

Maryland GAA



Code of Conduct 2023

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CODE OF CONDUCT FOR PARENTS

Parents/Guardians have an influential role to play in assisting and encouraging their children to fully participate in Gaelic Games, whether it is when they are playing our games or attending training or coaching sessions.

They should act as role models for their children as they participate in Gaelic Games.

Parents/Guardians should encourage their child to:

- Always 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.

Parents/Guardians should lead by example:

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

Parents/Guardians must:

- Complete and return the registration/permission and medical consent forms for their child's participation in the Club.
- Inform the coaches, and any other relevant Club personnel, of any changes in their child's medical or dietary requirements prior to coaching sessions, games or other related activities.
- Ensure that their child punctually attends, coaching sessions, games or other related activities.
- Provide their child with adequate clothing and equipment as may be required for the playing of our games, including for example helmets, shin guards, gum shields etc.
- Ensure that the nutrition/hydration and hygiene needs of their child are met.



- Listen to what their child may have to say.
- Show approval whether the team wins, loses or draws a game.
- Never attempt to meet their own needs and aspirations for success and achievement through their children's participation in games.

Parents/Guardians should assist the 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.
- Respecting the rights, dignity and worth of every person and by treating each one equally regardless of age, gender, ability, ethnic origin, cultural background or religion.

Parents/Guardians have the right to:

- Know their child is safe and to make a complaint if they believe that their child's safety is in any way compromised.
- Be informed of problems/concerns relating to their child by their team manager.
- Be informed if their child gets injured.



CODE OF CONDUCT FOR PLAYERS

Young players can benefit greatly from sports in terms of personal development and enjoyment.

As part of their development our players must be encouraged to realise that due to their participation they also have a responsibility to treat others with fairness and respect. With rights there will always be responsibilities.

When a young person signs a membership form as a player with Maryland GAA & Maryland/Tang GAA they are agreeing to abide by this Code of Behaviour and to any other policies or 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 levels with which they feel comfortable.
- Make their concerns known and have them dealt with in an appropriate manner.
- Be protected from abuse.
- Be listened to.

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 regardless of whether they do well or not.
- Represent their team, their Club and their family with pride and dignity.
- Respect all coaches, mentors, officials and their opponents.
- Be gracious in defeat and modest in victory.
- Shake hands before and after a game, irrespective of the result.
- Ensure that their coach/mentor/manager is informed in advance if they are unavailable for training and games.
- Know that it is acceptable to talk to the Club or juvenile Section Children's Officer with any concerns or questions they may have.
- Adhere to acceptable standards of behaviour.
- Tell somebody else if they or others have been harmed in any way.
- Take due care of Club equipment.

YOUNG PLAYERS should never:

- Cheat – always play by the rules.



- Shout at or argue with a game's official, with their coach, their team mates or opponents and should never use violence.
- 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 injured.
- Use unacceptable language or racial and/or sectarian references.



CODE OF CONDUCT FOR COACHES, MENTORS AND TRAINERS

All coaches, mentors and trainers (referred to hereafter as coaches) should ensure that young people and children benefit significantly from our games by promoting a positive, healthy and participatory approach in our work with underage players.

In developing the skills levels of every player, Coaches should always encourage enjoyment and fun while ensuring meaningful participation in our games and activities. Coaches should always remember that they are role models for the players in their care.

Recruitment of Coaches

All Coaches working with young people and children are required to be suitable for their chosen role(s), and should be appropriately trained, qualified and supported to fulfil such roles. All persons working or volunteering for such roles are required to undertake agreed vetting and background Police checks and to attend coaching and training courses relevant to their roles.

Coaches should maintain a child centred approach

- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person.
- Treat each person equally regardless of age, gender, ability, ethnic origin, cultural background or religion.
- Be positive during coaching sessions, games and other activities so that underage players always leave with a sense of achievement and an increased level of self-esteem.
- Recognise the development needs and capacity of all underage players, regardless of their ability, by emphasising participation for all while avoiding excessive training and competition. Skills development and personal satisfaction should have priority over competition when working with underage players.
- Develop an understanding of relevant coaching methods and ensure that they have the appropriate level of coaching accreditation.
- Do not equate losing with failure and do not develop a preoccupation with medals and trophies. The level of improvement made by underage players is the best indicator of effective coaching.

Coaches should lead by example

- 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.
- Encourage players to respect and accept the judgement of match officials.
- Promote Fair Play.
- Promote the RESPECT campaign.



- Don not smoke while working with underage players.
- Do not consume alcohol or non-prescribed drugs immediately prior to or while underage players are in your care.
- Encourage parents to become involved in your team and Club activities wherever possible.

Conduct of coaches when working with young people

- Develop an appropriate working relationship with children based on mutual trust and respect.
- Challenge Bullying in any form whether physical or emotional. Bullying is not acceptable behaviour be it from a young person, coach parent/guardian, spectator or match official.
- Don't shout at or lecture payers 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.
- The use of any form of physical punishment is prohibited as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour, unless it is by way of restraint.
- Avoid incidents of horse play or role play or telling jokes etc. that could be misinterpreted.
- Never undertake any form of therapy or hypnosis, in the training of children.

Avoid compromising your role as a coach

Some activities may require coaches to come into physical contact with underage players in the course of their duties. However, coaches should;

- Avoid taking coaching sessions on your own.
- Only deliver one to one coaching, if deemed necessary, in a group setting.
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact with an underage player and never engage in inappropriate touching of a player.
- Be aware that any necessary contact should be determined by the age and development of the player and should only take place with the permission and understanding of the player and in an open environment in the context of developing a player's skills and abilities.

Best practice

- As a coach always be punctual and properly attired.
- Ensure that all of your players are suitably and safely attired to play their chosen sport, e.g. mouthguards.
- Keep a record of attendance at training and at games by both players and coaches.
- 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.
- Be accompanied by at least one other adult in underage team dressing rooms.
- Set realistic – stretching but achievable – performance goals for your players and team.
- 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.



- Keep a record of any injuries and action subsequently taken. Ensure that another official referee/team mentor is present when a player is being attended to and can corroborate the relevant details.
- Make adequate provision for First Aid services.
- Do not encourage or permit players to play while injured.
- Be aware of any special medical or dietary requirements of players as indicated on the medical consent/registration forms or as informed by parents/guardians.
- With the expressed permission of parents/guardians be willing to keep necessary and emergency medication of players in a safe and accessible place for administration in accordance with the wishes of the parents/guardians.
- Do not administer medication or medical aid unless you are willing to do so and have received the necessary training to administer such aid.
- Do not communicate individually by text/email with underage players.
- Do not engage in communications with underage players via social network sites.
- Encourage parents/guardians to play an active role in organising and assisting various activities for your teams and your Club.
- 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.
- With the exception of their own child a coach should not transport a child alone, except in emergency or exceptional circumstances.



CODE OF CONDUCT FOR 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 and supporters.

Active, loyal and well behaved supporters are always welcome to attend and support our games but should be aware that their conduct will reflect upon the team, players and Clubs that they support and represent.

Fellow supporters have a responsibility to ensure that all spectators conduct themselves in an acceptable and well behaved manner at all times, when attending our games and competitions. Supporters should realise and consider that Young Players are encouraged to participate in Gaelic Games so that they may enjoy themselves while also improving their skills levels.

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 behaviour by not using foul language or harassing players, coaches 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.