

# Basketball Ireland Camp Policy Guidelines

## Introduction

These Basketball Ireland Camp Policy Guidelines are developed to ensure the highest standards of safety, welfare, and positive experience for all participants, staff, and coaches involved in Basketball Ireland camps. They build upon existing Basketball Ireland policies, including the Child Safeguarding Statement and Coaches Code Handbook, and address areas identified for improvement based on recent feedback and incidents. This document aims to provide clear, comprehensive, and actionable guidelines to foster a secure and supportive environment for all.

## 1. Roles and Responsibilities for Supervision

Effective supervision is paramount to ensuring the safety and well-being of all campers. This section clarifies the distinct roles and responsibilities of various personnel involved in camp operations, particularly concerning the supervision of residential campers during both coaching and non-coaching hours.

### 1.1. Definitions of Personnel

To ensure clarity and avoid ambiguity, the following definitions apply to personnel involved in Basketball Ireland camps:

**Camp Director:** The overall leader and administrator of the camp, responsible for all aspects of camp operation, staff management, policy implementation, and incident response. The Camp Director holds ultimate accountability for camper safety and welfare.

**Lead Coach:** A senior coach responsible for overseeing coaching activities within a specific conference or age group, managing a team of coaches, and ensuring adherence to coaching standards and camp policies during on-court sessions.

**Coach:** An individual responsible for delivering basketball coaching, instruction, and supervision to campers during scheduled on-court activities, drills, and games. Coaches are role models and are expected to uphold the highest standards of conduct and professionalism.

**House Parent/Residential Staff:** Designated adult staff members specifically assigned to residential houses or accommodation blocks. Their primary responsibility is the direct supervision, care, and welfare of residential campers during non-coaching hours, including evenings, nights, and early mornings. They are the primary point of contact for campers outside of scheduled basketball activities.

**Support Staff/Helpers:** General camp staff who assist with various administrative, logistical, and operational tasks, including meal supervision, facility management, and general camper support. Their roles are supplementary to direct supervision by coaches and house parents.

### 1.2. Supervision During Coaching Hours

During all scheduled on-court basketball activities, drills, and games, coaches are directly responsible for the supervision of campers within their assigned groups or stations. Lead Coaches are responsible for overseeing the general conduct and supervision practices of coaches under their direction. The Camp Director maintains overall oversight of all coaching activities.

### **Coach Responsibilities (Coaching Hours):**

- Maintain constant visual and auditory supervision of all assigned campers.
- Ensure all activities are conducted in a safe manner, adhering to established safety protocols and rules.
- Be aware of and respond promptly to any camper needs, concerns, or incidents.
- Promote a positive, inclusive, and respectful environment for all participants.
- Adhere to the Basketball Ireland Coaches Code of Conduct and all safeguarding policies.

### **1.3. Supervision During Non-Coaching Hours (Residential Camps)**

For residential camps, supervision extends beyond scheduled basketball activities to ensure the continuous safety and welfare of campers, particularly during evenings, nights, and early mornings. This period is primarily the responsibility of designated House Parents/Residential Staff.

#### **House Parent/Residential Staff Responsibilities:**

**Direct Overnight Supervision:** House Parents/Residential Staff are responsible for the direct, continuous supervision of campers within their assigned residential houses or accommodation blocks from the conclusion of evening activities until the commencement of morning activities.

**Curfew Enforcement:** Ensure strict adherence to established curfew times and lights-out policies.

**Regular Check-ins:** Conduct regular, proactive check-ins on campers throughout the evening and night to ensure their presence, well-being, and adherence to house rules. This includes periodic rounds of the residential areas.

**Emergency Response:** Be the primary point of contact for campers in case of illness, injury, or any other emergency during non-coaching hours. They must be equipped to respond promptly and effectively, escalating to the Camp Director or emergency services as necessary.

**External Care Provisions:** Provide general external care and support to campers, addressing any concerns or anxieties they may have outside of basketball activities.

**Reporting:** Document and report any significant incidents, concerns, or breaches of rules to the Camp Director in a timely manner.

#### **Coach Responsibilities (Non-Coaching Hours - Residential):**

While coaches may reside in the same accommodation as campers, their primary duty of care for direct supervision of campers concludes at the end of scheduled coaching activities, typically around 9 PM, unless they are explicitly assigned and trained as House Parents/Residential Staff for that period.

