involves suspected abuse or a criminal offence the Child Protection Officer is consulted, and the Disciplinary Committee is disbanded. The statutory authorities will then be informed.
- The Disciplinary Committee should review any relevant paperwork and hold any necessary meetings with all parties to proceed with complaints into any incident of suspected misconduct that does not relate to child abuse.
- It should, as soon as possible, inform the Board of Directors of the progress of the disciplinary process. This should be done within 10 working days.
- The Disciplinary Committee should furnish the individual with the nature of the complaint being made against him/her and afford him/her the opportunity of providing a response either verbally or in writing, but usually at a meeting with the disciplinary committee.
- Written confidential records of all complaints must be safely and confidentially kept, under the responsibility of the Child Protection Officer.
- Where it is established that an incident of misconduct has taken place, the Disciplinary Committee notifies the member of any sanction being imposed. The notification is made in writing, setting out the reasons for the sanction. If the member is under 18 years of age, correspondence should be addressed to the parents /carers.
- If the member against whom the complaint was made is unhappy with the decision of the Disciplinary Committee s /he has the right to appeal the decision to the Appeals Committee. Any appeal should be made in writing within an agreed period after the issue, usually 10 days after the decision of the Disciplinary Committee. The chairperson of the Appeals Committee should be a member of the Board of Directors. The Appeals Committee should consult with the Child Protection Officer in relation to issues of child welfare.
- The Appeals Committee has the power to confirm, set aside or change any sanction imposed by the Disciplinary Committee.
- If any party is not satisfied with the outcome, the matter can be referred to the Governing Body. However, efforts to resolve the issue at the local level should be exhausted before the National Governing Body is engaged in attempts to resolve the matter.