

**Cumann Luthchleas Gael**  
**Fo-Chumann Aodh Ruadh**  
**Beal Atha Seanaigh**



**Bord na nÓg Policies,  
Procedures & Ethos.**

# Contents

## Section One

1) Policy Statement .....	3
2) Child Protection Policy .....	3
3) Fair Play .....	4
4) Team Selection Policy .....	4
5) Adult Child Relationships in Sport .....	4
6) Children's Officer .....	5
7) Designated Liaison Person .....	6
8) Managers Role .....	6
9) Bord na nÓg Role .....	7
10) Protection .....	7
11) Substance Abuse .....	7
12) Burnout .....	8
13) Bullying .....	9
14) Child Abuse .....	9
15) Recommended Procedures .....	15
16) Recruitment of Sports Leaders .....	16
17) Physical Contact .....	16
18) Overnight Trips .....	16
19) Definitions .....	17
20) Dealing with Injured Players .....	17
21) Registration, Dropout and Transfers .....	18
22) Discipline .....	18
23) Use of Sanctions .....	18
24) Photographs .....	19
25) Mobile Phones .....	

## Section Two

1) Codes of Conduct .....	21
• Young Players .....	21
• Coaches/Mentors & Trainers .....	22
• Parents/Guardians .....	23
• Supporters .....	25
• The Club .....	25
2) Appendix 1 Standard form for reporting child welfare concerns .....	27

***Cumann Lúthcleas Gael, Aodh Ruadh, Béal atha Seanaigh  
November 2012***

## **1. Policy Statement**

- 1.1 Aodh Ruadh GAA Club is committed to safeguarding the wellbeing of its members. This document sets out the club's policies regarding underage players. It is intended to help provide guidelines for stakeholders to ensure that all underage players can enjoy the club's activities in a safe and fulfilling environment. Every individual in Aodh Ruadh GAA club should, at all times, show respect and understanding for their rights, safety and welfare, and conduct themselves in a way that reflects the principles of Aodh Ruadh GAA club, Cumann Lúthchleas Gael and the guidelines contained in the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport.

## **2. Child Protection Policy:**

- 2.1 To ensure that the best practice is followed by Aodh Ruadh GAA club we shall work closely with our Governing Body, Cumann Lúthchleas Gael. In order to promote best practice in children's sport, we shall comply with the guidelines of the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport; as set out in Section 2.7 which are:
- adopt and implement the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport as an integral part of its policy on children in the club
  - have its constitution approved and adopted by club's members at an AGM or at a meeting of the Management Committee of the Club.
  - adopt and consistently apply a safe and clearly defined method of recruiting and selecting Sports Leaders
  - clearly define the role of committee members, all Sports Leaders and parents/guardians
  - appoint at least one Children's Officer.
  - have a Designated Person to act as liaison with the Statutory Authorities in relation to the reporting of allegations or suspicions of child abuse.
  - ensure best practice throughout the club by disseminating its code of conduct, including the disciplinary, complaints and appeals procedures in operation within the club to all its members. The club's code of conduct should also be posted in all facilities used by the club
  - have in place procedures for dealing with a concern or complaint made to the Statutory Authorities against a committee member or Sports Leader or other members of the club.
  - ensure that relevant Sports Leaders report to the Club Management Committee on a regular basis
  - encourage regular turnover of committee membership while ensuring continuity and experience
  - develop effective procedures for responding to and recording accidents and to maintain an attendance record.
  - ensure that any unusual activity (high rate of drop-out, transfers, etc.) is checked out by the Children's Officer.

### **3. Fair Play**

- 3.1 All children's sport should be conducted in an atmosphere of fair play. Ireland has adopted and is committed to 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*)
- 3.2 **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.
- 3.3 **Competition:**  
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. Competitive demands leading to excessive pressure on young players is one of a number of factors which contributes to a high level of dropout from sport. It should always be kept in mind that the welfare of children comes first and competitive standards come second. 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.
- 3.4 **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.

### **4. Team Selection Policy**

It is the policy of Aodh Ruadh Bord na nÓg that all players at U6, U8 play only in their own age group. It is the preferred option that players at U10 play only in their own age group. This policy is to be implemented as long as numbers permit this and players attendance at training etc. to be taken into consideration.

The policy of the club is that dual players, who are members of dual county squads, can only play club matches above their age in club championship matches.

### **5. Adult-Child Relationships in Sport:**

- 5.1 Adult-child relationships in sport are based on trust. This places a clear duty of care on all adults, whether professional or voluntary, to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of children while engaged in sporting activity. Positive adult-child relationships will result in growth, development and fulfilment for all those involved in children's sport.
- 5.2 Given the important and responsible roles which adults play at many different levels in the Aodh Ruadh GAA club, it is essential that their competence and ability to deal with children in a fair, empathic and ethical way is supported, guided and maintained.

A consistent method of recruiting and selecting sports leaders should be in place. Effective management of sports leaders is also equally central to the promotion of good practice in the club. This should include support, supervision and access to training and effective communication between members of the club.

***Cumann Lúthcleas Gael, Aodh Ruadh, Béal atha Seanaigh***  
***November 2012***

### 5.3 Adult-child relationships in sport should be:

- open, positive and encouraging;
- entered into by choice;
- defined by a mutually agreed set of goals and commitments;
- respectful of the creativity and autonomy of children;
- carried out in a context where children are protected and where their rights are promoted;
- free from physical, emotional or sexual abuse and neglect or any threat of such harm;
- respectful of the needs and developmental stage of the child;
- aimed at the promotion of enjoyment and individual progress;
- governed by a code of ethics and good practice in sport that is agreed and adhered to by all members of Aodh Ruadh GAA club;
- respectful, but not unquestioning of authority;
- mindful of the fact that children with disabilities may be more vulnerable.

### 6. Children's Officer:

- 6.1 Aodh Ruadh Children's Officer 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 young people.
- 6.2 The club's Children's Officer 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.
- 6.3 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.
- 6.4 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.
- 6.5 The Children's Officer should have the following role:
  - To promote awareness of the code within the club, among young members and their parents/guardians.
  - To influence policy and practice within the club in order to prioritise children's needs
  - Establish contact with the National Children's Officer at governing body level.
  - 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.
  - Ensure each member signs an annual membership form that includes signing up to the code of conduct.
  - Ensure that the club rules and regulations include:-
    - Complaints, disciplinary and appeals procedures
    - An anti-bullying policy
    - Safety statement
    - Rules in relation to travelling with children

***Cumann Lúthcleas Gael, Aodh Ruadh, Béal atha Seanaigh***  
***November 2012***

## **7. Designated Liaison Person:**

7.1 In Aodh Ruadh GAA Club the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is the club Children's Officer – John Travers. The DLP is responsible for dealing with any concerns about the protection of children. The DLP is responsible for reporting allegations or suspicions of child abuse to, the Club Chairman or officer acting in his place, to the Health Services Executive or to An Garda Síochána.

