



SECTION  
03

## MAINTAINING GOOD PRACTICE AND BEHAVIOUR

THIS GUIDANCE FORMS PART OF  
THE CODE OF BEHAVIOUR (UNDERAGE) &  
CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY STATEMENT



**INTERNATIONAL SAFEGUARDING**

Iúil 2024

**This section of the Code Of Behaviour (Underage) has been endorsed by the Child Safeguarding Committee (Gaelic Games) and by World GAA for use by our International Boards and Units in pursuing and maintaining the required standards of good practice and behaviour while organising our games and other activities for children and young people.**

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## 01. YOUNG PLAYERS

Young Players can benefit greatly from sports in terms of personal development and enjoyment. Our players are encouraged to realise that as a result of their participation in our Gaelic Games, they also have a responsibility to treat all other players and officials with fairness and respect.

The term young players, i.e. any person who is under 18 years of age, also refers to children regardless of what team, grade or age group they play with. 'Underage' is a general term given to the players and competitions up to Minor grade level and to whom the Code of Behaviour (Underage) applies.

Young Players, and those who work with them in our Gaelic Games Associations are required to 'sign up' and abide by this Code of Behaviour and to any other policies or codes in our Clubs or Associations.

**The Code defines a young person or child as a person under 18 years of age. International units must ensure that the legal age of a child, in their jurisdiction, is reflected throughout each Section of the Code of Behaviour (Underage).**

### YOUNG PLAYERS ARE ENTITLED TO:

- Be safe and feel safe.
- Have fun and experience a sense of enjoyment and fulfilment.
- Be treated with respect, dignity and sensitivity.
- Be afforded appropriate confidentiality.
- Participate in games and competitions at age appropriate levels.
- Be afforded meaningful playing time to assist in the development of their playing skills, within their own age group and in accordance with Rule.
- Make their concerns known and have them dealt with in an appropriate manner.
- Be protected from abuse.
- Be listened to and have their suggestions heard in a constructive manner.

### YOUNG PLAYERS SHOULD ALWAYS:

- Play fairly, do their best and enjoy themselves.
- Respect fellow team members and opponents regardless of ability, cultural or ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation or religion.
- Support fellow team members regardless of whether they do well or not.
- Represent their team, their Club and their family with pride and dignity.
- Respect all coaches and decisions of officials.
- Be gracious in defeat and modest in victory.
- Shake hands before and after a game as part of the Give Respect - Get Respect initiative.
- Inform their coach/mentor/manager in advance if they are unavailable for training and games.
- Take due care of Club equipment.
- Know that it is acceptable to talk to the Club Children's Officer with any concerns or questions they may have.
- Tell somebody else if they or others have been harmed in any way.

### YOUNG PLAYERS SHOULD ENGAGE IN GOOD PRACTICE:

- Never cheat – always play by the rules.
- Never shout at or argue with a game's official, with their coach, their teammates or opponents.
- Never use violence towards teammates, coaches, officials, opponents or supporters.
- Accept the decisions of referees and other officials.
- Never use unfair or bullying tactics to gain advantage or isolate other players.
- Never spread rumours.
- Never tell lies about adults or other young people.
- Never play or train if they feel unwell or are injured.
- Never use unacceptable language or racial and/or sectarian or homophobic references towards a teammate, an opponent, a fellow player, coach, official or supporter by words, deeds or gestures.
- Never consume non-prescribed drugs or performance enhancing supplements.
- Never use social media to discuss teammates, opponents, coaches, match officials or other individuals.
- Never use social media or social media apps to distribute or redistribute offensive content or to taunt, bully or racially abuse others.

### YOUNG PLAYERS ON ADULT TEAMS

The progression of a player from underage grades to adult teams is always welcomed and may come sooner for some rather than others. While it is not unusual for players under 18 yrs. of age to be part of adult club teams, as permitted in rule, their participation requires additional attention as they still legally hold recognition as a child which their parents, fellow players, their Club and mentors and their Association must recognise and uphold.

This may require their fellow team members on their adult team being spoken to by the team mentors so as to address the legal status of the under 18 yr. olds and to emphasise that adults must always conduct themselves in an appropriate manner and an assurance that the adults will not encourage or facilitate the under 18 yr. olds to participate in adult related socialising or activity.

**Each of our Gaelic Games Associations permit under 18 yr. olds to play on adult teams at club level. However, we should be mindful of the manner in which we integrate these young people to adult team level and remind the adult team members and coaches of these teams, that they need to be mindful of the aspirations and maturity, or lack of maturity at times of these young players.**

**Mentors of adult teams that include underage players must be vetted, must be in membership of their association, must have attended child safeguarding training and must have a minimum coaching qualification.**

**Section 5 of the Code of Behaviour (Underage) - RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF COACHES, SUPERVISORS & OTHER VOLUNTEERS - outlines Association policy when choosing adults to work with children and includes guidance on vetting/background, Police checks and training requirements in advance of commencing their work.**  
<https://www.gaa.ie/the-gaa/child-safeguarding-and-protection/code-of-behaviour>



## 02. COACHES, MENTORS AND TRAINERS

**International units should ensure, that in addition to the Recruitment requirements outlined in this Code (Recruitment & Selection of Coaches, Supervisors and other Volunteers <https://www.gaa.ie/the-gaa/child-safeguarding-and-protection/code-of-behaviour> that legislative and sports authority recruitment requirements are fully adhered to when recruiting adults to work with children in any of our Gaelic Games Associations. In addition to such requirements, units must abide by our Code of Behaviour (Underage) supervision ratios when organising games and training activities at underage level. See Code of Behaviour (Underage) Appendix 12. GAELIC GAMES ASSOCIATIONS' ADULT - CHILD SUPERVISION AND COACHING RATIOS.**

All Coaches, Mentors and Trainers of young players (referred to hereafter as coaches) should ensure that these players benefit significantly from our games by promoting a positive, healthy and participatory approach with underage players. In developing the skills levels of every player, coaches should always encourage enjoyment and fun while ensuring meaningful participation in our games and activities. Coaches should always remember that they are role models for the players in their care.

