

ATHY RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB

The Showgrounds, Athy, Co. Kildare



ATHY RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB

CODE OF ETHICS



Code of Ethics

1 Glossary of Terms

- (1) "The Club" - means Athy Rugby Football Club
- (2) "Members" – means all Officers, Players, Team Officials and Social or Associate Members of Athy Rugby Football Club
- (3) "Players" – means all those taking part in team participation whether competitive, friendly, organised practice and training sessions.
- (4) "Team Officials" - means all coaches, Management teams, physio teams involved with one or more teams within the Club.
- (5) "Social or Associate Members" - means any person or persons who have paid a lesser subscription to the Club to become a member but not actively involved in the game of Rugby.
- (6) "Members and Guests" - include all members and officers of the Athy Rugby Football Club, and all guests of those members and officers, as well as all individuals who watch / attend / participate / officiate in matches hosted by the club in whatever capacity.
- (7) "Implicated Person" – means a person who is the subject of a sending off by a referee, the subject of a complaint by another person or is the subject of a disciplinary investigation for a breach of the club's Code of Ethics or any other behaviour deemed inappropriate by the Executive Committee of the Club.

For clarity and avoidance of doubt, this Code of Ethics refers to "Members, Players, Team Officials, Social Members, Members and Guests", whether individually, collectively or specifically referred to or not within this document.

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2 Introduction

Athy Rugby Football Club is committed to maintaining the highest standards of behaviour and conduct. Members representing the club are expected to support their Coaches and Captain and respond to leadership in a positive fashion to ensure the good standing of the club.

The Executive Committee of the Club has the overall responsibility for the behaviour of its members. Members remain under the jurisdiction of these rules when playing on an opponent's ground or when appearing in a league representative side.

These rules will apply in all matches played by the club, whether competitive or friendly, and all organised practice and training sessions and whilst present in or representing the Club in a social capacity.

3 General Rules of Behaviour

All members and guests of Athy Rugby Football Club will:

- ✓ Respect the rights, dignity, and worth of every person within the context of the game of Rugby.
- ✓ Treat everyone equally, and not discriminate on the grounds of age, gender, disability, race, ethnic origin, nationality, colour, parental or marital status, religious belief, class or social background, sexual preference or political belief.
- ✓ Not condone, or allow to go unchallenged, any form of discrimination if witnessed.
- ✓ Display high standards of behaviour.
- ✓ Promote the positive aspects of Rugby e.g. fair play, respect & friendship.
- ✓ Abide by the IRFU and Leinster Branch Code of Conduct (Appendix 1).
- ✓ Encourage all participants to learn the Laws and rules and play within them, respecting the decisions of match officials.
- ✓ Actively discourage unfair play, rule violations, and arguing with match officials.
- ✓ Recognise good performance not just match results.
- ✓ Ensure that activities are appropriate for the age, maturity, experience, and ability of the individual.
- ✓ Respect young people's opinions when making decisions about their participation in Rugby.
- ✓ Not smoke, drink or use banned substances whilst actively working with young people in the Club.
- ✓ Avoid the use of alcohol before coaching, during events and on trips with young people
- ✓ Not provide young people with alcohol, cigarettes or any banned substance when they are under the care of the Club.
- ✓ Follow **Irish Sport Council's, Code of Ethics & Good Practice for Children's Sport in Ireland'** and **IRFU Code of Conduct, Safeguarding Policy, IRFU Spirit of Rugby Guidelines** and any other relevant guidelines issued.
- ✓ Not take Photographs / Images of children at Matches, Training or Club Functions without the prior permission of the parents/carers of the children.



4 Bullying

Athy Rugby Football Club operates an Anti-Bullying Policy.

All cases of bullying or suspected bullying should be reported immediately to the Secretary or the Executive Committee.

Following appropriate investigation, where a case of bullying is identified, notwithstanding the Grievance and Disciplinary Procedure referred to in below, appropriate sanctions will be put in place immediately, including but not limited to disciplinary action, and where deemed appropriate, immediate expulsion from the Club.

Types of bullying (this list is non-exhaustive and serves only as a guide)

- ❖ Name calling.
- ❖ Spreading harmful rumours about others.
- ❖ Exclusion from activities.
- ❖ Intentionally isolating another person from conversation or during activity.
- ❖ Threatening or intimidating behaviour.
- ❖ Taking or damaging property or belongings.
- ❖ Physical assault or causing physical harm.
- ❖ Making a person do things they don't want to.
- ❖ Threatening or abusive text messaging and or use of social networking or social media internet sites that is deemed inappropriate against an individual, individuals, players, members or the name of Athy Rugby Football Club, Athy RFC or any other title associated with the Club at any given time.



