



Code of Ethics  
and Good Practice  
for Young Players



Ladies Gaelic



We All  
Play Ball





## TABLE OF CONTENTS

● 1.	Core Values	2
● 2.	Policy Statement	4
● 3.	Code of Behaviour for all Persons working with Young People	5
	3.1 Young Players	
	3.2 Mentors	
	3.3 Parents/ Guardians	
	3.4 Supporters	
	3.5 The Club	
	3.6 Children's Officer	
● 4.	Guidelines for Dealing with Young Players	15
	4.1 Mentor Recruitment and selection policy	
	4.2 Garda Vetting and AccessNI checks	
	4.3 Supervision	
	4.4 Travelling with Young Players	
	4.5 Away Trips/ Overnight Stays	
	4.6 Hosting	
	4.7 Safety	
	4.8 Touching	
	4.9 Photography and Filming Guidelines	
	4.10 Registration, Dropout & Transfers	
	4.11 Mobile Phones	
● 5.	Child Protection Procedures	26
	5.1 Dealing with a Complaint	
	5.2 Dealing with Suspected Abuse	
	5.3 False Allegations	
	5.4 Confidentiality	
	5.5 Anonymous Complaints	
	5.6 Rumours	
● 6.	Useful Forms	31
	6.1 Parental Registration Form	
	6.2 Annual Travel Permission Form	
	6.3 Overnight Travel Permission Form	
	6.4 New Mentor Application form	
	6.5 Existing Mentor/Volunteer Information form	
	6.6 Host Family	
● 7.	Appendices	37
	7.1 Format for Disciplinary Committee's Report	
	7.2 Anti-Bullying Policy	
	7.3 Grounds for Concern	
	7.4 Categories of Abuse	
	7.5 Inclusion and Integration Strategy	
	7.6 Volunteer Charter	
	7.7 Charter against Racism in Sport	
	7.8 Sample Codes of Conduct for Under 10's and Under 12's	
	7.9 Code of Ethics Information Evenings	
	7.10 Resources available	
● 8.	Useful Contact Numbers	49
● 9.	References	52



## 1. CORE VALUES

The Ladies Gaelic Football Association is based on the following principles that will guide the development of our sport for young players. The stages of development of the young person should guide the types of activity provided within the Association. Adults will need to have a basic understanding of the physical, emotional and personal needs of young players.

### Integrity in relationships

Adults interacting with young players in Ladies Gaelic Football should do so with integrity and respect for the player. There is a danger that sporting contexts can be used to exploit or undermine children. All adult actions should be guided by what is best for the young players and in the context of quality, and open working relationships. Verbal, physical, emotional or sexual abuse of any kind is unacceptable within Ladies Gaelic Football.

### Quality atmosphere and ethos

Ladies Gaelic Football involving young players 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.

### Importance of Childhood

The importance of childhood should be understood and valued by everyone involved in the Ladies Gaelic Football Association. The right to happiness within childhood should be recognised and enhanced at all levels of our sport.

### Needs of a Child

All children's sporting experiences should be guided by what is best for children. This means that adults should have basic understanding of the emotional, physical and personal needs of young people. The stages of development and the ability of children should guide the types of activity provided within the sport. In Ladies Gaelic Football these activities are clearly outlined in our Player Pathway, which forms the basis of our Unlocking the Potential Coach Development Programme.

### Equality

All children should be valued and treated in an equitable and fair manner regardless of age, gender, religion, social and ethnic background or political persuasion. Children, irrespective of ability or disability, should be involved in sports activities in an integrated and inclusive way, whenever possible, thus allowing them to participate to their potential alongside other children. Team Mentors should be aware of and seek to gain competence in addressing the needs of young people with disabilities or any other additional needs.

### Fair Play

Fair play is the guiding principle of the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Young Players in Ladies Gaelic Football. All 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 a way of behaving. It incorporates issues concerned with the elimination of cheating, gamesmanship, unequal opportunities, excessive commercialisation and corruption'. (European Sports Charter and Code of Ethics, Council of Europe, 1993).





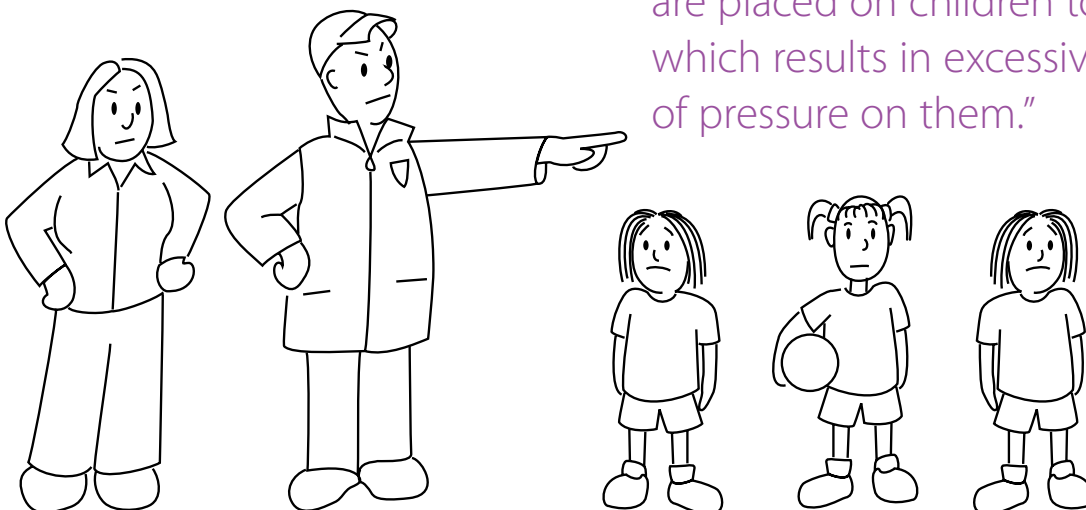
## Competition

Competition is an essential element of sport and should be encouraged in an age appropriate manner. A balanced approach to competition can make a significant contribution to children's development while at the same time providing fun, enjoyment and satisfaction. Through such competition children learn respect for opponents, officials and rules of the sport.



Too often competitive demands are placed on children too early, which results in excessive levels of pressure on them. This is one of a number of factors, which contribute to high levels of dropout in sport. It should always be kept in mind that the welfare of the player comes first and competitive standards come second. While under eight is a very different age group to under eighteen the same general principle should apply.

As adults we need to strike a balance between a young person's desire to win and a young person's right to participate, irrespective of ability. Remember that success is not the same as winning and failure is not the same as losing.



## Legislative Basis

While the Code of Ethics is not a legal document, it is based on the Child Care Act (IRL) 1991 and the Children (NI) Order 1993, as well as subsequent related legislation, such as Children's Act 2001, Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults Act (NI) 2003 and the Protection of Persons Reporting Act (IRL) 1998.

Furthermore Ireland is a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which acknowledges the right of the child to protection from all harm. Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child recognises the 'right of the child to engage in play and to have the chance to join in a wide range of activities.'

In order to promote this charter and in response to consultation with young people the Office of the Minister for Children (IRL) includes in its strategy the objective that 'children will have access to play, sport and recreation and cultural activities to enrich their experience of childhood.' The Officer of the Minister for Children appointed an Ombudsman for Children in 2004, while Northern Ireland appointed the Commissioner for Children and Young People in 2003.

This Code is intended to provide guidelines for those working with young people in Ladies Gaelic Football. It is not a definite legal interpretation of the legislation. While it is not a legal document, failure to comply may have legal implications or consequences.

"Too often competitive demands are placed on children too early, which results in excessive levels of pressure on them."



## 2. POLICY STATEMENT

The Ladies Gaelic Football Association is fully committed to safeguarding the well being of its members. Every individual in the Association should at all times, show respect and understanding for members rights, safety and welfare and conduct themselves in a way that reflects the principles of the Association and the guidelines contained in the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Young Players.

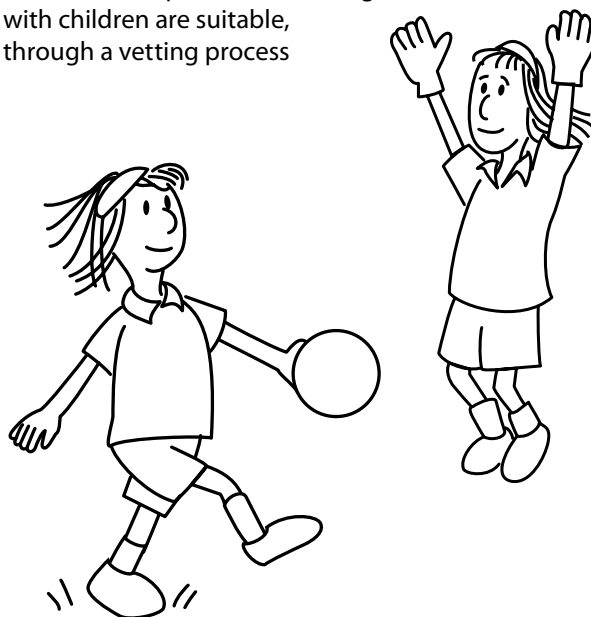
In Ladies Gaelic Football, one of our first priorities is the welfare of young players and we are committed to providing an environment, which will allow players to perform to the best of their ability, free from bullying and intimidation. As part of our commitment, we have adopted a code to protect our underage players (all persons under 18 years of age) and all mentors and members involved with our underage teams.



“we are committed to providing an environment, which will allow players to perform to the best of their ability, free from bullying and intimidation.”

### In compliance with the Code, the Ladies Gaelic Football Association will:

- Ensure that the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Young Players is adopted, agreed to, implemented and signed up to at Club, County and National level.
- Amend, as necessary, the Constitution to reflect a safe and clearly defined method of recruiting, selecting and managing
- Appoint a National Children’s Officer
- Ensure that effective disciplinary, complaints and appeals procedures are in place
- Have in place procedures for dealing with a concern or complaint made to the Statutory Authorities against a committee member or mentor
- Ensure that all clubs are fully affiliated and signed up to the Code
- Be represented by appropriate personnel at all education/ training workshops dealing with the Code
- Review child protection procedures regularly through open discussion to members, Sports Councils and Statutory Authorities
- Examine and take appropriate action in response to any reports of unusual incidents (high rate of transfers, dropouts) received from clubs
- Ensure that all personnel working with children are suitable, through a vetting process





### 3. Code of Behaviour for all Persons Working with Young People

This Code of Behaviour complements the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport and addresses the appropriate levels of behaviour, practice and conduct required from our young players, officials, team mentors, supporters, parents/guardians and clubs.

The Code of Behaviour is promoted by the following National Governing Bodies so as to enable and assist those who promote and deliver our games to comply with the highest possible standards in our work with children and young people.

**Cumann Lúthchleas Gael**  
(The Gaelic Athletic Association)

**Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael**  
(Camogie Association)

**Cumann Peil Gael na mBan**  
(Ladies Gaelic Football Association)

**Comhairle Liathróid Láimhe na hÉireann**  
(Irish Handball Council)

**Comhairle Cluiche Corr na hÉireann**  
(The Rounders Council of Ireland)

**We are fully committed to the safeguarding of our members and place the welfare of our players as a key priority. Everyone involved in our sports and activities should accept the roles and responsibilities that they undertake as we commit ourselves to maintaining an enjoyable and safe environment for all.**

It is recommended to use this Code in tandem with each National Governing Bodies own Codes of Best Practice or Codes of Ethics that outline in greater detail our roles and responsibilities when working with children and young people. We wish to see this code developed, promoted and implemented as an initiative that encourages fair play, respect, equal opportunities and safety.

#### 3.1 YOUNG PLAYERS

Young players can benefit greatly from sports in terms of personal development and enjoyment. As part of their participation our players must be encouraged to realise that they also have responsibilities to treat others with fairness and respect. With rights there will be responsibilities.

There will be a 'sign-up' procedure, whereby young people agree to abide by the *Code of Behaviour* and to any other policies and codes in your Club and National Governing Body.

##### YOUNG PLAYERS should be entitled to:

- Be safe and feel safe
- Have fun and experience a sense of enjoyment and fulfilment
- Be treated with respect, dignity and sensitivity
- Comment and make suggestions in a constructive manner
- Be afforded appropriate confidentiality
- Participate in games and competitions at a level at which they feel comfortable
- Be listened to
- Make their concerns known and have them dealt with in an appropriate manner



##### YOUNG PLAYERS should always:

- Play fairly, do their best and enjoy themselves
- Respect fellow team members regardless of ability, ethnic origin, cultural background or religion
- Support fellow team members whether they do well or not so well
- Represent their team, their club and their family with pride and dignity
- Respect all mentors, officials and their opponents
- Be gracious in defeat and modest in victory
- Shake hands before and after the game irrespective of the result
- Inform their coach/mentor/manager when they are unavailable for training and games
- Talk to the Club Children's Officer with any concerns or questions they may have
- Adhere to acceptable standards of behaviour and their Club's Code of Discipline
- Tell somebody else if they or others have been harmed in any way

##### YOUNG PLAYERS should not:

- Cheat – always play by the rules
- Shout at or argue with an official, with team mates or opponents
- Use unfair or bullying tactics to gain advantage or isolate other players
- Spread rumours
- Tell lies about adults or other young people
- Play or train if they feel unwell or are genuinely injured



### 3.2 MENTORS

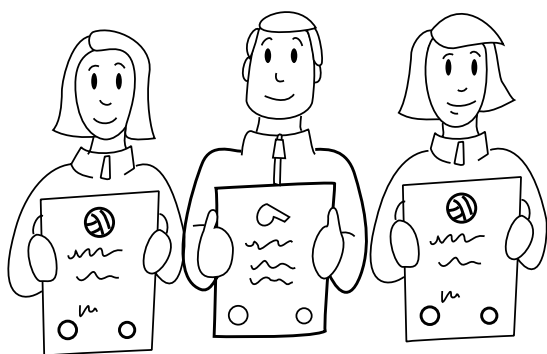
All Mentors should ensure that young people and children benefit significantly from our games by providing a positive, healthy and encouraging ethos for all. In developing the skill levels of every player you should always encourage enjoyment, fun and participation in our games and activities. Mentors should always remember that they are a role model for the players in their care.

