



Tyrrelstown United FC Club Codes of Practice

The guidelines in this document are based on the national guidelines as outlined in the following documents. Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport, Irish Sports Council, 2000. Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, Dept. of Health & Children 2011 Our Duty to Care, Dept. of Health & Children 2002 Football Association of Ireland Code of Ethics & Best Practice



Tyrrelstown United FC is a new football club, established in 2021 for the Tyrrelstown Community in Dublin 15.

We are providing a club for all children born between 2010 and 2020 for our teams aged from U8 up to U14. We also have a Girls Only Stream for U11 & U13 and a Football academy.

Our Club Committee oversees the running of the Club and the day-to-day operations is supported by The Child Protection Officer, Team Managers, Coaches and volunteers.

Our Club is a Charity and are one of the Grass roots clubs in the D15 area, overseen by the FAI. We participate in the North Dublin Schoolboy League (NDSL) and the Metropolitan Girls League (MGL) .

Committee Members
Chairperson: Jonny Aherne
Secretary: Deirdre Maher
Treasurer: Noel Quigley
Coaching Development Officers: Gar Cooney, Sharon Geraghty & Davie Elder
Membership Officer: Joanne Ryan
Equipment & Kit Officer: Eddie Sharpe
Club mark Officer: Johnnothan Cooke
FAI D15 Sponsor: Jamie Wilson



Mission Statement

The work of this club is based on the following principles that will guide the development of sport for young people in this club.

Children and young people's experience of soccer should be guided by what is best for the child or young person. The stages of development and the ability of the child should guide the types of activity provided within the club.

Adults will need to have a basic understanding of the needs of young people, including physical, emotional and personal.

Integrity in relationships: Adults interacting with young people in soccer should do so with integrity and respect for the child. All adult actions in soccer should be guided by what is best for the child and in the context of quality, open working relationships. Verbal, physical, emotional or sexual abuse of any kind is **unacceptable** at our club.

Quality atmosphere and ethos Soccer for young people should be conducted in a safe, positive and encouraging atmosphere. A child centred ethos will help to ensure that competition and specialisation are kept in their appropriate place.

All children should be treated in an equitable and fair manner regardless of age, ability, sex, religion, social and ethnic background or political persuasion. Children with disability should be involved in sports activities in an integrated way, thus allowing them to participate to their potential alongside other children.

Fair play & competition is the guiding principle our club and is much more than playing within the rules. A balanced approach to competition can make a significant contribution to the development of young people, while at the same time providing fun, enjoyment and satisfaction. Coaches/managers should aim to put the welfare of the child first and competitive standards second.



Child Protection & Welfare Policy Statement

Introduction.

The Club is committed to ensuring that all necessary steps will be taken to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people who participate in soccer. This Policy document clearly demonstrates the importance placed by Tyrrelstown United FC on the protection and safety of children and young people who participate in soccer.

All children and young people¹ who participate in soccer should be able to do so in a safe and enjoyable environment. While doing so they should be protected from any form of abuse be it physical, emotional, sexual, neglect or bullying. The responsibility for protecting children lies with all adults involved in this club and in soccer in general.

The Club recognises and accepts its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people by protecting them from physical, emotional or sexual harm and from neglect or bullying.

These clear policies, practices and procedures in addition to relevant training programmes will ensure that everybody in our club knows exactly what is expected of them in relation to protecting children and young people within soccer.

It is vital that children and young people who participate in Club activities are able to do so in a safe, enjoyable and quality environment.

In pursuit of this goal the club will:

- Advise all members (coaches, players, parents and spectators) of their responsibilities in relation to the welfare and protection of children and young people who participate in soccer.
- Operate within the recommended Football Association of Ireland codes of conduct and best practice guidelines.
- Appoint a Club Children's Officer in line with Football Association of Ireland requirements.
- Provide a child protection and welfare module in staff induction and development programmes.

Our Child Protection Officer is: **Elaine Doyle**

¹ Children are defined in Irish Law as being any person under 18 years of age.



The aims of the Club's Child Protection Policy are:

- To develop a positive and pro-active position in order to best protect all children and young people who participate in soccer, in order for them to do so in a safe and enjoyable environment.
- To provide appropriate guidance and advice to all club members (players, coaches, volunteers, spectators and parents) in all matters concerning child welfare and protection.
- To demonstrate best practice in the area of child welfare and protection.
- To promote ethics and best practice standards throughout soccer.

