



## Child Protection Policy

The Gaelic Athletic Association and Moygownagh GAA Club are committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for all young people who wish to participate in our Gaelic Games and activities. With this in mind and as part of the GAA Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport, Moygownagh GAA Club has drafted a Club Child Protection Policy, which you can find below.

### Child Protection Policy and Code of Best Practice and Conduct.

- 1. POLICY STATEMENT**
- 2. STANDARDS EVALUATION**
- 3. DESIGNATED PERSON**
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- 5. COMMUNICATION (TEXTING)**
- 6. REPORTING INCIDENTS**
- 7. VARIOUS CODES OF BEHAVIOUR & AREAS OF GOOD PRACTICE**

#### 1. POLICY STATEMENT

Children are the most important members in our club.

We at Moygownagh G.A.A. Club aim to promote the participation of children in our club by creating a culture of safety and fun.

“Children have the right to be protected from all forms of violence. They must be kept safe from harm and they must be given proper care by those looking after them”

(Article 19: UN Convention on the Rights of the Child)

All childrens sport should be conducted in an atmosphere of fair play. Ireland has adopted and is committed to the European Code of Sport Ethics which defines fair play as:

“ much more than playing within the rules. Fair play incorporates the concepts of friendship, respect for others and a sense of fellowship. It includes issues concerned with cheating, the use of unfair strategies while respecting the rules, manipulation of sports competitions and doping” ( Revised European Sports Charter, Council of Europe, 2021)

The Children’s First Act (2015) is based on a clear and consistent set of principles designed with the common aim of promoting the welfare of children.

Children have the right to be safe. All coaches should ensure that this fundamental principle takes precedent over all other considerations.

All club members, through their actions reflect the principles and guidelines contained in the

“GAA Child Safeguarding and Protection Guidelines’ and “Children First Guidance and Legislation”, Tusla - Child and Family Agency We promote the aims and ideals of our Association, adhere to its policy and nurture our Gaelic culture.

## **2. STANDARDS SET BY MOYGOWNAGH GAA CLUB WILL BE ACHIEVED THROUGH ENSURING THE FOLLOWING:**

Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment and Awareness of the issues which lead to children being harmed.

Maintaining of Good Practice and Behaviour.

Dealing with alleged breaches of the Code of Behaviour.

Recruitment and Selection: Safe recruiting procedures for coaches/volunteers, careful selection

Provision of approved Safeguarding/Child Protection awareness workshops for coaches and administrators

Application of codes of behaviour for coaches/volunteers

Application of codes of behaviour for children/young people

Application of codes of behaviour for parents

Application of good and safe working/playing practices

Dealing with Allegations or concerns of abuse.

Tackling Bullying in the Club: Anti Bullying Policy.

Code of Conduct for best practice, transport and general supervision, overnight and away trips and safety etc.

Availability of information – each parent should receive a copy or have access to the Child Protection Policy

Regular review and monitoring of Child Protection procedures by the management committee

All children are treated equally; the club will promote anti-discriminatory practices.

The policy applies to all those involved in Moygownagh GAA Club as coaches, administrators, officials, volunteer drivers, parents/guardians and children.

### 3. DESIGNATED LIASION PERSON ( DLP with respect to Child Protection)

The 'contact person' or Designated Person within Moygownagh GAA Club is:

**Name:** Stephanie Jennings

**Address:** Driminangle, Moygownagh, Ballina.

**Telephone number:** 087 6154318

**Name:** Selina Sweeney

**Address :**Fortland, Moygownagh, Crossmolina

**Telephone number:** 086 8777415

The name of designated liaison person(s) shall be made known to all in the club. He/She is the person to whom child protection concerns will be addressed. If the concern is about the designated person, please report to the County Chairman.

The club has procedures in place for dealing with concerns or allegation of abuse or neglect either within the club or externally but the first point of contact for the child, parent/guardian or coach is the designated person. However, any individual has the right to contact Gearóid Ó Maoilmhichíl [mandatedperson@gaa.ie](mailto:mandatedperson@gaa.ie) , Tusla or An Gardaí directly if they have concern about a child's welfare.

#### 4. CLUB CHILDREN'S OFFICER (YOUTH OFFICER)

The Children's Officer (CO):

The 'contact person' or Designated Person within Moygownagh GAA Club is:

**Name:** Stephanie Jennings

**Address:** Driminangle, Moygownagh, Ballina.

**Telephone number:** 087 6154318

**Name:** Selina Sweeney

**Address :**Fortland, Moygownagh, Crossmolina

**Telephone number:** 086 8777415

The Children's Officer is the link between youth mentors, members and management. It is essential that this communication line is clear and working. CO may be assisted by others whose details, along with the club chairperson's, are prominently displayed in e.g. club changing rooms, offices, and pavilion. The Children's Officer's function is to engender a child-centred club ethos, promote ethics and good practice, influence club policy and report to the management committee and designated person.

## 5. GUIDELINES FOR COMMUNICATION, IN PARTICULAR TEXTING.

Moygownagh GAA Club strongly recommends that when we pass on information regarding games, training or other activities for our under age players that we do so via group texts and that these group texts should preferably be sent to the parents of under-age players. Coaches and /or the Club Rúnaí should obtain these relevant contact numbers when an under-age player is being registered. This recommendation only applies to underage players i.e. under 18 year of age.

Are there any exceptions to the proposal on texting?

If, for whatever reason, a parent/guardian insists or requests that the information is sent directly by the club to their child and gives this request in writing the club may, if they so wish, accede to this request. However, if the club accedes to the request the information can only be sent as part of a group text and cannot be communicated individually to the under-age player.

Moygownagh GAA Club would regard the individual texting of an under- age player by their coach or mentor as being inappropriate and unnecessary. We do not wish to compromise the role of the coach and its best not to communicate by mobile in such instances where the coach would have the personal mobile telephone number of a child and the child or young person could equally have access to the coach's telephone number as well.

How do we interpret an underage player?

An under-age player is a person who is eligible to play in a game or event for persons under 18 years of age. Legislation in Ireland also defines a child as any person under 18 years of age and parents/guardians therefore have a particular level of responsibility for their child's welfare while they remain under 18 yrs of age. We use the terms child and young person frequently when we refer to under age players.

What if an underage player is on the club's senior panel?

The same recommendation applies and parental/guardian permission must be sought if you wish to directly communicate with the young person as part of a group text scheme.

#### **6a. GUIDELINES FOR REPORTING ACCIDENTS**

In the event of an accident the following procedure will be followed:

Contact parents/guardians in the event of all accidents.

Fill in 2 copies of Accident Form for ALL accidents. One copy to incident book/folder, other to designated person for filing/further action.

For more serious accidents:

Contact emergency services/G.P. if necessary

Record detailed facts surrounding accident, witnesses etc.

Complete accident form/book as above

All serious accidents should be reported through County Secretary to Croke Park

#### **6b. GUIDELINES FOR REPORTING ALLEGATIONS/INCIDENTS**

Record all incidents reported or observed on an incident form, forward to the designated person.

Ensure confidentiality – a ‘need to know basis’

The Designated Liaison Person(s) is responsible for report security

Adhere to An Cumann Lúthchleas Gael’s Code of Behaviour SECTION 11. This guidance forms part of the Code of Behaviour (Underage) dealing with allegations or concerns of abuse.

## 7. VARIOUS CODES OF BEHAVIOUR & AREAS OF GOOD PRACTICE IN MOYGOWNAGH GAA CLUB

### ***YOUNG PLAYERS SHOULD BE ENTITLED TO:***

- Be safe and feel safe.
- Have fun and experience a sense of enjoyment and fulfilment.
- Be treated with respect, dignity and sensitivity.
- Be afforded appropriate confidentiality.
- Participate in games and competitions at age appropriate levels.
- Be afforded adequate and meaningful playing time to assist in the development of their playing skills, within their own age group and in accordance with Rule.
- Make their concerns known and have them dealt with in an appropriate manner.
- Be protected from abuse.
- Be listened to and have their suggestions heard in a constructive manner.

### ***YOUNG PLAYERS SHOULD ALWAYS:***

- Play fairly, do their best and enjoy themselves.
- Respect fellow team members and opponents regardless of ability, cultural or ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation or religion.
- Support fellow team members regardless of whether they do well or not.
- Represent their team, their Club and their family with pride and dignity.
- Respect all coaches and decisions of officials.
- Be gracious in defeat and modest in victory.
- Shake hands before and after a game as part of the Give Respect - Get Respect initiative.
- Inform their coach/mentor/manager in advance if they are unavailable for training and games.
  - Take due care of Club equipment.
- Know that it is acceptable to talk to the Club Children's Officer with any concerns or questions they may have.
- Tell somebody else if they or others have been harmed in any way

### ***YOUNG PLAYERS SHOULD ENGAGE IN GOOD PRACTICE:***

- Never cheat – always play by the rules.
- Never shout at or argue with a game's official, with their coach, their team mates or opponents.
  - Never use violence towards team mates, coaches, officials, opponents or supporters.
  - Accept the decisions of referees and other officials.
  - Never use unfair or Bullying tactics to gain advantage or isolate other players.
  - Never spread rumours.
- Never tell lies about adults or other young people.
- Never play or train if they feel unwell or are injured.
- Never use unacceptable language or racial and/or sectarian or homophobic references towards a team mate, an opponent, a fellow player, coach, official or supporter by words, deeds or gestures.
  - Never consume non-prescribed drugs or performance enhancing supplements.
  - Never use social media to discuss team mates, opponents, coaches, match officials or other individuals.

- Never use social media or social media apps to distribute or redistribute offensive content or to taunt, bully or racially abuse others

***Coaches are required to:***

- o Undertake agreed vetting and background Police checks within the jurisdiction(s) in which they operate
- o Attend relevant Gaelic Games child safeguarding training
- o Possess a coaching qualification relevant to their role as recognised by their Association

***COACHES SHOULD MAINTAIN A CHILD CENTRED APPROACH***

- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person.
- Treat each person equally regardless of age, gender, ability, ethnic origin, cultural background or religion.
- Be positive during coaching sessions, games and other activities.
- 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.
- Recognise that skills development and personal satisfaction should have priority over competition when working with underage players.
- 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.
- Develop an understanding of relevant coaching methods and ensure that they have the appropriate level of coaching accreditation.
- Do not equate losing with failure and do not develop a preoccupation with medals and trophies. The level of improvement made by underage players is the best indicator of effective coaching.

***COACHES SHOULD LEAD BY EXAMPLE***

- Never use foul language or provocative language/gestures towards any player, fellow coach, match official or supporter.
- Only enter the field of play with the referee's permission.
- Do not question a referee's decisions or integrity.
- Encourage players to respect and accept the judgement of match officials.
- Promote Fair Play and encourage all players and fellow officials to always play by the rules of the game.
- Do not encourage or threaten a player by deed or gesture to act in any unacceptable manner towards, a fellow player, coach or official.
- Promote the RESPECT campaign amongst your players, fellow coaches, parents and supporters.
  - Do not smoke while working with underage players.



- Do not consume alcohol or non-prescribed drugs immediately prior to or while underage players are in your care.
- Encourage parents to become involved in your team and Club activities wherever possible

### ***CONDUCT OF COACHES WHEN WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE***

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

### ***AVOID COMPROMISING YOUR ROLE AS A COACH***

Some activities may require coaches to come into physical contact with underage players in the course of their duties. However, coaches should;

- Avoid taking coaching sessions on your own.
- Any delivery of one to one coaching must be within a group setting.
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact with an underage player and never engage in inappropriate touching of a player.
- 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.

## **BEST PRACTICE**

- Ensure that all of your players are suitably and safely attired to play their chosen sport. e.g. shin guards, gum shields (Football).
- As a coach always be punctual and properly attired.
- Be accompanied by at least one other adult at coaching sessions, games and in underage team dressing rooms.
- Abide by a minimum ratio 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.
- Groups of 10-20 children must have a minimum of 3 adults present at all times.
- 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.
- 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.
- Clubs may choose to appoint suitable persons to the role of Supervisor, i.e. Supervisor of Children. 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.
- A Supervisor must be a member of one of our Associations, must be an adult and is required to be vetted and have attended relevant Child Safeguarding Training.
- 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 Camps Assistants (at camps) do not have a coaching role.
  - Set realistic – stretching but achievable – performance goals for your players and teams.
  - Keep a record of attendance at training and at games by both players and coaches.
  - 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.
  - Afford meaningful playing time to young players so as to assist in the development of their playing skills, within their own age groups.
- 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.
- Make adequate provision for First Aid services.
- Do not encourage or permit players to play while injured.
- Inform parents/guardians if their child has been injured or becomes unwell at games and training as soon as is practical.
- 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.
- 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.
- Do not administer medication or medical aid unless you are willing to do so and have

received the necessary training to do so.

- Avail of the FOIREANN registration and communication system to communicate with the parents of young players.

- If necessary use mobile phones, only via a group text or email system, for communicating with the parents of players. Any exception to this form of group texting can only be proceeded with following permission from parents/guardians.
- Do not communicate individually by text, email or via social network sites and or apps with underage players.
- Encourage parents/guardians to play an active role in organising and assisting various activities for your teams and your Club.
- 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.
- With the exception of their own child a coach should not transport a child alone, except in emergency or exceptional circumstances.
- 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.
- 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

***PARENTS/GUARDIANS SHOULD ENCOURAGE THEIR CHILD TO:***

- Always play by the rules.
- Improve their skills levels.
- Appreciate everybody on their team and their opponents, regardless of ability.
- Respect and appreciate the contribution made by their coaches towards developing players and teams.
- Maintain a balanced and healthy lifestyle with regard to exercise, food, rest and play.

Advice may be sought if necessary from Club officials on this issue.

***PARENTS/GUARDIANS SHOULD LEAD BY EXAMPLE:***

- Adopt a positive attitude to their children's participation in our games.
- Respect officials' decisions and encourage children to do likewise.
- Do not exert undue pressure on your child.
- Never admonish your own child or any other child for their standard of play.
- Be realistic in their expectations.
- Show approval for effort, not just results.
- Avoid asking a child or young person, 'How much did you score today' or 'What did you win by' or 'What did you lose by.' Ask them 'Did they enjoy themselves.'
- Never embarrass a child or use sarcastic remarks towards a player.
- Applaud good play from all teams.
- Do not criticise playing performances. Identify how improvements may be made.
- Do not seek to unfairly affect a game or player.
- Do not enter the field of play unless specifically invited to do so by an official in charge.

***PARENTS/GUARDIANS SHOULD:***

- Complete through Foireann or on the Child/Youth Membership Form the annual registration/ permission and medical consent information for their child's participation in the Club.
- Inform the coaches, and any other relevant Club personnel, of any changes in their child's medical or dietary requirements prior to coaching sessions, games or other activities.
- Ensure that their child punctually attends coaching sessions/games or other activities. Provide their child with adequate clothing and equipment as may be required for the playing of our games including for example helmets, shin guards, gum shields etc.
- Ensure that the nutrition/hydration and hygiene needs of their child are met.
- Never encourage their child to consume non-prescribed drugs or take performance enhancing supplements.
- Listen to what their child may have to say.
- Show approval whether the team wins, loses or draws a game.
- Never attempt to meet their own needs and aspirations for success and achievement through their children's participation in games.
- Raise any issues or concerns they may have regarding their child's participation or performance in a team with the team coach(es) and should do so in a constructive and non-

confrontational manner and not in the company or vicinity of young players or other parents.

- Bring complaints about the conduct or practice of a coach to the attention of the relevant Club or County Children's Officer.

- Support your Club by becoming an active member and by participating in Club activities.

***PARENTS/GUARDIANS SHOULD ASSIST THEIR CLUB BY:***

- Showing appreciation to volunteers, coaches and Club officials.
- Attending training and games on a regular basis.
- Assisting in the organising of Club activities and events as requested.
- Respecting the rights, dignity and worth of every person and by treating each one equally regardless of age, gender, ability, ethnic origin, cultural background or religion.
- Not entering team dressing rooms unless deemed necessary by the team coach(es) so as to protect the privacy of all players.

***PARENTS/GUARDIANS HAVE THE RIGHT TO:***

- Know their child is safe and to make a complaint if they believe that their child's safety is in any way compromised.
- Be informed of problems/concerns relating to their child.
- Be informed if their child gets injured or becomes unwell.
- Complain to the relevant persons if they have concerns about the standard of coaching.
- Have, as a member, a say in relation to decisions being made within the Club.

**RESPECT**

- Responsible
- Encouraging
- Supportive
- Positive
- Enabling
- Considerate
- Tolerant

<http://gaa.ie/the-gaa/child-safeguarding-and-protection/code-of-behaviour/>

**Use this link to access the GAA Code of Behaviour**

This new Code brings together the collective good practice experiences of our Associations and marks a momentous occasion as we seek, through the implementation of an agreed and joint policy document, that while promoting our games amongst young people we also seek to provide a safe environment in which we can develop children, under 18 years of age, in a caring and respective environment within our respective Associations. This Code applies to all persons under 18 yrs. of age who participate in our games or other activities and to those who work with them and assist them in any capacity on our behalf.

Young people will spend some of the most enjoyable days of their lives playing our games and socialising with their friends in each of our Associations. Our role and our responsibility is to ensure that they benefit from and participate in our Gaelic Games in a safe and enjoyable environment where our Games are conducted in a spirit of fair play with everyone who works on our behalf emphasising respect, equality, safety and non-discrimination in all aspects of our work with children and young people. Each member of our Associations has a responsibility to accept and implement this Code as it directs us in such work. Breaches of the Code may be enquired into and if required sanctions may be applied in accordance with other provisions of the Code.

\_\_\_\_\_

*Chairperson.*

\_\_\_\_\_

*Secretary*

\_\_\_\_\_

*Children's Officer/DLP*

\_\_\_\_\_

*Children's Officer/ DLP*

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## CODE DECLARATION/SIGNATORY:

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO THE CLUB CHILDREN'S OFFICER OR OTHER NOMINATED OFFICIAL IN MOYGOWNAGH GAA CLUB.

This Code of Behaviour addresses the minimum levels of behaviour, practice and conduct required from our Young Players, Coaches, Officials, Managers, Supporters, Referees, Parents/Guardians and Clubs.

[www.gaa.ie/the-gaa/child-welfare-and-protection/code-of-behaviour/](http://www.gaa.ie/the-gaa/child-welfare-and-protection/code-of-behaviour/)

## DECLARATION:

I \_\_\_\_\_ (print name) .

I acknowledge that I have read, understand and accept the Code of Behaviour (Underage) and I agree to be bound by the principles set out in the Code when participating, playing or attending our Gaelic Games'.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Underage Player)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Parent/Guardian)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Coach/Referee)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_