#### Recruitment of Mentors

As a Mentor working with young people and children you are required to be suitable for your chosen role(s). Appropriate training and coaching will be provided so as to ensure that Mentors are fully trained, coached and qualified to fulfil their roles. All persons working or volunteering for such roles will also participate in agreed recruitment and selection procedures as outlined in the policies and procedures of each National Governing Body.

#### Maintaining a child centred approach

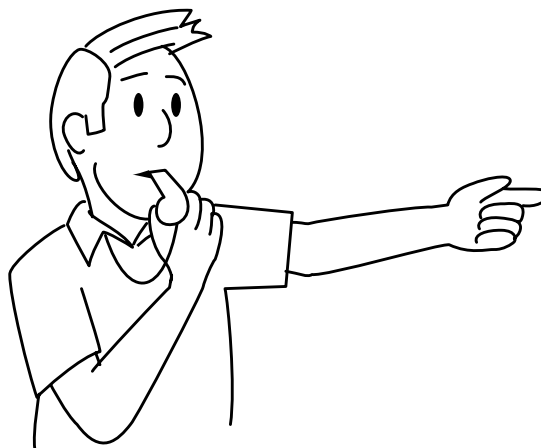
- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person and treat each one equally regardless of age, gender, ability, ethnic origin, cultural background or religion.
- Be positive during coaching sessions, games and other activities so that participants always leave with a sense of achievement and an increased level of self-esteem.
- Recognise the development needs of young players, by emphasising participation for all while avoiding excessive training and competition. Skills development and personal satisfaction should have priority over competition.
- Develop an understanding of relevant coaching methods and ensure that you have the appropriate level of coaching accreditation.



- Don't equate losing with failure and do not develop a preoccupation with medals and trophies. The level of improvement made by young players is the best indicator of effective coaching.

#### Mentors should lead by example

- Avoid smoking while working with young players
- Do not consume alcohol or non prescribed drugs immediately prior to or while young players are in your care
- Never use foul language or provocative language/gestures to a player, opponent or match official
- Only enter the field of play with the referee's permission and do not question a referee's decisions or integrity
- Encourage players to respect the judgement of match officials



#### Conduct of Mentors when working with young people

- Don't shout at or lecture players or reprimand/ridicule them when they make a mistake. Children learn best through trial and error. Children and Young people should not be afraid to risk error so as to learn
- Never use any form of corporal punishment or physical force
- Avoid incidents of horse play or role play or telling jokes etc that could be misinterpreted
- Ensure that all physical contact is appropriate and has the permission or understanding of the young person
- Never undertake any form of therapy – hypnosis etc, in the training of children



### Avoid compromising your role as a Mentor

- Avoid a situation where you are alone in a car or dressing room with a player
- Avoid taking coaching sessions on your own
- Avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with a player or away from others
- Avoid taking young players to your home

### Best practice

- Ensure that all players are suitably and safely attired to play their chosen sport.
- Keep a record of attendance at training and at games by both players and mentors.
- Be punctual and properly attired.
- Rotate the team captaincy and the method used for selecting teams so that the same children are not always selected to the exclusion of others.
- Set realistic – stretching but achievable – performance goals.
- Encourage parents/guardians to play an active role in organising and assisting various activities for your teams and your club.
- Use mobile phones, if deemed appropriate, only via a group text system for communicating with the parents/guardians of players and receive such permission at the commencement of each season.
- Keep a record of each injury and action taken. Ensure that another official referee/team mentor is present when a player is being attended to and can corroborate the relevant details.

- Ensure that all dressing rooms and the general areas that are occupied by your players and other club personnel, prior to, during or immediately following the completion of any match are kept clean and are not damaged in any way.
- 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.
- Make adequate provision for First Aid services.
- Do not encourage or permit players to play while injured.







### 3.3 PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Parents/Guardians have an influential role to play in assisting and encouraging their children to adopt a positive attitude and in encouraging them to maintain an involvement in sport. They should always be a good role model for their children

#### Parents/Guardians should encourage their child to:

- Play by the rules.
- Improve their skills levels.
- Appreciate everybody on their team, regardless of ability.
- Maintain a balanced and healthy lifestyle with regard to exercise, food, rest and play. Seek advice if necessary from club officials on this issue

#### Parents/Guardians should lead by example:

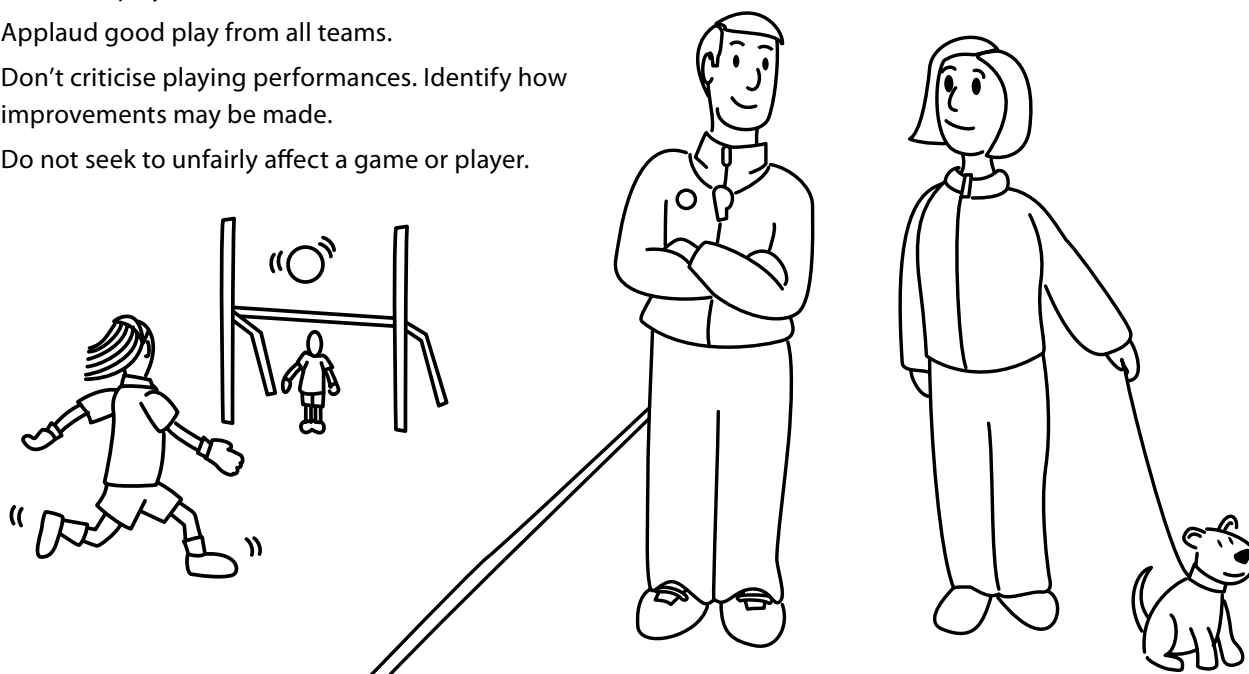
- Respect officials' decisions and encourage children to do likewise.
- Do not exert undue pressure on your child.
- Show approval for effort, not just results.
- Never embarrass a child or use sarcastic remarks towards a player.
- Applaud good play from all teams.
- Don't criticise playing performances. Identify how improvements may be made.
- Do not seek to unfairly affect a game or player.

#### Parents/Guardians should:

- Avoid asking a child or young person, 'How much did you score today or what did you win by or what did you lose by.' Ask them 'did they enjoy themselves'.
- Listen to what young people have to say.
- Show approval whether the team wins, loses or draws a game
- Never attempt to meet their own needs and aspirations for success and achievement through their children's participation in games.

#### Parents/Guardians should assist their club by:

- Showing appreciation to volunteers, mentors and club officials.
- Attending training and games on a regular basis.
- Assisting in the organising of club activities and events as requested.
- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person and treat each one equally regardless of age, gender, ability, ethnic origin, cultural background or religion



**“ Parents/Guardians should avoid asking a child or young person, 'How much did you score today or what did you win by or what did you lose by.'**

**Ask them 'did they enjoy themselves'.**



### 3.4 SUPPORTERS

Young players are eager to enjoy and benefit from the support they receive from parents, guardians, friends and other members of the club who attend our games as spectators. Active, loyal and well behaved supporters are always welcome to attend and support our games but should be aware that their conduct will always reflect upon the team, players and clubs that they support.

Fellow supporters have a responsibility to ensure that all spectators conduct themselves in an acceptable and well behaved manner at all times when attending under age games and competitions.

Supporters should always realise that young players participate in organised sport for fun.

#### Supporters add to the enjoyment of our games by:

- Applauding good performance and efforts from your club's players and from your opponents, regardless of the result.
- Condemning the use of violence in any form, be it by fellow spectators, coaches, officials or players.
- Encouraging players to participate according to the rules and the referees' decisions.
- Demonstrating appropriate social behaviour by not using foul language or harassing participants, mentors or officials.
- Respecting the decisions of all officials.
- Never ridiculing or scolding a player for making a mistake during games or competitions
- Showing respect to your Club's opponents. Without them there would be no games or competitions.
- Upholding the principles of **FAIR PLAY** and **RESPECT** for all.



### 3.5 THE CLUB

All clubs that cater for under age players must do so with a child centred approach and philosophy thus ensuring that those chosen by them to work with children and young people are at all times competent and confident as to their roles and responsibilities.

Clubs must provide these people with the necessary supports and ensure the best interests of the child, the young person and the adult that all those chosen to work on the club's behalf have been selected following thorough recruitment, selection, training and coaching procedures.

#### Promote Quality Participation by:

- Adopting this Code of Behaviour as a basic level of agreement between the club and their players, their mentors, parents/guardians and supporters.
- Leading by example and ensuring that you have a user friendly and child centred approach to your work and that you provide an equal opportunity to all who wish to participate in your games and activities, regardless of an individual's ability.
- Developing effective procedures for responding to and recording all attendances, incidents, accidents and injuries.
- Accessing relevant information on Alcohol and Substance Abuse Prevention Programmes and promoting relevant training in this area of health awareness for relevant club personnel.
- Distributing information on Anti Bullying strategies in our work with young people and by adopting and implementing an Ant Bullying Statement in the club.
- Ensuring that the Irish Sports Council Code of Ethics training is undertaken by all persons working in an official capacity with children and young people on behalf of the club.



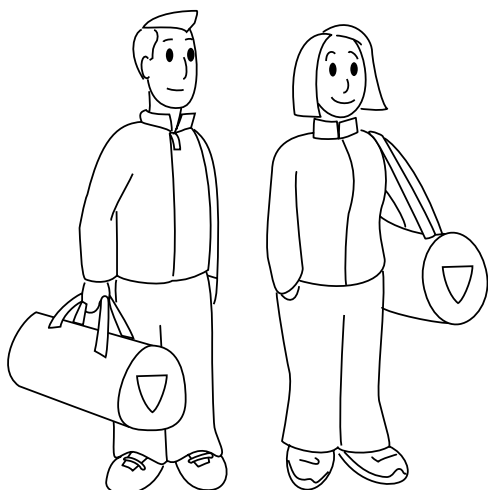
#### Encourage the Participation of Club Members by:

- Communicating regularly with your Mentors and clearly agree and define their roles.
- Adopting and implementing clearly defined recruitment and selection procedures when choosing mentors to work with children and young people.



### Encourage the Participation of Young Players

- Ensuring that the types of programmes, rules, equipment, length of games and training schedules are structured to facilitate greater participation by all young players, are suitable to all age categories, and to the ability and maturity level of young players.
- Respecting the rights, dignity and worth of all players by treating them equally regardless of their age, gender, ability, ethnic origin, cultural background or religion.
- Creating pathways for young people to participate in your games not just as players but afford other developmental opportunities including training to become a referee, coach etc.
- Ensuring that on the occasions when the team may travel away overnight, that separate sleeping facilities must be provided for all adults and, similarly, for each gender. If both genders are in your group, male and female mentors must be present.



### Encourage the Participation of Parents/ Guardians by:

- Encouraging parents/guardians to become members of their club and to make themselves aware as to the running of juvenile games and activities and to the rules and codes that direct us in our work.
- Encouraging the participation of parents and guardians in all aspects a club's activities and events and in the organising and delivery of our games.
- Welcome all parents/guardians to attend the games and training sessions that relate to their children. Information relating to such events should be made known to them at all times.
- Informing parents/guardians as to the identity of their Children's Officer. This person should be available to assist with any concerns or enquiries that parents/guardians may have regarding the welfare and safety of children and young people in the club.

### Develop Best Practice in Club Structures and Administration by:

- Ensuring that the Juvenile Section of the club is structured in accordance with good practice guidelines and that young people are afforded a role in decision making at an appropriate level.
- Ensuring that all club members are aware as to their responsibilities to all children and young people.
- Appointing a Children's Officer\* whose role shall include the monitoring of the child centred ethos of the club and compliance with the Code of Ethics and Good Practice (Irish Sports Council/SportsNI) and with any policies and guidelines as issued by the club, by their National Governing Bodies, or by statutory authorities and agencies.
- Appointing a Designated Person\* whose role shall include liaising with Statutory Authorities and their Governing Body in relation to the reporting of allegations and/or suspicions of child abuse.
- Ensuring that all players are covered by their relevant Injury Scheme and that all premises etc in use by your club and players are equally covered for property/liability insurance as deemed necessary.
- Ensuring that on the occasions when the team may travel away overnight, that separate sleeping facilities are provided for all adults and, similarly, for each gender. When a group consists of males and females you will be obliged to have male and female mentors present.
- Seeking the agreement of parents/guardians when their sons/daughters under 18 years of age are invited into adult squads. Boundaries of behaviour in adult groups are normally different from the boundaries that apply to under age teams and squads.



Let us ensure that everyone working on our behalf emphasises **FAIR PLAY, RESPECT, EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES** and **SAFETY** in all aspects of our work with children and young people



### 3.6 ROLE OF CHILDREN'S OFFICER

Your Children's Officer is key to the implementation of your Code of Ethics and selection of your Children's Officer requires careful attention. The Executive Committee of your Club/County Board should consider the qualities of and the role of the Children's Officer when selecting a suitable candidate.

#### Qualities of a Children's Officer

- Friendly
- Approachable
- Open-minded
- Good communicator

The Children's Officer should be player-centred in focus and should have as their primary aim the establishment of a player centred ethos within the club.

The Children's Officer is the link between the young players and the adults in the club.

Your Children's Officer should report regularly to the Executive of your Club/County Board.

#### Role of the Club Officer

- To promote awareness of the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Young Players within the club and particularly among the young players and their parents/guardians and mentors

- To influence policy and practice within the club in order to prioritise young players' needs
- To ensure all mentors are aware of practices within the code i.e Travel Permission Forms, Anti-Bullying Policy etc.
- To encourage the involvement of parents/guardians in the club activities and co-operate with parents/guardians in ensuring that each player enjoys her involvement in Ladies Gaelic Football
- To act as an advisory resource to mentors on best practice in Ladies Gaelic Football
- To liaise with the female mentors assigned to teams, ensuring that she is aware of good practices contained within the Code
- To ensure that young players know how to make concerns known to appropriate adults or agencies. Information disclosed by a player to the Children's Officer should be dealt with accordingly (see Section 5.2)
- To deal with any complaints or suspected child abuse according to the Code
- To report regularly to the Club Executive Committee
- To monitor changes in membership and follow up any unusual dropout, absenteeism or club transfers by young players or mentors
- To attend seminars in relation to Child Protection



**"The Children's Officer should be player-centred in focus and should have as their primary aim the establishment of a player centred ethos within the club."**



### Children's Officer's Checklist

**Has your club a Children's Officer? – Please appoint before working through the below framework as the Children's Officer is key to implementation of your Club Code.**

- 1. Has your club a Code of Ethics?
- 2. Does this code include an Anti-Bullying Policy?
- 3. Have you undertaken training in relation to the Code and Child Protection?
- 4. Do you promote awareness of your Code within your Club?
- 5. Has your club a policy on selection and recruitment of mentors? Have all your mentors signed mentor recruitment forms, existing and new mentors?
- 6. Have all your mentors signed a code of conduct?
- 7. Have all your players signed a code of conduct?
- 8. Have all your parents signed (a) a code of conduct, (b) parental permission forms?
- 9. Have you held an information evening for all parents of underage players?
- 10. Have you Permission forms for all underage teams which include (a) travel, (b) text messaging, (c) photography and video?
- 11. Do you report regularly to your Executive Committee?
- 12. Do all your players know how to make concerns known and to whom they make them known to?
- 13. Have you a policy in place to deal with a code of ethics complaint?
- 14. Have you a system in place to monitor changes in membership and follow up on any unusual dropout, absenteeism or club transfers by underage players?
- 15. Have you passed your contact details to your County Children's Officer and National Children's Officer?
- 16. Have you a Code of Ethics folder containing all the above information?





### Role of Designated Officer

The Designated Person will be responsible for dealing with any concerns about the protection of children in the Club. The designated person is responsible for reporting allegations or suspicions of child abuse to the County Board Designated Person, Health Service Executive (ROI) or Social Services (NI) and/or An Garda Síochána/Police Service of Northern Ireland.

It is recommended that this person is a senior club person. However, if there is difficulty identifying a separate individual to take this role, the Children's Officer can be appointed as designated person once the club/County is clear about the responsibilities of each role.

### Role of the National Designated Person

- Have knowledge of the Code of Ethics and statutory guidelines
- Have a knowledge of categories and indicators of abuse
- Undertake training in relation to child protection
- Assist with the ongoing development and implementation of the organisation's child protection training needs
- Provide information and advice on child protection within the organisation
- Be familiar with and able to carry out reporting procedures
- Be aware of national and local services responsible for child protection i.e. principal and duty social workers, etc
- To inform Health Service Executive/Social Services and /or An Garda Síochána/PSNI of relevant concerns about individual children, using the Standard Reporting Form. Keep a copy of this form and ensure acknowledgment of receipt of this form
- Ensure appropriate information is available at the time of referral and that the referral is confirmed in writing, kept under confidential cover.
- Ensure mentors and administrators are aware of allegations against them
- Ensure that an individual case record is maintained of the action taken by the Association, the liaison with other agencies and the outcome
- Ensure records are kept in confidence in a secure location and access is on a 'need to know' basis

### Role of Club/County Designated Person

- Have knowledge of the Code of Ethics and statutory guidelines
- Have a knowledge of categories and indicators of abuse
- Undertake training in relation to child protection
- Be familiar with and able to carry out reporting procedures
- Communicate with parents and/or agencies as appropriate

- Assist with the ongoing development and implementation of the Club/Counties child protection training needs
- Liaise with the National Children's Officer in relation to child protection training needs
- Be aware of local contacts and services in relation to child protection i.e. principal and duty social workers and their contacts
- To inform the local duty social worker in the Health Services Executive Local Area Board/ local Social Services and/or An Garda Síochána/PSNI of relevant concerns about individual children, using the Standard Reporting Form. Keep a copy of this form and ensure acknowledgement of receipt of this form

It is important to note that Children's Officers and Designated Persons do not have a counselling or therapeutic role or a responsibility of investigating or validating child protection concerns within your club or County.

Investigations of alleged abuse are carried out by the relevant Statutory Authorities as outlined in Children First and Our Duty to Care or by specially appointed trained personnel in counselling, psychological and child therapeutic services.

### Role of County Children's Officer

- To ensure that each club within the County has elected a Children's Officer
- To liaise with all Club Children's Officers on a regularly basis
- To ensure that all County Teams have adopted the Code and all players and mentors have signed up to the Code
- To ensure that all County Teams are aware of and have signed Travel Permission Forms and Overnight Permission Forms where relevant
- To act as an advisory resource to mentors on best practice in Ladies Gaelic Football
- To deal with any complaints or suspected child abuse according to the Code
- To attend National Seminars in relation to Child Protection
- To co-ordinate child protection courses within county
- To report regularly to the County Board Executive

### Role of National Children's Officer

- Ensuring that the Ladies Gaelic Football Association develops an appropriate sport specific code, which includes a policy statement, codes of conduct, recruitment and selection policy, etc
- Familiarise Children's Officers with our Duty to Care, to ensure they can act as an information source to other members of the organisation
- Commitment to attendance at appropriate training as required in order to act as a resource to members in relation to children's needs

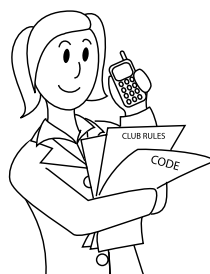


- Co-ordination of training for others
- The promotion of the values, attitudes and structures which make sport enjoyable for children
- Circulation of all relevant information and resource materials to clubs and County Boards
- Communication with Club and County Children's Officers to ensure the distribution of the Code and the promotion of related education programmes
- Liaison with all clubs to examine the rules, regulations and structures to ensure that they are child-centred, e.g. equal playing time, appropriate competition structures, bullying policy, etc
- Liaison with clubs to ensure drop-out rates and transfers are monitored so that unusual developments or trends can be addressed, including transfer of mentors.

**Best Practice**

- Produce information leaflets, establish age-group specific or underage team notice boards
- Hold regular information meetings for the young players, their parents/guardians and mentors
- Hold a registration day (for example first Sunday of month) – as each under-age player registers they are informed of the Code and Bullying Policy. The player and their parent/s sign up to the Code on registration

- Hold a Code of Ethics information night, inviting youth members, parents and mentors – it is important that the young players are aware of who the Children's Officer is and how to contact them, e.g. mobile number of Children's Officer is placed in dressing rooms or club notice board
- Distribute an information sheet on training times, pick up times, club rules and regulations, codes of conduct, safety policies, guidelines for away trips
- Distribute a list of games/fixtures planned for the year to parents and young players



- Provide one permission slip for parents signature at the beginning of the year containing all games and fixtures, both home and away
- Hold a 'sign up' night for mentors – inform mentors of guidelines in Code and good practice procedures

**“Distribute an information sheet on training times, pick up times, club rules and regulations, codes of conduct, safety policies, guidelines for away trips”**





## 4.1 MENTOR RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION POLICY

### Adult- Child Relationships in Sport

The trust implicit in adult-child relationships in sport places a duty of care on all adults, voluntary or professional, to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of the child while engaged in their sporting activity. Adults have a crucial leadership role to play in sport. Whether they are parents/guardians or Mentors or teachers, they can contribute to the creation of a positive sporting environment for young people. Positive adult-child relationships will result in growth, development and fulfilment for all those involved in children's sport.

The Ladies Gaelic Football Association relies on the time commitment of adults to our underage structures and is greatly indebted to those that give freely of their time on behalf of the Association.

Most adults who become involved in children's sport do so in their own free time. There may, therefore, be a reluctance to make impositions upon them with regard to either conditions of training or reproaches for any misdemeanours. However, given the importance and responsible roles which adults play at many different levels in sport, it is essential that their competence and ability to deal with children in a fair, empathic and ethical way is supported, guided and maintained.

The following recruitment and selection guidelines are put in place to ensure that these adult roles are seen as a positive contribution to the development of young players, regardless of age, and that the Ladies Gaelic Football Association adheres to the best possible standards when recruiting persons to work with young people on our behalf at Club, County, Provincial and National level.

All our personnel who work with children, young people or vulnerable adults should have appropriate child awareness training and be vetted through the Garda Vetting Unit which is co-ordinated via the National Children's Office in Croke Park. (Similarly Ulster GAA co-ordinate the vetting for AccessNI applicants).

### Recruitment

It is essential that all adults taking responsibility for young people, whether in a paid or unpaid capacity, in the Club or elsewhere in the Association should undergo a recruitment and selection process. The recruitment of adults to work with under age teams

should be co-ordinated by a senior and experienced member of the club and should be done in a confidential manner.

A consistent method of recruiting and selecting Mentors should be in place, including seeking references, confirming identity and checking adequacy of qualifications.

Effective management of Mentors is also equally central to the promotion of good practice in your Club. This should include support, supervision, access to training and effective communication between members of the Club.

The following procedures are recommended to assist clubs and counties when choosing coaches and other personnel for positions to which they are best suited.

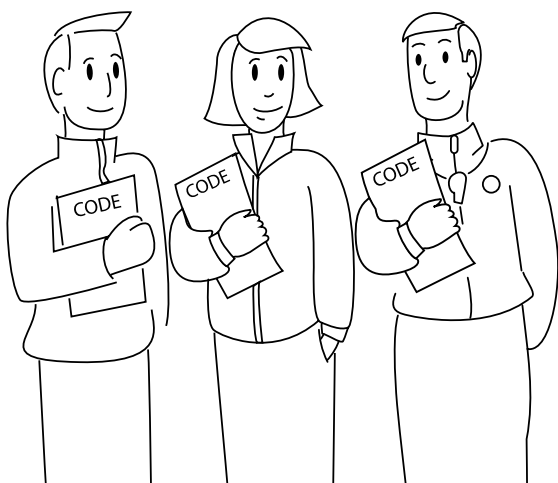
- The decision to appoint a mentor is the responsibility of the Club/County and not of any one individual within it. The Club/County committee should ratify all recommendations for appointment
- Responsibilities of the role and the level of experience/qualifications required should be drawn up and clearly stated beforehand – it is recommended that all mentors hold appropriate qualifications, e.g. FUNdamentals Coaching Certificate, First Aid Certificate, etc
- Each mentor should undergo a 'sign-up' procedure, whereby the appointed/reappointed mentors agree to abide by the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Young People and to the policies of the club and the Association
- All mentors, new and existing, should fill in an application form, giving names of two referees that may be contacted (Appendix 6.1) and where possible all new mentors should be interviewed and a probationary period is advisable







- It is good practice to meet with new mentors and conduct a short interview to ensure the mentor has the appropriate qualifications, etc
- All applicants will be required to complete Garda Vetting and/or AccessNI checks, as appropriate, prior to the commencement of their role(s) with young people in the Association.
- It is good practice to follow-up on named referees, especially if the new mentor is a stranger to the Club/County
- Existing mentors should not be excused from either the 'sign-up' or application form procedure. It is not necessary for existing mentors to undergo an interview
- No exceptions should be made in relation to the recruitment procedures
- All forms should be filed as a matter of record by the Club/County Board
- All mentors should be given a copy of the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Young People and they should be made aware of good practice procedures contained within the Code
- Every effort should be made to manage and support appointed mentors. Adequate supervision should always be provided – a mentor should not have to work alone



**“Adequate supervision should always be provided – a mentor should not have to work alone”**

## 4.2 GARDA VETTING AND AccessNI CHECKS

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

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

### Garda Vetting

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



### Protocol on Vetting Application Outcomes

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

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

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



### AccessNI Checks

#### How can a member of the Ladies Gaelic Football Association avail of vetting through Ulster GAA?

In the first instance the vetting applicant should contact their Club/County Secretary/Children’s Officer as appropriate. The Club/County Secretary/Children’s Officer should then make direct contact with the Ulster GAA Children’s Officer who will advise the process for how they can take forward the vetting application either through Garda vetting or AccessNI.

#### AccessNI vetting

Ulster GAA is a registered Umbrella Body with AccessNI to carry out vetting checks as part of the AccessNI service. Through a heads of agreement with Ulster GAA, all County Boards, Clubs, Ulster Ladies Gaelic, Ulster Camogie and other affiliated bodies can avail of this service.

AccessNI is the statutory body established to carry out vetting checks on people who as part of their employment or volunteer involvement have access to a child or vulnerable adult.

An Umbrella Body is an organisation which has registered with AccessNI to make applications for vetting checks (Standard or Enhanced Disclosures) on behalf of other organisations or individuals.

In order to comply with legislation under The Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (NI) Order 2003, Ulster GAA has since 1st April 2004 ensured that relevant check were carried out through

the POCVA system. These checks are now carried out by AccessNI or the Garda Vetting Unit as appropriate so as to ensure that individuals who work in any capacity on behalf of the Association and who might pose a threat or risk to children and/or vulnerable adults are not being used as coaches, mentors, external tutors, team managers, assistants, or work in any other capacity on behalf of the Association.

