



SECTION 07

CLUB AND COUNTY CHILDREN'S OFFICER

**THIS GUIDANCE FORMS PART OF THE
CODE OF BEHAVIOUR (UNDERAGE)**



The role of Children's Officer is central to maintaining the safeguarding of children and young people in our Gaelic Games Associations and to the implementation of the *Code of Behaviour (Underage)* at both Club and at County level. In addition to these core responsibilities the Children's Officer must also ensure, with the cooperation of other Officers, that legislative requirements governing the participation of children/young people and those who work with them are maintained at all times.

Achieving the above is a task that requires the cooperation of other Officers, coaches, parents and our underage players and given the legislative role that the Children's Officer must fulfil their work should be supported at all times by their respective Club Executive or County Committees.

Persons chosen as Children's Officers shall have the confidence of parents, mentors and children alike as somebody that can represent the views of others and we must ensure that their Club and/or County Committees acknowledges and delivers upon their child safeguarding responsibilities at all times.

CHILDREN'S OFFICER - AN OFFICER AT CLUB AND COUNTY LEVEL

In accordance with our rules, and due to wide range of responsibilities attached to the role, the Children's Officer, both Club and County, are appointed as Officers to their respective Club Executive Committee or County Committee/Board. This is not 'an elected' position as happens in the case of other Officers.

When appointing a Children's Officer, the relevant Committee should also appoint a Deputy Children's Officer whose services may be called upon in the event of the absence, unavailability or in the event of a conflict of interest involving the Children's Officer.

Given the key and over-arching Association and legal responsibilities attached to working with children it is recommended that the Children's Officer participates fully in all aspects of their respective Club or County Committee's work and where possible should report on a monthly basis, if possible, to their Committee as to appropriate levels of safeguarding compliance and adherence to our rules and our statutory requirements. Non-adherence to rules and the failure to remain compliant with statutory safeguarding requirements can have serious consequences for a Club, County and for the individual concerned.

Children's Officers should submit a written report to the Club AGM or County Convention, depending on their role. The report, while maintaining appropriate levels of confidentiality, should summarise their work and highlight any relevant issues on an annual basis.

The Club Children's Officer shall have the confidence of all Club mentors and parents while their County counterpart shall equally enjoy the confidence and support of their fellow County Officers and of their Club Children's Officers.

While the overall implementation of our *Code of Behaviour (Underage)* is the principal role for all Children's Officers the appointed person is a key influencer in the promotion of safeguarding, child welfare and the interests of children and young people in their Club/County and Association.

Neither the Club or County Children's Officers has the responsibility to validate allegations or concerns of abuse whether at Club or County level. The Club/County Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is the relevant person to assist in the processing of such matters as per our agreed [Guidance for Dealing with & Reporting Allegations or Concerns of Abuse](#).



CHILDREN'S OFFICER TRAINING

- Both the Club and County Children's Officer must attend the *Gaelic Games Safeguarding 2 - Club Children's Officer Workshop*, and prior to that must have also completed the *Gaelic Games Safeguarding 1 - Child Protection in Sport Awareness Workshop* and must be vetted
- Throughout the year safeguarding information and themes related seminars and webinars are organised by our National Children's Offices and both Club and County Children's Officers are urged to attend these events where up to date information on legislative changes or internal amendments to Code or Rules are outlined and discussed
- Children's Officers should avail of external training or attend seminars relevant to their role. The Gaelic Games Associations will continue to appraise our Children's Officers on changes to child safeguarding practices, legislation and requirements and will receive updates on such matters from their Association
- Where necessary it is recommended that County Children's Officers should organise training and information events for Club Children's Officers in their County

CLUB CHILDREN'S OFFICER – KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Ensure that all persons working with children and young people are vetted, have attended child safeguarding training in accordance with the requirements of the [Gaelic Games Safeguarding Training Policy](#) and possess a minimum safeguarding qualification and maintain a record of such compliance
- Assist, and oversee the Garda Vetting and/or Access NI application process as applicable to the jurisdiction of the Club
- Retain Vetting ID Documentation of club members as required
- Assist with the organising of the delivery of the *Child Protection in Sport Awareness* workshops, *Tackling Bullying* workshop and other appropriate training in consultation with the Club's Designated Liaison Person
- Ensure that all Players, Coaches/Team mentors, Parents/Guardians, Officials and spectators sign the *Code of Behaviour (Underage)* declaration form, as required
- Make copies of the *Code of Behaviour (Underage)* and of the *Maintaining Good Practice and Behaviour booklet* (Section 3 of the Code) available to relevant Club personnel
- Upload the joint *Code of Behaviour (Underage)* and the *Maintaining Good Practice and Behaviour booklet* (Section 3 of the Code) to the Club website and provide a link via other Club social media platforms in use by the Club
- Upload the *Club Child Safeguarding Statement* to the Club website and other social media platforms in use by the Association
- Liaise in particular with parents of underage players and ensure that they are aware of and understand the basic elements of the *Code of Behaviour (Underage)* and that they, with their son/daughter, sign the *Code declaration form*
- Be familiar with their role in processing alleged breaches of the 'Code', on how to deal informally with alleged breaches and of the booklet '*Dealing with Alleged Breaches of the Code of Behaviour (Underage)*'
- Ensure that the Club has established a Code of Behaviour (Underage) Hearings Committee and that the Club Executive is aware of its responsibilities in this matter
- Oversee, in cooperation with the Club Executive, the completion of the *Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment* and the *Child Safeguarding Statement* in accordance with the time frame agreed by our Associations
- The Club Children's Officer is the relevant person who shall be the first point of contact in respect of the *Club's Child Safeguarding Statement*
- Influence policy and practice within the Club in order to prioritise children's and young people's needs
- Promote greater consultation with underage players and participation by them in Club activities and planning
- Promote the *Give Respect – Get Respect* initiative amongst all team mentors and parents and as part of underage games and training and at inter Club events
- Encourage the involvement of parents/guardians in organising Club activities and co-operate with parents in ensuring that every young person enjoys his/her involvement with the Club

- Liaise with Coiste na nÓg to ensure that the “child centred ethos” is being adhered to through coaching and games development
- Develop good practice procedures in the recruitment and selection of persons working with young people in the Club
- Monitor, in association with team coaches, any significant drop out rates, lack of attendance or Club transfers of underage players and report accordingly to the Club Executive or Management Committee
- Maintain on-going contact with the County Children's Officer and with other Club Children's Officers in their locality
- Ensure that all coaches/mentors and managers of underage teams have fulfilled the minimum requirement of vetting, attendance at relevant child safeguarding training and have a minimum coaching qualification
- Ensure access to Foireann (Gaelic Games Management System) for relevant persons working with children and young people and that the information recorded in respect of the Club is accurate and up to date
- Make themselves known to the general membership of the Club and in particular to team mentors, managers and parents





COUNTY CHILDREN'S OFFICER – KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Assist Club Children's Officer in identifying their roles at Club level and the manner in which they may implement an annual work plan to deliver upon such roles
- Promote the *Code of Behaviour (Underage)* at County level and ensure that the Code and the *Maintaining Good Practice and Behaviour* booklet (Section 3 of the Code) are uploaded to the Club website and provide a link via other County social media platforms
- Upload the *County Child Safeguarding Statement* to the County website and other social media platforms in use by the Association
- Coordinate, with the assistance of Club Children's Officers, the delivery of the *Safeguarding 1 - Child Protection in Sport Awareness Workshops* and *Safeguarding 2- Club Children's Officer Workshops* throughout the County
- Coordinate, with the assistance of the County Designated Liaison Person, the delivery of *The Designated Liaison Person Workshops – Safeguarding 3*
- Oversee, in cooperation with the County Committee, the completion of the Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment and the *Child Safeguarding Statement* in accordance with the time frame agreed by our Associations
- The County Children's Officer is the relevant person who shall be the first point of contact in respect of the *County Child Safeguarding Statement*
- Assist where necessary the County Vetting Coordinator (where it applies) in the processing of vetting applications of all persons working in any capacity with children and young people. on behalf of our Associations

- Ensure that in accordance with their role and responsibilities that they have access to relevant data, including the Foireann (Gaelic Games Management System) that confirms all persons, who on behalf of our Associations work with children and young people, comply with our vetting, safeguarding and coaching qualifications requirements
- Ensure that all relevant personnel working with underage squads and county teams are compliant with Association safeguarding requirements
- Promote the *Give Respect – Get Respect* initiative as part of all underage Club games and in particular ensure, as deemed appropriate, the Respect Handshake prior to or at the end of games
- Influence policy and practice within the County with the assistance of Club Children's Officer so as to prioritise the safeguarding needs of children and young people in the Association.
- Promote consultation with underage players and participation by them in Club and County activities
- Liaise with the County Bord/Coiste na nÓg and Games Development Committee to ensure that the "child centred ethos" is being adhered to throughout the County as required
- Monitor, in association with Club Children's Officers, any significant drop out rates, lack of attendance or significant Club transfers of underage players and report accordingly to the County or other appropriate forum
- Maintain on-going contact, and organise regular meetings with the Club Children's Officers in the County
- Make themselves known to the Club Children's Officers in the County, to development squad and county underage team personnel
- Maintain regular contact with the Association's National Children's Office

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