



Stars of Erin Code of Conduct and Best Practice

Stars of Erin Code of Conduct and Best Practice is in accordance with the guidelines produced by the GAA in their “Best Code of Practice for Youth Sport”, approved for use by the Irish Sports Council.

The achievement of “Best Practice” is dependent on;

- The development of skill and well-being through the playing, coaching and promotion of our games.
- The adoption of the principles of fair play and good behaviour at all times
- The development of a positive, constructive, supportive and encouraging team environment.
- Maximising the sense of achievement, fun and participation in order to develop players to their full potential.

Stars of Erin is founded on the core values of mutual respect, valuing each person, and support and encouragement among team members, managers, coaches, mentors, parents and other members of the club.

We are committed to providing an environment that promotes a sense of belonging in our club and an ethos that will allow players to perform to the best of their ability, free from bullying and intimidation.

Inappropriate behaviour by any member of the club (or any person associated with the club) that undermines these values is unacceptable and will be considered in breach of the Club’s Code of Conduct. Such behaviour will be subject to disciplinary sanction as deemed fit by the Executive Committee.

The Code of Conduct and Best Practice forms part of our club’s ethos and as such, it is part of the rules and regulations that bind the operation of the club and its members.

All persons associated with Stars of Erin are expected to uphold and promote this ethos in all roles that they undertake on behalf of and as members as Stars of Erin.

All Stars of Erin coaches, mentors and trainers ensure that our young people and children benefit significantly from our games by promoting a positive, healthy and a participatory approach with our work with underage players. In developing the skill levels of every player, our coaches will always encourage enjoyment and fun while ensuring meaningful participation in our games and activities. All our coaches are required to undertake agreed vetting and background Garda checks and are appropriately trained through coaching and training courses.

Coaches, Mentors and Trainers

Stars of Erin GAA Club recognise the key role mentors play in the lives and development of young players.

Team coaches, managers, selectors and mentors can ensure that our sport has a beneficial impact when they adhere to the following principles;

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 so that underage players always leave with a sense of achievement and an increased level of self-esteem.
- 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. Skills development and personal satisfaction should have priority over competition when working with underage players.
- 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 to a player, opponent or match official.
- 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 an opponent, fellow player 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.
- Don't 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.
- The use of any form of physical punishment is prohibited as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour, unless it is 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, in the training of children.

- Never encourage players to consume non-prescribed drugs or take performance enhancing supplements

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.
- Only deliver one to one coaching, if deemed necessary, 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. helmets (Hurling and Camogie), goggles (Handball), 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Be aware of any special medical or dietary requirements of players as indicated on the medical consent/registration forms or as informed by parents/guardians.
- 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.
- 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 administer such aid.
- Do not engage in communications with underage players via social network sites.
- 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.
- Use mobile phones, if deemed appropriate, only via a group text or email system for communicating with the parents/guardians 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 with underage players.

KEY PRINCIPLES AND REQUIREMENTS OF MENTORS;

- Mentors, coaches, selectors and all those associated with Stars of Erin must work within the rules and guidelines laid down in the club's "Code of Conduct and Best Practice"
- Mentors must ensure when joining the club each year that all parents of young players are familiar with the full code of conduct, and that young players are familiar with the young players section of the code.
- Mentors, coaches and selectors must take and adhere to instruction from the Executive Committee in relation to coaching, best practice, and administration of club affairs, and must abide by the decisions of the Executive Committee/Juvenile Committee where appropriate, particularly in the event of any disagreement or dispute.

Young Players

Young Players can benefit greatly from sports in terms of personal development and enjoyment. Our players are encouraged to realise that as a result of their participation in our Gaelic Games that they also have a responsibility to treat other players and officials with fairness and respect. With rights there will always be responsibilities.

Young players, and those who work with them in our Associations are required to 'sign up' and abide by this Code of Behaviour and to any other policies or codes in your Club or National Governing Body.

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.
- Comment and make suggestions in a constructive manner.
- Be afforded appropriate confidentiality.
- Participate in games and competitions at levels with which they feel comfortable.
- Make their concerns known and have them dealt with in an appropriate manner.
- Be protected from abuse.
- Be listened to.