## RECRUITMENT OF COACHES

- Coaches working with young players are required to be suitable for their chosen role(s), and should be appropriately trained, qualified and supported when fulfilling such roles.

**In all jurisdictions in which we operate Coaches are required to:**

- o **Be in membership of their association**
  - o **Undertake agreed vetting and background Police checks within the jurisdiction(s) in which they operate**
  - o **Attend relevant Gaelic Games child safeguarding training or an acceptable alternative safeguarding programme, and update this training as required**
  - o **Possess a coaching qualification relevant to their role as recognised by their Association**
- Coaches of adult teams, which includes any player under 18 years of age, must also undertake the vetting, child safeguarding training and coaching requirements as outlined above.

## COACHES SHOULD MAINTAIN A CHILD CENTRED APPROACH

- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person.
- Treat each person equally regardless of age, gender, ability, ethnic origin, cultural background or religion.
- Be positive during coaching sessions, games and other activities.
- Recognise the development needs and capacity of all underage players, regardless of their ability, by emphasising participation for all while avoiding excessive training and competition.
- Recognise that skills development and personal satisfaction should have priority over competition when working with underage players.
- Ensure all those eligible to participate in any team within the Club are provided with an opportunity to do so with preference given to playing in their own age group.
- Develop an understanding of relevant coaching methods and ensure that they have the appropriate level of coaching accreditation.
- Do not equate losing with failure and do not develop a preoccupation with medals and trophies. The level of improvement made by underage players is the best indicator of effective coaching.

## COACHES SHOULD LEAD BY EXAMPLE

- Never use foul language or provocative language/gestures towards any player, fellow coaches, officials or supporters.
- Only enter the field of play with the referee's permission.
- Do not question a referee's decisions or integrity.
- Encourage players to respect and accept the judgement of match officials.
- Promote Fair Play and encourage all players and fellow officials to always play by the rules of the game.
- Do not encourage or threaten a player by deed or gesture to act in any unacceptable manner towards a fellow player, coach or official.
- Promote the RESPECT campaign amongst your players, fellow coaches, parents and supporters.
- Do not smoke while working with underage players.
- Do not consume alcohol or non-prescribed drugs immediately prior to or while underage players are in your care.
- Encourage parents to become involved in your team and Club activities wherever possible.

## CONDUCT OF COACHES WHEN WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

- Develop an appropriate working relationship with children based on mutual trust and respect.
- Challenge Bullying in any form whether physical or emotional. Bullying is not acceptable behaviour be it from a young person, coach, parent/guardian, spectator or match official.
- Do not shout at or lecture players or reprimand/ridicule them when they make a mistake. Children learn best through trial and error. Children and young people should not be afraid to risk error so as to learn.
- Never engage in the use of physical interventions as a form of response to misbehaviour, unless it is necessary by way of restraint.
- Avoid incidents of horse play or role play or telling jokes etc. that could be misinterpreted.
- Never undertake any form of therapy or hypnosis with children.
- Never encourage players to consume non-prescribed drugs or take performance enhancing supplements.
- Do not make energy enhancing products available to children.
- Never use racial and/or sectarian or homophobic references towards another coach, player, official or supporter by words, deeds or gestures.

## AVOID COMPROMISING YOUR ROLE AS A COACH

Some activities may require coaches to come into physical contact with underage players in the course of their duties. However, coaches should;

- Avoid taking coaching sessions on your own.
- Ensure any delivery of one to one coaching is within an overall group setting.
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact with an underage player and never engage in inappropriate touching of a player.
- Be aware that any necessary contact should be determined by the age and development of the player and should only take place with the permission and understanding of the player and in an open environment in the context of developing a player's skills and abilities.

## BEST PRACTICE

- Ensure that all of your players are suitably and safely attired to play their chosen sport. e.g. helmets (Hurling and Camogie), goggles (Handball), gum shields (Football).
- As a coach always be punctual and properly attired.
- Be accompanied by at least one other adult at coaching sessions, games and in underage team dressing rooms, in accordance with our agreed adult to child ratios.
- Abide by a minimum ratio of 2 adults to 10 children, (2:10). This ratio level requires at least one qualified coach and at least one other responsible adult to be present at all times. See Appendix 12 Gaelic Games Associations' Adult - Child Supervision and Coaching Ratios. <https://www.gaa.ie/the-gaa/child-safeguarding-and-protection/code-of-behaviour>
- Groups of 10-20 children must have a minimum of 3 adults present at all times.
- In the case of an all-female team, at least one of the two adults, where the minimum applies, must be female and similarly in the case of an all-boys team, at least one of the two adults must be male.

