



## 4.1 MENTOR RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION POLICY

### Adult- Child Relationships in Sport

The trust implicit in adult-child relationships in sport places a duty of care on all adults, voluntary or professional, to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of the child while engaged in their sporting activity. Adults have a crucial leadership role to play in sport. Whether they are parents/guardians or Mentors or teachers, they can contribute to the creation of a positive sporting environment for young people. Positive adult-child relationships will result in growth, development and fulfilment for all those involved in children's sport.

The Ladies Gaelic Football Association relies on the time commitment of adults to our underage structures and is greatly indebted to those that give freely of their time on behalf of the Association.

Most adults who become involved in children's sport do so in their own free time. There may, therefore, be a reluctance to make impositions upon them with regard to either conditions of training or reproaches for any misdemeanours. However, given the importance and responsible roles which adults play at many different levels in sport, it is essential that their competence and ability to deal with children in a fair, empathic and ethical way is supported, guided and maintained.

The following recruitment and selection guidelines are put in place to ensure that these adult roles are seen as a positive contribution to the development of young players, regardless of age, and that the Ladies Gaelic Football Association adheres to the best possible standards when recruiting persons to work with young people on our behalf at Club, County, Provincial and National level.

All our personnel who work with children, young people or vulnerable adults should have appropriate child awareness training and be vetted through the Garda Vetting Unit which is co-ordinated via the National Children's Office in Croke Park. (Similarly Ulster GAA co-ordinate the vetting for AccessNI applicants).

### Recruitment

It is essential that all adults taking responsibility for young people, whether in a paid or unpaid capacity, in the Club or elsewhere in the Association should undergo a recruitment and selection process. The recruitment of adults to work with under age teams

should be co-ordinated by a senior and experienced member of the club and should be done in a confidential manner.

A consistent method of recruiting and selecting Mentors should be in place, including seeking references, confirming identity and checking adequacy of qualifications.

Effective management of Mentors is also equally central to the promotion of good practice in your Club. This should include support, supervision, access to training and effective communication between members of the Club.

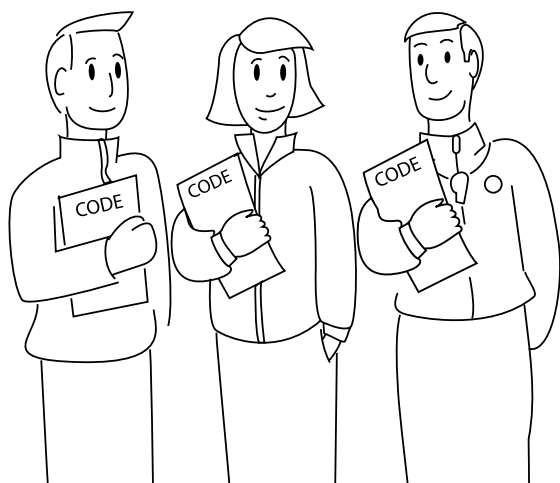
The following procedures are recommended to assist clubs and counties when choosing coaches and other personnel for positions to which they are best suited.

- The decision to appoint a mentor is the responsibility of the Club/County and not of any one individual within it. The Club/County committee should ratify all recommendations for appointment
- Responsibilities of the role and the level of experience/qualifications required should be drawn up and clearly stated beforehand – it is recommended that all mentors hold appropriate qualifications, e.g. FUNdamentals Coaching Certificate, First Aid Certificate, etc
- Each mentor should undergo a 'sign-up' procedure, whereby the appointed/reappointed mentors agree to abide by the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Young People and to the policies of the club and the Association
- All mentors, new and existing, should fill in an application form, giving names of two referees that may be contacted (Appendix 6.1) and where possible all new mentors should be interviewed and a probationary period is advisable





- It is good practice to meet with new mentors and conduct a short interview to ensure the mentor has the appropriate qualifications, etc
- All applicants will be required to complete Garda Vetting and/or AccessNI checks, as appropriate, prior to the commencement of their role(s) with young people in the Association.
- It is good practice to follow-up on named referees, especially if the new mentor is a stranger to the Club/County
- Existing mentors should not be excused from either the 'sign-up' or application form procedure. It is not necessary for existing mentors to undergo an interview
- No exceptions should be made in relation to the recruitment procedures
- All forms should be filed as a matter of record by the Club/County Board
- All mentors should be given a copy of the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Young People and they should be made aware of good practice procedures contained within the Code
- Every effort should be made to manage and support appointed mentors. Adequate supervision should always be provided – a mentor should not have to work alone



