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## DEALING WITH ALLEGED BREACHES OF THE CODE OF BEHAVIOUR (UNDERAGE)

### THIS DOCUMENT FORMS PART OF THE GAELIC GAMES CODE OF BEHAVIOUR (UNDERAGE)

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Code of Behaviour (Underage) is a joint code of good practice in accordance with Rule published by:-
  - 1.1.1. The Gaelic Athletic Association (“the GAA”);
  - 1.1.2. Ladies Gaelic Football Association (“the LGFA”);
  - 1.1.3. The Camogie Association;
  - 1.1.4. GAA Handball Ireland;
  - 1.1.5. Rounders Council of Ireland.  
(collectively “the Associations”)
- 1.2. The Code of Behaviour (Underage) outlines the standards of practice required of those participating in underage games and activities, regardless of what role they may play and in doing so, brings together the collective good practice experiences of our Associations while also recognising legislative, organisational and statutory guidance that governs our work with young people and children.
- 1.3. Our Associations are committed to creating and maintaining a safe and enjoyable environment for all young people and children who participate in our sports. In upholding this principle, our Associations will continue to abide by and integrate child welfare legislation and statutory guidance into our work in all jurisdictions in which we operate.
- 1.4. The welfare of the child shall always be our paramount consideration, whether it is on the playing fields, in the training of our underage players, in the recruitment of our coaches or the many other developmental and social opportunities that we offer our underage players on a regular basis.
- 1.5. The promotion and implementation of the Code of Behaviour (Underage) is everybody’s responsibility.

- 1.6. Unfortunately, breaches of the Code of Behaviour (Underage) may occur from time to time, some of which may be minor breaches and some of which may be major breaches. Breaches may happen for a number of reasons including, but not limited to, carelessness, poor practice, and a lack of understanding or there may be, in some instances, deliberate or calculated breaches of the Code of Behaviour (Underage).
- 1.7. This document, Dealing with Alleged Breaches of the Code of Behaviour (Underage), forms part of the Code of Behaviour (Underage) and sets out the procedures to be followed in the event of an alleged breach of the Code of Behaviour (Underage), the disciplinary procedures to be applied for a breach that has occurred and the sanctions that may be imposed for breaches of the Code of Behaviour (Underage).

## **2. General Provisions for Dealing with Alleged Breach of the Code of Behaviour (Underage)**

### **2.1. Status**

- 2.1.1. Breaches of the Code of Behaviour (Underage) may also be a breach of the rules of the relevant Association.
- 2.1.2. In circumstances where an allegation could constitute a breach of the Code of Behaviour (Underage) or a breach of rule, it shall be dealt with under the rules of the relevant Association and the disciplinary procedure contained in the rules, unless it is determined, in accordance with paragraph 5.1.6 below, that the allegation should be dealt with under the provisions of the Code of Behaviour (Underage).
- 2.1.3. Members of the GAA, LGFA, Camogie, Rounders and Handball Associations are obliged to cooperate with the informal or formal procedures for Dealing with Alleged Breach of the Code of Behaviour (Underage) as outlined in section 3-5 below. Any failure to do so shall be dealt with in accordance with the disciplinary procedures of the relevant Association's rules.

### **2.2. False Allegations**

- 2.2.1. Any member found to have made a false or vexatious allegation shall be dealt with in accordance with the disciplinary procedures in the relevant Association's rules.

### **2.3. Allegations of Abuse**

- 2.3.1. Allegations of abuse shall be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of the Guidance for Dealing with and Reporting Allegations or Concerns of Abuse, and not under the provisions below.

### **2.4. Role of Children's Officer**

- 2.4.1. The Children's Officer at Club, County, Provincial and National levels shall have a central role to play in promoting and implementing the Code of Behaviour (Underage). The Children's Officer may be called upon to facilitate a Code Hearings Committee although not in membership of that Committee or may deal with an alleged breach of the Code in an informal manner.
- 2.4.2. Due to their role(s) it is not permitted for a Children's Officer to be in membership of any Committee, at Club, County, Provincial or National level dealing directly with an alleged breach of the Code that has arisen within their County. Should such an alleged breach be discussed at any Committee, to which the Children's Officer is a member, they must absent themselves from the meeting while the matter is being discussed.

### **3. Reporting an Alleged Breach of the Code of Behaviour (Underage)**

- 3.1. An allegation of a breach of the Code of Behaviour (Underage) may be made by any person or persons ("the Complainant") to one of the following as appropriate in the circumstances:-
  - 3.1.1. The Club Children's Officer;
  - 3.1.2. The County Children's Officer;
  - 3.1.3. The National Children's Officer;
  - 3.1.4. The Secretary of the Club Executive Committee;
  - 3.1.5. The Secretary of the County Committee;
  - 3.1.6. The Secretary of the National Child Safeguarding Committee
- 3.2. While an allegation of an alleged breach of the Code of Behaviour (Underage) may initially be made verbally or in writing it must be submitted in writing by a complainant so as to enable it to be processed and should include the following information:
  - 3.2.1 The complaint must contain the time, date, venue and provision of the Code of Behaviour (Underage) that has been allegedly breached, the identity and names of any person(s) allegedly involved and the name(s) of person(s) who may have witnessed the alleged breach. The complaint must contain the name and contact details of the complainant.
- 3.3. Any failure to provide the information outlined at clause 3.2.1 above shall not invalidate an allegation.
- 3.4. Anonymous complaints can be difficult to deal with, however they cannot be ignored. All such complaints relating to inappropriate behaviour/poor practice should in accordance with section 3.1 be brought to the attention of the relevant person and assessed for processing if possible.

### **4. Informal Procedure for Dealing with Alleged Breaches of the Code of Behaviour (Underage)**

- 4.1. It is acknowledged that certain breaches of the Code of Behaviour (Underage) that occur at Club or County level may be instances of poor practice which may be appropriately dealt with in an informal manner.
- 4.2. Where an allegation has been made to the Club or County Children's Officer, the Children's Officer will consider the allegation and establish the facts and the context of the allegation.
- 4.3. Where the Children's Officer is of the view that the allegation is serious (because of the gravity of the allegation or for some other reason) he/she shall refer the allegation to the Secretary of the Club Executive Committee, the Secretary of the County Committee or the Secretary of the National Child Safeguarding Committee as appropriate to be dealt with in accordance with the formal procedure set out at clause 5 below.
- 4.4. Where the Children's Officer is of the view that the allegation of a breach of the Code of Behaviour (Underage) may be appropriately dealt with in an informal manner, he/she shall be responsible for dealing with the alleged breach informally and agreeing the procedure to be followed with the parties. This could involve meeting with the person(s) against whom an allegation has been made and resolving the matter amicably and by agreement.
- 4.5. If an alleged breach of the Code of Behaviour (Underage) is resolved informally, the Club or County Children's Officer will note the outcome in writing.
- 4.6. In the event that either party to the allegation objects to the allegation being dealt with informally, the Club or County Children's Officer shall refer the allegation to the Secretary of

the Club Executive Committee, the Secretary of the County Committee or the Secretary of the National Child Safeguarding Committee as appropriate to be dealt with in accordance with the formal procedure set out at clause 5 below.

4.7. In the event that:-

- 4.7.1. It is not possible to resolve the issue, the subject matter of the allegation, in an informal manner the Club or County Children's Officer shall refer the allegation to the Secretary of the Club Executive Committee, the Secretary of the County Committee or the Secretary of the National Child Safeguarding Committee as appropriate in the circumstances; or
- 4.7.2. The person against whom the allegation has been made or the complainant, is dissatisfied with the outcome of the informal procedure, he/she may refer the matter to either the Secretary of the Club Executive Committee, the Secretary of the County Committee or the Secretary of the National Child Safeguarding Committee as appropriate in the circumstances.

## **5. Formal Procedure for Dealing with an Alleged Breach of the Code of Behaviour (Underage)**

### **5.1 Consideration of allegation**

- 5.1.1. The Secretary of the Club Executive Committee, the County Committee or the National Child Safeguarding Committee (or any sub committees nominated for that purpose) shall refer any allegations he/she receives from a complainant to the respective committee for consideration.
- 5.1.2. The Club Executive Committee may nominate a sub-committee to consider the allegation to allow for greater efficiency when dealing with an allegation and to preserve confidentiality when dealing with such matters.
- 5.1.3. The County Committee shall appoint a committee known as the Code of Behaviour (Underage) County Determining Committee ("the Determining Committee"). The County Committee shall nominate three persons to the Determining Committee. In its appointment of the Determining Committee, the County Committee shall seek to appoint a nominee of the relevant County Committee of each of the LGFA, the Camogie Association and the GAA to the Determining Committee. Any allegation of failure to appoint nominees of any of the Associations shall not undermine the validity of the Determining Committee as appointed or its decisions.

The Determining Committee shall be responsible for initial consideration and investigation of any allegation made.

The GAA, LGFA and Camogie County Committees shall each ratify the membership of the Code of Behaviour (Underage) County Determining Committee.
- 5.1.4. The National Child Safeguarding Committee shall appoint a National Hearings Committee to investigate and consider allegations at Provincial and National level and may investigate and consider allegations at Club and County level as are referred to it.
- 5.1.5. If any member of the relevant committee is conflicted in relation to an allegation, that member shall notify the members of the relevant committee and shall not be involved in investigating or considering the allegation.
- 5.1.6. In circumstances where an allegation could constitute a breach of the Code of Behaviour (Underage) or a breach of rule of the relevant Association, the

Club Executive Committee, the Determining Committee or the National Child Safeguarding Committee appointed National Hearings Committee as the case may be, may determine, in its absolute discretion that the allegation shall be dealt with under the Code of Behaviour (Underage). If no such determination is made, the allegation shall be dealt with in accordance with the disciplinary procedures set out in the rules of the relevant Association.

## 5.2. Investigation of an allegation at Club/County/National Level

- 5.2.1. Provided that the allegation is to be dealt with under the Code of Behaviour (Underage), the relevant committee (see 5.1.2/5.1.3/5.1.4) may investigate any allegation that has come to its attention as it considers appropriate.
- 5.2.2. Where the relevant committee (see 5.1.2/5.1.3/5.1.4) deems it necessary to conduct an investigation, it may carry out the investigation or delegate the investigation to one or more of its members as it considers appropriate in the circumstances.
- 5.2.3. The level of investigation required will depend on the circumstances. It may involve interviewing and taking statements from the Complainant and/or the Respondent, members or witnesses and/or reviewing relevant documents.
- 5.2.4. If the Respondent is under 18 years of age, meetings or interviews should not take place with the Respondent without the presence of his or her parent or guardian, unless the Respondent's parents or guardians have been notified of the allegation and invited to attend the meeting or interview but have refused to do so. In circumstances where the Respondent's parents or guardian refuse to accompany him or her to a meeting or interview, the Respondent shall be entitled to be accompanied to the meeting or interview by an adult of his/her choosing. If the Respondent chooses not to be accompanied to the meeting by an adult, the meeting or interview may proceed.
- 5.2.5. The investigation is solely for the purpose of fact-finding and no decision on disciplinary action will be taking by the relevant committee.
- 5.2.6. At the conclusion of the investigation, the relevant committee may decide:-
  - 5.2.6.1. That no further action should be taken;
  - 5.2.6.2. To refer the allegation to Club or County Children's Officer to deal with the allegation informally;
  - 5.2.6.3. To refer the allegation for hearing to the Club, County or National Code of Behaviour (Underage) Hearings Committee; or
  - 5.2.6.4. To refer the allegation to be dealt with under the relevant Associations disciplinary rules.
- 5.2.7. GAA Code of Conduct- When consideration is given as to whether an alleged breach of the Code of Behaviour (Underage) is best dealt with under the Code or under other rule provisions it may be necessary to explore, in the case of a member of the GAA, if the GAA Code of Conduct for Members, Officers, Players, Parents/Guardians, Mentors, Supporters, Match Officials, Team and Units could apply to the case as referred.

Details on the GAA Code of Conduct may be accessed on [gaa.ie/code of conduct](http://gaa.ie/code-of-conduct).

- 5.3. In circumstances where the relevant committee refers the allegation to the Club, County Hearings Committee or National Child Safeguarding Hearings Committee or refers the allegations to be dealt with under the relevant Associations disciplinary rules, it shall prepare a report ("the Report").

- 5.4. In the event that the relevant committee omits from the Report evidence that is subsequently shown to be relevant, this shall not of itself affect the validity of the Report.
- 5.5. The Report shall contain:
- 5.5.1. The identity of any person(s) or Unit(s) against whom action is being taken (“the Respondent”);
  - 5.5.2. A statement of the alleged breach quoting the provision(s) of the Code of Behaviour (Underage) it is alleged has been breached;
  - 5.5.3. Copies of all relevant documents available to the relevant committee (including where appropriate, the original allegation); and
  - 5.5.4. A list of witnesses, if any, who will be required to attend the hearing on behalf of the relevant committee. This list may be updated at any stage up to 24 hours before any hearing.
- 5.6. Appointment of the Club Code of Behaviour (Underage) Hearings Committee (“the Club Code Hearings Committee”)
- 5.6.1. The Club Executive Committee shall appoint the Club Code Hearings Committee consisting of three individuals to hear allegations of breaches of the Code of Behaviour (Underage) at Club level.
  - 5.6.2. Where two or more Clubs amalgamate for the purpose of fielding underage team(s) the Club Executive Committee representing each of the amalgamating Club shall endorse the membership of a joint Club Code of Behaviour (Underage) Hearings Committee who shall act as the Club Code Hearings Committee for the amalgamated unit.
  - 5.6.3. In appointing the Club Code Hearings Committee, the Club Executive Committee will have regard to the extent of integration of the Associations in the particular club (if any) in selecting the Hearings Committee.
  - 5.6.4. Any allegation of failure to comply with the obligation to have regard to the extent of integration of the Associations in a particular club, shall not undermine the validity of the committee as appointed or its decision.
  - 5.6.5. If an individual appointed to the Club Code Hearings Committee is conflicted in relation to the parties to or the subject matter of the Report, that individual shall notify the Club Executive Committee of the conflict and shall be removed from the Club Code Hearings Committee.
  - 5.6.6. If an individual is removed from the Club Code Hearings Committee, the Executive Committee shall appoint a different individual to the Club Code Hearings Committee on a temporary or permanent basis.
  - 5.6.7. The Club Code Hearings Committee shall appoint from within its membership a Chairperson and a Secretary.
- 5.7. Appointment of the County Code of Behaviour (Underage) Hearings Committee (“the County Code Hearings Committee”)
- 5.7.1. The County Committee shall appoint the County Hearings Committee consisting



of three individuals, including a nominee from each of the GAA, the LGFA and the Camogie Association. If a nominee is not proposed from one of the Associations, the County Committee can appoint an individual in their place. The GAA, LGFA and Camogie County Committees shall each ratify the membership of the County Code of Behaviour (Underage) Hearings Committee.

5.7.2. If an individual appointed to the County Hearings Committee is conflicted in relation to the parties to or the subject matter of the Report, that individual shall notify the County Committee of the conflict and shall be removed from the County Hearings Committee.

