



Allegations Against Leaders

Muckross Hockey Club has agreed procedures to be followed in cases of alleged child abuse against Leaders. If such an allegation is made against Sports Leaders working within Muckross Hockey Club, two procedures should be followed:

- The reporting procedure in respect of the young person (reported by the Designated Person), see Child Welfare & Protection Procedures
- The procedure for dealing with the Sports Leader (carried out by the club chair or Children's Officer, or a person not already involved with the child protection concern)

The safety of the child making the allegation should be the first and paramount consideration and the safety of any other children who may be at risk. Muckross Hockey Club should take any necessary steps that may be necessary to protect children in its care. The protection should be in proportion to the level of risk. The issue of confidentiality is important. Information is shared on a need to know basis and the Sports Leader should be treated with respect and fairness. Parents should be informed.

The Reporting Procedure

If the Designated Person has reasonable grounds for concern, the matter should be reported to the local HSE / Social Services, following the standard reporting procedure and the parents should be informed.

The Sports Leader

The Designated Person may consult with the local HSE/Social Services informally to seek confirmation that there is reason for concern. Before the Designated Person refers the report to the local HSE/Social Services, the President of Muckross Hockey Club should deal with the Leader in question. Unless there is an immediate risk to the child and/or other young people in which case the Leader in question will be informed at the earliest opportunity which may be after the concern has been reported to the Statutory Authorities.

- When the concern is connected to the actions of a sports leader in the club, the person should be asked to stand aside pending the outcome of any investigation by the Statutory Authorities.
- When the Sports Leader is being privately informed by the President of Muckross Hockey Club of (1) The fact that an allegation has been made against him/her and (2) the nature of the allegation, (s)he should be afforded an opportunity to respond. His/her response should be noted and passed on to the Statutory Authorities.
- 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 Leader is entitled to natural justice.

Disciplinary action on the Leader should be considered but this should not interfere with the investigation of the Statutory Authorities. The follow up on an allegation of abuse against a sports leader should be in consultation with the Statutory Authorities. If it is deemed not to be a concern reportable to the Statutory Authorities but instead an incident of poor practice, the complaints procedure as outlined in Complaints and Appeals Procedure should be followed. It is important to 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 automatically mean that they are appropriate to work with young people in the future.

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. The information should be checked out and handled in a confidential manner.

Rumours

Rumours should not be allowed to hang in the air. Any rumours relating to inappropriate behaviour should be brought to the attention of the Children's Officer or the Designated Person and checked out without delay.