

# POLICY STATEMENT

## STACKSTOWN GOLF CLUB

Stackstown Golf Club is fully committed to safeguarding the wellbeing of their members. Every individual in golf should at all times, show respect and understanding for members rights, safety and welfare and conduct themselves in a way that reflects the principles of the organisation and the guidelines contained in the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport.

When working with young people in golf our first priority is the welfare of the young people and we are committed to providing an environment that will allow participants to perform to the best of their ability, free from bullying and intimidation.

## **Core Values in Sport for Young People**

Stackstown Junior Golf is based on the following principles that will guide the development of young people within golf, as outlined in page 9, **Code of Ethics and good Practice for Children's Sport**). Young People's experience of sport should be guided by what is best for the young person. The stages of development and the ability of the young person should guide the types of activity provided within the club. Adults will need to have a basic understanding of the needs of young people, including physical, emotional and personal.

### **Integrity in relationships**

Adults interacting with young people in sport should do so with integrity and respect for the child. There is a danger that sporting contexts can be used to exploit or undermine children. All adult action in sport should be guided by what is best for the child and in the context of quality, open working relationships. Verbal, physical, emotional or sexual abuse of any kind is unacceptable.

### **Quality atmosphere and ethos.**

Sport for young people in Stackstown Golf Club should be conducted in a safe, positive and encouraging atmosphere. A child-centred ethos will contribute to a safe and enjoyable atmosphere within the club.

### **Equality**

All children should be treated in an equitable and fair manner regardless of age, ability, sex, religion, social or ethnic background or political persuasion. Children with disability should be involved in sports activities in an integrated way, thus allowing them to participate to their potential alongside other children.

## Fair play.

All sport for young people should be conducted in an atmosphere of fair play. Ireland has contributed and is committed to the European Code of Sports Ethics, which defines fair play as “much more than playing within the rules”. It incorporates the concepts of friendship, respect for others and always playing with the right spirit. Fair play is defined as a way of thinking, not just behaving.

## Competition

A balanced approach to competition can make a significant contribution to the development of young people, while at the same time providing fun, enjoyment and satisfaction. However, competitive demands are often placed on children too early, which results in excessive levels of pressure on them. This can contribute to a high level of drop out from sport. Sports leaders should endeavour to put the welfare of the child first and competitive standards second. A child centred approach will help to ensure that competition and specialisation are kept in their appropriate place.

## CODE OF CONDUCT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Stackstown Golf Club wishes to provide the best possible environment for all young persons involved in the sport. Young people deserve to be given enjoyable, safe sporting opportunities, free of abuse of any kind. **These participants have rights, which must be respected, and responsibilities that they must accept.** Young people should be encouraged to realise that they have responsibilities to treat other participants and sport leaders with fairness and respect.

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### **Young Players are entitled to:**

- Be safe and feel safe
- Be listened to
- Be Believed
- Have fun and enjoy golf
- Have a voice in relation to their activities within golf
- Be treated with dignity, sensitivity, and respect
- Participate in an equitable and fair manner, irrespective of ability, disability, gender, religion, social class, etc
- Experience competition at a level at which they feel comfortable
- Make complaints and have them dealt with
- Get help against bullies
- Say No
- Protect their own bodies
- Confidentiality

### **Young Players should always:**

- Treat Sport leaders with respect, (including professionals, coaches, convenors, club officials, etc.)
- Look out for themselves and the welfare of others
- Play fairly at all times, do their best
- Be organised and on time, tell someone if you are leaving a competition or venue
- Respect Team members even when things go wrong
- Respect opponents, be gracious in defeat
- Abide by the Rules set down by Team Managers when travelling to away events, representing the Club, school, province or country, etc.
- Behave in a manner that avoids bringing Stackstown Golf Club or the game of Golf into disrepute.
- Talk to a Committee member within the Club if they have any problems

## **Young Players should never:**

- Cheat
- Use violence or engage in irresponsible, abusive, inappropriate or illegal behaviour
- Shout or argue with officials, team mates or opponents
- Harm team members, opponents or their property
- Bully or use bullying tactics to isolate another player or gain advantage
- Take banned substances, drink alcohol, smoke or engage in sexual behaviour
- Keep secrets, especially if they have been caused harm
- Tell lies about adults/young people
- Spread rumours
- Discriminate against other players on the basis of gender, age, disability, social class, religion, race, etc.

## **Bullying**

Bullying can occur between an adult and young person and young person to young person. In either case it is not acceptable within Stackstown Golf Club. The competitive nature of golf can create an environment that provides opportunities for bullying. The bully may be a parent that pushes too hard, a coach who adopts a win-at-all costs philosophy, a young person who intimidates another or an official who places unfair pressure on a person.

Bullying can only survive in an environment where the victim does not feel empowered to tell someone who can help or in which it is safe to do so. The damage inflicted by bullying can frequently be underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to young people, to the extent that it effects their health and development, or at the extreme, causes them significant harm.