These checks will inform us

- If the applicant has a criminal record;
- If their name is included on the Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) Disqualification from Working with Children List
- If they are included on the Department of Education (DE) List and/or the DHSSPS Disqualified from Working with Vulnerable Adults List

#### Garda vetting

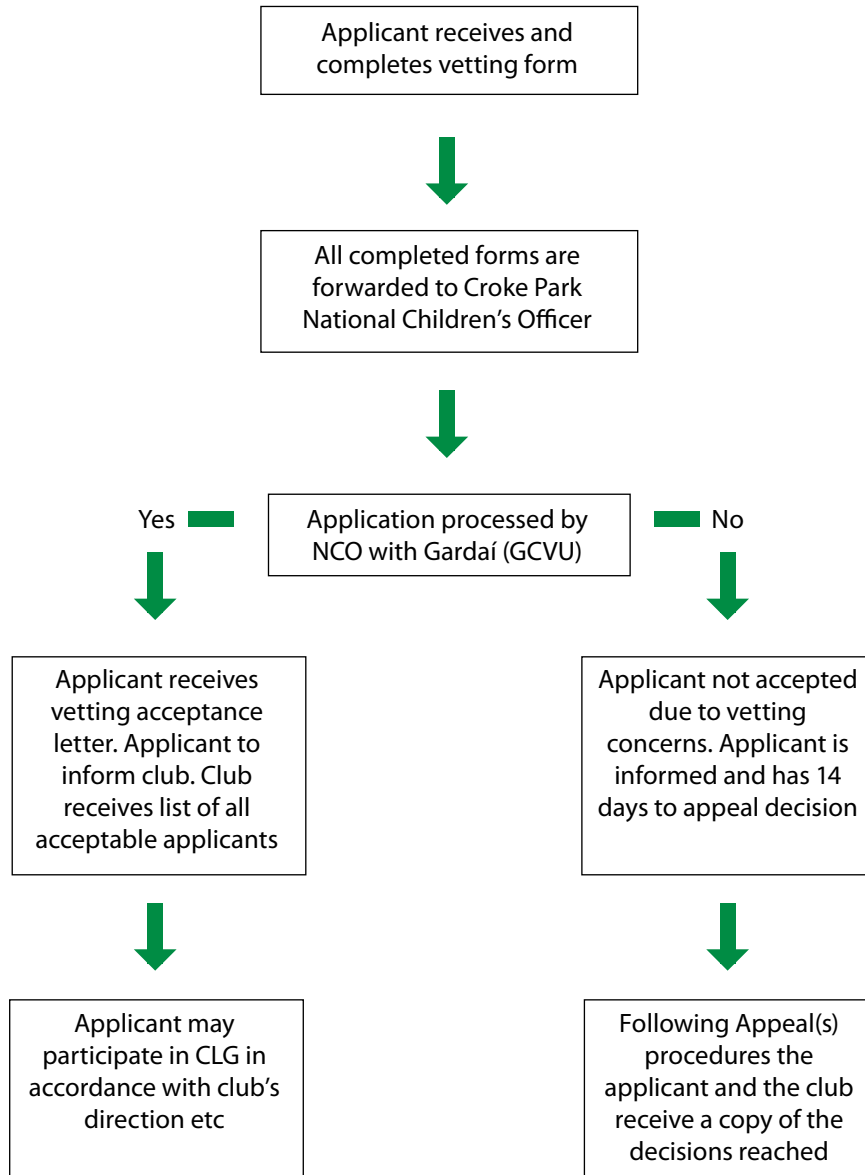
Ulster GAA is registered with the Garda Central Vetting Unit to carry out vetting checks as part of the Garda vetting service. Through a heads of agreement with Ulster GAA, all County Boards, Clubs, Ulster Ladies Gaelic, Ulster Camogie and other affiliated bodies can avail of this service.

Any information received will be treated confidentially and is subject to the Data Protection Act. Should it be necessary to meet or speak with the applicant regarding any information received this will be done without delay.



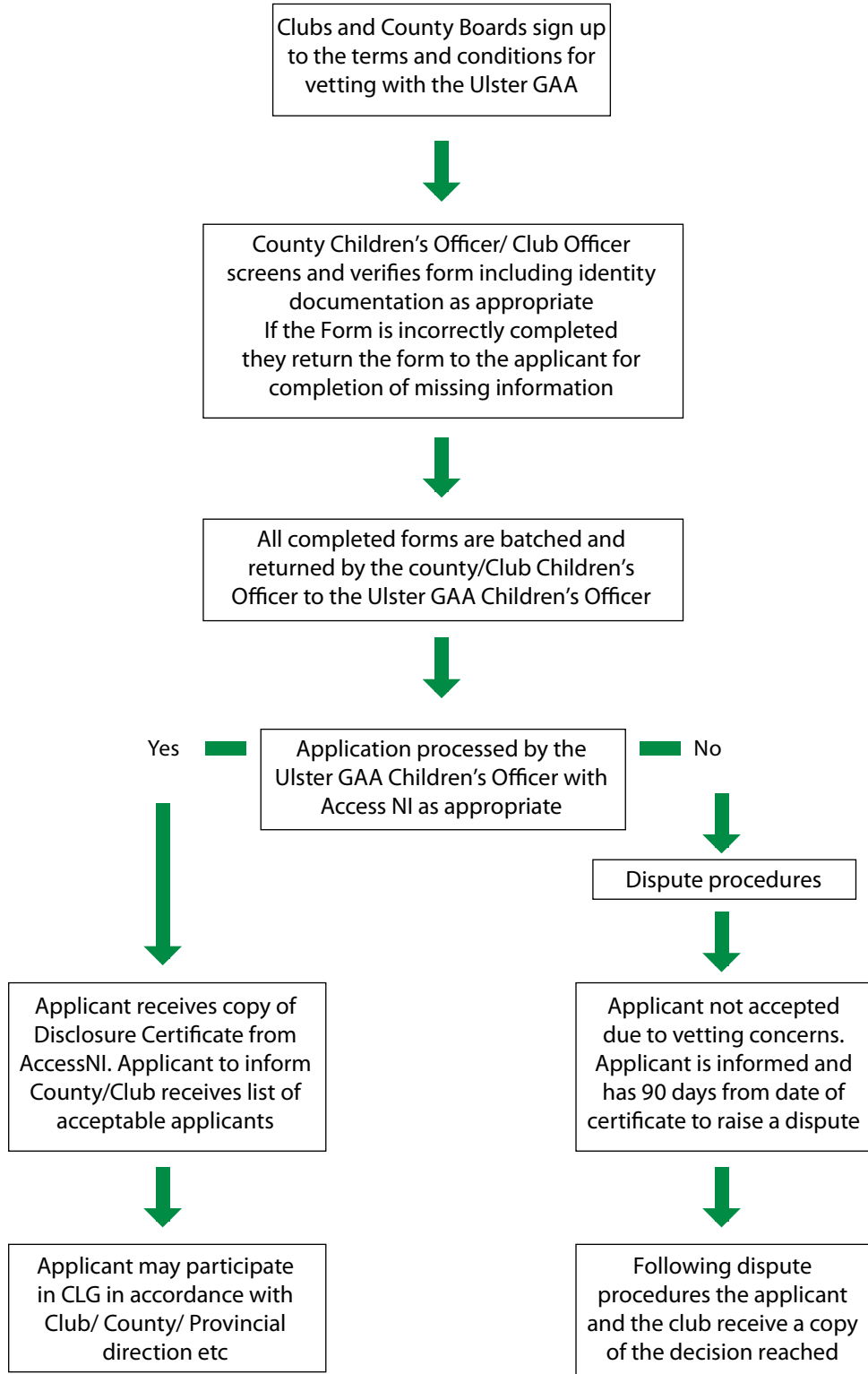


## Outline of Garda Vetting Process in the Ladies Gaelic Football Association





## Outline of AccessNI Vetting in the Ladies Gaelic Football Association





### 4.3 SUPERVISION

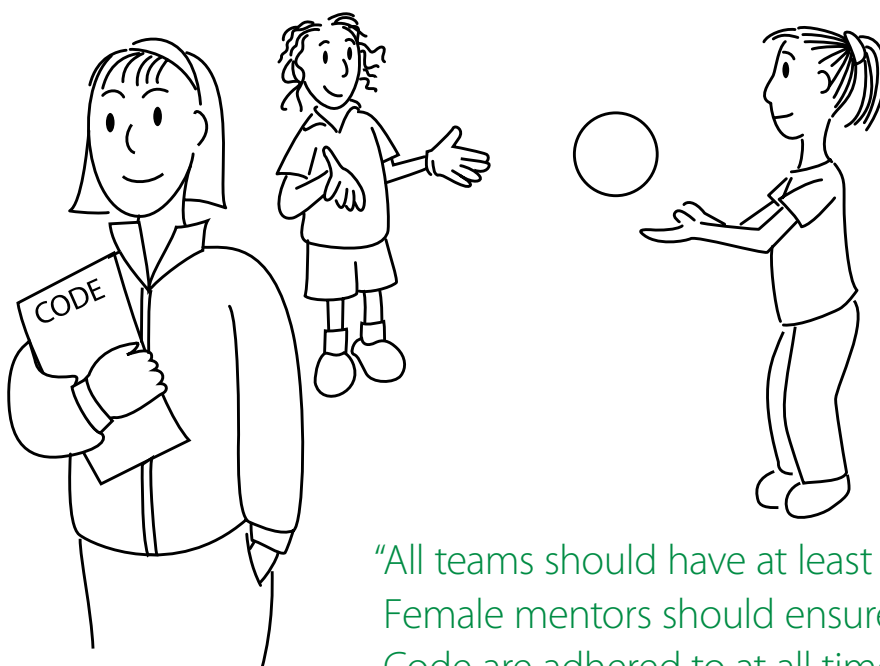
Make sure there is an adequate adult: child ratio. This will depend on the nature of the activity, the age of the players and any special needs of the group. As a recommended guide a ratio of \*1:8 for under 12 years of age and \*1:10 for players over 12 years of age.

*\*This is only a guide and will change depending on the circumstances, e.g. very young players, players with special needs or during away trips*

- All teams should have at least one female mentor. Female mentors should ensure that all areas of the Code are adhered to at all times
- Avoid being alone with any player, if you need to talk separately do so in an open environment, in view of others
- In changing rooms, where possible ask parents to take responsibility and supervise in pairs of appropriate gender
- Mentors should not need to enter changing rooms unless the players are very young or need special assistance and such supervision should be done by parents or in pairs of appropriate gender
- Mentors should remain in pairs until all players have been collected at the end of training or matches
- Keep attendance records and record any incidents/injuries that arise

### 4.4 TRAVELLING WITH YOUNG PLAYERS

- There is extra responsibility taken on by mentors when they travel with young players to games/tournaments. When travelling with young players you should:
  - Ensure that there is adequate insurance cover
  - Not carry more than the permitted number of passengers
  - Ensure use of safety belts at all times
  - Avoid travelling alone with one player. Where this is unavoidable the player should always sit in the back seat
- Ensure all mentors, parents and players have signed Travelling Permission forms (page 30) – these forms should include emergency contact numbers for players' parents. Forms may be modified accordingly
- It is recommended to include, at the start of year where possible, all fixtures which involve travel, so that one travel permission form will be valid all year.
- Permission forms should be signed on a yearly basis
- All forms should be kept on file within the Club/County Board by the Children's officer
- Each Club/County should remind all players of Code of Conduct when travelling to games



*“All teams should have at least one female mentor. Female mentors should ensure that all areas of the Code are adhered to at all times”*



## 4.5 AWAY TRIPS / OVERNIGHT STAYS

- When a game requires an overnight stay a separate permission form (Appendix 6.3) should be signed by parents and players, containing emergency contact number for parents
- Each overnight stay requires a separate permission form as details will vary
- All players should sign a Code of Conduct agreement
- Appoint a mentor who will make a report on returning home
- A meeting with parents and players is useful to communicate travel times, competition details, other activities, gear requirements, medical requirements, special dietary needs and any other necessary details
- Rooming arrangements – adults should not share rooms with young players, players share rooms with those of same age and gender and adults should knock before entering rooms
- All group socialization should take place in communal areas (i.e. no boys in girls' rooms and vice versa)
- Alcoholic drink, smoking or other illegal substances are forbidden to players
- At least one female should travel with each team
- There should be a good adult-player ratio, 1:5/6, and proper access to medical personnel
- Lights out times should be enforced
- Players should be under reasonable supervision at all times and should never leave the venue or go unsupervised without prior permission
- Parents should be encouraged to travel to assist with supervision especially with young players



## 4.6 HOSTING

Being a host family or being hosted is an integral part of many sports and if handled appropriately, can add to a child's enjoyment and experience at a competition. In Ladies Gaelic Football, our main competition which involves hosting is our National Féile na nÓg competition.

Hosting is a challenging role but also very rewarding. Special care should be taken in the selection of homes for overnight stays.

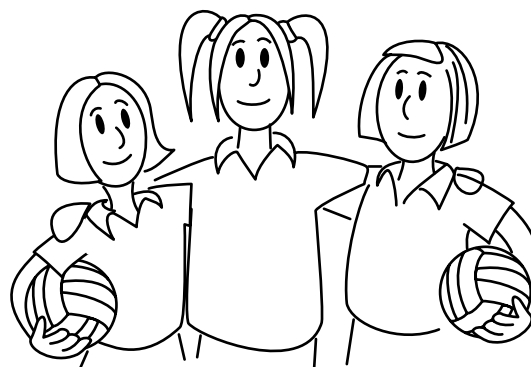
A host should be provided with as much information about the players staying with them and details of the competition. No player should be placed on their own with a host family.

All clubs should have knowledge of the host families prior to selection for hosting. However, in addition to this the host family should agree to provide references and be vetted.

Each club is responsible for their players and information related to the players. Parents of the player to be hosted should complete an Overnight Permission Form specific to the Competition, and provide dietary or medical requirements of the player. In addition clubs should follow the recruitment and selection procedures outlined on page 15, section 4.1.

