



# **Finn Valley Women's Football Club**

## *Finn Valley WFC*

### **Code 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.

The requirements under the Children First Act 2015, ([the Children First: National Guidance, and Tusla's Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice](#)).

Football Association of Ireland Code of Ethics & Best Practice

# **Finn Valley WFC Mission Statement**

The work of **Finn Valley WFC** 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 within soccer.

## **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. Too often unhealthy competitive demands are placed on children too early and results in excessive levels of pressure on them and as a consequence, high levels of dropout from sport.

## **Equality**

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:**

Fair play is the guiding principle of the Irish Sports Councils Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport.

It states that "all children's sport should be conducted in an atmosphere of fair play". Ireland has contributed and is committed to the European Code of Sports Ethics, which defines fair play as: "much more than playing within the rules".

It incorporates the concepts of friendship, respect for others and always playing with the right spirit. Fair play is defined as a way of thinking, not just behaving. It incorporates issues concerned with the elimination of opportunities, excessive commercialisation and corruption. (European Sports Charter and Code of Ethics, Council of Europe, 1993).

## **Competition**

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. A child-centred approach will help to ensure that competition and specialisation are kept in their appropriate place.

# Finn Valley WFC Child Protection & Welfare Policy Statement

## Introduction.

Finn Valley WFC 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 Finn Valley WFC on the protection and safety of children and young people who participate in soccer.

All children and young people<sup>1</sup> 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.

Finn Valley WFC 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 Finn Valley WFC 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 Finn Valley WFC) activities are able to do so in a safe, enjoyable and quality environment.

In pursuit of this goal Finn Valley WFC will:

- Advise all members of Finn Valley WFC (coaches, players, parents and spectators) of their responsibilities in relation to the welfare and protection of children and young people who participate in soccer. Please read our safety Policy, Child welfare and safety policy, and Codes of Conducts for Coaches, Players and Parents/Spectators.
- Operate within the recommended Football Association of Ireland codes of conduct and best practice guidelines. **Please see appendices 1 and 2 for FAI Codes of conduct for both Coaches and Parents.**
- 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

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

## **The aims of Finn Valley WFC 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 Finn Valley WFC is committed to cooperating fully with them in accordance with procedures as outlined with requirements under the Children First Act 2015, ([the Children First: National Guidance, and Tusla's Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice](#)).
- Finn Valley WFC will cooperate fully with the Football Association of Ireland National Children's Officer, Gardaí and Health Boards in any investigation of child abuse in soccer.

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

### **RULE 71. THE PROTECTION AND WELFARE OF CHILDREN**

(a) In line with requirements under the Children First Act 2015, ([the Children First: National Guidance, and Tusla's Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice](#)), 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.

Finn Valley WFC 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 (Gardaí, HSE, and Tusla) 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.

Ref. Children First 2011

## **Step One**

Any allegation of abuse must in the first instance be brought to the attention of the Child Protection Officer (CPO) of the Club. Should the CPO be unsure whether reasonable grounds for concern exist s/he can informally consult with the local TUSLA 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 Finn Valley WFC 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 Child Protection Officer 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 CPO is unable to contact a duty social worker, the Gardaí shall be contacted.

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

#### **Step Four**

Our CPO, 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 TUSLA and An 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

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.

The committee of the Finn Valley ladies WFC reserves the right to issue a Formal or Informal warning to any members of our club including Managers, Coaches, players or any other club member if they have breached any of the points outlined in our Code of Practice or any other disciplinary matters.

## 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. The complaint/allegation will then be investigated by the executive committee. If necessary, they will then convene the disciplinary committee/panel. If it is believed that the disciplinary committee is not needed at this stage, the Finn Valley ladies executive committee reserves the right to issue an informal verbal warning, where they trust it will resolve any further issues or discipline. **(Unless the complaint or concern relates to a child abuse matter or criminal offence that meets criteria for formal reporting to the statutory authorities.**

**Where there are potential contentious issues, due consideration should be given to ensure the independence of the disciplinary committee/panel and therefore, it is advisable that members of the disciplinary committee/panel should not be Offices/Directors of the body concerned as lack of independence is often cited as a ground for appeal.**

**(The Chairperson of the Club should 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

For any other information regarding the policies for complaints/concerns please refer to Appendix 3: FAI Concern/complaint Policy.

# Recruitment Policy

Finn Valley WFC 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 (if deemed necessary by the committee) to complete an application/self-declaration form, giving the names of two referees who will then be contacted. These referees must be independent to the applicant and cannot be a relation. Written references will then be verified and kept on file. However, the committee can at any point sanction a volunteer to come on board based on a vote providing the volunteer has the following criteria:

- 1) Child Safeguarding Cert
- 2) Garda Vetting (for the club)
- 3) Coaching Qualification (or in the process of obtaining one)

**(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 clearance

All appointments are subject to approval and ratification by the committee of Finn Valley WFC.

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

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

## Induction and training

When a volunteer has been accepted, the following processes applies:

### **(i) Induction:**

If, a volunteer is accepted on to the club, the volunteer goes into the buddy programme for the first season, where they shadow a more experienced member of the club (namely the manager of the team they are working with). This enables workers to get to know the organisation, their colleagues, their job and other organisations doing the same type of work. It should also cover expectations, conditions and procedures for dealing with discipline, grievances and allegations, and the organisation's child protection policy.

### **(ii) Trial period:**

Appointment should be conditional on the successful completion of a trial period, the length of which Finn Valley WFC has deemed to be three-month period. It gives an opportunity to assess the suitability of a new worker to work with children and his or her commitment to the organisation's policies on safe practices.

**(iii) Records:**

Details of qualification, garda vetting and safeguarding will be recorded, along with notes on any matters arising during any part of the trial period or buddy period (one season).

**(iv) Additional training:**

To maintain quality standards and good practice, we the Finn Valley WFC offer training on an ongoing basis for all volunteers and this is communicated to all concerned based on the FAI dates available. It is the responsibility of each volunteer to book themselves on these training courses and complete their qualifications and where necessary strive for further development. The Local Sports Partnerships provide training in the form of the Child Welfare in Sport Basic Awareness Workshop and subsequent Children's Officer training.



# Finn Valley Women's Football Club

## Volunteer Coach/Manager Application & Self Declaration Form (Please use block capitals)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ D.O.B \_\_\_\_\_

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

Tel. (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (Mobile) \_\_\_\_\_

### Coaching / Safe Gaurding Qualifications

Sport/ Safe Gaurding	Award Held	Date of Award

Previous experience/involvement in sport? Please give details.

Have you ever been asked to leave a sporting organisation in the past?

\_\_\_\_\_  
(If you have answered yes we will contact you in confidence)

Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence? If so give details

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Having a criminal record does not necessarily preclude anyone from working with children. If you have answered "yes" you will be contacted in confidence)

Please Turn Over....

**Referee:** Please supply the names, addresses and telephone numbers of two people whom we can contact and who from personal knowledge is willing to support your application.

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_ Tel. \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_ Tel. \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

I agree to work within Football Association of Ireland/ **Finn Valley WFC** Rules, Code of Practice and FAI approved codes of conduct & best practice guidelines. I also agree that I will refrain from getting involved in any behaviour that could bring the name of Finn Valley WFC or the sport of soccer into disrepute.

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



# Finn Valley Women's Football Club

## Reference Form Private and Confidential

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

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

The above has applied for a post within the Finn Valley WFC and has supplied your name as a referee. As an organisation committed to the safety/protection and happiness of children, we are anxious to know if you are satisfied that this person is suitable to work with children in a sporting capacity.

How long have you known this person? \_\_\_\_\_  
In what capacity?

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Are you satisfied that the above-named person is suitable to work with children in a sporting capacity?

Yes	
No	

*(If you have answered no, we will contact you in confidence)*

Please rate this person on the following (please tick)

	Poor	Average	Good	V Good	Excellent
Maturity					
Self Motivation					
Motivation of others					
Energy					
Trustworthiness					
Reliability					

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Any further Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return completed Form to: Finn Valley WFC Club Secretary or to  
Secretary.finnvalleywfc@gmail.com

# **Finn Valley WFC Coach, Manager, Volunteer Education & Support Policy**

The Committee of Finn Valley WFC are indebted to our coaches, managers and volunteers who give freely of their valuable time in providing a stimulating, challenging, supportive and fun soccer experience to children and young people in the Club.

The Committee will endeavour to support these coaches, managers and volunteers in their work by providing an environment where all activities are carried out in a safe, fun manner at all times conducted in the spirit of “Fair Play”.

Finn Valley WFC will make all efforts to assist all new volunteers, managers, coaches in whatever way they can.

Finn Valley WFC will provide an induction pack to all new volunteers/coaches which will familiarise them with Club rules, policies and procedures and expected codes of behaviour for children, coaches and parents/spectators.

Specifically in relation to those with no soccer background, the Committee have introduced a “Buddy” system whereby new members will accompany one of our existing coaches/ managers for a three month period during which they can familiarise themselves with the Club and its members adult and children and introduce them to some training routines and practice models.

The Committee of Finn Valley WFC recognise the value of having appropriately qualified personnel in the club, and therefore will endeavour to support any of our coaches in the coach education process.

At no time will any coach, manager, volunteer be expected to work or deal with any problem alone and they will be assured of Committee assistance and support at all times. Also, coaches, managers and volunteers are encouraged to share ideas, expertise and support other club personnel in any way they can.

