

CUMANN BÁIRE SETANTA

Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Young Players

POLICY STATEMENT

Cumann Báire Setanta is fully committed to safeguarding the well being of its members. Every individual should at all times show respect and understanding for one another's rights, safety and welfare, and conduct themselves in a way that reflects the principles of the GAA and the guidelines contained in the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Young Players.

CORE VALUES

Cumann Báire Setanta recognises:

- The Importance of childhood -and understands that our children's sporting experiences should be guided by what is best for them. This means that we should have a basic understanding of the emotional, physical and personal needs of young people. The stages of development and ability of children should guide the types of activity provided within sport.
- The Importance of the Adult-Child Relationship –and accepts that adults interacting with children in sport are in a position of trust and influence and should treat children with integrity and respect.
- The Principle of Equality –and understands that children should be valued and treated in an equitable and fair manner regardless of age, gender, 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 potential alongside other children.
- The Principles of Fair Play –and strives to provide a child-centred ethos that promotes the concepts of friendship, respect for others and always playing with the right spirit.
- The Place of Competition –and understands that a balanced approach to competition can make a significant contribution to children's development while at the same time providing fun, enjoyment and satisfaction. However, we need to strike a balance between a young person's desire to win and a young person's right to participate. Through age-appropriate competition children should learn respect for opponents, officials and rules of the game.

What is The Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport?

It is a document built on a number of core values including those outlined above. It addresses issues relating to the roles and responsibilities of all involved in children's sport, and underpins the importance of policies and procedures in providing quality leadership for children in sport. It outlines principles of good practice and child protection policy and procedures.

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR FOR ALL PERSONS WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

Why Do We Need A Code?

- To protect our players, mentors and our club.
- To ensure a positive experience of sport for all.
- To promote best practice in dealing with young players.
- To promote an inclusive environment
- To ensure that SPORT is *safe, fun* and *conducted in a spirit of fair play*.

This document outlines the rights, responsibilities and codes of conduct for the club, its young players, mentors, parents, and supporters. We all have rights that must be respected and responsibilities that we must accept.

Cumann Báire Setanta have a ‘sign-up’ procedure on club membership application forms, whereby young players, their mentors and parents agree to abide by a Code of Conduct which addresses appropriate standards of behaviour and practice.

YOUNG PLAYERS

A Young Player is any member of the club under 18 years of age.

Young Players are entitled to:

- Be safe and feel safe
- Have fun
- Be treated with respect, dignity and sensitivity
- Participate
- Have a voice
- Be listened to and have their concerns dealt with in an appropriate manner
- Be afforded appropriate confidentiality
- Get help against bullies

Young Players should:

- Represent their team, their club and their family with pride and dignity.
- Show respect to their team-mates, mentors, opponents, referees and match officials.
- Play fairly and do their best.
- Be gracious in defeat and modest in victory.
- Shake hands before and after the game irrespective of the result.
- Never use abusive or foul language to team-mates, mentors, opponents or match officials.
- Never strike or physically harm in any way a team-mate, mentor, opponent or match official.
- Inform their coach/mentor/manager when they are unavailable for training and games.
- Take due care of club equipment.

Code of Conduct:

Cumann Báire Setanta recognises the broad spectrum of ages and the differing stages of development of its young players. Each Code under the guidance of the Child Welfare Committee shall design Codes of Conduct that adopts the above rights and responsibilities but that reflects the age, gender and needs of its players.

Dealing with Breaches of the Code by Young Players:

In the event of young players breaching the code of conduct there shall be a staged approach to dealing with the complaint. This means that if a problem is not resolved at any given stage it moves on to the next stage. The age and developmental stage of the player shall be taken into consideration.

The Child Welfare Committee recommends the following procedure:

- Team mentors remind player of his/her signed consent to abide by the Code of Conduct.
- Team mentors may apply a ‘time-out’ sanction during training/match.
- Team mentors inform his/her parents/guardians of the situation.
- Team mentors should bring the situation to the attention of the Code’s Children’s Officer, who shall inform the player of the complaint and give a verbal warning.

- The Code's Children's Officer informs the Code's Chairperson and they investigate the matter and meet with the player and his parents/guardians. The Club's Children's Officer is informed of the complaint at this stage and sanctions such as suspension from training/matches may be applied.
- The player and his/her parents/guardians shall be invited to meet with the Club's Child Welfare Disciplinary Committee where they shall be informed of the complaint and be given the opportunity to respond. Following this meeting the Child Welfare Disciplinary Committee shall form a written report outlining the procedure followed, findings, conclusions and any disciplinary actions to be taken. All parties shall receive a copy of this report, which shall be signed by all members of the Child Welfare Disciplinary Committee and be kept on record.