5.7.3. If a nominee is temporarily or otherwise removed from the County Hearings Committee, the County Committee shall appoint a different nominee from the same Association as the removed nominee to the Hearings Committee on a temporary or permanent basis.

5.7.4. The County Hearings Committee shall appoint from within its membership a Chairperson and a Secretary.

#### 5.8. Appointment of the National (Code of Behaviour (Underage) ) Hearings Committee ("the National Hearings Committee")

5.8.1. The National Child Safeguarding Committee shall appoint the National Hearings Committee consisting of three individuals, one of whom it shall nominate as the Chairperson.

5.8.2. The National Hearings Committee shall hear allegations of breaches at Provincial and National level and may hear allegations of breaches at Club and County level if referred to it.

5.8.3. If any individual appointed to the National Hearings Committee is conflicted in relation to the parties to or the subject matter of the Report, that individual shall notify the National Child Safeguarding Committee of the conflict and shall be removed from the National Hearings Committee.

5.8.4. If an individual is removed from the National Hearings Committee, the National Child Safeguarding Committee shall appoint a different individual on a temporary or permanent basis to the National Hearings Committee while the allegations of breaches are being heard.

5.8.5. The National Hearings Committee shall appoint from within its membership a Secretary.

#### 5.9. Case Presenter

Where the relevant Committee refers the allegation to the Club, County or National Code of Behaviour (Underage) Hearings Committee the Committee shall also appoint a Case presenter from within its membership or may by agreement request the complainant to present the case.

#### 5.10. Notification of Hearing

5.10.1. The Chairperson of the relevant Club Hearings Committee, County Hearings Committee or National Hearings Committee shall notify the person against whom the allegation has been made ("the Respondent") and his or her parents, if the Respondent is under 18 years of age, the Complainant, the Case Presenter, the relevant Hearings Committee members of the following:



- 5.10.2. The date, time, and location of the hearing which must commence within 21 days of the relevant Hearings Committee having been appointed;
- 5.10.3. A copy of the Report;
- 5.10.4. The Respondent's right to be accompanied to the hearing and to cross examine witnesses;
- 5.10.5. If the Respondent is under 18 years of age, he/she will be informed that his/her parent have been notified and invited to the hearing;
- 5.10.6. A list of witnesses that will attend and inviting the Respondent to call witnesses.

#### 5.11. The Hearing at Club, County or Provincial/National Level ("the Hearing")

- 5.11.1. If the Respondent is an individual member, that Respondent shall attend The Hearing personally and may be represented by one full member of his or her Club or Unit.
- 5.11.1. If the Respondent is not a member, that Respondent shall attend the Hearing personally and may be represented by a nominated colleague.
- 5.11.2. If the Respondent is a Club, that Club shall be represented at the Hearing by a maximum of two of its full members.
- 5.11.3. If the Respondent is under 18 years of age, that Respondent may also be accompanied by his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) or by an individual nominated by his/her parent(s)/guardian(s).
- 5.11.4. The Case Presenter [see 5.9] shall attend the Hearing and present the evidence contained in the Report.
- 5.11.5. The relevant Hearings Committee will decide on all matters of procedure, and may adjourn Hearings and take such steps as are necessary and appropriate to the Hearing.
- 5.11.6. Any person found by the relevant Hearings Committee to have deliberately given false evidence, whether orally or in writing, or to have deliberately mislead any hearing shall be dealt with in accordance with the Disciplinary Procedures provided for by the Associations in their rules.

#### 5.12. Decision

- 5.12.1. At the conclusion of the hearing, the relevant Hearings Committee will retire to consider its decision as to whether the alleged breach of the Code of Behaviour (Underage) occurred and what sanction (if any) is appropriate and proportionate in the circumstances.
- 5.12.2. A decision shall be made by the majority of the members of the relevant Hearings Committee presiding over the Hearing.
- 5.12.3. The decision shall be recorded and shall be notified to the Complainant, the Respondent and the relevant committee who referred the allegation to the Hearings Committee.

### 5.13. Sanctions

The following sanctions are available to the Hearings Committees if it finds that there has been a breach of the Code of Behaviour (Underage) :-

- 5.13.1. Conditions in respect of the membership or level of participation that a person may have including, but not limited to, training or re-training of members appropriate to their roles and interaction with children and young people in the relevant Association;
- 5.13.2. Restrictions on the manner and level of participation that a person may have in the relevant Association;
- 5.13.3. Debarment in respect of a member from identified privileges of the relevant Association such as playing games, attending games, holding office, handling funds, attending occasions other than games etc.

### 5.14. Appeals

- 5.14.1. A Respondent who is aggrieved by the decision of the relevant Hearings Committee may appeal the decision by serving notice in writing ("the Appeal") to the Secretary of the Code of Behaviour (Underage) and Code of Conduct Appeals Committee ("the Appeals Committee"), within three 'working' days from the date and time of notification of the decision.
- 5.14.2. The Appeal shall be signed by the Appellant, or in the case of a Club or Unit, by its secretary and shall set out the grounds of appeal.
- 5.14.3. The Secretary of the Appeals Committee shall notify the Chairperson of the Appeals Panel that an Appeal has been lodged.

