



## Child Protection Policy

St John's GAC is committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for all young people and vulnerable adults who wish to participate in our Gaelic Games and activities. We recognise our moral duty and legal obligation to protect children and vulnerable adults at our club through the promotion of an environment which promotes the safety, dignity and well-being of young people at all times.

In order to protect and promote the interests of those under 18 years of age and vulnerable adults at our club we shall:-

1. Develop an awareness of the issues which may lead to young people being harmed.
2. Create an open environment, by identifying at least two "Child Protection Officers", ideally one male and one female, as "contact persons" to whom young people and their parents / guardians, can turn if they need to talk.
3. Provide information on other sources of help for young people.
4. Ensure that all allegations of abuse of young people are confidentially dealt with in accordance the GAA's Guidelines for Dealing with Allegations of Abuse (Fourth Edition 2009) and with statutory guidelines and relevant legislation.
5. Ensure that any incident involving actual harm or injury to a young person, or any "near miss" is recorded, reported and acted upon.
6. Ensure careful recruitment, selection and management procedures for people working with young people at St John's, so that they accept responsibility for ensuring the well-being of children in their care.
7. Implement Codes of Conduct for all adults working with young people in the club that include best practice in Child Protection and reflect this Child Protection Policy. Such adults may include coaches, parents, leaders and volunteers.

## St John's GAC Child Protection Policy

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8. Implement a Codes of Conduct for Parents and Spectators at underage games that include best practice in Child Protection and reflect this Child Protection Policy.
9. Implement a Codes of Conduct for young People that include best practice in Child Protection and reflect this Child Protection Policy.
10. Ensure that we have satisfactory club procedures to resolve complaints and conflicts that may arise if people fail to abide by the appropriate Codes of Conduct.
11. Ensure that we are involved in training made available through the various agencies which promote child protection, and strengthen links with these agencies.
12. Follow Governing Body guidelines on good practice for coaches.
13. Keep the Child Protection Policy under regular review
14. Provide a copy of this Child Protection Policy for each young person and their parents / guardians annually.

Jackie McMullan  
Cathaoirleach

Kevin McGlynn  
Rúnaí

### References

The Children (NI) Order 1995.

GAA Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport

<http://www.gaa.ie/files/pdf/a4codeofbestpractice2.pdf>

GAA Code of Behaviour for all Persons working with Young People

<http://www.gaa.ie/files/pdf/gaa-code-of-behaviour-2.pdf>

GAA Guidelines for Dealing with Accusations of Abuse

[http://www.gaa.ie/files/archives/official\\_reports/7613guidelines.pdf](http://www.gaa.ie/files/archives/official_reports/7613guidelines.pdf)

Camogie Association Guidelines for Children's Officers

<http://www.camogie.ie/Administration/CodeofEthics/GuidelinesforChildrensOfficers/tabid/146/Default.aspx>

SPORT NI - Safeguarding Children in Sport

<http://www.sportni.net/childprotectionindex.htm>

DHSSPSNI – Volunteer Development Agency

Our Duty to Care – Principles of Good Practice for the Protection of Children and Young People – 4<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2007

<http://www.sportni.net/4.OurDutytoCareAmendJul07.pdf.pdf>

This policy was adopted at our Annual General Meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2009.

It replaces the Child Protection Policy adopted at AGM 5<sup>th</sup> December 2004.

## APPENDIX TWO

# ST JOHN'S AGAINST BULLYING

Bullying will not be accepted or condoned at St John's. The following information is provided to assist coaches in recognizing and in dealing with bullying. All forms of bullying will be addressed.

Bullying can include:

- physical pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching etc
  - shouting, name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing,
  - emotional torment through ridicule, humiliation and the continual ignoring or excluding of individuals from friendship groups
  - sectarian/racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
  - sexual comments and/or suggestions
  - unwanted physical contact
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- Children from ethnic minorities, disabled children, young people who are gay or lesbian, or those with learning difficulties are more vulnerable to these forms of abuse and may be more likely to be targeted.

Preventing Bullying

- Everybody has the responsibility to work together to stop bullying – the child, the parent and the coach.
- This club is committed to the early identification of bullying and prompt, collective action to deal with it.
- Policy and practice will be agreed through consultation with the club, parents and children.
- Children should be encouraged to take a role in stopping bullying in the club.
- Policy and practice will be reviewed regularly in the light of changing needs and changes adopted by other agencies.
- Coaches will be given support when dealing with any bullying incident.

