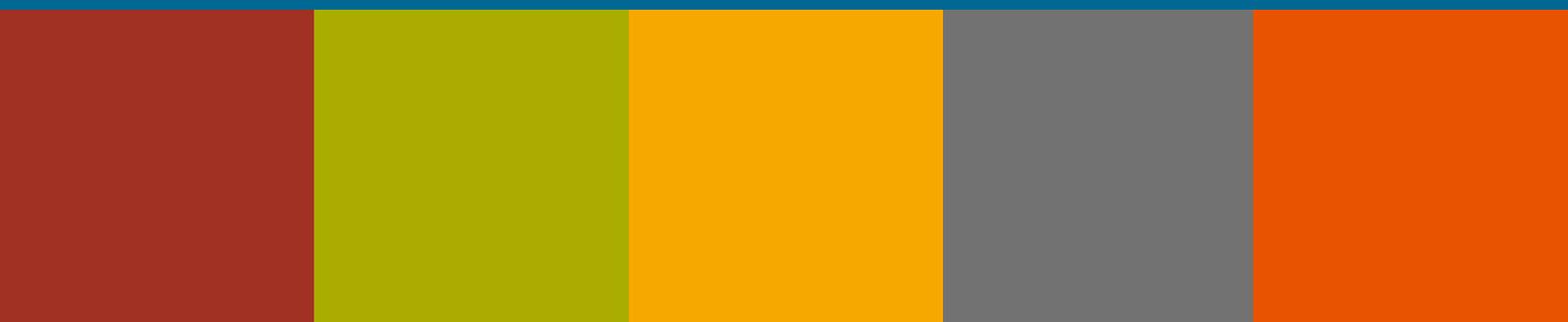


Our Games Our Code

Code of Best Practice
in Youth Sport
when working with
underage players



Contents

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Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport when working with underage players

The publication by the Gaelic Athletic Association, Ladies Gaelic Football Association, the Camogie Association, GAA Handball Ireland and the Rounders Council of Ireland of **Our Games – Our Code, the Joint Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport**, is indeed a momentous occasion for all who work with underage players and vulnerable adults in our respective Associations.

This Code brings together the collective good practice experiences of our Associations while also recognising the legislative, organisational and statutory guidance that governs our work with young people and children. Our Games – Our Code will assist us in supporting and directing our members and all units of our Associations in our work with underage teams in a coordinated and developmental manner.

Our Associations, in common with others who work with young people and children on a daily basis, will continue to abide by and integrate child welfare legislation and statutory guidance into our work, regardless of the jurisdiction in which we operate. In upholding this principle, the welfare of the child shall always be our paramount consideration, whether it is on the playing fields, in the training of our underage players, the recruitment of our coaches or the many other developmental and social opportunities that we offer our underage players on a daily and weekly basis.

If the local community is a bedrock of our Association so also are our underage players, many of whom will play our games from childhood to adulthood and will hopefully progress in later years to coaching and mentoring roles, more often than not in the one Club.

Our underage players will spend some of the most enjoyable days of their lives playing our games and socialising with their friends. Whether attending or playing GAA matches, playing Ladies Football or Camogie, or participating in Rounders or Handball activities, they will do so during some of the most important developmental years of their lives. Our role and our responsibility is to ensure that they benefit from and participate in our Gaelic Games in a safe and enjoyable environment and where our Games are conducted in a spirit of fair play where everyone working on our behalf emphasises respect, equality, safety and non discrimination in all aspects of our work with children and young people.

Agus an Cód Dea Chleachtas seo i bhfeidhm anois agus ba mhaith linn an Cód seo a fheiceáil forbartha i measc chuile dhuine a imríonn agus a ghlacann páirt inár gCluichí Gaelacha. Mol an Óige agus tiocfaidh sí.



Section 2

Child Protection and Welfare Statement

Our Games – Our Code is the new Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport agreed by the Gaelic Athletic Association, Ladies Gaelic Football Association, the Camogie Association, GAA Handball Ireland and the Rounders Council of Ireland. This Code will direct our members and all units of our Associations in our work with underage teams.

Our Associations are committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for all young people who participate in our Gaelic Games and activities. We shall take all practicable steps to protect them from discernable forms of abuse, from harm, discrimination or degrading treatment and shall respect their rights, wishes and feelings.

WE DO THIS BY;

- Recognising that all children have the right to be protected from harm.
- Ensuring that all our coaches and volunteers are carefully recruited and selected in accordance with our own guidelines and relevant legislative requirements and that they accept responsibility for ensuring the wellbeing of children in their care.
- Responding swiftly and appropriately to any allegations or concerns so as to protect the welfare of children who participate in our games and related activities.
- Appointing Children’s Officers in each of our Clubs and at County Board level.
- Appointing a National Children’s Officer to oversee the implementation of good child protection and welfare practices within our Associations.
- Appointing a Designated Officer in each Club and County who will liaise with the statutory authorities as appropriate.
- Appointing a National Designated Officer to assist, advise and oversee the processing of child protection and welfare matters.
- Providing parents and children with the opportunity to voice their concerns.
- Ensuring that all allegations of abuse of young people are confidentially dealt with in accordance the Association Guidelines and relevant legislation.
- Reviewing the effectiveness of our Child Protection and Welfare procedures and related policies on an on-going basis.
- Ensuring that members, coaches, team mentors, administrators, parents/guardians and spectators sign up to and adhere to our Code of Behaviour.
- Promoting the Give Respect - Get Respect initiative at all levels within our Associations.

Section 3

Code of Behaviour

When working with underage players

This Code of Behaviour is one section, albeit a vital section, of the Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport, Our Games - Our Code.

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

The Gaelic Athletic Association, the Camogie Association, Ladies Gaelic Football Association, GAA Handball Ireland and the Rounders Council of Ireland have endorsed this Code so that it may act as a guidance for those who promote and deliver our Gaelic Games and assist them in complying with the highest possible standards in our work with children and young people.

Everyone involved in our sports and in our 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.

This Code should be used in tandem with the overall Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport, Our Games – Our Code, where roles and responsibilities are outlined in greater detail. It is recommended that Coaches, Parents/Guardians and Players sign this Code of Behaviour and present the signed document, as a commitment of its implementation, to their Club Children’s Officer.

Our aim is to ensure that young people and children who play our games receive the best possible care, attention and protection while participating in our Gaelic Games.

Should a breach of the Code be alleged, or when people may refuse to adhere to the contents of the Code, certain actions may be deemed necessary and appropriate so as to protect the integrity of our work with children and young people and also to ensure that they receive the best possible care, attention and protection while participating in our Games.

Alleged breaches of this Code may therefore be enquired into, regardless of where or when they occur, in accordance with the guidance contained elsewhere in this Code and with particular reference to the accompanying publication, 'Our Games Our Code: Dealing with Alleged Breaches of the Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport.' Following any such enquiry, and where deemed necessary, sanctions or disciplinary action may be taken against those who have been proven to have breached the Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport.

This Code applies to all underage players and those who assist them in the preparation and playing of our games, regardless of competition or age group. Clubs, County Boards and Games Officials who are responsible for organising our games at all levels are obliged to implement this Code in the preparation of their teams and players for all competitions and at all other levels including Club blitzes and competitions, County development squads and Inter -County games.

It is our wish that this Code is developed, promoted and implemented as an initiative that encourages fair play, respect, equality, safety and non discrimination in all aspects of our work with children and young people.



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 that they also have a responsibility to treat other players and officials with fairness and respect. With rights there will always be responsibilities.

Young Players, and those who work with them in our Associations are required to 'sign up' and abide by this Code of Behaviour and to any other policies or codes in your Club or 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 levels with which they feel comfortable.
- Make their concerns known and have them dealt with in an appropriate manner.
- Be protected from abuse.
- Be listened to.

YOUNG PLAYERS SHOULD ALWAYS

- Play fairly, do their best and enjoy themselves.
- Respect fellow team members regardless of ability, cultural or ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation or religious beliefs.
- 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, Officials and their opponents.
- Be gracious in defeat and modest in victory.
- Shake hands before and after a game as part of the Give Respect Get Respect initiative, irrespective of the result.
- 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.
- 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.

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 team mates or opponents and should never use violence.
- 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 references to an opponent, a fellow player or official by words, deeds or gesture.
- Never consume non-prescribed drugs or performance enhancing supplements

Coaches, Mentors and Trainers

All Coaches, Mentors and Trainers (referred to hereafter as Coaches) should ensure that young people and children benefit significantly from our games by promoting a positive, healthy and participatory approach in our work 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

All Coaches working with young people and children are required to be suitable for their chosen role(s), and should be appropriately trained, qualified and supported to fulfil such roles. All persons working or volunteering for such roles are required to undertake agreed vetting and background Police checks within the jurisdiction in which they work and to attend coaching and training courses relevant to their roles. All such Coaches must attend relevant child welfare and protection training as provided or instructed by their Governing body and must also complete a basic coach education qualification.

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 so that underage players always leave with a sense of achievement and an increased level of self-esteem.
- 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. Skills development and personal satisfaction should have priority over competition when working with underage players.
- 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 to a player, opponent or match official.
- 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 an opponent, fellow player 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.
- 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.
- The use of any form of physical punishment is prohibited as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour, unless it is 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, in the training of children.
- Never encourage players to consume non-prescribed drugs or take performance enhancing supplements.

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.
- Only deliver one to one coaching, if deemed necessary, within a 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), shin guards, 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Be willing to keep 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 administer such aid.
- Use mobile phones, if deemed appropriate, 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 engage in communications with underage players via social network sites.
- 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.