**“Adequate supervision should always be provided – a mentor should not have to work alone”**

## 4.2 GARDA VETTING AND AccessNI CHECKS

The Ladies Gaelic Football Association administers the Garda Vetting and AccessNI checks of all persons who on behalf of the Association work in any capacity with children, young people and vulnerable adults. This service is but one part of the overall recommended recruitment and selection procedures for those who on our behalf work in areas of responsibility with children and young people, or who may do at a later stage.

Garda vetting, which is the pre-checking of an applicant's background for criminal convictions or prosecutions is recommended by the Irish Sports Council, by Sports NI in Northern Ireland and as part of Children First - the National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children.

### Garda Vetting

Vetting applications will only be accepted from organisations that have been so recognised by the Garda Central Vetting Unit (GCVU). The Ladies Gaelic Football Association is an organisation recognised by the GCVU to process vetting on behalf of our members and an Authorised Signatory has been selected by the Ladies Gaelic Football Association to fulfil this role.

The Ladies Gaelic Football Association has agreed to the implementation of vetting of all persons who on behalf of the Association work in any capacity with children, young people and vulnerable adults in the delivery of our games or activities. In effect this means that any person working on behalf of the Association or on behalf of any of our clubs with people under the age of 18 years of age will be required to be vetted. Vetting via the Garda Vetting Unit is outlined below while vetting via AccessNI and for Ulster GAA is outlined on page 18.

### How can a member of the Ladies Gaelic Football Association avail of Garda vetting?

**Step 1:** A vetting applicant, i.e. coach, mentor, manager etc. of an underage team, will receive a Ladies Gaelic Football Association Vetting Application Form from the Club's Children's Officer or from a nominated person in their club/county. This form has to be completed in full by the applicant and collected at club/county level, or forwarded directly to the National Children's Officer in Croke Park.



**Step 2:** All forms are then sent by secure post to the National Children's Officer, Ladies Gaelic Football Association, Level 6, Cusack Stand, Croke Park, Dublin 3.

*All forms must be sent to the National Children's Officer (NCO) in Croke Park for processing and not to An Garda Síochána.*

The National Children's Officer will then process all **correctly** completed forms with the GCVU. Processed forms will on their return contain a statement that there are no convictions recorded against the individual in the Republic of Ireland or elsewhere, or a statement of all convictions and/or prosecutions, successful or not, pending or completed, in the State or elsewhere as the case may be.

**In most instances it is convictions and/or prosecutions of a most serious nature and particularly against children/minors that MAY deem a person unsuitable to work with children in the Ladies Gaelic Football Association.**

**Please note that a stated conviction or unsuccessful prosecution MAY have NO bearing whatsoever on the acceptance of an individual in the Association and it is recommend that all cases be treated individually and confidentially and that they be assessed as per the requirements of the post/role and the work that it entails.**

**Step 3:** Following the processing of the vetting form it is the Ladies Gaelic Football Association's National Children's Officer who will inform each applicant individually by letter if their application is or is not being recommended for acceptance.

**Step 4:** If the recommendation is positive the applicant will receive a letter confirming this and requesting them to furnish their club/County with the letter of acceptance.

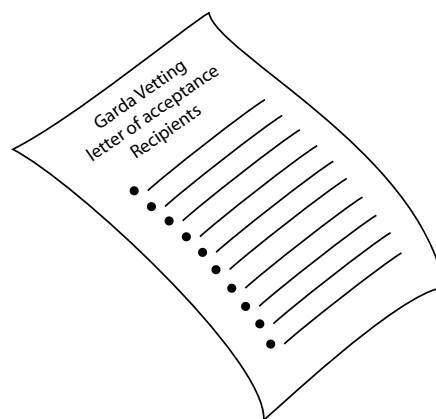
**Step 5:** If the recommendation is negative and if the applicant is not being recommended for acceptance a letter informing them of this decision will be sent to them by the Ladies Gaelic Football Association's National Children's Officer. The applicant will be afforded an opportunity to appeal this decision within 14 days and the process of appeal will be outlined to the applicant. A specially appointed Appeals Group will hear this appeal and will issue their findings directly to the applicant.

