IJA Child Safeguarding Statement

The Irish Judo Association provides judo activities and opportunities for young people through participation in club, provincial and national events and through our national teams. The Irish Judo Association is committed to safeguarding children by working under the guidance of our IJA Safeguarding Policies. Volunteers and staff, working with our young people, throughout the organisation, seek to create a safe environment for young people to grow and develop.

National Governing Body details:

- Name: Irish Judo Association
- Sport: Judo
- Location (National Office): Irish Sport HQ, Sport Ireland Campus, Dublin D15 DY62
- Size (Number of staff/members/clubs): 7 Members of Staff with 47 Affiliated Clubs
- Activities: Sport of Judo – training classes, grading, competition and performance

Principles to safeguard children form harm:

The Irish Judo Association is committed to safeguarding children and by working under the guidance of our National Governing Body Safeguarding Policies; our staff, both volunteers and employed, working with our young people throughout the organisation, seek to create a safe environment for young people to grow and develop within our sport. The following set of principles should be adhered to:

- **Importance of childhood** - The importance of childhood should be understood and valued by everyone involved in our sport.
- **Needs of the child** - All children's sport experiences should be guided by what is best for children. This means that adults should have a basic understanding of the emotional, physical, and personal needs of young people.
- **Integrity in relationships** - Adults interacting with children in our sport are in a position of trust and influence. They should always ensure that children are treated with integrity and respect, and the self-esteem of young people is enhanced.
- **Fair Play** - All children's sport should be conducted in an atmosphere of fair play. The principles of fair play should always be emphasised, and IJA event organisers and IJA coaches should give clear guidelines regarding acceptable standards of behaviour.
- **Quality atmosphere & ethos** – Our children's sport should be conducted in a safe, positive, and encouraging atmosphere.
- **Competition** - Competition is an essential element of our sport and should be encouraged in an age-appropriate manner. A child centred ethos will help to ensure that competition and specialisation are kept in their appropriate place.
- **Equality** - All children should be valued and treated in an equitable and fair manner regardless of ability, age, gender, religion, social and ethnic background, or political persuasion.

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Risk Assessment:

This Irish Judo Association written Risk Assessment document indicates the areas of potential risk of harm, the likelihood of the risk occurring, and gives the required policy, guidance or process documents require to alleviate these risks. The list of risks identified and procedures to manage these risks are contained in the following categories:

Risk Identified	Procedure in place to manage risk identified
Club and Coaching Practices	
1. Lack of coaching qualification.	1. IJA Coach education programme requirements.
2. Unauthorised photography & recording activities.	2. IJA Photography & Use of Images policy.
3. Behavioural Issues.	3. IJA Code of Conduct.
4. No guidance for travelling & away trips.	4. IJA Travel Guidelines trips with Minors.
5. Lack of adherence with misc. procedures in Safeguarding policy.	5. IJA Safeguarding Policy.
Complaints & Discipline	
1. Lack of awareness of a Complaints & Disciplinary policy.	1. IJA Code of Conduct/IJA Safeguarding Policy.
2. Difficulty in raising an issue by child and/or parent or guardian.	2. IJA Code of Conduct/IJA Safeguarding Policy.
3. Complaints not being dealt with seriously.	3. IJA Code of Conduct/IJA Safeguarding Policy.
Reporting Procedures	
1. Lack of knowledge of organisational & statutory reporting procedures	1. IJA Safeguarding Policy.
2. No DLP appointed.	2. IJA Club Compliance Policy.
3. Concerns of abuse or harm not reported.	3. Reporting procedures – IJA Safeguarding Policy.
4. Not clear who young person should talk to or report to.	4. Names & contact details of CCO, DLP published in IJA Safeguarding Policy.
Recruitment	
1. Recruitment of inappropriate people.	1. Recruitment policy within Communication Pack Clubs.
2. Lack of clarity on roles.	2. Club Structure Template in Communication Pack Clubs.
Communications	
1. Lack of awareness of 'risk of harm' with members and visitors.	1. Child Safeguarding Statement / Training Policy.
2. No communication of Child Safeguarding Statement of Code of Behaviour to members of visitors.	2. Child Safeguarding Statement (display)/Code of Behaviour (distribute).
3. Unauthorised photography and recording of activities.	3. Photography and Use of images policy.

4. Inappropriate use of social media and communications by under 18's.	4. Communications policy/Code of conduct.
General Risk of Harm 1. Harm not being recognised. 2. Harm caused by: a. Child to Child. b. Coach to Child. c. Volunteer to Child. d. Member to Child. e. Visitor to Child. 3. General behavioural issues. 4. Issues of Bullying. 5. Vetting of staff/volunteers. 6. Issues of Online Safety	1. Safeguarding policy/Child Safeguarding Training. 2. Safeguarding policy/Child Safeguarding Training. 3. Code of Conduct. 4. Anti-Bullying policy. 5. Safe Recruitment policy/Vetting policy. 6. Social Media/Online Safety policy.