### Host families should:

- Agree to abide by the Ladies Gaelic Football Association's Code of Ethics and Good Practice
- Consent to appropriate checks and references
- Attend host families meetings
- Provide a safe and supportive environment for young players



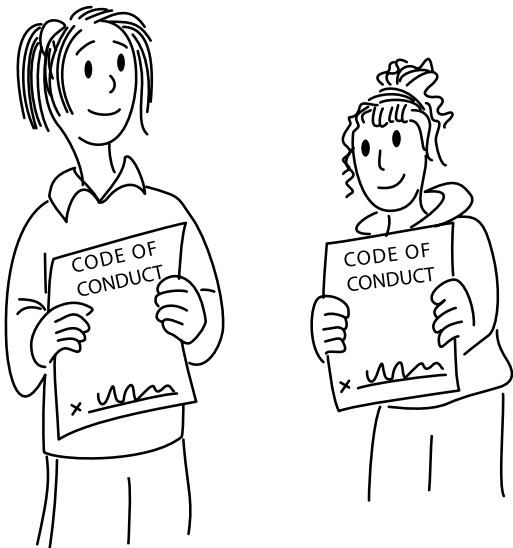


### Ladies Gaelic Football Association/County Boards/ Clubs should:

- Provide a travel pack to hosting families
- Check out references on hosting families where necessary
- Provide an itinerary of the trip
- Gather information on destination and venue

### Young Players should:

- Sign a Code of Conduct – specific to the Competition
- The Code of Conduct should be drawn up by the Club
- Not be asked to share a bed or a room with an adult
- Be happy with the arrangements
- Show respect to host families and their homes



## 4.7 SAFETY

All clubs should have a safety statement, including specific and potential risks attached to Ladies Gaelic Football. They should also have procedures in place for safeguarding against such risks. Safety statements should be specific to the club and the club grounds/ facilities.

### In addition clubs should:

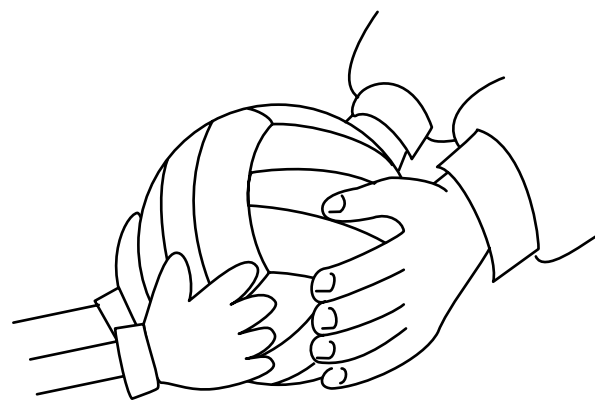
- Ensure activities are suitable for age and stage of development of players
- Keep a record of any specific medical conditions of the players

- Keep a record of emergency contact numbers for parents / guardians – Such records such be readily attainable
- Ensure any necessary protective gear is used
- Keep First Aid kit stocked up and ensure it is close at hand with access to qualified first-aider
- Know the contact numbers of emergency services and easy access to medical personnel if needed is recommended. All clubs should have an emergency plan, which all club members are aware of
- If an incident occurs, make a brief record of injury and action taken. Note the problem, action and outcome. Contact the players parents and keep them informed of all details

## 4.8 TOUCHING

Coaching, at certain times, may require a 'hands on approach', e.g., it may be necessary to support a player learning a new skill but the following should be taken into consideration

- Avoid unnecessary physical contact. Never engage in inappropriate touching
- Any necessary contact should be in response to the needs of the player and not the mentor
- It should be in an open environment with the permission and understanding of the player
- It should be determined by the age and developmental stage of the player – do not do something that a player can do for themselves



**“Any necessary contact should be in response to the needs of the player and not the mentor”**





## 4.9 PHOTOGRAPHY AND FILMING GUIDELINES

The Ladies Gaelic Football Association has adopted a policy in relation to the use of images of players on our website and in other publications. This policy does not seek to eliminate the use of photography or video but rather to minimise the risk and threats that inappropriate use of photographs or the recording of images may pose directly or indirectly, particularly for young people.

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

As part of the Parental Consent form (Form 6.4), all club's should receive signed recognition from the player's parents or guardians for the recording of photographic and recorded images etc as part of the player's registration process.

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

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

Many of our clubs have developed websites that enable them promote their club and club activities to their members, local community and at a County, Provincial and National level. The internet is an exciting and user friendly communication outlet for young people. It is important that while not wishing in any way to restrict the use of and accessibility to such sites that we recognise our responsibility in maintaining sites that are purposeful, educational, newsworthy, attractive in design and use and above all else are safe.

### Best practice guidelines:

- First and foremost ensure parents/guardians and the young people themselves have granted their consent for the taking and publication of photographic images. This permission should be sought by the club when the player registers on an annual basis.
- All children/young people featured in recordings must be appropriately dressed.
- The photograph or recording should focus on the activity rather than a particular young person.
- No personal details relating to the young person should be revealed as accompanying materials to the photograph or recorded image.
- Parents and spectators taking photographs/ recordings should seek permission in advance from the Club and should also be prepared to identify themselves if requested and state the purpose for their photography/filming.
- Group and team photographs may be taken but it is not necessary to match a player's name with the position in which they may be standing or seated in the team photograph

### Videoing as a coaching aid

Video equipment can be used as a legitimate coaching aid. Anyone concerned about any photography, taking place at events or training sessions, should contact the Children's Officer in relation to the matter.





- It is recognised that on certain occasions individual young people may receive recognition and may be presented with an award. When this happens in the case of an under age player certain levels of sensitivity and indeed of common sense are required and a balance should be drawn between the publication of a photograph of an individual, who may or may not be named, and the safety aspects of publication. Any such photography or recording of events that involves individual presentations should be discussed in advance of the event and agreement reached with all parties, including the club, parents and the young person themselves, as to what is and what is not permitted.
- Create recognised procedures for reporting the use of inappropriate images to reduce the risks to under age players. Any instances of the use of inappropriate images should be reported to the Club's Children's Officer and/or Designated Person and also to the relevant statutory authorities as deemed appropriate.
- Appoint a webmaster to manage your web site on behalf of the club and ensure that the webmaster is answerable to the club's Executive
- The Club Executive should agree at the outset the style, design and content policy of the website with the appointed webmaster, prior to going on-line
- Consult with the Club's Children's Officer when designing the website and ensure that the age of club members is considered when deciding the website policy



## 4.10 REGISTRATION, DROPOUT AND TRANSFERS

Loss of club members, including adult transfers, should be monitored. Any unusual or unexpected dropout or transfer of young players or mentors should be checked out by the Club Children's Officer and/or the County Board/ Provincial Council or Central Council. If any concerns regarding a child or children's welfare are raised the matter should be handled in accordance with procedures outlined in section 5.



## 4.11 MOBILE PHONES

Mobile phones are often given to children for security, enabling parents to keep in touch and make sure they are safe. In addition mobile phones 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. Within clubs there is a need to encourage responsible and secure use of mobile phones by adults and young people.





## 5 CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

Ladies Gaelic Football Association accepts that organisations, which include young people among its members, are vulnerable to the occurrence of child abuse. Child welfare and the protection of young players is the concern of all adults at all times, irrespective of their role within the organisation.

Below are the procedures for dealing with any welfare or protection issue that may arise. A report may be made by any member in the club or County but should be passed on to the Children's Officer who may in turn have to pass the concern to the Local Statutory Authorities.

It is not the responsibility of anyone working within Ladies Gaelic Football Association in a paid or voluntary capacity, or those working in affiliated organisations, to take responsibility or decide whether or not child abuse is taking place – that is the job of the Local Statutory Authorities. However, there is a responsibility to protect young players by assisting the appropriate agencies so that they can take any necessary action to protect the young person.

All members should follow both procedures outlined below, firstly the procedure for responding to a young player in distress and secondly the procedure for reporting a concern.

### 5.1 DEALING WITH A COMPLAINT

5.1.1. Forming a complaint

5.1.2. Appointment of Disciplinary Committee

5.1.3. Complaint Procedure

5.1.4. Sanctions

5.1.5. Appeal Procedure

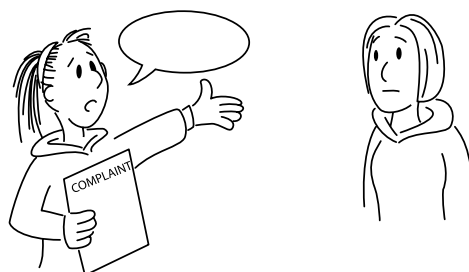
#### 5.1.1 The Complaint

- ☑ All \*complaints should be submitted in writing either to the Children's Officer or to the Chairperson
  - No action can be taken on 'hearsay'. 'Hearsay' should be noted in a record book
- ☑ Club/ County Chairperson should be notified of the complaint
- ☑ All complaints should be responded to within 5 working days by the Children's Officer
- ☑ If, in the opinion of the Chairperson/ Children's Officer, there are grounds for concern, the Statutory Authorities should be contacted immediately to receive professional guidance (See section 5.2)

- ☑ Written records of all complaints should be kept safely and confidentially
- ☑ The Mentor/Officer/Player/Parent against whom the complaint has been made should be notified of the complaint and the nature of the complaint, by telephone and also in writing
  - The letter of complaint remains the property of the Body to whom it was submitted i.e. the club/County Board, etc. The letter should be treated as confidential; therefore it is not read at a meeting or distributed to any person, this includes the person against whom the complaint is made.
- ☑ If the complaint is against a Mentor, this Mentor should be asked to temporarily step aside until the complaint has been investigated.
  - This is to protect the players and the mentor
  - A care-taker mentor should be put in place

*\*If complaint is submitted at Club level it is the responsibility of the Club to deal with the complaint*

*\*If the complaint is submitted at County Board Level the County Board must take responsibility to deal with the complaint*



#### 5.1.2 Appointment of Investigation Committee

- ☑ The \*Investigation Committee should consist of the Chairperson, the Children's Officer and an ordinary registered member of the club.
  - If the Children's Officer, Chairperson or any other member of the Investigation Committee is in any way connected to the complaint they should step down from the Committee
  - If the Children's Officer is involved, the Chairperson should contact the County Children's Officer to seek advice on dealing with the complaint
- ☑ Regular turnover of this committee is recommended.
- ☑ The issue of confidentiality is important. Information is on a need to know basis.

*\*It recommended that this Committee is put in place at the beginning of the year*



### 5.1.3 Complaint Procedure

It is the responsibility of the Investigation Committee to resolve problems relating to the conduct of its members. A complaint of any incident of suspected misconduct, including bullying, but does not relate to child abuse should be dealt with by the Investigation Committee.

- ☑ The Investigation Committee should inform the individual with details of the complaint being made against him/ her and afford him/ her the opportunity of providing a response verbally at a meeting with the Investigation Committee
  - If he/she does not attend the agreed meeting, offer him/her the opportunity of providing a response in writing
  - If he/she fails to co-operate with either opportunity the Investigation Committee must continue with the investigation of the complaint and note in their report the opportunities offered and the responses received.
- ☑ It is recommended that the Disciplinary Committee meet with all parties involved, affording each party the same rights and opportunities.
  - An underage player must be accompanied by parents/ guardians
  - If parents/ guardians are involved in the complaint, the underage player should be accompanied by an independent adult of their choice
- ☑ The Disciplinary Committee should form a written report outlining the procedure followed, findings, conclusions and any disciplinary actions or recommendations to be taken.
- ☑ All parties should receive a copy of this report. This report should be signed by all the Disciplinary Committee members and kept on record
- ☑ The Disciplinary Committee should, as soon as possible, inform the Management Committee of the conclusions of the investigation process

### 5.1.4 Sanctions

- ☑ Where it is established that an incident of misconduct has taken place, the Investigation Committee should notify the member of any sanction being imposed.
- ☑ The notification should be made in writing, setting out the reasons for the sanction.
  - If the member is under 18 years of age, correspondence should be addressed to parents/ guardians.

### 5.1.5 Appeal Procedure

- ☑ If the member against whom the complaint was made is unhappy with the decision of the Investigation Committee s/he should have the right to appeal the decision to an Appeals Committee (independent of the Investigation Committee).
- ☑ Any appeal should be made in writing within 7 days after issue of the decision of the Investigation Committee. The Chairperson of the Appeals Committee should be a member of the Management Committee or elected by the members at an AGM.
- ☑ The Appeals Committee have the power to confirm, set aside or change any sanction imposed by the Investigation Committee.
- ☑ If any party is not satisfied with the outcome, the matter can be referred to the National Children's Officer
  - However efforts to resolve the issue at local level should be exhausted before the National Children's Officer is engaged in attempts to resolve the matter.
- ☑ The National Management Committee will hear any Appeal submitted at National level, with their decision being final.

### 5.1.6 Filing of Complaints

- ☑ Written confidential records of all complaints should be safely and confidentially kept
- ☑ Club/County procedures should be defined for the possession of such records in the event of election of new officers.



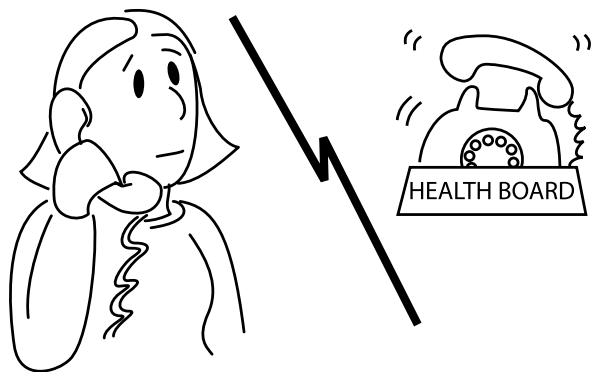
## 5.2 DEALING WITH SUSPECTED ABUSE

- 5.2.1 Reporting abuse
- 5.2.2 Response to a young player
- 5.2.3 Allegation against Mentors
- 5.2.4 Steps within Organisation
- 5.2.5 False Reporting
- 5.2.6 Confidentiality
- 5.2.7 Anonymous Report
- 5.2.8 Rumours

### 5.2.1 Reporting Abuse

If there are grounds for concern (Appendix 6.4) about the safety or welfare of a young player you should react to the concern. If unsure about whether or not certain behaviours are abusive (Appendix 6.5) and therefore reportable, you should contact the duty social worker in the Local Health Board or Social Services Department where you will receive advice. Grounds for concern include a specific indication from a player, a statement from a person who witnessed abuse or an illness, injury or behaviour consistent with abuse. Steps for reporting suspected abuse

- (a) Observe and note dates, times, locations and contexts in which the incident occurred or suspicion was aroused, together with any other relevant information
- (b) Report the matter as soon as possible to the designated officer within the Club/County responsible for reporting abuse, e.g. Children's Officer. If the Children's Officer has reasonable grounds for believing that the player has been abused or is at risk of abuse, s/he will make a report to the Health Board/Social Services who have statutory responsibility to investigate and assess suspected or actual child abuse



- (c) In cases of emergency, where a player appears to be at immediate and serious risk and the Children's Officer is unable to contact a duty social worker, the Garda Authorities should be contacted. Under no circumstances should a player be left in a dangerous situation pending intervention by the Statutory Authorities
- (d) If the Children's Officer is unsure whether reasonable grounds for concern exist s/he can informally consult with the local health board/social services. S/he will be advised whether or not the matter requires a formal report

Any Children's Officer reporting suspected or actual child abuse to the Statutory Authorities should first inform the family of their intention to make such a report, unless doing so would endanger the player or undermine an investigation.