Parents/Guardians

Parents/Guardians have an influential role to play in assisting and encouraging their children to fully participate in Gaelic Games, whether by playing our games or attending training or coaching sessions.

In common with Coaches and Club personnel the Parents/Guardians of underage players should act as role models for their children as they participate in Gaelic Games.

PARENTS/GUARDIANS SHOULD ENCOURAGE THEIR CHILD TO:

- Always play by the rules.
- Improve their skills levels.
- Appreciate everybody on their team, regardless of ability.
- 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 and return the registration/permission and medical consent forms 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, shin guards, gum shields etc.
- Ensure that the nutrition/hydration and hygiene needs of their child are met.

- Never encourage your child(ren) 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.

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 by 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 other underage 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.
- Complain if they have concerns about the standard of coaching.
- Have a say in relation to decisions being made within the Club.

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 spectators and supporters. Active, loyal and well behaved supporters are always welcome to attend and support our games but should be aware that their conduct will 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 and well behaved manner at all times, when attending our games and competitions. Unacceptable conduct by supporters should be reported to stadium stewards or officials in charge.

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

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 behaviour by not using foul language or harassing players, coaches or officials.
- Not entering the field of play, before, during or after a game, unless specifically invited to do so by an official in charge.
- 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.

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 are key people in the delivery of our games and should be respected and assisted in their roles.

Referees are conscious of the fact that they are instrumental in ensuring our games are played in a sporting manner in accordance with the rules of the game.

Players, Coaches, Mentors, Parents/Guardians and other Club personnel have a key role to play in the delivery of this aspect of our Gaelic Games particularly when working with underage players. The manner in which we accept the role, authority and decisions of a Referee will naturally be scrutinised very closely by our underage players.

IN THEIR CAPACITY AS REFEREES OF UNDERAGE GAMES WE EXPECT OUR REFEREES TO:

- Abide fully with the Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport: Our Games – Our Code
- 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.
- 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.

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.

GIVE RESPECT - GET RESPECT

Give Respect – Get Respect is an awareness campaign that seeks to ensure that Gaelic Games are promoted and played in a positive, fair and enjoyable manner and where Players, Coaches, Spectators and Referees Give Respect – Get Respect from each other.

The RESPECT campaign 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 Coaches, Clubs, Parents, Referees and Supporters.

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

THE RESPECT CAMPAIGN HIGHLIGHTS THE FOLLOWING GOOD PRACTICES:

- All players and coaches shake hands with their opponents and the referee before and after each game.
- Mark out a designated spectators' area around the playing area.
- At relevant underage categories teams should strive to achieve the maximum participation of all players in accordance with agreed playing models.
- The host Club should welcome referees and opposing teams to all games.
- A merit award, 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 and inter County League and Championship Games that promote the principles of the RESPECT campaign in association with Schools, other Clubs and Cumann na mBunscol.

- RESPECT**
- RESPONSIBLE
 - ENCOURAGING
 - SUPPORTIVE
 - POSITIVE
 - ENABLING
 - CONSIDERATE
 - TOLERANT



The Club

Clubs that cater for underage players must do so with a child centred approach and philosophy that recognises that the welfare of the child is paramount while ensuring that each child is provided with developmental opportunities that are appropriate to their age and abilities.

Clubs must ensure that those chosen to work on their behalf with underage players have been selected following a thorough recruitment, selection, training and coaching procedure which includes relevant vetting in accordance with the jurisdiction requirements in which we operate.

Clubs must also provide those who work on our behalf with the necessary supports so as to enable them to fulfill their roles. Clubs will ensure that those chosen to work with children and young people are at all times competent and confident in their roles, have undertaken comprehensive recruitment procedures including vetting, have received relevant child welfare related training, as provided or instructed by their Governing Body, and must also have completed a basic coach education qualification.

Clubs must formally ratify the appointment of those that are chosen to act as underage mentors, coaches and managers. Such ratification of roles may take place at Club Executive level or by the Club Coiste na nÓg and should be subject to annual renewal. These appointments should not take place via election or a vote of the membership but rather by recommendation from the relevant Committee following consideration of suitably qualified individuals.

CLUBS SHOULD PROMOTE QUALITY PARTICIPATION BY:

- Adopting the Code of Behaviour as a basic level of agreement between the Club and their players, their coaches, parents/guardians and supporters.
- 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.
- 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.

CLUBS SHOULD ENCOURAGE THE PARTICIPATION OF THEIR MEMBERS BY:

- Agreeing the role of each and every coach or mentor working with young people.
- Ensuring that relevant Child Protection Training is undertaken by all persons working in an official capacity with children and young people in the Club.
- Adopting and implementing clearly defined recruitment and selection procedures when choosing coaches and other relevant personnel to work with young people.
- When appointing mentors, coaches and managers of underage teams consideration should be given where possible to not appointing a parent of a child to such roles in the child's team. Experience has shown that conflicts of interest may arise sometimes between a child and their parent or between other parents and the team mentors, coaches or managers who may act in such a capacity.

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.
- 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 member ratio of male and female coaches is 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 of a Club's activities and events and in the organising and delivery of our games.
- 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.

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 any policies and guidelines as issued by the Club, by their National Governing Bodies, or by statutory authorities and agencies in their jurisdiction.
- Appointing a Designated Liaison Person whose role shall include liaising with Statutory Authorities and the relevant Governing Body 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. Boundaries of behaviour in adult groups are normally different from the boundaries that apply to underage teams and squads.
- Appointing a Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport Hearings Committee at Club level to hear complaints or allegations of breaches of the Code of Best Practice. The Committee of three people shall, through their representation, reflect the integrated nature of the Club, i.e. membership of the GAA, LGFA and Camogie. The functions of this Committee, plus all other procedures relating to dealing with breaches of the Code, may be accessed in a complimentary publication, Our Games Our Code: How to Deal with Alleged Breaches of the Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport.

Our Games – Our Code

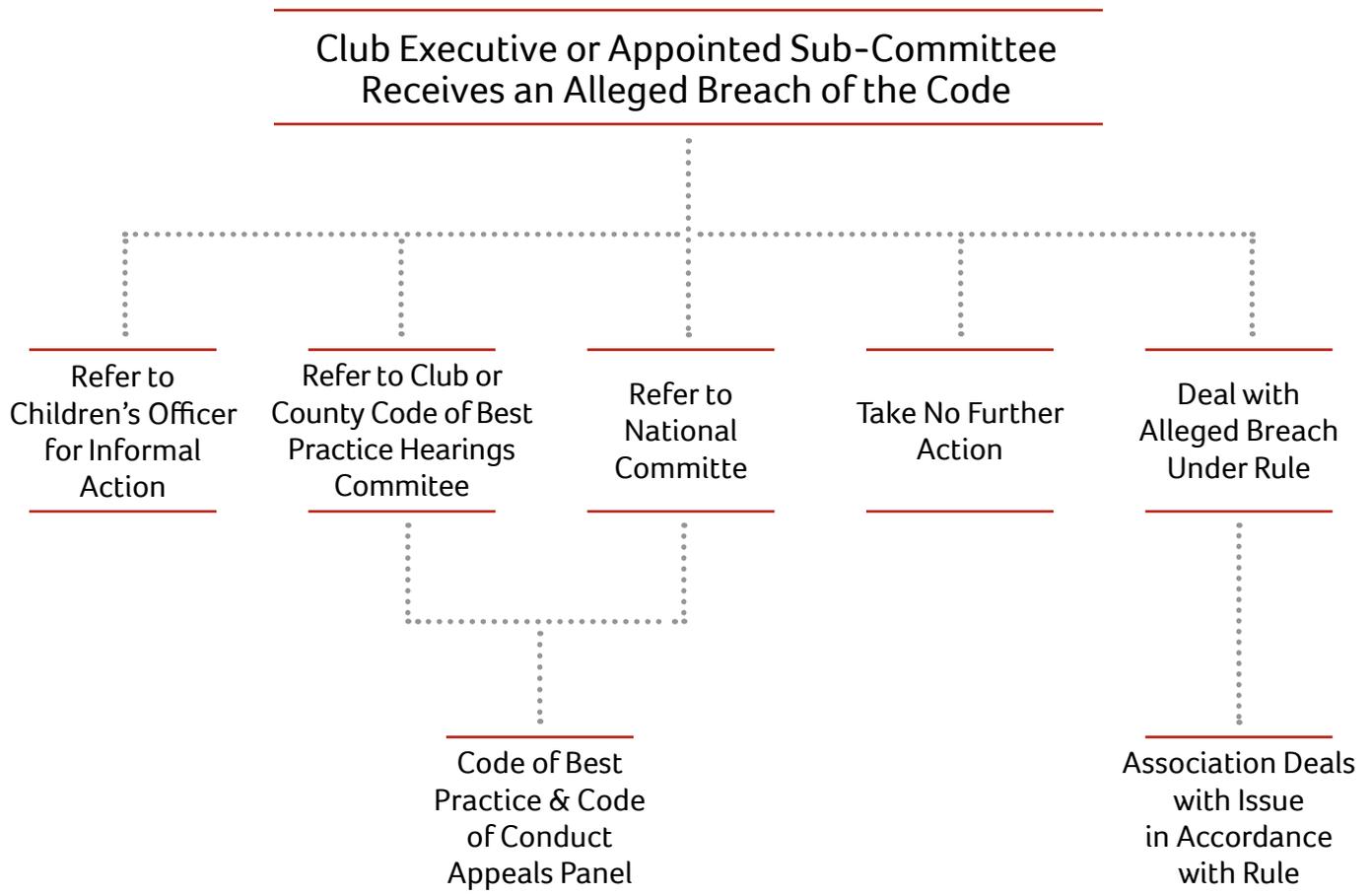
Dealing with Alleged Breaches of the Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport

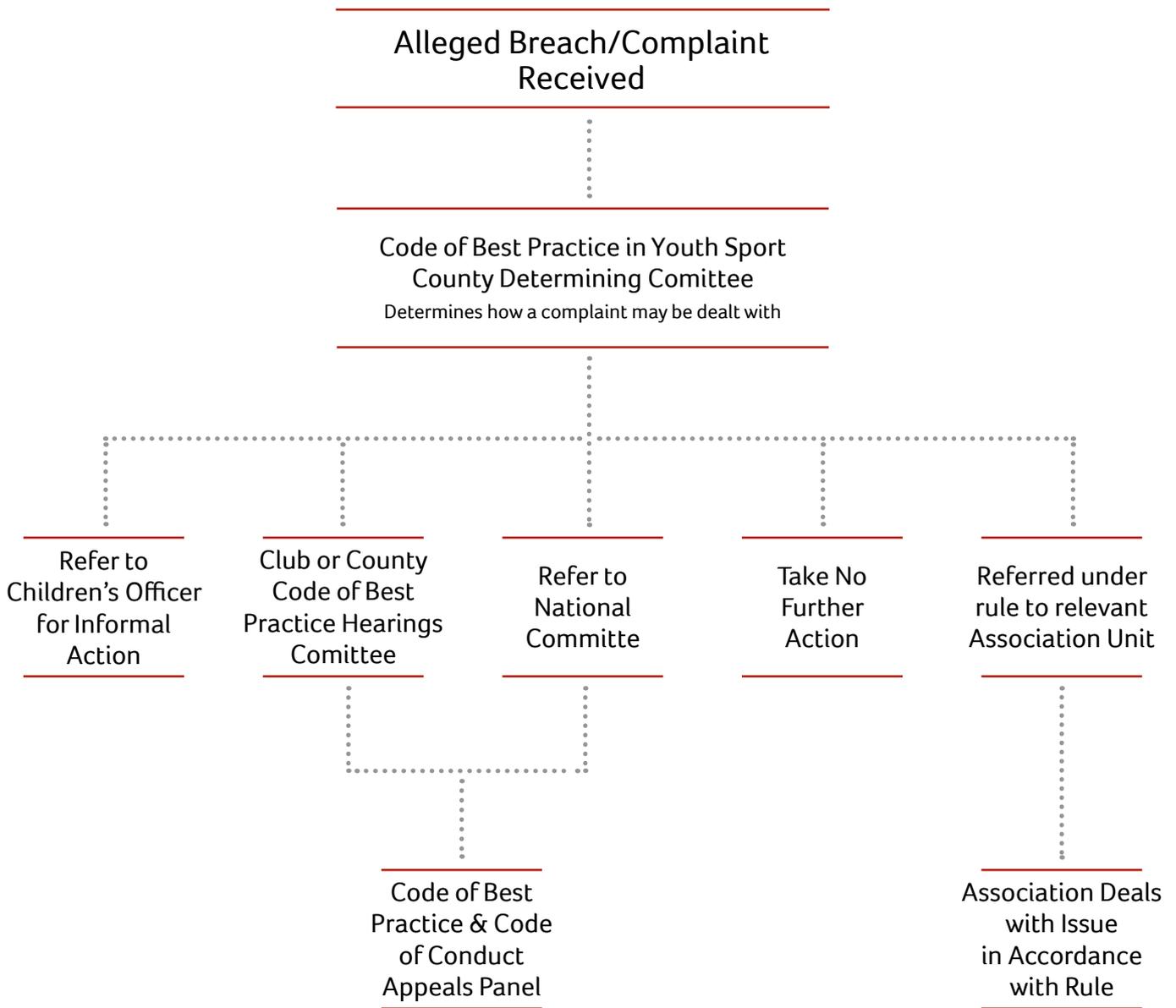
Our Games – Our Code, the joint Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport (including the Code of Behaviour) outlines the minimum levels of behaviour that we require of those that are involved in underage games and activities. The Code applies equally to underage players, coaches, to parents and guardians, to our supporters, referees and officials. While the promotion of the Code may be seen as the responsibility of the Children's Officer ultimately it is everybody's responsibility to ensure that the Code is fully implemented.

Breaches of our Code will unfortunately occur from time to time, some minor and some of major consequences. This may happen as a result of carelessness, poor practice, lack of understanding or there may in some instances be deliberate or indeed calculated breaches of the Code.

Minor instances of poor practice may quite appropriately be dealt with at Club/County level by the Children's Officer in an informal manner and by agreement. This could necessitate meeting with the person who may be responsible for the poor practice or the minor breach of the Code and resolving the issue amicably and by agreement. All such outcomes should be noted by the Club Children's Officer. However, other alleged breaches of the Code may have to be dealt with in a more formal manner as outlined in the diagrams on pages 24 and 25.

A detailed publication titled Our Games Our Code: Dealing with Alleged Breaches of the Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport is available from the GAA, the Camogie Association, Ladies Gaelic Football Association, GAA Handball Ireland and the Rounders Council of Ireland or may be downloaded from their respective websites.





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GAA Anti-Bullying Policy Statement

The GAA aims to create a supportive environment where any form of bullying is unacceptable. We adopt a whole organisational approach to addressing bullying and are committed to implementing structures and relevant training to deal with allegations of bullying. Incidents of bullying are regarded as serious breaches of our Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport - Our Games Our Code. We are committed to achieving an ethos of respect so as to maximise the potential of all our members when playing or participating in our Gaelic Games.

DEFINITION

Bullying is defined as repeated aggression, be it verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against others.

THE GAA SEEKS TO ENSURE THAT:

- Incidents of bullying behaviour are addressed appropriately
- All persons in membership of the Association or attending our games or activities are aware that bullying behaviour is unacceptable in the GAA.

DEALING WITH BULLYING

The Code of Behaviour when working with underage players provides good practice guidance in relation to the prevention of bullying.

If you are aware of or have a concern that bullying behaviour is happening within your Club you should report the matter to your Club Children's Officer.

We recognise that incidents of bullying are a breach of the Code of Behaviour and of our Give Respect - Get Respect initiative and all such incidents will be dealt with accordingly.

Club Children's Officer

Date

Name of Club

Section 4

The Role of the Club and County Children's Officer



The Club and County Children's Officer



www.gaa.ie

THE CLUB AND COUNTY CHILDREN'S OFFICER

The appointment of a Children's Officers at both Club and County level is an essential element in the creation of a quality atmosphere and in establishing a child and youth centered ethos at both Club and County level.

All of the Gaelic Games Associations are committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for all young people* who participate in our Gaelic Games and activities. In our work with young people and with adults a number of national policy documents act as a resource and govern our commitments:

- Our Games – Our Code when working with underage players is a joint Code of Best Practice administered by the Gaelic Athletic Association, the Camogie Association, the Ladies Football Association, the Rounders Council of Ireland and GAA Handball Ireland. Our Games – Our Code is a major reference and policy publication covering many aspects of good practice procedures required in running the local Club and also outlines each Associations responsibilities and procedures for dealing with the welfare and safety of underage players when playing our games and participating in our activities
- A Code of Behaviour - when working with underage players - jointly published by the Gaelic Athletic Association, the Camogie Association, the Ladies Football Association, the Rounders Council of Ireland and GAA Handball Ireland. This Code outlines the minimum level of good practice behaviour and practice that we require of our underage players, their parents/guardians, our Clubs, our coaches and supporters
- The Irish Sports Council/Sport NI Code of Ethics & Good Practice for Children's Sport. This publication establishes a series of principles, policy and practice guidelines for all Sports Organisations that promote their sport with children. Containing a wide range of resources the Code act as guidance for all Sports Organisations on the island of Ireland

Each of the Gaelic Games Associations complies fully with statutory guidelines and existing legislation in all jurisdictions in which we operate. Additionally all Associations have agreed internal policy procedures, based on their organisational structures, for dealing with any allegations and/or concerns of abuse. Copies of these procedures are available from each of the Associations and from:

Gaelic Athletic Association www.gaa.ie
Camogie Association www.camogie.ie
Ladies Football Association www.ladiesgaelic.ie
Rounders Council of Ireland www.gaarounders.ie
GAA Handball Ireland www.handball.ie

The appointment of a Children's Officer at both Club and County level while deemed essential is also a mandatory requirement. These Officers fulfil a key role at Club and County level and are members of the relevant Club Executive and County Committees. This leaflet outlines the roles and responsibilities of Children's Officers as a guide for those who undertake such key roles on our behalf.

*Young People – The term 'young people' denotes any person under the age of 18 years.