Coaches are expected to maintain appropriate conduct and act as positive role models at all times, even during their personal time within the camp premises.

Any coach observing a safeguarding concern or an immediate risk to a camper's safety during non-coaching hours has a duty to intervene and report it immediately to the nearest House Parent/Residential Staff or the Camp Director.

#### **1.4. Communication of Supervision Model to Parents**

Basketball Ireland is committed to transparent communication with parents regarding the supervision model in place at its camps. All pre-camp information provided to parents will clearly outline:

The distinct roles of coaches and residential staff in camper supervision.

The specific hours during which direct supervision is provided by coaches (on court) and residential staff (overnight).

The contact information for key supervisory personnel (Camp Director, House Parents) for emergencies or concerns during all hours of the camp.

The procedures for campers to report concerns or seek assistance at any time.

#### **2. Alcohol and Substance Policy**

Basketball Ireland maintains a strict policy regarding alcohol and substance use to ensure a safe and healthy environment for all camp participants. This policy applies to all staff, coaches, volunteers, and any other personnel involved in Basketball Ireland camps, both on and off-campus during the camp period.

##### **2.1. Zero-Tolerance for On-Campus Consumption**

There is a zero-tolerance policy for the consumption or possession of alcohol, illegal drugs, or any intoxicating substances by any staff, coach, or volunteer at any time on camp premises, including all accommodation, sports facilities, and common areas. This includes, but is not limited to, the period during scheduled activities and non-coaching hours.

**Rationale:** The presence of alcohol or intoxicating substances on camp premises by staff undermines the safe and professional environment Basketball Ireland is committed to providing for children. It also creates a significant safeguarding risk and is incompatible with the role of a positive role model.

##### **2.2. Off-Campus Consumption and Return to Camp**

While staff and coaches may have personal time during the camp period, particularly during non-coaching hours, strict guidelines apply to off-campus alcohol consumption, especially for those residing on-site or with any supervisory responsibilities.

**Expectation of Sobriety:** All staff and coaches, particularly those with residential or supervisory duties, are expected to be fully sober and unimpaired when returning to camp premises from any off-campus activities. Impairment due to alcohol or other substances upon return to camp is a serious breach of policy.

**No Return Under Influence:** No staff member or coach is permitted to return to camp premises, especially residential areas, if they are under the influence of alcohol or any intoxicating substance to an extent that impairs their judgment, conduct, or ability to respond to a situation. This applies regardless of whether they are officially on duty or not, as their presence on campgrounds, particularly in residential areas, implies a level of responsibility for the safety and well-being of campers.

**\*Reporting Concerns:** Any staff member or coach who observes another staff member or coach returning to camp under the influence of alcohol or substances is obligated to report this immediately to the Camp Director or the designated Child Safeguarding Officer.

### **2.3. Consequences of Policy Violation**

Any violation of this Alcohol and Substance Policy will be treated as a serious breach of conduct and will result in immediate disciplinary action, up to and including removal from the camp, termination of employment/volunteer engagement, and reporting to relevant authorities if safeguarding concerns are identified. Basketball Ireland reserves the right to take all necessary actions to protect the safety and welfare of its campers.

## **3. Incident Reporting and Resolution Process**

Basketball Ireland is committed to a transparent, fair, and child-centred approach to handling all incidents and concerns that arise during camp. This section outlines the procedures for reporting, investigating, and resolving incidents, with a focus on clear communication and appropriate action.

### **3.1. Reporting an Incident**

All staff, coaches, and campers are encouraged and empowered to report any concerns or incidents, no matter how minor they may seem. Prompt reporting is crucial for effective resolution.

**For Campers:** Campers are encouraged to report any concerns, incidents, or feelings of discomfort to their Coach, House Parent/Residential Staff, or the Camp Director. Multiple avenues for reporting will be clearly communicated to campers at the start of camp, including designated trusted adults and a confidential reporting mechanism if available.

**For Staff and Coaches:** All staff and coaches have a mandatory duty to report any observed or reported incidents, including but not limited to: safeguarding concerns, behavioural issues, injuries, or breaches of camp policy. Reports should be made immediately to the Camp Director or the designated Child Safeguarding Officer.