### 5.2.2 Response to a Young Player

**When a young player discloses information of suspected abuse you should:**

- (a) Deal with any allegation of abuse in a sensitive and competent way through listening to and facilitating the player to tell about the problem, rather than interviewing about details of what happened
- (b) Stay calm and not show any extreme reaction to what the player is saying. Listen compassionately, and take what the player is saying seriously
- (c) Understand that the player has decided to tell something very important and has taken a risk to do so. The experience of telling should be a positive one so that the player will not mind talking to those involved in the investigation
- (d) Be honest with the player and tell them that it is not possible to keep this information a secret
- (e) Make no judgmental statements against the person whom the allegation is made
- (f) Not question the player unless the nature of what she is saying is unclear. Leading questions should be avoided. Open, non-specific questions should be used such as "Can you explain to me what you mean by that"



- (g) Check out the concerns with the parents/ guardians before making a report unless doing so would endanger the player
- (h) Give the player some indication of what would happen next, such as informing parents/ guardians, Health Board or Social Services. It should be kept in mind that the player may have been threatened and may feel vulnerable at this stage
- (i) Carefully record the details
- (j) Pass on this information to the Children's Officer/ designated officer within the Club. Always reassure the player that they have done the right thing in telling you



**“Always reassure the player that they have done the right thing in telling you”**

### 5.2.3 Allegations Against Mentors

**If an allegation of alleged child abuse is made against a mentor working within the Club/County or Association, the following procedures should be followed:**

- The reporting procedure in respect of suspected child abuse. (5.2.1)
- The procedure for dealing with the mentor. (5.2.4)

The safety of the player making the allegation should be considered and the safety of any other players who may be at risk. The club should take any necessary steps that may be necessary to protect its players. The issue of confidentiality is important – the mentor should be treated with respect and fairness.

### 5.2.4 Dealing with the Mentor

While the designated Children's Officer makes the report to the local Health Board, the Chairperson of the club should deal with the mentor.

- The Chairperson should privately inform the mentor that
  - (a) an allegation has been made against him/her
  - (b) the nature of the allegation
- He/she should be afforded an opportunity to respond
- His/her response should be noted and passed on to the Health Board/Social Services
- The mentor should be asked to step aside pending the outcome of the investigation. When a mentor is asked to step aside it should be made clear that it is only a precautionary measure and will not prejudice any later disciplinary proceedings

The Club/County Children's Officer should inform the National Children's Officer that the mentor has been asked to stand aside.

It is also the duty of all Association members to inform the National Children's Officer of a mentor who is under investigation by a Statutory Authority.

The Ladies Gaelic Football Association can consider disciplinary action on the mentor but should ensure that this does not interfere with the investigation of the Statutory Authorities – the outcome of the investigation and any implications it might have will be considered during the Disciplinary procedure.

It should be noted 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.

### 5.3 False Allegations

The Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998 provides immunity from civil liability to persons who report child abuse 'reasonably and in good faith' to the Health Board or the Gardaí (See 5.13.1 – ISC. Code). The act also covers the offence of 'false reporting'.

**The main provisions of the Act are:**

1. The provision of immunity from civil liability to any person who reports child abuse "reasonably and in good faith" to designated officers of Health Boards or any member of An Garda Síochána.

2. The provision of significant protections for employees who report child abuse. These protections cover all employees and all forms of discrimination up to and including dismissal.
3. The creation of a new offence of false reporting of child abuse where a person makes a report of child abuse to the appropriate authorities “knowing that statement to be false”. This is a new criminal offence designed to protect innocent persons from malicious reports.

This law does not exist in Northern Ireland, but an individual who reports concerns in ‘good faith’ is not deliberately attempting to slander another person’s name. In Northern Ireland there is legislation, the Criminal Law Act (NI) 1967 which places the responsibility on everyone to report offences or to forward information to the police by emphasising the, ‘duty of every other person, who knows or believes, (a) that the offence or some other arrestable offences has been committed and (b) that he has information which is likely to secure, or to be material assistance in securing, the apprehension, prosecution or conviction of any person for that offence’.

### 5.4 Confidentiality

Confidentiality should be maintained in respect of all issues and people involved in cases of abuse, welfare or bad practice. It is important that the rights of both the player and the person about whom the complaint has been made are protected.

The following points should be kept in mind:

- A guarantee of confidentiality or undertakings regarding secrecy cannot be given, as the welfare of the player will supersede all other considerations

**“Any rumours relating to inappropriate behaviour should be brought to the attention of the Children’s Officer and checked out without delay”**

- All information should be treated in a careful and sensitive manner and should be discussed only with those who need to know
- Information should be conveyed to the parents/guardians of the player in a sensitive way about whom there are concerns
- Giving information to others on a ‘need to know’ basis for the protection of a player is not a breach of confidentiality
- All persons involved in a protection process (the player, her parents/guardians, the alleged offender, her family, mentors) should be afforded appropriate respect, fairness, support and confidentiality at all stages of the procedure
- Information should be stored in a secure place, with limited access to designated people
- The requirements of the Data Protection laws should be adhered to
- Breach of confidentiality is a serious manner

### 5.5 ANONYMOUS COMPLAINTS

Anonymous complaints can be difficult to deal with but should not be ignored. In all cases the safety and welfare of the player/s is paramount. Any such complaints relating to inappropriate behaviour should be brought to the attention of the Children’s Officer. The information should be checked out and handled in a confidential manner.

### 5.6 RUMOURS

Rumours should not be allowed to hang in the air. Any rumours relating to inappropriate behaviour should be brought to the attention of the Children’s Officer and checked out without delay.





## 6.1 PARENTAL REGISTRATION FORM

Players' Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parents'/Guardians' Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Parents'/Guardians' Contact telephone number/s: \_\_\_\_\_

Details of Child's special needs or medical history  
(i.e. details of any known allergies, conditions or medications): \_\_\_\_\_

In the event of illness or injury, I give permission for medical treatment to be administered where considered necessary by a nominated first aider, or by suitably qualified medical practitioners. If I cannot be contacted and my child needs emergency hospital treatment, I authorise a qualified medical practitioner to provide emergency treatment or medication

Emergency contact person (if you are unavailable): \_\_\_\_\_

Number: \_\_\_\_\_

### Parents Code of Conduct:

1. I will respect the rules and procedures set down in the Ladies Gaelic Football Association's Code of Ethic's and Good practice for Young Players
2. I will respect my children's team mates, mentors (e.g. managers, coaches, selectors) and other parents, as well as players, parents and coaches from opposing teams. I will encourage my child to treat other players, coaches, selectors and managers with respect
3. I will give encouragement and applaud positive accomplishments whether from my child, her team mates, her opponents or the officials
4. I will respect all officials and their authority during matches
5. I will never demonstrate threatening or abusive behaviour or use foul language

### Travel:

I understand that my daughter(s) will be required to travel to participate in matches and other club activities.

### Photography:

I understand that photographs or video footage will be taken, by an accredited photographer/video person, during or at Ladies Gaelic Football related events and may be used in the promotion of the sport or club.

### Text Messaging:

I understand that my daughter(s) may be contacted by text message from her club mentor in relation to training and match times and venues and from time to time in relation to club information and notices.

If you would like to receive the same text as your daughter please tick the relevant box:

Yes  My number is: \_\_\_\_\_ No

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_





## 6.2 ANNUAL TRAVEL PERMISSION FORM

Name of Child: \_\_\_\_\_

Team: \_\_\_\_\_

How we intend to get to away games:  Bus  
 Lifts  
 Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

Pick up times \_\_\_\_\_ Pick up location: \_\_\_\_\_

Drop off time: \_\_\_\_\_ Drop off location: \_\_\_\_\_

### Young Player

I have read and accept the conditions and rules set down in the Code of Ethics and Good practice for Young Players when travelling to matches and events. I agree to abide the rules of my Club and Association.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Parent/ Guardian of Player

I have read and accept the conditions and rules set down in the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Young Players when travelling to events

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency contact number: \_\_\_\_\_

Any known allergies or medical conditions: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



### 6.3 OVERNIGHT TRAVELLING PERMISSION FORM FOR UNDERAGE PLAYERS

Game: \_\_\_\_\_

Venue: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates: \_\_\_\_\_

Pick up time: \_\_\_\_\_ Pick up location: \_\_\_\_\_

Drop off time: \_\_\_\_\_ Drop off Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Overnight Accommodation: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact number: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Young Player

I have read and accept the conditions and rules set down in the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Young Players when travelling to matches and events which involves overnight stays. I agree to abide by the rules of my Club and Association.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Parent/Guardian of Participant

I have read and accept the conditions and rules set down in the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Young Players when travelling to matches and events which involves overnight stays.

Name of Child(ren): \_\_\_\_\_

Parents/Guardians Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency contact number: \_\_\_\_\_

Any known allergies or medical conditions: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



**6.4 NEW MENTOR APPLICATION FORM**

Position applied for: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Any Surname previously: \_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone No(s): \_\_\_\_\_

List previous experience/involvement in this or any other club. Include experience of working with young people in a voluntary or professional capacity. Include details of other sport involvement with young people.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Sporting NGB Qualifications. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Do you agree to abide by the guidelines contained in the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for young players?  Yes  No

Do you agree to abide by the rules of the Ladies Gaelic Football Association and (name your club) \_\_\_\_\_  Yes  No

Have you ever been asked to leave a sporting organisation? (If you have answered yes, we will contact you in confidence)  Yes  No

Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence or been the subject of a caution: a Bound Over Order: or are you at present the subject of criminal investigations? (If you have answered yes,we will contact you in confidence)  Yes  No

**References**

Please supply the name and address of two people who we can contact and who, from personal knowledge, are willing to endorse your application. One of these names should be, where possible, the name of an administrator/mentor in your last club/place of involvement.

Name and Contact Details of Referee 1

\_\_\_\_\_

Name and Contact Details of Referee 2

\_\_\_\_\_

I agree to abide by the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Young Players in Ladies Gaelic Football and the Code of Conduct and policies.

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

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



## 6.5 EXISTING MENTOR/VOLUNTEER INFORMATION FORM

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

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

Mentors/volunteers should familiarise themselves with The Ladies Football Associations 'Code of Ethics and Good Practice', in particular the Code of Conduct. Mentors/volunteers should read below and agree to abide by these terms. This self-declaration should be updated annually:

### As a leader with the Ladies Gaelic Football Association I agree that I should:

- Be positive during sessions and competitions, praise and encourage efforts as well as results
- Put welfare of young person first, strike a balance between this and winning/result
- Encourage fair play and treat participants equally
- Recognise development needs, ensuring activities are appropriate for the individual
- Plan and prepare appropriately
- Have experience relevant to working with young people or hold up-to-date qualification and be committed to the guidelines of this code
- Involve parents where possible and inform parents when problems arise
- Keep record of attendance at training and competitions
- Keep a brief record of injury(s) and actions taken
- Keep a brief record of problem/action/outcomes, if behavioural problems arise
- Report any concern in accordance with this Code's reporting procedures

### Where possible I will avoid:

- Spending excessive amounts of time with children away from others
- Taking sessions alone
- Taking children on journeys alone in the car

### Sports leaders should not:

- Use any form of punishment or physical force on a child
- Take children to their home.
- Exert undue influence over a participant in order to obtain personal benefit or reward
- 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. This includes innuendo, flirting or inappropriate gestures and terms
- 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 children

### Self-Declaration

Do you agree to abide by the guidelines contained in 'The Ladies Gaelic Football Associations Code of Ethics and Good Practice?

Yes  No

Do you agree to abide by the rules of the LGFA and your club/county?

Yes  No

Have you ever been asked to leave a sporting organisation?  
*(If you have answered yes, we will contact you in confidence)*

Yes  No

Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence or been the subject of a caution; a bound over order; or are you at present the subject of criminal investigations? *(If you have answered yes, we will contact you in confidence)*

Yes  No

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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



## 6.6 HOST FAMILY FORM

Club:

\_\_\_\_\_

County:

\_\_\_\_\_

We agree to abide by the Ladies Gaelic Football Association Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Young Players

Name of Parents/Guardians:

\_\_\_\_\_

Address:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Contact Number:

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Host Family Head(s) of Household):

\_\_\_\_\_

Date:

\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Club Secretary:

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature:

\_\_\_\_\_

Date:

\_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix 7.1 – Format for Disciplinary Committee’s Report

Below is a suggested outline of how to write up a report following a complaint. Additional information may be added to the format.