## SETTING AN GOOD EXAMPLE

**St John's GAC**, its coaches and its volunteers shall endeavour to set a good example to our juvenile members by:

- Respecting every child's needs and rights to a safe play environment where security, praise, recognition and are available.
- Respecting every individual's feelings and views.
- Recognising that everyone is important and that our differences make each of us special.
- Showing appreciation of others by acknowledging their individual qualities, contributions and progress.
- Ensuring safety by having rules and practices carefully explained and displayed for all to see.
- Providing an opportunity for young people to take responsibility for their behaviour.

### **Support to the Parents**

- Parents should be advised on club policy and practice about bullying.
- Any incident of bullying will be discussed with the child's parent(s).
- Parental advice on action will be sought and agreements made as to what action should be taken.
- Information and advice on coping with bullying will be given.
- Support should be offered to the parent(s) including information on other agencies or support lines (e.g. Parentline 0808 800 2222)

## Support to the Child

- Children should know who would listen to and support them.
- Any advice and assistance should be given by an experienced coach.
- Children should have access to Helpline numbers (e.g. Childline 0800 1111)
- Children should be told what is being recorded, in what context and why.
- Systems should be established to open the door to children wishing to talk about bullying or any other issue that affects them. Barriers to talking need to be broken down to enable children to approach adults.
- Anyone who reports an incident of bullying will be listened to carefully and be supported, whether the child being bullied or the child who is bullying.
- Any reported incident of bullying will be investigated objectively and will involve listening carefully to all those involved.
- Children being bullied will be supported and assistance given to uphold their right to play and live in a safe environment which allows their healthy development.
- Those who bully will be supported and encouraged to stop bullying.
- Sanctions involving long periods of isolation, or which diminish and make individuals look or feel foolish in front of others, should be avoided.

*"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)

## APPENDIX THREE

# PREVENTION OF ABUSE

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

In order to protect children from abuse we will:-

- raise the awareness of all volunteers who work with juvenile members about the issue of child abuse,
- advise them of the types of abuse and the signs of abuse,
- provide a reporting mechanism so that any concerns they may have are delivered quickly to those bodies that need to know in a quick, efficient and confidential manner.

We recognize that being cognisant of the indicators of abuse in respect of young members caused by others outside the club is of an equal importance for the safety and well being of that child.

## CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

We at **St John's GAC** will never promise to keep secrets. However, information of a confidential nature will only be communicated on a "need to know" basis, with the welfare of the child paramount. Considerations of confidentiality will not be allowed to override the rights of children or young members to be protected from harm.

*"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)

## AWARENESS OF THE ISSUES

**The Children (NI) Order 1995 formally recognises four types of abuse.**

**Physical.** Physical abuse is the deliberate physical injury to a child, or the willful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering. This may include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, confinement to a room or cot, or inappropriately giving drugs to control behaviour.

**Neglect.** Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in significant harm. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate foods, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment, lack of stimulation or lack of supervision. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

**Sexual.** Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at or the production of pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

**Emotional.** Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Smothering a child's development through over-protection can also be a form of abuse. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone. Domestic violence, adult mental health problems and parental substance misuse may expose children to emotional abuse.

## INDICATORS OF ABUSE

The following is a list of some indicators of abuse, but it is not exhaustive:

| PHYSICAL INDICATORS   | BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS  |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unexplained bruising in soft tissue areas</li> <li>• Repeated injuries</li> <li>• Black eyes</li> <li>• Injuries to the mouth</li> <li>• Torn or bloodstained clothing</li> <li>• Burns or scalds</li> <li>• Bites</li> <li>• Fractures</li> <li>• Marks from implements</li> <li>• Inconsistent stories/excuses relating to injuries</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unexplained changes in behaviour - becoming withdrawn or aggressive</li> <li>• Difficulty in making friends</li> <li>• Distrustful of adults or excessive attachment to adults</li> <li>• Sudden drop in performance</li> <li>• Changes in attendance pattern</li> <li>• Inappropriate sexual awareness, behaviour or language</li> <li>• Reluctance to remove clothing</li> </ul> |

## REPORTING PROCEDURES

**Any coach or other volunteer who has grounds for suspecting that a child may be the victim of abuse, whether from within the club or from without, should inform the CHAIRPERSON, the SECRETARY or either of the CHILD PROTECTION OFFICERS, immediately.**



# DEALING WITH DISCLOSURE

## DO's

- Stay calm.
- Listen & hear. Give the person time to say what they want.
- Reassure them that they have done the right thing in telling and that it will be dealt with appropriately.
- Record in writing what was said as soon as possible
- Report to someone else in the organisation - "the designated person".
- Record your report.