MENTORS

A Mentor is any adult who works *directly* with young players. It includes those who coach, train and contact players, those who administer first aid, supervise or manage teams.

Cumann Báire Setanta recognises the important role mentors play in the lives of young players and that they are 'role models' for the players in their care. To safeguard the health, safety and welfare of our children, all mentors are asked to:

- **READ The Code of Ethics**
- **Fill out a 'Mentor' application form and return it to a member of the Child Welfare Committee within the designated time**
- **Complete a Garda Vetting ON LINE**
- **Attend the Child Protection course and Foundation course**

Cumann Báire Setanta also acknowledges the commitment and generosity of its mentors to its underage structures and is greatly indebted to those who give freely of their time on behalf of the Club and the GAA.

Mentors are entitled to:

- Be treated with respect by players, parents, other mentors and club officers
- Be supported by parents in showing respect to referees and match officials
- Be supported by parents in showing respect for the rules of the game
- Be supported by parents in terms of supervision, giving lifts to matches and washing jerseys.
- To have the importance of their role recognised and valued

Mentors should always:

- Be members of the Club or associated with the Club.
- Ensure that all players on their squad are members of the Club
- Ensure that all players on their squad receive and sign up to the Players Code of Conduct
- Sign up to and follow the Mentors Code of Conduct
- Be a good 'role model' for the players on their squad

Mentors Code of Conduct:

- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every player
- Be positive during training sessions, games and other related activities
- Develop an understanding of relevant coaching methods and attend relevant coaching courses
- Maintain a balance between a mentor's desire to win and a player's right to participate
- Respect referees and match officials
- Respect other coaches/ mentors

- Avoid use of foul language/gestures
- Avoid shouting at or ridiculing young players
- Never use physical force (pushing, grabbing, etc)
- Ensure all physical contact is appropriate (all physical contact should be with the consent of the player)
- No alcohol while young players are in your care
- Avoid smoking while working with young players
- Strive to follow best practice as outlined below

Best Practice

- Ensure that all players are suitably and safely attired to play their chosen sport
- Keep a record of attendance at training sessions and matches
- Be punctual for training and matches
- Keep First Aid kits stocked and at hand
- Be aware of medical conditions
- Inform parents of injuries
- Never encourage players to play when injured or unwell
- Follow club guidelines in relation to the use of mobile phones.
- Ensure all transportation of young players is within the law
- Never take training sessions on your own
- Avoid being alone with players (car, dressing room...etc)
- Avoid situations/comments that may be misinterpreted
- Never leave underage players unattended
- Two adults (one of which is a mentor) stay until all younger players are collected
- Teams with female players or very young players i.e. u8s ***must*** have at least one female mentor
- Be aware of photography guidelines and be sensitive to the wishes of parents in this respect

Use of Mobile Phones:

Mentors are advised that when communicating with young players via mobile phone to use a group text system. It is club policy that all players under 16 will be contacted via their parents/guardians **ONLY**. Players over 16 may be contacted directly with parents/guardians consent.

Use of Photography:

Cumann Báire Setanta wishes to minimise the risk and threats that the inappropriate use of photographs and video may pose directly or indirectly for our young players. These guidelines are not about preventing parents from taking pictures, but rather to ensure that only those who have a right to take photographs do so.

- Parents will be asked for their consent to allow their child be included in team photographs and or video-footage of games or related events.
- Parents and spectators taking photographs should make themselves known to the team mentors in advance.
- All young players featured in photographs/videos should be appropriately dressed.
- Personal details of the young players need not be directly matched to their image.

PARENTS

Parents/Guardians have an influential role to play in assisting and encouraging their children to adopt a positive attitude and in encouraging them to maintain an involvement in sport. They should always be a good role model for their children.

Parents are entitled to:

- Know their child is safe
- Be informed if their child is injured
- Be informed of any problems relating to their child
- Have a voice

Parents should always:

- Register their children as per club rules
- Sign up to and follow the club's Code of Conduct for Parents
- Ensure that their child understands and signs up to the club's Code of Conduct for Young Players
- Lead by example
- Ensure that their child has the proper attire and safety equipment for their chosen code
- Show approval for effort, not just results
- Ensure their child is dropped off for and collected on time from training/matches at the designated meeting points
- Support mentors and club officials
- Help out at training when needed, under the supervision of designated mentors.

SUPPORTERS

Young players benefit from the support they receive from parents, guardians, friends and other members of the club who attend our games as spectators. Active, loyal and well behaved supporters are always welcome to attend and support our games but should be aware that their conduct will always reflect upon the team, players and club that they support.

Supporters should always:

- Show respect for players, mentors and their opponents
- Respect the decisions of referees and match officials
- Applaud good performance and effort, regardless of the result
- Demonstrate appropriate social behaviour by not using foul language or harassing participants, mentors or officials
- Never ridicule or scold a young player for making a mistake during games or competitions
- Uphold the principles of FAIR PLAY and RESPECT for all

THE CLUB

Cumann Báire Setanta is committed to ensuring a safe and positive sporting environment for its young players. It is committed to ensuring that those chosen to work on the club's behalf have followed thorough recruitment and selection procedures.

The Club should always:

- Ensure it has an active Children's Officer
- Support the Child Welfare Committee in implementing the Club's Code of Ethics
- Support the Child Welfare Committee in adopting a recruitment policy for mentors

- Ensure that the Juvenile Section of all its Codes is structured in accordance with good practice guidelines
- Respect confidentiality in relation to the work of the Child Welfare Disciplinary Committee

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION POLICY

Cumann Báire Setanta recognises that adults working directly with young players should undergo a recruitment and selection process.

All Mentors must:

- **Complete and return a Mentor Application form**
- **Complete online Garda Vetting and present vetting acceptance letter to Children's Officer**
- **Complete Child Protection and Foundation courses**

The Child Welfare Committee will provide information for adults wishing to become mentors to young players. The information will outline the roles, rights and responsibilities of mentors and make them aware of good practices contained within the Code. Mentor Application forms will be available from the Child Protection Officer. The roles, which mentors may apply for, include coaching, training, administration, supervision and first aid. It is recommended that all mentors hold a FUNDamentals Coaching Certificate/ Foundation Coaching Certificate.

Garda Vetting

Cumann Lúthchleas Gael and Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael have agreed to the implementation of vetting of all persons who on their behalf work in any capacity with children, young people and vulnerable adults in the delivery of our games. Vetting Application forms are available online (see www.gaa.ie). Incorrectly completed forms will be returned to the applicants. Following processing of the vetting forms, the GAA National Children's Office in Croke Park will inform each applicant individually by email if their application is being accepted. The applicant should then furnish their Children's Officer with the letter of acceptance or email. If the response is negative, the applicant may appeal the decision within 14 days and the process of appeal will be outlined to the applicant. The absence of a letter of acceptance will deem a person ineligible to work as a mentor. Currently, garda vetting must be updated every five years.

DEALING WITH A COMPLAINT

- **Forming a complaint**
- **Complaint procedure**
- **Confidentiality**

Forming a complaint:

Complaints may be made either in writing or orally to the Children's Officer of that code or to the club Children's Officer. (Hearsay, rumours and anonymous complaints cannot be dealt with).

A letter of complaint remains the property of the body to whom it was submitted. The letter should be treated as confidential; therefore it is not read at a meeting or distributed to any person, this includes the person against whom the complaint is made.

Complaint procedure:

Stage 1. Complaints against mentors, parents or supporters shall be investigated initially by the Children's Officer and the Chairman of the code within which the alleged incident occurred. The person against whom the complaint is made shall be notified of the complaint and afforded the opportunity of providing a response either verbally or in writing. If he/she does not co-operate with this opportunity, those investigating the complaint must note the opportunities offered and the responses received. The complaint

shall then be referred to the Club's Child Welfare Disciplinary Committee. This Committee shall consist of the Club Chairman, the Club's Children's Officer, a member of the Child Welfare Committee and another Club Member.

Stage 2. The Child Welfare Disciplinary Committee shall investigate the matter and meet with all parties involved. Where it is established that an incident of misconduct has taken place, the committee shall notify the person against whom the complaint was made of any sanctions being imposed. A written report outlining the procedure followed, the findings and conclusions, any disciplinary actions taken and /or recommendations made shall be signed by the members of the committee and kept on record.

Confidentiality:

All persons involved in a complaint procedure should be afforded appropriate respect, fairness, support and confidentiality at all stages of the procedure. All information should be treated in a careful and sensitive manner and should be discussed only with those who need to know. Written records and reports should be stored securely with limited access to designated people. *Giving information to others on a 'need to know' basis for the protection of a player is not a breach of confidentiality.*

Note: If an issue cannot be resolved at Club level, the matter can be referred to the National Children's Officer.