# Finn Valley WFC Safety Policy

All coaches/managers in Finn Valley WFC have a responsibility to ensure the safety of the players with whom they work as far as possible within the limits of their control. Therefore coaches should seek to create a safe and enjoyable environment in which to play and train. (*Clubs are advised to carry out a risk assessment in relation to premises, training facilities and equipment and implement appropriate safety rules*)

In this respect:

- Adequate supervision must be maintained at all times. Best practice advice would advocate adult: child ratios of **2 Leaders to every 16 children** (1:8), but no coach, manager or volunteer works alone (Individual Clubs would need to clarify this with their individual insurance company)
- Regular safety checks should be carried out in relation to premises, training facilities and equipment. Ensure that the FAI Goalpost safety policy is strictly adhered to at all times
- Finn Valley WFC safety rules and Code of Practice should be adhered to at all times
- 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 and matches and injuries should be recorded, with a note of action taken in relation to each one. Never play injured players.
- Parents/Guardians should be notified of injuries/illness which their children incur while participating in any Finn Valley WFC soccer activity.
- Records of attendance should be maintained
- Ensure the use of any recommended safety equipment
- When attending and/ or travelling to and from training and/ or games in their role as a coaching representative of Finn Valley WFC, coaches and managers must not participate in or organise/ arrange/ agree any activities with team members/players other than training or matches unless pre-authorised with the committee and a risk assessment has been carried out prior to the activity taking place.

# Finn Valley WFC Substance Abuse Policy

In Finn Valley WFC the use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco shall be actively discouraged as being incompatible with a healthy approach to sporting activity.

Coaches/managers shall not smoke when taking a session or drink alcohol before taking a session.

In relation to our under-age teams Finn Valley WFC shall endeavour to organise receptions and celebrations in a non-alcoholic environment and in a manner that is suitable for the age group concerned.

Where this is not possible, the Club will comply with the **Football Association of Ireland directive that under no circumstances whatsoever can any person under the age of 18 years consume alcohol and any and all appropriate steps should be taken to ensure that this policy is strictly adhered to.**

Our coaches/managers/committee shall act as role models for appropriate behaviour and refrain from drinking alcohol at such functions

# Finn Valley WFC Club Children's Officer/s

The appointment of Club Children's Officers is an essential element in the creation of a quality atmosphere in any club. They act as a resource to members with regard to children's issues and also ensure that children have a voice in the running of the club and can freely talk of their experiences.

Government guidelines advise that a children's officer should be appointed by all clubs and this should be done in accordance with recommended selection and recruitment procedures. The appointment of this person should be carried out in consultation with juvenile members and their parent/guardians.

The League/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 Children First 2015 (the Children First: National Guidance, and Tusla's Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice).
- Have an understanding of relevant child welfare/protection legislation,
- Have undertaken a Garda Vetting application (when available)
- Have attended the relevant awareness training on child welfare and protection and availed of Children's Officer training

The League/Club Children's Officer should have the following functions:

- To promote the Code of Ethics & Good Practice
- To influence policy and practice and to prioritise children's needs
- To ensure that children know how and whom they can report their concerns to within the club. Information disclosed by a child should be dealt with in accordance with the Department of Health and Children's Guidelines "Children First"
- To encourage the participation of parents/guardians in club activities
- To co-operate with parents to ensure that each child enjoys his/her participation in soccer
- To act as a resource with regard to best practice in children's soccer
- To report regularly to the Club Management Committee
- To monitor changes in membership and follow up any unusual dropout, absenteeism or club transfers by children or coach/volunteers

**Club/League Children's Officers do not have the responsibility of investigating or validating child protection concerns within the club and have no counselling or therapeutic role. This responsibility lies with TUSLA and Gardaí.**

Finn Valley WFC have appointed **Deirdre Laverty** as our Children's Officer and she can be contacted at 0866029993.

# Guidance on the Use of Photographic and Filming Equipment

Many people use cameras and video equipment at soccer activities and the vast majority, do so for perfectly legitimate reasons. However, there is evidence that people have used sporting events to take inappropriate photographs and video footage of children and young people in vulnerable positions.

Finn Valley WFC has adopted a policy in relation to the use of images of players on their websites and in other publications.

Where possible we will try to use models or illustrations when promoting an activity and avoid the use of the first name and surname of individuals in a photograph. This reduces the risk of inappropriate, unsolicited attention from people within and outside the sport.

Rules to guide use of photography:

- If the player is named, avoid using their photograph.
- If a photograph is used, avoid naming the player.
- Ask for the player's permission to use their image. This ensures that they are aware of the way the image is to be used to represent the sport. A player's permission form is one way of achieving this.
- Ask for parental permission to use their image. This ensures that they are aware of the way the image is to be used to represent the sport. A parental permission form is one way of achieving this.
- Only use images of players in suitable dress to reduce the risk of inappropriate use. The content of the photograph should focus on the activity not on a particular child

Create recognised procedures for reporting the use of inappropriate images to reduce the risks to players. Follow the child protection procedures, ensuring either the designated person or, if necessary, the health boards and/or Gardaí are informed.

Amateur photographers/film/video operators wishing to record an event or practice session should seek permission/accreditation with the children's officer, team manager/coach and/or event organiser of session. This club / organisation will display the following information prior to the start of an event to inform spectators of the policy:

*"In line with the recommendation in the Finn Valley WFC Code of Conduct, the promoters of this event request that any person wishing to engage in any video, zoom or close range photography should register their details with the organisers. Children and young people should only be photographed or filmed with their permission and/or the permission of their parents/guardian".*

When commissioning professional photographers or inviting the press to an activity or event we will aim to ensure they are clear about our expectations of them in relation to child protection.

Professional photographers/film/video operators wishing to record an event or practice session should seek accreditation with the children's officer/event organiser/team manager by producing their professional identification for the details to be recorded.

We will then:

- Provide a clear brief about what is considered appropriate in terms of content and behaviour
- Issue the photographer with identification which must be worn at all times
- Keep a record of accreditations
- Inform players and parents that a photographer will be in attendance at an event and ensure they consent to both the taking and publication of films or photographs
- Not allow unsupervised access to athletes or one to one photo sessions at events
- not approve/allow photo sessions outside the events or at an athlete's home

**Videoing as a coaching aid:** Video equipment can be used as a legitimate coaching aid. However, permission should first be obtained from the player and the player's parent/carer.

Clubs should also be aware of the dangers of permitting camera phones in dressing rooms and should apply appropriate safety rules.

*Anyone concerned about any photography taking place at events/matches or training sessions should bring their concerns to the attention of the committee/team manager/coach children's officer.*

### **Mobile Phones**

Mobile phones are often given to children for security, enabling parents to keep in touch and make sure they are safe. Young people value their phones highly as it offers them a sense of independence. In addition mobile phones allow quick and easy contact, which can make a safe and efficient way to carry out club business. However such technology has also allowed an increase in direct personal contact with young people, in some cases used to cross personal boundaries and cause harm to young people. Therefore, we need to encourage responsible and secure use of mobile phones by adults and young people.

#### **Therefore club personnel should advise children:**

- If you receive an offensive photo, email or message, do not reply, save it, make a note of times and dates and tell a parent or children's officer/designated person within the club.
- Be careful about who you give your phone number to and don't respond to unfamiliar numbers
- Change your phone number in cases of bullying or harassment
- Don't use the phone in certain locations; inappropriate use of your camera phone may cause upset or offence to another person, e.g. changing rooms
- Treat your phone as you would any other valuable item so that you guard against theft

#### **As a coach/manager remember:**

- Use only group texts for communication among players and teams and inform parents of this at the start of the season. For all players U18 this will be through Parental contact groups.
- It is not appropriate to have any contact or communication with individual players privately.

Don't use the phone in certain locations; inappropriate use of your camera phone may cause upset or offence to another person. Mobile phones are not permitted to be used in changing rooms.



# Finn Valley WFC Travelling Guidelines

Coaches transporting players to games is not ideal however when travelling with young people coaches/volunteers of Finn Valley WFC should:

- Where possible arrange buses or have parents transport their own kids. If parents make personal arrangements between themselves this is not the responsibility of the Finn Valley WFC.
- In the event of buses being used, the driver is required to go directly to the match venue and return directly to the Finn Valley Centre or other pre-agreed point of drop off immediately following the game.
- If coaches are transporting players to games, they are required to go directly to the match venue and return directly to the Finn Valley Centre or other pre-agreed point of drop off immediately following the game.
- Ensure that there is adequate insurance cover
- Not carry more than the permitted number of passengers
- Ensure the use of safety belts
- Keep to the rules of the road
- Avoid being alone with one player; if with one player you could: put the passenger in the back seat, drop off at central locations, get parental permission for transporting children on a regular basis, and clearly state times of pick off and drop off.

# Finn Valley WFC Touching Guidelines

All managers/volunteers of Finn Valley WFC are advised that:

Any necessary physical contact should be in response to the needs of the child and not the adult

It should be in an open environment with the permission and full understanding of the player

It should be determined by the age and developmental stage of the player. You should not anything that a child can do for him/herself

Coaches should not treat injuries out of sight of others. Use a "Two-Deep" (two personnel, or two players) supervision system. Only personnel who are qualified in administering First Aid or treating sports injuries should attempt to treat an injury.

The comfort level and dignity of the player should always be the priority. Example: Only uncover the injured area or cover private areas of the athlete's body.

