



3. Code of Behaviour for all Persons Working with Young People

This Code of Behaviour complements the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport and addresses the appropriate levels of behaviour, practice and conduct required from our young players, officials, team mentors, supporters, parents/guardians and clubs.

The Code of Behaviour is promoted by the following National Governing Bodies so as to enable and assist those who promote and deliver our games to comply with the highest possible standards in our work with children and young people.

Cumann Lúthchleas Gael
(The Gaelic Athletic Association)

Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael
(Camogie Association)

Cumann Peil Gael na mBan
(Ladies Gaelic Football Association)

Comhairle Liathróid Láimhe na hÉireann
(Irish Handball Council)

Comhairle Cluiche Corr na hÉireann
(The Rounders Council of Ireland)

We are fully committed to the safeguarding of our members and place the welfare of our players as a key priority. Everyone involved in our sports and activities should accept the roles and responsibilities that they undertake as we commit ourselves to maintaining an enjoyable and safe environment for all.

It is recommended to use this Code in tandem with each National Governing Bodies own Codes of Best Practice or Codes of Ethics that outline in greater detail our roles and responsibilities when working with children and young people. We wish to see this code developed, promoted and implemented as an initiative that encourages fair play, respect, equal opportunities and safety.

3.1 YOUNG PLAYERS

Young players can benefit greatly from sports in terms of personal development and enjoyment. As part of their participation our players must be encouraged to realise that they also have responsibilities to treat others with fairness and respect. With rights there will be responsibilities.

There will be a 'sign-up' procedure, whereby young people agree to abide by the *Code of Behaviour* and to any other policies and codes in your Club and 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 a level at which they feel comfortable
- Be listened to
- Make their concerns known and have them dealt with in an appropriate manner



YOUNG PLAYERS should always:

- Play fairly, do their best and enjoy themselves
- Respect fellow team members regardless of ability, ethnic origin, cultural background or religion
- Support fellow team members whether they do well or not so well
- Represent their team, their club and their family with pride and dignity
- Respect all mentors, officials and their opponents
- Be gracious in defeat and modest in victory
- Shake hands before and after the game irrespective of the result
- Inform their coach/mentor/manager when they are unavailable for training and games
- 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 not:

- Cheat – always play by the rules
- Shout at or argue with an official, with team mates or opponents
- Use unfair or bullying tactics to gain advantage or isolate other players
- Spread rumours
- Tell lies about adults or other young people
- Play or train if they feel unwell or are genuinely injured



3.2 MENTORS

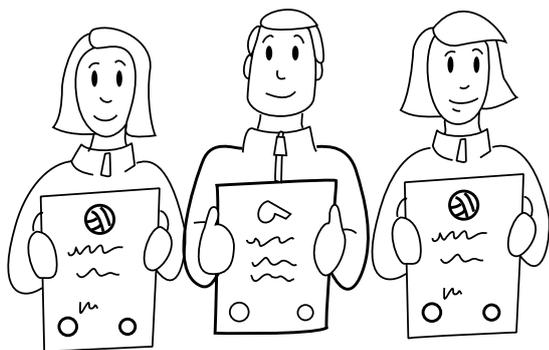
All Mentors should ensure that young people and children benefit significantly from our games by providing a positive, healthy and encouraging ethos for all. In developing the skill levels of every player you should always encourage enjoyment, fun and participation in our games and activities. Mentors should always remember that they are a role model for the players in their care.

Recruitment of Mentors

As a Mentor working with young people and children you are required to be suitable for your chosen role(s). Appropriate training and coaching will be provided so as to ensure that Mentors are fully trained, coached and qualified to fulfil their roles. All persons working or volunteering for such roles will also participate in agreed recruitment and selection procedures as outlined in the policies and procedures of each National Governing Body.