The Club Children's Officer

The Club Children's Officers shall assist in promoting a child and youth centered ethos in the Club. In their work the Club Children's Officer shall be the link between the children/young people and the adults within the Club. In taking up this role the Club Children's Officer should:

- Have good communication skills, be approachable and open minded
- Have good knowledge and be familiar with their Child Welfare and Protection Codes and Guidelines
- Have an understanding of relevant child welfare/protection legislation
- Have undertaken a Garda Vetting/Access NI/CRB check relevant to their jurisdiction
- Have attended the relevant awareness training on child welfare and protection and availed of Children's Officer training

ROLE

The key role of the Club Children's Officer is to ensure the implementation and promotion of the relevant Child Welfare and Protection Codes and Guidelines for good practice in their Club so as to ensure that young people can participate, enjoy and benefit from our Gaelic Games in safe and enjoyable surroundings. Our Games - Our Code is the agreed good practice reference and policy document that is central to guiding the Children's Officer in their role.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Promote awareness of Our Games – Our Code and the joint Code of Behaviour within the Club
- Identify the need and facilitate the delivery of Child Protection in Sport Awareness Workshops and other relevant Child Protection and Welfare training within the Club
- Distribute and oversee the implementation of the Joint Code of Behaviour – when working with underage players and ensure in so far as possible, that all Players, Coaches, Team Mentors, Parents, Guardians, Officials and Spectators adhere to the Code
- Promote an Anti Bullying ethos in the Club and deal with instances or allegations of Bullying in a fair, impartial and constructive manner and in collaboration with others as appropriate
- Ensure that each under age member signs and submits an annual membership form, a parental consent form as required (away trips etc) and that the necessary medical information of an underage player, as deemed relevant, is made known to the Club and/or the team coaches
- Support the implementation of the RESPECT initiative at Club level in co-operation with team personnel, underage members, referees, spectators, parents and guardians
- Influence policy and practice in the Club in order to prioritise the needs of our underage players
- Promote greater consultation with under age players and participation by them in Club activities and planning
- Ensure that young people are afforded the opportunity to express concerns about their sports activities/experiences within the Club
- Encourage the involvement of parents/guardians in organising Club activities

- Develop good practice procedures in the recruitment and selection of persons working with young people in the Club
- Oversee the implementation of Garda Vetting/ Access NI/CRB checks, as appropriate, within the club
- Monitor, in association with team coaches, any significant trends or developments relating to the participation of young people in Gaelic Games and report accordingly to the Club Executive or Management Committee
- Maintain on-going contact with the County Board Children's Officer and with other Club Children's Officers
- Report regularly to the Club Executive Committee as required
- Ensure that the Club Executive Committee appoints a Code of Behaviour Advisory Committee each year to assist the Children's Officer in fulfilling their roles. (see Code of Behaviour)
- Deal with breaches of **Our Games – Our Code** and the joint **Code of Behaviour** as per relevant guidance
- Make referrals of alleged allegations of abuse to the Club Designated Person
- Conduct an annual audit of best practice in child protection and welfare within the Club and report accordingly



The County Children's Officer

In the context of promoting and implementing our commitment to creating a safe and enjoyable environment for all young people* who participate in Gaelic Games and activities, County Boards are obliged at the outset to appoint a County Children's Officer. The County Children's Officer's shall be a member of the County Committee and should:

- Have good communication skills, be approachable and open minded
- Be familiar with their Child Welfare and Protection Codes and Guidelines
- Have undertaken a Garda Vetting/Access NI/CRB check relevant to their jurisdiction
- Have attended the relevant basic awareness training on child welfare and protection and Children's Officer training
- Be familiar with relevant child welfare/protection legislation
- Have a commitment to attend other relevant training as required
- Have the confidence of all Clubs and in the particular of Club Children's Officers within the County

ROLE

The key role of the County Children's Officer is to oversee the implementation and promote an awareness of **Our Games – Our Code** and the joint **Code of Behaviour** with the co-operation of Clubs in the County and with Club Children's Officers.

The County Children's Officer

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Ensure that each Club has appointed a Club Children's Officer and that these Children's Officers are aware of their roles and responsibilities
- Regularly liaise with all Club Children's Officers; respond to their queries; support and assist them to develop and implement an annual work plan
- Promote and co-ordinate Child Protection in Sport Awareness Workshops for all Clubs in the County
- Liaise with Child Protection in Sport Awareness Workshop Tutors and ensure that all Club and County personnel receive child welfare training relevant to their roles
- Ensure that all tutors adhere to Association and legislative requirements in the delivery of their workshops
- Ensure that the activities of underage County Development Squads and County underage teams' activities are compliant with the relevant Gaelic Games Codes, with the RESPECT initiative and with relevant playing models, in co-operation with Coiste na nÓg as appropriate
- As required, liaise and advise the County Coaching and Games Development structures on strengthening a child centred ethos in their programmes and activities
- Assist, if required, the County Vetting Co-ordinator in the processing of vetting applications on behalf of the Association to the relevant authorities
- Advise on good practice in the recruitment and selection of persons working with young people at Club and County level
- Promote greater consultation with under age players and participation by them in Club and County activities
- Deal with breaches of Our Games – Our Code and the joint Code of Behaviour as per relevant guidelines
- Monitor and report on any significant trends or developments relating to the participation of young people in Gaelic Games
- Review and report to the County Committee on the extent and nature of implementation of the relevant Association Codes within the County and by Clubs
- Maintain regular communication and liaison with the National Children's Officer and provide reports as required
- Provide an Annual Report to each Annual County Board Convention



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Tá leagan Gaeilge den bhileog seo ar fáil ar www.gaa.ie/clubzone

Section 5

Club Activities For Underage Players

Away Trips, Hosting an Event and Transport

Away Trips

Many teams and Clubs participate in trips away from home throughout the year. These trips are seen as additional to the regular games that take place as part of a County fixtures schedule or during inter Club blitzes. Trips away from home are often viewed as a means by which young teams and players may be rewarded for their endeavours at the end of their season or as a means by which greater team morale and camaraderie can be developed, regardless of age.

An example of rewarding a team or organising a trip is to invite the team or a number of teams to attend inter-county matches. This is a popular means by which young people may see and attend games where their chosen code is played at a high level of skill and competitiveness. Visiting other clubs and playing matches against teams of a similar age group in other areas or counties will also give younger players an insight into the broad geographical nature and community ethos attached to our Games while creating greater camaraderie with their colleagues and within their own clubs.

The pre-planning and detailed organising of such trips for younger players will require a high degree of care and preparation and adults should always remember the key roles of responsibilities they have during such trips on behalf of their club, on behalf of parents and on behalf of the young people themselves.

PRE TRIP PREPARATIONS

- A detailed programme of activity should be approved in advance at Club level following agreement with the other club(s) involved in the away trip.
- Where possible a member of your organising group should be familiar with the away venue, should visit the venue if deemed necessary and ensure themselves that the venue can cater for the entire programme of activities. This is particularly relevant should an overnight stay be required.
- Parental/guardian consent must be obtained in writing so as to permit any young person under 18 yrs of age participate in any organised trip.
- Young people (of an appropriate age) and their parents/guardians should sign a form agreeing to abide by the programme and to any agreed procedures that relate to the organised trip.
- An agreed Code of Behaviour, specifically designed for the trip, should be discussed, outlined and agreed with all players and adults that are participating on the trip.
- Medical information, deemed relevant by the parents/guardians of players, should be made known

to the leaders of the Club's trip and what action, if any, may be may be required of them in the case of an emergency. (See Appendix 1)

- Such information, including food or other related allergies should have previously been recorded on the annual/registration form of each underage club member.
- A detailed programme which includes the following should be presented to all players and their parents/guardians:
 - A time schedule of departure and arrival at your destination.
 - Full information about the trip; including all activities and events planned.
 - Emergency contact numbers during the trip and contact details for parents/guardians
- All adults accompanying the underage team should be made aware as to what their responsibilities are and what role(s) they may have during the trip.
- It is the Club's responsibility to ensure that the trip itself and all activities taking place throughout the trip adhere to insurance cover, that all participants are eligible members of their Association's relevant injury scheme and that the activities of the trip do not compromise the conditions of their injury scheme or any additional insurance policy.
- Where it is deemed necessary the organisers of all such trips should seek and gain the permission of their County Board prior to announcing the details of the programme to their members.

DURING THE TRIP

- It is essential that at least one individual with first aid qualifications be part of your organising group and that this individual be present or available throughout the trip.
- Young people must be adequately supervised throughout the trip as per our recommended ratios of adults to young people. This ratio may differ depending on the age group of participants, the activities to be undertaken, whether there is an overnight stay, if the trip is abroad etc.
- A generally acceptable ratio of 1:8, i.e. one adult per eight young people, is deemed in most instances to be a normal sports activity ratio. Organisers of club trips should always be mindful of ensuring that additional adults accompany their group in case of emergencies or unforeseen circumstances.
- There must be at least two adults of each gender with mixed groups.
- Adults are required to be familiar with the agreed rules on smoking and on the consumption of alcohol during the trip, as outlined in the GAA Code of Behaviour. As a basic minimum, adults are required to avoid smoking while working with young players and must not consume alcohol or non prescribed drugs while young players are in their care.

OVERNIGHT STAYS

When participating in an overnight stay a number of matters require careful preplanning and agreement.

By agreement with all parties, including players and parents, a decision is required whether the Club will avail of hotel or guest house accommodation or if invited will avail of a hosting arrangement by the host Club in the houses of their Club members.

Regardless of what form of accommodation is agreed upon adequate and specific supervisory ratios of adults to children must be agreed in advance. This ratio, which is very dependent on the age category of the children/young people, may also vary should the group be participating in certain outdoor activities or in water sports and will also vary if the group is a mixed gender group.

HOTEL OR GUEST HOUSE ACCOMMODATION

- Check out the proposed accommodation for children/young people and Club mentors. Ensure that it complies with health and safety regulations, is accessible, is of a suitable standard and is appropriate for the particular age group and programme of events.
- When availing of overnight accommodation adults (except parents) should not share a room with a child. If exceptional or emergency circumstances so dictate and the presence of an adult is deemed necessary there should be more than one child in the room with the adult at all times.
- Where children are sharing a room it must be with others of the same age grouping and gender.
- All children should be provided with a bed each and should not have to share a bed with another child.
- It is also preferably that the sharing of rooms be done with fellow club members at an inter club event and that such arrangements are made known in advance of the trip to the childrens' parents.