- Where a team or training group consists of both boys and girls, the supervision/coaching personnel, must also comprise of both male and female personnel.
- Clubs may choose to appoint suitable persons to the role of Supervisor, i.e. Supervisor of Children. A supervisor is not a coach, but a person appointed to assist in normal supervisory roles which could include access and entry to club grounds, registration, dressing room duties, supervision at away trips etc. A Supervisor must be a member of one of our Associations, must be an adult and is required to have undertaken vetting/background Police checks and have attended relevant Child Safeguarding Training.
- The number of coaches required will naturally depend on the number of children attending a training session, camp, game or other activity. When assessing how many coaches are required always note that Supervisors and Camps Assistants (at camps) do not have a coaching role.
- Set realistic – stretching but achievable – performance goals for your players and teams.
- Keep a record of attendance at training and at games by both players and coaches.
- Rotate the team captaincy and the method used for selecting teams so that the same children are not always selected to the exclusion of others.
- Afford meaningful playing time to young players so as to assist in the development of their playing skills, within their own age groups. For the purpose of clarification, playing a player occasionally as a substitute in the concluding minutes of a game, would not constitute meaningful playing time.
- Keep a record of any injuries and actions subsequently taken. Ensure that another official referee/team mentor is present when a player is being attended to and can corroborate the relevant details.
- Make adequate provision for First Aid services.
- Do not encourage or permit players to play while injured.
- Inform parents/guardians if their child has been injured or becomes unwell at games and training as soon as is practical.
- Be aware of any special medical or dietary requirements of players as indicated on the medical consent/registration forms or as informed by parents/guardians.
- Be willing to retain the necessary and emergency medication of players in a safe and accessible place in accordance with the wishes and permission of the parents/guardians.
- Do not administer medication or medical aid unless you are willing to do so and have received the necessary training to do so.
- If necessary use mobile phones, only via a group text or email system, for communicating with the parents/guardians of players. Any exception to this form of group texting can only be proceeded with following permission from parents/guardians.
- Do not communicate individually by text, email or via social network sites and or apps with underage players.
- Encourage parents/guardians to play an active role in organising and assisting various activities for your teams and your Club.
- If it is necessary to transport a child/young person in your car, ensure that they are seated in a rear seat with seat belts securely fastened and that all drivers are adequately insured.
- With the exception of their own child a coach should not transport a child alone, except in emergency or exceptional circumstances.



- Ensure that all dressing rooms and the general areas that are occupied by your players and other Club personnel, prior to, during or immediately following the completion of any match are kept clean and are not damaged in any way.
- Should you be aware of or have concerns regarding the possible abuse of a child you should, without delay, report this to the relevant statutory authority and you may seek the assistance of your Designated Liaison Person (DLP) - see Section 8 of the Code of Behaviour (Underage) The role of the Designated Liaison Person.

## REQUIREMENTS FOR THOSE WHO WORK WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The Gaelic Games Associations' Code of Behaviour (Underage) was developed in accordance with Child Protection and Safeguarding legislation and with our wish to maintain the highest standards of good practice in our work with children. We require that those who work in various roles with children or young people (under 18 yrs. of age) must adhere to the following requirements, prior to commencing their role.

### COACHES

In all jurisdictions in which we operate Coaches are required to:

- Be in membership of their association
- Undertake agreed vetting and background Police checks within the jurisdiction(s) in which they operate
- Attend relevant Gaelic Games child safeguarding training or an acceptable alternative safeguarding programme and update as required
- Possess a coaching qualification relevant to their role as recognised by their Association

### SUPERVISORS

The role of Supervisor or responsible adult has been created to assist clubs and teams who wish to encourage parents and others to participate in the organising and running of their activities. A Supervisor is not a qualified coach and may not carry out coaching.

- Supervisor of Children or responsible adult must be satisfactorily vetted or undertake background Police checks within the jurisdiction(s) in which they operate
- Must attend relevant Gaelic Games approved child safeguarding training and update the training as required

### VETTING/BACKGROUND POLICE CHECKS

Any person working in a role of responsibility with children or young people in any of our units must be vetted through the service of one of our Gaelic Games Associations. This includes coaches, selectors, trainers, supervisors, Children's Officers and DLPs.

Once vetted the individuals vetting outcome shall be recognised and accepted by each of the Gaelic Games Associations. The period of recognition shall be in accordance with jurisdictional guidance and where no such guidance exists the recognition period for the vetting/background Police checks shall be for three years and re-vetting of the individual must then take place.

It is not permitted to act in any of the above or related roles until the person has completed their vetting.

## SAFEGUARDING TRAINING

**The Child Safeguarding Committee (Gaelic Games) developed a comprehensive safeguarding training programme for those who, on our behalf, wish to work with children, whether it be as part of the delivery of our games or other activities. *The Gaelic Games Safeguarding 1 Workshop* is available for delivery in-person or online and may be modified with the permission of the Child Safeguarding Committee, so as to be compatible with the statutory requirements and guidance in each jurisdiction.**

**International units may be required to avail of alternative safeguarding training programmes and where this may arise it is accepted as an alternative to the *Gaelic Games Safeguarding 1 Workshop* should be clarified with the Child Safeguarding Committee in advance**

Safeguarding training has a three-year recognition period after which the individual must attend further safeguarding training.

For the purpose of clarification Coaches and Supervisors who work with children in the Gaelic Games Associations must be in membership of their Gaelic Games Associations.

## 03. PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Our Associations constantly seek the active participation of all parents and guardians, particularly at Club level, where the ethos of volunteerism forms the basis of our community led Clubs and also enables us to promote and participate in many other community based endeavours.

In common with coaches and club personnel the parents/guardians of underage players should act as role models for their children and are welcome to attend their child's training activities and games.

### PARENTS/GUARDIANS SHOULD ENCOURAGE THEIR CHILD TO:

- Always play by the rules.
- Improve their skills levels.
- Appreciate everybody on their team and their opponents, regardless of ability.
- Respect and appreciate the contribution made by their coaches towards developing players and teams.
- Maintain a balanced and healthy lifestyle with regard to exercise, food, rest and play. Advice may be sought if necessary from Club officials on this issue.

### PARENTS/GUARDIANS SHOULD LEAD BY EXAMPLE:

- Adopt a positive attitude to their children's participation in our games.
- Respect officials' decisions and encourage children to do likewise.
- Do not exert undue pressure on your child.
- Never admonish your own child or any other child for their standard of play.
- Be realistic in their expectations.
- Show approval for effort, not just results.
- Avoid asking a child or young person, 'How much did you score today' or 'What did you win by' or 'What did you lose by.' Ask them 'Did they enjoy themselves.'
- Never embarrass a child or use sarcastic remarks towards a player.
- Applaud good play from all teams.
- Do not criticise playing performances. Identify how improvements may be made.
- Do not seek to unfairly affect a game or player.
- Do not enter the field of play unless specifically invited to do so by an official in charge.