YOUNG PLAYERS SHOULD ALWAYS:

- Play fairly, do their best and enjoy themselves.
- Respect fellow team members regardless of ability, cultural or ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation or religious beliefs.
- 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, Officials and their opponents.
- Be gracious in defeat and modest in victory
- Shake hands before and after a game as part of the Give Respect Get Respect initiative, irrespective of the result.
- 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.
- Adhere to acceptable standards of behaviour and their Club's Code of Discipline.
- 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 and should never use violence.
- 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 references to an opponent, a fellow player or official by words, deeds or gesture.

- Never consume non-prescribed drugs or performance enhancing supplements

Parents/Guardians

Stars of Erin recognise that parents play a key role in relation to volunteer support for our club and its teams. We encourage parents to become active members of our club to ensure growth, development and continuity of our club.

PARENTS/GUARDIANS SHOULD ENCOURAGE THEIR CHILD TO:

- Always play by the rules.
- Improve their skills levels.
- Appreciate everybody on their team, regardless of ability.
- 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 and return the registration/permission and medical consent forms 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 your child(ren) 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.

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 other underage 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.
- Complain if they have concerns about the standard of coaching.
- Have a say in relation to decisions being made within the Club

Adult Members

Stars of Erin GAA Club is fully committed to safeguarding the well-being of its members. We encourage "best practice" in the playing of our games and we are committed to providing an environment and ethos which will at all times, show respect and understanding for member's rights, safety and welfare. We aim to assist our adult players in achieving their true potential by fair and ethical means. In accordance with this guiding philosophy, our sport must be drug free and played in a fair and sporting spirit.

Code of Conduct

Adult players should ensure that our sport has a beneficial impact when they adhere to the following principles;

- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of each and every player equally regardless of age, gender, ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation, social background or ability.
- Encourage the respect for opponents, officials, selectors, and other coaches. AVOID CRITICISM OF MENTORS AND OFFICIALS.
- Never bully or use bullying tactics to isolate another player.
- Never use unfair tactics or bullying to gain unfair advantage.
- Respect fellow team members – on and off the pitch.
- Respect opponents – be humble in victory and gracious in defeat.
- Accept apologies from an opponent should the situation arise.
- Behave in a manner that avoids bringing our club into disrepute.
- Represent your family, club and county with pride and dignity.
- Respect club property and the personal belongings of others and in particular that dressing rooms (home and away, equipment and facilities are left tidy and not damaged in any way.
- Advise your coach/ manager/mentor in advance whether you are available or not available for training and competition.

- Be generous with praise and never ridicule or shout at players for making a mistake – you make them too!!
- Be punctual, properly attired and lead by example.
- Never equate losing with failure.
- Do not use foul and abusive language.
- Do not use cameras, videos and camera phones in dressing rooms.
- Display leadership and good example particularly when dealing with younger and underage members. Your behaviour will be what they'll aspire to.....
- Bring any concerns in relation to club activities to the attention of your mentors, any club official or your Club Chairman.

GAA Anti-Bullying Policy Statement

The GAA aims to create a supportive environment where any form of bullying is unacceptable. We adopt a whole organisational approach to addressing bullying and are committed to implementing structures and relevant training to deal with allegations of bullying. Incidents of bullying are regarded as serious breaches of our Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport - Our Games Our Code. We are committed to achieving an ethos of respect so as to maximise the potential of all our members when playing or participating in our Gaelic Games.

DEFINITION

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

THE GAA SEEKS TO ENSURE THAT:

- Incidents of bullying behaviour are addressed appropriately
- All persons in membership of the Association or attending our games or activities are aware that bullying behaviour is unacceptable in the GAA.

DEALING WITH BULLYING

The Code of Conduct and Best Practice provides good practice guidance in relation to the prevention of bullying. If you are aware of or have a concern that bullying behaviour is happening within your Club you should report the matter to your Club Children's Officer. We recognise that incidents of bullying are a breach of the Code of Behaviour and of our Give Respect - Get Respect initiative and all such incidents will be dealt with accordingly.

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