

ST JOHN'S GAC  
INFORMATION FOR COACHES  
AND YOUTH LEADERS



*Mol an óige agus tiocfaidh sí*  
*Praise youth and it will blossom*

2015

The purpose of this information pack is to provide coaches and prospective coaches information on the policies and practices at St John's so that they may be best able to deliver a positive, supportive environment where the welfare of the child is paramount and where both the child and the club develop to their maximum potential.

For the purpose of this policy we define children as any person under the age of 18 years

# POLICY STATEMENT

**St John's GAC aim to promote the participation of children in our club by creating a culture of safety, fun and fair play. We recognise that all children have the right to be safe and that this fundamental principle takes precedence over all other considerations.**

St John's GAC recognises that we have a responsibility to:

- Safeguard and promote the interests and well-being of all those under 18 years who are involved in our club activities;
- Take all reasonable steps to protect children from harm, discrimination or degrading treatment;
- Respect the rights, wishes and feelings of all children in our club.
- Inform and involve parents in all that we do with their children.
- Have a Child Protection Policy (Appendix One)
- Have designated Child Protection Officers

St John's GAC has the right to:

- Expect all leaders to comply with its Codes of Conduct.
- Take appropriate action if members breach the Codes of Conduct or Child Protection Policy.
- Expect all members to undertake appropriate training when advised to.
- Expect leaders will not abuse members physically, emotionally or sexually.
- Take appropriate action in the event of accusations.
- Acquire pre-employment checks on all coaches as from April 2006, as agreed by the Ulster Council
- Maintain records on individuals in line with advice from the data protection agency i.e. only hold records on individuals that they have a justifiable reason for holding.

This policy applies to all those involved in St John's GAC; coaches, administrators, officials, volunteers and parents.

## FAIR PLAY

All children's sport should be conducted in an atmosphere of fair play.

Ireland and the UK have adopted and are committed to the European Code of Sports Ethics, which defines fair play as:

*“much more than playing within the rules. It incorporates the concepts of friendship, respect for others and always playing within the right spirit. Fair play is defined as a way of thinking, not just a way of behaving. It incorporates issues concerned with the elimination of cheating, gamesmanship, doping, violence (both physical and verbal), exploitation, unequal opportunities, excessive commercialism and corruption.”*

(European Sports Charter and Code of Ethics, Council of Europe, 1993)

## CHILD PROTECTION

St John's adopted a child protection policy at its Annual General Meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2004 and reviewed this on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2009. This policy is presented in full in Appendix One.

A number of under-18s will also train and play with our adult teams in camogie, football and ladies football. They are still covered by our Child Protection Policy and Practices whilst with the adult teams.

The young people who come to St John's will be regarded as children first and competitors / footballers second.

## ST JOHN'S AGAINST BULLYING

Bullying will not be accepted or condoned at St John's. Guidance on detection and dealing with bullying is given in Appendix Two.

We delivered an Anti-Bullying & Positive Mental Health Workshop in September 2013 with our PIPS Programmes (our 2013 Charity of the Year) and facilitated every first year pupil at St Malachy's High School to attend such a workshop.

## EQUALITY STATEMENT

In accordance with our Equality Policy we believe that all children should be valued and treated in an equitable and fair manner regardless of ability, age, sex, religion, social and ethnic background or political persuasion.

Children, irrespective of ability or disability should be involved in sports activities in an integrated and inclusive way, whenever possible, thus allowing them to participate to their full potential alongside other children (Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport 2000)

# THE ROLE OF YOUTH COACHES & OTHER YOUTH LEADERS

The primary duty of our juvenile coaches is to assist in the development of our juvenile members. This includes their social, emotional, and personal development as well as development as a sports person.

The juvenile coach will operate as a member of a team with the support of the whole club within the framework of our Child Protection Policy and associated policies and practices.

The coaches for all our underage groups are appointed by the Executive / Management Committee.

Coaches shall have regard to the needs of the individual children in their charge and will organize training and activities that are appropriate to the age and ability of the children. Coaches must recognize individual difference between children; some may be more naturally competitive than others, some may be quicker or slower at learning particular skills, some will be better able to perform the required skills at the right time in games, some will be better “team players” than others, some will be better able to make the “right decisions” in games, and so on.

Coaches must also try to “SQUARE THE CIRCLE” of meeting separate individual needs with the collective needs of the team.

Coaches must recognise that the long term development of the club, and of our juvenile members, may not be best served by “win every game” mentality.

Coaches must recognise the rules of the Association and of County and Divisional Boards.

## DUTIES OF YOUTH COACHES (CONT.)

There are many duties which must be performed if the club is to continue its development and to provide a rewarding and enjoyable experience for our juvenile members and to ensure that their long term development is encouraged, supported and facilitated. Some of these duties may be delegated to or shared with others, but it is essential that all the duties are performed, and performed to a high standard.

The duties shall include the following:-

### **Supervision of children and young people**

- at the club
- while travelling to away matches/games/venues
- at away venues

### **Liaison with parents and guardians**

- with regard to individual children's' development
- giving details of training times, away trips, including e.g. location, guidelines in respect of clothing, provision of lunches etc.

### **Coaching skills**

- Coaching football, camogie and other skills (as appropriate)

### **Managing teams**

- Building team spirit
- Developing children's understanding of positional roles, etc.

### **Liaison with other coaches**

- To deliver a coherent programme of development
- particularly those of age groups above and below your own

## DUTIES OF YOUTH COACHES (CONT.)

### **Liaison with other club officers, e.g.,**

- Fixture Secretary regarding training timetable and changes
- Fixture Secretary regarding match arrangements
- PRO to generate publicity and feedback in media
- Registrar to ensure only registered and paid-up players used
- Child Protection Officers regarding any welfare issues
- Treasurer regarding any financial issues

### **Liaison with others outside of the club, e.g.**

- Supporting referees and other match officials
- GAA, LGFA, CCA officials
- County / Divisional Board officers
- Opposing coaches/mentors

### **Undertaking training** to develop your abilities as a coach

- Training for coaches organized by association, county boards etc.
- Emergency First Aid
- Child Protection awareness

This is not an exhaustive list. / Any other duties as may arise from time to time.

**Coaches shall only allow players who are registered members of the club, fall within the appropriate age categories and who have paid their annual membership to represent the club. The registrar and/or secretary shall provide all coaches with a written list of players who are eligible under the above conditions and the team coach shall adhere to it. The registrar and/or secretary shall update the list as appropriate.**

# COACH DEVELOPMENT

It is hoped that coaches will undertake whatever training they require to develop their skills and abilities as coaches and mentors within the club. This may include coaching courses run by the governing bodies or by other bodies recognized by Sports Northern Ireland.

Coaches can expect the club to support them in any training they may undertake for the benefit of the club.

Coaches should share their knowledge, experience and training with each other for the benefit of the club.

Experienced coaches should mentor inexperienced coaches.

Coaches should undergo training and regular refresher training in child protection awareness.

Coaches should undergo training and regular refresher training in Emergency First Aid.

All coaches will be treated equally within the club – there shall be no hierarchy within the club depending on the age group taken by the coach. All age groups are equally valued by the club.

Success in coaching is measured primarily by the development of the children being coached, not by trophies won.

Coaches should contribute positively to the development and enhancement of child protection policies and practices within the club.

APPENDIX ONE  
**CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

APPENDIX TWO  
**ST JOHN'S AGAINST BULLYING**

APPENDIX THREE  
**PREVENTION OF ABUSE**

APPENDIX FOUR  
**GOOD AND SAFE WORKING  
& PLAYING PRACTICES**

APPENDIX FIVE  
**RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES  
FOR COACHES & OTHER VOLUNTEERS**

APPENDIX SIX  
**TRAINING FOR VOLUNTEERS & COACHES**

APPENDIX SEVEN  
**CODES OF PRACTICE VOLUNTEERS &  
COACHES**

APPENDIX EIGHT  
**REPORTING PROCEDURES**

APPENDIX NINE  
**VALUING VOLUNTEERS POLICY**

FURTHER READING

GAA - CODE OF BEST PRACTICE IN YOUTH SPORT

GAA - GUIDELINES FOR DEALING WITH ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE