

CHILD PROTECTION & SAFEGUARDING POLICY

1. Policy statement

Cavan Eagles Basketball Club places the welfare of children and young people at the heart of everything it does. Every child has the right to take part in basketball in an environment that is safe, supportive, inclusive and developmental. The Club is unequivocally committed to safeguarding every child and young person who participates in any Club activity from harm of any kind.

This Policy is consistent with the Children First Act 2015, the Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth — current edition), the Sport Ireland Safeguarding Guidance for Children and Young People in Sport, the Basketball Ireland Safeguarding Codes, and the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012–2016.

2. Safeguarding Statement (Section 11, Children First Act 2015)

Under section 11 of the Children First Act 2015, every "relevant service" providing a service to children is required to have a written Safeguarding Statement specifying the service provided, the principles and procedures the provider observes to keep children safe, and naming the Designated Liaison Person. The Club's Safeguarding Statement is set out below.

Service provided. Cavan Eagles Basketball Club provides basketball training, competition, schools-based coaching and community basketball programmes to children and young people in the Cavan region and surrounding areas, across age bands from Academy (age 7) through to Under-18 Juvenile.

Principles to which the Club is committed:

- 2.1** The welfare of every child and young person is paramount and overrides all other Club considerations.
- 2.2** Every child has the right to be heard, listened to and taken seriously.
- 2.3** Every child has the right to participate in basketball free from harm — physical, emotional, sexual, neglect, bullying or discrimination.
- 2.4** Every reasonable concern about the welfare of a child is treated seriously and acted upon, regardless of the source.
- 2.5** Information sharing about a child's welfare is governed by the Children First Act and is not blocked by data-protection considerations where the welfare of a child is engaged.

Designated Liaison Person and Children's Officer — see Section 4 below.

This Safeguarding Statement is published on the Club's communication channels, displayed at every venue at which the Club operates, and made available on request to any parent, guardian, partner organisation or competent authority.

3. Scope and definitions

This Policy applies to every individual associated with Cavan Eagles Basketball Club, whether as a player, coach, athlete support person, volunteer, committee member, parent, guardian, spectator, contractor or guest. It applies at every Club activity — training sessions, games, away trips, tournaments, presentation evenings, fundraising activities, schools-programme sessions, the Cleveland Project cross-border activity, online interactions, and any other setting in which an individual is acting on behalf of the Club.

Key terms used in this Policy:

- 3.1** "Child" or "young person" — any individual under the age of 18 years.
- 3.2** "Parent" or "guardian" — legal parent, legal guardian or primary carer.
- 3.3** "Leader" — any adult appointed by the Club to a role of responsibility for the welfare of under-18 members. Includes head coaches, assistant coaches, team managers, selectors, designated chaperones, and any volunteer with delegated responsibility for under-18 members.
- 3.4** "Mandated Person" — as defined in Schedule 2 of the Children First Act 2015; in the Club's context, includes coaches holding a Basketball Ireland coaching qualification while engaged in coaching activity, and any Sport Ireland-recognised qualified coach.
- 3.5** "DLP" — Designated Liaison Person; the Club officer with statutory responsibility for receiving and acting on safeguarding concerns and for liaising with Tusla and An Garda Síochána on the Club's behalf.

4. Designated personnel

The Club operates with the following named safeguarding roles. Contact details for these roles are published at every Club venue, on the Club's communication channels, and in the Members' Handbook.

4.1 Club Children's Officer — Joanna Gannon. The Children's Officer is the first point of contact for any child, parent, leader, volunteer or visitor who has a concern relating to the welfare of a child within the Club. The Children's Officer promotes a child-centred approach to all Club activities, supports families and coaches in raising concerns, and works closely with the DLP.

4.2 Designated Liaison Person (DLP). The DLP holds the statutory function of receiving any safeguarding concern that may meet the reporting threshold under the Children First Act 2015, of assessing the threshold, of making the formal report to Tusla and (where appropriate) to An Garda Síochána, and of liaising on the Club's behalf with the statutory authorities thereafter.

4.3 Chairperson. The Chairperson holds overall accountability for the Club's implementation of this Policy and supports the DLP and Children's Officer in their functions.

4.4 Mandated Persons. Any Basketball Ireland-qualified coach (and any other Sport Ireland-recognised qualified coach) working with children under the Club's banner is a Mandated Person under Schedule 2 of the Children First Act 2015. Each such Mandated Person carries a personal legal obligation to report any reasonable concern about a child to Tusla.

5. Children First risk assessment

Section 11(1)(b) of the Children First Act 2015 requires every relevant service to undertake a written assessment of the risks of harm to a child while participating in the service. The Club's risk assessment identifies the principal categories of potential risk and the corresponding mitigating controls. The full risk assessment is maintained as a companion document to this Policy.

