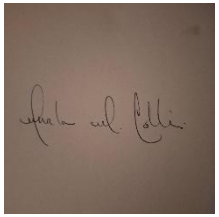
American Football Ireland

Section 1 - Child Safeguarding Statement

American Football Ireland provides American Football activities to young people through participation in clubs nationwide and through the national u20s programme. American Football Ireland (AFI) is committed to the enjoyment of American Football by young people. It values and encourages the participation of parents, coaches and volunteers in American Football for participants of 15 years of age to 18 years of age. The policy of AFI regarding safeguarding children is to respect the dignity and rights of all Youth Players. AFI will strive throughout its organisation to promote, create and maintain safe environments for all Youth Players. It will endeavour to maintain the core values of the association – Integrity, Respect, Inclusivity, Excellence and Teamwork.

Following a risk assessment for any potential harm to a child while involved in American Football, we have identified areas of risk and the list of procedures to be put in place to manage these risks. These risks were categorised under the following headings: Recruitment, Club and Coaching Practices, Reporting, Complaints, Facilities and Communication. Section 3 indicates the areas of potential risk of harm, the likelihood of the risk occurring, and gives the required policy, guidance or documents required to alleviate these risks. Our child safeguarding statement has been developed in line with requirements under the Children First Act 2015 and in Northern Ireland, the Club Framework for Safeguarding Standards.

AFI expects all of those involved in Youth American Football to adopt and supervise the implementation of these safeguarding principles and standards. AFI recognises that implementation is an ongoing process and it is committed to the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement and accompanying safeguarding policy to keep youths involved in American Football safe from harm. This Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed by December 2027, or as soon as is reasonably practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers. For queries relating to this Child Safeguarding Statement please contact Nuala Collins at ChildProtection@americanfootball.ie



Signed: Nuala Collins
National Child Protection Officer

American Football Ireland

Section 2 - Principles to Safeguard Children from Harm

AFI is committed to safeguarding children and, by working under the guidance of our Safeguarding Policies our staff, both volunteers and employed, working with our young people, throughout the organisation, seek to create a safe environment for young people to grow and develop within sport. The following set of principles should be adhered to:

- Importance of childhood
  - The importance of childhood should be understood and valued by everyone involved in youth football.
- Needs of the child
  - All youth football experiences should be guided by what is best for children. This means that adults should have a basic understanding of the emotional, physical and personal needs of young people.
- Integrity in relationships
  - Adults interacting with young people in American Football are in a position of trust and influence. They should always ensure that young people are treated with integrity and respect, and the self-esteem of young people is enhanced.
- Fair Play
  - Youth Football should be conducted in an atmosphere of fair play. The principles of fair play should always be emphasised, and organisers should give clear guidelines regarding acceptable standards of behaviour.
- Quality atmosphere & ethos
  - Youth Football should be conducted in a safe, positive and encouraging atmosphere.
- Competition
  - Competition is an essential element of sport and should be encouraged in an age appropriate manner. A child centred ethos will help to ensure that competition and specialisation are kept in their appropriate place.
- Inclusivity
  - All young people should be valued and treated in an equitable and fair manner regardless of ability, age, gender, religion, social and ethnic background or political persuasion, as per the AFI mission statement and core values

Sport Ireland Safeguarding Guidance for Children & Young People in Sport

American Football Ireland

Section 3 AFI Risk Assessment

This risk assessment considers the potential for harm to come to children whilst they are in the care of American Football Ireland. This risk assessment has been carried out prior to the publication of AFI's Child Safeguarding Statement (Section 11 (1b) Children First Act 2015). In this context and in accordance with the requirements of Section 11 (1) of the Children First Act 2015, that states "as a provider of a relevant service we will undertake an assessment of any potential harm to a child while availing of the service"; the risk is of abuse and not general health and safety risk. This risk assessment is also in accordance with Sport Northern Ireland's Club Framework for Safeguarding Standards in Sport.

The risk assessment indicates the areas of potential risk of harm, the likelihood of the risk occurring, and gives the required policy, guidance or process documents required to alleviate these risks. The list of risks identified and procedures to manage these risks are listed in the following categories.