7.2 Club Designated Liaison Person should;

- Have knowledge of the Code of Ethics and statutory guidelines
- Have knowledge of categories and indicators of abuse
- Undertake training in relation to child protection
- Be familiar with and able to carry out reporting procedures.
- Communicate with parents and/or agencies as appropriate
- Assist with the ongoing development and implementation of Aodh Ruadh child protection training needs.
- Liaise with the national children's officer in relation to child protection training needs
- Be aware of local contacts and services in relation to child protection, i.e. principal and duty social workers and their contacts.
- To inform local duty social worker in the Health Services Executive Local Area Board / local Social Services and/or An Garda Síochána of relevant concerns about individual children, using the Standard Reporting Form, (see Appendix 2 Page 27). Keep a copy of this form and ensure acknowledgement of receipt of this form
- Report persistent poor practice to the Club Officers and if necessary to National Designated Person.
- Advise club administrators on issues of confidentiality, record keeping and data protection.

7.3 The Club's Children's Officers/Designated Liaison Persons do not have the responsibility of investigating or validating child protection concerns within the club and have no counselling or therapeutic role. These roles are filled by the Statutory Authorities as outlined in Children First. Furthermore while Aodh Ruadh GAA Club has disciplinary, complaint and appeal procedures in place, it is important to note that the investigation of suspected child abuse is the responsibility of the Statutory Authorities and should not be undertaken by Children's Officers/Designated Persons or other club sports leaders

## **8. Managers Role**

It is strongly recommended that there be a minimum of 3 adult coaches with any underage team either at training, matches or any club activity.

- All managers need to have first aid training.
- A first aid bag must be present at all training & matches.
- Managers are expected to attend Bord na nÓg monthly meetings.
- Managers are expected to keep an attendance record at training sessions. A record must be kept of any injuries that occur at training/matches.

## **9. Bord na nÓg Committee Role**

It is the responsibility of the Bord na nÓg committee to:

- Provide first aid training for managers
- Provide CPR training for managers
- Provide coaching courses
- Provide a first aid bag for all teams and to check bags at beginning of each season
- Provide kit for teams i.e. balls, jerseys
- Oversee disciplinary issues
- Provide safe training & playing environment that is welcoming & inclusive to all children
- Support to all managers and coaches at all grades

## **10. Protection:**

- 10.1 It is the goal of Aodh Ruadh GAA Club to provide a safe, positive and nurturing environment where children can develop and enhance their physical and social skills.
- 10.2 Awareness of risk to children's happiness and welfare in sport should be seen as central to protection against harm. Such risk could include the following:
- children suffering significant harm by being deprived of proper supervision and safety.
  - Sports Leaders, parents/guardians subjecting children to constant criticism, sarcasm, rejection, threatening behaviour or pressure to perform at unrealistic levels.
  - the infliction of any form of non-accidental injury or other forms of child abuse.

## **11. Substance Abuse:**

- 11.1 Aodh Ruadh GAA Club actively discourages the use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco which are incompatible with a healthy approach to sporting activity.
- 11.2 Underage teams are encouraged to organise receptions and celebrations in non-alcoholic environment
- 11.3 Aodh Ruadh GAA Club promotes fair competition through the development of sound training practice and actively discourages the use of any substance that is perceived to offer short cuts to improved performances or to by-pass the commitment and hard work required to achieve success.

## **12. Burnout:**

- 12.1. Burnout may be defined as a process resulting from an activity that was once a source of fun and personal satisfaction, but later becomes associated with progressive physical and psychological distress.
- 12.2 It represents a loss of energy and enthusiasm for sport and is characterised by anxiety and stress. The child no longer has fun and becomes overwhelmed by the demands of competition and training. S/he may wish to drop out of sport.
- 12.3 The following practices are deemed by the Irish Sports Council to be harmful to children's welfare;
  - pressuring a child to perform at a level which is beyond his/her capacity based on age or maturation level
  - over-training or the making of demands on a child that lead to burnout
  - knowingly permitting an injured child to participate in a sporting activity
  - failure to take adequate precautions to protect a child from environmental hazards
  - failure to take account of known ailments or relevant weaknesses of a child
- 12.4 Psychological stress within the sporting context can be caused by:
  - over-emphasis on winning
  - age-inappropriate expectations
  - excessive criticism
  - inappropriate use of sanctions/discipline
  - rejection
  - disapproval of skill/performance ability
  - failure to provide support and encouragement for effort and achievement
  - failure to involve a child/children as fully as possible in the activity
  - the use of coarse, inappropriate language
- 12.5 The following can be signs of psychological stress or burnout:
  - sleep disturbance
  - irritability
  - tension
  - lack of energy
  - sadness/depression frequent illness
  - loss of interest and enthusiasm
  - absenteeism, arriving late, leaving early
  - no pleasurable anticipation of participation in sporting events
- 12.6 Combating psychological stress and burnout.

Children who show an early aptitude for sport are very often asked to participate in a range of team sports or across a range of age groups. This can put them at risk of stress and burnout.
- 12.7 Stress and burnout can be prevented and dropout rates reduced by measures such as:
  - listening to and respecting children's views about participation
  - parents/guardian and sports leaders de-emphasising the importance of winning and encouraging the development of individual skills and effort instead.
  - Attaining an appropriate match between the individual child's ability and the activity in which s/he is participating
  - Ensuring that the physical or sporting abilities of the child are not viewed by the child as indications of his/her worth
  - Ensuring that the children have fun and enjoy activities in which they are involved using modified games
  - Maximising the involvement of children by using substitutions
  - Ensuring that children are not participating in adverse climatic conditions

### **13. Bullying:**

- 13.1 Aodh Ruadh GAA Club will not tolerate bullying in any form, against any person.
- 13.2 Bullying is repeated aggression of a verbal, psychological or physical nature, conducted by an individual or group against others. It is intentionally aggravating and intimidating. Teasing, taunting, hitting, threatening, extortion and deliberate exclusion are all examples of bullying.
- 13.3 All Aodh Ruadh GAA Club underage players are strongly encouraged to report any bullying to team management or to the Children's Officer, sooner rather than later. Team managers and mentors of underage teams should remain vigilant at all times to ensure that there is no bullying activity taking place, they should also remind young players periodically that bullying will not be tolerated and should always be reported.
- 13.4 Comprehensive supervision of all sporting activities is essential to help prevent bullying.
- 13.5 The Club, through team management structures and the Children's officer must always endeavour to provide a supportive environment for the victims of bullying.
- 13.6 Cooperation of parents/guardians is essential in countering bullying.