**Step 6:** If the Appeals Committee recommends acceptance of the vetting application Step 4 comes into operation.

**Step 7:** If the Appeals Committee upholds the recommendation of rejection the applicant and their club will be duly informed. Over a period of time all persons who on behalf of the Ladies Gaelic Football Association, work in any capacity with children and young people will have furnished their club with a Garda Vetting letter of acceptance. The absence of such a letter will deem a person ineligible to work in such a capacity.

The Ladies Gaelic Football Association's central data base will retain the vetting application outcomes.

Clubs will be issued with a list of persons who receive the Garda Vetting 'letter of acceptance' from the National Children's Officer.



### Protocol on Vetting Application Outcomes

**There are established procedures in place to conduct vetting of all persons who work in any capacity with children, young people and vulnerable adults in the delivery of our games and activities.**

**Ladies Gaelic Football recognises that there is a standardised vetting system operated by Cumann Lúthchleas Gael, Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael, Irish Handball Council and The Rounders Council of Ireland, which functions for the purpose of determining the suitability of personnel to deliver our games and activities in settings which may facilitate unsupervised access to children and/or vulnerable adults, within each of the above bodies.**

**The status and validity of decisions reached in each body in respect of the suitability of an individual for a position within it, is acknowledged and accepted by each of the other bodies.**

**AccessNI Checks****How can a member of the Ladies Gaelic Football Association avail of vetting through Ulster GAA?**

In the first instance the vetting applicant should contact their Club/County Secretary/Children's Officer as appropriate. The Club/County Secretary/Children's Officer should then make direct contact with the Ulster GAA Children's Officer who will advise the process for how they can take forward the vetting application either through Garda vetting or AccessNI.

**AccessNI vetting**

Ulster GAA is a registered Umbrella Body with AccessNI to carry out vetting checks as part of the AccessNI service. Through a heads of agreement with Ulster GAA, all County Boards, Clubs, Ulster Ladies Gaelic, Ulster Camogie and other affiliated bodies can avail of this service.

**AccessNI** is the statutory body established to carry out vetting checks on people who as part of their employment or volunteer involvement have access to a child or vulnerable adult.

**An Umbrella Body** is an organisation which has registered with AccessNI to make applications for vetting checks (Standard or Enhanced Disclosures) on behalf of other organisations or individuals.

In order to comply with legislation under The Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (NI) Order 2003, Ulster GAA has since 1st April 2004 ensured that relevant checks were carried out through

the POCVA system. These checks are now carried out by AccessNI or the Garda Vetting Unit as appropriate so as to ensure that individuals who work in any capacity on behalf of the Association and who might pose a threat or risk to children and/or vulnerable adults are not being used as coaches, mentors, external tutors, team managers, assistants, or work in any other capacity on behalf of the Association.

These checks will inform us

- If the applicant has a criminal record;
- If their name is included on the Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) Disqualification from Working with Children List
- If they are included on the Department of Education (DE) List and/or the DHSSPS Disqualified from Working with Vulnerable Adults List

**Garda vetting**

Ulster GAA is registered with the Garda Central Vetting Unit to carry out vetting checks as part of the Garda vetting service. Through a heads of agreement with Ulster GAA, all County Boards, Clubs, Ulster Ladies Gaelic, Ulster Camogie and other affiliated bodies can avail of this service.