The Risk Assessment was undertaken on: 31.03.2026

Procedures:
Our Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed in line with requirements under the Children First Act 2015, (the Children First: National Guidance, and Tusla's Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice ROI, Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and the Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT) NI).
In addition to our Risk Assessment document described above, there are further procedures that support our intention to safeguard children while they are availing of our activities.

The IJA has the following procedures in place as part of our Safeguarding Policies:

- Procedures for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct by staff or volunteers against a child availing of our activities.
- Procedures for the safe recruitment of staff and volunteers to work with children in our activities.
- Procedures for access to child safeguarding training and information, including the identification of the occurrence of harm.
- Procedure for reporting of child protection or welfare concerns to Statutory Authorities.
- Procedure for maintaining a list of the persons (if any) in the relevant service who are mandated persons.
- Procedure for appointing a relevant person.

The Mandated Person for the IJA is Mr Sean Fleming – sean.fleming@irishjudoassociation.ie.
The National Children's Officer for the IJA is Mr Paul Pender – paul.pender@irishjudassociation.ie.

Implementation:
We recognise that implementation is an ongoing process. Our NGB is committed to the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement and the procedures that support our intention to keep children safe from harm while availing of our activities.

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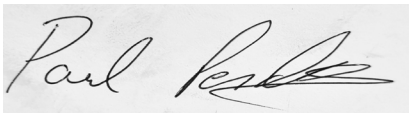
Please note the following:

- That all staff and volunteers have been furnished with a copy of this statement.
- This statement is available to parents/guardians, the Agency (IJA Secretary), and members of the public on request.
- This statement will be displayed in a prominent place by the Irish Judo Association and its' affiliated clubs.

This Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed on 31.03.2027.

Signed:  Date: 31.03.2026
(On behalf of the Irish Judo Association)

Name: Paul Pender Phone no: 00353 858135580
For queries on this Child Safeguarding Statement, please contact Mr Paul Pender.

Glossary of Terms

Safeguarding or Child Protection: The term child protection has been extended to safeguarding as it reflects the wider responsibility for health safety and prevention as well as just protection from abuse. It may be defined as: Doing everything possible to minimise the risk of harm to children, young people & vulnerable adults.

Safeguarding is about being proactive and putting measures in place in advance of any contact with children, young people & vulnerable adults to ensure that they are going to be kept safe. This could include:

- Ensuring staff/volunteers are properly checked when they are recruited
- Guidelines for people who come into contact with children, young people & vulnerable adults as part of their role to ensure they know what they need to do to keep them safe
- Guidelines for planning an event or activity with children, young people & vulnerable adults and putting measures in place to minimise the risk of safeguarding issues occurring.

Children & Young People (Child/Juvenile/Junior/Underage): A child or young person is defined by the law in both jurisdictions as a person under the age of 18 years. For the purposes of this document the term children & young people apply to all under the age of 18.

Vulnerable Adult: A vulnerable adult is defined as a person who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is unable to take care of him or herself or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

Parent/guardian: For the purposes of this document when referring to parent/guardian the term is used to include parents, legal guardians, and/or carer.

Coach/Trainer/Sports Leader: A coach is a person who assists the young participant to develop his or her skills and abilities in a progressive way.

Manager: A manager is an individual who takes overall responsibility for a team or a group of sports people and who will often have a direct input into the nature and organization of the activity itself.

Disclosure: A disclosure is defined as a specific allegation of abuse. It may or may not be made against a named individual. A suspicion is when concern is expressed about abuse that may have taken place or concern that abuse may take place.

Designated Person/ Children's Officers: Is the person who is responsible for reporting allegations or suspicions of child abuse to the Statutory Authorities and acts as a resource with organisations for children. This person will also be responsible for dealing with any course about protection of young people.

Statutory Authorities: The authorities who promote the protection and welfare of young people and vulnerable adults who have the responsibility for the investigation and/or validation of suspected child abuse, i.e., in the ROI it is An Garda Siochána and the Child and Family Agency (TULSA), and in NI it is the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and the Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT). A guidance list is noted at the end of this document.

