

New Ross and District Pipe Band

Child Protection Policy

The New Ross and District Pipe Band will:

- Promote the health and welfare of children by providing opportunities for them to take part in the activities of the band safely.
- Respect and promote the rights, wishes and feelings of children.
- Promote and implement appropriate procedures to safeguard the well-being of children and protect them from abuse.
- Require members to adopt and abide by this Child Protection Policy and these Procedures.
- Respond to any allegations of misconduct or abuse of children in line with this Policy and these Procedures as well as implementing, where appropriate, the relevant disciplinary and appeals procedures.

Principles

The welfare of children is everyone's responsibility, particularly when it comes to protecting them from abuse of any kind. Children have a lot to gain from participation in the pipe band world. It provides an excellent opportunity for them to learn new skills, become more confident and maximise their own unique potential. This Policy and these Procedures are based on the following principles:

- The welfare of children is the primary concern.
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, socio-economic status, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse of any kind.
- It is everyone's responsibility to report any concerns about abuse.
- All incidents of alleged poor practice, misconduct and abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

Definition of Abuse

- Emotional Abuse
- Neglect
- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Negative Discrimination (including racism)
- Bullying (includes bullying by gangs; bullying by family members; physical bullying; verbal bullying; teasing; and harassment)
- Inappropriate comment, sexual innuendo, harassment of any kind.
- Endangerment through reckless, thoughtless, malicious, or careless acts, gestures or comments.

Designated Liaison Person & Assistant Designated Liaison person

A Designated Liaison Person (DLP) & Assistant Designated Liaison person (ADLP) will be nominated by the band at each AGM. The Designated Liaison Person has the main responsibility for managing child protection issues within the New Ross and District Pipe Band. The role and responsibilities of the DLP and ADLP are detailed below:

1. Implement and promote **the Irish Pipe Band Association's and the New Ross and District Pipe Band's** Child Protection Policy and Procedures.
2. Act as the main contact within the band for the protection of children .
3. Encourage good practice and support of procedures to protect children .
4. Keep abreast of developments and understand the latest information on data protection, confidentiality and other legal issues that impact on the protection of children.
5. Communicate with the IPBA's Designated Liaison Person.
6. Maintain confidential records of reported cases and action taken and liaise with the statutory agencies and ensure they have access to all necessary information.
7. Monitor Child Protection Procedures for the band.

Recommended Characteristics of the Designated Liaison Person:

- Have an understanding of the issues affecting children and the sensitive way in which they must be managed.
- Be able to communicate the implications of protecting children to all members.
- Be able to communicate with children .
- Be supportive of the introduction of the Child Protection Policy.
- Have an understanding and appreciation of the need to respect confidentiality.
- Be able to follow procedures and recognise when to seek advice and not rely solely on their own judgement.
- Be willing to challenge members who do not comply with the Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children

The code of conduct details the types of practice required by all members of the band when in contact with children.

When teaching , practicing with , or socialising with children:

- Always work in an open environment e.g. avoid private or unobserved situations and encourage an open environment for activities.
- Treat all children equally, with respect and dignity.
- Put the welfare of each child first before winning or achieving performance goals.
- Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Ensure that if any form of manual or physical support is required for a child , it is provided openly, the child is informed of what is being done and their consent is obtained.
- Avoid inappropriate comment, gestures, innuendo,
- Avoid endangering children through reckless or careless acts.
- Maintain age appropriate language and conversation.
- Do not supply minors with alcohol, cigarettes or any drug.
- Always encourage a high standard of discipline , performance and demeanour through personal example and positive advice.

For taking and transporting children away from home (including overseas trips):

- Always tell another member that you are transporting a child, give details of the route and the anticipated length of the journey.
- Ensure all vehicles are correctly insured.
- All reasonable safety measures are taken, e.g. children in the back seat, seatbelts are worn.
- Ensure, where possible, a male and female accompany mixed groups of children .
- On overseas trips, the band committee must ensure that supervision is provided for all minors at all times.
- Senior members of the band will be designated for looking after passports, helping with baggage check-in and retrieval, uniform and instrument maintenance, timetabling while abroad , first aid, laundry , snack and food concerns, home sickness, free time, sleeping arrangements, packing for the home leg of the trip, etc.
- Children under the age of 14 must be accompanied by an older sibling who is preferably a playing member of the band or by an adult (parent, guardian) .

Practice To Be Avoided at all times

- Avoid having ‘favourites’ - this could lead to resentment and jealousy by other children and could lead to false allegations.
- Avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others.
- Ensure that when children are taken away from home, adults avoid entering their rooms unless in an emergency situation or in the interest of health and safety. If it is necessary to enter rooms, the door should remain open, if appropriate.
- Never use bad language or age inappropriate language to children
- Avoid put downs.
- Avoid taking children to your home, unless in groups.
- Never engage in sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- Never engage in rough or physical contact .
- Never form intimate emotional or physical relationships with children .
- Never allow or engage in touching a child in a sexually suggestive manner.
- Never allow children to swear or use sexualised language unchallenged.
- Never make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun.
- Never reduce a child to tears as a form of control.