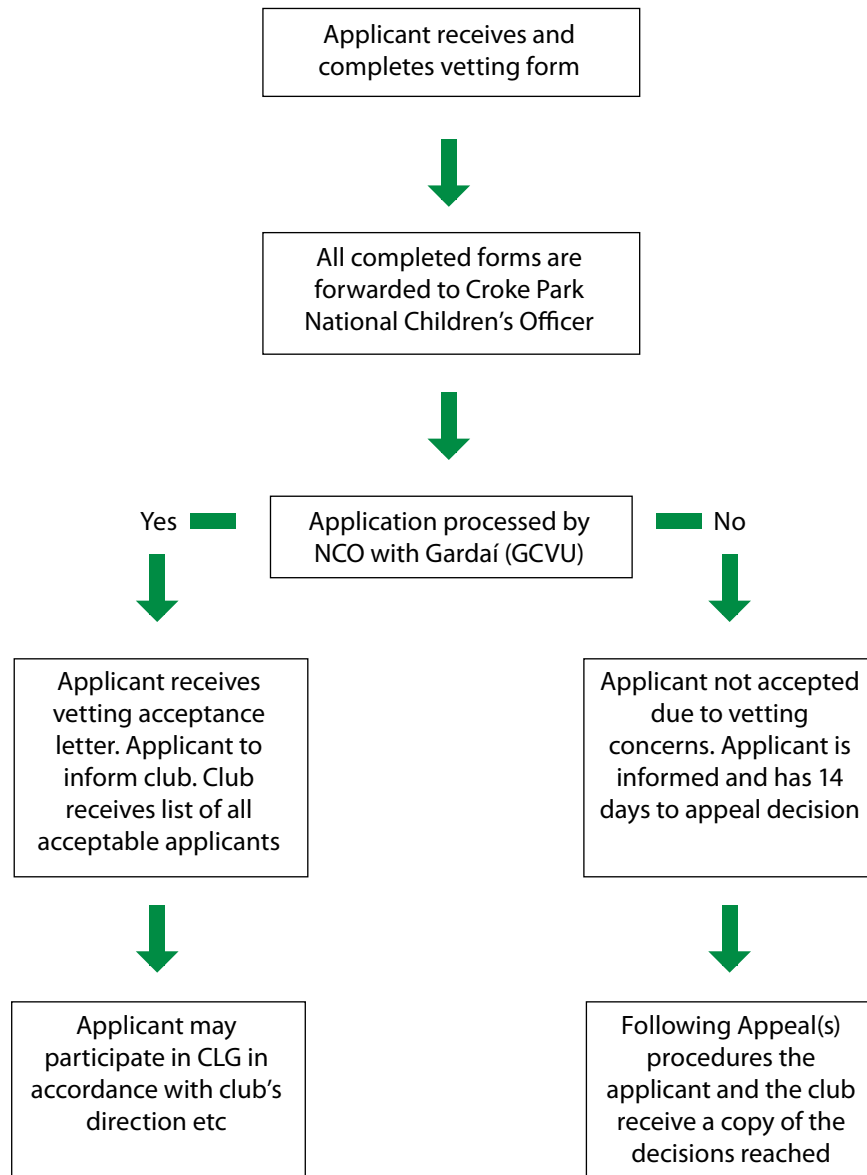
Any information received will be treated confidentially and is subject to the Data Protection Act. Should it be necessary to meet or speak with the applicant regarding any information received this will be done without delay.