Recruitment

Potential risk of harm to children	Likelihood of harm happening L-M-H	Required policy, guidance and procedure in place to minimise risks identified	Further Action Required
Risk of recruiting inappropriate people to work with young people		AFI Safeguarding Policy	Ongoing review
• There is a National Child Protection Officer that is vetted and successfully trained	High	National Child Protection Officer audits clubs to ensure all relevant staff, volunteers and coaches have Safeguarding training certificates prior to the beginning of youth football training for a season	Ongoing review
• All relevant Youth Football staff and volunteers successfully completed the necessary vetting requirements	High		
• All relevant Youth Football volunteers have clear outlines of their role's descriptions agreed	High	Vetting Officer audits clubs to ensure all clubs have all relevant staff, volunteers and coaches vetted prior to training commences, and also throughout the season as necessary	Ongoing review
• Youth Football section have put in place adequate supervision processes in accordance with AFI Safeguarding Policy	Medium	All volunteers (Club/AFI) to be interviewed and to have a clear outline of what their role will be if successful	Ongoing review
Risk of untrained people working with young people			
• Safeguarding personnel completed all Sport Ireland / Sport NI safeguarding training and other necessary staff and volunteers received appropriate safeguarding training as per AFI training requirement chart	High	Director of Youth Football to regularly check with club Head Coaches to ensure adequate supervision is in place according to the guidelines	Ongoing review
• Risk of harm (physical, emotional, sexual abuse or neglect) of a child by a staff/volunteer/child if coaches are not trained	High		

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Club & Coaching Practices

Potential risk of harm to children	Likelihood of harm happening L-M-H	Required policy, guidance and procedure in place to minimise risks identified	Further Action Required
Risk of untrained people working with young people • Coaches working with youth players are appropriately trained for the level of football they are coaching	Medium	AFI Safeguarding Policy Director of Youth Football to regularly check that all coaches associated with a club have valid coaching qualifications	Ongoing review
Risk if relevant staff and volunteers are not aware of the safeguarding policy as it relates to club and coaching practices		Parental consent form for each youth player is needed to register on the Azolve system and a youth player cannot be registered without consent.	Ongoing review
• Risk of harm if there is not a consent form for each youth player, with parental permission, with relevant medical information and permission to participate, photographic permission and travel consent	High	Code of Conduct as outlined in the IAFA Safeguarding Policy has been distributed to clubs for onward distribution to its members	Ongoing review
• Codes of Conduct for youth players and parents published/distributed	High	Supervision, social media and photographs guidelines as outlined in the AFI Safeguarding Policy has been distributed to clubs for onward distribution to its members	Ongoing review
• Risk of harm if staff and volunteers do not know policies in relation to supervision, social media and photographs	High	Travel and transport guidelines as outlined in the AFI Safeguarding Policy has been distributed to clubs for onward distribution to its members	Ongoing review
• Risk of harm if staff and volunteers are not aware of travel and away trips procedures	High	Bullying and inappropriate use of social media as outlined in the AFI Safeguarding Policy has been distributed to clubs for onward distribution to its members	Ongoing review
• Risk of harm of abuse, including online, through bullying and inappropriate use of social media	Medium		

Reporting

Potential risk of harm to children	Likelihood of harm happening L-M-H	Required policy, guidance and procedure in place to minimise risks identified	Further Action Required
Risk of harm if complaints and reporting procedures are not in place • Risk of harm (physical, emotional, sexual abuse or neglect) of a child by a staff/volunteer/child if reporting procedure not known	High	AFI Safeguarding Policy Reporting guidelines as outlined in the AFI Safeguarding Policy has been distributed to clubs for onward distribution to its members	AFI Safeguarding Policy to be updated with Reporting guidelines

• Name of the AFI National Child Protection Officer Safeguarding Person is listed and available at all youth football events • The AFI National Child Protection Officer is listed on the Child Safeguarding Statement • Parents know how to raise a concern • Youth players know how to make their concerns known • Do all those involved with youth football know how to raise a concern with AFI/Child Protection Officer and/or to follow Children First / Our Duty to Care reporting process? • Club volunteers know how to deal with complaints	High High High High High High		Website americanfootball.ie to be updated with a section relating to Child Safeguarding with subsections directing visitors to the AFI Child Safeguarding Statement, policy and online reporting

