

**Ulster Squash Safeguarding Policy for Children and Young People in Sport**

**Safeguarding Children – Key People**

For safeguarding concerns, you can reach out to:

*The US designated Safeguarding Officer is Augusto Azuara-Blanco. Augusto can be contacted via e-mail at* [*safeguarding@ulstersquash.com*](mailto:safeguarding@ulstersquash.com)

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INTRODUCTION

Squash Ulster is fully committed to safeguarding the well being of its members. Every individual in the organisation should always show respect and understanding for members rights, safety and welfare and conduct themselves in a way that reflects the principles of the organisation. This policy and guidance refer specifically to safeguarding children and young people within the sport. It is integrated with and based on Squash Ireland’s Safeguarding Policy for Children and Young People in Sport, see: <https://www.squashireland.ie/development-resources/safeguarding/>

The Squash Ulster Safeguarding Policy for Children and Young People playing squash is underpinned in Northern Ireland by the Children (NI) Order 1995 and Cooperating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland 2017.

This policy statement and guidance is also informed in Northern Ireland by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007 and Protection of Freedoms Act 2012.

The terms “children and young people” and “children” will be used  
interchangeably in the text to refer to those under 18 years of age. The law in  
Northern Ireland ensures protection for children under 18.

***We expect all our squash clubs in Ulster to adopt this policy and guidance and implement its associated standards. Squash Ulster will work with our clubs to achieve this.***

**Safeguarding Principles**

**BACKGROUND**Children have a lot to gain from sport. Their natural sense of fun and  
spontaneity can blossom in positive sporting environments. Sport provides an  
excellent opportunity for children to learn new skills, become more confident  
and maximise their own unique potential. These benefits will increase through  
a positive and progressive approach to the involvement of children in sport  
that places the needs of the child first and winning and competition second.  
Winning and losing are an important part of sport but they must be kept in a  
healthy perspective. A child- centred approach to children’s sport will return  
many benefits in terms of the health and wellbeing of our future adult  
population. The organisation of squash for children should be guided by a set  
of core values that provide the foundation for all practice:

PRINCIPLE 1: IMPORTANCE OF CHILDHOOD  
The importance of childhood should be understood and valued by everyone  
involved in sport. The right to happiness within childhood should be recognised  
and enhanced at all levels of sport.

PRINCIPLE 2: NEEDS OF THE CHILD  
All children’s sport 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. The stages of development and  
ability of children should guide the types of activity provided within sport.

PRINCIPLE 3: INTEGRITY IN RELATIONSHIPS  
Adults interacting with children in sport (referred to as Sports Leaders in this  
Code) are in a position of trust and influence. They should always ensure that  
children are treated with integrity and respect, and the self-esteem of young  
people is enhanced. All adult actions in sport should be guided by what is best  
for the child and carried out in the context of respectful and open  
relationships. Physical, emotional or sexual abuse and neglect of any kind or  
threat of such abuse is totally unacceptable within sport, as in society in  
general.

PRINCIPLE 4: FAIR PLAY  
All children’s sport should be conducted in an atmosphere of fair play.

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 within the right spirit.  
Fair play is defined as a way of thinking, not just a way of behaving. It  
incorporates issues concerned with the elimination of cheating,  
gamesmanship, doping, violence (both physical and verbal), exploitation,  
unequal opportunities, excessive commercialisation and corruption.  
(European Sports Charter and Code of Ethics. Council of Europe, 1993).  
This model of fair play should be incorporated into all sport organisations that  
have juvenile and child members as participants. The principles of fair play  
should always be emphasised, and organisers should give clear guidelines  
regarding acceptable standards of behaviour. The importance of participation  
for each child, best effort and enjoyment rather than winning should be  
stressed. Children should be encouraged to win in an open and fair way.  
Behaviour, which constitutes cheating in any form, for example, falling over in  
football to gain free kicks or penalties, should be discouraged.

PRINCIPLE 5: QUALITY ATMOSPHERE AND ETHOS  
Children’s sport should be conducted in a safe, positive and encouraging  
atmosphere. Standards of behaviour for leaders and children in sports  
organisations should be as important as the standards set for sports  
performance. Standards of excellence should extend to personal conduct.