5 Additional Rules of Behaviour While Playing

- The Captains and Team Officials are always responsible for ensuring that play is conducted within the spirit of the game as well as within the Laws.
- Players and Team Officials will not at any time engage in conduct unbecoming to a player or team official, which could bring the game into disrepute.
- Players and Team Officials will not intimidate assault or attempt to intimidate or assault an umpire, another player or spectator.
- Players and Team Officials will not use crude or abusive language (known as “sledging”) nor make any offensive gestures, nor appeal excessively.
- Players and Team Officials will not make any public pronouncement or comment, which is detrimental to the game, in question.
- The Captain and Team Officials must take adequate steps to ensure the good behaviour of their members, and supporters towards players, and umpires.
- Place the well-being and safety of all players above the development of performance.
- Adults must not change or shower at the same time using the same facility as children.
- If Adults and children need to share a changing facility, the Club must have consent from the Parents that their children can share a changing room with Adults in the club.
- Cameras and any other recording Equipment must not be used in the changing room.

**Please note that if children are uncomfortable changing or showering at the Club, no pressure should be placed on them to do so.*

6 Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures

The Executive Committee will be empowered to take disciplinary action against any person who is found to be in breach of the Rules and Code of Conduct of the Club.

In the event of a complaint being made to the Club in respect of any matter which would be deemed to contravene the Rules and Code of Conduct of the Club, the following Grievance and Disciplinary procedures will be followed:

(a) Grievances

A complaint may relate to a personal grievance, a collective grievance or an alleged breach of the Athy Rugby Football Club Code of Ethics (including bullying) or other serious matter.

(b) Raising an issue informally

It is anticipated that most issues can be resolved at local level between the parties involved, i.e. between members themselves, with the captains or the appropriate member of the committee. The sooner an issue is raised informally the better as it can often be resolved quickly and in a low-key manner. This is the case also when a person feels they are being subject to repeated behaviour that is an affront to their dignity (i.e. bullying behaviour). However, where this is not

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possible/appropriate or where such an approach fails to address the matter satisfactorily, the formal complaints procedure should be followed.

(c) Formal Grievances

A formal complaint should be sent to the Club Secretary or the Child Welfare Officer (where the complaint relates to youth rugby) in writing setting out the issue and the relevant details. The complaint should identify any efforts (if appropriate) that were made to try and resolve the matter at a local level. Complaints relating to another player, captain or officer that allege a breach of the Athy Rugby Football Club code of Ethics or other serious matter that could potentially lead to disciplinary action will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.

Any other formal complaint will be considered by the Club Secretary (or Child Welfare Officer) and the Executive Committee, who will seek to resolve the matter with the relevant parties. Having done so a response will be sent to the complainant informing them of the outcome and reasons in as timely a fashion as possible (preferably within 21 days)

The complainant may appeal this decision in writing to the Club Secretary (or Child Welfare Officer) requesting the matter be reconsidered. At this stage the Executive Committee will refer the matter to the disciplinary committee to review the complaint and the outcome. The disciplinary committee will report back to the Executive Committee and a written response outlining the decision will be sent to the complainant in as timely a fashion possible (preferably within 21 days). This decision will be final and binding.

(d) Disciplinary Procedure

This procedure is intended to be used only where issues cannot be resolved at local level with captains or other members of the committee or between players themselves. Notwithstanding this all complaints brought in writing will be given due consideration.

The aim of this procedure is to ensure that the club properly controls its players and members to ensure that the Club acts in a manner designed to protect the good name of the Club and of the game of rugby generally.

(e) Formal Procedure

Any alleged breach of Athy Rugby Football Club Code of Ethics or serious matter that can be reasonably shown as something that could bring the club or the game of rugby into disrepute will be notified in writing (to be known as 'a Complaint') by the relevant captain (or any other person) to the Club Secretary or the Child Welfare Officer (where the complaint relates to youth rugby) as soon as possible (but, where possible, within 21 days*) following the alleged breach taking place.

**Note: In the interests of fairness, complaints should be submitted within these timeframes. However, later complaints will be considered where the allegation is of a serious nature or where it involves a youth member.*

Any complaint so initiated must be referred to the Executive Committee.

Upon receipt of such complaint, and as soon as reasonably practicable, Executive Committee will note the complaint and refer the matter to The Disciplinary Committee which will be convened as soon as practicable.

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****Note:** *The Child Welfare Officer and/or designated contact person should always be consulted on any complaint/issue that involves a person under the age of 18 so they can provide guidance. Allegations of child abuse/child protection issues will be reported to the relevant authorities.*

(f) Disciplinary Committee

The Executive Committee will appoint a Disciplinary Officer and Disciplinary Committee Panel as soon as possible after the AGM each year. The Disciplinary Officer will be a member of the Executive or will be co-opted if not a member. The other members of the Disciplinary Committee Panel (minimum 3 additional persons) will not be executive committee members and will be persons of long good standing in the club or community. When a complaint is received the Disciplinary Officer will arrange a hearing as soon as is practicable. Any adjournments may be granted at the discretion of the Disciplinary Committee.

