# GB Online Refresher Safeguarding Training for leaders

## Introduction

The Girls’ Brigade Ireland adopted their child safeguarding policy over 20 years ago and has continually updated it over the years. The Child Safeguarding Policy outlines procedure to help leaders to ensure the safety of the members, and their own safety, as they partake in their activities. It aims to affirm the good work that our leaders undertake on a voluntary basis.

This training module has been put in place to ensure that our leaders are able to refresh their Child Safeguarding training on a regular basis (at least every three years).

## Part 1 – Why do we need safeguarding policies and procedures?

Having a Child Safeguarding Policy which outlines our policies and procedures enables the Girls’ Brigade Ireland:

* To provide a safe environment for our members and the leaders who work with them.
* To outline the safe work practices we want our leaders to follow
* To reassure parents and guardians as to the level of good practice within our organisation
* To outline what is expected, and what is not accepted, with respect to behaviour for everyone in the organisation

As an organsiation working with children The Girls’ Brigade Ireland must legally have in place policies and procedures to safeguard all children in our care

All leaders agree to abide by the Girls’ Brigade Ireland’s Child Safeguarding Policy and must be familiar with its procedures which are provided to support and help them in their role as a leader.

In addition to our Child Safeguarding Policy the Girls’ Brigade Ireland has adopted a Child Safeguarding Statement in line with the requirements of the Children First Act 2015. This written statement outlines the service our organisation provides, the principles and procedures to be observed in order to ensure, as far as practicable, that a child in our organisation is safe from harm.

Each company is provided with their own Child Safeguarding Statement and this should be displayed at their meeting venue.

## Part 2 - Best Practice

The safety of Girls’ Brigade members and leaders has always been a priority of the Girls’ Brigade Ireland.

In order to ensure that Girls’ Brigade is a safe environment for both members and leaders, leaders should ensure that the following are in place in their company:

All members should be registered on our online membership system each year, leaders should be aware of any medical conditions, special needs and permissions etc provided by the parents so the leaders can follow the parent’s wishes.

Leaders should ensure that attendance records are kept for all attending GB activities, indoor, outdoor or virtual.

Leader should ensure that adequate supervision is in place for all activities and girls should never be left on their own. The minimum adult to child ratio should be two leaders per first group of eight girls, allowing an additional leader for each group of eight thereafter.

Leaders should aware of any safety measures in place for your meeting place and understand the evacuation procedures in case of an emergency. Each company should carry out a fire drill with all members annually where it is safe to do so.

Each company should have a handover process in place for drop offs and collection of girls and leaders should ensure that their meeting place is secure.

Leaders should plan their activities at the beginning of each session or term. Leaders need to be aware of any risks involved in certain activities. Leaders should take into consideration the maturity, experience and ability of girls and leaders when planning and assessing risks.

It is important that leaders bring their company first aid kit to all activities and ensure that the first aid kit is checked and updated annually. Leaders should ensure that another person is present when administering first aid.

Leaders should inform parents of any accident or incident as soon as possible. Leaders should also complete an accident/incident form with full details.

Before taking girls on any outings or overnight trips, leaders should obtain additional parental consent via our online membership system and inform Headquarters of their plans.

Leaders should avoid transporting children in private cars, where possible. Where this is unavoidable, leader should maintain child safeguarding best practice.

The General Safety and Management section of our Child Safeguarding Policy sets out the full standard of care and safety practice expected at all GB activities.

## Part 2 – Code of Behaviour (3 mins)

Codes of Behaviour provide protection for everyone in The Girls’ Brigade Ireland, including children, employees and leaders. It is important that everyone involved has guidelines on what is expected, and what is not accepted, with respect to their behaviour.

