

The Gaelic Games Council of Britain (GGCB)

Coaches, Mentors and Trainers Code of Behaviour

1. Introduction

- 1.1 All Coaches, Mentors and Trainers (referred to hereafter as **Coaches**) should ensure that young people and children, under the age of 18, benefit significantly from gaelic games and associated activities by promoting a positive, healthy and participatory approach in our work with underage players
- 1.2 In developing the skills levels of every player, coaches should always encourage enjoyment and fun while ensuring meaningful participation in our games and activities.
- 1.3 Coaches should always remember that they are role models for the players in their care.

2. Recruitment of Coaches

- 2.1 All Coaches working with young players, under the age of 18, are required to be suitable for their chosen role(s), and should be appropriately trained, qualified and supported when fulfilling such roles.

Coaches are required to:

- **Undertake agreed vetting and background Police checks within the jurisdiction(s) in which they operate (DBS in England and Wales and PVG in Scotland).**
 - **Attend relevant Gaelic Games child safeguarding training and update as required.**
 - **Possess a coaching qualification relevant to their role as recognised by their Association.**
- 2.2 Coaches of adult teams, which includes any player under the age of 18 years of age, must also undertake the vetting, child safeguarding training and coaching requirements, as outlined above,

3. Coaches should maintain a child centred approach

- 3.1 Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person.
- 3.2 Treat each person equally regardless of age, gender, ability, ethnic origin, cultural background or religion.
- 3.3 Be positive during coaching sessions, games and other activities.
- 3.4 Recognise the development needs and capacity of all underage players, regardless of their ability, by emphasising participation for all while avoiding excessive training and competition.
- 3.5 Recognise that skills development and personal satisfaction should have priority over competition when working with underage players.
- 3.6 Ensure all those eligible to participate in any team within the Club are provided with an opportunity to do so with preference given to playing in their own age group.
- 3.7 Develop an understanding of relevant coaching methods and ensure that they have the appropriate level of coaching accreditation.
- 3.8 Do not equate losing with failure and do not develop a preoccupation with medals and trophies.
- 3.9 The level of improvement made by underage players is the best indicator of effective coaching.

4. Coaches should lead by example

- 4.1 Never use foul language or provocative language/gestures towards any player, opponent, fellow coach, match official or supporter.
- 4.2 Only enter the field of play with the referee's permission.

- 4.3 Do not question referee's decisions or integrity.
- 4.4 Encourage players to respect and accept the judgement of match officials.
- 4.5 Promote Fair Play and encourage all players and fellow officials to always play by the rules of the game.
- 4.6 Do not encourage or threaten a player by deed or gesture to act in any unacceptable manner towards an opponent, fellow player, coach or official.
- 4.7 Promote the RESPECT campaign amongst your players, fellow coaches, parents, and supporters.
- 4.8 Do not smoke or vape while working with underage players.
- 4.9 Do not consume alcohol or non-prescribed drugs immediately prior to or while underage players are in your care.
- 4.10 Encourage parents to become involved in your team and Club/County activities wherever possible.

5. **Conduct of Coaches when working with children & young people under 18 years of age**

- 5.1 Develop an appropriate working relationship with children (young people) based on mutual trust and respect.
- 5.2 Challenge Bullying in any form whether physical or emotional.
- 5.3 Bullying is not acceptable behaviour be it from a young person, coach, parent/guardian, spectator, or match official.
- 5.4 Don't shout at or lecture players or reprimand/ridicule them when they make a mistake. Children learn best through trial and error.
- 5.5 Children and young people should not be afraid to risk error so, as to learn.
- 5.6 Never engage in the use of physical interventions as a form of response to misbehaviour, unless it is necessary by way of restraint.
- 5.7 Avoid incidents of horse play or role play or telling jokes etc. that could be misinterpreted.
- 5.8 Never undertake any form of therapy or hypnosis with children.
- 5.9 Never encourage players to consume non-prescribed drugs or take performance enhancing supplements.
- 5.10 Do not make energy enhancing products available to young people.
- 5.11 Never use racial and/or sectarian or homophobic references towards another coach, player, opponent, official or supporter by words, deeds or gesture.

6. **Avoid compromising your role as a Coach**

- 6.1 Some activities may require coaches to come into physical contact with underage players in the course of their duties. **However, coaches should:**
 - 6.1.1 Avoid taking coaching sessions on your own.
 - 6.1.2 Any delivery of one-to-one coaching must be within a group setting.
 - 6.1.3 Avoid unnecessary physical contact with an underage player and never engage in inappropriate touching of a player.
 - 6.1.4 Be aware that any necessary contact should be determined by the age and development of the player and should only take place with the permission and understanding of the player and in an open environment in the context of developing a player's skills and abilities.

7. **Best Practice**

- 7.1 Ensure that all, of your players are suitably and safely attired to play their chosen sport. e.g. helmets (Hurling and Camogie), goggles (Handball), shin guards, gum shields (Football).
- 7.2 As a coach always be punctual and properly attired.
- 7.3 Be accompanied by at least one other adult at coaching sessions, games and in underage team dressing rooms.
- 7.4 Abide by minimum supervision ratios 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.
- 7.5 Groups of 10-20 children must have a minimum of 3 adults present at all times.
- 7.6 In the case of an all-female team, at least one of the two adults must be female and similarly in the case of an all-boys team, at least one of the two adults must be male.
- 7.7 Where a team or training group consists of both boys and girls, the supervision/coaching personnel, must also comprise of both male and female personnel.
- 7.8 Clubs may choose to appoint suitable persons to the role of Supervisor ie Supervisor of Children/Young People. A Supervisor is not a coach, but a person appointed to assist in normal supervisory roles which could include access and entry to club grounds, registration, dressing room duties, supervision at away trips etc.
- 7.9 A Supervisor must be a member of one of our Associations, must be an adult and is required to be vetted and have relevant Child Safeguarding Training.
- 7.10 The number of coaches required will naturally depend on the number of children attending a training session, camp, game or other activity. When assessing how many coaches are required always note that Supervisors and Camp Assistants do not have a coaching role.
- 7.11 Set realistic – stretching but achievable – performance goals for your players and teams.
- 7.12 Keep a record of attendance at training and at games by both players and coaches.
- 7.13 Rotate the team captaincy and the method used for selecting teams so that the same children are not always selected to the exclusion of others.
- 7.14 Afford meaningful playing time to young players so as to assist in the development of their playing skills, within their own age group.
- 7.15 Keep a record of any injuries and actions subsequently taken. Ensure that another official referee/ team mentor is present when a player is being attended to and can corroborate the relevant details.
- 7.16 Make adequate provision for First Aid services.
- 7.17 Do not encourage or permit players to play while injured.
- 7.18 Inform parents/guardians if their child has been injured or becomes unwell at games or training as soon as is practical.
- 7.19 Be aware of any special medical or dietary requirements of players as indicated on the medical consent/registration or FOIREANN forms or as informed by parents/guardians.
- 7.20 Be willing to keep the necessary and emergency medication of players in a safe and accessible place in accordance with the wishes and permission of the parents/guardians.
- 7.21 Do not administer medication or medical aid unless you are willing to do so and have received the necessary training to do so.
- 7.22 Avail of the FOIREANN registration and communication system to communicate with the parents of young players.
- 7.23 If necessary, use mobile phones, only via a group text or email system, for communicating with the parents/guardians of players. Any exception to this form of group texting can only be proceeded with following permission from parents/guardians.

- 7.25 Do not communicate individually by text, email or via social network sites and or apps with underage players.
- 7.26 Encourage parents/guardians to play an active role in organising and assisting various activities for your teams and your Club.
- 7.27 If it is necessary to transport a child/young person in your car, ensure that they are seated in a rear seat with seat belts securely fastened and that all drivers are adequately insured.
- 7.28 With the exception, of their own child a coach should not transport a child alone, except in emergency or exceptional circumstances.
- 7.29 Ensure that all dressing rooms and the general areas that are occupied by your players and other Club personnel, prior to, during or immediately following the completion of any match are kept clean and are not damaged in any way
- 7.30 Should you be aware of or have concerns regarding the possible abuse of a child you should, without delay, report this to the relevant statutory authority or may seek the assistance of your Designated Liaison Person (DLP) so that they may assist you in processing this matter. All such reports must also be forwarded to your Association's National Designated Liaison Person/Mandated Person, without delay.