HOME STAY ACCOMMODATION

- When availing of home stay accommodation the host club is responsible for choosing a host family that has been recommended to them and have been satisfactorily vetted in accordance with Association requirements.
- When availing of home stay accommodation adults (except parents) should not share a room with a child. If exceptional or emergency circumstances so dictate and the presence of an adult is deemed necessary there should be more than one child in the room with the adult at all times.
- When availing of home stay accommodation Children must not share a room with adults from the host family.
- All children should be provided with a bed each and should not have to share a bed with another child.
- Where children are sharing a room it must be with others of the same age grouping and gender. It is also preferably that the sharing of rooms be done with fellow club members at an inter club event and that such arrangements are made known in advance of the trip to the childrens' parents.

REVIEW OF TRIP

A full review of the trip should involve all who participated from the club and the result of the review should be retained and reviewed if and when the group intend organising another or similar trip or if the club intends re-visiting the area or the host club again.

Hosting An Event

The hosting of a scheduled game, a challenge match, an underage blitz or an inter Club tournament is now seen as a normal event for most Clubs in Hurling, Football, Camogie, Ladies Football, Rounders and Handball.

While most events are organised by age category and by chosen code so as to provide inter club games and offer skill development opportunities these event by their very nature can also provide young people of all ages with a positive social experience allowing them enjoy themselves within a safe environment.

The safeguarding criteria and guidance that applies to away trips, recruitment, travel, health and safety to the hosting of an event with the additional responsibility that when hosting you are organising the games or the event for more than your own Club or team.

A NUMBER OF GROUND RULES APPLY TO HOSTING AN EVENT.

- 1 Don't be pressurised into offering to host an event if you cannot do it or if you do not have adequate resource of facilities to cater for the proposed event.
- 2 Be absolutely clear that you have the full support of your own Club when embarking on hosting an event
- 3 Clarify with those that requested of you host the event (e.g. Juvenile Board, Féile Committee ...) what is required of your Club
- 4 Form an organising team, with a nominated person in charge, to oversee the hosting
- 5 Allocate specific responsibilities to each member of the organising team
- 6 Agree a timescale and a plan for the delivery of all of your actions (see draft action plan)
- 7 Agree your plan or outline your plan with the governing body who requested your Club to host the event (e.g. Juvenile Board, Féile Committee ...)
- 8 Meet regularly to review all work in progress
- 9 If you are providing a home stay option for your guest Clubs you must abide by the guidance given under the Home Stay Accommodation
- 10 Never presume that somebody else had done it!

Event:

INTER CLUB UNDER 14 TOURNAMENT

It is very useful to draw up an event action plan that can be used as a guide for all persons working on the event and also as a check list for the organising committee in reviewing their progress to date.

Below is the commencement of an Event Action Plan for an U14 Inter Club Tournament that your Club had been invited to organise by the County Board. It contains some identified actions and sufficient blank spaces for the identification and delivery of other actions. You have eight weeks notice of the event. Complete this event plan in advance of meetings and as your preparations develop and are completed.

ACTIONS	By When? (Date)	Responsibility? (Name)	Done? (Date)
APPROX 8 WEEKS BEFORE EVENT			
Accept invitation to host event	8 weeks before	Relevant Club Committee	
Establish Organising Committee and named person in charge	8 weeks before	Appointed by Club Committee	
1st meeting of Tournament Committee	7 weeks before	Organising Committee Chair	
Allocate responsibilities at 1st meeting		Name the tasks and people	
Agree correspondence to visiting Clubs		Agree with Secretary	
Prepare budget at 1st meeting		Responsibility of Treasurer	
Identify sponsors (if appropriate)		Overseen by Treasurer	
Book pitches or venues as appropriate		A Committee member	
Agree on home stay option and plan accordingly (see Home Stay Accomodation Section)			
APPROX 6 WEEKS BEFORE EVENT			
Organising Committee meeting			
Post correspondence to visiting Clubs with relevant forms etc			
Check insurance implications if any			
Complete event plan and circulate			
Check out all venues by visit			

APPROX 4 WEEKS BEFORE THE EVENT

Organising Committee meeting

Confirm participating teams and Clubs

Make 'draws' and circulate information

Arrange for First Aid at tournament

APPROX 2 WEEKS BEFORE THE EVENT

Organising Committee meeting

A team withdraws from the Tournament

Organising Committee meeting

APPROX 1 WEEK BEFORE THE EVENT

2nd team withdraws from tournament

New sponsor seeks role in the
Tournament

DAY OF THE TOURNAMENT

Register each team and their coaches

Check dates of birth

AFTER THE EVENT REVIEW

Organising Committee meeting

Financial report

Transport

Adequate preparation and an insistence on the use of safe transport arrangements regardless of the length of journey are key elements of good practice when considering any trip taken by an underage team or players. This applies regardless of the length of journey or indeed the mode of transport availed of, whether it is public, private or personal transport.

The transport arrangements for underage players is a priority safety matter for sports organisations, for Clubs, parents and for young people themselves. While it may be preferential to avail of private bus or coach transport it is also recognised that in some instances this is not feasible and certain Clubs and teams could not operate without the goodwill of volunteers and parents who ensure that children are transported to an event or a match and are returned safely.

In so far as we rely on many parents to provide transport in our clubs the challenge we face in ensuring that all such services are provided in a safe environment that complies with our own standards of good practice and with local or national legislative requirements.

It is recognised that private cars are used by many Clubs and teams as a common practice when transporting children to games as part of a County fixtures schedules or as part of inter club blitzes. It is however advisable if possible not to use members' cars when travelling on away trips of great distance. In such circumstances Clubs are advised to avail of bus or coach transport and it is essential therefore that all aspects of the transport arrangements are checked out and agreed in advance. The safety and welfare of children is paramount and must be considered a priority at all times when transporting our underage players from one venue to another.

A NUMBER OF BASIC REQUIREMENTS APPLY WHEN TRAVELLING TO GAMES AS FOLLOWS:

- That every parent has supplied at least two emergency contact numbers to the team Coaches that may be used in the event of an emergency concerning their child or the group or in the event of a change in schedule
- That all players may travel following parental/guardian consent
- That any medical conditions of players are made known to Coaches in advance of any trip and as part of the annual registration process
- That parents are supplied with the contact telephone number of the Coach in charge on the day and of any other accompanying Coaches
- That any particular rules or regulations relating to a trip are made known to parents and children alike and agreed in advance of departure
- That the Club is satisfied that the proposed trip has been planned and agreed in accordance with child welfare procedures where the safety of the child is paramount in all preplanning of the trip

BUS AND COACH TRANSPORT:

The following should be considered when availing of bus and coach transport:

- The company chosen must be a reputable transport company with a proven track record in transporting children
- All vehicles should be well-maintained and roadworthy and should be properly taxed and insured
- Transport should be fully accessible for people with disabilities whether they are members of the group or for others who may accompany them.
- Seat belts must be worn at all times on buses and coaches.
- Alternative transport should be available in case of emergency.
- Vehicles should be equipped with a First Aid kit and a fire extinguisher and leaders of the group should be familiar with how to use them.
- When hiring a vehicle Club personnel should have no hesitation in enquiring as to the company's reputation and reliability.
- Adult coaches should ensure that children remain safely seated at all times during the journey.
- An adequate ratio of adults to children on the bus must be ensured at all times taking the age of the group members into consideration and the need for male/female ratios with mixed gender groups

PRIVATE TRANSPORT IN CARS

If an adult has to transport a child/children there are a number of safety measures that should be agreed so as to minimise any potential child welfare or safety risks to their children and or adults:

- If a child is being transported by car the parents of the child should be informed as to who will be transporting their child, why this mode of transport has been chosen, how long the journey may take, the departure time and the estimated time of return
- It is important that children are comfortable with whoever may be the driver of the car in which they travel and are made aware as to what are the transport arrangements made for them by their Club
- Drivers must ensure that they have adequate insurance to carry the required number of passengers
- If the driver is in a paid position in the Club or in the Association or is in receipt of expenses for the trip they may be required to have additional insurance cover to enable them transport any passengers
- Central collection and drop off points are recommended when transporting children
- The driver (and other team personnel) should be contactable by mobile phone in case of emergencies
- With the exception of their own child an adult should not transport a child alone, except in emergency or exceptional circumstances
- In accordance with transport legislation where applicable children must use appropriate child restraints and seat belts when travelling in a car or other vehicles
- No driver should ever consume alcohol or non prescribed drugs prior to driving
- No driver should smoke in the car when transporting children on behalf of the Club or Association
- Where a driver may be under medical care or taking prescribed medication he/she must ensure that such medication may not inhibit their driving abilities

- All drivers and persons who have access to children on our behalf should have undertaken a vetting background check in accordance with the Association's guidelines and should have been informed that their vetting application has been accepted

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

When using public transport please ensure that

- That the full travel schedule is made known in advance to all parents and players
- That drop off and pick arrangements have been agreed in advance
- That where available, seat booking arrangements are agreed in advance e.g. trains
- That an adequate number of adults accompany the group in a supervisory role
- That a contingency plan is in place in case a scheduled public transport arrangement or booking is cancelled, is late, or has been missed by the group

Section 6

Recruitment and Selection of Coaches, Mentors and other Volunteers

From their early years to their late teens young people continue to gain from the knowledge, experience and skills that adults bring in the promotion of our Gaelic Games. Such an approach promotes a sense of achievement, an opportunity to develop their skills and a sense of fun and fair play in our underage games as these players seek to enjoy, benefit and develop from their involvement.