### **14. Child Abuse:**

- 14.1 Aodh Ruadh GAA Club, accepts, that like all organisations dealing with children it is vulnerable to the possibility of child abuse. The Club is committed to dealing with the issue of abusive behaviour in a proactive and consistent manner. Through the adoption of formal policies and procedures the Club aims to always operate best practice in this area and to endeavour to always provide the safest and most enjoyable experiences for children and sports leaders alike.
- 14.2 The following factors are central to effective child protection in sport:
  - acceptance by all involved with children that abuse, whether physical, emotional, neglect or sexual is wrong, severely damages children and must be confronted
  - awareness of the behavioural and physical indicators of various forms of abuse
  - knowledge of the appropriate response and action to be taken where abuse is revealed or suspected
  - vigilance and avoidance of all situations conducive to risk
  - open, trusting and co-operative relationships within the club, and with parents/guardians and others concerned with children's progress or welfare
  - willingness to co-operate with the Statutory Authorities (police authorities, health service executive or social services), in relation to sharing information about child protection concerns at any time.
- 14.3 Abuse is normally categorised into four different types: neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse.
  - 14.3.1 Child Neglect

Neglect is normally defined in terms of omission, where a child suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adult or medical care. It may also include neglect of a child's basic emotional needs. Neglect generally becomes apparent in different ways over a period of time rather than at one specific point. For instance, a child who suffers a series of minor injuries is not having his or her needs for supervision and safety met. The threshold of significant harm is reached when abusive interactions dominate and become typical of the relationship between the child and the parent/guardian.

#### 14.3.2 Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is normally to be found in the relationship between an adult and a child. It occurs when a child's need for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met.

Examples of emotional abuse include:

- (a) Persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming
- (b) Where the level of care is conditional on his or her behaviour
- (c) Unresponsiveness, inconsistent or unrealistic expectations of a child
- (d) Premature imposition of responsibility on the child
- (e) Over or under protection of the child
- (f) Failure to provide opportunities for the child's education and development
- (g) Use of unrealistic or over-harsh disciplinary measures
- (h) Exposure to domestic violence.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone. The threshold of significant harm is reached when abusive interactions dominate and become typical of the relationship between the child and the responsible adult.

#### 14.3.3 Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is any form of non-accidental injury that causes significant harm to a child including:

- (a) Shaking, hitting or throwing
- (b) Use of excessive force in handling
- (c) Deliberate poisoning
- (d) Suffocation or drowning
- (e) Munchausen's syndrome by proxy (where parents/guardians fabricate stories of illness about their child or cause physical signs of illness)
- (f) Allowing or creating a substantial risk of significant harm to a child
- (g) For children with disabilities it may include confinement to a room or cot, or incorrectly given drugs to control behaviour
- (h) Burning or scalding

#### 14.3.4 Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or sexual arousal, or for that of others, For example:

- (a) Exposure of the sexual organs or any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of a child
- (b) Intentional touching or molesting of the body of a child whether by a person or object for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification
- (c) Masturbation in the presence of a child or involvement of the child in the act of masturbation
- (d) Sexual intercourse with the child, whether oral, vaginal or anal
- (e) Sexual exploitation of a child
- (f) It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

#### 14.3.5 Signs of Child Abuse

Signs of abuse can be physical, behavioural or developmental. A cluster or pattern of signs is the most reliable indicator of abuse. Indicators should be noted. It is important, however, to realise that all of these indicators can occur in other situations where abuse has not been a factor, and that the list is not exhaustive.

<b>Category of Abuse</b>	<b>Indicators Physical</b>	<b>Indicators Behavioural</b>
Physical	Unexplained bruising in soft tissue areas. Bites, burns and scalds.	Becoming withdrawn or aggressive. Reluctance to change clothing.
Emotional	Drop in performance. Crying.	Regressive behaviour. Excessive clinginess.
Neglect	Weight loss. Untreated fractures.	Changes in attendance. Reluctance to go home.
Sexual	Torn or bloodstained clothing. Inappropriate sexual awareness, behaviour or language.	Distrustful of adults. Sudden drop in performance.

Table 1 Indicators of Abuse.

#### 14.3.6 Grounds for Concern

Consider the possibility of child abuse if there are reasonable grounds for concern. Reasonable grounds for concern (Children First 4.3.2.), exist when there is:

- a specific indication from a child that s/he has been abused
- an account by a person who saw the child being abused
- evidence, such as an injury or behaviour which is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused another way
- an injury or behaviour which is consistent both with abuse and with an innocent explanation but where there are corroborative indicators supporting the concern that it may be a case of abuse. An example of this would be a pattern of injuries, an implausible explanation, other indications of abuse, dysfunctional behaviour;
- consistent indication, over a period of time, that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect.

#### 14.4 Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998

The Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998 provides immunity from civil liability to persons who report child abuse “reasonably and in good faith” to the Health Service Executive or the Gardaí. This means that, even if a reported suspicion of child abuse proves unfounded, a plaintiff who took an action would have to prove that the reporter had not acted reasonably and in good faith in making the report.

***Cumann Lúthcleas Gael, Aodh Ruadh, Béal atha Seanaigh  
November 2012***

#### 14.5 Recognising and Reporting Suspected Child Abuse:

Aodh Ruadh GAA Club wishes to ensure that all involved parties, team managers, mentors, children, parents and guardians are fully aware of how to go about reporting suspected incidences of abuse, and to whom such reports should be made.

The ability to recognise child abuse depends as much on a person's willingness to accept the possibility of its existence as it does on knowledge and information. It is important to note that child abuse is not always readily visible, and may not be clearly observable. If a Sports Leader or a parent/guardian is uneasy or suspicious about a child's safety or welfare the following response should be made:

- (a) Observe and note dates, times, locations and contexts in which the incident occurred or suspicion was aroused, together with any other relevant information;
- (b) Report the matter as soon as possible to the designated person. In the case of Aodh Ruadh GAA Club this is Children's Officer/Welfare Officer – John Travers. If there are reasonable grounds for believing that the child has been abused or is at risk of abuse, s/he will make a report to the statutory authorities who have statutory responsibility to investigate, assess and validate suspected or actual child abuse
- (c) In cases of emergency, where a child appears to be at immediate and serious risk and the Designated Person is unable to contact a duty social worker the Gardaí should be contacted. Under no circumstances should a child be left in a dangerous situation pending intervention by the Statutory Authorities
- (d) If the Designated Person is unsure whether reasonable grounds for concern exist or not, s/he should informally consult with the local duty social worker. S/he will be advised whether or not the matter requires a formal report;
- (e) A Designated Person reporting suspected or actual child abuse to the Statutory Authorities should first inform the family of their intention to make such a report, unless doing so would endanger the child or undermine an investigation
- (f) A report should be given by the Designated Person to the Statutory Authorities in person or by phone, and in writing; without delay
- (g) It is best to report child abuse concerns by making personal contact with the relevant personnel in the Statutory Authorities and follow up in writing
- (h) In those cases where the club finds that it does not have reasonable grounds for reporting a concern to the Statutory Authorities, the member who raised the concern should be given a clear written statement by the designated person of the reasons why the club is not taking action. The member should be advised that, if they remain concerned about the situation, they are free to consult with, or report to, the Statutory Authorities in their area.