### 5.15. Appointment of the Appeals Panel

- 5.15.1. The Associations shall have an Appeals Panel comprised of ten individuals which include representatives from each of the Associations.
- 5.15.2. The Chairperson of the Appeals Panel shall appoint an Appeals Committee comprised of three members from the Appeals Panel to consider an appeal from a decision of the relevant Hearings Committee.

### 5.16. Notification of the Appeal and the Appeal Hearing

- 5.16.1. All parties to any original Hearing shall have the right to be present at the hearing of an Appeal.
- 5.16.2. The Appeal shall be heard as soon as is reasonably convenient.
- 5.16.3. A copy of the Appeal, together with notification of the place, date and time of the Appeal Hearing shall be sent by the Secretary to the Appeals Committee and to all parties to the original Hearing.
- 5.16.4. The Appellant may only call witnesses who gave evidence in the original Hearing.
- 5.16.5. An Appeal shall be limited to the matters raised in the Appellant's Appeal as originally lodged and shall be upheld only where (i) there has been a clear

infringement or misapplication of the Code of Behaviour (Underage) by a Hearings Committee or (ii) the Appellant's Right to a fair hearing has otherwise been compromised to such extent that a clear injustice has occurred. No determination of fact by a Hearings Committee shall be set aside unless shown to be manifestly incorrect.

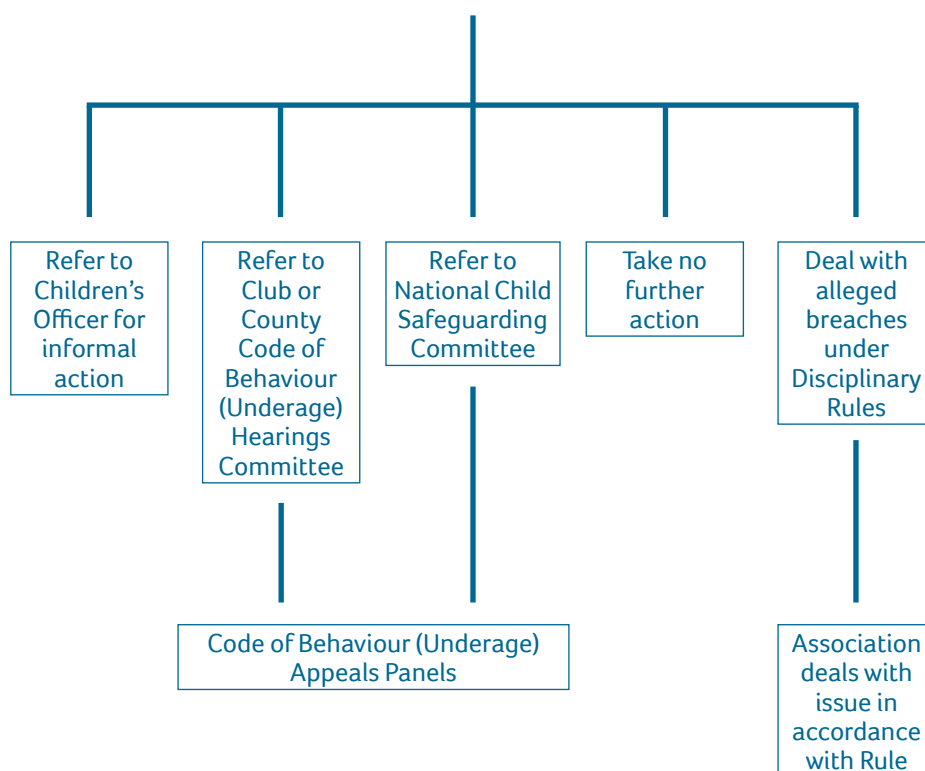
- 5.16.6. The Appeal's Committee appointed to hear the appeal shall not have been connected to the investigation or the complaint previously, and no member of the Appeal's Committee shall have been a member of the Hearings Committee considering the original Report

#### 5.17. Appeals Decision

- 5.17.1. A decision shall be made by the Appeals Committee on foot of the appeal and such decision shall be notified to the Appellant, the Hearings Committee, and any other relevant party. In the event of the Appeal being upheld, the Appeals Committee shall either:
- 5.17.2. Annul the decision appealed against and direct no further action be taken by the Hearings Committee;
- 5.17.3. Remit the matter for re-hearing or re-processing (with or without recommendations as to procedure), or
- 5.17.4. Substitute its own decision on the matter.