Our Games have always been promoted amongst our younger population in a well motivated and committed manner so as to assist our younger players in the development of their skills and their commitment to our Gaelic Games. This support, led primarily by adults who work in a voluntary capacity, must always be delivered in accordance with Association guidance and standards. We greatly rely on the thousands of adults, whether it is parents or coaches, who give freely of their time to our juvenile structures and underage membership, but equally recognise that their contribution is, at all times, in accordance with our own guidance and statutory requirements.

This is still the case and those who promote our games have a responsibility to young people and to their parents and guardians to ensure that our coaches and mentors, who work in a supervisory and supportive capacity with our underage teams, are selected supported and trained to fulfil their roles in a careful, sensible and effective manner.

This unique bond in sport is based on a trusting and mutually respectful relationship and can be enhanced by the recruitment, selection and up-skilling of adults who are suitable to such roles. While the role of the adult may vary from team to team and from age group to age group it is however essential that regardless of such roles that adults are fully aware at the outset as to what is expected of them, what supports they will receive and what levels of responsibility they themselves have on behalf of the team, the club, the parents and the young people in their care.

This we can achieve by adopting good practice procedures when recruiting our managers, coaches and other personnel who work with children and young people.

Statutory guidance and legislative requirements are now more stringent when recruiting adults to work with children. These requirements apply to our Gaelic Games as they do all sports bodies or to youth clubs or other recreational or educational services. We are duty bound to ensure that all adults who work with children and young people in our Associations are carefully chosen to carry out whatever tasks we ask of them and that they are vetted or undergo criminal background checks prior to them, taking up any supervisory or coaching role. Similarly, we must ensure that all such adults are suitably trained to fulfil their roles and that we have adequate numbers of adults in place for all occasions so as to satisfy the necessary child welfare ratios of adults to children currently in place.

The following recruitment and selection guidelines are put in place as a support mechanism so as to ensure that those recruited adhere to the best possible standards that we have adopted in ensuring that our Games are played and promoted in a an enjoyable, safe and developmental environment.

Guidance on Recruitment and Selection

It is essential that all adults taking responsibility for young people, whether in a paid or unpaid capacity should undergo a recruitment and selection process. The recruitment of adults to work with underage teams should be co-ordinated by a senior and experienced member of the club and should be done so in a confidential manner. The following procedures will assist Clubs when choosing to place coaches and other personnel in the position to which that are best suited.

1 Role clarification

The role envisaged e.g. manager, coach, and the age group that it is proposed they should work with should be clearly known and stated at the outset. The responsibilities relating to the role and the level of experience or qualifications required should be clarified at the outset.

2 Role assistance

The various supports available via the club, e.g. Foundation Level Coaching, child Welfare Training are basic good practice coaching requirements for adults who wish to work with underage teams in the promotion of our Gaelic Games.

3 Application form

Applicants should complete an application form prior to commencing any role when working with underage players. (See Appendix 2).

4 References

As part of the recruitment process references should be sought from applicants. These may refer to the person's character and if applicable to the applicants previous background in sports and in Gaelic Games, if applicable. All references should be verified by the club.

5 Vetting and Police checks

All applicants are required to complete Garda Vetting and/or Police Checks, as appropriate, prior to the commencement of their role(s) with young people in the Association.

6 Meet the applicant

A senior representative of the Club should meet with each applicant to ensure that they are aware of the role(s) allocated to them and they may use the occasion to clarify any issues that may arise and identify any coaching or up-skilling needs as appropriate.

7 Code of Behaviour for all Persons Working with Underage players

All persons who work with young people will be required to sign the Code of Behaviour. This declaration should be retained by the Club in respect of everybody working with underage personnel, regardless of their role.

8 Child Welfare Training

All persons working with underage players are required to undertake recognised Child Welfare Training as promoted by their Sport's Governing Body.

9 Support and Review

Continuous supports should be made available to all coaches etc so as to enable them fulfil their roles as requested. The role of the Club 'Coiste na nÓg' and of the Club Children's Officer may be invaluable in identifying such supports. The Club should review the role of all underage personnel on an annual basis.

Delivering a Vetting Service at Local and National Level

DELIVERING A VETTING SERVICE AT LOCAL AND NATIONAL LEVEL

The vetting of Coaches, Mentors and other personnel who work with children and young people is as a core element of good recruitment and selection procedures in all sports organisations.

The GAA, Ladies Gaelic Football Association, the Camogie Association, GAA Handball Ireland and The Rounders Council of Ireland support the mandatory requirement that all persons who work on our behalf with children and young people must be vetted or have a criminal background check carried out in the jurisdiction in which they operate, before they work with children.

Regardless of legislative requirements this is now a key element of our welfare and protection strategy and of our recruitment practices. In effect this means that any person working on our behalf or on behalf of any of our Clubs with people under the age of 18 years of age or with vulnerable adults is now required to be vetted.

Applicants will be vetted and re-vetted as necessary in accordance with the roles that they fulfil and any directives relating to such vetting procedures in whatever jurisdiction in which we operate.

DELIVERING A GARDA VETTING SERVICE AT NATIONAL AND LOCAL LEVEL IN CUMANN LÚTHCHLEAS GAEL (GAA), THE ROUNDERS COUNCIL OF IRELAND AND GAA HANDBALL IRELAND

GARDA VETTING BACKGROUND CHECKS

Garda Vetting is but one part of the overall recommended recruitment and selection procedures for those who on our behalf work in areas of responsibility with children and young people, or who may do at a later stage. Garda vetting, which is the pre-checking of an applicant's background for criminal convictions or prosecutions is recommended by the Irish Sports Council, by Sports NI in Northern Ireland and as part of Children First - the National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children.

While most vetting applicants are adults i.e. over 18 yrs of age, it is permissible to have persons aged between 16 and 18 yrs of age vetted by the GAA, but only with written parental consent.

The GAA carries out a vetting service on behalf of GAA Hurling and Football Clubs, on behalf of GAA Handball Ireland, the Rounders Council of Ireland and Scór.

HOW CAN YOU AVAIL OF VETTING IN THE GAA?

STEP 1

A vetting applicant, i.e. an underage coach, mentor, manager etc. will generally receive a GAA Vetting Application Form from the Club's Children's Officer. This form must be completed in full by the applicant and collected locally (in the club) or forwarded directly to a nominated person who will collate these forms at and forward them to the GAA National Children's Office in Croke Park.

STEP 2

Prior to forwarding these forms to Croke Park they will be checked by a suitable person, nominated by the County Board. This person will check forms for accuracy and will return incorrectly completed forms to applicants. The County Board nominated person will also record the name and address of each applicant on a 'batch form' and send this electronically to the National Children's Officer in Croke Park. Training is provided for this person so as to assist them in their role.

STEP 3

All forms are then sent by secure post to the National Children's Officer, GAA, Croke Park, Dublin 3. All forms must be sent to the National Children's Officer (NCO) in Croke Park for processing and not to An Garda Síochána.

The NCO will then process all correctly completed forms with the Garda Central Vetting Unit. Processed forms will on their return contain a statement that there are either no convictions recorded against the individual in the Republic of Ireland or elsewhere, or a statement relating to convictions and/or prosecutions, successful or not, pending or completed, as recorded against the applicant in the State or elsewhere as the case may be.

STEP 4	<p>Following the processing of the vetting form it is the GAA National Children's Office who will inform each applicant individually by letter if their vetting application has or has not been accepted. In most instances it is convictions and/or prosecutions of a most serious nature and particularly against children/minors that MAY deem a person unsuitable to work with children in the GAA.</p> <p>Please also note that a stated conviction or unsuccessful prosecution MAY have NO bearing whatsoever on the acceptance of an individual in the Association and it is recommend that all cases be treated individually and confidentially and that they be assessed as per the requirements of the post/role and the work that it entails.</p>
STEP 5	<p>If the recommendation is positive the applicant will receive a GAA Garda Vetting Acceptance letter confirming that their application has been successful and directing them to furnish their club with the letter of acceptance.</p> <p>Over a period of time all persons who on behalf of the GAA work in any capacity with children and young people will have furnished their Club with a GAA Garda Vetting letter of acceptance. The absence of such a letter will deem a person ineligible to work in such a capacity.</p>
STEP 6	<p>If the recommendation is negative and if the applicant is not being recommended for acceptance a letter informing them of this decision will be sent to them by the GAA National Children's Officer. The applicant will be afforded an opportunity to appeal this decision within 14 days and the process of appeal will be outlined to the applicant. A specially appointed Appeals Group will hear this appeal and will issue their findings directly to the applicant.</p>
STEP 7	<p>If the Appeals Committee recommends acceptance of the vetting application Step 5 comes into operation.</p>
STEP 8	<p>If the Appeals Committee upholds the recommendation of rejection the applicant and their Club Chairperson will be duly informed. This will prohibit that applicant from working in any capacity with children in their Club or in any other section or unit of the Association.</p>
STEP 9	<p>The GAA central data base will retain all vetting application and outcome details. Club Children's Officers will be issued with a list of persons who receive the Garda Vetting 'letter of acceptance' from the National Children's Officer on a regular basis.</p>
STEP 10	<p>Individual applicants may, at the discretion of the GAA National Children's Office, be re-vetted at any time or will be re-vetted in accordance with legislative guidance on re-vetting in whichever jurisdiction in which we operate.</p>

PROTOCOL ON VETTING APPLICATION OUTCOMES

There are established procedures in place to conduct vetting of all persons who work in any capacity with children, young people and vulnerable adults in the delivery of our games and activities.