The key principles underpinning this Policy are that:

- The welfare of the child is the first and paramount consideration.
- All children and young people have a right to be protected from abuse of any kind regardless of their age, gender, disability, culture, language, racial origin, religious beliefs or sexual identity.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse/poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately. It is essential that we work in partnership with children and young people and their parents/carers. The HSE has a statutory responsibility to safeguard and protect the welfare of children and this Club is committed to cooperating fully with them in accordance with procedures as outlined in "Children First" National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children.
- The Club will cooperate fully with the Football Association of Ireland National Children's Officer, Gardai and Health Boards in any investigation of child abuse in soccer.

The Football Association of Ireland's regulations in regard to child welfare and protection are defined in the rulebook as:

RULE 71. THE PROTECTION AND WELFARE OF CHILDREN

(a) In line with legislation and Government Guidelines (The Child Care Act 1991 and the Protection for Persons Reporting Abuse Act 1998) in relation to child protection and welfare, it is mandatory that all participants, clubs, leagues, divisional associations and other football bodies shall be bound by the FAI recommended codes of conduct and best practice guidelines

(b) Any act, statement, conduct or other matter which harms a child or children, or poses or may pose a risk of harm to a child or children, shall constitute behaviour which is improper and brings the game into disrepute.



(c) Breaches shall become a disciplinary offence. Any member issued with a ban from football activity shall have their name notified to all League Secretaries for onward dissemination to all Club Secretaries. The notification shall state the name of the individual and the fact a ban has been issued.

(d) Any participant who is the subject of a Statutory Inquiry in relation to any child welfare concern must stand down from all football activities pending the outcome of that inquiry and any subsequent internal disciplinary proceedings.

(e) Any member convicted of an offence by the Irish Courts or Courts of any other jurisdiction involving the welfare of children shall be automatically banned from membership of the Association. For the avoidance of doubt, no disciplinary or other hearing shall be necessary in order to implement this automatic ban.

RULE 95. PROTECTION AND WELFARE OF CHILDREN

1. All participants, clubs, leagues, divisional associations and other football bodies shall be bound by the FAI rules, codes of conduct and guidelines governing the protection and welfare of children, and breaches of such rules, codes and guidelines shall be subject to disciplinary sanction.

2. The disciplinary body may impose any sanction it deems appropriate.

3. Any act, statement, conduct or other matter which harms a child or children, or poses or may pose a risk of harm to a child or children, shall constitute behaviour which is improper and brings the game into disrepute.

4. Any participant who is the subject of a statutory inquiry in relation to any child welfare concern must stand down from all football activities pending the outcome of that inquiry and any subsequent internal disciplinary proceedings.

Our Club, through confirming this policy document has demonstrated its commitment to ensuring that children and young people can participate in all soccer activities with their safety and welfare being of paramount importance.

It is essential that this document represents a process of continual improvement in the area of child protection and welfare in soccer.

It is the responsibility of all adults involved in soccer to actively promote safe and best practice standards whilst being ever vigilant and aware of their responsibilities to children and young people in their care.



Procedure for dealing with Child Abuse Concerns or Allegations

It is important to note that the investigation of suspected child abuse is the responsibility of the Statutory Authorities (Gardai, HSE) and should not be undertaken by Children's Officers or any other Club/League. All allegations of child abuse must be referred to the Statutory Authorities.

When an allegation is received it should be assessed promptly and carefully. It will be necessary to decide whether a formal report should be made to the HSE, and this decision should be based on reasonable grounds for concern.

The following examples would constitute reasonable grounds for concern:

- (i) a specific indication from a child that (s)he was abused.
- (ii) a statement from a person who witnessed abuse.
- (iii) an illness, injury or behaviour consistent with abuse.
- (iv) a symptom which may not in itself be totally consistent with abuse, but which is supported by corroborative evidence of deliberate harm or negligence.
- (v) consistent signs of neglect over a period of time.

Step One

Any allegation of abuse must in the first instance be brought to the attention of the Chairperson of the Club. Should the Chairperson be unsure whether reasonable grounds for concern exist s/he can informally consult with the local HSE duty social worker. S/he will be advised whether or not the matter requires a formal report.

Coaches/volunteers may be subjected to erroneous or malicious allegations. Therefore, any allegation of abuse should be dealt with sensitively and appropriate support should be provided for staff/volunteers including counselling where necessary.