Any doubts of a medical nature should be passed on to a suitably qualified medical person.

Coaches should not play injured players.

**Comforting/congratulating players is an important part of the relationship between coaches and players.**

Guidelines for this type of touch are:

- Limit touching to "safe" areas, such as hand-to-shoulder. It should not involve touching genital area, buttocks, breasts, or mouths.
- Make clear your intention to congratulate or comfort the player.
- Get permission from the player before embracing them - remember that personnel are in a position of power.
- Respect a players discomfort or rejection of physical contact.
- Be sure that touching occurs only when others are present.

**Avoid unnecessary physical contact and never engage in inappropriate touching**

## **Finn Valley WFC**

### **Guidance on the use of Sanctions**

#### **Discipline in Soccer**

Discipline in soccer should always be positive in focus, providing the structures and rules that allow players to set their own goals and strive for them. It should encourage players to become more responsible for themselves and their actions and therefore more independent.

Discipline should be a positive reinforcement for effort. It should encourage the development of emotional and social skills as well as skills in soccer. Players have to be helped to become responsible for the decisions and choices they make within soccer, particularly when it is likely to make a difference between playing fairly or unfairly.

There is no place in soccer for fighting, bullying, over aggressive or dangerous behaviour.

At all times, players should treat others in a respectful manner. They should never bully, interfere with or take unfair advantage of others.

The use of sanctions is an important element in the maintenance of discipline. However, Coaches/Managers/Volunteers and Administrators should have a clear understanding of where and when particular sanctions are appropriate.

It should be remembered that effectively controlled organisations and successful coaches/managers/volunteers are characterised by the sparing use of sanctions. The age and developmental stage of the child should be taken into account when using sanctions.

Sanctions should always be fair, consistent and applied evenly, and in the case of a persistent offence, should be progressively applied.

The following steps are suggested:

- Rules should be clearly stated and agreed
- A warning should be given if a rule is broken

- A sanction (use of time out for example) should be applied if a rule is broken for a second time
- If a rule is broken three or more times, the child should be spoken to and parents/guardians involved if necessary
- Sanctions should only be used in a corrective way that is intended to help children improve both now and in the future. They should never be used in retaliation or to make coach/manager/volunteer feel better or more powerful
- When violations of the team rules or other misbehaviours occur, sanctions should always be applied in an impartial and fair manner
- Sanctions should never be used as threats. If a rule is broken, the appropriate sanction/s should be implemented consistently, fairly and firmly
- Sanctions should not be applied if the coach/manager/volunteer is not comfortable with them. If an appropriate action cannot be devised immediately, the child should be told that the matter will be dealt with later, at a specified time and as soon as is possible
- Once a sanction/s has been imposed, it is important to make the child feel s/he is a valued member of the team again
- A child should be helped, to understand if necessary why sanction/s are imposed
- A child should not be sanctioned for making errors whilst playing soccer
- Physical activity (e.g. running laps or doing push ups) should not be used as a sanction as to do so may cause a child to resent physical activity which is something that s/he should learn to enjoy throughout his/her life. Remember Soccer has to be Fun if participants are to continue playing
- Sanctions should be used sparingly. Constant criticism and sanctioning can cause participants to turn away from Soccer

Adopted from the Children First: National Guidance, and Tusla's Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice).

## **Finn Valley WFC Code of Conduct for Parents/ 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.

## **Finn Valley WFC Code of Conduct for Coaches/ Managers**

- Encouraging participation and fun
- Promoting the development of skills as opposed to winning at all cost
- Ensure playing time for all players throughout the season
- Emphasising and praising effort
- Acting as 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
- Follow the Finn Valley Ladies WFC Code Of Practice

## **Finn Valley WFC Code of Conduct for Coaches/ Managers – Group Messages**

- Team group messages are for correspondence relating to trainings and matches only, this correspondence comes from the Manager only and in their absence the assistant/ coach can be given permission to contact the team  
(The secretary/ assistant and the child welfare officer is the only other party that can communicate any further club related matters to the groups)
- The management group is set up where managers/ committee can be kept aware of any issues relating to pitches/ trainings, games and teams. These matters generally need to be resolved / decision made within 24hrs at the latest.  
(The secretary / assistant and child welfare officer are the only other parties that can communicate any further club related matters to the groups)
- Any matters that are not urgent can be reviewed and sent to the secretary via email and will be added to the agenda for the next meeting. [secretary.finnvalleywfc@gmail.com](mailto:secretary.finnvalleywfc@gmail.com)

# **Finn Valley WFC Code of Conduct for Trainings**

- The assigned managers of the teams are responsible for taking the training session (These personnel have been identified by the committee as the most experienced).
- Any new/old coaches/assistants will work with the manager when asked to aid and otherwise will learn from the manager in their approach.
- Coaches and assistants are responsible for taking an attendance record at all training session while also collecting the appropriate fee outlined by Finn Valley WFC from each child while recording the payment. (This detail needs to be provided to the committee monthly along with all monies). *This applies when no committee member is present.*
- If multiple teams are training at once it is the responsibility of the assistants to appoint a representative for that day to take the attendance and money record.
- Where multiple teams are training together the most experienced and senior manager may/can take lead of training.
- If the manager is unavailable to attend training, they will reach out to the assistant and on that instruction the assistant will then prepare to take the training session (ensuring additional help is at hand).

## **Finn Valley WFC Bullying Guidelines**

What is Bullying?

- Bullying can be defined as repeated aggression be it verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against others. It is behaviour that is intentionally aggravating and intimidating and occurs mainly in social environments such as schools, clubs and other organisations working with children and young people.

Combating Bullying

- The anti-bullying policy of The Finn Valley WFC includes the following measures:
- Ensures that all members follow the code of conduct, which promotes the rights and dignity of each member.
- Raises awareness of bullying as an unacceptable form of behaviour
- Complaints procedure used if bullying occurs
- Provides comprehensive supervision at all games and during the course of tours
- Provides a supportive environment for victims of bullying
- Obtains co-operation of parents / guardians to combat bullying

# Finn Valley WFC Players Code of Conduct

## Children in Finn Valley WFC 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.
- Finn Valley WFC commit to ensuring all players get match time throughout the season
- 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 Finn Valley WFC 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 Finn Valley WFC 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 Finn Valley WFC into disrepute

In Finn Valley WFC we want children in Finn Valley WFC 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.

Finn Valley WFC is 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” we in Finn Valley WFC will insist on:

- Encouraging participation and fun
- Promoting the development of skills as opposed to winning at all cost
- Ensure playing time during the league
- 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 underage players (under 18 years). 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.
- With the exception of their own child a coach should not transport a child alone, except in emergency or exceptional circumstances.
- Taking children on journeys alone in their care. 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.
- Avoid incidents of horse play or role play or telling jokes etc. that could be misinterpreted.

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**

# **Finn Valley WFC Roles & Responsibilities – Committee & Management**

## **Chairperson**

- Overall organisation and running of the club including promotion and club development
- Chair the Committee meetings and AGM
- Direct general affairs of the club
- Lead the committee in making decisions for the benefit of the whole club including disciplinary matters
- Represent an unbiased viewpoint allowing free discussion to take place
- Have the casting vote on any unresolved club issues
- Assist the Club Secretary to produce agendas
- Represent the club at external meetings, when required
- Manage and oversee the work of officers and other club personnel
- Present the club's annual reports

## **Secretary**

- Plan club meetings with the chairperson and agree an agenda with all club officers
- Circulate details of meetings (time, location, agenda etc.) to club members
- Take minutes
- Follow-up with relevant parties on key actions arising from meetings
- Ensure meetings adhere to procedures of the club constitution
- Initiating and responding to all club correspondence (dealing with queries, official NGB correspondence etc.)
- Filing all club correspondence (incoming & outgoing)
- Adhere to Governing Body rules on communication (e.g. format/timing of response to written communications)
- Work with club PRO to ensure broader public awareness (and availability) of club correspondence (as appropriate)
- Managing club membership, registration and team affiliation (in conjunction with club registrar)
- Keeping an accurate record of contact details for members, officers and third parties
- Handling club insurance and related paperwork (e.g. filing of injury claims)
- Maintain appropriate records of membership and communication and club documents such as the club constitution
- Assist the Chairman in strategic planning of ongoing club development

## **Treasurer**

- Creating and maintaining the club's annual budget
- Working with other club officers to generate and collect funds:
- With the secretary/ registrar for collecting membership fee payments
- Event organisers for tickets/ sponsorship
- Payments to third parties e.g. insurance, utilities (e.g. electricity/gas), maintenance etc.
- Ensuring accurate and up-to-date records of all club income and expenditure
- Collecting funds from fundraising and transfer to bank electronically (or in person) and bank reconciliation
- Seeking approval of the club's committee for major expenditures

- Preparing Financial statements and maintaining the club's financial performance

### **Child Welfare Officer**

- Assist the club to fulfil its responsibilities to safeguard children and young people
- Assist the club to implement the child welfare section (including training) of the development plan
- To be the first point of contact for staff, volunteers, parents and children/young people where concerns about children's welfare, poor practice or child abuse are identified
- Be the first point of contact with the Child Welfare Officer at your National Governing Body
- Implement the National Governing Body's reporting and recording procedures
- Maintain contact details for local social services, police and the Area Child Protection Committee
- Promote the National Governing Body's best practice guidance/code of ethics and behaviour within the club and anti-discriminatory practice
- Ensure confidentiality is maintained

### **PRO**

- Responsible for all social media advertising, trainings, matches etc.
- Announcing fixtures, club travel arrangements (where applicable) and match results to the supporter base and the wider community
- The PRO also takes responsibility for club appearance on match days - ensuring club kit (socks, shorts, jerseys etc.) are consistent
- Distributing club notes and match reports to local newspapers and smaller publications such as community newsletters and free-sheet newspapers
- Monitor social media to ensure club is not inadvertently misrepresented
- Distribute club posters (e.g. Club trainings, recruitment and fixture announcements, social events,) to local businesses, schools and community centres
- After each game the club PRO must enter results and scorers of both teams on the Donegal Women's League Facebook page under the fixtures for that day and text same information to the Donegal League PRO.
- The match report with team/ action photos (where appropriate) to be sent to Sinead Hagan, [sid.hagank@gmail.com](mailto:sid.hagank@gmail.com)
- Rule 9.25, the home club must text the results and scorers of both teams to the league PRO by 10pm on the date of the match and a detailed report forwarded to him/her by 12noon the day after the game. Failure to adhere to this rule will result in a 20 euro fine.
- If the club PRO is not available to complete the above by the timelines it is up to him/her to appoint someone else to do so in advance.

