

**Mountaineering Ireland**  
**Safeguarding Policy & Procedures - Summary of Amendments**  
**Dated 07.10.20**

**Introduction and rationale for Safeguarding Policy and Procedures**

Safeguarding children means protecting the health, well-being and human rights of children. It includes enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect. Safeguarding children is **everyone's** responsibility and communication and participation with children and young people is a key element of engaging with them in Mountaineering Ireland. All organisations working with or alongside children or vulnerable adults in both Northern Ireland and The Irish Republic must have a Safeguarding Policy in place. A **Safeguarding Children or Protection Policy** is a statement that makes it clear what an organisation, club or group will do to keep children and vulnerable adults safe. The policy must stipulate an organisation's commitment to protect and outline the practical measures and procedures it will undertake to support this statement.

We have evolved a comprehensive safeguarding policy and procedure document which details every aspect of working in the best interests of children and young people. We recently revised and added to the document due to ongoing and updating legislative and governmental policy changes. No doubt this will be an ongoing process as changes occur in this field.

We have tried to include the main changes in the reviewed policy in this document for your attention. I hope you will find it useful

Warmest Regards

Gerry Gorman  
National Children's Officer  
Mountaineering Ireland

## General amendments since previous Policy

- Legislative changes in document to reflect the changing law both in terms of Criminal Justice, Children's law and GDPR in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.
- Clarification of roles of officers in relation to safeguarding of children from National level to club or local level and expectations of it.

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### Importance and requirements of Confidentiality

The welfare of the child is paramount. No guarantees of secrecy or confidentiality can be given to information regarding a child as the child's welfare and safety supersedes all other considerations. Information should only be passed to individuals who are in appropriate positions to safeguard a child's welfare and safety. Information concerning children should be treated in a respectful, professional and purposeful manner. The National Children's Officer is available to give appropriate guidance when clubs /members may have issues over confidentiality.

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### Board of Mountaineering Ireland

The Board of Mountaineering Ireland and the CEO shall appoint a National Designated Liaison Person (normally the CEO) and a National Children's Officer to safeguard the well-being and interests of children within Mountaineering Ireland.

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### Mountaineering Ireland Clubs

Each club registered with Mountaineering Ireland with members under the age of 18 shall appoint a Club Children's Officer, and a Club Designated Liaison Person. The description and duties for these roles are described in *Section 5 – People involved in Mountaineering Ireland*. All clubs are also required to have a safety statement and risk assessment adopted.

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The Sport Ireland training/awareness workshops are available locally through the Local Sports Partnership network and the Sport NI training is available through a number of approved trainers Mountaineering Ireland can support clubs with training arrangements, can have staff trained to deliver Safeguarding Level 1. It is important for adults with responsibility for children to have a basic understanding of how to ensure the safety and well-being of all participants in sport. Other courses offered outside sport may be accepted only on application to the National Children's Officer.

Club Committee (where club has U18 members)	Mountaineering Ireland policy adopted within the club. All clubs must have a safeguarding statement and risk assessment adopted	Where involved in coaching children vetting as policy	Where involved in coaching children vetting as policy	Committee code of conduct
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This is now a requirement by law in ROI jurisdiction and relevant Sports bodies and councils.

### Complaints Procedures

Mountaineering Ireland has a Complaints Process and Procedures. This will be an ongoing piece of work, which should include documentation for young people advising them

- How to make a complaint if they do not feel safe.
- Who to make a complaint to and how the complaint will be managed.
- How to appeal the decision of the complaint if they are unhappy with the result.

### Vulnerability – adults

In Ireland, we consider an adult a Vulnerable Person if the adult has a restricted capacity to guard himself/herself against harm or exploitation or to report such harm or exploitation. This may arise because of emotional physical or intellectual impairment and both context and individual may influence risk of abuse. We will be looking on how to update our policy and procedures in the light of safeguarding in the future. However, now our focus will be directed to the safeguarding or Children/young people.

### Specific Safeguarding Rules

All members must comply with the mandatory sections of this document, as amended from time to time. An individual convicted of any charges relating to the abuse of a child will be immediately and permanently excluded from membership of Mountaineering Ireland in any capacity (see Vetting Policy for full details).

Where the Director of Public Prosecutions seeks to charge a member for a serious crime, this is above the threshold of risk considered acceptable by Mountaineering Ireland. Such a disclosure will result in the immediate suspension of that individual from membership of Mountaineering Ireland.

### **Vetting Policy - summary**

The Mountaineering Ireland Vetting Policy is concerned with the provision of Garda / Access NI vetting for those in Mountaineering Ireland. The Vetting Policy requires any personnel working with children to undergo a vetting check to assist in the decision making process to ensure suitability for their role or position.

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### **In the event of an incident**

If an incident occurs, the details must be recorded together with the problem or issue, any action taken and the outcome or resolution. This should be recorded in a hard copy book and the details notified to Mountaineering Ireland. For any incident concerning a child contact should be made with their parent/guardian who should be kept informed of all details. For other individuals their nominated emergency contact person should be informed.

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### **Accommodation**

These measures are to protect both the under 18s and the adult in accommodation circumstances.

- To ensure privacy, it would be appropriate to consider accommodation needs appropriate to age, needs of the young person/child and gender.
- Under 18s should not be expected to share a room with an instructor/coach or person in authority (unless this is with their parent). In some areas, e.g. an alpine hut, accommodation is on an open plan basis.

\*Please note that this measure does not apply to parents and their own children or to sharing by siblings

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### **Photography and Media images**

Where photographs of children are going to be published Mountaineering Ireland should seek written consent from the young people and parents to do so. This consent contained within Mountaineering Ireland's consent form.