Step Two

Should the Club become aware of an allegation of abuse of a child or children by a coach/volunteer during the execution of that coaches/volunteers' duties, the Chairman will privately inform the coach/volunteer of the following:

- the fact that the allegation has been made against him/her.
- the nature of the allegation.

Step Three

The coach/volunteer should be afforded an opportunity to respond. The Chairman will note the response and pass on this information when making the formal report to the HSE.

The report to the HSE should contain observations, dates, times, locations and contexts in which the incident occurred, or suspicion was aroused, together with any other relevant information.



In cases of emergency, where a child appears to be at immediate and serious risk and the Chairperson is unable to contact a duty social worker, the Gardai shall be contacted.

Under no circumstances will a child be left in a dangerous situation pending intervention by the Statutory Authorities.

Step Four

Our chairperson, if reporting suspected or actual child abuse to the Statutory Authorities will first inform the family of their intention to make such a report, unless doing so would endanger the child or undermine any statutory investigation.

Step Five

All subsequent actions following an allegation of abuse against a coach/volunteer will be taken in consultation with the HSE and A Garda Síochána. An immediate meeting will be sought with these two agencies for this purpose. The Football Association of Ireland National Children's Officer is also available to provide support and advice.

Step Six

Under Football Association of Ireland rules, any coach/volunteer/manager who is the subject of a statutory investigation into alleged child abuse, is required to stand down from all soccer activities until the investigation is completed. Therefore, the FAI National Children's Officer must be informed immediately of any formal notification to the Statutory Authorities

When a person is asked to stand down it should be made clear that it is only a precautionary measure in keeping with standard procedures/guidelines and will not prejudice any later disciplinary proceedings.

The coach/volunteer concerned should be advised that the procedures being undertaken are in accordance with statutory requirements. He or she should be treated with respect and fairness, and also be assured that all information will be dealt with in a sensitive and confidential manner.

Step Seven

The Club will carefully consider the outcome of the statutory investigation and will then assess if there are any outstanding disciplinary issues in relation to their internal rules or infringements of the Football Association of Ireland best practice guidelines. It must be remembered that the fact that the alleged abuser has not been prosecuted or been found guilty does not mean that they are appropriate to work with young people in the future.

Internal Club disciplinary proceedings can only be initiated after the Statutory Authorities have completed theirs.



Club Disciplinary, Complaints and Appeals Procedure (Covers all matters other than suspected child abuse which has to be referred to the Statutory Authorities)

While many concerns can be dealt with in an informal manner to the satisfaction of all concerned, it is advisable that detailed records are maintained in respect of all complaints and that all parties are advised of the formal complaints and appeals procedure. All reasonable efforts to resolve matters should be exhausted at local level before accessing the appeals procedure.

Step One

Any person who has a complaint or concern should bring it to the attention of the secretary under the relevant rules of the body concerned.

The complaint or concern should be in writing and should outline all relevant details and other parties involved in line with procedure.

Step Two

The complaint or concern should then be brought to the attention of the appropriate person in line with club rules who will convene the disciplinary committee/panel (best practice would advise that this committee/panel would consist of three members) unless the complaint or concern relates to a child abuse matter or criminal offence that meets criteria for formal reporting to the statutory authorities.

The Chairperson of the Club shall not sit on the Disciplinary Committee

Step Three

The disciplinary committee/panel should furnish any participant with details of the complaint being made against them and afford them the opportunity of providing a response either verbally or in writing. In the event of a complaint against a child, the parents/guardians should be informed and advised of the process.

Step Four

The disciplinary committee/panel should then hear the case of all parties involved and decide if a rule or regulation has been infringed.

Step Five

The disciplinary committee/panel should then inform in writing those involved of their decision and any sanctions if any that are to be imposed. This notification should be in writing, setting out the reasons for the sanction. (Written notification should be forwarded to parents if the proceedings involve a participant under eighteen years of age)

Step Six

Any party unhappy with the findings of the disciplinary committee/panel can appeal the decision in writing to their respective superior body as per rules. Clubs, leagues, divisional associations and other football bodies should review their rules to ensure they contain a provision that facilitates an appeals procedure in this respect.



Step Seven

The appeal body should then rehear the case and all evidence, should be considered. The appeals body should have the power to uphold or reject the appeal or to vary, alter or set aside any sanction imposed by the disciplinary committee/panel.