### **Club Managers**

- Plan and lead fun and safe coaching sessions, possibly working alongside other coaches and coaching assistants
- Observe and analyse skills, suggesting improvements and making players aware of their progress
- Liaise with team assistants
- Select teams, possibly working with team assistants and other coaching staff
- Put into action the coaching elements of the Club Development Plan
- Mentor new coaches and Young Leaders
- Reflect and evaluate coaching sessions

- Delegate organisational roles which don't require coaching skills
- Promote and abide by club policy, child protection, fair play, Code of Conduct and equal opportunities
- Follow procedure for reporting accidents
- Each Manager is responsible for printing of their match cards, all match cards to be completed correctly including date/ time, venue, own team, opponents, age group, players and numbers, managers and other technical staff.
- Log any injuries or incidents in the incident books assigned (dates, times, treatment), time parents were called etc.
- Ensure there is a female representative at your trainings and matches – this person needs to be garda vetted and have a safeguard course completed.

### **Club Coaches/ Assistants**

- Plan and lead fun and safe coaching sessions, working alongside the manager and other assistants
- Observe and analyse skills, suggesting improvements and making players aware of their progress.
- Liaise with team managers
- Liaise with the manager on the selection of the teams
- Put into action the coaching elements of the Club Development Plan
- Mentor new coaches and Young Leaders, if applicable
- Reflect and evaluate coaching sessions
- Promote and abide by club policy, child protection, fair play, Code of Conduct and equal opportunities
- Follow procedure for reporting accidents
- Each assistant is responsible for ensuring that all match cards are completed correctly including date/ time, venue, own team, opponents, age group, players and numbers, managers and other technical staff.
- During matches, as the assistant/ coach it is your responsibility to complete a match report on all (HOME) games and submit the report to the PRO by 10pm the night of the game. (Fines are in place for the club where this is not done)
- Club PRO is [jbrennanca107@gmail.com](mailto:jbrennanca107@gmail.com) 0876715659 (The club PRO will take further action communicating this to the League PRO on the same night)
- Log any injuries or incidents that occur at training or matches. An Injury report form must be completed and given to the Chairperson or the Club Secretary. These forms are available from the Club Secretary.

### **Club First Aiders**

- Attend to the injured players during games
- Log any incidents on the incident book that the manager or assistant has been provided
- Report any incidents to the club secretary
- Be present for all team talks before and during games
- Do not be left on your own with any child
- Report if the first aid kit needs restocking to the club secretary

## Flyers should be provided to all Parents with children registered in the club.

### Finn Valley WFC Travelling Guidelines

When travelling with young people coaches/volunteers of Finn Valley WFC should:

- Where possible arrange buses or have parents transport their own kids, otherwise
- Ensure that there is adequate insurance cover
- Not carry more than the permitted number of passengers
- Ensure the use of safety belts
- Keep to the rules of the road
- Avoid being alone with one player; if with one player you could: put the passenger in the back seat, drop off at central locations, get parental permission for transporting children on a regular basis, and clearly state times of pick off and drop off.

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- Obtains co-operation of parents / guardians to combat bullying




**Committee Contact Details:**

Chairperson - Tena Quigley 0876100993  
 Secretary - Sara Herron 0877947039  
 Treasurer - Teresa Conway 087750068  
 Child Protection Officer - Deirdre Lafferty 0866029993  
 PRO - John Brennan 0876715659



**Parents & Spectators Code of Conduct**



**PLEASE REMEMBER:**

- THE PLAYERS ARE CHILDREN
- THE COACHES ARE VOLUNTEERS
- THE REFEREES ARE HUMAN
- SHOW RESPECT TO PLAYERS & COACHES
- FIRST PRIORITY IS HAVING FUN

### Finn Valley WFC Parents/Spectators Code of Conduct

- Always Remember...Before you complain...Have you volunteered yet???
- 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 teams supporters will often be remembered long after the result of the game. Be remembered for the right reasons.
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- Be happy, have fun and enjoy soccer
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- Be listened to and to be believed
- Have a voice in the running of the club

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- use abusive language, or argue with, the referee, officials, team mates or opponents
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- bully
- tell lies about adults or other children
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- take banned substances to improve performance
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- behave in any manner that may bring the name of Finn Valley WFC into disrepute

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- Being realistic with our expectations
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- Teaching players to respect different cultures
- Teaching players that standards of behaviour are just as important as winning

### Finn Valley WFC Guidance on the use of Photographic and Filming Equipment

Many people use cameras and video equipment at soccer activities and the vast majority, do so for perfectly legitimate reasons. However there is evidence that people have used sporting events to take inappropriate photographs and video footage of children and young people in vulnerable positions.

Finn Valley WFC has adopted a policy in relation to the use of images of players on their websites and in other publications.

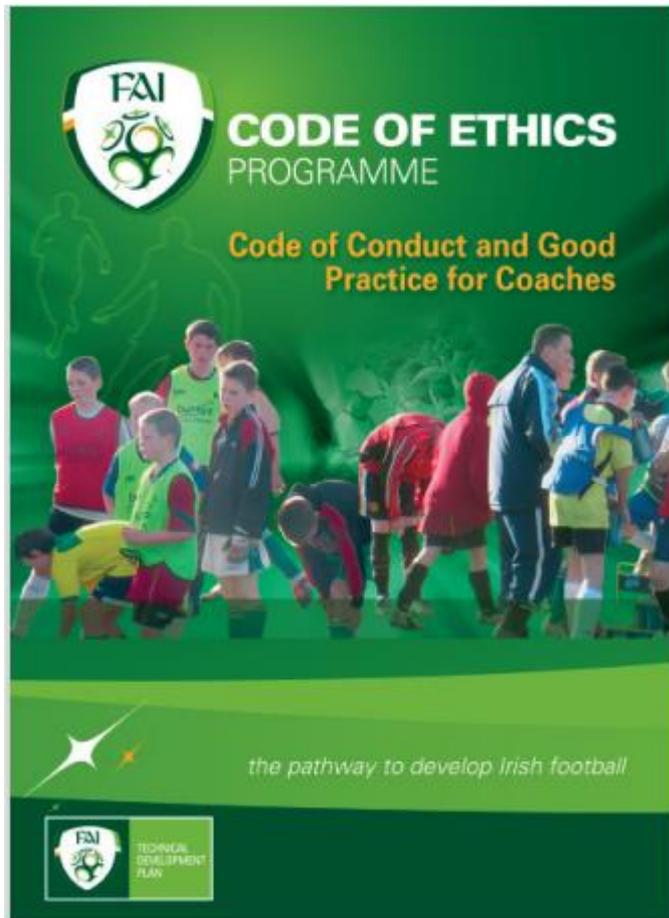
Where possible we will try to use models or illustrations when promoting an activity and avoid the use of the first name and surname of individuals in a photograph. This reduces the risk of inappropriate, unsolicited attention from people within and outside the sport.

### Finn Valley WFC Rules to guide use of photography:

- If the player is named, avoid using their photograph.
- If a photograph is used, avoid naming the player.
- Ask for the player's permission to use their image. This ensures that they are aware of the way the image is to be used to represent the sport. A player's permission form is one way of achieving this.
- Ask for parental permission to use their image. This ensures that they are aware of the way the image is to be used to represent the sport. A parental permission form is one way of achieving this.
- Only use images of players in suitable dress to reduce the risk of inappropriate use. The content of the photograph should focus on the activity not on a particular child

(Policy updated FEB '23 to be reviewed FEB '25)

# APPENDIX 1: FAI CODE OF CONDUCT FOR COACHES



Code of Conduct and Good Practice for Coaches
FAI

## Football and Young People

The Football Association of Ireland is indebted to the countless number of volunteers who give of their time in providing football opportunities for children and young people. Like all sports, football, provides an excellent pathway for children and young people to learn new skills, become more confident and maximise their own potential. Through their participation, they can learn and develop life skills, have fun and enjoyment, make friends and experience life in a way that can enhance their personal growth throughout their lives.

People become involved in football for young people for a variety of different reasons. They come from a variety of sporting backgrounds and take on various roles within clubs and other football organisations. Yet irrespective of their role or responsibility, they all share the common goal of providing football opportunities for young people.

