

## 01. YOUNG PLAYERS

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

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

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

### **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.
- Be afforded appropriate confidentiality.
- Participate in games and competitions at age appropriate levels.
- Be afforded adequate and meaningful playing time to assist in the development of their playing skills, within their own age group and in accordance with Rule.
- Make their concerns known and have them dealt with in an appropriate manner.
- Be protected from abuse.
- Be listened to and have their suggestions heard in a constructive manner.

### **YOUNG PLAYERS SHOULD ALWAYS:**

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

**YOUNG PLAYERS SHOULD ENGAGE IN GOOD PRACTICE:**

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

**YOUNG PLAYERS ON ADULT TEAMS**

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

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

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

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

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

- Showing appreciation to volunteers, coaches and Club officials.
- Attending training and games on a regular basis.
- Assisting in the organising of Club activities and events as requested.
- Respecting the rights, dignity and worth of every person and 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 all players.

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

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



### 03. PARENTS/GUARDIANS

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

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

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

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

#### **PARENTS/GUARDIANS SHOULD LEAD BY EXAMPLE:**

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

#### **PARENTS/GUARDIANS SHOULD:**

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



The Gaelic Games Associations is currently reviewing the content of the 'Lets Tackle Bullying' training programme. This Section - Tackling Bullying in Your Club - shall be amended on completion of this review. Clubs are reminded to discuss and adopt the Anti-Bullying Policy Statement below and to use this statement when addressing any issues of bullying in their club.

## GAA ANTI-BULLYING 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 Behaviour (Underage). 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

Date

Name of Club



09. CODE DECLARATION/SIGNATORY

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

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

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

**DECLARATION**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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