- Never allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Never share a room with a child for sleeping accommodation.
- Never invite or allow children to stay with you at your home.

Reporting

If members have concerns about an incident involving a child that seems untoward or unusual they must report their concerns as soon as possible to the Designated Liaison Person. Parents should also be informed of the incident as soon as possible unless it is not in the child's interests to tell them .

Report, record and inform if the following occur:

- If you accidentally hurt a child.
- If a child seems distressed in any manner.
- If a child misunderstands or misinterprets something you have said or done.
- If a child needs to be restrained.

Children in Publications and on the Internet

Websites and publications provide excellent opportunities to broadcast achievements of individuals to the world and to provide a showcase for the activities of young people . In some cases, however, displaying certain information about children could place them at risk. The following procedure must be followed to ensure that the New Ross and District Pipe Band's information on the Internet does not place children at risk.

- Publications or information on an Internet site must never include personal information that could identify a child e.g. home address, e-mail address, telephone number of a child.
- Before publishing any information about a child, written consent must be obtained from the child's parent/guardian.

Any concerns or enquiries about publications or Internet information should be reported to the band's Designated Liaison Person.

How to Listen to a Disclosure (i.e. a report of serious neglect or abuse)

In the event of a young member of the band making a disclosure to another member of the band, it is important to listen carefully to the information that is disclosed. When listening to a disclosure the following good practice is required:

- React calmly so as not to frighten the child/vulnerable adult.
- Do not show disbelief.
- Tell the child/vulnerable adult that he/she is not to blame and that he/she was right to tell.
- Take what the child/vulnerable adult says seriously, recognising the difficulties inherent in interpreting what a child/vulnerable adult says, especially if they have a speech disability and/or differences in language.
- Do not pre-suppose that the experience was bad or painful - it may have been neutral or even pleasurable.
- Always avoid projecting your own reactions onto the child or vulnerable adult.
- If you need to clarify, keep questions to the absolute minimum to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said.
- If you need to clarify or the statement is ambiguous, use open-ended, non-leading questions.
- Do not introduce personal information from either your own experiences or those of other children .
- Reassure the child or vulnerable adult.
- Report the disclosure to the DLP immediately.

Actions to Avoid in the Event of a Disclosure

- Avoid panic.
- Avoid showing shock or distaste.
- Avoid probing for more information than is offered.
- Avoid speculating or making assumptions.
- Avoid making negative comments about the person against whom the allegation has been made.
- Avoid approaching the individual against whom the allegation has been made.
- Avoid making promises or agreeing to keep secrets.

- Avoid giving a guarantee of confidentiality.

Responding to a Suspicion or Allegation of Abuse against another member of the band.

The feelings caused by the discovery of potential abuse by a member will raise different issues, e.g. disbelief that a member would act in this way. It is not the responsibility of a member to take responsibility or to decide whether or not a child has been abused. However, as with allegations against non-members, it is the responsibility of the individual to act on any concerns.

Any information that raises concern about the behaviour of a member towards a child must be passed on as soon as possible that day, in accordance with these procedures. No member in receipt of such information shall keep that information to himself/ herself or attempt to deal with the matter on their own.

These Procedures aim to ensure that all suspicions and/or allegations of abuse against a member are taken seriously and are dealt with in a timely and appropriate manner.

On receiving information about a member that leads to a suspicion or allegation of abuse:

- Listen to the child as detailed in the section on ‘How to Listen to Disclosures’.
- Pass your concerns to the Designated Liaison Person .
- Act on any advice given.

Important Note: Where the concern is about the Designated Liaison Person it must be reported to the Assistant DLP or Chairman of the band or any officer of the band.

Actions for the Designated Liaison Person when Concerns are Reported

1. It is the Designated Liaison Person’s responsibility to pass on any information regarding child abuse (physical/emotional/sexual) to the appropriate authorities for investigation. (HSE/Gardai)
2. It is not the role of the DLP to investigate an incident/alleged incident.
3. It is the duty of the DLP to inform the committee of the band of any allegation or incidence of abuse at the earliest opportunity.

Disciplinary Procedure

1. Where a member of the band has been accused of child abuse, the member shall be suspended from all band activities pending the outcome of an investigation. Suspension is not a form of disciplinary action. The member may be suspended whilst an investigation is carried out.
2. Where an allegation of child abuse is upheld against a member of the band, that member shall be expelled from the band.