The Disciplinary Committee will be chosen from the Panel and will consist of at least three persons including the Disciplinary Officer. A chairperson will be elected each time the Disciplinary Committee is convened to deal with an issue. None of the members will be connected with the implicated person(s) at the time of the complaint or alleged breach of the Code of Ethics. If a member of the Disciplinary Committee is related to the implicated person(s), that member will excuse themselves for the duration of the adjudication of that complaint or alleged breach. Where the disciplinary matter involves a player under 18 the Child Welfare Officer will be consulted by the committee to ensure adherence to relevant safeguarding policies and legislation.

In any case which is referred for a Disciplinary Hearing, as much notice as possible (in writing) of the hearing and of the offence(s) alleged will be given to the implicated person.

The implicated person will be entitled to attend the hearing, state their case, be informed of the evidence provided by others and will be given the opportunity to refute charges against him or her. The player will be entitled to be supported by a colleague, friend, child welfare officer or parent and to call witnesses.

The purpose of the Disciplinary Hearing will be to establish the facts and the committee having considered all the evidence will make a finding which will be recommended to the Executive Committee for ratification. For the avoidance of doubt, the Disciplinary Committee will be allowed to communicate with the implicated person to arrange a hearing etc, but the disciplinary committee will not communicate the findings of any hearing or investigation except through the Executive Committee.

Any player, coach, parent or spectator who is sent off during a game will be immediately suspended by the club pending the outcome of a Leinster Branch hearing and / or a Club Disciplinary Hearing.

(g) Red Cards / Sending's Off

Any player, coach, parent or spectator who is sent off during a game is deemed to be immediately suspended by the club pending the outcome of a Leinster Branch hearing and / or a Club Disciplinary Hearing. In these cases, a Club Disciplinary Hearing will be convened as soon as possible, and in all cases, this should be in advance of the Leinster Branch hearing if time and



schedules allow. The disciplinary panel will, if possible, determine any sanction that may be necessary and inform the implicated person and the Leinster Branch of the outcome in advance of the Leinster Branch Hearing.

(h) Penalties

If the Club finds that misconduct occurred, the following are possible sanctions:

1. To require a person to write letter(s) of apology within a specified time.
2. To record a reprimand and to give a warning as to future conduct.
3. To suspend a player's right to be considered for selection by the club to play in one or more matches.
4. To suspend a person's membership of the club for a period.
5. To suspend a person from attending matches for a period.
6. To adopt a sanction handed down by Leinster Branch or IRFU
7. To impose more than one of the above penalties.
8. To terminate the person's membership forthwith.

Decisions of the Disciplinary Panel (a finding that a complaint is proved or not proved or a decision on penalty) will be by majority vote; where necessary the Disciplinary Panel Chairman will have a casting vote.

The implicated person will be notified by the Club Secretary in writing of the decision and any penalties, if any, imposed within seven days of the decision being made.

(i) Appeals Procedure

The implicated person will have the right of appeal to the Executive Committee of the Club for a review of the findings of the Disciplinary Hearing and of the penalty or penalties imposed.

If Notice of Appeal is given the penalty will not take effect pending the hearing of the Appeal, which will take place as soon as is practicable.

The Appeal will be by way of re-hearing before a different Panel. The composition of the Appeals Panel will be at the discretion of the Club Executive Committee and will consist of not less than three persons, none of whom will be connected with the player at the time of the alleged breach. The implicated person will have the same rights of attendance and representation, and to call witnesses as they had before the Disciplinary Panel.

The Appeals Panel may confirm, vary or reverse the decision of the Disciplinary Panel and it will have the power to increase the penalty and award costs of the Appeal hearing. Decisions of the Appeal Panel will be by majority vote; where necessary, the Appeals Panel Chairman will have a casting vote.

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- (j) For the avoidance of doubt, the Appeals Panel will be allowed to communicate with the implicated person to arrange a hearing etc. but the Appeals Panel will not communicate the findings of any hearing or investigation except through the Executive Committee.

The player will be notified by the Club Secretary in writing of the decision and any penalties, if any, imposed by the Appeals Panel within seven days of the Appeals decision having been made.

The decision of the Appeals Panel will be final and binding.