The GAA, GAA Handball Ireland and the Rounds Council of Ireland recognises that there is a standardised vetting system operated by the Camogie Association and by Ladies Gaelic Football, which functions for the purpose of determining the suitability of personnel to deliver our games and activities in settings which may facilitate unsupervised access to children and/or vulnerable adults, within each of the above bodies.

The status and validity of decisions reached in each body in respect of the suitability of an individual for a position within it is acknowledged and accepted by each other body.

GARDA VETTING SERVICES BY THE CAMOGIE ASSOCIATION

The Camogie Association has implemented Garda Vetting in the Association as we promote best practice in the recruitment and selection of persons to work with children and young people in our Association.

It is but one part of the overall recommended recruitment and selection procedures for those who work on our behalf in areas of responsibility with children, young people and vulnerable adults, or who may at a later stage seek to work in such areas of responsibility.

Garda vetting, which is the pre-checking of an applicant's background for criminal convictions or prosecutions is recommended by the Irish Sports Council, by Sports NI in Northern Ireland and as part of Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children. Vetting and Police checks have been utilized by many Governmental agencies and by sports and community based organizations for a number of years.

PROCEDURE FOR SUBMISSION OF COMPLETED FORMS

CLUB

Club Children's Officer to initiate process within club by the distribution of Garda Vetting Application forms to club officers and officials. Application Forms to be returned to the Children's Officer in a sealed envelope marked – Garda Vetting Application forms.

Club Children's Officer will then pass on a bundle of unopened envelopes in a sealed envelope to the Garda Vetting Officer within An Cumann Camógaíochta.

The Garda Vetting Officer within An Cumann Camógaíochta examines the application forms and if completed correctly forwards them to the Garda Central Vetting Unit. If a form is not completed correctly it is returned direct to the applicant for correction.

COUNTY

County Children's Officer to initiate process within the county by the distribution of Garda Vetting Application forms to officials of development squads and underage county teams. Application Forms to be returned to the County Children's Officer in a sealed envelope marked – Garda Vetting Application forms.

County Children's Officer should then pass on a bundle of unopened envelopes in a sealed envelope to the Garda Vetting Officer within An Cumann Camógaíochta.

The Garda Vetting Officer within An Cumann Camógaíochta examines the application forms and if correct sends them to Garda Vetting Unit. If the application form is not completed correctly it is returned to the member for correction.

FORMS

Garda Vetting Forms can be downloaded below. They must be printed double sided as a single page. A Parent / Guardian consent form must be filled for applicants between the ages of 16 and 18.

ACCEPTANCE LETTERS

Following the processing of the vetting forms successful applicants will be notified by letter from An Cumann Camógaíochta. This letter is a valuable document and must be retained. An official, date stamped copy of the letter will also be included; this copy must be given to the Children's Officer who will keep it on file.

Club Children's Officers or Secretaries can request an updated list of its members who have been vetted by contacting An Cumann Camógaíochta Vetting Officer.

PROTOCOL ON VETTING APPLICATION OUTCOMES

There are established procedures in place to conduct vetting of all persons who work in any capacity with children, young people and vulnerable adults in the delivery of our games and activities.

An Cumann Camógaíochta recognises that there is a standardised vetting system operated by Cumann Lúthchleas Gael, Ladies' Gaelic Football, Irish Handball Council and The Rounders Council of Ireland, which functions for the purpose of determining the suitability of personnel to deliver our games and activities in settings which may facilitate unsupervised access to children and/or vulnerable adults, within each of the above bodies.

The status and validity of decisions reached in each body in respect of the suitability of an individual for a position within it is acknowledged and accepted by each other body.

4.2 GARDA VETTING AND AccessNI CHECKS

The Ladies Gaelic Football Association administers the Garda Vetting and AccessNI checks of all persons who on behalf of the Association work in any capacity with children, young people and vulnerable adults. This service is but one part of the overall recommended recruitment and selection procedures for those who on our behalf work in areas of responsibility with children and young people, or who may do at a later stage.

Garda vetting, which is the pre-checking of an applicant's background for criminal convictions or prosecutions is recommended by the Irish Sports Council, by Sports NI in Northern Ireland and as part of Children First - the National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children.

Garda Vetting

Vetting applications will only be accepted from organisations that have been so recognised by the Garda Central Vetting Unit (GCVU). The Ladies Gaelic Football Association is an organisation recognised by the GCVU to process vetting on behalf of our members and an Authorised Signatory has been selected by the Ladies Gaelic Football Association to fulfil this role.

The Ladies Gaelic Football Association has agreed to the implementation of vetting of all persons who on behalf of the Association work in any capacity with children, young people and vulnerable adults in the delivery of our games or activities. In effect this means that any person working on behalf of the Association or on behalf of any of our clubs with people under the age of 18 years of age will be required to be vetted. Vetting via the Garda Vetting Unit is outlined below while vetting via AccessNI and for Ulster GAA is outlined on page 18.

How can a member of the Ladies Gaelic Football Association avail of Garda vetting?

Step 1: A vetting applicant, i.e. coach, mentor, manager etc. of an underage team, will receive a Ladies Gaelic Football Association Vetting Application Form from the Club's Children's Officer or from a nominated person in their club/county. This form has to be completed in full by the applicant and collected at club/county level, or forwarded directly to the National Children's Officer in Croke Park.

Step 2: All forms are then sent by secure post to the National Children's Officer, Ladies Gaelic Football Association, Level 6, Cusack Stand, Croke Park, Dublin 3.

All forms must be sent to the National Children's Officer (NCO) in Croke Park for processing and not to An Garda Síochána.

The National Children's Officer will then process all **correctly** completed forms with the GCVU. Processed forms will on their return contain a statement that there are no convictions recorded against the individual in the Republic of Ireland or elsewhere, or a statement of all convictions and/or prosecutions, successful or not, pending or completed, in the State or elsewhere as the case may be.

In most instances it is convictions and/or prosecutions of a most serious nature and particularly against children/minors that MAY deem a person unsuitable to work with children in the Ladies Gaelic Football Association.

Please note that a stated conviction or unsuccessful prosecution **MAY** have **NO** bearing whatsoever on the acceptance of an individual in the Association and it is recommend that all cases be treated individually and confidentially and that they be assessed as per the requirements of the post/role and the work that it entails.

Step 3: Following the processing of the vetting form it is the Ladies Gaelic Football Association's National Children's Officer who will inform each applicant individually by letter if their application is or is not being recommended for acceptance.

Step 4: If the recommendation is positive the applicant will receive a letter confirming this and requesting them to furnish their club/County with the letter of acceptance.

Step 5: If the recommendation is negative and if the applicant is not being recommended for acceptance a letter informing them of this decision will be sent to them by the Ladies Gaelic Football Association's National Children's Officer. The applicant will be afforded an opportunity to appeal this decision within 14 days and the process of appeal will be outlined to the applicant. A specially appointed Appeals Group will hear this appeal and will issue their findings directly to the applicant.

Step 6: If the Appeals Committee recommends acceptance of the vetting application Step 4 comes into operation.

Step 7: If the Appeals Committee upholds the recommendation of rejection the applicant and their club will be duly informed. Over a period of time all persons who on behalf of the Ladies Gaelic Football Association, work in any capacity with children and young people will have furnished their club with a Garda Vetting letter of acceptance. The absence of such a letter will deem a person ineligible to work in such a capacity.

The Ladies Gaelic Football Association's central data base will retain the vetting application outcomes.

Clubs will be issued with a list of persons who receive the Garda Vetting 'letter of acceptance' from the National Children's Officer.



