



SECTION
09

ORGANISING CLUB ACTIVITIES FOR UNDERAGE PLAYERS

THIS GUIDANCE FORMS PART OF
THE CODE OF BEHAVIOUR (UNDERAGE) &
CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY STATEMENT



INTERNATIONAL SAFEGUARDING

Iúil 2024

This section of the Code of Behaviour (Underage) highlights good practice in the organizing of Club activities for underage players. It includes useful advice and hints on hosting activities, organising away trips, an event planner and transport guidance.

International Units must at all times ensure that their practices adhere to both the statutory guidance that apply in the jurisdiction in which they operate and that these practices also abide by the good practices outlined throughout the Gaelic Games Code of Behaviour (Underage).

ORGANISING CLUB ACTIVITIES FOR UNDERAGE PLAYERS

AWAY TRIPS

Many teams and Clubs participate in trips away from their home base at various times during the year, none more so that our Clubs who are affiliated to International Boards and Regions. These trips may be part of or indeed additional to the regular games that take place as part of a County fixtures schedule or during inter Club blitzes. By their very nature trips away from home can assist in developing team morale and camaraderie, regardless of age, and often lay the foundation for young players and families to commit further to their local Club.

Clubs regularly reward underage teams by visiting other Clubs and playing matches against teams of a similar age group in other areas or Counties. This gives younger players an insight into the broad geographical nature and community ethos attached to our Gaelic Games while creating greater camaraderie with their fellow colleagues and within their own Clubs.

The pre-planning and detailed organising of such trips for younger players will require a high degree of care and preparation. Adults should always remember the key roles of responsibilities they have during such trips on behalf of their Club, on behalf of parents/guardians and on behalf of the young people themselves.



Pre-trip preparations

- A detailed programme of activity should be approved in advance at Club level following agreement with the other Club(s) or Units who may be involved in the away trip.
- Where possible, a member of your organising group should be familiar with the away venue, should visit the venue in advance if deemed necessary and ensure themselves that the venue can cater for the planned programme of activities. This is particularly relevant should an overnight stay be required.
- Parental/guardian written consent must be obtained so as to permit any young person under 18 yrs. of age participate in any organised trip. This consent should be in addition to the **CHILD/YOUTH MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM (Appendix 1)**
- Contact details for all parents/guardians must be obtained in advance of the trip.
- Young people (of an appropriate age) and their parents/guardians should sign a form agreeing to abide by the programme and to any agreed procedures that relate to the organised trip.
- An agreed Code of Conduct, specifically designed for the trip, should be discussed, outlined and agreed with all players and adults, including Club personnel, that are participating on the trip, prior to the trip taking place.
- The Code of Conduct should outline agreed procedures and the penalties that may apply. The Code of Conduct should address:
 - o The use of mobile phones during the trip
 - o No alcohol regulations
 - o No unauthorised photography or recording
 - o Rules on changing room access
 - o Accommodation arrangements
 - o General standards of behaviour
- Medical, allergy and food intolerance information, deemed relevant by the parents/guardians of players, should be made known to the leaders of the Club trip and what action, if any, may be required of them in the case of an emergency. (Child/Youth Membership Application Form)
- A detailed programme which includes the following should be presented to all players and their parents/guardians in advance of the trip:
 - o The named leader of the trip and their contact details
 - o A time schedule of departure and arrival at your destination
 - o Full information about the trip; including all activities and events planned
 - o Emergency contact numbers of Club personnel who are accompanying the group
- All adults accompanying the underage team should be compliant with Vetting/Police Background checks and safeguarding requirements and be aware as to what are their responsibilities and what role(s) they may have during the trip.
- It is the Club's/Unit's responsibility to ensure that the trip itself and all activities taking place throughout the trip adhere to insurance cover, that all participants are eligible members of their Association's relevant injury scheme and that the activities of the trip do not compromise the conditions of their injury scheme or other additional insurance policies.
- Where it is deemed necessary the organisers of all such trips should seek and gain the permission

of their County/Regional/International Board, to enable the trip take place, prior to announcing the details of the programme to their members.