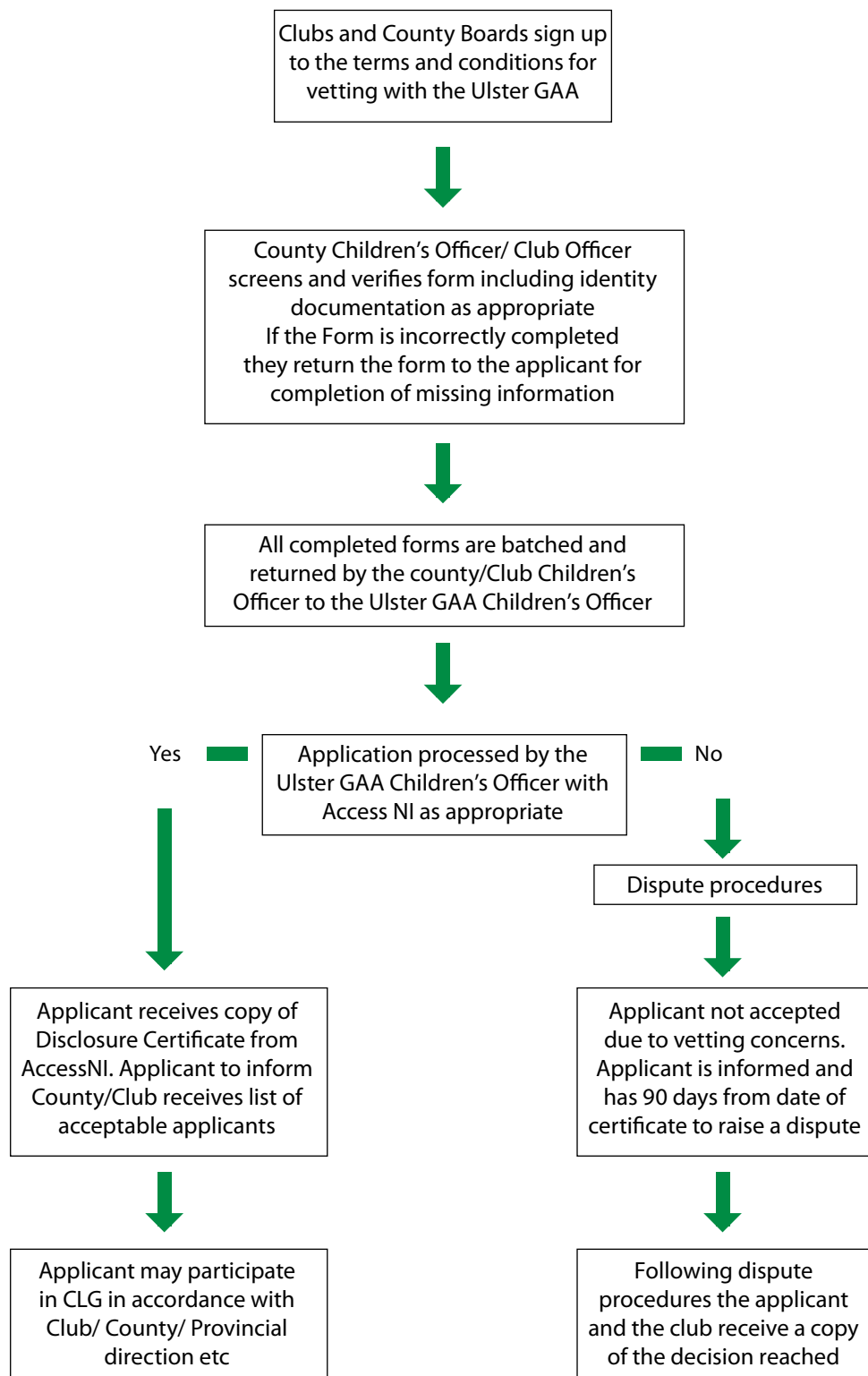


## Outline of Garda Vetting Process in the Ladies Gaelic Football Association





## Outline of AccessNI Vetting in the Ladies Gaelic Football Association





### 4.3 SUPERVISION

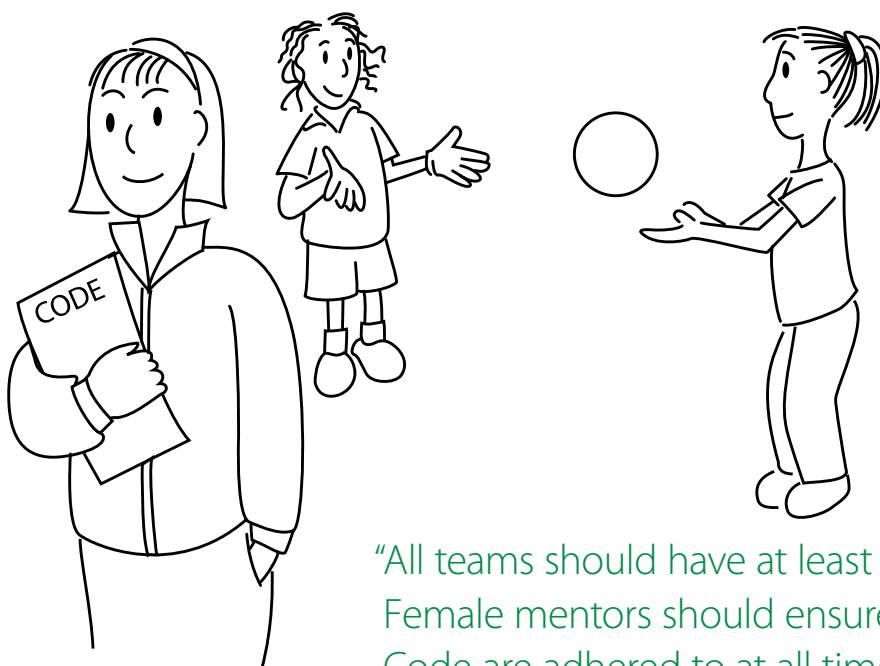
Make sure there is an adequate adult: child ratio. This will depend on the nature of the activity, the age of the players and any special needs of the group. As a recommended guide a ratio of \*1:8 for under 12 years of age and \*1:10 for players over 12 years of age.