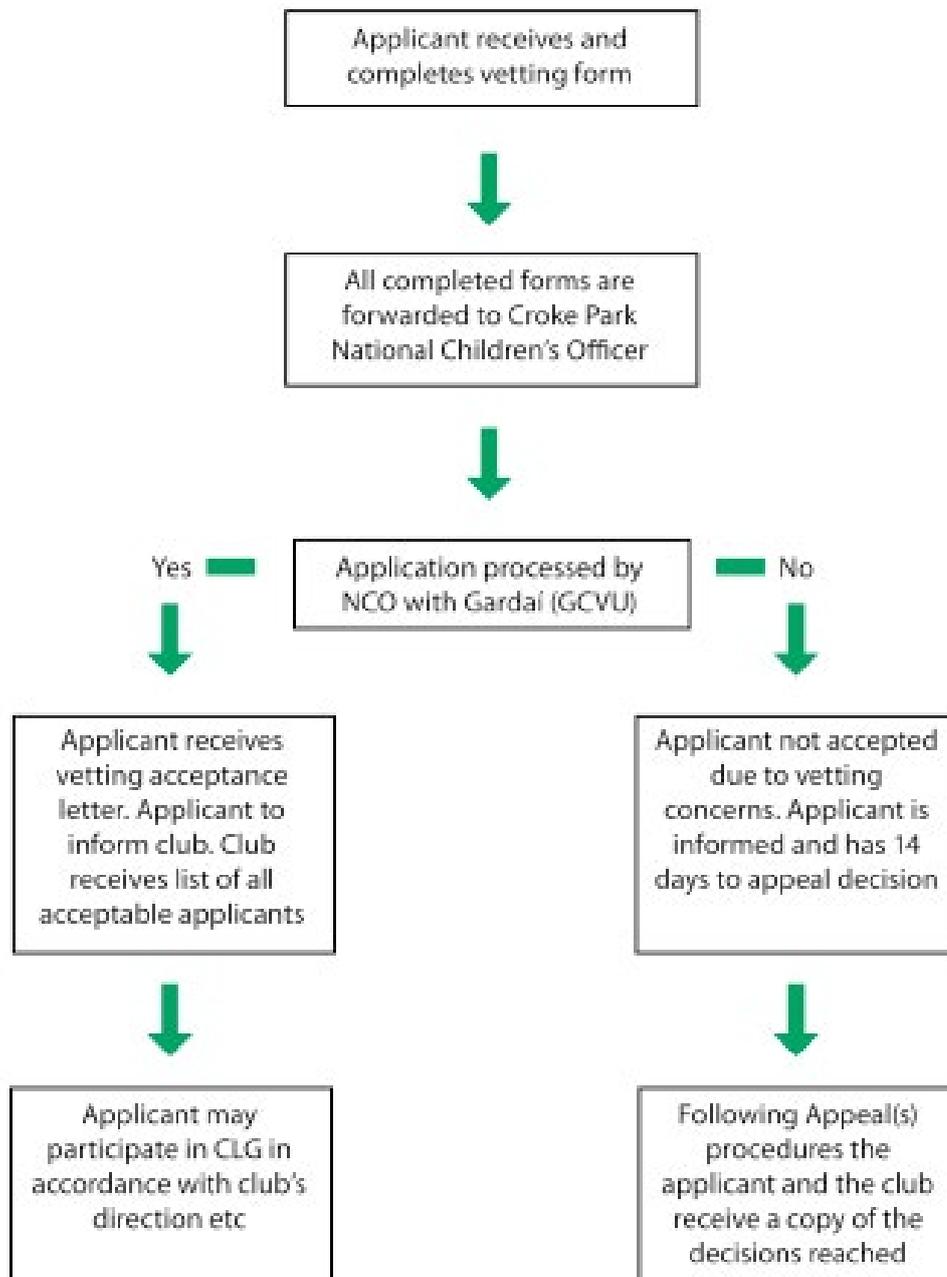
Protocol on Vetting Application Outcomes

There are established procedures in place to conduct vetting of all persons who work in any capacity with children, young people and vulnerable adults in the delivery of our games and activities.

Ladies Gaelic Football recognises that there is a standardised vetting system operated by Cumann Lúthchleas Gael, Cumann Camógalochta na nGael, Irish Handball Council and The Rounders Council of Ireland, which functions for the purpose of determining the suitability of personnel to deliver our games and activities in settings which may facilitate unsupervised access to children and/or vulnerable adults, within each of the above bodies.

The status and validity of decisions reached in each body in respect of the suitability of an individual for a position within it, is acknowledged and accepted by each of the other bodies.

Outline of Garda Vetting Process in the Ladies Gaelic Football Association



AccessNI

ADMINISTERED BY COMHAIRLE ULADH/ULSTER GAA FOR THE GAA,
LADIES GAELIC FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION, THE CAMOGIE ASSOCIATION,
GAA HANDBALL IRELAND AND THE ROUNDERS COUNCIL OF IRELAND

Comhairle Uladh CLG (Ulster GAA) in complying with current child protection and welfare legislation and in accordance with Association guidance and policy have decided to take the necessary steps to ensure that anyone working with children or vulnerable adults at Provincial, County or Club level must be vetted. From the 1st April 2008 additional procedures came into operation for the vetting of personnel working with Children or Vulnerable Adults through ACCESSNI. Comhairle Uladh is now registered as an umbrella body with ACCESSNI, which allows us to carry out vetting checks.

WHAT IS ACCESSNI?

ACCESSNI is the vetting service which replaced the old POCVA service from the 1st April 2008. It provides criminal history information about anyone seeking paid or unpaid work in defined areas, such as working with Children or vulnerable adults and in our case for those that seek to work on our behalf with children or vulnerable adults in the GAA, with Handball, Rounders, Camogie and Ladies Gaelic Football,.

County Boards and Clubs are required to sign up to the Ulster Council terms and conditions for using the ACCESSNI vetting service before we can begin processing applications for checks on behalf of the county or club respectively.

Ulster GAA also acts as an umbrella body for then GAA, Handball, Rounders, Camogie and Ladies Gaelic Football Association in processing vetting applications through ACCESSNI.

Details on this vetting process have been circulated to Clubs through our County Boards, however if you require further information on this vetting process and the application forms Club Secretaries may contact the Ulster Council Children's Officer on 028/048 37521900 or by emailing info.ulster@gaa.ie

Ulster GAA also acts as an Umbrella Body for Handball, Rounders, Camogie and Ladies Football in processing vetting applications. These respective clubs again can avail of this service either by contacting their relevant Children's Officer or by contacting the Ulster GAA.

Supervision

All clubs providing opportunities for our young people to participate in Gaelic games must ensure that all adults placed or appointed by them in roles of responsibility are suitable to fulfil such roles. All such persons must:

- Have had a recent Vetting (Garda/Police) check
- Have signed the Joint Code of Behaviour
- Have appropriate training and qualification to enable them fulfil their role
- Have an understanding of their responsibility to safeguarding children
- Have undertaken recognised Child Welfare Training as promoted by their Sport's Governing Body

SUPERVISION RATIOS

Young people must always be adequately supervised regardless of activity and it is the responsibility of Clubs to ensure that a satisfactory ratio of adults to young people is always maintained.

Supervision ratios will depend on the nature of the activity, the age of the players and any special needs of the group. It is recommended that a ratio of 1:8 for under 12 years of age and 1:10 for players over 12 years of age should be maintained as a basic minimum.

Such recommended ratios act as a guide and will vary depending on the circumstances, e.g. players with special needs, very young players, and mixed gender groups or on away trips.

PEOPLE ALLOCATED A SUPERVISORY ROLE SHOULD:

- Avoid being alone with any player, if you need to talk separately do so in an open environment, in view of others
- Not enter team dressing rooms unless deemed necessary by the team coach (es) so as to protect the privacy of other underage players and should always be accompanied by at least one other adult when in underage team dressing rooms.
- When organising a club trip always be mindful of ensuring that additional adults accompany the group in case of emergencies or unforeseen circumstances.
- When participating in an overnight stay a specific ratio of adults to children should have been agreed in advance. This ratio, which is very dependent on the age category of the children/young people, whether it is a single or mixed gender group and whether the group may be participating in certain outdoor activities or in water sports etc.
- Always clearly state start/finish times of training and if possible of games (home or away) and other activities including trips away from home.
- Remain in pairs until players have been collected or have left in accordance with parental or guardian permission.
- Keep attendance records and record any injuries/incidents as they arise.
- All female underage teams must have at least one female acting in a supervisory capacity (e.g. Coach, Trainer). Similarly, all male teams must also have at least one male acting in a supervisory capacity,

Section 7

Communications and Social Media

Taking photographs of players, using web sites to publicise activities, contacting parents and guardians about training and games for underage teams the use of facebook and other social media networks in addition to the videoing of events, games, training and coaching sessions are normal daily activities within most clubs. The Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport does not seek in any way to eliminate or curtail these activities but proposes certain safeguards so as to ensure that we minimise the risk or threats that inappropriate use of photographs or the recording of images may pose, particularly for young people.

Communicating with underage players and teams

Coaches and mentors should never place themselves in a compromising position by texting or communicating via social media sites with underage players. All such communications regarding GAA activities should be sent via the parents or guardians of the underage player, unless otherwise agreed with the parents/guardians, in writing.

In general the following should apply when communicating with underage players:

- Use mobile phones, if deemed appropriate, 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. (see Juvenile Membership Application form)
- Do not communicate individually by text/email sites with underage players.
- Do not engage in communications with underage players via social network sites.

Guidelines for Photographic/Recorded Images

It should be noted that having photographic and filming guidelines is not about preventing parents and guardians from taking pictures, but rather to ensure that only those who have a right to take photographs do so.

These safeguards should still permit and facilitate the recording of relevant and suitable materials, should allow us to photograph the enjoyment gained by participating in our games, should enable coaches to use the latest technology in the delivery of training skills and should also enable clubs to promote their activities in a safe and non threatening manner.

A common sense approach is required when deciding on what may or may not be appropriate as we do not wish to prohibit the recording of games, coaching sessions or celebrations at club level through the use of photography or by recording on video equipment



The key concerns regarding the use of images and photographs of children/young people relate to:

- The possible identification of children when a photograph is accompanied by personal information and its inappropriate use thereafter
- The inappropriate use, adaptation or copying of images for use in child pornography or illegal website
- The taking of inappropriate photographs or recorded images of children

It should be noted that we have little or no influence on what photographs may be taken and published in local or national newspapers as such photography is covered by a different set of guidelines. Should we ever be unhappy with the publication of such photographs or images we can address this matter with the individual newspaper or the Press Council of Ireland and the Office of the Press Ombudsman.

Photography and the recording of images in a public place do not generally require explicit or prior consent. However if an event e.g. a game or training session is taking place, involving underage players, in a public, private or local authority park, and if you are in charge of such an event you are entitled to request a person to resist from taking photos if you feel that such action or photography may be inappropriate.

In general individual children should not be identified with the exception being when they are being publicly acknowledged (e.g. an award or achievement), for which prior consent has been given.

Children and young people have a right to privacy and therefore their consent should be sought in relation to the use of personal data including images. Parental consent should also be sought and all clubs should receive signed permission from the player's parents or guardians for the recording of photographic and recorded images etc as part of the player's registration process. Information should also be provided as to how and for what purpose images will be used.

Be aware that refusal of consent should not in any way limit children or young people's participation in activities.