### Complaint:

State the nature of the complaint and individuals involved

### Procedure:

State

1. Who the Disciplinary Committee consisted of
2. Who the Disciplinary Committee met with
3. Any additional parties who the Disciplinary Committee met with/spoke to, for example the Health Board may have been contacted informally

### Conclusion:

Summarise the main findings from the above meetings and the final decision met by the Disciplinary Committee following these meetings

### Sanctions:

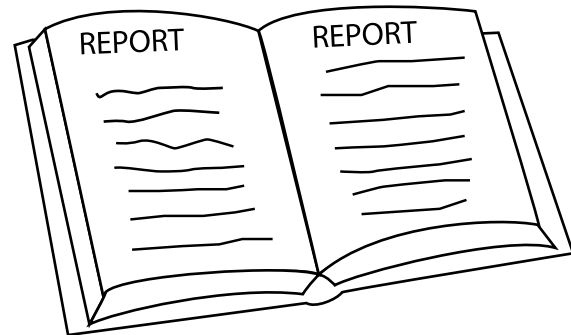
State any sanctions, which the Disciplinary Committee have imposed on any individuals as a result of the complaint

### Recommendations:

State any recommendations, which the Disciplinary Committee feel, are necessary to prevent such a complaint from reoccurring e.g. all club members involved with underage players attend a Child Protection course

### Signature:

All members of the Disciplinary Committee should sign and date the report





## Appendix 7.2 – Anti-Bullying Policy

*This is adapted from the Scout Association of Ireland's Child Protection Policy*

### 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 young people. It includes behaviours such as teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting and extortion behaviour by one or more players against a victim

### How would you know if a player is being bullied?

All bullies operate using furtiveness, threats and fear. Bullying can therefore only survive in an environment where the victim does not feel empowered to tell someone who can help or in which it is not safe to do so. The following indicators are warning signs that a young person might be getting bullied

- Reluctance to come to a venue or take part in activities
- Physical signs (unexplained bruises, scratches, or damage to belongings)
- Stress-caused illness – headaches, and stomach aches which seem unexplained
- Fearful behaviour (fear of walking to a meeting, going different routes, asking to be driven)
- Frequent loss of, or shortage of, money with vague explanations
- Having few friends
- Changes in behaviour (withdrawn, stammering, moody, irritable, upset, distressed)
- Not eating
- Attempting suicide or hinting at suicide
- Anxiety (shown by nail-biting, fearfulness, tics)

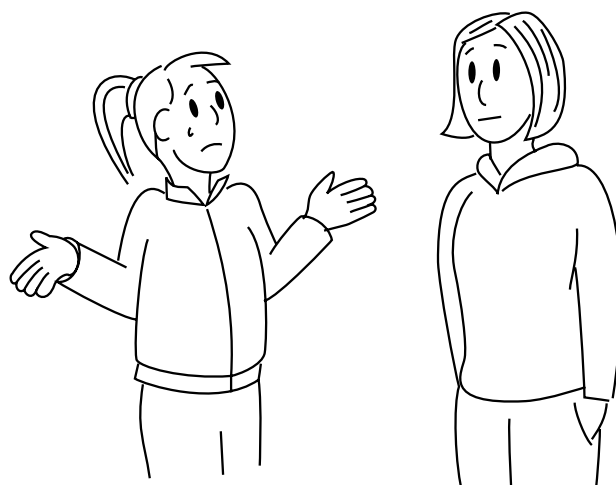
*There are other possible reasons for many of these indicators.*

### Who should deal with bullying?

While the more extreme forms of bullying would be regarded as physical or emotional abuse and are reported to the health board or An Garda Síochana, dealing with bullying behaviour is normally the responsibility of all Mentors within this club / organisation.

### How can it be prevented?

- Ensure that all members follow the code of conduct, which promotes the rights and dignity of each member
- Deal with any incidents as they arise
- Use a whole group policy or 'no-blame approach', i.e., not 'bullying the bully' but working with bullies and the group of young people, helping them to understand the hurt they are causing, and so make the problem a 'shared concern' of the group
- Reinforce that there is 'a permission to tell' culture rather than a 'might is right'
- Encourage young people to negotiate, co-operate and help others, particularly new or different people
- Offer victim immediate support and put the 'no blame approach' into operation
- Never tell a young person to ignore bullying, they can't ignore it, it hurts too much
- Never encourage a young person to take the law into their own hands and beat the bully at their own game
- Tell the victim there is nothing wrong with them and it is not their fault





## NO BLAME' APPROACH

### Step 1 – Interview with the victim

If you find that there has been an incident of bullying, first talk to the victim. At this stage find out who was involved and what the victim is now feeling. Try asking the following questions:

- Was it verbal or physical intimidation?
- How hurt is the victim
- Was it within his/her own peer group?
- Ensure the victim that his/her name will not come out in the investigation
- Actively listen

### Step 2 – Meet with all involved

Arrange to meet with all those involved; this should include some bystanders, those who may have colluded, those who joined in and those who initiated the bullying.

- Have a maximum of six to eight in the group – keep the number controllable
- Make a point of calling a 'special' meeting
- Ensure the severity of the topic is understood by all
- Speak only of the hurt caused in general terms with no reference to the victim
- Play on the conscience of all – ask questions like: How would you feel? Would you like it done to you?



Arrange to meet with all those involved; this should include some bystanders, those who may have colluded, those who joined in and those who initiated the bullying.

### Step 3 – Explain the problem

The distress being suffered as a result of the bullying incident is explained. At this stage the details of the incident or the allocation of the blame is not discussed. Explain the feelings of loneliness, feeling left out, rejected, laughed at. Try asking questions:

- Would they like it if it happened to them
- "Someone here in this group was bullied by someone within the group, what could we do to see it does not happen again?"
- Listen, watch out for reactions, and pick up on any without isolating anyone

### Step 4 – Share the responsibility

Explain what steps/controls may have to be introduced to prevent further incidents and how everyone will loose out as a result.

### Step 5 – Ask the group for their ideas

At this stage the group is encouraged to suggest ways that would make the victim feel happier. All positive responses are noted. Use phrases "if it were you" to encourage a response. Listen to all suggestions and note them.

### Step 6 – Leave it to them

Now the problem has been identified, solutions suggested, the problem is now handed over to the group to solve. Arrange to meet again in a week's time. Pass responsibility over to the group and give a time frame within which something must be done.

### Step 7 – Meet them again

Each member of the group, including the bully, discuss how things are going, who is doing what and have there been other incidents. This allows for continual monitoring and also keeps all involved in the process. Again enforce the idea of the 'team' looking after each other at regular intervals to ensure it is known that bullying or intimidating behaviour will not be tolerated.



## APPENDIX 7.3 – Grounds for Concern

Examples of reasonable grounds are:

1. a specific indication from a player that she has been abused
2. a statement from a person who witnessed abuse
3. an illness, injury or behaviour consistent with abuse
4. a symptom which may not itself be totally consistent with abuse, but which is supported by corroborative evidence of deliberate harm or negligence
5. consistent signs of neglect over a period of time

In some cases of child abuse the alleged perpetrator will also be a young person and it is important that behaviour of this nature is not ignored. Grounds for concern will exist in cases where there is an age difference and/ or difference in power, status or intellect between the children involved. However, it is important to distinguish between normal sexual behaviour and abusive behaviour. Persons unsure about whether or not certain behaviours are abusive and therefore reportable, should contact the duty social worker in the local Health Board or Social Services department where they will receive advice.

## Signs of Abuse

### Physical Indicators

- Unexplained bruising in soft tissue areas
- Repeated Injury
- Black eye(s)
- Injuries to mouth
- Torn or bloodstained clothing
- Burns or scalds
- Bites
- Fractures
- Marks from implements
- Inconsistent stories, excuses relating to injuries

### Behavioural Indicators

- Unexplained changes in behaviour
- Becoming withdrawn or aggressive
- Regressive behaviour
- Difficulty in making friends
- Distrustful of adults or excessive attachment to adults
- Sudden drop in performance
- Change in attendance pattern
- Inappropriate sexual awareness, behaviour or language
- Unusual reluctance to remove clothing
- Reluctance to go home





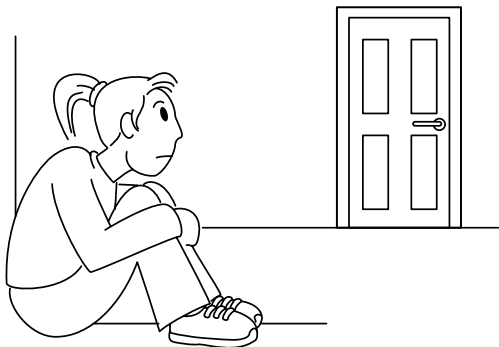
## APPENDIX 7.4 – Categories of Abuse

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

### 1. Neglect

Neglect is normally defined in terms of omission, where a young person suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults, or medical care. It may also include neglect of a young person's basic emotional needs.

Neglect usually becomes apparent in different ways over a period of time rather than at one specific point. For instance, a young person who suffers a series of minor injuries is not having her needs for supervision and safety met. The threshold of significant harm is reached when the young person's needs are neglected to the extent that her well being and/or development is severely affected.



### 2. Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is normally to be found in the relationship between an adult and a young person rather than in a specific event or pattern of events. It is rarely manifested in terms of physical symptoms.

Examples of emotional abuse include

- Persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming
- Where the level of care is conditional on her behaviour
- Unresponsiveness, inconsistent or unrealistic expectations of a young person
- Premature imposition of responsibility on the young person

- Over or under protection of the young person
- Failure to provide opportunities for the child's education and development
- Use of unrealistic or over-harsh disciplinary measures
- Exposure to domestic violence, adult mental health problems and parental substance misuse may expose children to emotional abuse

### 3. Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is any form of non-accidental injury that causes significant harm to a young person, including:

- Shaking, hitting or throwing
- Use of excessive force in handling
- Deliberate poisoning
- Suffocation or drowning
- Munchausen's syndrome by proxy (where parents/guardians fabricate stories of illness about their child or cause physical signs of illness)
- Allowing or creating a substantial risk of significant harm to a young person
- For young people with disabilities it may include confinement to a room or cot, or incorrectly given drugs to control behaviour
- Burning or scalding

### 4. Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse occurs when a young person is used by another person for his or her gratification or sexual arousal, or for that of others. For example:

- Exposure of the sexual organs or any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of a young person
- Intentional touching or molesting of the body of a young person whether by person or object for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification
- Masturbation in the presence of a young person or involvement of the child in the act of masturbation
- Sexual intercourse with the young person, whether oral, vaginal or anal
- Sexual exploitation of a young person
- It may include non-contact activities, such as involving young people in looking at pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways

## APPENDIX 7.5 – Inclusion and Integration Strategy 2009 – 2015

In 2009 a dedicated team representing the GAA, Ladies Gaelic Football, Camogie, Handball and Rounders was tasked with examining the best practices in Inclusion and Integration in Irish sport and Irish society in order to develop a stand alone inclusion strategy for all organisations of the Gaelic Games Family.

The process included submissions from schools, clubs and individuals. These submissions identified challenges, successes and best practices from city, urban and rural contexts. The team also consulted with experts and representatives from more than 20 organisations and groups and many made formal submissions.

The strategy and specific targets were presented to the leadership of Ladies Gaelic Football, Camogie, Handball and Rounders and the proposals were adopted by each organisation.

The strategy has now been adopted as policy by all organisations and a set of accountable actions have been agreed at National, Provincial, County and Club level within each organisation.

The Gaelic Games family welcomes people of all nationalities, ethnicities, religions, ages and abilities into our sports.

Integrating children and young people with any form of disability into our games and other activities is a key component of the core values of each Association. All clubs and teams should be aware there are many ways in which the integration and greater involvement of disabled young persons in our games and other activities can be promoted and achieved.

It is recommended that all club or team personnel avail of any training in relation to Disability Awareness to ensure we can impact positively on the quality of life for disabled people and other marginalised groups.

Strategy is available for download from [www.ladiesgaelic.ie](http://www.ladiesgaelic.ie)



The Gaelic Games family welcomes people of all nationalities, ethnicities, religions, ages and abilities into our sports.



## APPENDIX 7.6 – Volunteer Charter

### VOLUNTEER CHARTER



# Supporting you, Supporting us!

#### Ladies Gaelic Football Association will ensure that volunteers will be.....

- ⊗ Appreciated and have their voluntary contribution recognised
- ⊗ Provided with supervision and support through a designated mentor system
- ⊗ Provided with safe working conditions and offered appropriate training for their specific role
- ⊗ Respected by all members of the Association
- ⊗ Enriched from their experience in a fulfilling and positive manner
- ⊗ Considered valuable members of the Association
- ⊗ Informed about, and given the opportunity to play an active part in the Association as a whole
- ⊗ Able to say 'no' and to leave without feeling guilty
- ⊗ Treated fairly and not to experience discrimination
- ⊗ Enlisted with meaningful duties and know what is expected from them in their role

#### The Ladies Gaelic Football Association asks of volunteers.....

- ⊗ To respect the values and aims of the Association as outlined in our Strategic Plan and Code of Ethics and Good Practice
- ⊗ To be reliable and committed to their role
- ⊗ To attend essential training and support sessions
- ⊗ To be honest if they are experiencing problems
- ⊗ To respect the confidentiality of the club and the Association
- ⊗ To treat all members, or people involved with or supporting the sport with respect and dignity

#### Becoming a volunteer.....

The Ladies Gaelic Football Association welcome people who are interested in volunteering on a regular, intermittent or on a one-off basis with any of the below skills:

Administration	Project Management	Refereeing
Website design and maintenance	Leadership	Supervision
Fund-raising	Journalism	First Aid
Event organising	Coaching	

If you have a skill which is not listed and you feel the Association may benefit from it, please feel free to contact us also.

To learn more about volunteering or to become a volunteer for the Ladies Gaelic Football Association, please contact your nearest Club.

To find out your nearest club, please contact Paula Prunty, National Games Development Officer on (01) 8363156 or email: [paula@ladiesgaelic.ie](mailto:paula@ladiesgaelic.ie)

Ladies Gaelic Football Association  
Level 6, Cusack Stand Croke Park, Dublin 3  
Tel: (01) 8363156 Fax (01) 8363111  
Website: [www.ladiesgaelic.ie](http://www.ladiesgaelic.ie)

*Supporting you, Supporting us!*

## APPENDIX 7.7 – Charter against Racism in Sport

### Team up Against Racism

We, the signatories of this Charter, will endeavour to ensure that the activities of our organisations are conducted in a way that is free from discrimination, harassment or prejudice on the grounds of 'race', colour, ethnic or national origins, religious belief and membership of the Traveller community. In signing this Charter we recognise that racism deprives people of their basic human rights, dignity and respect.

The principles of this Charter are:

- To challenge racism in all its forms
- To work towards removing racism from sport
- To encourage our members, participants and spectators to reject racism
- To welcome participants and spectators from all nationalities and ethnic backgrounds
- To protect our members, participants and spectators from racial abuse and harassment
- To promote this Charter amongst our members, participants and spectators





## APPENDIX 7.8 – Sample Codes of Conduct for Under 10's and Under 12's

### Ladies Gaelic Stars

- Play for enjoyment and to be with our friends
- Make new friends on our team and other teams
- Promise to try our best to improve our skill to help our team mates
- Learn to play a game which should give us a lifetime of enjoyment
- Play fairly at all times
- Thank the referee for giving time to take charge of the game
- Promise to respect our opponents – even if we lose
- Shake hands with our opponents before and after the game

### Réaltaí Pheil na mBan

- Bain sult as an imirt agus bí le d chairde
- Déan cairde nua ar an bhfoireann s'againne agus ar fhoirne eile
- Geall go ndéanfaimid gach dícheall ár scileanna a fheabhsú agus cabhrú lenár bhfoireann
- Foghlaim cluiche a thabharfaidh taitneamh dúinn ar feadh ár saoil
- Imir go cóir i gcónaí
- Gabh buíochas leis an réiteoir as an ról sin a chomhlíonadh
- Geall go mbeidh meas againn ar an bhfoireann eile – fiú má chaill muid
- Lámh a chroitheadh lenár gcéile comhraic roimh agus tar éis an chluiche





## APPENDIX 7.9 – Code of Ethics Information Evenings

### Who should attend?

This will depend on the size of your club and the number of players involved. A small club should aim to hold 1 night and invite the entire club as outlined below. A larger club may hold a separate evening for (a) the coaches, (b) the parents and (c) the players.