*\*This is only a guide and will change depending on the circumstances, e.g. very young players, players with special needs or during away trips*

- All teams should have at least one female mentor. Female mentors should ensure that all areas of the Code are adhered to at all times
- Avoid being alone with any player, if you need to talk separately do so in an open environment, in view of others
- In changing rooms, where possible ask parents to take responsibility and supervise in pairs of appropriate gender
- Mentors should not need to enter changing rooms unless the players are very young or need special assistance and such supervision should be done by parents or in pairs of appropriate gender
- Mentors should remain in pairs until all players have been collected at the end of training or matches
- Keep attendance records and record any incidents/injuries that arise

### 4.4 TRAVELLING WITH YOUNG PLAYERS

- There is extra responsibility taken on by mentors when they travel with young players to games/tournaments. When travelling with young players you should:
- Ensure that there is adequate insurance cover
- Not carry more than the permitted number of passengers
- Ensure use of safety belts at all times
- Avoid travelling alone with one player. Where this is unavoidable the player should always sit in the back seat
- Ensure all mentors, parents and players have signed Travelling Permission forms (page 30) – these forms should include emergency contact numbers for players' parents. Forms may be modified accordingly
- It is recommended to include, at the start of year where possible, all fixtures which involve travel, so that one travel permission form will be valid all year.
- Permission forms should be signed on a yearly basis
- All forms should be kept on file within the Club/County Board by the Children's officer
- Each Club/County should remind all players of Code of Conduct when travelling to games



*"All teams should have at least one female mentor. Female mentors should ensure that all areas of the Code are adhered to at all times"*



## 4.5 AWAY TRIPS / OVERNIGHT STAYS

- When a game requires an overnight stay a separate permission form (Appendix 6.3) should be signed by parents and players, containing emergency contact number for parents
- Each overnight stay requires a separate permission form as details will vary
- All players should sign a Code of Conduct agreement
- Appoint a mentor who will make a report on returning home
- A meeting with parents and players is useful to communicate travel times, competition details, other activities, gear requirements, medical requirements, special dietary needs and any other necessary details
- Rooming arrangements – adults should not share rooms with young players, players share rooms with those of same age and gender and adults should knock before entering rooms
- All group socialization should take place in communal areas (i.e. no boys in girls' rooms and vice versa)
- Alcoholic drink, smoking or other illegal substances are forbidden to players
- At least one female should travel with each team
- There should be a good adult-player ratio, 1:5/6, and proper access to medical personnel
- Lights out times should be enforced
- Players should be under reasonable supervision at all times and should never leave the venue or go unsupervised without prior permission
- Parents should be encouraged to travel to assist with supervision especially with young players



## 4.6 HOSTING

Being a host family or being hosted is an integral part of many sports and if handled appropriately, can add to a child's enjoyment and experience at a competition. In Ladies Gaelic Football, our main competition which involves hosting is our National Féile na nÓg competition.

Hosting is a challenging role but also very rewarding. Special care should be taken in the selection of homes for overnight stays.

A host should be provided with as much information about the players staying with them and details of the competition. No player should be placed on their own with a host family.

All clubs should have knowledge of the host families prior to selection for hosting. However, in addition to this the host family should agree to provide references and be vetted.