#### 14.6 Response to a child reporting any form of abuse

The following points should be taken into consideration:

- (a) The child should understand in an age appropriate way that it is not possible that any information will be kept a secret;
- (b) It is important to deal with any allegation of abuse in a sensitive and competent way through listening to and facilitating the child to tell about the problem, rather than interviewing the child about details of what happened;
- (c) It is important to stay calm and not to show any extreme reaction to what the child is saying. Listen compassionately, and take what the child is saying seriously;
- (d) It should be understood that the child has decided to tell about something very important and has taken a risk to do so. The experience of telling should be a positive one so that the child will not mind talking to those involved in the investigation;
- (e) No judgemental statement should be made against the person against whom the allegation is made;

***Cumann Lúthcleas Gael, Aodh Ruadh, Béal atha Seanaigh***  
***November 2012***

- (f) The child should not be questioned unless the nature of what s/he is saying is unclear. Leading questions should be avoided. Open, non-specific questions can be used if necessary such as “Can you explain to me what you mean by that”. Try to let the child tell their story, use their words
- (g) The child should be given some indication of what would happen next, such as informing parents/guardians, health service executive or social services. It should be kept in mind that the child may have been threatened and may feel vulnerable at this stage.
- 14.7 Sources of Child Abuse  
It is important to realise that children may be subjected to abuse by parents/guardians or other family members, persons outside their family, other children, or those who have responsibility for their care for one reason or another for short or long periods of time.
- 14.8 Children in certain situations may be especially vulnerable to abuse. These include children who, for short or long periods, are separated from parents or other family members and depend on other adults for their care and protection. Children with disabilities may also be more at risk as the nature of their disability sometimes limits communication between themselves and others and they may depend more than most children on a variety of adults to meet their needs, for example, for care and transport. Those from a minority racial background may also be especially vulnerable. This could be due to the difficulty in recognising that racism is inherent in our society, which impacts on a child’s ability to seek help from those in positions of authority.
- 14.9 Peer abuse;  
In some cases of child abuse the alleged perpetrator will also be a child and it is important that behaviour of this nature is not ignored. Grounds for concern will exist in cases where there is an age difference and/or difference in power, status or intellect between the children involved. However, it is also important to distinguish between normal sexual behaviour and abusive behaviour.
- 14.10 Allegations of abuse against sports leaders  
In the event of an allegation of abuse being made against a member of the Aodh Ruadh coaching or management staff the following two steps should be taken  
1) The reporting procedure as laid out above.  
2) The procedure for dealing with the club sports leader.  
Special consideration must be given to the safety of the child or children making the complaint. The club must make every effort to offer them protection. The club sports leader who is subject of the concern is entitled to be treated with respect and fairness.
- 14.11 Steps to be taken within the Club.  
Where reasonable grounds for concern exist the following steps should be taken by the club:
- advice should be sought from the local duty social worker with regard to any action by the club deemed necessary to protect the child/children who may be at risk.
  - the matter should be reported to the local statutory authorities following the standard reporting procedure outlined above
  - in the event that the concern is connected to the actions of a Sports Leader in the club, the Sports Leader involved in the concern should be asked to stand aside pending the outcome of any investigation by the Statutory Authorities. It is advisable that this task be undertaken by a senior office holder other than the designated person/children’s officer who takes the responsibility for reporting

- When the Sports Leader is being privately informed by the senior officer of
- a) the fact that an allegation has been made against him/her and
  - b) the nature of the allegation, s/he should be afforded an opportunity to respond. His/her response should be noted and passed on to the statutory authorities.
- 14.12 All persons involved in a child protection process (the child, his/her parents/guardians, the alleged offender, his/her family, Sports Leaders) should be afforded appropriate respect, fairness, support and confidentiality at all stages of the procedure.
- 14.13 Once the criminal process is completed, the Club should consider the need to examine whether there are grounds for disciplinary proceedings for misconduct. The fact that the alleged abuser has not been prosecuted or has been found not guilty does not mean that such proceedings are not necessary or feasible.
- 14.14 Confidentiality.
- Confidentiality is about managing information in a respectful, professional and purposeful manner. Confidentiality should be maintained in respect of all issues and people involved in concerns about the welfare of a child or bad practice within a club. It is important that the rights of both the child and the person about whom the complaint has been made are protected.
- a guarantee of confidentiality or undertakings regarding secrecy cannot be given, as the welfare of the child will supersede all other considerations
  - all information should be treated in a careful and sensitive manner and should be discussed only with those who need to know
  - information should be conveyed to the parents/guardians of the child about whom there are concerns in a sensitive way
  - giving information to others on a “need to know” basis for the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality.
- 14.15 Anonymous Complaints.
- Anonymous complaints can be difficult to deal with but should not be ignored. In all cases the safety and welfare of the child/children is paramount. Any such complaints relating to inappropriate behaviour should be brought to the attention of the Designated Person. This information should be checked out and handled in a confidential manner.
- 14.16 Rumours:
- Rumours should not be allowed to hang in the air. Any rumours relating to inappropriate behaviour circulating in Aodh Ruadh Club should be brought to the attention of the Designated Person and checked out without delay. Any ensuing information should be handled confidentially and with sensitivity. If the designated person has reasonable grounds for concern that a child has been abused s/he should refer the matter to the Statutory Authorities, using the standard reporting procedure. If there is any doubt about the requirement to report the substance of a rumour, advice should be sought from the duty social worker in the local HSE or social services department.
- 14.17 Children are encouraged to report problems or concerns directly to the Children’s Officer and/or to their parents/guardians, or any trusted adult, regardless of how minor or serious the problem might be. Parents/guardians should also encourage children to inform them of any such problems or concerns.
- Open trusting relationships between adults and children will help to ensure that all important issues are dealt with in a constructive manner.

## **15. Recommended procedures:**

Aodh Ruadh GAA Club operates on the basis of good practice and includes a complaints/appeals procedure:

Codes of conduct reflecting a child centred ethos have been drawn-up for players, mentors and parents.