### **3.2. Initial Response and Assessment**

Upon receiving a report, the Camp Director or Child Safeguarding Officer will initiate an immediate initial response.

**Prioritise Safety:** The immediate safety and well-being of the child(ren) involved is the paramount concern. Any necessary steps to ensure their safety will be taken without delay.

**Information Gathering:** Initial information will be gathered from the reporting party and any directly involved individuals. This may include separating individuals involved to prevent further escalation or influence.

**Notification:** The Camp Director will notify the Basketball Ireland National Children's Officer (Rory Wall) of any significant safeguarding concerns or serious incidents as per Basketball Ireland's Child Safeguarding Statement and reporting procedures.

### **3.3. Investigation Process**

For incidents requiring further investigation, a structured and impartial process will be followed.

**Impartiality:** Investigations will be conducted impartially, focusing on gathering facts and evidence from all relevant parties. All individuals involved will be treated with respect and their accounts heard fairly.

**Confidentiality:** Information gathered during an investigation will be treated with the utmost confidentiality, shared only with those who have a legitimate need to know for the purpose of the investigation or resolution.

**Documentation:** All steps of the investigation, including interviews, findings, and decisions, will be thoroughly documented using a standardised incident report form. This ensures consistency and provides a clear record of the process.

**Witness Statements:** Where applicable, written statements will be obtained from witnesses, ensuring they are provided voluntarily and without coercion.

**No Coercion for Apologies:** During an ongoing investigation, individuals will not be coerced or pressured to offer apologies or admissions of guilt, as this could prejudice the investigation or have legal implications. Any apologies offered must be genuine and voluntary.

### **3.4. Communication with Parents/Guardians**

Communication with parents/guardians during an incident investigation will be managed carefully to balance transparency with the need to protect the integrity of the investigation and the privacy of all parties.

**Timely Notification:** Parents/guardians of any child directly involved in a significant incident will be notified in a timely manner, once initial safety measures are in place and sufficient information is gathered to provide a factual overview.

**Designated Communicator:** A single designated individual (typically the Camp Director or Child Safeguarding Officer) will be responsible for communicating with parents/guardians to ensure consistent and accurate information is provided.

**Managed Expectations:** Parents will be informed about the investigation process, the steps being taken, and the expected timeline. Expectations regarding outcomes, such as disciplinary actions against staff or coaches, will be managed carefully, as such details may be confidential.

**Parental Input:** Parents will be given the opportunity to provide their perspective and any relevant information to the investigation. However, direct questioning of other campers or staff by parents will not be permitted to maintain the integrity of the process.

### **3.5. Resolution and Follow-up**

Upon conclusion of the investigation, appropriate resolution steps will be taken.

**Action Plan:** Based on the findings, an action plan will be developed, which may include disciplinary measures, policy revisions, additional training, or support for affected individuals.

**Feedback:** Where appropriate and permissible, feedback on the outcome of the investigation will be provided to the reporting party and the parents/guardians of the child(ren) involved, respecting confidentiality and privacy.

**Continuous Improvement:** All incidents will be reviewed to identify systemic issues or areas for improvement in camp policies, procedures, or training. Lessons learned will be integrated into future camp planning and staff development.

#### **4. Camper Welfare and Proactive Supervision**

Basketball Ireland is committed to fostering an environment where every camper feels safe, supported, and valued. Proactive supervision and a strong focus on camper welfare are integral to achieving this goal.

##### **4.1. Continuous Supervision Model**

Supervision of campers is a continuous responsibility throughout the duration of the camp, extending beyond formal coaching sessions. This includes all activities, free time, meals, and overnight periods.

**Designated Supervisory Zones:** All areas of the camp, including sports facilities, dining areas, common rooms, and residential accommodations, will have designated supervisory personnel present during operational hours.

**Visibility and Accessibility:** Supervisory staff (coaches, house parents, support staff) will maintain a visible presence and be easily accessible to campers at all times. They will actively engage with campers, observe their interactions, and be attuned to any signs of distress or concern.

##### **4.2. Proactive Check-ins and Well-being Monitoring**

Beyond scheduled activities, a system of proactive check-ins will be implemented to monitor the well-being of residential campers, particularly during non-coaching hours.