During the trip

- It is essential that at least one individual with first aid qualifications be part of your organising group and that this individual be present or available throughout the trip.
- Young people must be adequately supervised throughout the trip as per the agreed supervision ratios of 2 adults to 10 young people. This ratio may differ depending on the age group of participants, the activities to be undertaken, whether there is an overnight stay, if the trip is outside of their jurisdictional boundaries and must take any statutory guidance in respect of such activities into consideration. (See Appendix 9 Supervision Ratios).
- Organisers of Club trips should always be mindful of ensuring that additional adults accompany their group on trips away for supervision purposes and in case of emergencies or unforeseen circumstances. These adults are subject to our vetting and child safeguarding requirements. (See Appendix 6 & 7).
- Where a team or training group consists of both boys and girls, the supervision and coaching personnel must also comprise of both male and female personnel.
- In the case of an all-female team, at least one of the adults (coach/supervisor) must be female and similarly in the case of an all-boys team, at least one of the adults (coach/supervisor) must be male.
- Adults are required to be familiar with the agreed rules on smoking and on the consumption of alcohol during the trip, as outlined in the GAA Code of Behaviour. As a basic minimum, adults are required to avoid smoking while working with young players and must not consume alcohol or non-prescribed drugs while young players are in their care.

Overnight stays

When participating in an overnight stay a number of matters require careful preplanning and agreement.

By agreement with all parties, including players and parents, a decision is required whether the Club/Unit will avail of hotel or guest house accommodation, or if invited will avail of a hosting arrangement by the host Club in the houses of their Club members.

Regardless of what form of accommodation is agreed upon, adequate and specific supervisory ratios of adults to children must be agreed in advance. This ratio, which is very dependent on the age category of the children/young people, may also vary should the group be participating in certain outdoor activities or in water sports and will also vary if the group is a mixed gender group.

Hotel, hostel or guest house accommodation

- Check out the proposed accommodation for children/young people and Club mentors. Ensure that it complies with health and safety regulations, is accessible, is of a suitable standard and is appropriate for the particular age group and programme of events.
- When availing of overnight accommodation adults (except parents) should not share a room with a child. If exceptional or emergency circumstances dictate and the presence of an adult is deemed necessary, there should be more than one child in the room with the adult at all times, unless medical or parental advice is to the contrary.
- Where children are sharing a room it must be with others of the same age grouping and gender.
- All children should be provided with a bed each and should not have to share a bed with another child.



- It is also preferable that the sharing of rooms be done with fellow Club members at inter Club events and that such arrangements are made known in advance of the trip to the child's parents.

Home stay accommodation

- When availing of home stay accommodation the host Club is responsible for choosing a host family that has been recommended to them and has been satisfactorily vetted in accordance with Association requirements.
- When availing of home stay accommodation adults (except for the parent of a child) should not share a room with a child. If exceptional or emergency circumstances so dictate and the presence of an adult is deemed necessary there should be more than one child in the room with the adult at all times, subject of agreement.
- When availing of home stay accommodation Children must not share a room with adults from the host family.
- All children should be provided with a bed each and should not have to share a bed with another child.
- Where children are sharing a room it must be with others of the same age grouping and gender. It is also preferably that the sharing of rooms be done with fellow Club members at an inter Club event and that such arrangements are made known in advance of the trip to the child's parents.

Review of trip

A full review of the trip should involve all who participated from the Club and the result of the review should be retained and reviewed if and when the group intend organising another or similar trip, or if the Club intends revisiting the area or the host Club again.

HOSTING AN EVENT

The hosting of a series of games, a challenge match, an underage blitz or an inter Club tournament is now seen as a normal event for most Clubs in Hurling, Football, Camogie, Ladies Football, Rounders and Handball.

While such events are generally organised by age category and by code, so as to provide inter Club games and offer skill development opportunities, these events by their very nature can also provide young people of all ages with a positive social experience allowing them to develop within a safe environment.

The safeguarding criteria and guidance that applies to away trips, recruitment, travel, health and safety also apply to the hosting of an event with the additional responsibility that when hosting you are organising the games or the event for more than your own Club or team members.

A number of ground rules apply to hosting an event.

- 1 Don't be pressurised into offering to host an event if you cannot do it or if you do not have adequate resources or facilities to cater for the proposed event
- 2 Be absolutely clear that you have the full support of your own Club when embarking on hosting an event
- 3 Clarify with those who requested of you to host the event (e.g. International Board, Juvenile Board, Féile Committee etc...) what is required of your Club
- 4 Form an organising team, with a nominated person in charge, to oversee, plan and implement the hosting
- 5 Allocate specific responsibilities to each member of the organising team
- 6 Agree a timescale and a plan for the delivery of all of your actions (see Event Action Plan)
- 7 Agree your plan or outline your plan with the governing body who requested your Club to host the event (e.g. International Board, Juvenile Board, Féile Committee etc...)
- 8 Meet regularly to review all work in progress
- 9 If you are providing a home stay option for your guest Clubs you must abide by the guidance given under the Home Stay Accommodation
- 10 Never presume that somebody else had done it!