PRINCIPLE 6: 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. A balanced  
approach to competition can make a significant contribution to children’s  
development while at the same time providing fun, enjoyment and  
satisfaction. Through such competition children learn respect for opponents,  
officials and rules of the sport. Too often competitive demands are placed on  
children too early, which results in excessive levels of pressure on them. This is  
one of several factors, which contribute to high levels of dropout from  
sport. It should always be kept in mind that the welfare of children comes first

and competitive standards come second. While under eight is a very different  
age group to under eighteen the same general principle should apply. As adults  
we need to strike a balance between a young person’s desire to win and a  
young person’s right to participate, irrespective of ability. Remember that  
success is not the same as winning and failure is not the same as losing.

PRINCIPLE 7: EQUALITY  
All children should be valued and treated in an equitable and fair manner  
regardless of ability, age, gender, religion, social and ethnic background or  
political persuasion. Children, irrespective of ability or disability should be  
involved in sports activities in an integrated and inclusive way, whenever  
possible, thus allowing them to participate to their potential alongside other  
children. Sports Leaders should be aware of and seek to gain competence in  
addressing the needs of young people with disabilities or any other additional  
needs.

**Policies, Procedures and Practice  
1. Safe Recruitment Procedures for those working with Children and Young People**It is important that Squash Ulster takes all reasonable steps to ensure that  
only suitable people are recruited to work with children and young people. The  
following procedures will apply before appointing coaches, managers, leaders  
to work with children and young people:  
• Applications form must be completed, qualifications verified and role  
clearly defined  
• Vetting should be completed  
• Board ratifies appointment  
• Relevant code of conduct must be signed  
• Safeguarding training must be completed

• Knowledge of Squash Ulster policies and procedures, names of Designated Liaison Person and National Children’s Officer

**2. Safeguarding Training**Squash Ulster requires that all staff and volunteers working with Children and  
Young People receive safeguarding training. Sport NI offer safeguarding training courses, see: <https://www.sportni.net/clubs-coaching/safeguarding/>

**3.Roles and Responsibilities**Squash Ulster is responsible for overseeing the adoption and implementation  
of safeguarding guidance for children and young people in sport. It is also  
responsible for overseeing the adoption and implementation of the guidelines and standards by all its affiliated members.

**4. Reporting and Protection**All those involved in sport have a moral duty to report concerns to help create  
a safe environment for children, Staff and volunteers should be alert to the  
possibility that children with whom they are in contact may be being abused or  
at risk of being abused. They should know how to recognise and respond to the  
possibility of abuse or neglect.  
The safety and wellbeing of the child must take priority over concerns about  
adults against whom an allegation may be made.  
Reports of concern should be made without delay to the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI, <https://www.psni.police.uk/contact-us>) and the Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT) Gateway Team.

Visit gateway contacts:  
[www.nidirect.gov.uk/publications/gatewayservice-teams-contact-details](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/publications/gatewayservice-teams-contact-details)

**5. Disciplinary, Complaints and Appeals of Code of Behaviour Breaches**Squash Ulster has put disciplinary, complaints and appeals procedures in  
place. (see: <file:///C:/Users/3047790/Downloads/Safeguarding-policy-Jan-2023-1.pdf>). It is important to note that the investigation of suspected child abuse is the responsibility of the Statutory Authorities.  
  
**6. Safeguarding Guidance**Ulster Squash has adopted the guidance by Irish squash detailing how to provide a safe environment for children and young people:

<https://www.squashireland.ie/development-resources/safeguarding/>   
• Overnight, staying away and hosting  
• Supervision, ratios and environments  
• Registration, dropouts and club transfers  
• Incident and accidents reporting form  
• Transport and Travel  
• Filming and photography  
• Inappropriate images  
• Social media  
• Use of mobile phones  
• Physical contact  
• Bullying  
• Facilities

**7. Bullying**Bullying is defined by the Department of Education and Skills guidelines  
as unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical,  
conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons)  
and which is repeated over time.

Squash Ulster recognises its duty of care and responsibility to safeguard  
all participants from harm and seeks to ensure that bullying behaviours  
is not accepted or condoned.   
Squash Ulster has adopted the Anti Bullying Policy adopted by Squash Ireland, see [file:///C:/Users/30477 90/Downloads/Safeguarding-policy-Jan-2023-1.pdf](file:///C:/Users/30477%2090/Downloads/Safeguarding-policy-Jan-2023-1.pdf)

**7. Codes of Conduct**Our Codes of Conduct set a standard of behaviour that reflect Squash Ulster and  
make it easier to deal with conduct and behaviour issues as they arise. Codes  
of conduct set expectations for everyone involved – from administrators,  
coaches and officials to players, parents and spectators.  
• Code for young people  
• Code for parents/guardians  
• Code for sports leaders  
• Code for committees  
The Ulster Squash Code of Conduct along with Squash Ireland Code of Conduct are to be found here:

<file:///C:/Users/3047790/Downloads/Appendix-4-Childrens-Code-of-Conduct-FINAL-2-1.docx-2.pdf> /

**Review**

This policy and associated documents will be reviewed every three years (next review due in December 2027)

**Safeguarding Training**

Under the Children (NI) Order and Cooperating to Safeguard Children and Young People 2017, all coaches are required to complete safeguarding training and Access NI. To apply to Access NI please contact Augusto Azuara-Blanco by e-mail at: [safeguarding@ulstersquash.com](mailto:safeguarding@ulstersquash.com)

In Northern Ireland, Sport NI provides the necessary training, which can be accessed through your local council's sports development officer. See <https://www.sportni.net/clubs-coaching/safeguarding/>

Safeguarding certification must be renewed every three years.

**Roles and responsibilities**

**Safeguarding advisor**

Ulster Squash has appointed a Safeguarding Advisor, Augusto Azuara-Blanco ([*safeguarding@ulstersquash.com*](mailto:safeguarding@ulstersquash.com)*)*. The Safeguarding Advisor is a member of the Ulster Squash Board, and ensures that children’s interests are kept on, and influence the decisions of, the agenda of Ulster Squash.

The role of the Safeguarding Advisor involves:

• Having knowledge of the Safeguarding Code and relevant child protection

legislation (Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern

Ireland 2017).

• Commitment to attendance at appropriate training as required in order to

act as a resource to members in relation to children’s needs

• The promotion of the values, attitudes and structures which make sport

enjoyable for children

• Circulation of all relevant information and resource materials, on children’s

sport to clubs and affiliates of the sports organisations

• Communication with Club Children’s Officers to ensure the distribution of

the Code and the promotion of related education programmes, materials

events and governing body related codes

• Assisting in the development of a system of record keeping which maintains

confidentiality while allowing for appropriate information to be passed to

relevant authorities where necessary

**Club Children’s Officer (CCO)**

The appointment of Club Children’s Officers in a sports clubs/ organisations is

an essential element in the creation of a quality atmosphere. They act as a

resource with regard to children’s issues. In summary Children’s Officers

should review current policies in relation to young people, check that all

activities are safe and fun, and inform adults of how to deal with any concerns

that may arise in relation to the protection of children and young people. Club

Children’s Officers should be child centred in focus and have as the primary

aim the establishment of a child centred ethos within the club. S/he is the link

between the children and the adults in the club. S/he also takes responsibility

for monitoring and reporting to the Club Management Committee on how club

policy impacts on young people and Sports Leaders. The Children’s Officer

should be a member of or have access to, the Club Management Committee

and should be introduced to the young people in an appropriate forum. The

Club Children’s Officer should have the following role: To promote awareness

of safeguarding guidelines within the club, among young members and their

parents/guardians. This could be achieved by: - the production / distribution of

information leaflets, the establishment of children’s/age group specific notice

boards, regular information meetings for the young people and their

parents/guardians.

• To influence policy and practice within the club in order to prioritise

children’s needs

• To ensure that children know how to make concerns known to appropriate

adults or agencies.

• To encourage the appropriate involvement of parents/ guardians in the club

activities

• To act as an advisory resource to Sports Leaders on best practice in

children’s sport

• To report regularly to the Club Management Committee.

• To monitor changes in membership and follow up any unusual dropout,

absenteeism or club transfers by children or Sports Leaders

• To ensure that the children have a voice in the running of their club and

ensure that there are steps young people can take to express concerns about

their sports activities / experiences.

• Establish communication with other branches of the club, e.g. facilitate

parent’s information sessions at the start of the season.

• Keep records on each member on file, including junior members, their

contact numbers.

• Special needs of the child that should be known to leaders