**Regular Rounds:** House Parents/Residential Staff will conduct regular, documented rounds of residential areas during evenings and nights to ensure all campers are present, safe, and adhering to rules. These rounds are not merely headcounts but opportunities to observe the general atmosphere and address any immediate needs.

**Pastoral Care:** Staff will be trained to recognise signs of homesickness, emotional distress, or social difficulties among campers and to provide appropriate support or escalate concerns to the Camp Director or designated welfare officer.

**Health and Safety Checks:** Regular checks will be made to ensure campers are maintaining personal hygiene, getting adequate rest, and accessing meals and hydration. Any health concerns will be promptly addressed with the camp medical staff or physio.

##### **4.3. Emergency Procedures and Camper Access to Assistance**

Clear and accessible emergency procedures are vital to ensuring camper safety at all times.

**Emergency Contact Information:** Emergency contact numbers for the Camp Director, designated medical personnel, and the nearest House Parent/Residential Staff will be prominently displayed in all residential houses and key camp locations. Campers will be explicitly informed of these contacts during orientation.

**Clear Reporting Pathways:** Campers will be educated on clear pathways to report emergencies, illness, or concerns, even during non-coaching hours. This includes knowing who to approach and how to contact them (e.g., designated emergency phone numbers, direct access to House Parents).

**Staff Training:** All staff will receive comprehensive training on emergency protocols, including first aid, fire safety, and procedures for responding to medical emergencies or safeguarding incidents.

## **5. Clarity on "Staff Member" Definition and Communication**

To prevent misunderstandings and ensure consistent expectations, Basketball Ireland will enhance the clarity of roles and improve communication of all camp policies to both staff and parents.

### **5.1. Standardised Role Definitions**

All official camp documentation, including the Coaches Handbook, Camp Information, and any parent-facing materials, will utilise standardised and clearly defined roles for all personnel. A glossary of terms will be included in key documents to ensure common understanding.

**Glossary of Terms:** A dedicated section will define roles such as 'Camp Director,' 'Lead Coach,' 'Coach,' 'House Parent/Residential Staff,' and 'Support Staff/Helpers,' detailing their primary responsibilities, particularly concerning supervision and safeguarding duties.

### **5.2. Enhanced Pre-Camp Information for Parents**

Information provided to parents prior to camp will be comprehensive, explicit, and designed to address common parental concerns and potential areas of misunderstanding.

**Detailed Supervision Model:** The pre-camp information will clearly articulate the camp's supervision model, differentiating between on-court coaching

supervision and overnight residential supervision. It will specify the roles responsible for each and the hours of their direct responsibility.

**Alcohol and Substance Policy:** The camp's zero-tolerance alcohol and substance policy for staff and coaches, including expectations for off-campus conduct and return to camp, will be explicitly stated.

**Incident Reporting:** Clear instructions on how parents can raise concerns or report incidents, and the process for how these will be handled, will be provided.

### **5.3. Comprehensive Staff Training and Onboarding**

All staff and coaches, particularly new recruits, will undergo mandatory, comprehensive training prior to the commencement of camp. This training will cover all aspects of camp policy, with a strong emphasis on safeguarding, supervision, and incident response.

**Policy Review:** Training will include a thorough review of all relevant Basketball Ireland policies, including the Child Safeguarding Statement, Coaches Handbook, and these Camp Policy Guidelines.

**Practical Scenarios:** Training will incorporate practical scenarios and role-playing exercises to ensure staff are equipped to apply policies effectively in real world situations, particularly concerning incident response and communication.

**Duty of Care:** The training will reinforce the continuous duty of care owed to campers by all staff, regardless of their specific role or time of day.

## **Conclusion**

These updated Basketball Ireland Camp Policy Guidelines represent a commitment to continuous improvement in safeguarding and camper welfare. By clarifying roles, strengthening policies on alcohol and incident management, enhancing proactive supervision, and improving communication, Basketball Ireland aims to provide an even safer, more supportive, and enriching experience for all participants. Adherence to these guidelines by all staff and coaches is mandatory and will be regularly reviewed to ensure ongoing effectiveness.

**ENDS**