Written confidential records in relation to disciplinary proceedings should be safely and confidentially kept on file (procedures should clearly define the possession of such records in the event of election of new officers)

Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints can be difficult to deal with, however they cannot be ignored. All complaints relating to inappropriate behaviour/poor practice should be brought to the attention of the Chairperson of the Club. In all cases the safety and welfare of the child/children is paramount.

All complaints should be checked out and handled in a confidential manner. It is important to record all such complaints and actions taken. Specific advice on dealing with anonymous complaints can be got from your local HSE duty social worker or alternatively the Football Association of Ireland National Children's Officer.

Rumours

Rumours should not be allowed hang in the air. Any rumour/s relating to inappropriate behaviour/s circulating in the club should be brought to the attention to the Chairperson and checked out promptly. All ensuing information should be handled confidentially and with sensitivity.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is about managing information in a respectful, professional and purposeful manner. It is important that the rights of both the child and the person about whom the complaint has been made are protected. Therefore, appropriate confidentiality will be maintained in respect of all issues and people involved in concerns about the welfare of a child or bad practice within the club.

The following points will be borne in mind:

- A guarantee of confidentiality or undertakings regarding secrecy cannot be given, as the welfare of the child will supersede all other considerations.
- All information should be treated in a careful and sensitive manner and should only be discussed with those who need to know.
- Information will be conveyed to the parents/guardians of a child about whom there are concerns in a sensitive way. Giving information to others on a "need to know" basis for the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality.



Recruitment Policy

The Club will take all reasonable steps to ensure that coaches, managers and volunteers are suitable to work with children and young people.

All coaches, managers and volunteers are required to complete an application/self-declaration form, giving the names of two referees who will then be contacted. Written references will then be verified and kept on file.

(If you have had a previous involvement in sport, one of these names must be that of an administrator/leader of your last club/place of involvement)

All coaches/volunteers subject to Garda Vetting

All appointments are subject to approval and ratification by the Club committee.

All coaches, managers and volunteers will be subject to a sign-up procedure in which they undertake to abide by the Club's rules and FAI codes of conduct and good practice. (Appropriate confidentiality will be maintained in regard to all application and reference forms)

Once recruited, the Club will make all efforts to support and manage coaches, managers and volunteers ensuring that no person is expected to work alone.



Code of Conduct for Spectators

- Remember that although children play organised soccer, they are not miniature professionals. Don't place excessive pressure on children to perform to unrealistically high expectations. Children play soccer to develop their skills, to have fun and enjoy the game.
- Be on your best behaviour and lead by example. The behaviour of a team's supporters will often be remembered long after the result of the game. Be remembered for the right reasons.
- Applaud good play, sportsmanship and best effort by the visiting team as well as your own.
- Welcome and respect all your teams opponents. Without them there would be no match.
- Condemn the use of violence in all forms at every opportunity.
- Verbal abuse of players, match officials or opposing supporters cannot be accepted in any shape or form. Players or match officials should never be regarded as fair targets for ignorant or abusive behaviour.



Players Code of Conduct

Children in our club are entitled to:

- *Be safe*
- *Be treated with dignity, sensitivity and respect*
- *Participate in soccer on an equal basis, appropriate to their ability and stage of development.*
- *The Club have decided that all players are entitled to a minimum playing time of 75% of the time per match. Criteria for team selection should be clearly defined.*
- *Be happy, have fun and enjoy soccer*
- *Make a complaint in an appropriate way and have it dealt with through a proper and effective complaints procedure*
- *Be afforded appropriate confidentiality*
- *Be listened to and to be believed*
- *Have a voice in the running of the club*

Children should also be encouraged to realise that they also have responsibilities to treat other children, fellow players, coaches and volunteers with the same degree of fairness and respect.