Leaders must comply at all times with the Code of Behaviour which includes:

* Treat all children equally, treat all children as individuals;
* Listen to and respect children
* Involve children in decision making, as appropriate
* Provide encouragement, support and praise
* Use appropriate language
* Have fun and encourage a positive atmosphere
* Respect a child’s personal space
* Use age-appropriate teaching aids and materials
* Be cognisant of a child’s limitations
* Create an atmosphere of trust
* Respect differences of ability, culture, race
* Be inclusive of children with special needs
* Plan and be sufficiently prepared
* Report any concerns to the Child Safeguarding team and follow reporting procedures
* Encourage children to report any bullying, concerns or worries
* Observe appropriate dress and behaviour
* Keep parents/guardians informed of any issues that concern their children
* Avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with a child
* Don’t allow/engage in inappropriate touching of any form
* Don’t hit or physically chastise children
* Ensure that any contact with children through social/digital media is in line with the procedures outlined
* Ensure that any physical contact which is necessary as part of teaching the children activities cannot be deemed to be inappropriate.
* Avoid horseplay or inappropriate touch
* Don’t leave children unattended or unsupervised
* Provide a safe environment by abiding by the procedures outlined in the General Safety and Management section

The full Code of Behaviour for Leaders is contained in the Child Safeguarding Policy. Breaches to the Code of Behaviour will be dealt with under the complaints policy and disciplinary procedures.

A code of behaviour for members helps to explain children’s rights and responsibilities when taking part in a group’s activities. For a code of behaviour to work best, children need to be able to develop the code for themselves, with the assistance of leaders.

It is recommended that at the commencement of the year a code of behaviour be drawn up with the members’ participation for each age group. While it is recognised that discipline may seem at times to be restrictive to children it is best enforced with their agreement and therefore the members should also be involved with deciding what sanctions should be associated with the code of behaviour.

The Child Safeguarding Policy details the various elements that an effective code of behaviour should contain. For older age groups the Code of Behaviour should address the members use of technology at GB.

Once the Code of Behaviour for Members and sanctions have been agreed by the member of the group it can be displayed at weekly meetings or a copy of it given to each child for them to sign.

## Part 3 – Recruitment (2 mins)

The Girls’ Brigade Ireland shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that all leaders who come into contact with children are suitable persons for such work. All adults who are regularly volunteering with The Girls’ Brigade Ireland must complete our leader recruitment process which includes Garda Vetting.

Parents, guests etc volunteering as a once-off do not need to complete leader recruitment but should be supervised at all times by leaders.

Potential leaders must:

* Register for a trial membership
* Complete a vetting invitation form
* Provide originals and copies of id
* Complete Captains recommendation form with the Captain
* Submit all paperwork to HQ for processing
* Finish Garda vetting online

Captains and new leaders will be notified when Garda vetting and reference checks are completed and appointment ratified by the National Board

Following ratification of appointment the new leader should update their trial membership

No potential leaders should start working with girls in a company until the leader recruitment process has been completed.

Any Brigaders or other teenagers aged 16-17 need to complete Garda vetting in order to volunteer within companies and work with younger age groups.

All new leaders are required to attend a Child Safeguarding training session within twelve months of their appointment.

All leaders within the organisation must complete Garda vetting every three years.

## Part 4 – Ancillary policies (1 min 39 secs)

The Girls’ Brigade Ireland is committed to providing a caring, supportive and friendly environment where children learn to value and respect each other and are challenged to reach their full potential through active participation. The Girls’ Brigade Ireland will not tolerate bullying by anyone in any of its activities.

Leaders should be familiar with the Girls’ Brigade Ireland Anti-Bullying policy so they are equipped to prevent bullying in their companies and know how to respond to bullying should it occur.

In particular leaders should be familiar with the cyberbullying section of the Anti-Bullying policy, especially the actions they should take if they consider a child is the target of cyberbullying or if a child discloses they are a target of cyberbullying. It is important to note that serious cases of cyberbullying should be reported to the Gardai. The Child Safeguarding Team are available to support leaders in situations of concerns or disclosures by members of cyberbullying.

The Girls’ Brigade Ireland has a Complaints Policy for dealing with complaints as situations can arise where children or their parents/guardians are not happy with the way their child was treated at an event or activity run by the Girls Brigade Ireland.

Leaders should be familiar with the Complaints Policy so they know how to deal with a complaint if one is ever received by them.

Leaders can access these policies on the GB website. (Can’t find Anti-bullying on website)

## Part 5 – Reporting Concerns and Disclosures (3 mins 10 secs)

The Girls’ Brigade Ireland values its members and has a programme aimed at the development of girls and young women in which all forms of abuse , bullying and harassment are unacceptable. We are committed to upholding the rights of every child who attends our organisation including the rights to be kept safe and protected from harm, listened to and heard.