Indicative risk categories addressed:

- 5.1** Risk of harm during training and games — controlled through Garda Vetting, coach qualification standards, supervision ratios (Section 14), Codes of Conduct, and the Club's Health & Safety Policy.
- 5.2** Risk of harm in transport and overnight stays — controlled through written parental consent, two-Leader rule, single-sex sleeping arrangements, named adult chaperones, and the Travel and Overnight Stays section (Section 13).
- 5.3** Risk of harm in changing-room contexts — controlled through changing-room protocols (Section 12).
- 5.4** Risk of harm through inappropriate adult–child communication — controlled through the Communications protocol (Section 11) and the Social Media Policy.
- 5.5** Risk of bullying — addressed through the Anti-Bullying provisions (Section 17) and the Code of Conduct for Players.
- 5.6** Risk arising in hosting visiting players (including American imports) — addressed through the Hosting protocol (Section 15).
- 5.7** Risk arising in schools-programme delivery — managed jointly with each partner school under each school's own Child Safeguarding Statement.
- 5.8** Risk arising in online and remote interactions — addressed through the Online Safeguarding protocol (Section 11).

The risk assessment is reviewed at least annually by the Children's Officer and DLP, and at any earlier point if a material change in Club operations, venues or programmes occurs.

6. Safe recruitment, vetting and training of Leaders

The Club applies safe-recruitment practices for every Leader role. The minimum standard for any adult taking responsibility for the welfare of children at Cavan Eagles is:

- 6.1** Completion of a written application form for the role.
- 6.2** Two references from individuals not related to the applicant. References are taken up in writing before any role involving contact with children commences.
- 6.3** A brief interview with a member of the Executive to set expectations and agree the Code of Conduct.
- 6.4** Garda Vetting through Basketball Ireland's vetting process. No adult may take responsibility for children's activities at Cavan Eagles unless they hold a current Garda Vetting disclosure. The Vetting Register is maintained by the Children's Officer and

reviewed quarterly. Vetting is renewed every three years or earlier if the role changes or the disclosure becomes invalid.

6.5 Sport Ireland Safeguarding 1 course (or recognised equivalent — including the Basketball Ireland Safeguarding course) before commencing in role. Safeguarding 2 (Children's Officer course) is held by the Children's Officer. Safeguarding 3 (DLP course) is held by the DLP. Refreshers are completed on the Sport Ireland-recommended three-year cycle.

6.6 Completion of Children First e-learning available free from Tusla / Department of Children.

6.7 Induction briefing on this Policy, the Codes of Conduct, and any role-specific safeguarding considerations.

7. Codes of behaviour for Leaders working with children

All Leaders, when engaged in any activity on behalf of the Club involving children, will:

7.1 Treat every child with dignity and respect, regardless of age, ability, family background, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or any other characteristic.

7.2 Place the welfare and development of the child above competitive ambitions, team results or personal recognition.

7.3 Work in pairs where reasonably possible. Never undertake one-to-one interactions with a child in a private or unobserved setting except where an interruption to the open setting is genuinely unavoidable and is immediately reported to a second Leader.

7.4 Avoid physical contact with children other than where necessary for safe skill demonstration, the management of an injury, or the prevention of harm. Where physical contact is required, the Leader explains what they are doing and why and seeks the child's consent where age-appropriate.

7.5 Use only Club-approved channels for communicating with under-18 members, with a parent copied. See Section 11.

7.6 Refrain from alcohol, smoking, vaping or unsuitable language in the presence of children at any Club activity.

7.7 Avoid lifts in private cars with under-18 members unless explicit parental consent has been given and another adult is also present in the vehicle. Genuine emergency exceptions are documented and reported to the Children's Officer.

7.8 Maintain appropriate confidentiality around every member's personal information.

7.9 Model and uphold the Code of Conduct for Coaches.

8. Recognising abuse, neglect and bullying

8.1 The Children First National Guidance identifies four categories of abuse: physical, emotional, neglect and sexual abuse. A reasonable concern about the welfare of a child can arise from observation, from disclosure by the child, from disclosure by another person, or from a Leader's own concern about a colleague's conduct.

8.2 Leaders are NOT required to investigate or to confirm the concern. The Leader's role is to RECOGNISE the concern and to RESPOND by reporting it through the Club's safeguarding pathway. Investigation is the function of Tusla and An Garda Síochána.