### PARENTS/GUARDIANS SHOULD:

- Complete the Child/Youth Membership Form the annual registration/permission and medical consent information for their child's participation in the Club.
- Inform the coaches, and any other relevant Club personnel, of any changes in their child's medical or dietary requirements prior to coaching sessions, games or other activities.
- Ensure that their child punctually attends coaching sessions/games or other activities.
- Provide their child with adequate clothing and equipment as may be required for the playing of our games including for example helmets, gum shields etc.

- Ensure that the nutrition/hydration and hygiene needs of their child are met.
- Never encourage their child to consume non-prescribed drugs or take performance enhancing supplements.
- Listen to what their child may have to say.
- Show approval whether the team wins, loses or draws a game.
- Never attempt to meet their own needs and aspirations for success and achievement through their children's participation in games.
- Raise any issues or concerns they may have regarding their child's participation or performance in a team directly with the team coach(es) and should do so in a constructive and non-confrontational manner and not in the company or vicinity of young players or other parents.
- If deemed necessary, bring complaints about the conduct or practice of a coach to the attention of the relevant Club or County Children's Officer.
- Support your Club by becoming an active member and by participating in Club activities.

#### **PARENTS/GUARDIANS SHOULD ASSIST THEIR CLUB BY:**

- Showing appreciation to volunteers, coaches and Club officials.
- Attending training and games on a regular basis.
- Assisting in the organising of Club activities and events as requested.
- Respecting the rights, dignity and worth of every person and treating each one equally regardless of age, gender, ability, ethnic origin, cultural background or religion.
- Not entering team dressing rooms unless deemed necessary by the team coach(es) so as to protect the privacy of all players.

#### **PARENTS/GUARDIANS HAVE THE RIGHT TO:**

- Know their child is safe and to make a complaint if they believe that their child's safety is in any way compromised.
- Be informed of problems/concerns relating to their child.
- Be informed if their child gets injured or becomes unwell.
- Complain to the relevant persons if they have concerns about the standard of coaching.
- Have, as a member, a say in relation to decisions being made within the Club.



## 04. SUPPORTERS

Young Players are eager to enjoy and benefit from the support they receive from parents, guardians, friends and other members of the Club who attend our games as supporters of the team and Club. Active, loyal and well behaved supporters add to the enjoyment of our games and are always welcome to attend our games but should be aware that their conduct will always reflect upon the team, players and Clubs that they support and represent.

Fellow supporters have a responsibility to ensure that all spectators conduct themselves in an acceptable manner at all times, when attending our games and competitions or indeed before or after our games. Unacceptable conduct by supporters should be reported to stewards or officials in charge (if appropriate) or at Club level to the Children's Officer.

Supporters should realise and respect that young players are encouraged to participate in Gaelic Games so that they may enjoy themselves while also improving their skills levels.

### WE EXPECT OUR SUPPORTERS TO:

- Encourage and applaud good performance and effort from players and opponents alike, regardless of the result.
- Never engage in the use of violence, on their own or with others.
- Demonstrate appropriate good behaviour by not using foul language, and by not engaging in racially abusive language or deeds or by harassing players, supporters, coaches or officials.
- Never enter the field of play, before, during or after a game.
- Respect the decisions of all officials.
- Never ridicule or scold a player for making a mistake during games or competitions.
- Show respect to your Club's opponents. Without them there would be no games or competitions.
- Uphold the principles of FAIR PLAY and RESPECT for all.

## 05. REFEREES

Throughout this Code of Behaviour emphasis has been placed on the need to co-operate with and facilitate those who organise and deliver our games and activities. Referees, and other officials who officiate at our games, are central to the delivery of these games and should be respected and assisted in their roles at all times.

Referees are conscious of the fact that they are instrumental in ensuring our games are played in a sporting manner and in accordance with the rules of the game as are players, coaches, mentors, parents/guardians and other Club personnel.

The manner in which adults accept the role, authority and decisions of a referee will naturally be scrutinised most closely by our underage players and adults alike. Therefore, adults need to show good example to players and to their children in how they should express their respect for referees and other match officials.

Parents and Clubs should encourage underage players, at an appropriate age level, to attend referee training courses and to subsequently officiate age-appropriate games which could result in refereeing being their preferred pathway or role in our Gaelic Games Associations for some current players.

Any referee, under 16 years of age, when officiating at a game, must be accompanied by a suitable adult who shall act as a supervisor to the referee. This supervisor must fulfil the requirements of a supervisor, as outlined elsewhere in the Code of Behaviour (Underage).

### IN THEIR CAPACITY AS REFEREES OF UNDERAGE GAMES REFEREES SHALL:

- Apply the playing rules on an impartial and consistent basis.
- Act with integrity and objectivity in all games.
- Communicate decisions to players and team officials in an effective and constructive manner and in consideration of the age groups playing our games.
- Deal with dissent firmly and fairly.
- Work as a team with other match officials.
- Maintain composure regardless of the circumstances.
- Avail of assessments and supports to improve performance.
- Uphold and implement the Give Respect – Get Respect initiative at all levels.
- Report misconduct of players, team officials or supporters conscious of the fact that such matters may be followed up in accordance with rule and by Club or County Children's Officers.
- Undertake agreed vetting and background Police checks within the jurisdictions in which they officiate and attend relevant child safeguarding training.

**Players, Coaches, Supporters, Parents/Guardians and other Club personnel should recognise the pivotal role that referees play in our underage games and should support them at all times when fulfilling their roles.**

## 06. GIVE RESPECT – GET RESPECT

**Give Respect – Get Respect** is an awareness initiative that promotes the playing of our games in a positive, fair and enjoyable manner and where Parents, Players, Coaches, Spectators and Referees Give Respect – Get Respect to and from each other.

The RESPECT initiative applies at all levels and amongst all players regardless of age, competition or ability. The key participants in the Give Respect – Get Respect campaign are not just the Players themselves but also Coaches, Clubs, Parents, Referees and Supporters.

Delivering the principles of the Give Respect – Get Respect initiative at ‘underage’ level is a key factor in ensuring that Young Players and Children are made aware of the need to be respectful of others, not merely while playing our games, but as part of society in general.

The Give Respect – Get Respect initiative is supported by the GAA, Ladies Gaelic Football Association, the Camogie Association, GAA Handball and GAA Rounders.

### THE GIVE RESPECT – GET RESPECT INITIATIVE HIGHLIGHTS THE FOLLOWING GOOD PRACTICES:

- All players and coaches shake hands with their opponents and the referee before and after each game.
- Host Clubs or home teams should mark out a designated spectators’ area around the playing area
- Teams should strive to achieve the maximum participation of all players in accordance with agreed playing models at underage level.
- Host Clubs should formally welcome referees and opposing team to all games.
- A merit award, at County level, based on sporting endeavour and fair play, shall be awarded to players and teams who have upheld the RESPECT principles.
- Adopt and implement the Code of Behaviour when working with underage players as the minimum level of agreement between the Club and players, coaches, parents, guardians and supporters at underage level.
- Organise half time exhibition games during Club, Inter-County League and Championship Games that promote the principles of the RESPECT campaign in association with schools, other Clubs and Cumann na mBunscol.
- Clubs should ensure that the coaches of underage teams are aware of and also implement the Give Respect – Get Respect initiative.

### RESPECT

- Responsible
- Encouraging
- Supportive
- Positive
- Enabling
- Considerate
- Tolerant



## 07. THE CLUB

All Clubs that cater for underage players must do so with a child centred approach and philosophy that recognises that maintaining best practice in the safeguarding of children and young people is paramount at all times.

Clubs must ensure that those chosen to work on their behalf with underage players and teams have been selected following thorough recruitment, selection and training procedures.

**In all jurisdictions in which we operate, Coaches are required to**

- o **Be in membership of their association**
- o **Undertake agreed vetting and background Police checks within the jurisdiction(s) in which they operate**
- o **Attend relevant Gaelic Games child safeguarding training or an acceptable alternative safeguarding programme and update as required**
- o **Possess a coaching qualification relevant to their role as recognised by their Association**

A number of non-coaching roles with children, carried out on behalf of the Club, may also require that some of the above conditions are met, prior to commencing such roles. (See Section 5 of the Code of Behaviour (Underage) Recruitment and Selection of Coaches, Supervisors and other Volunteers). <https://www.gaa.ie/the-gaa/child-safeguarding-and-protection/code-of-behaviour>

While the purpose of any specified role and the frequency of activity by an individual in a Club may influence what recruitment criteria must be met, Clubs are advised that they should act on the side of caution and where deemed appropriate seek the vetting/background Police checks and child safeguarding training of individuals relevant to their roles. Such individuals could include bus drivers of underage club teams employed by the Club, parents who regularly drive children to games on behalf of the Club, physios etc.

All of the above are part of a range of support services that are available from Clubs for those seeking to work with children in our Associations.

Such requirements are elaborated upon in greater detail in Section 5 of the Code of Behaviour (Underage), The Recruitment and Selection of Coaches and other Volunteers.

Clubs must ensure that those chosen to work with children and young people are at all times competent and confident in their roles and have received relevant child welfare and sports related training, as provided or instructed by our Associations to enable them fulfil such roles.

### CLUBS SHOULD PROMOTE QUALITY PARTICIPATION BY:

- Adopting the Code of Behaviour (Underage) as a basic level of agreement between the Club and their players, their coaches, parents/ guardians and supporters and others who work with young people.
- Leading by example and ensuring that a user-friendly and child centred approach is adopted in our work with young people and that equal opportunities are available for all to participate in our games and activities, regardless of an individual's ability.
- Developing effective procedures for responding to and recording all attendances, incidents, accidents and injuries.



- Ensuring that any concerns of abuse or alleged breaches of the Code of Behaviour (Underage) are recorded and acted upon, without delay, in accordance with Association procedures.
- Ensuring that all Club personnel are made aware as to the identity of their Club Children's Officer and their Designated Liaison Person and that these persons and their deputy officers are suitably trained for their roles.
- Availing of relevant information on health and wellbeing initiatives for young people and other club personnel including the Healthy Club Project.
- Distributing information on Anti-Bullying strategies in our work with young people and by adopting and implementing an Anti-Bullying Statement in the Club. (See Section 12 Dealing with Bullying in your Club)

### **CLUBS SHOULD ENCOURAGE THE PARTICIPATION OF THEIR MEMBERS BY:**

- Agreeing the specific role of each and every coach or mentor or others working with young people.
- Adopting and implementing clearly defined recruitment and selection procedures when choosing coaches and other relevant personnel to work with children and young people.

### **ENCOURAGE THE PARTICIPATION OF YOUNG PLAYERS BY:**

- Ensuring that training schedules, playing rules, use of equipment and length of games are structured to facilitate greater participation by all young players, and are suitable to all age categories, and to the ability and maturity level of players.
- Not imposing responsibilities or roles on young people that may be inappropriate to their age.
- Respecting the rights, dignity and worth of all players and treating them equally regardless of their age, gender, ability, ethnic origin, cultural background or religion.
- Affording players meaningful playing time to assist in the development of their playing skills, within their own age group and in accordance with Rule.
- Creating pathways for young people to participate in our games not just as players but by affording them other developmental opportunities including training to become referees, coaches etc.
- Ensuring that when the team may travel away and stay overnight that separate sleeping facilities are provided for all adults and for young people. Similarly, for mixed groups, separate sleeping quarters for males and females shall be required.
- When a group consists of both males and females, that an adequate adult to player ratio of male and female coaches is present, in accordance with Association agreed adult to child supervision ratios.