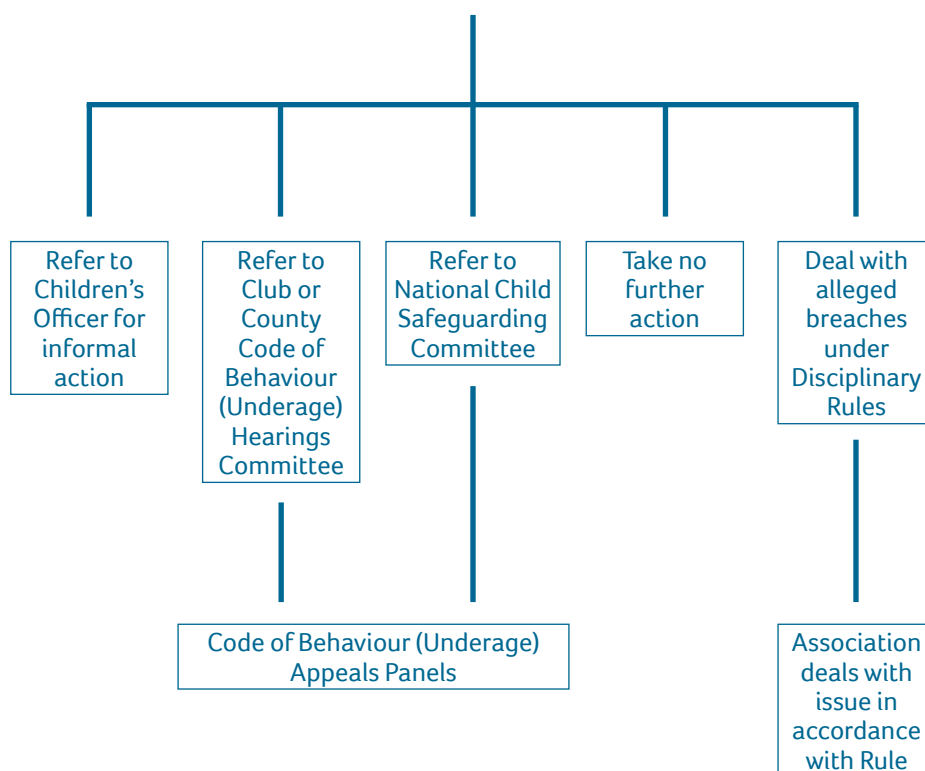
## DEALING WITH ALLEGED BREACHES OF THE CODE OF BEHAVIOUR (UNDERAGE) AT CLUB LEVEL

Club Executive or Appointed  
Sub-Committee receives an Alleged  
Breach of the Code of Behaviour  
(Underage)



## DEALING WITH ALLEGED BREACHES OF THE CODE OF BEHAVIOUR (UNDERAGE) AT COUNTY LEVEL

Alleged Breach of Code received  
and considered by the Code of  
Behaviour (Underage)  
County Determining Committee



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, whether it is parents or coaches, who give freely of their time to our juvenile structures and underage membership, but equally recognise that their contribution must, at all times, be in accordance with our own guidance and statutory requirements.

Those that promote our games primarily at club level have a responsibility to young people and to their parents and guardians to ensure that our coaches and mentors, who have been chosen to work in a supervisory and supportive capacity with children and young people, are selected supported and trained to fulfil their roles in a careful, sensible and effective manner.

This unique bond in sport is based on a trusting and mutually respectful relationship and 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 adults are 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 we can achieve by adopting good practice procedures and adhering to our Code of Behaviour when we recruit our managers, coaches and other personnel who work with children and young people on our behalf. Statutory guidance and legislative requirements are now more stringent when recruiting adults to work with children. These requirements apply to our Gaelic Games Associations as they do to all sports bodies or to youth clubs or other recreational or educational services. We are duty bound to ensure that all adults who work with children and young people in our Associations are carefully chosen to carry out whatever tasks we ask of them.

This Code of Behaviour (Underage) affirms the policy position that all coaches who work with children and young people must:

- Undergo vetting or police background checks
- Must attend relevant child safeguarding training as approved by our Associations
- Must obtain a minimum coaching qualification

The following recruitment and selection guidelines are put in place as a support mechanism so as to ensure that those recruited adhere to the best possible standards that we have adopted in 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 recruitment and selection procedure prior to commencing their role. The recruitment of adults to 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 and other personnel in the position to which that 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 at the outset.

## 2 ROLE ASSISTANCE

The various supports available via the club, e.g. Foundation Level Coaching, Child Safeguarding Training are basic good practice coaching requirements for adults who wish to work with underage teams in the promotion of our Gaelic Games.

## 3 APPLICATION FORM

Applicants should complete an application form prior to commencing any coaching role.

## 4 REFERENCES

Applicants should submit references. 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 CHECKS

All applicants are required to complete Garda Vetting and/or Police 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 coaching qualification.

## 7 MEET THE APPLICANT

A senior representative of the Club should meet with each applicant to ensure that they are aware of the role(s) allocated to them and they may use the occasion to clarify any issues that may arise and identify any coaching or up-skilling needs as appropriate.

## 8 CODE OF BEHAVIOUR (UNDERAGE)

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

## 9 SUPPORT AND REVIEW

Continuous supports should be made available to all coaches etc. so as to enable them 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. Clubs should review the role of all coaches annually.

# DELIVERING A VETTING SERVICE AT LOCAL AND NATIONAL LEVEL

## VETTING IN THE GAELIC GAMES ASSOCIATIONS

The Gaelic Games Associations comprising of the GAA, LGFA, Camogie, Rounders and Handball Associations, have a long established principle of vetting any person who, on our behalf, works with children or vulnerable adults in any of our Associations. This principle is enshrined in rule through our Code of Behaviour (Underage) and has become part of the overall recruitment and selection process for those who wish to work with children in our Associations whether it be in a voluntary or paid role.

For the purpose of clarification the GAA administers vetting for GAA Clubs and members and also for Handball and Rounders Association members while the Camogie Association and the Ladies Gaelic Football Association does likewise for their membership.

We do not provide a vetting service for members of the public but where a non-member has been invited to provide a coaching or training role to under 18 yr. olds they may, for that purpose, avail of our vetting services.

Vetting services for the Association are currently overseen by our Offices in Croke Park while Comhairle Uladh acts



on our behalf in coordinating AccessNI vetting services.

All international units are obliged to adhere to the legislative vetting and police background checks that are required in the jurisdiction in which they operate.

### **Vetting by the National Vetting Bureau for the Gaelic Games Associations**

#### **LEGISLATION**

The National Vetting Bureau (Children & Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 - 2016 commenced on 29th April 2016 and from that date a statutory obligation was placed upon our Associations to ensure that all persons who on our behalf undertake 'relevant work' with children are vetted prior to taking up that role in Ireland.

The Act also established the National Vetting Bureau (NVB) to oversee the e-vetting services previously administered by the Garda Central Vetting Unit.

#### **WHO NEEDS TO BE VETTED?**

In the Gaelic Games Associations any person who carries out a role of responsibility such as coaching, managing or training underage teams or indeed adult teams that contain any player under 18 yrs. of age must be vetted. This requirement also applies to organising underage activities or refereeing underage games, to bus drivers employed by a club or a team and to physios working with our underage players. Thereafter, each club shall decide if other specific roles merit a person being vetted.

#### **IS IT AN OFFENCE TO WORK WITH CHILDREN IF YOU ARE NOT VETTED?**

It is a criminal offence, for a person acting on behalf of the Gaelic Games Associations, or for any of our Associations to permit any person to commence working with children on our behalf without that person first obtaining a vetting disclosure from the National Vetting Bureau in respect of the role for which they have been recruited. It is also a breach of Association rule if you are working with children or vulnerable adults on behalf of any of our Associations and have not been vetted.

#### **WHAT IF THE VETTING APPLICANT IS UNDER 18 YRS. OF AGE?**

Gaelic Games Associations vetting is available to any person over 16 yrs. of age fulfilling a role of responsibility with children or vulnerable adults. A parental consent form, NVB Parent/Guardian Consent Form, must be completed in advance of submitting an application for persons aged between 16 and 18 yrs. of age.

#### **E-VETTING IN THE GAELIC GAMES ASSOCIATIONS**

The following outlines the vetting process carried out by the National Vetting Bureau in collaboration with our Associations via what is termed and on-line or E-Vetting system. Since the Vetting Acts came into being on 29 April 2016 our Associations have replaced previous 'paper vetting applications' with the new on line or E-Vetting system.

#### **HOW CAN A MEMBER AVAIL OF OUR ASSOCIATIONS' E-VETTING SERVICES?**

Vetting for a member involves 3 easy to follow steps as follows:

##### **Step 1 – The ID process:**

An applicant, i.e. a member of one of the Gaelic Games Associations, must through their own Associations website, complete the first step which is the completion of the Association's E-Vetting ID Form. This form compels you to provide proof of your identity to your Club Children's Officer, who must verify that they have received the ID documentation as required. The ID verification shall be retained by the Club Children's Officer for the duration of the e-vetting process or it may be attached by the applicant at Step 2 to the on Line Vetting Application Form.

The primary purpose of this form provides for an applicant to provide their name, address and club that they state the role for which they applied, and they then present their ID (e.g. copy of their passport plus a utility bill with their current address). They will also supply a valid email address for future reference.

##### **Step 2 – Completing the E-Vetting Application Form.**

The initial on-line E-Vetting Application Form is available to download from each of our Associations websites.

Once the applicant completes the on-line E-Vetting Application Form the information provided is forwarded to the NVB by the GAA, LGFA or Camogie vetting personnel, as relevant. The applicant, will then be forwarded by email the online NVB Vetting Form to complete.

For security and administrative purposes the details entered by the applicant will be emailed back to them. The applicant's Club Secretary will also receive an email inform them that a named person in the Club has applied as a member of the club to be vetted, and are being issued with the NVB Vetting Application Form.

### **Step 3 – NVB Vetting Application form**

The NVB will issue the applicant with the NVB Vetting Application form. This will be issued to the email address provide by the applicant in Step 2.

Completing this form is a confidential matter between the applicant and the NVB. All sections of the form including current and previous addresses, email address and contact telephone numbers, information on convictions and prosecutions (if any), plus other information will be required when completing the form.

Once all sections of the form have been completed and forwarded on-line to the NVB this then completes the application process for E Vetting in the Gaelic Games Associations and within a short period of time the applicant shall be contacted by their applicant Association informing them as to the outcome of their vetting application. The applicant's Club Secretary will also be notified when the vetting process has been completed and if the application has been successful.

### **RECOGNITION OF VETTING BETWEEN EACH OF THE GAELIC GAMES ASSOCIATIONS**

As a result of a long standing agreement between each of the Gaelic Games Associations, any person vetted by for example by the GAA shall have their vetting outcome recognised by the LGFA, Camogie, Rounders and Handball and do not have to undertake additional vetting by either of these Associations. A reciprocal arrangement exists between each of the Associations.