Event action plan

Event: inter club under 15 tournament

It is very useful to draw up an event action plan that can be used as a guide for all persons working on the event and also as a check list for the organising committee in reviewing their progress to date.

Below is the commencement of an Event Action Plan for an U15 Inter Club Tournament that your Club had been invited to organise by the relevant Board. It contains some identified actions, some of which have a time scale inserted while blank spaces remain to be completed when agreeing dates and timescales for other actions or completing tasks.

This template is only an example and is based on an 8 week lead in period. It should be amended and completed by the relevant person in charge as each target or task is completed or achieved.

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ACTIONS	By When? (Date)	Responsibility? (Name)	Done? (Date)
APPROX. 8 WEEKS BEFORE EVENT			
Accept invitation to host event	8 weeks before	Relevant Club Committee	
Establish Organising Committee and named person in charge	8 weeks before	Appointed by Club Committee	
1st meeting of Tournament Committee	7 weeks before	Organising Committee Chair	
Allocate responsibilities at 1st meeting		Name the tasks and people	
Agree correspondence to visiting Clubs		Agree with Secretary	
Prepare budget at 1st meeting		Responsibility of Treasurer	
Identify sponsors (if appropriate)		Overseen by Treasurer	
Book pitches or venues as appropriate		A Committee member	
Agree on home stay option and plan accordingly (see Home Stay Section)			
APPROX. 6 WEEKS BEFORE EVENT			
Organising Committee meeting			
Post correspondence to visiting Clubs with relevant forms etc.			
Check insurance implications if any			
Complete event plan and circulate			
Check out all venues by visit			
APPROX. 4 WEEKS BEFORE THE EVENT			
Organising Committee meeting			
Confirm participating teams and Clubs			
Make 'draws' and circulate information			
Arrange for First Aid at tournament			
APPROX. 2 WEEKS BEFORE THE EVENT			
Organising Committee meeting			
A team withdraws from the Tournament			
APPROX. 1 WEEK BEFORE THE EVENT			
2nd team withdraws from tournament			
New sponsor seeks role in the Tournament			
DAY OF THE TOURNAMENT			
Up early!			
Register each team and their coaches			
Check dates of birth			
AFTER THE EVENT REVIEW			
Organising Committee meeting			
Financial report			
Event report			
Treat the organising Committee and all helpers!			

TRANSPORT

Adequate preparation and an insistence on the use of safe transport arrangements regardless of the length of journey are key elements of good practice when considering any trip taken by an underage team or players. This applies regardless of the length of journey or indeed the mode of transport availed of, whether it is public, private or personal transport.

The transport arrangements for underage players is a priority safety matter for Gaelic Games Clubs, teams, parents and for young people themselves. When using road transport it may be preferential to avail of private bus or coach transport it is also recognised that in some instances this is not feasible and certain Clubs and teams could not operate without the goodwill of volunteers and parents who ensure that children are transported to an event or a match and are returned safely.

In so far as we rely on many parents to provide transport in our Clubs, the challenge we also face is to ensure that that all such services are provided in a safe environment that complies with our own standards of good practice and with local or national legislative requirements.

It is recognised that the use of the private cars of parents and members is a common practice for many Clubs and teams when transporting children to games whether it be for County or Regional fixtures schedules or inter Club blitzes, tournaments, trips etc . It is however advisable if possible not to use members' cars when travelling on away trips of great distances. In such circumstances, Clubs are advised to avail of bus or coach transport and it is essential therefore that all aspects of the transport arrangements are checked out and agreed in advance. The safety and welfare of children is paramount and must be considered a priority at all times when transporting our underage players from one venue to another.

A number of basic requirements apply when travelling to games as follows:

- A parent/guardian of a participating child is supplied with at least two emergency contact numbers of the team coaches that may be used in the event of an emergency concerning their child or in the event of a change in schedule
- All players participating on the trip have completed a travel consent form and indicated acceptance of the Code of Conduct drawn up for the trip
- That any medical conditions of players are made known to team coaches in advance of any trip and as part of the annual registration process
- That any particular rules or regulations relating to a trip are made known to parents and children alike and agreed in advance of departure
- That the Club is satisfied that the proposed trip has been planned and agreed in accordance with child safeguarding procedures where the safety of the child is paramount in all preplanning of the trip

Air Travel:

Clubs and other Units at International level are often required to avail of air travel and while this may incur a greater expense the same principles of safety apply when organising this mode of transport. Additional considerations for air travel include:

- Travel document e.g. passport or visas should all be checked well in advance of the trip taking place
- It is preferable for safety and supervision purposes that the entire group, players and adults, travel together