DEALING WITH SUSPECTED ABUSE

There are four types of Child Abuse; physical, emotional, neglect and sexual.

Signs of Abuse:

- Physical- Unexplained bruising, bites, burns and scalds. Becoming withdrawn or aggressive. Reluctance to change clothing.
- Emotional- Drop in performance, crying. Regressive behaviour. Excessive clinginess.
- Neglect- Weight loss, untreated fractures. Changes in attendance. Reluctance to go home.
- Sexual- Torn or bloodstained clothing. Inappropriate sexual awareness, behaviour or language. Distrustful of adults. Sudden drop in performance.

Grounds for Concern:

Reasonable grounds for concern exist when there is

- A specific indication from a child that he/she has been abused.
- An account by a person who saw the child being abused
- Evidence, such as an injury or behaviour which is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused another way.
- An injury or behaviour which is consistent both with abuse and with an innocent explanation but where there are corroborative indicators supporting the concern that it may be a cause of abuse. An example of this would be a pattern of injuries, an implausible explanation, other indications of abuse, dysfunctional behaviour.
- Consistent indication, over a period of time that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect.

The ability to recognise child abuse depends as much on a person's willingness to accept the possibility of its existence as it does on knowledge and information. It is important to note that child abuse is not always readily visible, and may not be clearly observable. If a mentor or parent/guardian is uneasy or suspicious about a child's safety or welfare the following response should be made.

- Observe and note dates, times, locations and contexts in which the incident occurred or suspicion was aroused, together with any other relevant information.

- Report the matter as soon as possible to the designated person/children’s officer. If there are reasonable grounds for believing that the child has been abused or is at risk of abuse the Children’s Officer will make a report to the statutory authorities who have statutory responsibility to investigate, assess and validate suspected or actual child abuse.
- If the Children’s Officer is unsure whether reasonable grounds for concern exist or not, he/she should informally consult with the local duty social worker who will advise whether or not the matter requires a formal report.
- A designated person reporting suspected or actual child abuse to the Statutory Authorities should first inform the family of their intention to make such a report, **unless doing so would endanger the child or undermine the investigation.**

Response to a child reporting any form of abuse:

- The child should understand in an age appropriate way that it is not possible that any information will be kept a secret.
- Stay calm and do not show any extreme reaction to what the child is saying.
- Listen to the child and let the child tell their story.
- Do **NOT** interview the child or ask leading questions.
- No judgemental statements should be made against the person against whom the allegation is made.
- The child should be given some indication of what would happen next, such as informing parents/guardians, health board or social services. It should be kept in mind that the child may have been threatened and may feel vulnerable at this stage.
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you.

The Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998 provides immunity from civil liability to persons who report child abuse ‘reasonably and in good faith’ to the Health Board or to the Gardaí. It also provides protection for innocent persons where a false report of child abuse is made to the authorities ‘knowing that statement to be false. This is now a criminal offence.

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

What is bullying?

Bullying can be defined as repeated aggression be it verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against others.

It is behaviour that is intentionally aggravating and intimidating and occurs mainly in social environments such as schools, clubs and other organisations working with young people. It includes behaviours such as teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting and extortion behaviour by one or more players against a victim, including any such activity conducted via electronic media.

Combating Bullying:

Our Club aims to combat bullying by

- Raising awareness of bullying as an unacceptable form of behaviour
- Creating a club ethos which encourages children, mentors and parents/guardians to report bullying
- Providing a safe level of supervision for children at all sporting and club related activities
- Providing a supportive environment for victims of bullying
- Obtaining the co-operation of parents/guardians to counter bullying

The following indicators are warning signs that a young person might be getting bullied

- Reluctance to come to a venue or take part in activities
- Unexplained bruises, scratches or damage to belongings
- Stress caused illness – headaches and stomach aches which seem unexplained
- Fearful behaviour –taking a different route to/from training or matches, asking to be driven
- Frequent loss of, or shortage of money with vague explanations
- Having few friends
- Changes in behaviour –withdrawn, stammering, moody, irritable, upset, distressed
- Not eating

Note: There are other possible reasons for many of the above.

This Code of Ethics is adapted from each National Governing Bodies own Codes of Ethics to meet the current needs of **Cumann Báire Setanta**. The Child Welfare Committee, with the support of the Club Executive, wishes to see this code developed, promoted and implemented as an initiative that encourages fair play, respect, equal opportunities and safety.