Coaches, parents and administrators all have an important role to play in promoting good practice in children's sport. They should have, as their first priority, children's safety and enjoyment of the sport.

The FAI wants sport to be safe, to be fun and to ensure that no matter what sport young people are involved in, that it takes place in the spirit of 'FAIR PLAY'.

Fair play is the guiding principle of the Irish Sport's Council's Code of Ethics as well as the FAI's Code of Ethics and Good Practice which is designed to provide guidance for those working with young people in football. It outlines the type of issues that need to be discussed and addressed to provide the safest and most enjoyable environment not only for players but also the coaches and volunteers involved.

Coaches achieve satisfaction from working with children and young people. Focusing on the individual participants' needs and performance encourages young people to achieve and demonstrate enjoyment, equality and fair play. They will come to realise that standards of behaviour are as important as sports performance.

In taking this approach children are encouraged to:

- Do their best – put in their best effort.
- Improve and develop their skills.
- Make friends.
- Play by the rules.
- Appreciate/accept everyone in the group, regardless of ability, race, religion, gender etc.

## Player Centred Approach

Coaches need to be aware of why children want to play soccer. They want to learn new skills, make new friends, be part of a group, to win and be successful, experience challenges, excitement and action.

While winning is important, it must be remembered that winning at all costs does not meet the needs of players. Results are not necessarily a good indicator of coaching effectiveness or ability, the improvement level of players and their level of enjoyment is.

Coaches should aim to provide a safe and enjoyable environment where children and young people are placed at the centre of all activities.

### In promoting good practice and creating a child/player centred approach coaches should:

- Act as good role models.
- Encourage and be positive during sessions so that players leave with a sense of achievement.
- Set challenging, realistic but achievable goals.
- Plan and prepare each session appropriately and ensure proper levels of supervision.
- Ensure that all activities are inclusive and allow all players to participate in an enjoyable way.
- Put the welfare and enjoyment of players first and strike a balance between this and winning or achieving results.
- Enforce the principles of fair play treating each player equally, with dignity and respect and ensure that all players play within the rules.
- Be aware of the developmental stages and needs of players.
- Avoid over training and over emphasis on competition.
- Involve parents/guardians and other club members in what we do.
- Be qualified and up to date with the latest coaching knowledge and skills.

Ref. Irish Sports Council, Code for Leaders

## Best Practice

In keeping children and young people at the forefront of planning and practice, 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 welfare of children is of paramount consideration.

Coaches are given a position of trust by parents/guardians and players, and should show the highest standards of behaviour whilst in the company of under age players.

It is important that coaches follow an agreed code of good practice and parents/club officials are satisfied that coaches are suitable to lead the activities undertaken. The comprehensive Code of Ethics & Best Practice guidelines is available on our website at [www.fai.ie](http://www.fai.ie). It is important to note that in adhering to these guidelines we ensure not only a safe environment for children but also a safe environment in which coaches and volunteers can operate.

### 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.
- Undertake any form of therapy (hypnosis etc.) in the training of young people.

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, 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 cars.

## Safety

Coaches have a responsibility to ensure the safety of the players with whom they work as far as 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.
- Appropriate safety rules should be adopted and implemented.
- 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. Never play injured players.
- Parents/Guardians should be notified of injuries/illness which their children incur while participating in any football activity a positive approach to the involvement of children in sport.

FAIreland has amended its rules to include a child protection element in line with Children First (Department of Health & Children), the Irish Sports Council's Code of Ethics & Good Practice and relevant recent child welfare legislation.

Specifically coaches/volunteers are required to operate within these recommended codes of conduct and best practice. The complete code of conduct for coaches is posted at [www.fai.ie](http://www.fai.ie).

**"Sport for young people is about Fun and Participation,  
Best Effort and Fair Play in a Safe Environment"**

### In promoting "Sport for Fun" coaches should:

- Encourage participation and fun.
- Promote the development of skills as opposed to winning at all costs.
- Emphasise and praise effort.
- Act as a good role model.
- Actively discourage children/young players from abusing referees, officials, team mates or opponents (take off offending players).
- Insist on **FAIR PLAY** (take off offending players).
- Be realistic with your expectations.
- Be aware of children's feelings.
- Teach players to respect different cultures.



4

### Children in Football are entitled to:

- Be safe.
- Be treated with dignity, sensitivity and respect.
- Participate in football on an equal basis, appropriate to their ability and stage of development.
- Be happy, have fun and enjoy football.
- 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, referees, coaches and volunteers with the same degree of fairness and respect.

### In this regard children should undertake to:

- Play fairly, do their best and have fun.
- 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 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.



## Responsibility to Report

Any person, who has concerns about a child's welfare or who suspects that a child is being abused, or is at risk of abuse, has a responsibility to report their concerns to the Health Board or Gardaí.

Persons unsure about whether or not certain behaviours are abusive and therefore reportable, are advised that they can seek advice from the duty social worker in their local health board area where they will receive appropriate advice.

In cases of emergency where a child appears to be at immediate and serious risk and the duty social worker is not contactable, call the Gardaí.

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

All clubs should have clear procedures for responding to reports or concerns relating to the safety and welfare of children. Coaches / volunteers, children and parents / guardians should be aware of how and to whom they report concerns within the club or organisation.

## Mobile Phones

Mobile phones are often given to children for security, enabling parents to keep in touch and make sure they are safe.

However such technology has also allowed an increase in direct personal contact with young people, in some cases used to cross personal boundaries and cause harm. Within clubs there is a need to encourage responsible and secure use of mobile phones.

In this respect Coaches are advised to:

- Use group texts for communication among athletes and teams and inform parents of this at the start of the season
- It is not appropriate to have constant communication for individual athletes
- Don't use the phone in certain locations; inappropriate use of your camera phone may cause upset or offence to another person, e.g. changing rooms

### For further information or advice see:

FAI Code of Ethics & Best Practice which is available on our website [www.fai.ie](http://www.fai.ie)  
Or contact: FAI Code of Ethics Programme Co-ordinator / National Children's Officer,  
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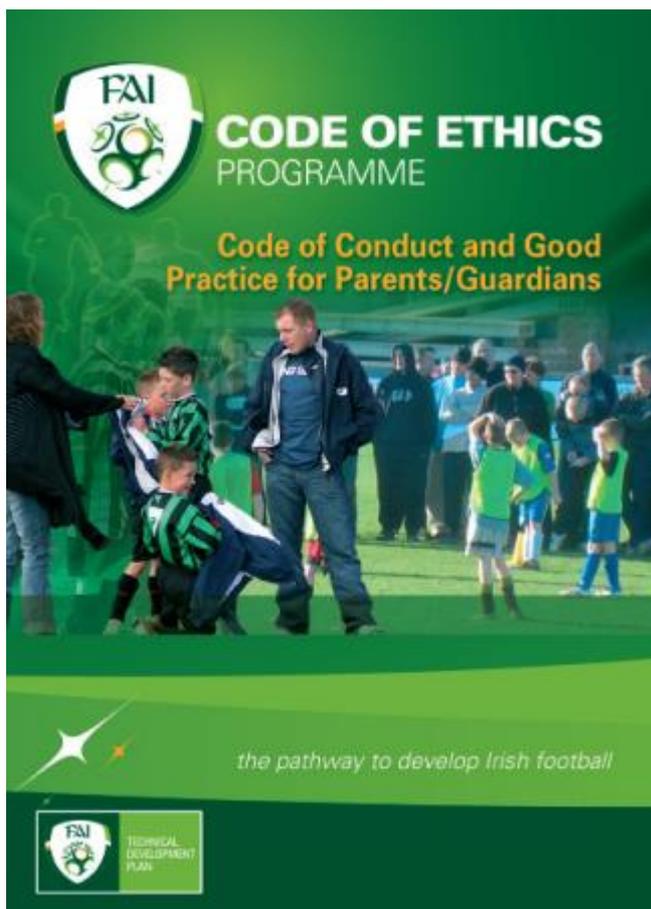


CODE OF ETHICS  
PROGRAMME



FAI is a proud member of the FAI

# APPENDIX 2: FAI CODE OF CONDUCT FOR PARENTS



Code of Conduct and Good Practice for Parents / Guardians FAI Ireland

## Football and Young People

Football, like all sports, provides an excellent pathway for children and young people to learn new skills, become more confident and maximise their own potential. Through their participation, they can learn and develop life skills, have fun and enjoyment, make friends and experience life in a way that can enhance their personal growth throughout their lives.

People become involved in football for young people for a variety of different reasons. They come from a variety of sporting backgrounds and take on various roles within clubs and other football organisations. Yet irrespective of their role or responsibility, they all share the common goal of providing football opportunities for young people.

Parents, coaches and administrators all have an important role to play in promoting good practice in children's sport. They should have, as their first priority, the children's safety and enjoyment of the sport.

The FAI want football to be safe, it wants football to be fun and wants to ensure that no matter what level of the game young people are involved in, that it takes place in the spirit of **FAIR PLAY**.

Fair play is the guiding principle of the Irish Sport's Council's Code of Ethics as well as the FAI's Code of Ethics and Good Practice programme which is designed to provide guidance for those working with young people in football. It outlines the type of issues that need to be discussed and addressed to provide the safest and most enjoyable environment not only for young people but also the coaches and volunteers involved.

Focusing on individual participants' needs encourages young people to achieve and demonstrate enjoyment, equality and fair play. Through this they will come to realise that standards of behaviour are equally as important as sports performance.