Each club is responsible for their players and information related to the players. Parents of the player to be hosted should complete an Overnight Permission Form specific to the Competition, and provide dietary or medical requirements of the player. In addition clubs should follow the recruitment and selection procedures outlined on page 15, section 4.1.

### Host families should:

- ☒ Agree to abide by the Ladies Gaelic Football Association's Code of Ethics and Good Practice
- ☒ Consent to appropriate checks and references
- ☒ Attend host families meetings
- ☒ Provide a safe and supportive environment for young players





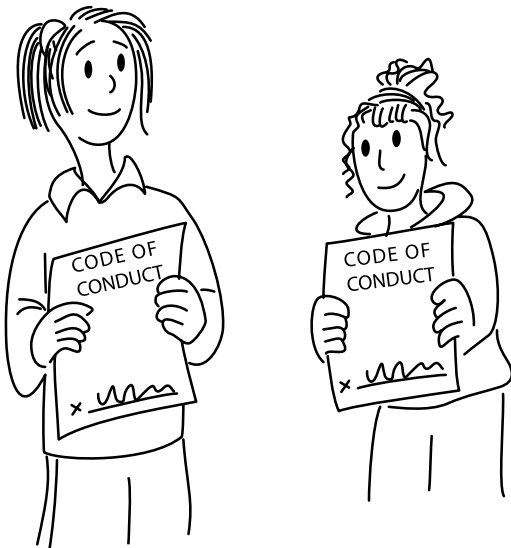


### Ladies Gaelic Football Association/County Boards/ Clubs should:

- ☒ Provide a travel pack to hosting families
- ☒ Check out references on hosting families where necessary
- ☒ Provide an itinerary of the trip
- ☒ Gather information on destination and venue

### Young Players should:

- ☒ Sign a Code of Conduct – specific to the Competition
- ☒ The Code of Conduct should be drawn up by the Club
- ☒ Not be asked to share a bed or a room with an adult
- ☒ Be happy with the arrangements
- ☒ Show respect to host families and their homes



## 4.7 SAFETY

All clubs should have a safety statement, including specific and potential risks attached to Ladies Gaelic Football. They should also have procedures in place for safeguarding against such risks. Safety statements should be specific to the club and the club grounds/ facilities.

### In addition clubs should:

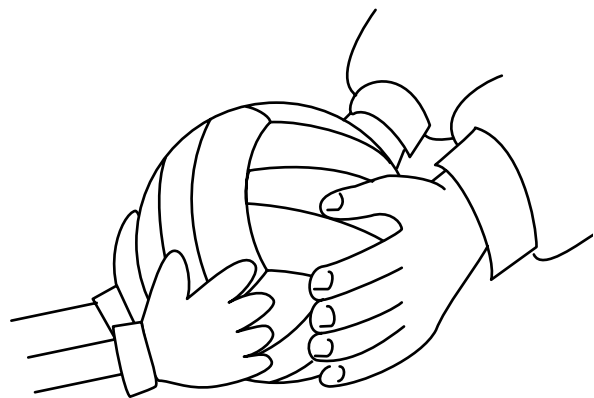
- Ensure activities are suitable for age and stage of development of players
- Keep a record of any specific medical conditions of the players

- Keep a record of emergency contact numbers for parents / guardians – Such records such be readily attainable
- Ensure any necessary protective gear is used
- Keep First Aid kit stocked up and ensure it is close at hand with access to qualified first-aider
- Know the contact numbers of emergency services and easy access to medical personnel if needed is recommended. All clubs should have an emergency plan, which all club members are aware of
- If an incident occurs, make a brief record of injury and action taken. Note the problem, action and outcome. Contact the players parents and keep them informed of all details

## 4.8 TOUCHING

Coaching, at certain times, may require a 'hands on approach', e.g., it may be necessary to support a player learning a new skill but the following should be taken into consideration

- Avoid unnecessary physical contact. Never engage in inappropriate touching
- Any necessary contact should be in response to the needs of the player and not the mentor
- It should be in an open environment with the permission and understanding of the player
- It should be determined by the age and developmental stage of the player – do not do something that a player can do for themselves



**"Any necessary contact should be in response to the needs of the player and not the mentor"**



## 4.9 PHOTOGRAPHY AND FILMING GUIDELINES

The Ladies Gaelic Football Association has adopted a policy in relation to the use of images of players on our website and in other publications. This policy does not seek to eliminate the use of photography or video but rather to minimise the risk and threats that inappropriate use of photographs or the recording of images may pose directly or indirectly, particularly for young people.