- The club, on receiving a complaint, will appoint a disciplinary committee to resolve problems relating to the conduct of its members. This includes bullying. The complaint should be in writing to the secretary or Children's Officer and should be responded to within 5 working days. The committee should consist of a representative from the Management Committee, the Children's Officer and ordinary registered members of the club, or as deemed by the club's constitution
- If the complaint involves suspected abuse or a criminal offence the Children's Officer should be consulted and the disciplinary committee disbanded. The statutory authorities will then be informed
- the disciplinary committee should review any relevant paper work and hold any necessary meetings with all parties to proceed with complaints into any incident of suspected misconduct that does not relate to child abuse. It should, as soon as possible, inform the Management Committee of the progress of the disciplinary process. This should be done within 10 working days
- the disciplinary committee should furnish the individual with the nature of the complaint being made against him/her and afford him/her the opportunity of providing a response either verbally or in writing, but usually at a meeting with the disciplinary committee. Written confidential records of all complaints should be safely and confidentially kept and club procedures should be defined for the possession of such records in the event of election of new officers
- where it is established that an incident of misconduct has taken place, the disciplinary committee should notify the member of any sanction being imposed. The notification should be made in writing, setting out the reasons for the sanction. If the member is under 18 years of age, correspondence should be addressed to the parents/guardians
- if the member against whom the complaint was made is unhappy with the decision of the disciplinary committee s/he should have the right to appeal the decision to an appeals committee (independent of a disciplinary committee). Any appeal should be made in writing within an agreed period after issue, that is 10 days after the decision of the disciplinary committee. The chairperson of the appeals committee should be a member of the Management Committee.

The appeals committee should consult with the Children's Officer in relation to issues of child welfare and codes of conduct.

- The appeals committee should have the power to confirm, set aside or change any sanction imposed by the disciplinary committee
- If any party is not satisfied with the outcome the matter can be referred to the Governing Body of the GAA. However efforts to resolve the issue at local level should be exhausted before the Governing Body is engaged in attempts to resolve the matter.

***Cumann Lúthcleas Gael, Aodh Ruadh, Béal atha Seanaigh  
November 2012***

## **16. Recruitment of Sports Leaders:**

- 13.1 Aodh Ruadh GAA Club relies heavily on the time and commitment freely given by volunteers and without this the opportunities for children and young people to participate in sport may not exist. In order to make these opportunities a positive experience it is recommended that all adults taking responsibility for young people in the club should undergo a recruitment process. The following recruitment steps will help to protect young people and assist in placing leaders in the position to which they are suited and supported.
- List tasks that Sports Leaders need to perform and the skills needed for those tasks
  - Make all vacancies openly available to interested and qualified applicants
  - Each applicant should complete an application form. This should include a self-declaration section/ form.
  - It is not the responsibility of any one person to recruit a leader.
  - All recommendations for appointment should be ratified by Aodh Ruadh Bord na nÓg management committee. The decision to appoint a Sports Leader is the responsibility of a sports club/organisation, and not of any one individual within it.
  - Once recruited into the club, all sports leaders should be adequately managed and supported and any statutory guidelines should be adhered to
  - A probationary period is advisable and should be established, ideally through an informal interview, which can be used to assess the leader's commitment to promoting good practice in relation to young people.
  - Confirm identity of leader by checking formal identification, such as passport or driving license.
  - When storing information in relation to applicants information should be treated as highly sensitive and confidential. It should be kept in a locked cupboard that is accessible only to a nominated officer and a deputy nominated officer.
- 13.2 After making a final decision about the applicant, the original information sent to vetting authorities must be destroyed immediately by shredding or burning. The club may, however, include a note on any personnel file stating that a check was carried out and that the person's conditional offer of appointment was confirmed/withdrawn as a result.

## **17. Physical Contact**

- 17.1 Appropriate physical contact will usually be for to serve the young player's ends and not the adults. Contact which is likely to be appropriate may include helping a young player to develop a skill, or to help prevent or treat an injury. This should happen in an open and controlled environment and always with the permission and understanding of the player involved.
- 17.2 Don't do something that a child can do for themselves
- 17.3 Never engage in inappropriate touching, such as touching of groin, genital areas, buttocks, breasts or any other part of the body that might cause a child distress or embarrassment.

## **18. Overnight and Away Trips:**

- 18.1 Written permission of parents/guardians should be obtained for all overnight away trips, this should;
- include permission to travel, behaviour agreement and any medical/special needs of the group, (including permission to treat the participant)
  - The agreement should be signed by both parents and participants
- 18.2 All adults who travel on away trips should be carefully chosen. The roles and responsibilities of adults participating in away trips should be clearly defined.
- 18.3 The management committee of Aodh Ruadh GAA Club should appoint a Team Manager/Head of Delegation for away trips. S/he should have overall responsibility for

***Cumann Lúthcleas Gael, Aodh Ruadh, Béal atha Seanaigh  
November 2012***

the children's well-being, behaviour and sleeping arrangements. S/he should be appointed as an official of the club for the duration of the trip.

The Team Manager should submit a written report to the club management committee as soon as possible after the end of the trip. On away trips, coaches should be accountable to the Team Manager in all non-performance related matters.

- 18.4 Where there are mixed teams there should be leaders of both genders (at least one female and/or male in the management/coaching structure)
- 18.5 Adults should not share a room with a child. Where the presence of an adult is needed there should be more than one child in the room with the adult. If children are sharing a room, it should be with those of the same groupings, age and gender.
- Managers should check out the venue beforehand, so that separate and appropriate sleeping arrangements can be made in advance.
- 18.6 Alcoholic drink, smoking and other illegal substances / activities are forbidden to participants. Leaders should act as role models in this respect.

## **19. Definitions**

- 19.1 Designated Liaison Person: Is a person who is responsible for reporting allegations or suspicions of child abuse to the Statutory Authorities. This person will also be responsible for dealing with any concerns about the protection of young people.
- 19.2 Statutory Authorities: the authorities who promote the protection and welfare of young people and who have the responsibility for the investigation and/or validation of suspected child abuse, i.e. in the ROI it is An Garda Síochána and the Health Service Executive.
- 19.3 Harm can be defined as the ill-treatment or the impairment of the health or development of a child. Whether it is significant is determined by his/her health and the development as compared to that which could reasonably be expected of a child of similar age.