## DON'TS

- Panic.
- Promise to keep secrets.
- Enquire into the details of the abuse.
- Make a child repeat the story unnecessarily.

## APPENDIX FOUR GOOD AND SAFE WORKING & PLAYING PRACTICES

**St John's GAC** believe that the implementation of good and safe working practices will develop the club in the short, medium and long term to the mutual benefit of the members, the local area and community as a whole. We will:

- Provide a safe environment for members;
- Provide proper supervision of children within the club and with a satisfactory ratio of coaches to children at all times. A **maximum** ratio of 1 coach to 20 children will be adhered to (this will vary dependent on the age group being trained);
- Provide proper, recommended and safe equipment including,
  - Sport specific guidelines e.g. goal posts etc.,
  - identification markers / cones, clearly visible,
  - playing / coaching surfaces, free from debris;
- Allow the use of equipment only when supervised by a coach;
- Establish a clearly defined safe area of play that is separated from vehicular traffic;
- Have Public Liability Insurance in place, covering all members of the club;
- Ensure that only children within same or similar age bands will be selected for team playing/coaching;
- Ensure that a first aider and first aid kit will be on hand in event of an accident, with accident incident book/folder to be marked up at every accident. **ALL** accidents will be reported to parents at collection (Appendix Eight).
- Provide adequate supervision by coaches and/or other volunteers when members are transported to other venues;
- Seek the Consent of parents prior to any transport being facilitated;

## GOOD AND SAFE WORKING & PLAYING PRACTICES (CONT.)

- Provide ongoing training and information for all coaches and volunteers;
- Implementation club policies and procedures that are in line with guidance from *Our Duty to Care* and the *Code of Ethics for Children's Sport*;
- The facilitation of open discussion on member protection issues;
- Support to all members who report accusations of abuse;
- Treat any suspected abuse information confidentially;
- Take appropriate action if club members breach standards of reasonable behaviour in line with our policies and our codes of conduct;
- Establishment and maintain a coaching register;
- Set standards of good practice;
- The designated child protection officer(s) has knowledge of statutory child protection procedures and their responsibility in reporting concerns (from Co-operating to Safeguard Children DHSSPS).
- Keep parents informed, therefore parents should have access to the club's policy guidelines especially those which directly affect their children.
- Implement reporting procedures so that we can learn from any accidents or incidents that may occur and amend our policies and procedures as required.

## APPENDIX FIVE

# RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES FOR COACHES & OTHER VOLUNTEERS

To ensure the highest possible standards of Child Protection are observed at St John's, we will ensure that coaches and other volunteers are carefully selected, trained and supervised. Therefore:-

- Only the Executive Committee of St John's GAC shall appoint coaches and other volunteers to work with those under 18 years of age.
- All new coaches and volunteers hoping to work with children must complete an application form (Appendix X).
- The application must be proposed and seconded by two club members.
- Existing coaches, as listed in Appendix Y will be treated as if an acceptable application has been received.
- All coaches / volunteers working with children or young people will provide information to allow a background check to be carried out by the appropriate agencies. This shall be either a Protection Of Children (POC) check or a Protection Of Children and Vulnerable Adults (POCVA) check. The Ulster Council agreed in April 2006 that such checks must be a pre-requisite to approval to coach.
- In cases where a report is returned as part of the POCVA check with information regarding criminal activity the Child Protection Officer(s) and the Chairperson of the Executive Committee will consider the contents of the report and make a decision on the suitability of the proposed coach to work with children.
- **ALL** volunteers/coaches must agree to abide by the club's Child Protection Policy and all are required to sign a pro-forma stating this.
- Any concerns or objections with regard to suitability of a coach must be submitted to the "designated person". These matters will be raised with the executive committee with appropriate action taken including a formal response in writing to the concerned party if required.