Ensure that Club Officers, mentors, coaches, parents of all underage players (including underage players on Senior teams), and anyone involved with juvenile players attend.

It is also good practice to invite your adult players as many of them will have underage players as team mates.

Invite your County Children's Officer to deliver a section of the evening. This is a beneficial way of introducing the County Children's Officer to your club.

### What will I need:

- Your Club's Code of Ethics
- The Ladies Gaelic Football Association's Code of Ethics and Good Practice
- Joint Code of Behaviour leaflets
- Copies of: Parents Registration Form  
Existing Mentors Form  
New Mentors Form  
Player's Code of Conduct

Get anyone in attendance that has not already filled out relevant forms to do so

### What areas should be covered?

1. Provide an **introduction to your Club**, outlining a brief history, number of teams, number of current mentors. Any other relevant information to parents, etc
2. Give the **main objectives of your Code**: to make our sport safe, fun and ensure that it is conducted in a spirit of fair play. Outline that the Code is in place to protect the players but also the Club and its mentors.
3. Discuss your **Codes of Conduct** for all relevant parties – players, mentors and parents. Outline that parents represent the club at all matches/functions.

## 4. General Guidelines

- Recruitment procedures – the club ensures that all safety precautions are adhered to.
- Supervision – no mentor works alone where possible and this is where parents play a key role in assisting the club with this guideline. Outline here key areas where parents can assist: travelling to matches, supervising in dressing rooms, assistance with training, handing out water bottles
- Travelling – outline the requirement of parents assisting with transport to matches
- Away trips and overnight stays – importance of parental support
- General Safety Guidelines – these should be specific to the club i.e. Health and Safety regulations of the GAA facilities, dressing rooms, clubhouse, etc and also outlining where players should be collected from, valuables brought to training, etc
- Photography and Filming guidelines – parental permission form
- Text Messaging – if the club uses text messaging as a means of communicating with players, this should be outlined to parents and a sample of the texts being sent shown to them. Some parents may opt to have the same message sent to them also.

## 5. How to make a Complaint

Keep this section simple and factual as the main aim is to let parents/mentors know there is a procedure and it is outlined in your Code of Ethics should any one require it.

## 6. Bullying Policy

This is a very important section. Parents should be made aware of the role they play in preventing bullying and creating an environment where a child will tell an adult if they are being bullied.

## 7. Training and Vetting

Advise where to get relevant Child Protection training. Provide information on the training available. Recommend that all those involved with juvenile players attend this course. Also outline the Vetting requirements of all those working with underage players.



### How to coordinate the evening

Time required: 1 ½ hours maximum

Venue: Club facilities – suitable room/hall, i.e. can provide a comfortable environment for the number invited to attend

Refreshments: Tea and Coffee refreshments is a good way to start/end the evening and is an opportunity to allow the club officials to meet the parents.

- It is recommended to hold the evening at the beginning of the year, in conjunction with your registration night. Finding a date that suits everyone will always be impossible and a good method of achieving full attendance is parents must attend to register their daughter and complete a parental permission form.
- Send out confirmation of the evening and generate awareness of the evening by putting up posters in the local shops/church. Use your club website also to advertise the evening.
- Contact The Ladies Gaelic Football Association for any literature required
- Allow time for questions and answers and feedback



### Sample Case Studies

#### Small Club Information Evening

- Invited parents, mentors, players – juvenile and adult
- Invited guest player – Adult Inter-County Senior Player from a different County to speak to the players
- Held evening in conjunction with their Registration night – parents had to attend if wanted to register their daughters
- Parents were in one room of club house for the talk and registrations
- Children and coaches were in main hall with the guest player who gave a brief talk on training, nutrition, player code of conduct, alcohol, drugs, etc
- The evening was also used as a recruitment opportunity – the club highlighted different 'duties' e.g. supervision in dressing rooms, drivers for games, etc which were needed to ensure the club continued functioning. Parents volunteered on a rota basis.

#### Large Club Information Evening

- Invited all parents of the juvenile section
- Held information evening on the Code
- Chairperson addressed the parents in relation to the Club policies regarding the Code
- Invited the National Children's Officer to attend and address any concerns of the parents
- Requested all parents to sign the Parental Permission forms after the talk when parents were aware of what they were signing
- It ended as a social evening within the club
- All parents gave great feedback to the club who now hold an annual information/social evening

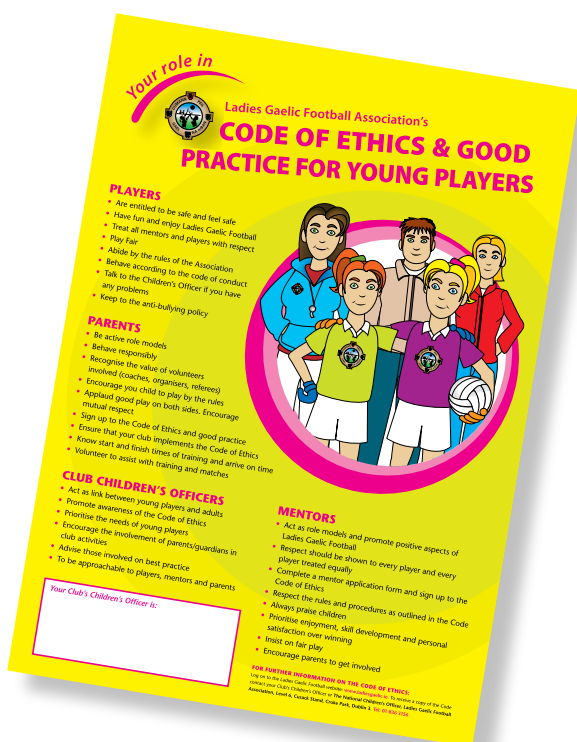
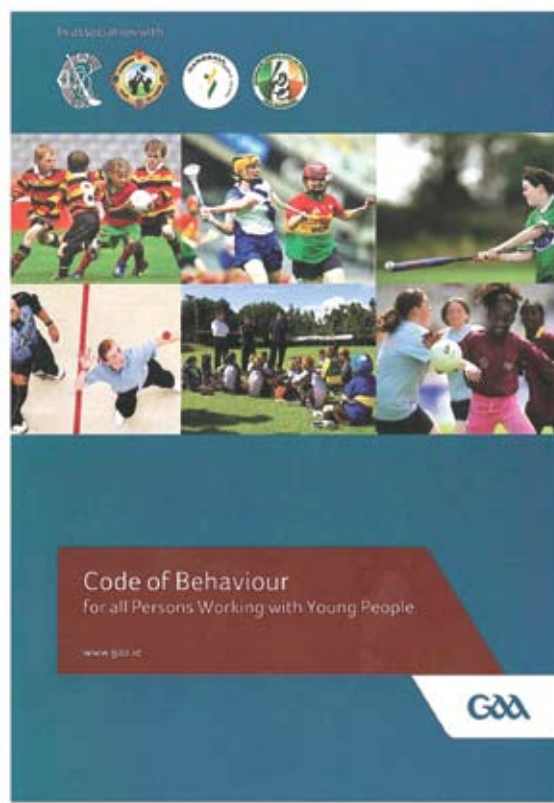




## APPENDIX 7.10 – Resources Available

A Code of Ethics Poster and copies of the Code of Behaviour Booklet are available by contacting:

National Children's Officer,  
Ladies Gaelic Football Association,  
Cusack Stand, Croke Park,  
Dublin 3. (01) 8363156





## 8. LIST OF USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

### Eastern Health Board – Area Child Care Manager

Community Care Area	Address	Phone No.
Area 1	Tivoli Road, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin	(01) 2808403
Area 2	Vergemount Hall, Dublin 6	(01) 2698222
Area 3	The Malting Business Park, 54/55 Marrowbone Lane, Dublin 8	(01) 4544733
Area 4	Old County Road, Crumlin, Dublin 12	(01) 4542511
Area 5	The Lodge, Cherry Orchard, Ballyfermot, Dublin 10	(01) 6268101
Area 6	Rathdown Road, Dublin 7	(01) 8385034
Area 7	Rose Cottage, Fairview, Dublin 15	(01) 8575431
Area 8	Cromcastle Road, Coolock, Dublin 5	(01) 8476122
Area 9	Popular House, Popular Square, Naas, Co. Kildare	(045) 876001
Area 10	Glenside Road, Wicklow	(0404) 60800

### Midland Health Board – Area Child Care Manager

Community Care Area	Address	Phone No.
Longford/ Westmeath	Social Work Dept, Longford	(043) 50584
	Mullingar	(044) 44877
	Athlone Health Centre	(0902) 75301
Laois/ Offaly	Child and Family Centre, Portlaoise	(0502) 62300
	Social Work Dept. Tullamore	(0506) 22488

### Mid-Western Health Board – Area Child Care Manager

Community Care Area	Address	Phone No.
Limerick	Unit 3, Camillus Hospital, Shelbourne Road, Limerick	(061) 483711
Clare	Tobartaoiscaín, Ennis, Co. Clare	(065) 23921
North Tipperary	General Hospital, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary	(067) 31491

### North-Eastern Health Board – Area Child Care Manager

Community Care Area	Address	Phone No.
Cavan/Monaghan	Community Care Office, Listdarn, Cavan	(049) 61822
Louth	Community Care Office, Dublin Road, Dundalk, Co. Louth	(042) 9332287
Meath	Family Resource Centre, Commons Road, Navan, Co. Meath	(046) 9021595

### North-Western Health Board – Area Child Care Manager

Community Care Area	Address	Phone No.
Donegal	Ballybofey, Co. Donegal	(074) 9131391
Sligo/Leitrim	Markievicz House, Co. Sligo	(071) 9155133



## 8. LIST OF USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

### Southern Health Board – Area Child Care Manager

Community Care Area	Address	Phone No.
South Lee	Abbey Court House, Georges Quay, Cork	021 923814
North Lee	Abbeycourt House, Georges Quay, Cork	021 965511
North Cork	Gouldshill, Mallow, Co. Cork	021 21484
West Cork	Hospital Grounds, Skibbereen, Co. Cork	028 21722
Kerry	18 Denny Street, Tralee, Co. Kerry	066 23400

### South-Eastern Health Board – Area Child Care Manager

Community Care Area	Address	Phone No.
Carlow/Kilkenny	Community Care Centre, Carlow	0503 36520
	Community Care Centre, Kilkenny	056 52208
Waterford	Community Care Centre, Cork Road, Waterford	051 842800
Wexford	South Eastern Health Board, Ely House, Wexford	053 47718/9
South Tipperary	Community Care Centre, Western Road, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary	052 22011

### Western Health Board – Area Child Care Manager

Community Care Area	Address	Phone No.
Galway	Community Care Offices, Newcastle Road, Galway	091 52312225 ext 6330
Mayo	Hill House, Castlebar, Co. Mayo	094 22333 ext 2183
Roscommon	Community Care Offices, Ardsallagh, Roscommon	0903 27089

### National Counselling Services

Northern Area HB	1800 234 110
East Coast Area HB	1800 234 111
South Western Area HB	1800 234 112
Midland HB	1800 234 113
Western HB	1800 234 114
Mid-Western HB	1800 234 115
Southern HB	1800 234 116
North Eastern HB	1800 234 117
South Eastern HB	1800 234 118
North Western HB	1800 234 119

<b>Confidential Garda Line (24 hours)</b>	1800 666 111
---	--------------



## 8. LIST OF USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

### Northern Ireland – Contacts for Local Health & Social Services

Please note there is no central number for out of hours contact.  
Board areas now have their own contact numbers.

#### Community Care Area

##### **EHSSB Belfast**

Out of hours number EHSSB

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust Headquarters

South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust Headquarters

##### **NHSSB Ballymena**

Out of hours number NHSSB

Northern Health and Social Care Trust Headquarters

##### **SHSSB Armagh**

Out of hours number SHSSB

Southern Health and Social Care Trust Headquarters

##### **WHSSB Londonderry**

Out of hours number WHSSB

Western Health and Social Care Trust Headquarters

NSPCC 24 Helpline

Childline

**[www.there4me.com](http://www.there4me.com)** – a confidential advice website for teenagers

**[www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)**

#### Ladies Gaelic Football Association – Head Office

Level 6, Cusack Stand, Croke Park, Dublin 3.

Tel: 0 1 8363156,

Fax: 01 8363111

Email: [info@ladiesgaelic.ie](mailto:info@ladiesgaelic.ie)

Website: [www.ladiesgaelic.ie](http://www.ladiesgaelic.ie)

#### Phone No.

**028 9032 1313**

028 9056 5444

028 90565656

028 9266 9111

**028 25311000**

028 9446 8833

0845 6012333

**028 3741 0041**

028 3752 2381

028 3861 3950

**028 7186 0086**

028 7134 5171

028 7134 5171

0808 800 5000

0800 1111



## 9. REFERENCES

The guidelines in this document are based on the National Guidelines as outlined in the following documents

- Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport, Irish Sports Council, 2000.
- Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children, Dept. of Health & Children 1999
- Our Duty to Care, Dept. of Health & Children 2002
- GAA Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport, GAA, 2009
- For Northern Ireland Clubs and Organisations reference should also be made to Children Act NI and Safeguarding Children
- [www.sportprotects.org.uk](http://www.sportprotects.org.uk)



**Ladies Gaelic Football Association**

Level 6, Cusack Stand, Croke Park, Dublin 3.

**Tel:** (01) 8363156 **Fax:** (01) 8363111 **Email:** [info@ladiesgaelic.ie](mailto:info@ladiesgaelic.ie) **Web:** [www.ladiesgaelic.ie](http://www.ladiesgaelic.ie)