In this regard children in this club should undertake to:

- play fairly, do their best and have fun
- be on their best behaviour at all times
- abide by all club rules
- make high standards of Fair Play the standard others want to follow
- respect opponents, they are not the enemy, they are partners in a sporting event
- shake hands before and after the match, whoever wins
- give opponents a hand if they are injured, put the ball out of play so they can get attention
- accept apologies from opponents when they are offered
- respect fellow team members and support them both when they do well and when things go wrong
- treat players from minority groups with the same respect you show other people
- be modest in victory and be gracious in defeat- ***“Be A Sport”***
- approach the club Children’s Officer with any questions or concerns they might have. Coaches and parents should encourage children to speak out and support them in doing so

Children in this Club should not:

- cheat
- use abusive language, or argue with, the referee, officials, team mates or opponents
- use violence, use physical contact only when it is allowed within the rules
- bully
- tell lies about adults or other children
- spread rumours
- take banned substances to improve performance
- keep secrets about any person who may have caused them harm
- behave in any manner that may bring the name of the club into disrepute



In this Club we want our members to have fun and develop skills in a safe and **Fair Play** environment where standards of behaviour are just as important as winning.

We recognise that competition and winning is an important goal, but winning at all costs does not meet the needs of young players.

We are aware that recent research would suggest that increasing numbers of children leave sport between the ages of eight and thirteen. A number of the most common reasons given were; that sport was no longer fun, they did not get to play and overemphasis on winning.

Therefore we have to make every effort to ensure that we keep a balanced approach to competition, make sure all players get a chance to play and strive to keep the fun in soccer.

Making sport fun.

In promoting "Sport for Fun" in this club we will insist on:

- *Encouraging participation and fun*
- *Promoting the development of skills as opposed to winning at all costs*
- *Ensure a minimum playing time of 15 minutes per match per player (time may vary according to League Rules)*
- *Emphasising and praising effort*
- *Acting as a good role models*
- *Insisting on **Fair Play** (we will take off offending players)*
- *Being realistic with our expectations*
- *Being aware of children's feelings*
- *Teaching players to respect different cultures*
- *Teaching players that standards of behaviour are just as important as winning*



Best Practice-Coaches

In keeping children and young people at the forefront of planning and practice, our coaches can be confident that participants will enjoy their football experiences and that their actions are regarded as safe and in keeping with the principle that the safety and welfare of children is of paramount consideration.

Our Coaches are given a position of trust by parents/guardians and players, and are expected to operate to the highest standards of behaviour whilst in the company of under age players (under 18years). Our coaches are also expected not to engage in any activity that could reasonably be viewed as bringing the club or soccer in general into disrepute.

It is important to for our coaches to note that in adhering to these guidelines ensures not only a safe environment for children but also a safe environment in which coaches and volunteers can operate.

Most coaches work in an environment where it is recognised that, in a sporting context, certain types of coaching require a 'hands on approach', i.e., it may be necessary to support a participant in order to physically demonstrate a particular technique. This should only occur when necessary and in an open and appropriate way with the knowledge, permission and full understanding of the participant concerned and his/her parents/guardians.

Coaches must realise that certain situations or friendly actions could be misinterpreted, not only by the player, but by outsiders motivated by jealousy, dislike or mistrust and could lead to allegations of sexual misconduct or impropriety. Therefore coaches should be aware of, and avoid all situations conducive to risk.

Where possible, our coaches/volunteers should avoid:

- Spending excessive amounts of time with children away from others.
- Taking sessions alone (always employ "Two Deep" supervision).
- Taking children to their homes.
- Taking children on journeys alone in their care.

Our Coaches/volunteers should never:

- Exert undue influence over a participant in order to obtain personal benefit or reward.
- Share a room with a young person alone on away trips.
- Engage in rough physical games, sexually provocative games or allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any kind, and/or make sexually suggestive comments about or to a child.
- Use any form of corporal punishment or physical force on a young person.
- Take measurements or engage in certain types of fitness testing without the presence of another adult and permission from the Committee
- Undertake any form of therapy (hypnosis etc.) in the training of young people. •

Safety

Coaches have a responsibility to ensure the safety of all players possible within the limits of their control. Therefore, coaches should seek to create a safe and enjoyable environment in which to play and train.



In this respect:

- Regular safety checks should be carried out in relation to premises, training facilities and equipment. Any problems should be brought to the attention of the Committee
- Appropriate safety rules should be adopted and implemented and protective equipment should be used in any contact training session.
- Parents/guardians should be informed of the starting and finishing times of training sessions and matches.
- A first aid kit should be available at all training sessions /matches and injuries should be recorded, with a note of action taken in relation to each one.
- Parents/Guardians should be notified of injuries/illness which their children incur while participating in any football activity
- Never play injured players.
- **Ensure that the FAI Goalpost safety policy is strictly adhered to at all times**