9. Responding to a disclosure

If a child or young person discloses abuse, or expresses concerns about themselves or another person, the Leader receiving the disclosure will:

- 9.1 Listen calmly and patiently. Allow the child to speak in their own words. Avoid leading questions; avoid expressions of judgment or shock.
- 9.2 Acknowledge the child's courage in speaking and reassure them that they were right to speak up.
- 9.3 NOT make promises of confidentiality. Explain clearly that the information must be shared with the people who can help.
- 9.4 Make a contemporaneous written note. Record the child's own words wherever possible; record time, date, place, who was present, and what was said.
- 9.5 Pass the note, and any contextual information, to the Children's Officer or DLP without delay.
- 9.6 NOT discuss the disclosure with anyone else within or outside the Club other than the Children's Officer, the DLP, and any statutory authority engaged in the matter.

10. Reporting concerns — internal and external

10.1 All safeguarding concerns are reported, in the first instance, to the Children's Officer. The Children's Officer briefs the DLP.

10.2 Where the DLP determines that the concern reaches the threshold for statutory reporting under the Children First Act 2015 — including any concern that a child has been or is being harmed, is being neglected, or is at risk of being harmed — the DLP submits a formal report to Tusla via the Tusla Web Portal (tusla.ie). In any matter of immediate concern for the safety of a child, the DLP also reports to An Garda Síochána without delay.

10.3 Where the concern is below the statutory reporting threshold but warrants Club-level action, the Children's Officer and the Chairperson agree the appropriate response — which may include a quiet conversation with the family, a review of supervision arrangements, additional training for a Leader, or referral to the Discipline Committee under Article 13 of the Club Constitution.

10.4 Every Mandated Person at Cavan Eagles carries a personal legal obligation under the Children First Act 2015 to report a reasonable concern to Tusla, regardless of the Club's internal process. The Club's internal process supports — and does not replace — that statutory obligation.

11. Communications with under-18 members

11.1 The Club's standard communications with under-18 members are conducted through the child's parent or guardian in the first instance.

11.2 Direct one-to-one messaging with an under-18 player is not permitted other than via group channels that include a parent and/or another Leader.

11.3 Online sessions involving under-18 players are conducted with two Leaders present and with parental consent secured in advance.

11.4 Social-media interactions are governed by the Club's Social Media Policy. Leaders do not friend, follow or message under-18 players from personal social-media accounts.

12. Changing rooms and changing protocols

12.1 Adult Leaders do not change in the same room as children. Children are supervised by Leaders from the corridor or doorway and Leaders enter the changing room only where genuinely required for child welfare or safety, and never alone with a single child.

12.2 No mobile phones, cameras or recording devices are permitted in changing rooms while children are present. Parents and members are reminded of this expectation at the start of every season.

13. Transport, trips and overnight stays

13.1 Parents are responsible for transporting their children to and from training and games.

13.2 Two adults should be present in any vehicle carrying under-18 players wherever reasonably possible.

13.3 Solo-driver lifts with a single child are avoided save in genuine emergency, and where they occur are reported to the Children's Officer.

For overnight stays — including National Cup weekends and away trips,— the additional requirements are:

13.4 Specific written parental consent for the overnight stay (separate from general consent at registration).

13.5 Published itinerary shared in advance with parents.

13.6 Room assignments that respect single-sex sleeping arrangements appropriate to the players' ages.

13.7 Named adult chaperones for each room, with Garda Vetting current.

13.8 A named lead Leader with overall accountability for the trip.

13.9 Emergency contact details for every player held by the lead Leader and accessible at all times during the trip.

14. Supervision ratios

The Club applies the following minimum supervision ratios at all times, consistent with Sport Ireland guidance:

14.1 Under 8 years — one Leader per six children.

14.2 Ages 8–12 — one Leader per eight children.

14.3 Ages 12–17 — one Leader per ten children.

14.4 For mixed-age groups — the ratio applicable to the youngest child applies.

14.5 A minimum of two adults must be present at any session, regardless of group size.

15. Hosting visiting players

15.1 Where the Club hosts visiting players — including American imports — in private homes, the host family is Garda-Vetted as needed and the arrangement is approved in advance by the Executive. The Children's Officer makes a welcome visit within the first fortnight of any extended hosting arrangement and conducts follow-up checks at intervals not exceeding three months.

15.2 The American Import Induction Pack (work-in-progress under PA 047) addresses safeguarding considerations for any minor in the home of a host family.

16. Allegations against a Leader

16.1 Any allegation made against a Leader is taken seriously and handled in accordance with Sport Ireland's Safeguarding Guidance for Children and Young People in Sport.

16.2 The Leader against whom the allegation is made will, where appropriate, be asked to step back from their role pending the outcome of any investigation. Stepping back is a precaution, not a finding. The presumption of innocence is preserved at all times, balanced against the paramount welfare of the child.