## APPENDIX SIX

# TRAINING FOR VOLUNTEERS & COACHES

In order to provide the best experience possible for our young members it is important that our coaches and other volunteers are as well trained as possible. Therefore:-

- Coaches and other volunteers shall be expected to take part in Governing Body approved coaching courses and sessions for volunteers and coaches. Such courses and sessions are scheduled by the County Board, but we will try to have these delivered at St John's where possible.
- In their first year of coaching, new coaches and volunteers should shadow a more experience coach.
- **ALL** coaches are expected to qualify to at least Foundation level within three years of appointment.
- We will encourage coaches to gain further qualifications (Level One, Two ...etc.)
- Coaches should attend refresher courses as appropriate.
- We will encourage members to attend training courses provided by other competent bodies (as recognized by Sport Northern Ireland) as there will be many transferable skills and shared competencies.
- Education and training in the basics of child protection will be provided on a three-yearly cycle and this shall apply to all coaches, volunteers and committee members working with the children or young members.
- We will ensure that all new coaches have attended child protection awareness workshop within twelve months of taking up their post. This opportunity will also be made available to parents and other volunteers to enable a culture of a child-focused club to prevail.
- Coaches shall aware of and committed our current Child Protection Policy and Codes of Practice and shall be expected to contribute to the continuous/regular updating and review of these.
- All coaches shall undertake training and refresher training in Emergency First Aid on a three-yearly cycle.

# APPENDIX SEVEN CODE OF CONDUCT FOR COACHES OF UNDERAGE TEAMS AND OTHER YOUTH LEADERS

St John's GAC Drumnaquoile adopts a child centred approach and philosophy in the running of the club to ensure that our juvenile members have a rewarding and enjoyable time at the club and that their long term development is encouraged and supported.

To that end we have adopted this Code of Conduct for all those working with our juvenile members so that all are working to an agreed philosophy and set of standards to provide our children and young people with a quality sporting and social programme at all times.

It is the responsibility of everyone working with juvenile members within the club to be aware of their responsibilities under this Code of Conduct. Any queries about this code should be referred to a Child Protection Officer or the Club Chairperson

All Juvenile Coaches and Youth Leaders within the club must:

- Abide by the rules of the governing body, {GAA, LGFA, Camogie Association as appropriate}, and its component bodies
- Abide by the policies and practices within the club.
- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of all and treat everyone equably and promote a tolerant environment
- Set a good example – what you do may be more important than what you say. Your behaviour, comments and language should be positive and supportive
- Ensure that the highest standards of child welfare are maintained
- Support and value referees and other match officials, and encourage juvenile members to consider participating in these ways
- Support and value county and divisional board officials, and encourage juvenile members to consider participating in administration
- Provide quality supervision and instruction for juvenile players

- Ensure that the types of programmes, training schedules, modified rules, equipment used, length of games etc. are modified to suit the age, ability and maturity level of young players
- Emphasise fair play, not winning at all costs.
- Highlight behaviour and skill development.
- *Listen to your players and involve them in the decisions; encourage them to show leadership and planning and evaluation relation to the club.*
- Agree to undergo background checks with the appropriate agencies in order to maximise child safety
- Avail of training courses (run by association and others), so that you are better able to deliver high quality training sessions for the juvenile members
- Implement Policy and practices (and lead by example) in relation to responsible use of alcohols and in relation to recreational and performance enhancing drugs.
- Implement relevant sports safety policies and practices.
- Not encroach upon the field of play (in a threatening manner)

I have read and understand and agree to abide by this Code of Conduct. I understand that failure to abide by this Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action by the Club Executive Committee.

Signed:\_\_\_\_\_

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

# CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ADMINISTRATORS WITH RESPECT TO DEVELOPMENT OF UNDERAGE MEMBERS

St John's GAC Drumnaquoile adopts a child centred approach and philosophy in the running of the club to ensure that our juvenile members have a rewarding and enjoyable time at the club and that their long term development is encouraged and supported.

To that end we have adopted this Code of Conduct for all those working with our juvenile members so that all are working to an agreed philosophy and set of standards to provide our children and young people with a quality sporting and social programme at all times.

Enforcement of this code of conduct is the responsibility of every member and any queries about this code should be referred to the Child Protection Officer or the Club Chairperson

All Administrators must:

- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of all and treat everyone equably.
- Not exert undue influence to obtain personal benefit or reward.

All Administrators within the club must work to:

1.1 Make your club environment more user friendly by providing equal opportunities for all to participate.

1.2 Create pathways for young people to participate in Gaelic Games not just as a player, e.g. as a referee, coach, administrator etc.