Remember having photographic and filming guidelines is not about preventing parents from taking pictures, but rather to ensure that only those who have a right to take photographs do so.

As part of the Parental Consent form (Form 6.4), all club's should receive signed recognition from the player's parents or guardians for the recording of photographic and recorded images etc as part of the player's registration process.

It should be noted that we have little or no influence on what photographs may be taken and published in local or national newspapers as such photography is covered by a different set of guidelines. Should we ever be unhappy with the publication of such photographs or images we can address this matter with the individual newspaper or the Press Council of Ireland.

Photography and the recording of images in a public place do not generally require explicit or prior consent. However if an event e.g. a game or training session is taking place, involving under age players, in a public, private or local authority park, and if you are in charge of such an event you are entitled to request a person to resist from taking photos if you feel that such action or photography may be inappropriate.

Many of our clubs have developed websites that enable them promote their club and club activities to their members, local community and at a County, Provincial and National level. The internet is an exciting and user friendly communication outlet for young people. It is important that while not wishing in any way to restrict the use of and accessibility to such sites that we recognise our responsibility in maintaining sites that are purposeful, educational, newsworthy, attractive in design and use and above all else are safe.

### Best practice guidelines:

- First and foremost ensure parents/guardians and the young people themselves have granted their consent for the taking and publication of photographic images. This permission should be sought by the club when the player registers on an annual basis.
- All children/young people featured in recordings must be appropriately dressed.
- The photograph or recording should focus on the activity rather than a particular young person.
- No personal details relating to the young person should be revealed as accompanying materials to the photograph or recorded image.
- Parents and spectators taking photographs/ recordings should seek permission in advance from the Club and should also be prepared to identify themselves if requested and state the purpose for their photography/filming.
- Group and team photographs may be taken but it is not necessary to match a player's name with the position in which they may be standing or seated in the team photograph

### Videoing as a coaching aid

Video equipment can be used as a legitimate coaching aid. Anyone concerned about any photography, taking place at events or training sessions, should contact the Children's Officer in relation to the matter.



- It is recognised that on certain occasions individual young people may receive recognition and may be presented with an award. When this happens in the case of an under age player certain levels of sensitivity and indeed of common sense are required and a balance should be drawn between the publication of a photograph of an individual, who may or may not be named, and the safety aspects of publication. Any such photography or recording of events that involves individual presentations should be discussed in advance of the event and agreement reached with all parties, including the club, parents and the young person themselves, as to what is and what is not permitted.
- Create recognised procedures for reporting the use of inappropriate images to reduce the risks to under age players. Any instances of the use of inappropriate images should be reported to the Club's Children's Officer and/or Designated Person and also to the relevant statutory authorities as deemed appropriate.
- Appoint a webmaster to manage your web site on behalf of the club and ensure that the webmaster is answerable to the club's Executive
- The Club Executive should agree at the outset the style, design and content policy of the website with the appointed webmaster, prior to going on-line
- Consult with the Club's Children's Officer when designing the website and ensure that the age of club members is considered when deciding the website policy



## 4.10 REGISTRATION, DROPOUT AND TRANSFERS

Loss of club members, including adult transfers, should be monitored. Any unusual or unexpected dropout or transfer of young players or mentors should be checked out by the Club Children's Officer and/or the County Board/ Provincial Council or Central Council. If any concerns regarding a child or children's welfare are raised the matter should be handled in accordance with procedures outlined in section 5.



## 4.11 MOBILE PHONES

Mobile phones are often given to children for security, enabling parents to keep in touch and make sure they are safe. In addition mobile phones can make a safe and efficient way to carry out club business. However such technology has also allowed an increase in direct personal contact with young people, in some cases used to cross personal boundaries and cause harm to young people. Within clubs there is a need to encourage responsible and secure use of mobile phones by adults and young people.