APPENDIX 1 - Code of Conduct - Leinster Branch / IRFU

Code for Players

- ✓ Play for enjoyment and become part of the rugby family.
- ✓ Respect the "Game of Rugby" and play within the laws of the Game.
- ✓ Accept the referee's decision and let your captain or coach ask any relevant questions.
- ✓ Play with control. Do not lose your temper.
- ✓ Always do your best and be committed to the game, your team and your club.
- ✓ Be a "good sport". Applaud all good play whether by your team or the opposition.
- ✓ Respect your opponent. Treat all players as you would like to be treated. Do not "bully" or take advantage of any player.
- ✓ Rugby is a team sport so make sure you co-operate with your coach; teammates and members of your club.
- ✓ Remember that the goals of the game are to have fun, improve your skills and feel good.
- ✓ At the end of the match thank your opponents and the referee for the match.
- ✓ Always remember that you owe a duty of care to your opponents. Tackle hard but fairly, do not intend to hurt your opponent.
- ✓ Winning and losing is part of sport: Win with humility lose with dignity.
- ✓ As part of the team it is important that you attend training regularly and listen to your coach and help your team.
- ✓ As a team sport, it is important to understand that all members are important to the team!
- ✓ Remember you are representing your team, club, family and the Game of Rugby.

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Code for Parents

- ✓ Remember, young people play rugby for their enjoyment, not only yours.
- ✓ Encourage your child always to play by the Laws of the Game.
- ✓ Teach young children that honest endeavour is as important as winning, so that the result of each game is accepted without disappointment.
- ✓ Help young people to work towards skill improvement and good sportsmanship.
- ✓ Set a good example by applauding good play on both sides.
- ✓ Never ridicule, humiliate or shout at young players for making a mistake or losing a match.
- ✓ Do not place emphasis on winning at all costs.
- ✓ Do not force an unwilling child to participate in the playing of rugby. If the child is to play, he/she will do so in good time through your encouragement.
- ✓ Support all efforts to remove verbal and physical abuse from rugby.
- ✓ As a spectator do not use profane language or harass referees, coaches or players.
- ✓ Do not publicly question the referees' judgement and never their honesty.
- ✓ Recognise the value and importance of volunteer referees and coaches.
- ✓ Identify and acknowledge the good qualities of the Game of Rugby and uphold these values.
- ✓ Remember you and your child's contribution to the Game of Rugby is very important to the IRFU and be proud of your contribution.
- ✓ Understand the value of team sport and the importance thereof.

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Code for Coaches

- ✓ Lead by example young people need a coach whom they respect.
- ✓ Be generous with your praise when it is deserved. Never ridicule or shout at players for making mistakes or losing a match.
- ✓ Teach your players that the Laws of the Game are mutual agreements which no one should evade or break.
- ✓ Ensure that all players participate in matches. The "average" players deserve equal time.
- ✓ Remember that young players play for fun and enjoyment and that skill learning and playing for fun have priority over highly structured competition. Winning is not the only objective.
- ✓ Develop player and team respect for the ability of opponents, as well as for the judgement of referees and opposing coaches.
- ✓ Insist on fair play and disciplined play. Do not tolerate foul play, fighting or foul language. Be prepared to take off an offending player.
- ✓ Create a safe and enjoyable environment in which to train and play.
- ✓ Do not over burden younger players with too much information.
- ✓ Be aware of the effect you have on growing children.
- ✓ Never criticise the referee or touch judges during or after a match in front of players or spectators.
- ✓ Always thank the match officials and if they have made decisions which require clarification, discuss the problems after everyone has changed.
- ✓ Seek and follow the advice of a doctor in determining when an injured player is ready to play again.
- ✓ Be responsible and ensure you uphold the ethos of the game and the IRFU.
- ✓ Support the Code of Ethics and all policies regarding Children in Sport.
- ✓ Ensure you and your players are proud of your team, club and efforts during the season.
- ✓ Remember that as a coach of an "age grade team" you are to act in "loco parentis" and to that extent your duty of care is more onerous than that of a coach to an adult team.

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Code for Spectators

- ✓ Remember that although young people play organised rugby they are not "miniature internationals".
- ✓ Be on your best behaviour and lead by example. Do not use profane language or harass referees, players or coaches.
- ✓ Applaud good play by the visiting team as well as your own.
- ✓ Show respect for your team's opponents. Without them there would not be a match.
- ✓ Condemn the use of violence in all forms at every opportunity.
- ✓ Verbal abuse of players or referees cannot be accepted in any shape of form.
- ✓ Players or referees are not fair targets for ignorant behaviour.
- ✓ Encourage young players to play by the Laws of the Game.
- ✓ Spectators can contribute to the enjoyment of the event and all involved.
- ✓ Be proud of your club and the Game of Rugby

[Leinster Branch IRFU Disciplinary Regulations may be read/downloaded from Leinster Branch website]

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Revision History for this template document

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1.0	1 st Issue	Exec.	Exec.	Exec.	May 2013
2.0	Re-Draft – Add Disciplinary Committee & IRFU Code of Conduct	AG	Exec.	Exec.	12-09-2019
3.0	Changes re timing of hearings after a red card	AG	Exec.	Exec.	28-11-2019

Distribution List

	Committee	Name
1	Executive Committee	All Members

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