## **20. Dealing With Injured Players:**

Regrettably injuries sometimes occur to young players. The following is clear set of guidelines in relation to this important matter:

- Youth team officials should have attended a First Aid course. Such courses are usually arranged by the Coiste Contae. Cumann Lúthchleas Gael has various manuals available dealing with First Aid and this material is made available to those in charge of youth teams by the club.
- Each team official should ensure that a first aid kit is available at each game and training session.
- Team officials should ascertain (in so far as possible) any incidents of medical history of the youth under their care.
- When a player is injured in a game, he should be brought for immediate medical attention to a doctor or hospital, where deemed necessary, by a team official. The player's parents should be notified as soon as possible, if they were not at the game.
- A stretcher should be available at the ground.
- No risks should be taken with a young players injury. If necessary, an injured player should be left on the field and immediate medical help summoned. Every effort should be made to comfort the injured player until the medical attention arrives.
- Where injured players are required to stay in hospital for a period of time, Team Officials should ensure contact with the player and his family as to his well being. The Aodh Ruadh Children's Officer is available to assist in this matter if required.
- Team Officials should ensure that injured players are made aware of existing insurance schemes within Cumann Lúthchleas Gael and they should assist such players in the submission of their claims.

***Cumann Lúthcleas Gael, Aodh Ruadh, Béal atha Seanaigh  
November 2012***

## **21. Registration, Dropout and Club Transfers:**

Loss of club members, including adult transfers, should be monitored. Any unusual or unexpected dropout or club transfer of children or Sports Leaders should be checked out by the Club Children's Officer. If any concerns regarding a child or children's welfare are raised the matter should be handled in accordance with procedures outlined earlier in this document.

## **22. Discipline in Children's Sport:**

Discipline in sport should always be positive in focus. Children should be helped to become responsible about the decisions and choices they make within sport, particularly when they are likely to make a difference between playing fairly and unfairly. There should be no place for fighting, over-aggressive or dangerous behaviour in sport.

## **23. The Use of Sanctions:**

- 23.1 The use of sanctions is an important element in the maintenance of discipline. The age and developmental stage of the child should be taken into consideration when using sanctions. Sanctions should be fair and consistent and in the case of persistent offence, should be progressively applied. They should never be used to retaliate or to make a Sports Leader feel better.
- 23.2 The following steps are suggested and should always be used in conjunction with the code of conduct for young people:
- rules should be stated clearly and agreed.
  - a warning should be given if a rule is broken.
  - a sanction (for example, use of time out) should be applied if a rule is broken for a second time.
  - if a rule is broken for the third time the child should be spoken to, and if necessary, the parents/guardians may be involved
  - a child should not be sanctioned for making errors when s/he is playing.
  - physical activity (e.g. running laps or doing push-ups) should not be used as a sanction. To do so only causes a child to resent physical activity, something that s/he should learn to enjoy throughout his/her life.
  - sanctions should be used sparingly. Constant sanctioning and criticism can cause a child to turn away from sport.
  - once sanctions have been imposed, it is important to make the young person feel s/he is a valued member of the group again
  - where relevant some sanctions may need to be recorded and parents informed
  - all matters of discipline that cannot be resolved by the team manager will be referred to Bord na nÓg disciplinary committee for resolution
  - Sanctions may include the following:
    - suspension from the team
    - suspension from the club
    - suspension for a period of time
    - suspension for a number of matches
    - suspension from club activities
    - expulsion from the club

## **24. Use of Photographic and Mobile Equipment:**

- 24.1 It is important to recognize the need to reduce the risk of inappropriate, unsolicited attention from people within and outside the GAA. Group photographs where the club is identified rather than individuals are good for publicity without creating a risk to those in the photographs.
- 24.2 Only those who have a right to take photographs should be permitted to do so. Anyone concerned about photography taking place at events or training sessions can contact the Children's Officer and ask him to deal with the matter.
- 24.2 If the athlete is named, avoid using their photograph. If a photograph is used, avoid naming the athlete.
- 24.3 Ask for the athlete's permission to use their image to ensure that they are aware of the way the image is to be used to represent the sport.
- 24.4 Ask for parental permission to use the athlete's image to ensure that parents are aware of the way the image is to be used to represent the sport.
- 24.5 To reduce the risk of inappropriate use, only use images of athletes in suitable dress. The content of the photograph should focus on the activity not on a particular child
- 24.6 Talk to Children's Officer if you are worried about use of images
- 24.7 Photographs, when used with personal information, can be used as a means of identifying children. This practice can make a child vulnerable to an individual who may wish to "groom" that child for abuse. Furthermore the content of the photo can be used or adapted for inappropriate use. There is evidence of this adapted material finding its way onto child pornography sites. Adults and sports leaders need to work together to prevent those wishing to cause such harm to young people.

## **25. Mobile Phones:**

- 25.1 Mobile phones are often given to children for security, enabling parents to keep in touch and make sure they are safe. Young people value their phones highly as it offers them a sense of independence. In addition mobile phones allow quick and easy contact, which can make a safe and efficient way to carry out club business. However such technology has also allowed an increase in direct personal contact with young people, in some cases used to cross personal boundaries and cause harm to young people. Within clubs there is a need to encourage responsible and secure use of mobile phones by adults and young people.
- 25.2 As a young person remember:
  - If you receive an offensive photo, email or message, do not reply, save it, make a note of times and dates and tell a parent or children's officer within the club.
  - Be careful about who you give your phone number to and don't respond to unfamiliar numbers
  - Change your phone number in cases of bullying or harassment
  - Don't use the phone in certain locations; inappropriate use of your camera phone may cause upset or offence to another person, e.g. changing rooms
  - Treat you phone as you would any other valuable item so that you guard against theft
- 25.3 As a Leader remember:
  - Use group texts for communication among athletes and teams and inform parents of this at the start of the season. Permission should be sought from parents before sending texts to children from under 14 grade down, and parents should be offered the right to receive messages instead of, or as well as young players.
  - It is not appropriate to have constant communication with individual athletes
  - Don't use the phone in certain locations; inappropriate use of your camera phone may cause upset or offence to another person, e.g. changing rooms.

***Cumann Lúthcleas Gael, Aodh Ruadh, Béal atha Seanaigh***  
***November 2012***

**Sources for This Document:**

Children First; National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children, Department of Health and Children, Dublin 1999.

Code of Conduct for GAA Officials Dealing with Young Players, Cumann Lúthcleas Gael Official Website.

Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport, The Irish Sports Council.

'Kilkenny City GAA Clubs Policy on Healthy Living Through Gaelic Games' 2008

Safety & Welfare Policy for Underage Players, James Stephens GAA Club, Kilkenny  
St James Stephens GAA Club, Kilkenny

## Code of Behaviour for all Persons Working with Young People

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This Code of Behaviour complements the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport and addresses the appropriate levels of behaviour, practice and conduct required from our young players, coaches, mentors, supporters, parents/guardians and clubs.

The Code of Behaviour is promoted by the following National Governing Bodies so as to enable and assist those who promote and deliver our games as we comply with the highest possible standards in our work with children and young people.