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Safeguarding Policy

The Irish Judo Association has agreed and adopted the following Safeguarding Policy:

1. To fully commit to the safety and welfare of its members especially young or vulnerable persons by promoting and prioritising safeguarding
2. Ensure the protection, safety and welfare of a child or young person is of paramount importance
3. Ensure that everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and is provided with appropriate learning opportunities to recognize, identify and respond to signs of safeguarding concerns
4. Ensure appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents/concerns and support is given to those who raise or disclose a concern. The relevant statutory authorities (Child & Family Agency, Health & Social Care Trusts, Police Service NI & An Garda Síochána) shall receive full so-operation in any matter relating to the protection, safety and welfare of a child or young person
5. Any matter concerning the protection, safety and welfare of a child or young person shall be treated with all confidentiality
6. Implement all policies and practices pertinent for the protection, safety and welfare of a child or young person and ensure robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in operation
7. The Safeguarding Policy will be reviewed by the organisation on a regular basis
8. To inform all clubs of the 'Sport Ireland Safeguarding Guidance for Children & Young People in Sport manual: **https://irishjudoassociation.ie/policies-forms/**

Safeguarding Policy - Club Requirements

Club Structure - a number of changes have been to be made to the structure of a local club. A Children's Officer & a Designated Person must be appointed within each club. These persons must undergo Safeguarding 2 & Safeguarding 3 training respectively. Clubs must also comply with the new guidelines with regards to Safeguarding:

1. Club Constitution must be amended to reflect Safeguarding requirements
2. All Clubs must appoint personnel to hold the following roles - a) Children's Club Officer, b) Designated Person
3. The Children's Officer and Designated Person must sit on the Club's Executive Committee to report on Safeguarding issues
4. The Club's Children's Officer & Designated Person must complete the relevant Safeguarding 2 & 3 training and a copy of the certificate received is required as part of the Club Affiliation pack each year
6. All Head Club Coaches & Assistant Coaches should complete Safeguarding 1. A registered club coach may not act as Club Children's Officer or Designated Person for that club.
7. Safeguarding must be an item on the Club's Executive Committee Monthly Agendas
8. All clubs should have a robust recruitment process, including vetting, references and interview for all committee members, coaches and all staff/volunteer members
9. All Club members must be signed up to the Safeguarding Policy in conjunction with the national programme
10. A complaints procedure should be in place for each club
11. Adult Supervision should be available during all children's activities for judo classes & competitions

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Child Welfare and Protection Procedures

Irish Judo Association accepts that organisations, which include young people among its members, are vulnerable to the occurrence of child abuse. Below are the procedures for dealing with any welfare or protection issue that may arise. Child welfare and the protection of young people is the concern of all adults at all times, irrespective of their role within the organization.

If there are grounds for concern (see Sport Ireland Code, page 44), about the safety or welfare of a young person you should react to the concern. Persons unsure about whether or not certain behaviours are abusive and therefore reportable, should contact the duty social worker in the local health service executive or social services department where they will receive advice. Grounds for concern include a specific indication from a child, a statement from a person who witnessed abuse or an illness, injury or behaviour consistent with abuse.

A report may be made by any member in the club but should be passed on to the Designated Person in that club who may in turn, have to pass the concern to the Designated Person or the local Statutory Authorities. It is not the responsibility of anyone working within Irish Judo Association 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. That is the job of the local statutory authorities. However, there is a responsibility to protect children by assisting the appropriate agencies so that they can than make enquiries and take any necessary action to protect the young person.

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

Response to a Child Disclosing Abuse

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

- **(a)** Deal with any allegation of abuse in a sensitive and competent way through listening to and facilitating the child to talk about the problem, rather than interviewing the child about details of what happened.
- **(b)** Stay calm and not show any extreme reaction to what the child is saying. Listen compassionately and take what the child is saying seriously.
- **(c)** Understand that the child has decided to tell you something very important and has taken a risk to do so. The experience of telling should be a positive one so that the child will not mind talking to those involved in the investigation.
- **(d)** Be honest with the child and tell them it is not possible to keep the information a secret.
- **(e)** Make no judgmental statements against the person whom the allegation is made.
- **(f)** Not question the child unless the nature of what s/he is saying is unclear. Leading questions should be avoided. Open, non-specific questions should be used such as “Can you explain to me what you mean by that”.
- **(g)** Check out the concerns with the parents/guardians before making a report unless doing so would endanger the child or compromise an investigation.
- **(h)** Give the child some indication of what would happen next, such as informing parents/guardians, health service executive or social services. It should be kept in mind that the child may have been threatened or may feel vulnerable at this stage.
- **(i)** Carefully record the details.

(j) Pass on this information to the Designated Person (Mr Sean Fleming)
(k) Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you

Reporting Suspected or Disclosed Child Abuse

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

(a) Observe and note dates, times, locations and contexts in which the incident occurred, or suspicion was aroused, together with any other relevant information.
(b) Report the matter as soon as possible to the Designated Person (Mr Sean Fleming) with responsibility for reporting abuse if the Designated Person has reasonable grounds for believing that the child has been abused or is at risk of abuse, s/he will make a report to the health service executive/social services who have statutory responsibility to investigate and assess suspected child abuse.
(c) In cases of emergency, where a child appears to be at immediate or 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.
(d) If the Designated Person is unsure whether reasonable grounds for concern exist s/he can informally consult with the local health board/social services, (see Sport Ireland code page 46). 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 will first inform the family of their intention to make such a report, unless doing so would endanger the child or undermine an investigation.

The Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998 provides immunity from civil liability to persons who report child abuse 'reasonably and in good faith' to the Health Service Executive or the Gardaí (See 5.13.1 – ISC. Code). The act also covers the offence of 'false reporting'. The main provisions of the Act are:

1. The provision of immunity from civil liability to any person who reports child abuse "reasonably and in good faith" to designated officers of Health Service Executive or any member of An Garda Siochana;
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, but an individual who reports concerns in 'good faith' is not deliberately attempting to slander another person's name. In Northern Ireland there is legislation, the Criminal Law Act (NI) 1967 which places the responsibility on everyone to report offences or to forward information to the police by emphasizing the, 'duty of every other person, who knows or believes , (a) that the offence or some other arrestable offences has been committed: and (b) that he has information which is likely to secure, or to be material assistance in securing, the apprehension, prosecution or conviction of any person for that offence'

Allegation against Sports Leaders/Coaches

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The Irish Judo Association has agreed procedures to be followed in cases of alleged child abuse against Sports Leaders/Coaches. If such an allegation is made against Sports Leader/Coach working within the club/association, two procedures should be followed:

- The reporting procedure in respect of suspected child abuse (reported by the designated person), see previous page
- The procedure for dealing with the Sports Leader/Coach (carried out by the club Chair or senior officer, or a person not already involved with the child protection concern)

The safety of the child making the allegation should be considered and the safety of any other children who may be at risk. The club should take any necessary steps that may be necessary to protect children in its care. The issue of confidentiality is important. Information is on a need-to-know basis, and the Sports Leader/Coach should be treated with respect and fairness.

The reporting procedure

If the designated person has reasonable grounds for concern, the matter should be reported to the local health board/ social services, following the standard reporting procedure.

The Sports Leader/Coach

While the designated officer makes the report to the local health board, the Chair of the club should deal with the Sports Leader/Coach in question.

- The Chair should privately inform the leader/coach that (a) an allegation has been made against him / her and (b) the nature of the allegation. He / she should be afforded an opportunity to respond. His / her response should be noted and passed on to the health board / social services
- The leader/coach should be asked to step aside pending the outcome of the investigation. When a person is asked to step aside it should be made clear that it is only a precautionary measure and will not prejudice any later disciplinary proceedings.

The governing body should be informed by the Designated Person that the leader has been asked to stand aside. Governing bodies can consider disciplinary action on the leader but should ensure that this does not interfere with the investigation of the Statutory Authorities. It is important that governing bodies consider the outcome of the investigation and any implications it might have. The fact that the alleged abuser has not been prosecuted or been found guilty does not mean that they are appropriate to work with young people in the future.

Confidentiality

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

The following points should be kept in mind:

- A guarantee of confidentiality or undertakings regarding secrecy cannot be given, as the welfare of the child will supersede all other considerations.
- All information should be treated in a careful and sensitive manner and should be discussed only with those who need to know.
- Information should be conveyed to the parents / guardians of the child in a sensitive way.
- Giving information to others on a 'need to know' basis for the protection of child is not a breach of confidentiality.
- All persons involved in a child protection process (the child, his/her parents/guardians, the alleged offender, his/her family, Sports Leaders) should be afforded appropriate respect, fairness, support and confidentiality at all stages of the procedure.
- Information should be stored in a secure place, with limited access only to designated people.
- The requirements of 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 Designated Person (Sean Fleming). The information should be checked out and handled in a confidential manner.

Rumours

Rumours should not be allowed hang in the air. Any rumours relating to inappropriate behaviour should be brought to the attention of the Designated Person, (Mr Sean Fleming) and checked out without delay.

Links to Relevant Guidance and Legal Frameworks

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely:

- Children Act, 1989
- United Convention of the Rights of the Child, 1991
- Data Protection Acts 1998 to 2018
- Human Rights Act, 1998
- Sexual Offences Act, 2003
- Children Act, 2004
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act, 2006
- Protection of Freedoms Act, 2012
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 – 25 years
- Statutory guidance for organisations which work with and support children and young people who have special educational needs
- Code of Ethics and Good Practice in Children's Sport, Irish Sports Council
- Children First Act, 2015

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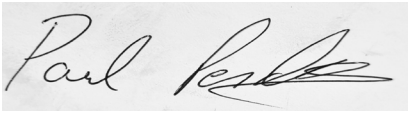
Clubs with any questions or queries should contact the National Children's Officer at:
paul.pender@irishjudoassociation.ie or 085 8135580



Mr Paul Pender
National Children's Officer
Irish Judo Association

Date: 31.03.2026
Next Review Date: 31.03.2027