

Duty of Care and Child Protection

Dualgas Cúraim agus Cosaint Leanaí

The Gaelic Athletic Association (Cumann Lúthchleas Gael) is a community based family orientated organisation and as such believes that a transparent youth centred approach should be adopted by all units involved in the promotion and development of Gaelic games, culture and other activities at underage levels. Under age is defined as anyone under the age of 18.

A philosophy that promotes the importance of fair play, participation, enjoyment and equality for young people where young people strive to achieve their full potential as they mature and develop and respect the value of discipline.

Policy

- GAA clubs should adopt the Child Protection Policy of Code of ethics and best practice for children/youth sport.
- All personnel working with children or young people must be vetted.
- All personnel working with children or young people should undertake the necessary GAA Child Protection in Sport Awareness training as appropriate.
- Clubs should have in place procedures for dealing with a concern or complaint, including disciplinary, complaints and appeals procedures.

These policies are taken in line with Rule 1.13 Safeguarding of Children/Young People in the Official Guide 2013.

Best Practice

- Clubs should have a Child Protection Policy.
- It is best practice that GAA clubs adopt and implement the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport as part of the clubs child protection policy.
- A Children's Officer should be selected as a

member of the club executive committee to look after the interests and wellbeing of children and young people within the club.

- Clubs should adopt and implement the GAA Anti Bullying Policy.
- Clubs should have a code of conduct for children and young people, parents, coaches, leaders and volunteers.
- Appoint a Code of Best Practice Hearings Committee to deal with alleged breaches of the code.
- GAA clubs should obtain parental consent forms for children and young people for trips away or overnight stays.
- Clubs should adopt and implement a safe and clearly defined method of recruiting and selecting coaches, sports leaders and mentors.
- A Clubs Management committee should ratify all appointments made within the club.
- Clubs should have a policy relating to the use of Photographic and Mobile equipment.
- Clubs should have a policy that deals with drug misuse and substance abuse.
- Clubs should have in place guidelines relating to special needs.
- Clubs should develop and implement effective procedures for recording all attendances, accidents and injuries.
- Ensure all club officers are aware of their responsibilities to all children and young people.
- Maintain confidentiality in dealing with sensitive information and in dealing with issues in relation to child protection.
- Review policies and procedures regularly.

Some examples of how the policies and best practice can be implemented within clubs:

- Annual club registration night where children and young people, parents, coaches, leaders and volunteers would be informed as to the behaviour that is expected of them and they would sign,



alongside their parent/guardian, the relevant codes of conduct.

- At club management meetings any new appointments made within the club should be ratified by the management committee.
- Access NI/Garda vetting of all personnel within the club who will be working with children or young people. Checks can be carried out through the Ulster Council; the Ulster Council Children's Officer should be contacted for information on this.
- Select a children's officer within the club who would be responsible for looking after the needs of the children and young people within the club, be responsible for organising appropriate training for parents, coaches, mentors etc.
- GAA Child Protection in Sport Awareness training workshops run within the club for those who will be working with children and young people for the club.
- The children's officer should communicate with club members the club child protection policy and also how to deal with a concern or complaint. This could be communicated on an educational training night run by the club.
- Before all trips away permission slips should be completed by the parents or legal guardian for children and young people who are going on the trip. The parents/legal guardian should be made aware of dates, times, venues and duration or trips e.g. if they are over night etc.
- Parents should be notified of all events or trips that their children would be involved in.
- If photographs are taken of children for promoting events that have taken place for publication in a newspaper, on a website or to be displayed in a club etc. permission should be obtained first from the parents. Permission slips should explain what the photographs would be used for and also ask for the consent of the child and their parents/legal guardian to allow the child to be involved in having the photographs taken.
- Clubs should actively promote non smoking, and provide relevant information on alcohol and substance prevention programmes.
- Display on a Notice board within the club the contact details of the children's officer and contact details of organisations where the children or young people may turn to for help/advice e.g. if they want to talk to someone about abuse, suicide, drugs etc.
- Relevant leaflets should be available within the club on these issues.

Where examples are used they are only samples and not exhaustive as a myriad of variations exist in everyday life and operations.