Cumann Lúthchleas Gael (The Gaelic Athletic Association)  
Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael (Camogie Association)  
Cumann Peil Gael na mBan (Ladies Gaelic Football Association)  
Comhairle Liathróid Láimhe na hÉireann (Irish Handball Council),  
Comhairle Cluiche Corr na hÉireann (The Rounders Council of Ireland)

Everyone involved in our sports and activities should accept the roles and responsibilities that they undertake as we commit ourselves to maintaining an enjoyable and safe environment for all. The safeguarding of our members will always be a key priority as we recognise that the welfare of the child is of paramount importance in our work.

It is recommended to use this Code in tandem with each National Governing Bodies own Codes of Best Practice or Codes of Ethics that outline in greater detail our roles and responsibilities when working with children and young people.

We wish to see this code developed, promoted and implemented as an initiative that encourages fair play, respect, equal opportunities and safety.

### YOUNG PLAYERS

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Young players can benefit greatly from sports in terms of personal development and enjoyment. As part of their participation our players must be encouraged to realise that they also have responsibilities to treat others with fairness and respect. With rights there will always be responsibilities.

There will be a 'sign-up' procedure, whereby young people agree to abide by the Code of Behaviour and to any other policies and codes in your Club and National Governing Body.

**YOUNG PLAYERS should be entitled to:**

- Be safe and feel safe.
- Have fun and experience a sense of enjoyment and fulfilment.
- Be treated with respect, dignity and sensitivity.
- Comment and make suggestions in a constructive manner.
- Be afforded appropriate confidentiality.
- Participate in games and competitions at a level at which they feel comfortable.
- Be listened to.
- Make their concerns known and have them dealt with in an appropriate manner.
- Be protected from abuse.

**YOUNG PLAYERS should always**

- Play fairly, do their best and enjoy themselves.
- Respect fellow team members regardless of ability, ethnic origin, cultural background or religion.

***Cumann Lúthcleas Gael, Aodh Ruadh, Béal atha Seanaigh  
November 2012***

- Support fellow team members whether they do well or not so well.
- Represent their team, their club and their family with pride and dignity.
- Respect all coaches, mentors, officials and their opponents.
- Be gracious in defeat and modest in victory.
- Shake hands before and after the game irrespective of the result.
- Inform their coach/mentor/manager when they are unavailable for training and games.
- Talk to the Club Children's Officer with any concerns or questions they may have.
- Adhere to acceptable standards of behaviour and their Club's Code of Discipline.
- Tell somebody else if they or others have been harmed in any way.
- Take due care of club equipment.

**YOUNG PLAYERS should not:**

- Cheat - always play by the rules.
- Shout at or argue with an official, team mates or opponents or use violence.
- Use unfair or bullying tactics to gain advantage or isolate other players.
- Spread rumours.
- Tell lies about adults or other young people.
- Play or train if they feel unwell or are injured.
- Use unacceptable language or racial and/or sectarian references.

**YOUNG PLAYERS - Definition**

The term Young Players is frequently used throughout this Code of Behaviour. For the purpose of this publication, a Young Player is defined as any person under the age of 18 years of age, who is not or has not been married.

## **COACHES, MENTORS AND TRAINERS**

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All Coaches, Mentors and Trainers (referred to hereafter as Coaches) should ensure that young people and children benefit significantly from our games by providing a positive, healthy and encouraging ethos for all. In developing the skills levels of every player you should always encourage enjoyment, fun and participation in our games and activities. Coaches should always remember that they are role models for the players in their care.

**Recruitment of Coaches**

As a Coach working with young people and children you are required to be suitable for your chosen role(s). Appropriate training and supports will be provided so as to ensure that Coaches are suitable, comfortable and qualified to fulfil their roles. All persons working or volunteering for such roles will also participate in agreed recruitment and selection procedures as outlined in the policies and procedures of each National Governing Body.

**Maintaining a child centred approach:**

- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person and treat each one equally regardless of age, gender, ability, ethnic origin, cultural background or religion.
- Be positive during coaching sessions, games and other activities so that participants always leave with a sense of achievement and an increased level of self-esteem.
- Recognise the development needs and capacity of all young players, regardless of their ability, by emphasising participation for all while avoiding excessive training and competition. Skills development and personal satisfaction should have priority over competition.
- Develop an understanding of relevant coaching methods and ensure that you have the appropriate level of coaching accreditation.
- Don't equate losing with failure and do not develop a preoccupation with medals and trophies. The level of improvement made by young players is the best indicator of effective coaching.

**Coaches should lead by example**

- Avoid smoking while working with young players.

***Cumann Lúthcleas Gael, Aodh Ruadh, Béal atha Seanaigh***  
***November 2012***

- Do not consume alcohol or non prescribed drugs immediately prior to or while young players are in your care.
- Never use foul language or provocative language/gestures to a player, opponent or match official.
- Only enter the field of play with the referee's permission and should not question a referee's decisions or integrity.
- Encourage players to respect and accept the judgement of match officials.
- Promote Fair Play.
- Encourage parents to become involved in our activities wherever possible. Conduct of Coaches when working with young people
- Don't 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 use any form of corporal punishment or physical force.
- Avoid incidents of horse play or role play or telling jokes etc that could be misinterpreted.
- Ensure that all physical contact is appropriate and has the permission or understanding of the young person.
- Never undertake any form of therapy - hypnosis etc, in the training of children.
- 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, mentor, parent or guardian.

#### **Avoid compromising your role as a Coach**

- Avoid a situation where you are alone in a car or dressing room with a player.
- Avoid taking coaching sessions on your own.
- Avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with a player or away from others.
- Avoid taking young players to your home.

#### **Best practice**

- Ensure that all players are suitably and safely attired to play their chosen sport.
- Keep a record of attendance at training and at games by both players and coaches.
- Be punctual and properly attired.
- 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.
- Set realistic - stretching but achievable - performance goals.
- Encourage parents/guardians to play an active role in organising and assisting various activities for your teams and your club.
- Use mobile phones, if deemed appropriate, only via a group texts system for communicating with the parents/guardians of players and receive such permission at the commencement of each season.
- Do not communicate individually by text with under age players.
- Keep a record of each injury and action taken. Ensure that another official referee/team mentor is present when a player is being attended to and can corroborate the relevant details.
- 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.
- 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.
- Make adequate provision for First Aid services.
- Do not encourage or permit players to play while injured.

## **PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

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Parents/Guardians have an influential role to play in assisting and encouraging their children to adopt a positive attitude and in encouraging them to maintain an involvement in sport. They should always be a good role model for their children.

**Parents/Guardians should encourage their child to:**

- Play by the rules.
- Improve their skills levels.

***Cumann Lúthcleas Gael, Aodh Ruadh, Béal atha Seanaigh***  
***November 2012***

- Appreciate everybody on their team, regardless of ability.
- Maintain a balanced and healthy lifestyle with regard to exercise, food, rest and play. Seek advice if necessary from club officials on this issue

**Parents/Guardians should lead by example:**

- 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.
- Never embarrass a child or use sarcastic remarks towards a player.
- Applaud good play from all teams.
- Don't 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 or play area unless invited to do so by an official in charge.