### **ENCOURAGE THE PARTICIPATION OF PARENTS/GUARDIANS BY:**

- Encouraging parents/guardians to become members of their Club and to make themselves aware as to the running of juvenile games and activities and to the rules and codes that direct us in our work.
- Welcoming all parents/guardians to attend the games and training sessions that relate to their children. Information relating to such events should be made known to them at all times.
- Informing parents/guardians as to the identity of their Children's Officer. This person should be available to assist with any concerns or enquiries that parents/guardians may have regarding the welfare and safety of children and young people in the Club and the implementation of the Code of Behaviour (Underage).

**DEVELOP BEST PRACTICE IN CLUB STRUCTURES AND ADMINISTRATION BY:**

- Ensuring that the Juvenile Section of the Club is structured in accordance with good practice guidelines and that young people are afforded a role in decision making at an appropriate level.
- Ensuring all those eligible to participate in their age appropriate team within the Club are provided with an opportunity to do so.
- Appointing underage team personnel, e.g. coaches, trainers etc. on an annual basis and ensuring that they have:

**In all jurisdictions in which we operate, Coaches are required to:**

- Be in membership of their association
- Undertaken agreed vetting and background Police checks within the jurisdiction(s) in which they operate
- Attended relevant Gaelic Games child safeguarding training or an acceptable alternative safeguarding programme and update as required
- A coaching qualification relevant to their role as recognised by their Association
- Ensuring that all Club members are aware as to their responsibilities to all children and young people.
- Appointing a Children's Officer (and Deputy Children's Officer) whose role shall include the monitoring of the child centred ethos of the Club and compliance with any policies and guidelines as issued by the Club, by our Associations, or by statutory authorities and agencies in their jurisdiction.
- Appointing a Designated Liaison Person (and Deputy Designated Liaison Person) whose role shall include liaising with Statutory Authorities and assisting members in relation to the reporting of allegations, concerns and/or suspicions of child abuse.
- Ensuring that all players are covered by their relevant Injury Scheme and that all premises etc. in use by your Club and players are equally covered for property/liability insurance as deemed necessary.
- Adopting procedures that facilitate the privacy and safety of all young people in the Club and that all such procedures are maintained and regularly reviewed so as to ensure that young people feel safe and are safe in the Club.
- Seeking the agreement of parents/guardians when their sons/daughters under 18 years of age are invited into adult squads. Being aware that boundaries of behaviour in adult groups are normally different from the boundaries that apply to underage teams and squads.
- Appointing a Club Code Determining Committee and a Code of Behaviour (Underage) Hearings Committee, as outlined in detail in the Code of Behaviour (Underage) Section 4. <https://www.gaa.ie/the-gaa/child-safeguarding-and-protection/code-of-behaviour> These Committees shall be appointed and mandated by the Club Executive to process, investigate and as required to hear any alleged breaches of the Code of Behaviour (Underage) and in the case of the Code of Behaviour (Underage) Hearings Committee to reach a determination, following their hearing, in the event of a decision that a breach of the Code has taken place.
- Adopting, the Club Child Safeguarding Statement, with amendments as necessary, the content of which must be made known to Club members and put on prominent display in the Club premises.
- Ensure that Club members are aware of our Child Safeguarding procedures including the policy documents Code of Behaviour (Underage) and the Guidance for Dealing with and Reporting Allegations or Concerns of Abuse and of our responsibilities to report concerns and allegations of abuse to the relevant statutory authorities and to the Association's DLP, as required.



## 08. SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN GAELIC GAMES ASSOCIATIONS' PROCEDURES

The Gaelic Athletics Associations, Ladies Gaelic Football Association, the Camogie Association, GAA Handball and GAA Rounders have agreed a number of joint Child Safeguarding initiatives and policies so as to ensure, as far as is practicably possible, the safety of children from the risk of harm while playing our games and participating in our activities.

The adoption of such agreed documents alone will not achieve this aim. However, the continuous commitment and implementation of such good practices by dedicated volunteers at Club, County, Provincial and International levels, with the cooperation and support of an equally dedicated cohort of staff, will assist us as we seek to create a safe environment for young people in which to grow and develop.

Equally so the role of parents in supporting our work and the vigilance of our members is vital as we jointly pursue this aim.

In particular, in all jurisdictions in which we operate agreed procedures now require that all coaches of underage teams or teams that include any person under 18 years of age must fulfil the following criteria;

- Be in membership of their association
- Undertake agreed vetting and background Police checks within the jurisdiction(s) in which they operate.
- Attend relevant Gaelic Games child safeguarding training or an acceptable alternative safeguarding programme and update as required
- Possess a coaching qualification relevant to their role as recognised by their Association.

**Our agreed policies and procedures are in accordance with current legislative requirements and include:**

- That on a biennial basis Clubs, Counties and our National Associations shall carry out a Risk Assessment procedure which is an exercise that examines all aspects of our service from a safeguarding perspective and establishes whether there are any practices or features of our services, whether they be games, training, other activities for children, or the recruitment of coaches & mentors, that have the potential to put children at risk of harm, and
- Following the completion of the Risk Assessment that Clubs, Counties and our National Associations shall publish a Child Safeguarding Statement, which is binding on all of our members, and outlines the policies and procedures which are in place to manage and minimise the risks that have previously been identified as part of the Risk Assessment process
- A Code of Behaviour (Underage) which includes:
  - o Recruitment policy for those working with children
  - o Child safeguarding training requirements
  - o Anti-Bullying statement
  - o Social Media Guidance
  - o Guidance for Dealing and Reporting Allegations or Concerns of Abuse that at a minimum may be amended by agreement with International Units, to reflect the reporting of abuse procedures in place for sports associations in the jurisdiction in which we operate and that the adopted procedures are made known to our members including coaches, underage players and their parents/guardians.
  - o Appointing Designated Liaison Persons at Club, County and other levels as appropriate.
  - o Appointing Children's Officers at Club, County and other levels who shall be the Association's relevant persons or first point of contact in respect of the Child Safeguarding Statement.