1.3 Ensure that the types of programmes, rules, equipment length of games and training schedules are modified to suit the age ability and maturity level of young players.

1.4 Provide quality supervision and instruction for junior players and ensure volunteers are adequately trained.



1.5 Direct coaches and officials to highlight behaviour and skill development.

1.6 Ensure that everyone emphasises fair play, not winning at all costs.

1.7 Develop Codes of Conduct for coaches, players, parents and spectators and encourage them to follow this guidance.

1.8 Remember you set an example. Your behaviour and comments should be positive and supportive.

1.9 Maximise child safety by conducting volunteer screening and other child protection strategies.

1.10 Implement Policy and practices (and lead by example) in relation to responsible use of alcohols and in relation to recreational and performance enhancing drugs.

1.11 Adopt and implement relevant sports safety policies and practices.

1.12 Promote a culturally tolerant environment.

1.13 Listen to your players and involve them in the decision leadership and planning and evaluation relation to the club.

1.14 Respect the rights, dignity and worth of all participants regardless of their gender, ability and cultural background or religion.

I understand and agree to abide by this Code of Conduct. I understand that failure to abide by this Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action by the Club Executive Committee.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

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

## APPENDIX EIGHT

# GUIDELINES FOR REPORTING ACCIDENTS & INCIDENTS

In the event of an accident, an incident or a “near miss”, the following procedure will be carried out:-

- An accident book/folder is required for all games and coaching sessions for all age groups under 18.
- Fill in a copy of the Incident Form for **ALL** accidents, incidents and “near misses” (below).
- Contact emergency services/ GP if required.
- Inform parents/guardians if a young person has been injured.
- Record in detail all facts surrounding the accident, witnesses etc.
- Keep any such records in the accident book/folder.
- Regularly review the accident book/folder to determine whether any changes to policies and practices are needed (at least once per year).
- If any coach identifies an action required to prevent a similar accident occurring they are encouraged to inform the Youth Committee/Executive Committee as soon as possible.

# INCIDENT REPORT

What happened? When & Where?

Who else was there?

What did you do?

How and when did you tell parents?

Any other information?

Date            \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/201\_\_\_\_

Signed        \_\_\_\_\_

Name (Block Capitals) \_\_\_\_\_



# GUIDELINES FOR REPORTING ALLEGATIONS OR INCIDENTS OF CHILD ABUSE

In the event of someone observing or receiving a report of an incident of abuse, the following procedure will be carried out:-

- An incident book/folder shall be held by the Youth Officer/ CPO/Chairperson and will cover all games and coaching sessions for all age groups under 18.
- Fill in a copy of the Incident Form for **ALL** incidents. Record in detail all facts surrounding the incident, witnesses etc.
- Give this form to a “designated person” (Childrens Officer/ Child Protection Officer/Chairperson)
- Ensure confidentiality - only "need to know basis" (reference confidentiality clause)
- The designated person will be responsible for storing any report in a safe and secure environment.
- Please refer to “Guidelines for Dealing with Allegations of Abuse”, Cumann Luthchleas Gael, (Second Edition) March 2001.
- Regularly review the incident book/folder to determine whether any changes to policies and practices are needed (at least once per year).

# VALUING VOLUNTEERS



St John's GAC is a great club. This is due to the selfless contributions of our past and present volunteers. We are totally dependent on the on-going efforts of our volunteers if we are to continue our development. *Go raibh maith agaibh.*

We recognise that our volunteers and potential volunteers face many demands on their time; work, family, social and leisure commitments, and that this will restrict their capacity to volunteer with St John's.

We recognise that much of your "free" time may be taken up with caring for others or in volunteering with other organisations; we salute you for making such contributions for the betterment of our community. We will seek to support you in these efforts, and may even work with you as a charity partner promoting health & well-being in our community.

We do not accept that you do not have suitable skills or talents to contribute to our club – there are many tasks to be performed and there will be something to match your proficiency and aptitude.

We are committed to finding the "best person for the job", and will develop and implement recruitment procedures to this end.

We will provide support, management, training and encouragement for all our volunteers to boost their individual development.

**St John's GAC is a great club. An hour of your time will made us better.**  
*Go raibh maith agat.*

**Volunteers are seldom paid;  
not because they are worthless,  
but because they are PRICELESS!**

This document has been approved by the Club Executive Committee and serves as the working policy document of St John's.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Cathaoirleach      Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Rúnaí      Date \_\_\_\_\_