- Flight times, departures and arrivals, must be agreed with parents/guardians and made known to all
- Parents/guardians should be required to share information as to a child's fear of flying or other associated difficulties

Bus and coach transport:

The following should be considered when availing of bus and coach transport:

- The company chosen must be a reputable transport company with a proven track record in transporting children
- The driver must have availed of Police background check in advance of the trip by the bus company or by your Club
- All vehicles should be well-maintained and roadworthy and should be properly taxed and insured
- Transport should be fully accessible for people with disabilities whether they are members of the group or for others who may accompany them
- Seat belts must be worn at all times on buses and coaches
- Alternative transport should be available in case of emergency
- Vehicles should be equipped with a First Aid kit and a fire extinguisher and leaders of the group should be familiar with how to use them
- When hiring a vehicle Club personnel should have no hesitation in enquiring as to the company's reputation and reliability
- Adult coaches should ensure that children remain safely seated at all times during the journey
- An adequate ratio of adults to children on the bus must be ensured at all times taking the age of the group members into consideration and the need for male/female ratios with mixed gender groups

Private transport in cars

If an adult has to transport a child/children to a game, training or organised event there are a number of safety measures that should be agreed so as to minimise any potential child welfare or safety risks to children and or adults:

- If a child is being transported by car the parents of the child should be informed as to who will be transporting their child, why this mode of transport has been chosen, how long the journey may take, the departure time and the estimated time of return
- It is important that children are comfortable with whoever may be the driver of the car in which they travel and are made aware as to what are the transport arrangements made for them by their Club
- Drivers must ensure that they have adequate insurance to carry the required number of passengers
- If the driver is in a paid position in the Club or in the Association or is in receipt of expenses for the trip they may be required to have additional insurance cover to enable them transport any passengers. This may be a statutory requirement in some jurisdictions.
- Central collection and drop off points are recommended when transporting children
- The driver (and other team personnel) should be contactable by mobile phone in case of emergencies

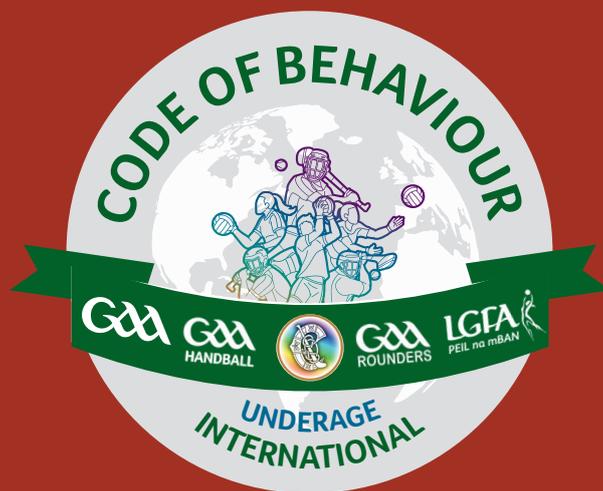
- With the exception of their own child, an adult should not transport any other child alone, except in emergency or exceptional circumstances
- In accordance with transport legislation children must use appropriate child restraints and seat belts when travelling in a car or other vehicles
- No driver should ever consume alcohol or non-prescribed drugs prior to driving
- No driver should smoke in the car when transporting children on behalf of the Club or Association
- Where a driver may be under medical care or taking prescribed medication he/she must ensure that such medication does not inhibit their driving abilities
- All drivers and persons who have access to children on our behalf should have undertaken Police background check in accordance with the Association's guidelines
- Clubs may not be aware but certain jurisdictions apply specific regulations in respect of the transport of children. An example would be that European law requires all children in cars, vans and other goods vehicles to be carried using an appropriate child restraint until either they have reached the age of 12 years or are 150 cm (5' in Republic of Ireland) and 135 cms. (4' 5" in Northern Ireland). See Republic of Ireland: RSA.ie - The Law Northern Ireland: www.childcarseats.org.uk/the-law/



Public transport

When using public transport please ensure that

- That the full travel schedule is made known in advance to all parents and players
- That drop off and pick arrangements have been agreed in advance
- That where available, seat booking arrangements are agreed in advance e.g. trains
- Where a team or training group consists of both boys and girls, the supervision and coaching personnel, must also comprise of both male and female personnel
- In the case of an all-female team, at least one of the adults (coach/supervisor) must be female and similarly in the case of an all-boys team, at least one of the two adults (coach/supervisor) must be male
- That a contingency plan is in place in the event of a scheduled public transport arrangement or booking being cancelled, is delayed, or has been missed by the group



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