## 09. CODE DECLARATION/SIGNATORY

*PLEASE CUT OUT THIS PANEL AND RETURN IT TO YOUR CLUB CHILDREN'S OFFICER  
OR OTHER NOMINATED OFFICIAL*

This Code of Behaviour addresses the minimum levels of behaviour, practice and conduct required from our Young Players, Coaches, Officials, Managers, Supporters, Referees, Parents/Guardians and Clubs.

[www.gaa.ie/the-gaa/child-safeguarding-and-protection/code-of-behaviour](http://www.gaa.ie/the-gaa/child-safeguarding-and-protection/code-of-behaviour)

### DECLARATION

I \_\_\_\_\_  
(print name)

I acknowledge that I have read, understand and accept the **Code of Behaviour (Underage)** and I agree to be bound by the principles set out in the Code when participating, playing or attending our Gaelic Games'.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Underage Player)

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Parent/Guardian)

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Coach/Referee)

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Abbotstown GAA Club (incorporating GAA, LGFA, Camogie, Handball and Rounders) in accordance with our Code of Behaviour (Underage), our policies, procedures and our legislative requirements has agreed this Child Safeguarding Statement, which is binding on our members.**

The basic aims of the Gaelic Athletic Associations include fostering and developing our Gaelic Games and Irish cultural activities among young people and children. These games and related activities are organised and promoted by dedicated volunteers at Club, County, Regional and International levels, with the cooperation and support of an equally dedicated cohort of staff all

of whom are committed to the safeguarding of children and young people in our Association as we seek to create a safe environment for young people to grow and develop.

**This Child Safeguarding Statement was agreed by the Abbotstown GAA Club Executive Committee on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

## PRINCIPLES TO SAFEGUARD CHILDREN FROM HARM

This statement recognises that in accordance with legislative requirements, and our commitments in our Gaelic Games Code of Behaviour (Underage), (see QR Code 1), to safeguard all children regardless of race, ability, ethnicity or sexual orientation from harm, that the welfare and interests of children are paramount in all circumstances. The Code of Behaviour aims to ensure that children and young people have a positive, developmental and enjoyable experience of Gaelic Games and other activities and that they do so, as far as is practicable, in a safe and enjoyable environment in accordance with the Children First Act (2015) and the Children (NI) Order 1995.

## RISK ASSESSMENT

In preparing this statement we have completed a risk assessment, available on request from our Children's Officer, which addresses the potential for harm\* to children when they are participating in our games and attending our activities under the following headings:

- **Identify Areas of Risk of Harm;**
- **Club/County and Coaching Practices;**
- **Complaints & Discipline;**
- **Reporting Procedures;**
- **Club Facilities;**
- **Recruitment;**
- **Communications and General Risk of Harm.**

\* Harm means in relation to a child - Assault, ill treatment or neglect of a child in a manner that seriously affects or is likely to seriously affect the child's health, development or welfare or sexual abuse of a child.

## RISK IDENTIFIED

Safeguarding training for coaches, Children's Officers and Designated Liaison Persons and others who work with children which address Association safeguarding procedures and the risk of harm to children

Risk of harm when hosting and activity or away trip  
Risk of harm through online abuse and social media  
Inappropriate use of photography

Bullying of a child

Risk of harm to a child by an adult or another child including definitions of abuse

## PROCEDURES IN PLACE TO ADDRESS RISKS

Gaelic Games Safeguarding Training programmes and policy

Code of Behaviour (Underage) Includes directives on; Recruitment, Vetting and Safeguarding Training; Guidance for Coaches, Parents & Supporters on Maintaining Good Practice & Behaviour; Hosting events, Away Trips & Transport; Social Media Guidance; Photography

Anti-Bullying Training & Statement

Guidance for Dealing with and Reporting Allegations or Concerns of Abuse

## QR CODE



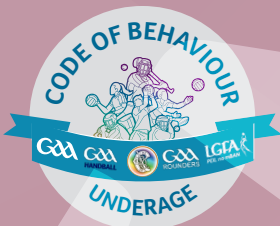
## PROCEDURES

Our Child Safeguarding Statement has been prepared in accordance with the legislative requirements contained in the *Children First Act 2015*, *Children's First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017)*, the *Children (NI) Order 1995*, *Tusla's Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice* and as required by our Association rules and Code of Behaviour (Underage).

## PROCEDURES IDENTIFIED

**The following procedures, addressed in our Guidance for Dealing with & Reporting Allegations or Concerns of Abuse (QR Code 3) and Code of Behaviour (QR Code 1) in support our intention to safeguard children while they are availing of our services and activities.**

- Procedure in respect of the management of allegations against any member, non-member or staff/volunteer availing of our services (QR Code 3)
- Procedure for the safe recruitment and vetting of volunteers & staff to work with children and young people (QR Code 1)
- Procedure for provision of and access to Gaelic Games Child Safeguarding Training and information including the identification of the occurrence of harm (QR Code 1)
- Procedure for the reporting allegations of abuse, protection or welfare concerns of a child to the Association, Tusla or Gateway Team, availing as applicable (QR Code 3)
- Procedure for appointing a relevant person i.e. the Club Children's Officer who is the relevant person appointed for the purpose of this statement (QR Code 1)
- Our Club shall maintain a list of membership who, if known, and in accordance with the Children First Act 2015 are specified as mandated persons, regardless of what role (if any), they hold in the Club.



The Gaelic Games Associations **Code of Behaviour (Underage)** and **Child Safeguarding Policy Statement** provides detailed guidance to our Clubs and other units on the minimum standards of good practice and behaviour that we seek from everybody, who on our behalf, work with children. The "Code" seeks to safeguard children and young people who participate in our games and attend our activities.