**Parents/Guardians should:**

- Complete and return the registration/permission and medical consent forms for their child's participation in the club.
- Inform the mentors of any change 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.
- The club would expect that parents will ensure that players selected for teams are available. If for any reason a player is unavailable the manager should be informed in reasonable time.
- Provide their child with proper clothing and equipment.
- Ensure that the nutrition/hydration and hygiene needs of their child are met.
- 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'.
- Listen to what young people 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.

**Parents/Guardians should assist their club by:**

- Showing appreciation to volunteers, mentors and club officials.
- Attending training and games on a regular basis.
- Assisting in the organising of club activities and events as requested.
- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person and treat each one equally regardless of age, gender, ability, ethnic origin, cultural background or religion.

**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.
- Complain if they have concerns about the standard of coaching.
- Have a say in relation to decisions being made within the club.

***Cumann Lúthcleas Gael, Aodh Ruadh, Béal atha Seanaigh  
November 2012***

## SUPPORTERS

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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 spectators. Active, loyal and well behaved supporters are always welcome to attend and support our games but should be aware that their conduct will always reflect upon the team, players and clubs that they support.

Fellow supporters have a responsibility to ensure that all spectators conduct themselves in an acceptable and well behaved manner at all times when attending under age games and competitions.

Supporters should always realise that young players participate in organised sport for fun.

**Supporters add to the enjoyment of our games by:**

- Applauding good performance and efforts from your club's players and from your opponents, regardless of the result.
- Condemning the use of violence in any form, be it by fellow spectators, coaches, officials or players.
- Encouraging players to participate according to the rules and the referees' decisions.
- Demonstrating appropriate social behaviour by not using foul language or harassing participants, mentors or officials.
- Respecting the decisions of all officials.
- Never ridiculing or scolding a player for making a mistake during games or competitions
- Showing respect to your Club's opponents. Without them there would be no games or competitions.
- Upholding the principles of FAIR PLAY and RESPECT for all.

## THE CLUB

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All clubs that cater for under age players must do so with a child centred approach and philosophy that recognises that the welfare of the child is paramount, thus ensuring that those chosen by them to work with children and young people are at all times competent and confident as to their roles and responsibilities.

Clubs must provide these people with the necessary supports and ensure in the best interests of the child, the young person and the adult that all those chosen to work on the club's behalf have been selected following thorough recruitment, selection, training and coaching procedures.

**Promote Quality Participation by:**

- Adopting this Code of Behaviour as a basic level of agreement between the club and their players, their mentors, parents/guardians and supporters.
- Leading by example and ensuring that you have a user friendly and child centred approach to your work and that you provide an equal opportunity to all who wish to participate in your games and activities, regardless of an individual's ability.
- Developing effective procedures for responding to and recording all attendances, incidents, accidents and injuries.
- Accessing relevant information on Alcohol and Substance Abuse Prevention Programmes and promoting relevant training in this area of health awareness for relevant club personnel.
- Distributing information on Anti Bullying strategies in our work with young people and by adopting and implementing an Anti Bullying Statement in the club.

**Encourage the Participation of Club Members by:**

- Communicating regularly with your Mentors and clearly agree and define their roles.
- Ensuring that the Irish Sports Council and Sport NI Code of Ethics training is undertaken by all persons working in an official capacity with children and young people on behalf of the club.
- Adopting and implement clearly defined recruitment and selection procedures when choosing mentors to work with children and young people. Encourage the Participation of Young Players

***Cumann Lúthcleas Gael, Aodh Ruadh, Béal atha Seanaigh***  
***November 2012***

- Ensuring that the types of programmes, rules, equipment, length of games and training schedules are structured to facilitate greater participation by all young players, are suitable to all age categories, and to the ability and maturity level of young players.
- Respecting the rights, dignity and worth of all players by treating them equally regardless of their age, gender, ability, ethnic origin, cultural background or religion.
- Creating pathways for young people to participate in your games not just as players but afford other developmental opportunities including training to become a referee, coach etc.
- Ensuring that on the occasions 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 your group consists of both males and females you are required to have male and female leaders/mentors present.

**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.
- Encouraging the participation of parents and guardians in all aspects a club's activities and events and in the organising and delivery of our games.
- Welcome 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.

**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 that all club members are aware as to their responsibilities to all children and young people.
- Appointing a Children's Officer whose role shall include the monitoring of the child centred ethos of the club and compliance with the Code of Ethics and Good Practice (Irish Sports Council/SportsNI) and with any policies and guidelines as issued by the club, by their National Governing Bodies, or by statutory authorities and agencies.
- Appointing a Designated Person whose role shall include liaising with Statutory Authorities and their Governing Body in relation to the reporting of allegations 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.
- Seeking the agreement of parents/guardians when their sons/daughters under 18 years of age are invited into adult squads. Boundaries of behaviour in adult groups are normally different from the boundaries that apply to under age teams and squads.

***Cumann Lúthcleas Gael, Aodh Ruadh, Béal atha Seanaigh***  
***November 2012***

**Protection and/or Welfare Concerns to the H.S.E.**

**PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL**  
**In case of Emergency or outside Health Board hours,**  
**contact should be made with An Garda Síochána.**

**A. To Principal Social Worker/designate:**

\_\_\_\_\_

This will be printed as relevant to each Community Care Area.

**1. Details of Child:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Male: \_\_\_\_\_ Female: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Age/D.O.B.: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_

**1a. Name of Mother:**

**Name of Father:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Address of Mother if different to Child:**

**Address of Father if different to Child:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

**1b. Care and Custody arrangements regarding child, if known:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**1c. Household composition**

Name	Relationship to Child	Date of Birth	Additional Information e.g. school/occupation

Note: A separate form must be completed in respect of each child being reported.

**2.** Details of concern(s), allegation(s), or incident(s) dates, times, who was present, description of any observed injuries, parent's view(s), child's view(s) if known.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**3.** Details of person(s) allegedly causing concern in relation to the child:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to child: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

**4.** Name and address of other personnel or agencies involved with this child:

Social Workers: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Public Health Nurse: \_\_\_\_\_ Pre-School.Ceche/Youth Club: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Hospital: \_\_\_\_\_ Other (specify e.g. youth groups etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Are parents/legal guardians aware of this referral to the School Work Department?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, what is their attitude? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Details of person reporting concerns:

(Please see guidance notes re. limitations of confidentiality)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Nature and extent of contact with child/family: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Details of person completing form:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

***Cumann Lúthcleas Gael, Aodh Ruadh, Béal atha Seanaigh  
November 2012***