16.3 The Club cooperates fully with any statutory investigation by Tusla or An Garda Síochána. The Children's Officer and DLP manage the communications between the Leader, the Club and the statutory authorities, in line with statutory confidentiality rules.

17. Anti-bullying

17.1 Bullying — whether physical, verbal, emotional, exclusionary, or cyber — has no place at Cavan Eagles. The Club's Anti-Bullying approach is integrated into this Policy and into the Code of Conduct for Players.

17.2 Any allegation of bullying is investigated promptly by the Children's Officer, who may engage the relevant team coach, parents and players in the resolution. Where bullying conduct continues despite intervention, the matter is referred to the Discipline Committee under Article 13 of the Club Constitution.

18. Photography, filming and image use

18.1 Written parental consent is obtained for every under-18 player before any image of an identifiable child is used on Club channels or in promotional material. Consent may be withdrawn at any time.

18.2 Photographers attending a Club event identify themselves on arrival and obtain Committee permission before recording where the event is private.

18.3 No images of children in changing rooms or while changing kit are permitted at any time.

18.4 Parents and members are reminded at the start of each season that they may not film, photograph or live-stream Club training sessions or games featuring other people's children without consent.

18.5 BasketballIreland.tv broadcasts of WSL and other livestreamed senior fixtures are addressed separately under the Club's GDPR Privacy Policy and the broadcast partner's privacy notice.

19. Confidentiality and data protection

19.1 Personal information about Club members is held in accordance with the Club's GDPR Privacy Policy & Data Retention Schedule and the Data Protection Act 2018.

19.2 Safeguarding records are held securely by the Children's Officer (with limited access by the DLP and the Chairperson) and are retained indefinitely, sealed, in line with the retention schedule.

19.3 Confidentiality in safeguarding matters is not absolute. Where the welfare of a child is engaged, the Club shares information with Tusla, An Garda Síochána and other competent authorities to the extent required by the Children First Act 2015. The Data Protection Act 2018 does not prevent appropriate information-sharing for child-protection purposes.

20. Protected disclosures

No member, parent, Leader, volunteer or visitor who, in good faith, reports a safeguarding concern will be subject to victimisation, retaliation or detriment as a result of doing so. The Protected Disclosures (Amendment) Act 2022 extends statutory whistleblower protection to volunteers, and the Club applies the spirit of that protection across every safeguarding report regardless of the reporter's status.

21. Complaints and appeals

The Club's Complaints Procedure sets out the formal route for any complaint. Complaints touching on the welfare of a child are routed automatically to the Children's Officer and DLP regardless of their original heading. Statutory reporting to Tusla and Garda is NOT subject to the Complaints Procedure.

22. Related Club policies and external documents

- Cavan Eagles Code of Conduct — Coaches.
- Cavan Eagles Code of Conduct — Parents and Spectators.
- Cavan Eagles Code of Conduct — Players.
- Cavan Eagles Social Media Policy.
- Cavan Eagles Complaints Procedure.
- Cavan Eagles GDPR Privacy Policy & Data Retention Schedule.
- Cavan Eagles Equality, Inclusion & Diversity Policy.
- Cavan Eagles Anti-Doping Policy.
- Cavan Eagles Health & Safety Policy.
- Cavan Eagles Vetting Register (template at Policies/07 – Child Protection & Safeguarding (Cavan Eagles)/Vetting Register (Template).docx).
- Children First Act 2015.
- Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (DCEDIY).

- Sport Ireland Safeguarding Guidance for Children and Young People in Sport (current edition).
- Basketball Ireland Safeguarding Codes 1, 2 and 3.

23. Review and continuous improvement

This Policy is reviewed by the Committee at least annually, and immediately following any material change in legislation, regulation, Sport Ireland or Basketball Ireland safeguarding guidance, or Club operating context. The next scheduled review is May 2027.

24. Adoption

This Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy is presented to the Cavan Eagles Basketball Club committee for formal adoption. Once adopted, it is published on the Club's communication channels, displayed at every Club venue, and made available to every member, parent, coach, ASP and volunteer.

This Policy is reviewed annually at a committee meeting of Cavan Eagles Basketball Club. Following review, it is signed off by the Chairperson, the Honorary Secretary and the Honorary Treasurer. Where any of those three officers is unavailable, sign-off may be exercised by such other Committee member as the Chairperson nominates in writing. Once signed off, the Policy is published on the Club's communication channels and made available to every member, parent, coach and volunteer.

Reviewed and adopted by the Cavan Eagles Basketball Club committee on:

Date of committee meeting: 26th May 2026

Signed (Chairperson):  _____

(GRAHAM TOLAN)