

# The Club

Clubs that cater for underage players must do so with a child centred approach and philosophy that recognises that the welfare of the child is paramount while ensuring that each child is provided with developmental opportunities that are appropriate to their age and abilities.

Clubs must ensure that those chosen to work on their behalf with underage players have been selected following a thorough recruitment, selection, training and coaching procedure which includes relevant vetting in accordance with the jurisdiction requirements in which we operate.

Clubs must also provide those who work on our behalf with the necessary supports so as to enable them to fulfill their roles. Clubs will ensure that those chosen to work with children and young people are at all times competent and confident in their roles, have undertaken comprehensive recruitment procedures including vetting, have received relevant child welfare related training, as provided or instructed by their Governing Body, and must also have completed a basic coach education qualification.

Clubs must formally ratify the appointment of those that are chosen to act as underage mentors, coaches and managers. Such ratification of roles may take place at Club Executive level or by the Club Coiste na nÓg and should be subject to annual renewal. These appointments should not take place via election or a vote of the membership but rather by recommendation from the relevant Committee following consideration of suitably qualified individuals.

## CLUBS SHOULD PROMOTE QUALITY PARTICIPATION BY:

- Adopting the Code of Behaviour as a basic level of agreement between the Club and their players, their coaches, parents/guardians and supporters.
- Leading by example and ensuring that a user friendly and child centred approach is adopted in our work with young people and that equal opportunities are available for all to participate in our 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 Anti-Bullying statement in the Club.

#### **CLUBS SHOULD ENCOURAGE THE PARTICIPATION OF THEIR MEMBERS BY:**

- Agreeing the role of each and every coach or mentor working with young people.
- Ensuring that relevant Child Protection Training is undertaken by all persons working in an official capacity with children and young people in the Club.
- Adopting and implementing clearly defined recruitment and selection procedures when choosing coaches and other relevant personnel to work with young people.
- When appointing mentors, coaches and managers of underage teams consideration should be given where possible to not appointing a parent of a child to such roles in the child's team. Experience has shown that conflicts of interest may arise sometimes between a child and their parent or between other parents and the team mentors, coaches or managers who may act in such a capacity.

#### **ENCOURAGE THE PARTICIPATION OF YOUNG PLAYERS BY:**

- Ensuring that training schedules, playing rules, use of equipment and length of games are structured to facilitate greater participation by all Young Players, and are suitable to all age categories, and to the ability and maturity level of players.
- Not imposing responsibilities or roles on young people that may be inappropriate to their age.
- Respecting the rights, dignity and worth of all players and treating them equally regardless of their age, gender, ability, ethnic origin, cultural background or religion.
- Creating pathways for young people to participate in our games not just as players but by affording them other developmental opportunities including training to become referees, coaches etc.
- Ensuring that when the team may travel away and stay overnight that separate sleeping facilities are provided for all adults and for young people. Similarly, for mixed groups, separate sleeping quarters for males and females shall be required.
- When a group consists of both males and females, that an adequate adult to member ratio of male and female coaches is 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 of a Club's activities and events and in the organising and delivery of our games.
- Welcoming 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 any policies and guidelines as issued by the Club, by their National Governing Bodies, or by statutory authorities and agencies in their jurisdiction.
- Appointing a Designated Liaison Person whose role shall include liaising with Statutory Authorities and the relevant Governing Body in relation to the reporting of allegations, concerns 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.
- Adopting procedures that facilitate the privacy and safety of all young people in the Club and that all such procedures are maintained and regularly reviewed so as to ensure that young people feel safe and are safe in the Club.
- 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 underage teams and squads.
- Appointing a Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport Hearings Committee at Club level to hear complaints or allegations of breaches of the Code of Best Practice. The Committee of three people shall, through their representation, reflect the integrated nature of the Club, i.e. membership of the GAA, LGFA and Camogie. The functions of this Committee, plus all other procedures relating to dealing with breaches of the Code, may be accessed in a complimentary publication, Our Games Our Code: How to Deal with Alleged Breaches of the Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport.