



CHEERSPORT

I R E L A N D

CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

1. Introduction

Cheer Sport Ireland (CSI), as the National Governing Body (NGB) for Cheerleading and Performance Cheer in Ireland, is fully committed to ensuring that all children and young people who participate in our sport are safe, protected, and supported. This Child Safeguarding Policy outlines the standards, structures, and procedures that guide our practices in accordance with the Children First Act 2015, Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017), Sport Ireland's Safeguarding Guidance for Children in Sport, and all relevant statutory requirements.

CSI recognises the rights of all children to be safe and to be protected from harm, abuse, neglect, bullying, and exploitation. All member clubs, coaches, volunteers, officials, parents/guardians, and staff share responsibility for safeguarding and must adhere to this policy.

2. Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this Child Safeguarding Policy is to:

- Promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children participating in Cheer Sport.
- Provide guidance to adults working with children to ensure best practice.
- Establish clear procedures for responding to child protection and welfare concerns.
- Support member clubs to meet their legal and ethical obligations under Irish law.

3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All CSI member clubs
- All children and young people under 18 involved in CSI activities
- All coaches, volunteers, welfare officers, staff, contractors, event personnel, and board/committee members

It covers all CSI-sanctioned activities including training, events, competitions, camps, workshops, online interactions, and travel.

4. Definitions

Child: Anyone under 18 years of age.

Child Protection: Activities designed to protect children from abuse or neglect.

Safeguarding: Broader measures aimed at preventing harm and promoting wellbeing.

Harm: As defined under the Children First Act 2015, including assault, ill-treatment, sexual abuse, or neglect.

Designated Liaison Person (DLP): The person responsible for managing child protection concerns within CSI.

Mandated Person: A person under the Act who has a legal duty to report concerns above a defined threshold.

Children's Officer (CO): The appointed individual within clubs and CSI who promotes a child-centred ethos and supports the implementation of safeguarding practices.

5. CSI's Safeguarding Principles

CSI adopts the following guiding principles:

- Children's welfare is paramount.
- All children have the right to participate in sport in a safe, positive, and enjoyable environment.
- All children should be treated equally and with respect and dignity.
- All adults involved in the sport have a duty of care.
- All actions and behaviours must be in the best interests of children.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- Concerns will be responded to promptly, sensitively, and professionally.
- Confidentiality will be maintained in line with legal requirements.

6. Responsibilities of Cheer Sport Ireland

CSI will:

- Maintain and review this Child Safeguarding Policy and the CSI Child Safeguarding Statement.
- Ensure appropriate reporting procedures are in place.
- Appoint a National Children's Officer, Designated Liaison Person, and Mandated Person as required.
- Provide training, guidance, and support to member clubs.
- Ensure vetting, recruitment, and supervision procedures meet national standards.
- Promote awareness of safeguarding responsibilities among all members.

7. Responsibilities of Member Clubs

All affiliated clubs must:

- Adopt the CSI Child Safeguarding Policy, Safeguarding Statement, and related procedures.
- Appoint a Club Children's Officer and Club Designated Liaison Person.
- Ensure all coaches and volunteers complete required safeguarding training (Safeguarding 1, 2, or 3).
- Maintain proper supervision ratios and safe environments.
- Comply with Garda Vetting and safe recruitment requirements.

- Promote and enforce Codes of Behaviour.
- Keep accurate safeguarding records in line with CSI retention procedures.

8. Safe Recruitment and Vetting

CSI and all affiliated clubs must ensure:

- All staff and volunteers working with children are appropriately vetted through the National Vetting Bureau.
- Identity, qualifications, and references are verified.
- Applicants are assessed for suitability to work with children.
- Roles involving contact with children have clear job descriptions.

No coach, volunteer, or staff member may engage in regulated activity with children until vetting and checks are completed.

9. Training Requirements

CSI requires the following training standards:

- Safeguarding 1: Mandatory for all coaches, volunteers, event staff working directly with children.
- Safeguarding 2: Required for Club Children's Officers.
- Safeguarding 3: Required for Designated Liaison Persons.

Refresher training should be completed every 3 years or as updated by Sport Ireland.

10. Codes of Behaviour

CSI maintains Codes of Behaviour for:

- Coaches
- Athletes
- Parents/Guardians
- Volunteers
- Committee Members/Staff

Compliance with the Codes is mandatory for all participants and leadership.

11. Safe Supervision of Children

CSI promotes safe supervision practices including:

- Clear adult-to-child ratios
- Two-adult rule wherever possible
- Never be in a private or unsupervised one-on-one settings

- Appropriate supervision in changing areas
- Procedures for arrival, waiting, and collection of children

Full details are outlined in the CSI Supervision Policy.

12. Online Safety and Media

Children's participation in digital communication must follow CSI's policies on:

- Social Media & Online Safety
- Photography & Use of Images
- Use of Devices
- Livestreaming & Media Accreditation

Consent and caution are essential when capturing or sharing media involving children.

13. Anti-Bullying

CSI prohibits all forms of bullying — physical, verbal, emotional, and cyberbullying. CSI and clubs must:

- Promote anti-bullying culture
- Respond promptly to concerns
- Support affected children
- Document reports and actions taken

14. Reporting Child Protection Concerns

All adults involved in Cheer Sport have a responsibility to report concerns about the safety or welfare of a child.

CSI's reporting procedures follow the Children First Act 2015 and require:

- Reporting concerns to the Club DLP or CSI DLP
- Mandated reporting where thresholds are met
- Immediate action in cases of imminent danger
- Notifying Gardaí in emergencies
- Keeping factual, objective written records

Full procedures are found in the CSI Reporting Procedures Policy.

15. Responding to Disclosures

When a child discloses abuse:

- Listen calmly and without judgement
- Reassure them they did the right thing
- Do not promise secrecy
- Record what was said using the child's own words
- Report immediately to the DLP

16. Confidentiality & Record-Keeping

All information related to safeguarding concerns will be handled with:

- Respect for privacy
- Compliance with GDPR
- Secure storage
- Access limited to authorised persons

Records will be retained according to the CSI Record Keeping & Retention Policy.

17. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years, or sooner if:

- There are significant changes in legislation
- Sport Ireland updates guidance
- There is learning from case management
- CSI determines review is necessary

18. Approval

This Child Safeguarding Policy was approved by the Board of Cheer Sport Ireland on: 11/07/2026

Signed:

FIONA COLLUMB, President/Chairperson

JOAN HEAPES, National Children's Officer