



SECTION  
05

## RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF COACHES, SUPERVISORS & OTHER VOLUNTEERS

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



**INTERNATIONAL SAFEGUARDING**

Íúil 2024

## GOOD RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PRACTICES

From their early years to their late teens young people continue to gain from the knowledge, experience and skills that adults, acting in a coaching role, bring in the promotion of our Gaelic Games. Such supports presents these children with a sense of achievement, with an opportunity to develop their individual and team skills and promotes a sense of fun and fair play in our underage games.

This support, led primarily by adults who work in a voluntary capacity, must always be delivered in accordance with Association child safeguarding guidance and acceptable standards of coaching. We greatly rely on the thousands of adults who give freely of their time to our juvenile teams and underage membership, but equally recognise that their contribution must, at all times, be in accordance with and statutory requirements in the jurisdiction in which we operate.

As our communities at International levels continue to develop, a natural progression is to expand our games and activities at underage level with children and young people.

Those who oversee and promote underage games at club level have a responsibility to ensure that our coaches and mentors, who have been chosen to work in coaching, supervisory and other supportive roles, are selected, supported and trained to fulfil these roles in a careful, sensible and effective manner.

Gaelic Games at underage level creates a respectful and trusting relationship that can be enhanced by the recruitment, selection and up-skilling of adults who are suitable to such roles. While the role of the adult may vary from team to team, and from age group to age group, it is however essential that regardless of such variations in role, that the chosen adult is fully aware at the outset as to what is expected of them, what supports they will receive and what levels of responsibility they themselves have on behalf of the team, the Club, the parents and the young people in their care.

This can all be achieved by adopting good practice procedures and adhering to all aspects of our Code of Behaviour (Underage) when we recruit our managers, coaches and other personnel to work with children and young people.

Statutory guidance and legislative requirements relating to adults who work with children are embedded in our recruitment and selection procedures. These requirements apply to our Gaelic Games Associations as they do to all sports bodies, to youth clubs or other recreational or educational services.

**This Code of Behaviour (Underage) affirms the policy position that all coaches, prior to commencing their role(s) with children, must:**

- Be in membership of their association
- Undertake agreed vetting and background Police checks within the jurisdiction(s) in which they operate
- Attend relevant Gaelic Games child safeguarding training or an acceptable alternative safeguarding programme, and update as required
- Possess a coaching qualification relevant to their role as recognised by their Association

The following recruitment and selection guidance are put in place as a support mechanism so as to ensure that those recruited by us to the best possible standards that we have adopted while ensuring that our Games are played and promoted in an enjoyable, safe and developmental environment.

## **GUIDANCE ON RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION**

It is essential that all adults who have undertaken a role of responsibility with children and young people, whether in a paid or unpaid capacity, should undergo a comprehensive recruitment and selection procedure prior to commencing their role. The recruitment of adults who work with underage teams should be co-ordinated by a senior and experienced member of the club, with the advice or involvement of the Children's Officer. All such recruitment should be done confidentially.

The following procedures will assist Clubs when choosing to place coaches/mentors of underage teams in the position to which they are best suited.

### **1 Role clarification**

The role and responsibilities envisaged e.g. manager, coach, and the team's age group should be clearly known and stated at the outset. Any specific levels of experience or qualifications required should also be clarified in advance.

### **2 Role assistance**

The various supports available via the club, e.g. Introduction to Coaching Gaelic Games Award or other Gaelic Games coaching qualifications, recognised Child Safeguarding Training, are basic good practice that should assist adults who wish to work with underage teams in the promotion of our Gaelic Games.

### **3 Application form**

Applicants should complete the Coach and Mentor Application Form (Appendix 2) prior to being considered for a coaching role.

### **4 References**

At a minimum applicants should submit at least one reference. These may refer to the person's character and if applicable to their previous background in sports and in Gaelic Games. References should be verified.

### **5 Vetting and police background checks**

All applicants are required in law to complete Garda Vetting and/or Police background checks, as appropriate, prior to the commencement of their role(s) with young people in the Association.

### **6 Child safeguarding training and coaching qualification**

All persons working with underage players are required to undertake recognised Child Safeguarding Training as promoted by the Gaelic Games Associations and must also possess a recognised coaching qualification.

### **7 Meet the applicant**

A senior representative of the Club (and not on their own) should meet with all applicants or a short list of applicants to discuss the roles, the applicant's experience and general suitability to work with children and young people. Never choose a person to work with children unless you are satisfied that they have the attributes and temperament to fulfil what is required of them in such an important role.

### **8 Meet the chosen applicant again**

Once the successful applicant and accompanying 'management team' have been chosen, the Club should nominate a number of representatives, including the Children's Officer, to meet with them. This meeting should enable the Club to identify any additional training or coaching needs required and to emphasise the Club's approach to development of underage players, to meaningful playing time for all and to supporting the management team in their roles.

## 9 Code of Behaviour (Underage)

All persons who work with young people will be required to sign the Code of Behaviour.

## 10 Support and review

Continuous supports should be made available to all coaches etc. so as to enable them to fulfil their roles as requested. The role of the Club 'Coiste na nÓg' and of the Club Children's Officer may be invaluable in identifying such supports.

## SUPERVISION

**All clubs providing opportunities for our young people to participate in Gaelic Games must ensure that adults placed or appointed by them in roles of responsibility are suitable to fulfil such roles and must as a minimum, prior to taking up such roles:**

- **Be in membership of their association**
- **Have undertaken agreed Vetting and Police background checks as directed by their Association within the jurisdiction in which they operate**
- **Attend relevant child safeguarding training**
- **Possess a coaching qualification relevant to their role as recognised by their Association**
- **Have signed the Gaelic Games Code of Behaviour (Underage)**

### Supervision ratios

Young people must always be adequately supervised regardless of activity and it is the responsibility of Clubs to ensure that a satisfactory supervisory ratio of adults to young people is always maintained.

Supervision ratios will depend on the nature of the activity, the age of the players and any special needs of the group.

The Gaelic Games adult - child supervision ratio agreement forms part of the Code of Behaviour (Underage) and applies as a minimum ratio to all Club and Camp activities, up to and including the minor level grade and to the activities of our International units.

### Ratios

- Playing and training activities must abide by a minimum ratio of 2 adults to 10 children, (2:10). This ratio level requires at least one qualified coach and at least one other responsible adult to be present at all times
- Ratios of 2:10 apply to each group of ten children or up to ten children in a group
- Groups of 10-20 children must have a minimum of 3 adults present at all times
- Any group that exceeds 20 in number must also abide by the minimum ratios as per above
- The number of coaches and or responsible adults required will depend on the number of children attending a training session, a camp or game, with consideration also given to the nature of the activity as required and the needs of the children

### Coach

- Coaches, as a minimum, must have achieved the Introduction to Coaching Gaelic Games Award, must be satisfactorily vetted and have attended relevant Child Safeguarding Training and be in membership of their association.
- Club and Camp Coaches must be in membership of one of the Gaelic Games Associations
- Coaches must be at least 18 yrs. of age

### Responsible adult

- The responsible adult, i.e. a person over 18 yrs. of age, if not a qualified coach, shall be deemed a Supervisor of Children. He/she must also be satisfactorily vetted and must have attended relevant Child Safeguarding Training
- Club and Camp Supervisors must be in membership of one of the Gaelic Games Associations
- When appointing a person as a Supervisor or 'responsible adult' to work at underage level, Clubs have a responsibility to appoint persons of the highest standards who shall be recognised as role models to work with children
- Persons appointed as Supervisors of Children shall be obliged to be satisfactorily vetted/Police background checked and must have attended relevant Child Safeguarding Training or an acceptable alternative safeguarding programme, and update as required

### Camp and Activity Assistant

- The role of Camp and Activity Assistant is that of assisting and not coaching or supervising
- The following applies to a Camp Assistant:
  - o Camp/Activity Assistants must be at least 16 yrs. of age
  - o Must be satisfactorily vetted/Police background check
  - o Must complete the Camp Assistant Safeguarding Training Programme or an acceptable and an agreed safeguarding training programme <https://learning.gaa.ie/CampSafeguarding>
  - o May choose to attend additional Child Safeguarding training e.g. Safeguarding 1 workshop
  - o May not act in a coaching or supervisory role, which are two other distinct roles

### Gender requirements

- 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



## POLICE BACKGROUND CHECKS

**International units must satisfy themselves that the recruitment and selection procedures they operate, for both volunteers and staff, are in accordance with those outlined by statutory bodies and by sports' governing bodies in the jurisdiction in which they operate. All such procedures must abide by the requirements of the Gaelic Games Associations' Code of Behaviour (Underage).**

**The highest possible standards should be implemented when availing of Police background checks and the vetting of all personnel who work with children in our Associations.**

The Gaelic Games Associations comprising of the GAA, LGFA, Camogie, Rounders and Handball Associations, have a long established principle of vetting or carrying out a Police check on any person who works with children in a child related position in any of our Associations. This principle is enshrined in rule through our Code of Behaviour (Underage). It conforms with our legal responsibilities and is a core element of the recruitment and selection process for those who wish to work with children in our Associations, whether it be in a voluntary or paid role.

Once vetted, and should they remain in a role of responsibility when working with children, all personnel shall be subject to the re-vetting or background checks at agreed intervals as outlined in the relevant legislation in which our International units operate.

### Recognition of vetting between each of the Gaelic Games Associations

International units should explore if it is permissible for personnel recruited to work with one of our Gaelic Games Associations, e.g. GAA, may be permitted to avail of their vetting or Police background check when applying to work with another one of our Gaelic Games Associations, e.g. Ladies Football or Camogie, within the same jurisdiction. Should this be permissible, the portable use of vetting or background checks should be facilitated by our Associations.

While it may not be possible to retain a copy of police checks in the jurisdiction you operate, if a decision is made to appoint the applicant, volunteer or paid employee, a record of the date and certificate number of the police check should be recorded and retained in the relevant personal file.

## HOW TO COMPLETE A POLICE BACKGROUND CHECK IN OUR ASSOCIATION

**International units must outline here how an individual may apply for a Police check, what is the process and how our Associations will apply the outcome of the check as part of our recruitment procedures.**



Produced by the Child Safeguarding Committee in association with  
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