Facilities

Potential risk of harm to children	**Likelihood of harm happening L-M-H**	**Required policy, guidance and procedure in place to minimise risks identified**	**Further Action Required**
Use of facilities • If hiring facilities has the club checked that appropriate safeguarding procedures have been put in place • Appropriate medical procedures are in place at the facility • Anti-bullying statement is made available to all staff for display and distribution to children and parents at camps, etc.	Medium Medium Medium	AFI Safeguarding Policy AFI Anti-bullying Statement AFI By-laws Clubs to ensure all facilities are checked to have appropriate safeguarding procedures in place in advance of every youth football event Clubs to ensure ambulance at every youth football event as per AFI By-laws Bullying guidelines as outlined in the AFI Safeguarding Policy has been distributed to clubs for onward distribution to its members	AFI Anti-bullying statement to be drafted and made available at all youth football events Ongoing review Ongoing review Ongoing review

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Communications

Potential risk of harm to children	Likelihood of harm happening L-M-H	Required policy, guidance and procedure in place to minimise risks identified	Further Action Required
Risk of harm if not communicating with staff, volunteers, parents and players • Child Safeguarding Statement and safeguarding policies communicated to members and staff • Lack of awareness of "risk of harm" with members and visitors • Inappropriate use of social media and communications by u18 youth players • Inappropriate use of social media and communications with u18 youth players	High High High High	AFI Safeguarding Policy AFI Safeguarding Policy has been distributed to clubs for onward distribution to its members and available on AFI website americanfootball.ie Social Media guidelines as outlined in the AFI Safeguarding Policy has been distributed to clubs for onward distribution to its members	Website americanfootball.ie to be updated with a section relating to Child Safeguarding with subsections directing visitors to the AFI Child Safeguarding Statement, policy and online reporting

General Risks of Harm

Potential risk of harm to children	Likelihood of harm happening L-M-H	Required policy, guidance and procedure in place to minimise risks identified	Further Action Required

General risk of harm
• Harm not being recognised
• Harm caused by
  ○ Child to child
  ○ Coach to child
  ○ Volunteer to child
  ○ Member to child
  ○ Visitor to child
• General behavioural issues
• Unauthorised photography and recording of activities
	High
	High
	High
	High
		AFI Safeguarding Policy Child
		Safeguarding training AFI
		Bylaws
		Video and photographic guidelines as outlined in the AFI Safeguarding Policy has been distributed to clubs for onward distribution to its members
			Ongoing review
			Ongoing review
			Ongoing review
			Ongoing review

American Football Ireland

Section 4 - Procedures

Our Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed in line with requirements under the Children First Act 2015 and the Club Framework for Safeguarding Standards in Northern Ireland. In addition to our Risk Assessment document described above, there are further procedures that support our intention to safeguard children while they are availing of our activities. AFI has the following procedures in place as part of our Safeguarding Policies:

- Procedures for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct by staff or volunteers against a child availing of our activities
- Procedures for the safe recruitment of staff and volunteers to work with children in our activities
- Procedures for access to child safeguarding training and information, including the identification of the occurrence of harm
- Procedure for reporting of child protection or welfare concerns to Statutory Authorities

Please note that all procedures listed are available on request.

The Mandated Person for AFI is Nuala Collins.

American Football Ireland

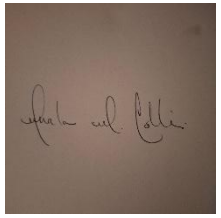
Section 5 - Implementation

We recognise that implementation is an ongoing process. AFI is committed to the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement and the procedures that support our intention to keep children safe from harm while availing of our activities.

Please note the following:

- That all staff have been furnished with a copy of this statement
- This statement is available to parents/guardians, AFI members and members of the public on request
- This statement will be displayed on the website americanfootball.ie by AFI

This Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed again by December 2027



Signed: Nuala Collins

Date: May 22, 2026

On behalf of AFI

Name: Nuala Collins

Email: ChildProtection@americanfootball.ie

For queries on this Child Safeguarding Statement, please contact Nuala Collins above.