The reporting procedures should always be used when an employee or leader has reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been, is being or is at risk of being abused or neglected. If what may be symptoms of abuse are ignored it could result in ongoing harm to the child. It is not necessary to prove that abuse has occurred to report a concern, all that is required is that there is a reasonable grounds for concern.

Reasonable grounds for concern for a child protection or welfare concern include:

* Evidence, for example an injury or behaviour, that is consistent with abuse and is unlikely to have been caused in any other way
* Any concern about possible sexual abuse
* Consistent signs that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect
* A child saying or indicating by other means that he or she has been abused
* Admission or indication by an adult or a child of an alleged abuse they committed
* An account from a person who say the child being abused.

The Child Safeguarding Team consists of Jemma Lee and Olive Good. Their role is to ensure the implementation of the Child Safeguarding Policy throughout the organisation and support leaders and members in respect of any aspect covered in the Child Safeguarding Policy. They provide guidance and support to leaders regarding child protection concerns and reports concerns to Tusla as necessary.

## Dealing with a disclosure

When dealing with a disclosure by a member, leaders should:

* React calmly
* Take the child seriously
* Listen carefully and attentively
* Reassure the child they have done the right thing in talking to you
* Do not promise to keep secrets
* Ask questions for clarification only
* Do not express any opinions
* Ensure that the child understands what will happen next
* Maintain confidentiality as appropriate
* Report to the Child Safeguarding Team

## Reporting Procedures

The diagram shows you the GB reporting procedure:

* Leaders should make notes about your concern, or any disclosure that has taken place,
* Keep your notes concise just the facts.
* Leaders should contact the Child Safeguarding Team who will offer support and advice.
* The Child Safeguarding Team will seek advice from Tusla about the concern and if required report to Tusla and/or the Gardai.

Leaders should never hesitate to report a concern, disclosure or allegation to the Child Safeguarding Team even if they are in doubt whether it needs to be reported or not. The Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998 provides protection for anyone who reports concerns, disclosures or allegation in good faith and in the child’s best interest even if it is then proven unfounded. The Child Safeguarding Team have the resources of Tusla available to them to ascertain whether concerns, disclosures or allegations raised by leaders need to be reported to Tusla.

If the concern is in relation to a serious offence against a child and needs to be reported to the Gardai under the Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012, the Child Safeguarding Team will advise and support the leader to make a report to the Gardai to meet their legal obligations.

## Conclusion

Thank you for undertaking your refresher training.

Please remember that the Child Safeguarding Team is available to all leaders, parents and members at all times.

(Done as a Video of Olive and Jemma)

ASSESSMENT

10 Questions

Why do we need safeguarding policies and procedures?

To provide a safe environment for children and those who work with them.

To outline the safe work practices we want our leaders to follow

To reassure parents and guardians as to the level of good practice within our organisation

To make it difficult to get leaders and create more red tape?????

If you have 25 girls in your group how many leaders at a minimum should you have present?

3

4

5

6

What should available at every GB activity?

Access to online membership system,

first aid kit,

Child Safeguarding Statement,

attendance book,

equipment

plan of activities

hand sanitizer and cleaning equipment

Check if they tick all the above will it be wrong when we only absolutely need them to tick top four

Which of these must be adhered to under the Leaders Code of Behaviour?

1

2

3

4

Tickle fight

+ one really wrong one

Who should be involved in putting the Members Code of Behaviour in place?

Leaders

Leader and parents

Leaders and girls

Tick which of the following must be completed before an adult works with children in GB

Trial membership

Garda vetting

References

Captain’s Recommendation form

Ratification by National Board

Child Safeguarding training X

Leadership training X

What is cyberbullying?

* Someone not liking your photo on social media
* Someone sending you texts or phone messages of a sexual nature
* Someone sending you repeated messages on social media that distress you
* Someone sharing an embarrassing photograph of you with others via digital means
* Someone not adding you to their group chat

8 When keeping a child safeguarding concern or disclosure confidential with whom can you discuss it?

- Captain

- Member of National Board

- Child Safeguarding Team

- Family members

9 Which of the following should you do if a child makes a disclosure to you

- Be as calm as possible

- Listen attentively

- Ask lots of questions

- Reassure the child they have done the right thing it talking to you

- Express your feelings towards the alleged abuser

- Report whilst keeping confidential

10 Who should you contact if you have a child safeguarding concern?

- Child Safeguarding Team

- Tusla

- Parents of child