**In taking this approach children are encouraged to:**

- Do their best – put in their best effort.
- Improve and develop their skills.
- Make friends.
- Play by the rules.
- Appreciate/accept everyone in the group, regardless of ability, race, religion, gender etc.



## Guide for Parents / Guardians

Parents / guardians play an important role in promoting children's happiness and success in football and sport in general.

Parental expectations and behaviour have a significant bearing on children's attitude and behaviour while participating in football.

Parents / guardians need to be aware of why children want to play football. Children want to learn new skills, make new friends, be part of a group, to win and be successful, experience challenges, excitement and action.

While winning is important, it must be remembered that winning at all costs does not meet the needs of players. Results are not necessarily a good indicator of coaching effectiveness or ability, the improvement level of players and their level of enjoyment is.

**Support and encouragement from parents / guardians will contribute to children having:**

- A sense of personal achievement.
- An enjoyment of soccer.
- Improved physical fitness.
- Higher self-esteem.
- A greater level of skill.
- Improved social skills.




It is important for parents / guardians to find out what their children want from football, and help them to set realistic targets to achieve this. **This may involve controlling their own aspirations and avoiding the desire to force their own dreams or unfulfilled ambitions on them.**

#### It is important to:

- Encourage but not force children to be active.
- Know when he / she is ready to play.
- Encourage healthy lifestyle habits.
- Attend training and games where possible.
- Promote and teach **FAIR PLAY**.
- Teach your child to treat referees, other players, coaches, officials and spectators with respect regardless of race, creed, colour, sex or ability.
- Help children to set realistic targets.
- Help children with decision making.

#### Parents/Guardians should not:

- Ignore or dismiss complaints or concerns expressed by a child which relate to his/her involvement in soccer.
- Ridicule or shout at a child for losing a game or making a mistake.
- Treat any club as a child minding service.
- Take safety for granted.
- Put undue pressure on any child to please or perform well.

Most importantly parents / guardians should: **"LEAD BY EXAMPLE"**

## Parent / Coach Co-Operation

It is important that parents / guardians establish contact with the individual responsible for coaching their child.

#### In addition, parents / guardians should:

- Give the coach help when asked and show appreciation for a job well done.
- Support the coach's and referee decisions. These individuals are only doing the best they can and they need support not anger.
- Refrain from contacting the coach unless it is necessary, respect they have a private life.

- Inform the coach about any illness, injury, holidays, etc.
- Make an effort to attend training and games.
- Communicate any concerns you may have to the coach.
- Make sure the child has appropriate equipment/clothing/refreshments.
- Encourage **FAIR PLAY** at home and do not instill a "win at all costs" attitude in children.
- Be positive or be quiet, negative comments are counter-productive.
- Conduct themselves in such a way which promotes the definition of **FAIR PLAY**.
- Be prepared to be asked to leave by officials or club personnel if behaviour is contrary to the definition of **FAIR PLAY**.

#### Parents / Guardians should never:

- Insult players or club personnel.
- Argue with, or shout abuse at officials and they should actively discourage children or young players from doing likewise.
- Suggest or encourage cheating, aggressive or "dirty" play.
- Placing undue or inappropriate criticism on a player, causing the player unnecessary or unhealthy levels of stress.
- Behave with physical or verbal aggression towards another person (actually use force or threaten the use of force).
- Engage in any "harassment" type of behaviour.

**"Sport for young people is about Fun and Participation, Best Effort and Fair Play in a Safe Environment"**

#### In promoting "Football for Fun" everyone involved in the organisation of football should:

- Encourage participation and fun.
- Promote the development of skills as opposed to winning at all costs.
- Emphasise and praise effort.
- Act as a good role model.
- Insist on **Fair Play**.
- Be realistic with expectations.
- Be aware of children's feelings.
- Teach players to respect different cultures.



#### Children in soccer are entitled to:

- Be safe.
- Be treated with dignity, sensitivity and respect.
- Participate in football on an equal basis, appropriate to their ability and stage of development.
- Be happy, have fun and enjoy football.
- 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.
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Children should also be encouraged to realise that they also have responsibilities to treat other children, referees, fellow players, coaches and volunteers with the same degree of fairness and respect.

#### In this regard children should undertake to:

- Play fairly, do their best and have fun.
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- 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 should not:

- Cheat.
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## Responsibility to Report

Any person, who has concerns about a child's welfare or who suspects that a child is being abused, or is at risk of abuse, has a responsibility to report their concerns to the Health Board or Gardaí.

Persons unsure about whether or not certain behaviours are abusive and therefore reportable, are advised that they can seek advice from the duty social worker in their local health board area where they will receive appropriate advice.

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All clubs should have clear procedures for responding to reports or concerns relating to the safety and welfare of children. Coaches / volunteers, children and parents / guardians should be aware of how and to whom they report concerns within the club or organisation.

## Mobile Phones

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- It is not appropriate to have constant communication for individual athletes
- Don't use the phone in certain locations; inappropriate use of your camera phone may cause upset or offence to another person, e.g. changing rooms

#### For further information or advice see:

FAI Code of Ethics & Best Practice which is available on our website [www.fai.ie](http://www.fai.ie)  
**Or contact:** FAI Code of Ethics Programme Co-ordinator / National Children's Officer,  
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## APPENDIX 3: FAI CONCERN/COMPLAINT POLICY



# FAI Concern/ Complaint Policy



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## Glossary

- **Affiliated Member** of the Association shall mean all National Bodies, Provincial Associations, leagues, clubs and AGM Members who have affiliated directly to the FAI or to their respective governing body.
- **Children, Child or Young Person** shall mean a person under the age of 18 other than a person who is or has been married.
- **Clubs/League Children's Officer** shall mean the person who the Child welfare day to day functions are delegated to. Their remit shall be a key component of the Safeguarding Statement and they shall be the Relevant Person for the Child Safeguarding Statement.
- **Designated Liaison Person** shall mean the person who is responsible for ensuring that reporting procedures within the Club/League are followed so that child welfare and protection concerns are referred promptly to Statutory Authorities and will also liaise with outside agencies. Additionally, they will be a resource person to any employee or volunteer who has child protection concerns.
- **Executive Committee** shall mean the Committee of the Affiliated Member responsible for the day to day running of the Affiliated Member.
- **Incident Form** shall mean the document which should be completed when making a report of poor practise.
- **National Body** shall mean the Colleges Football Association of Ireland (CFAI), Defence Forces Football Association (DFFA), Football Association of Ireland Schools (FAIS), Football For All (FFA), Irish Soccer Referees Society (ISRS), Irish Universities Football Union (IUFU), Junior Council and the Schoolboys Football Association of Ireland (SFAI).
- **Provincial Associations** shall mean the Connaught Football Association (CFA), Leinster Football Association (LFA), Munster Football Association (MFA) and Ulster Football Association (UFA).
- **Reporting Form** shall mean the document which should be completed when making a report of Child abuse.
- **Stand Down Order** shall mean an order which is issued to any person who is the subject of a complaint or inquiry by a Statutory Authority in relation to any Child welfare or Vulnerable Person concern. A Stand Down Order is issued to an individual to immediately refrain from particular activities within the FAI for a specified or indefinite period pending the outcome of an enquiry or investigation in accordance with FAI Rules.
- **Statutory Authorities** shall mean those state bodies which promote the welfare and protection of Children and Vulnerable Persons and have a legal responsibility for the investigation and/or validation of suspected abuse, and these include An Garda Síochána, the Health Service Executive and the Child and Family Agency (Túsia) and any other authority as may be appropriate from time to time.
- **The Policy** shall mean this FAI Concerns / Complaints Policy.
- **Vulnerable Person** means a person, other than a Child, who—
  1. is suffering from a disorder of the mind, whether as a result of mental illness or dementia,
  2. has an intellectual disability,
  3. is suffering from a physical impairment, whether as a result of injury, illness or age, or
  4. has a physical disability,which is of such a nature or degree—
  1. as to restrict the capacity of the person to guard himself or herself against harm by another person, or
  2. that results in the person requiring assistance with the activities of daily living including dressing, eating, walking, washing and bathing.

Please note- within the Policy where Child/Children is referred to there may be occasions when it may also be applicable to Vulnerable Persons.

## 1. Introduction

---

- 1.1. This document is written to provide clear and unambiguous procedures for responding to cases of suspected poor practice and/or abuse. It aims to set out guidelines and procedures on how to take action if there are any concerns about a Child's or Vulnerable Person's safety and welfare, for those working in a voluntary or paid capacity with Children or Vulnerable Persons within the game.
- 1.2. There is a responsibility on all volunteers/ staff within the game of Association football in Ireland to protect Children, Young Persons and Vulnerable Persons and report suspected abuse so that the Statutory Authorities can investigate. However, it is important to distinguish between poor practice and abuse.

## 2. What is Poor Practice?

---

- 2.1. Incidents of poor practice occur when the needs of Children or Vulnerable Persons are compromised. Examples of poor practice are likely to be once off incidents and these might include but are not limited to:

### 2.2. Coach

1. Giving preferential treatment to individuals and unfairly rejecting others (e.g. singling out and only focusing on the talented Children and failing to involve the full squad).
2. Giving preference to winning games over Children's development, participation and satisfaction.
3. Encouraging Children to play while injured.
4. Using inappropriate language, gestures or comments to motivate Children or provoke a reaction.
5. Delivering a coaching session alone, without another responsible adult present.
6. Not paying due care and attention to the Children taking part in the training session or game.
7. Failing to recognise and applaud a Child's efforts to make improvements to their game.
8. Coaching alone when their own child is part of the team.
9. Entering the field of play as a coach/manager when their own child is involved in an on-field incident.

