

# ***IABA Physical Contact Policy***

## **Physical Contact Policy**

The Irish Amateur Boxing Association supports the policy of appropriate physical contact in response to the needs of a child taking into account the child's age and stage of development, this means adults should not do what a child can do for themselves. Contact should be in an open environment and with the permission of the young person.

## **General**

The Irish Amateur Boxing Association promotes the use of appropriate physical contact between adults and children and young people. Adults involved with children and young people in boxing should **avoid unnecessary physical contact and never engage in inappropriate touching**. Misleading or inaccurate information relating to physical contact can undermine the confidence of adults working with children and young people. This can also have serious safety implications for children. For leaders, coaches, volunteers or any adults and children to feel comfortable the following should be followed:

## **Appropriate Physical Contact**

Appropriate contact is when:

**The aim is to teach or develop a skill or technique that the child cannot accomplish without help**; the nature and the reason for the physical contact must be explained by the adult to the child and must be within the scope of the qualification of the adult

**It is required by the nature of the activity** – Boxing requires a 'hands on approach', from time to time; activities which require physical contact should be identified prior to training sessions and club activities and must be kept within the rules of the sport

**An injury requires treatment** – the child should be informed about what is happening and encouraged to hold dressings etc., however for emergency first aid treatment this may not be possible

**An accident can be prevented from occurring** – this will be in reaction to an emergency situation

## **Respect for a young person**

All children must be treated with dignity and respect with any level of physical contact required. A young person's permission should be requested where any physical contact is required, the adult and child involved will feel more comfortable. Leaders should convey approval with verbal encouragement and praise, rather than the use of often repetitive physical contact.

Any contact should be in an open environment and children should be encouraged to voice any concern if they feel uncomfortable or threatened. Children should know how to voice any concerns – through their parents or the Club Child Protection Officer. Any form of physical contact as a punishment or as a response to misbehaviour is unlawful. Only necessary and appropriate



physical intervention may be used to prevent a child or young person from harming themselves, others or damaging property. Misbehaviour may need to be dealt with under breaches of the code of conduct through the complaints and disciplinary procedures.

### **Managing the Young Persons Emotions**

A child in distress may require comfort and reassurance as in a manner that would normally be provided by a parent or guardian. A young person may also react to victory or success with an expression of affection to an adult, a hug for example. Adults must ensure that their reaction to the child in distress or because of a success does not become unnecessary and unjustified physical contact, particularly with the same young person over a period of time. Any contact should be in response to the needs of the child and not the needs of the adult in an open environment.

### **Parents/Guardians**

Ensure the parents are aware of the need for physical contact from time to time and they are comfortable with what is required (examples of this includes: young boxers often become very nervous before entering a competitive bout or very despondent after a loss and can look toward their coach for reassurance and support. This can sometimes include physical contact such as an arm around the shoulder or pat on the back. Such physical contact is appropriate as long as it occurs in an open environment and is in line with the rest of the guidelines surrounding physical contact as identified in this document.)

### **Medical and Sports Science Practitioners**

Within the sport of boxing there is often a requirement for physical contact from medical staff and sports science professionals. This should only be undertaken by properly trained and qualified personnel that are following the specific guidelines and codes of practice for their profession. Any queries in this regard should be directed to the National Child Protection Officer.