## SAFEGUARDING OFFICERS

<b>Abbotstown GAA Children's Officer</b>	Áine Foley	<a href="mailto:childrensofficer.abbotstown.dublin@gaa.ie">childrensofficer.abbotstown.dublin@gaa.ie</a>
<b>Abbotstown Designated Liaison Person</b>	Michael Rogers	(Cathaoirleach)
<b>GAA/Rounders</b>	Michelle Harte	<a href="mailto:mandatedperson@gaa.ie">mandatedperson@gaa.ie</a>
<b>Camogie</b>	TBC	<a href="mailto:mandatedperson@camogie.ie">mandatedperson@camogie.ie</a>
<b>Handball</b>	David Britton	<a href="mailto:mandatedperson.handball@gaa.ie">mandatedperson.handball@gaa.ie</a>
<b>LGFA</b>	Paula Prunty	<a href="mailto:mandatedperson@lgfa.ie">mandatedperson@lgfa.ie</a>

**All policies and procedures listed above are available at [www.gaa.ie/the-gaa/child-safeguarding-and-protection](http://www.gaa.ie/the-gaa/child-safeguarding-and-protection)**

## IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

The Gaelic Athletic Associations and Abbotstown GAA are committed to the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement and the accompanying child safeguarding policies and procedures that support our intention to keep children and young people safe from harm while availing of our service. This Statement, adopted and endorsed by Abbotstown GAA Club Executive Committee, shall be reviewed by **16<sup>th</sup> March 2025** or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

## 11. CHILD/YOUTH MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM (PAGE 1 OF 3)

This template Child/Youth Membership Form outlines the minimum level of information required when registering your child (under 18 yrs. of age) with your Club. It is recommended that membership registration should be completed by using the Foireann registration system.

**Note:** It is advisable that relevant Data Protection regulations and directives relevant to the sharing of sensitive information in your jurisdiction should accompany this form.

**Ainm/Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Seoladh/Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Birth:** \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

**Gender:**

I hereby apply to: \_\_\_\_\_ Club ("the Club") for Membership of the Club and Membership of Cumann Lúthchleas Gael (The Gaelic Athletic Association) ("GAA") ("Membership")

I subscribe to and undertake to further the aims and objectives of (Association) to abide by its Rules including the **Code of Behaviour (Underage)**, which is available at: [www.gaa.ie/the-gaa/child-safeguarding-and-protection/code-of-behaviour](http://www.gaa.ie/the-gaa/child-safeguarding-and-protection/code-of-behaviour)

**Síithe/Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Dáta:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Print name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent(s)/Guardian(s), on behalf of the above named:-**

- We/I consent to the above Application and to undertakings given by the Applicant.
- We/I understand the personal data on this form will be used by the Club and the Association for the contractual purpose of registering (or re-registering) and maintaining the Applicant's Membership and notification of Club activities such as matches, meetings and Club events.
- We/I understand that the Personal Data will be retained by the Club and the Association for such period as the Applicant's Membership subsists and for a reasonable period thereafter.
- We/I understand that We/I can resign the Applicant's Membership by writing to the Club or the Association and their Personal Data will then be erased except where the Club or the Association has a clear justification to retain such Personal Data (e.g. for child safeguarding purposes, insurance, etc).
- We/I understand that the Applicant's Personal Data will also be used for administrative purposes to maintain their Membership including club and team administration, registrations, teamsheets, referee reports, disciplinary matters, injury reports, transfers, sanctions, permits and for statistical purposes.
- We/I understand that if I do not provide the Applicant's Personal Data their Membership cannot be registered with the Club and the Association.

**Síithe/Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **(Parent/Guardian)**

**Print name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Dáta:** \_\_\_\_\_

## 11. CHILD/YOUTH MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM (PAGE 2 OF 3)

### MEDICAL INFORMATION

Please outline any medical information (i.e. allergies, conditions, medication) which may impact on your child's health, welfare or behaviour while participating in our activities.

- I consent to the processing of the personal medical data as outlined above for the purpose of administering medical assistance to my child if required.
- In the event of illness/injury, I give permission for medical treatment to be administered by a nominated first aider, or by suitably qualified medical practitioners.
- If I cannot be contacted and my child requires emergency hospital treatment, I authorise a qualified medical practitioner to provide emergency treatment or medication.

**Síithe/Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **(Parent/Guardian)**      **Dáta:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian mobile no:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

I give my consent, by ticking the boxes and signing below, for my information to be used as follows *(Please tick as appropriate)*

- To provide me on my own behalf and on behalf of my child with updates regarding Club activities such as games, training, meetings and Clubs events
- To provide me with details of Club fundraising activities including social occasions, ticket sales etc.
- I am aware that my child's photograph or video image may be taken whilst attending or participating in games or activities connected with the Club and I consent to it being used in the promotion of Gaelic Games, print, online/digital and social media mediums of communication



## 11. CHILD/YOUTH MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM (PAGE 3 OF 3)

I understand that I can withdraw my consent at any time by writing to the [Club or my Association].

I understand my rights under Data Protection legislation, as outlined on later on this form

**Síithe/Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **(Parent/Guardian)**

**Print name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Dáta:** \_\_\_\_\_

**My contact preferences are as follows:**

**Email** \_\_\_\_\_  **Text** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of full member; proposing new member:**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Dáta:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Print name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of full member; seconding new member:**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Dáta:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Print name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**For Official Use only:**

Registered in Central Membership Database on \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Identification Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Upon election, your membership details will be entered on the Association's membership database in accordance with Rule.





Produced by the Child Safeguarding Committee in association with  
Cumann Lúthchleas Gael, Cumann Camógaíochta, Cumann Peil na mBan,  
Liathróid Láimhe CLG na hÉireann and Comhairle Cluiche Corr na hÉireann.