### 2.3. Parent / Guardian

1. Placing too much pressure on their Child to perform to a high standard and win games.
2. Criticising their Child's performances instead of highlighting the positives of their game and where improvements were made.
3. Failing to ensure that their Child is appropriately dressed for the weather conditions.
4. Making derogatory comments about their Child, or another Child during a game or training session.
5. Failing to bring their Child to training on time, or collect them promptly at the end of the session.

### 2.4. Supporters

1. Using inappropriate language towards Children, coaches, referees or other supporters.
2. Making inappropriate comments about the performance of Children, coaches or referees.
3. Entering the field of play during a match or training session without being asked to do so.

### 2.5. The Club

1. Failing to provide adequate safeguarding arrangements for the Children in their care.
2. Failing to implement FAI Rules on the protection and welfare of Children, the FAI Child Welfare Policy and other supporting documents.
3. Placing undue pressure on a coach or team of Children to win games or competitions.
4. Allowing poor practice to go unreported (e.g. a coach who ridicules and criticises Children who make a mistake during a match).

1. Failing to create an environment that encourages player development and enjoyment over winning games and trophies.
2. Failing to provide appropriate safeguarding education for their coaches and members.
3. Not having procedures in place to ensure a parent/guardian does not coach their own child's team alone and that they do not enter the field of play as the coach or manager when their own child is involved in an on-field incident.

#### 2.6. General

1. Shouting at or ridiculing Children when they make a mistake. Children should be given the opportunity to learn from their mistakes and develop.
2. Allowing Children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
3. Placing Children in potentially compromising and uncomfortable situations with adults.
4. Ignoring health and safety guidelines (e.g. allowing Children to set up goal posts unsupervised by adults).
5. Failing to adhere to the club's codes of practice.

#### 2.7. Points to remember

1. Judgement about whether an incident is one of Child abuse or poor practice may not be possible at the point of referral, but only after the collation of relevant information.
2. The majority of poor practice concerns should be dealt with directly by the club in the first instance. Please refer to Section 3 for guidance on how to deal with an example of Poor Practice.

### 3. How to Deal with Alleged Poor Practice

---

- 3.1. Where alleged poor practice has been identified or reported, it must be dealt with in a fair and impartial manner. All information should be treated in the strictest of confidence, in accordance with procedures concerning confidentiality outlined in the FAI Child Welfare and Safeguarding Policy.
- 3.2. When an example of alleged poor practice is reported, it should be dealt with on a case by case basis. The following steps provide guidance as to how a complaint of poor practice could be handled:
  1. Alleged poor practice is observed and/or reported. This information is then passed on to the Children's Officer.
  2. Initial assessment is carried out by the Children's Officer who should collate all information / reports and record what action has been initially taken, if any.
  3. Inform the person(s) against which the report of alleged poor practice has been made and offer them the opportunity to respond.
  4. The Children's Officer should then record what the next step will be and if any other parties need to be approached to collect information or reports from.
  5. If information needs to be collected from Children this should be done in the presence of their parents or guardians. Collecting information from Children should only occur where necessary.
  6. All information should be treated in the strictest of confidence, in accordance with procedures concerning confidentiality outlined in the FAI Child Welfare and Safeguarding Policy.
  7. If the accused agrees that poor practice has taken place, they may be subject to an appropriate sanction. The matter should be referred by the Designated Liaison Person and / or Children's Officer to their Executive Committee for review. On assessment, the Executive Committee may refer the matter to an appropriate disciplinary body. This should be the body to which the matter was reported and if investigated in full no referral to a higher body is warranted.
  8. If the alleged poor practice is disputed, the Designated Liaison Person and / or Children's Officer must refer the matter to their Executive Committee for review. On assessment, the Executive Committee may refer the matter to an appropriate disciplinary body. This should be the body to which the matter was reported and if investigated in full no referral to a higher body is warranted.

9. Should a disciplinary hearing be required, the panel should be impartial consisting of at least 3 members. All parties should be provided with the opportunity to make further oral and / or written submissions.
10. Should the alleged poor practice relate to an individual that is under 18 years of age, **no meetings should be held with that person without the presence or permission of a parent/ guardian** if a parent or guardian cannot attend then a coach chosen by the parents can attend in their place.
11. All parties should be informed of the decision of any such investigation or disciplinary hearing in **writing** as soon as possible on completion of same.

**Note:** If a party feels that the alleged Poor Practice has not been investigated in full, they should refer the matter to the appropriate Affiliated Member as outlined in the FAI Concern / Complaint Procedure (please see Appendix 1), for example, Club to League, League to National Body/Provincial Association, National Body/Provincial Association to FAI.

#### 4. Possible Sanctions Involving Poor Practice

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**4.1.** If there is cause to believe that poor practice has occurred, a sanction proportionate to the offence should be applied. Some examples of possible sanctions are likely to be, but are not limited to:

##### 4.2. Coach

1. Issued with a verbal and / or written warning and warned as to their future conduct.
2. Required to re-attend an FAI approved Safeguarding course.
3. Required to step aside from duties for a specified period of time, or permanent removal.
4. Asked to work alongside a more experienced coach to ensure best practice is followed at all times.
5. Monitored by a nominated person as directed by the appropriate Committee.

##### 4.3. Parent / Guardian and Supporters

1. Issued with a verbal and / or written warning and warned as to their future conduct.
2. Asked not to attend training sessions and / or games for a period of time, or permanent removal.
3. Required to attend an FAI approved Safeguarding 1 course.
4. Suspended from club and have club membership removed.

**Note:** Any suspension / removal of a parent / guardian should not impact the involvement of the Child. Drop off and collection of their Child should be facilitated to allow the Child attend training and matches.

##### 4.4. The Club

1. Issued with a verbal and / or written warning and warned as to their future conduct.
2. Required to attend an FAI approved Safeguarding 2 or 3 course as appropriate to the role.
3. If a complaint of poor practice concerns a member of the Executive Committee, they may be asked to step down from their role for a specified period of time, or permanent removal.
4. Required to comply with recommendations concerning safeguarding practices from a higher body.

## 5. Child Abuse

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### 5.1. Concerns identified as Child abuse will fall within the following categories:

1. Physical Abuse
2. Neglect
3. Sexual Abuse
4. Emotional Abuse
5. Bullying

**Note:** Further information on each form of abuse can found in the FAI Child Welfare and Safeguarding Policy.

### 5.2. Grounds for Reasonable Concern

There are a number of indicators of abuse / suspected abuse, which include but are not limited to:

1. A direct disclosure / indication from a Child that they are / have been abused.
2. An account or report by a person who saw the Child being abused.
3. Consistent indication, over a period of time that a Child is suffering from abuse as defined in the FAI Child Welfare and Safeguarding Policy.
4. Evidence, such as an injury or behaviour which is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused another way.
5. A sudden change of temperament and / or personality in the Child.
6. Corroborative indicators supporting a concern e.g. pattern of injuries, an implausible explanation, other indicators of abuse, dysfunctional behaviour.
- 7.

If you have any concerns you should discuss these with the Designated Liaison Person in your organisation. At any time, you can consult informally with Tusta (Child & Family Agency) if you have a concern.

**Note:** For more information on recognising child abuse, please refer to the FAI Child Welfare and Safeguarding Policy.

### 5.3. How to Respond to a Disclosure from a Child

Should a Child make a disclosure, the following points should be considered:

1. At all times, take the Child seriously.
2. Questions should be kept to a minimum. Your role is to listen, not to interview.
3. Praise the Child and assure them they have done the right thing.
4. Stay calm and do not react emotionally.
5. Do not make any judgemental statements about the alleged abuse or abuser.
6. Do not promise to keep the information a secret, but reassure the Child that any sharing of information will be to protect them.
7. Record exactly what has been said as soon as possible in line with recording procedures (Please see Appendix 2).
8. Explain to the Child what will happen next.
9. All information should be treated in the strictest of confidence, in accordance with procedures concerning confidentiality outlined in the FAI Child Welfare and Safeguarding Policy.

## 6. Reporting

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- 6.1.** If a report of poor practice is made it should be recorded using the Incident Form in Appendix 2. This report should be submitted to the Children's Officer. A record should be kept of when the report was made, to whom and any response(s) received. For the avoidance of doubt, the person completing the Incident Form may in fact be the Children's Officer.
- 6.2.** If the report of Child abuse is made it should be recorded using the Reporting Form in Appendix 3. This report should be submitted to the Designated Liaison Person. Reporting procedures are detailed within Section 5 of the Child Welfare and Safeguarding Policy should be followed.
- 6.3.** In cases which are deemed to be poor practice, they should be dealt with in accordance with Section 3 of the Policy.
- 6.4.** In cases which are deemed child abuse they should be dealt with as follows:
1. Anyone can report a concern about a child. If you have any concerns about a child you should report it to the Child and Family Agency (Tusla).
  2. A report can be made in person, by telephone or in writing to the Child and Family Agency (Tusla).
  3. The Reporting Form should also be completed and submitted immediately to the Designated Liaison Person for your organisation, where appropriate.
  4. This report must also be forwarded to a Duty Social worker in the Child and Family Agency (Tusla) in the area where the child lives.
  5. To access the contact details of a Duty Social worker you will need to log onto [www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie), select 'Get in Touch', select 'Duty Social Work Teams'.
  6. If the Designated Liaison Person is unsure whether reasonable grounds for concern exist, they should informally contact the Child and Family Agency (Tusla) who will advise whether or not the matter requires a formal report.
  7. If a child is in danger outside of office hours for the Child and Family Agency (Tusla) you need to contact the Gardaí.
- Note:** In the event that the Designated Liaison Person decides that they do not have reasonable grounds for reporting any concerns - Individuals are free to consult with, or make a report (formal or informal) to the Statutory Authorities themselves. More detail on reporting cases of Child Abuse can be found in the FAI Child Welfare and Safeguarding Policy 2018.