## **Stackstown Golf Club will**

- Encourage all members to follow the Code Of Conduct, which promotes the rights and dignity of each member
- Deal with any incidents as they arise

- Use a whole group policy or 'no blame approach', i.e. not 'bullying the bully' but working with bullies and the group of young people, helping them to understand the hurt they are causing, and so make the problem a 'shared concern' of the group
- Reinforce that there is a 'permission to tell' culture rather than a 'might is right'
- Encourage young people to negotiate, co-operate and help others, particularly new or children with needs
- Offer the victim immediate support and put the 'no blame approach' into operation
- Never tell a young person to ignore bullying, they can't ignore it, it hurts too much
- Never tell a young person to take the law into his own hands and never beat the bully at his/her own game
- Tell the victim there is nothing wrong with them and it is not their fault.

### **Child Welfare and Protection Procedures**

Stackstown Golf Club accepts that Clubs or organisations that accept young people among its members are vulnerable to the occurrence of child abuse. Below are the procedures for dealing with any welfare or protection issue that may arise. Child welfare and the protection of young people is the concern of all adults at all times, irrespective of their role within the Club.

If there are grounds for concern about the safety or welfare of a young person you should react to the concern. Persons unsure about whether or not certain behaviours are abusive and therefore reportable, should contact the duty social worker in the local health services executive or social services department where they will receive advice. Grounds for concern include a specific indication from a child, a statement from a person who witnessed abuse or an illness, injury or behaviour consistent with abuse. A report may be made by any member in the Club but should be passed on to the Designated Officer, who may in turn, have to pass the concern to the Local Statutory Authorities. It is not the responsibility of anyone working within Stackstown Golf Club, in a paid or voluntary capacity, to take responsibility or decide

whether or not child abuse is taking place. That is the job of the Local Statutory Authorities. However there is a responsibility to protect children by assisting the appropriate agencies so that they can make enquiries and take any necessary action to protect the young person.

Everyone should follow both procedures outlined below, firstly the procedure for responding to a child in distress and secondly the procedure for reporting the concern.

### **Response to a Child Disclosing abuse**

When a young person discloses information of suspected abuse you should:

(a) Deal with any allegation of abuse in a sensitive and competent way through listening to and facilitating the child to tell about the problem, rather than interviewing the child about details of what happened

(b) Stay calm and don't show any extreme reaction to what the child is saying. Listen compassionately and take what the child is saying seriously

(c) Understand that the child has decided to tell something very important and has taken a risk to do so. The experience of telling should be a positive one so that the child will not mind talking to those involved in the investigation.

(d) Be honest with the child and tell them it is not possible to keep information a secret

(e) Make no judgemental statements against the person whom the allegation is made

(f) Do not question the child unless the nature of what he/she is saying is unclear. Leading questions should be avoided. Open, non-specific questions should be used such as "Can you explain to me what you mean by that".

(g) Check out the concerns with the parents/guardians before making a report unless doing so would endanger the child

(h) Give the child some indication of what would happen next, such as informing parents/guardians, police, or social services. It should be kept in mind that the child may have been threatened and may feel vulnerable at this stage.

- (i) Carefully record the details
- (j) Pass on the information to the Designated Officer
- (k) Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you

### **Reporting Suspected or Disclosed Child Abuse**

The following steps should be taken in reporting child abuse to the statutory authorities:

- (a) Observe and note dates, times, locations and contexts in which the incident occurred or suspicion was aroused, together with any other relevant information
- (b) Report the matter as soon as possible to the Designated Officer in the Club who has responsibility for reporting abuse. If the Designated officer has reasonable grounds for believing that the child has been abused or is at risk of abuse, s/he will make a report to the local social services who have statutory responsibility to investigate and assess suspected or actual child abuse
- (c) In cases of emergency, where a child appears to be at immediate and serious risk and the Designated Officer is unable to contact a social worker, the police authorities should be contacted. Under no circumstances should a child be left in a dangerous situation pending intervention by the Statutory Authorities.
- (d) If the Designated Officer is unsure whether reasonable grounds for concern exist s/he can informally consult with the local social services. S/he will be advised whether or not the matter requires a formal report.

The Designated Officer reporting suspected or actual child abuse to the Statutory Authorities will first inform the family of their intention to make such a report, unless doing so would endanger the child or undermine an investigation.

The **Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998** provides immunity from civil liability to persons who report child abuse 'reasonably and in good



and 'Faith' from civil liability to the Health Service Executive of the Gardai. The Act also covers the offence of 'false reporting'. The main provisions of the Act are:

The provision of immunity from civil liability to any person who reports child abuse "reasonably and in good faith" to designated officers of Health Service Executive or any member of An Garda Siochana.

- 2) The provision of significant protections for employees who report child abuse. These protections cover all employees and all forms of discrimination up to and including dismissal.
- 3) The creation of a new offence of false reporting of child abuse where a person makes a report of child abuse to the appropriate authorities "knowing that statement to be false". This is a new criminal offence designed to protect innocent persons from malicious reports.

The Designated Officer in Stackstown Golf Club is: Frank Dunleavy

The Children's Officer in Stackstown is Ita O'Brien

Either of the above can be contacted via the office in the Clubhouse.