### **RE-VETTING**

The Vetting Act provides for the re-vetting of all applicants. The Gaelic Games Associations' Vetting Policy stipulates that as part of our good practice procedures members shall be re-vetted at a minimum within a five year time period.

A vetting acceptance letter issued by the GAA shall cease to be valid five years after the date of issue.

## **ACCESS NI**

**Coordinated by Comhairle Uladh on behalf of the Gaelic Games Associations**

In order to comply with legislation in the 6 Counties and the rules of our Associations, all persons working with children or young people in a voluntary or paid capacity, must be vetted prior to commencing their role. Those who are involved in the management of individuals appointed to work with children or young people in our Associations must also be vetted.

This vetting service is carried out by AccessNI for individuals in the Gaelic Games Associations in Antrim, Armagh, Derry, Down, Fermanagh and Tyrone where they return criminal history information in respect of each applicant. All applications and the AccesNI services are coordinated on our behalf by Ulster GAA who are registered with AccessNI for this purpose.

The AccessNI checks will clarify if an applicant has a criminal record; if their name is included on the Disclosure and Barring Scheme (DBS) list of individuals barred from engaging in regulated activity with children or if relevant the DBS list of individuals barred from engaging in regulated activity with adults and any other information held by the authorities that may be relevant to the position applied for. Any information received will be treated confidentially and recruitment decisions will be made with discretion and will only have the involvement of a specifically selected Comhairle Uladh case management. A copy of your disclosure certificate will be returned directly by AccessNI to you and also to Comhairle Uladh.

This enables Ulster GAA to make more informed recruitment decisions in relation to the suitability of the applicant for specified roles. Ulster GAA process applications for vetting checks free of charge, for our volunteers at a club's request.

Clubs as always are reminded that they should not permit anyone to work with children or young people in the Club until they have been suitably vetted and approved for their role.

### **THE ACCESSNI VETTING SERVICES ARE PROCESSED AS FOLLOWS:**

1. Applicant complete the Online Application Form
2. Club Officers signs ID Document Copies and forwards same to Ulster GAA
3. Ulster GAA approve the form and the ID and send to Access NI
4. Access NI process the form and issue the Disclosure Certificate to the applicant
5. Ulster GAA write to the applicant to confirm their vetting acceptance
6. If there is information on the applicants disclosure certificate, Ulster GAA will write out to you requesting sight of the certificate in hard copy in its original form, and the applicant provides that copy as soon as possible.
7. Ulster GAA risk assess all Enhanced Disclosure Certificates that contain information. Where there are areas of concern, the applicant is contacted, meet with and any decision with regard to their suitability for the position applied is made following this process.
8. Where required, Ulster GAA will meet with club officers to discuss any concern.
9. Applicants have the right to appeal any decision made by Ulster GAA in relation to their suitability for the position applied.
10. While applicants, in accordance with our Vetting Policy, may be re-vetted at any time they must formally undertake re-vetting within a five year period.

**Further information on AccessNI services as coordinated by Ulster GAA may be found at <http://ulster.gaa.ie/safeguarding/access-ni/>**

## **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. All such persons must at a minimum:**

- **Have undertaken Vetting (Garda/Police) 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 Joint Code of Behaviour**

### **SUPERVISION RATIOS**

Young people must always be adequately supervised regardless of activity and it is the responsibility of Clubs to ensure that a satisfactory 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. It is recommended that a minimum ratio of 1:8 for under 12 years of age players and a ratio of 1:10 for players over 12 yrs. of age. When abiding by such ratios a coach must always be accompanied by at least one other suitably qualified adult at all times.

Such recommended ratios act as a guide to the minimum ratios of adults to children and may vary depending on the circumstances, e.g. players with special needs, very young players, and mixed gender groups or on away trips.

### **PEOPLE ALLOCATED A SUPERVISORY ROLE SHOULD:**

- Avoid being alone with any player, if you need to talk separately do so in an open environment, in view of others.
- Not enter or be in team dressing rooms in which there are underage players or teams unless their presence is deemed necessary by the team coach(es) and they are accompanied by another adult (who has met the Association's recruitment criteria). This is to protect the privacy of underage players and the credibility of the adult and to avoid any situation whereby the unaccompanied presence of an adult could give cause for

concern.

- When organising a club trip always be mindful of ensuring that additional adults accompany the group in case of emergencies or unforeseen circumstances.
- When participating in an overnight stay a specific ratio of adults to children should be agreed in advance. This ratio, is dependent on the age category of the children/young people, whether it is a single or mixed gender group and whether the group may be participating in certain outdoor activities or in water sports etc.
- Always clearly state start/finish times of training and if possible of games (home or away) and other activities including trips away from home.
- Remain in pairs until players have been collected or have left in accordance with parental or guardian permission.
- Keep attendance records and record any injuries/incidents as they arise.
- Where a team consist of both boys and girls, and for the avoidance of doubt, the coaching team must also consist of both male and female personnel while male only teams must include at least one male coach and female only teams must include at least one female coach.