## 7. Stand Down Order

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- 7.1.** Any persons under investigation by a Statutory Authority must be issued with a Stand Down Order in accordance with the FAI Child Welfare and Safeguarding Policy.

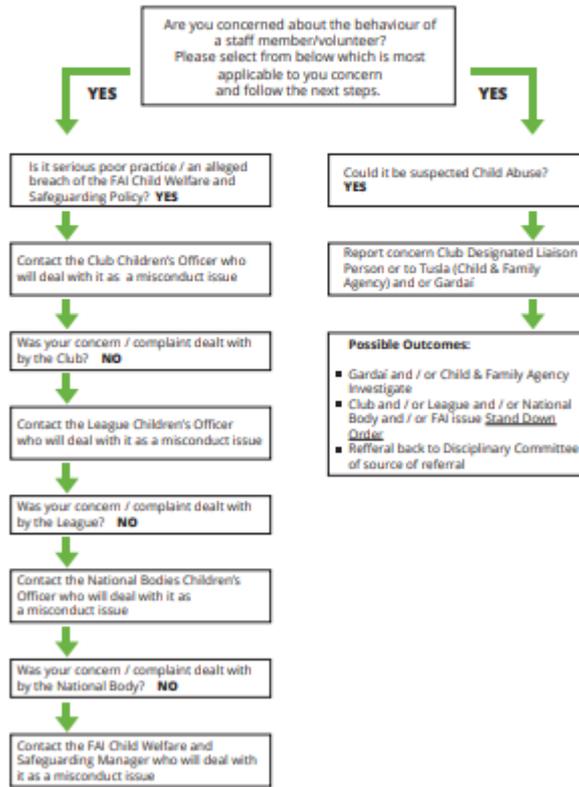
## 8. Anonymous Complaints

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- 8.1.** Whilst difficult to pursue, anonymous complaints should not be ignored. Anonymous complaints should be brought to the attention of the Designated Liaison Person and / or Children's Officer and investigated in full based on the information that has been provided. The investigation should be completed without prejudice to any person and it should be explained to all parties that there is an obligation to investigate all matters reported. Where necessary, having carefully considered all of the facts, a report to the Statutory Authorities may be submitted.



**Concern / Complaint Procedure**





CLUB NAME	
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Accident/Incident Report Form (Please use block capitals or type this form)

Name of person completing this form	
Title/Role	
Address	
Tel. Number	
Mobile Number	

Accident Details
_____
_____
_____
_____

Date and Time	
Venue	

Name of person completing this form	
Name of person completing this form	
Name of person completing this form	

Witness 1 Contact Details	
Witness 2 Contact Details	

Signature	
Date	



**APPENDIX 3  
Reporting Form**

Use block letters when filling out this form. Fields marked with an \* are mandatory.

1. Tusla Area (this is where the child resides)*	
2. Date of Report*	

**3. Details of Child**

First Name*		Surname*	
Male* <input type="checkbox"/>	Female* <input type="checkbox"/>	Date of Birth*	
Address*		Estimated Age*	
		School Name*	
		School Address*	
Eircode			

**4. Details of Concerns\***

Please complete the following section with as much detail about the specific child protection or welfare concern or allegation as possible. Include dates, times, incident details and names of anyone who observed any incident. Please include the parents and child's view, if known. Please attach additional sheets, if necessary

Please see 'Tusla Children First – A Guide for the Reporting of Child Protection and Welfare Concerns' for additional assistance on the steps to consider in making a report to Tusla

**5. Type of Concern**

Child Welfare Concern <input type="checkbox"/>	Neglect <input type="checkbox"/>	Sexual Abuse <input type="checkbox"/>
Emotional Abuse <input type="checkbox"/>	Physical Abuse <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**6. Details of Reporter**

<b>First Name</b>		<b>Surname</b>	
<b>Address</b> If reporting in a professional capacity, please use your professional address.		<b>Organisation</b>	
		<b>Position Held</b>	
		<b>Mobile No.</b>	
		<b>Telephone No.</b>	
<b>Eircode</b>		<b>Email Address</b>	

Is this a Mandated Report made under Sec 14, Children First Act 2015? Yes  No

Mandated Person's Type

**7. Details of Other Persons Where a Joint Report is Being Made**

<b>First Name</b>		<b>Surname</b>	
<b>Address</b> If reporting in a professional capacity, please use your professional address.		<b>Organisation</b>	
		<b>Position Held</b>	
		<b>Mobile No.</b>	
		<b>Telephone No.</b>	
<b>Eircode</b>		<b>Email Address</b>	

<b>First Name</b>		<b>Surname</b>	
<b>Address</b> If reporting in a professional capacity, please use your professional address.		<b>Organisation</b>	
		<b>Position Held</b>	
		<b>Mobile No.</b>	
		<b>Telephone No.</b>	
<b>Eircode</b>		<b>Email Address</b>	

**8. Parents Aware of Report**

Are the child's parents/carers aware that this concern is being reported to Tusla? Yes  No

If the parent/carer does not know, please indicate reasons:

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**9. Relationships**

Details of Mother			
First Name		Surname	
Address		Mobile No.	
		Telephone No.	
		Email Address	
Eircode			
Is the Mother a Legal Guardian?*		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

Details of Father			
First Name		Surname	
Address		Mobile No.	
		Telephone No.	
		Email Address	
Eircode			
Is the Father a Legal Guardian?*		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

**10. Household Composition**

First Name	Surname	Relationship	Date of Birth	Estimated Age	Additional Information e.g. school, occupation, other

11. Details of Person(s) Allegedly Causing Harm

First Name*	<input type="text"/>	Surname*	<input type="text"/>
Male* <input type="checkbox"/>	Female* <input type="checkbox"/>	Date of Birth	<input type="text"/>
Address	<input type="text"/>	Estimated Age	<input type="text"/>
		Mobile No.	<input type="text"/>
		Telephone No.	<input type="text"/>
		Email Address	<input type="text"/>
		Organisation	<input type="text"/>
		Occupation	<input type="text"/>
Eircode	<input type="text"/>	Position Held	<input type="text"/>
Relationship to Child		<input type="text"/>	
Address at time of alleged incident		<input type="text"/>	
If name unknown please indicate reason		<input type="text"/>	

First Name*	<input type="text"/>	Surname*	<input type="text"/>
Male* <input type="checkbox"/>	Female* <input type="checkbox"/>	Date of Birth	<input type="text"/>
Address	<input type="text"/>	Estimated Age	<input type="text"/>
		Mobile No.	<input type="text"/>
		Telephone No.	<input type="text"/>
		Email Address	<input type="text"/>
		Organisation	<input type="text"/>
		Occupation	<input type="text"/>
Eircode	<input type="text"/>	Position Held	<input type="text"/>
Relationship to Child		<input type="text"/>	
Address at time of alleged incident		<input type="text"/>	
If name unknown please indicate reason		<input type="text"/>	

**12. Name and Address of Other Organisations, Personnel or Agencies Known to be Involved Currently or Previously with the Family**

Profession	First Name	Surname	Address	Contact Number	Recent Contact e.g. 12/18 months ago
Social Worker					
Public Health Nurse					
GP					
Hospital					
School					
Gardaí					
Pre-school/ crèche					
Other					

**13. Any Other Relevant Information, Including any Previous Contact with the Child or Family**

**Please ensure you have indicated if this is a mandated report in section 6.  
Thank you for completing the report form.**

In completing this report form you are providing details on yourself and on others. Details such as name, address and date of birth fall under the definition of 'Personal Data' in the Data Protection Acts, 1988 & 2003. Tusla has a responsibility under these Acts in its capacity as a Data Controller to, amongst other things, obtain and process this data fairly; keep it safe and secure; and to keep it for a specified lawful purpose. That purpose is to fulfil our statutory responsibility under the Child Care Act 1991 to promote the protection and welfare of children. Tusla may, during the course of the assessment of this report disclose such Personal Data to other agencies including An Garda Síochána. Further details about Tusla's responsibilities as a Data Controller and your rights as a Data Subject can be found on our website, [www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie). As you are providing Personal Data on others, you are a Data Processor. We ask that you only provide those details that are necessary for the report and that you keep this report and the Personal Data contained in it secure from unauthorised access, disclosure, destruction or accidental loss.

**14. For Completion by Tusla Authorised Person on Receipt of Report**

<b>Report Received by</b>		
First Name	<input type="text"/>	Surname
Date	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<b>Mandated Report Acknowledgement by</b>		
First Name	<input type="text"/>	Surname
Date Sent	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Authorised Person Signature*	<input type="text"/>	
Date*	<input type="text"/>	
Child Previously Known	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Allocated Case No	<input type="text"/>	

## NOTES