Maintaining a child centred approach

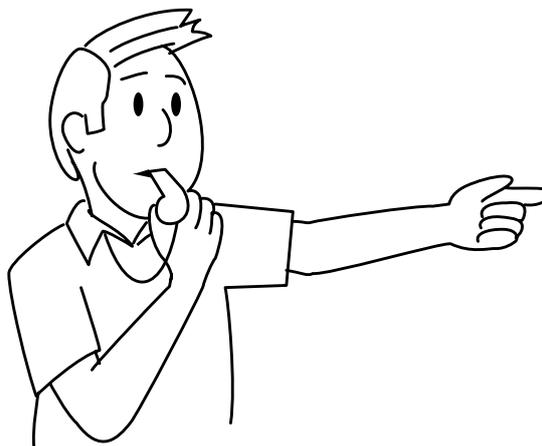
- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person and treat each one equally regardless of age, gender, ability, ethnic origin, cultural background or religion.
- Be positive during coaching sessions, games and other activities so that participants always leave with a sense of achievement and an increased level of self-esteem.
- Recognise the development needs of young players, by emphasising participation for all while avoiding excessive training and competition. Skills development and personal satisfaction should have priority over competition.
- Develop an understanding of relevant coaching methods and ensure that you have the appropriate level of coaching accreditation.



- Don't equate losing with failure and do not develop a preoccupation with medals and trophies. The level of improvement made by young players is the best indicator of effective coaching.

Mentors should lead by example

- Avoid smoking while working with young players
- Do not consume alcohol or non prescribed drugs immediately prior to or while young players are in your care
- 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 and do not question a referee's decisions or integrity
- Encourage players to respect the judgement of match officials



Conduct of Mentors when working with young people

- 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
- Never use any form of corporal punishment or physical force
- Avoid incidents of horse play or role play or telling jokes etc that could be misinterpreted
- Ensure that all physical contact is appropriate and has the permission or understanding of the young person
- Never undertake any form of therapy – hypnosis etc, in the training of children



Avoid compromising your role as a Mentor

- Avoid a situation where you are alone in a car or dressing room with a player
- Avoid taking coaching sessions on your own
- Avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with a player or away from others
- Avoid taking young players to your home

Best practice

- Ensure that all players are suitably and safely attired to play their chosen sport.
- Keep a record of attendance at training and at games by both players and mentors.
- Be punctual and properly attired.
- 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.
- Set realistic – stretching but achievable – performance goals.
- Encourage parents/guardians to play an active role in organising and assisting various activities for your teams and your club.
- Use mobile phones, if deemed appropriate, only via a group text system for communicating with the parents/guardians of players and receive such permission at the commencement of each season.
- Keep a record of each injury and action taken. Ensure that another official referee/team mentor is present when a player is being attended to and can corroborate the relevant details.

- 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.
- 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.
- Make adequate provision for First Aid services.
- Do not encourage or permit players to play while injured.





3.3 PARENTS/GUARDIANS

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/Guardians should encourage their child to:

- 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. Seek advice if necessary from club officials on this issue

Parents/Guardians should lead by example:

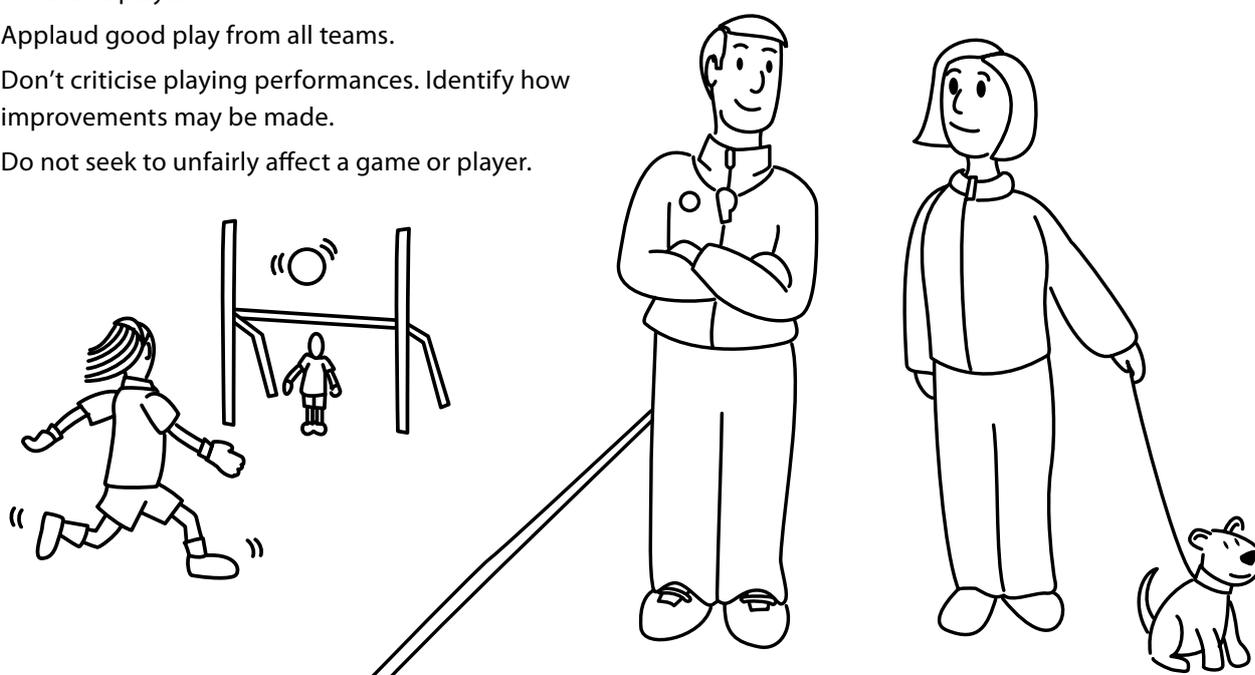
- Respect officials' decisions and encourage children to do likewise.
- Do not exert undue pressure on your child.
- Show approval for effort, not just results.
- Never embarrass a child or use sarcastic remarks towards a player.
- Applaud good play from all teams.
- Don't criticise playing performances. Identify how improvements may be made.
- Do not seek to unfairly affect a game or player.

Parents/Guardians should:

- 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'.
- Listen to what young people 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, mentors and club officials.
- Attending training and games on a regular basis.
- Assisting in the organising of club activities and events as requested.
- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person and treat each one equally regardless of age, gender, ability, ethnic origin, cultural background or religion



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Ask them 'did they enjoy themselves'.



3.4 SUPPORTERS

Young players are eager to enjoy and 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 clubs that they support.

Fellow supporters have a responsibility to ensure that all spectators conduct themselves in an acceptable and well behaved manner at all times when attending under age games and competitions.

Supporters should always realise that young players participate in organised sport for fun.

Supporters add to the enjoyment of our games by:

- Applauding good performance and efforts from your club's players and from your opponents, regardless of the result.
- Condemning the use of violence in any form, be it by fellow spectators, coaches, officials or players.
- Encouraging players to participate according to the rules and the referees' decisions.
- Demonstrating appropriate social behaviour by not using foul language or harassing participants, mentors or officials.
- Respecting the decisions of all officials.
- Never ridiculing or scolding a player for making a mistake during games or competitions
- Showing respect to your Club's opponents. Without them there would be no games or competitions.
- Upholding the principles of **FAIR PLAY** and **RESPECT** for all.



3.5 THE CLUB

All clubs that cater for under age players must do so with a child centred approach and philosophy thus ensuring that those chosen by them to work with children and young people are at all times competent and confident as to their roles and responsibilities.

Clubs must provide these people with the necessary supports and ensure the best interests of the child, the young person and the adult that all those chosen to work on the club's behalf have been selected following thorough recruitment, selection, training and coaching procedures.

Promote Quality Participation by:

- Adopting this Code of Behaviour as a basic level of agreement between the club and their players, their mentors, parents/guardians and supporters.
- Leading by example and ensuring that you have a user friendly and child centred approach to your work and that you provide an equal opportunity to all who wish to participate in your games and activities, regardless of an individual's ability.
- Developing effective procedures for responding to and recording all attendances, incidents, accidents and injuries.
- Accessing relevant information on Alcohol and Substance Abuse Prevention Programmes and promoting relevant training in this area of health awareness for relevant club personnel.
- Distributing information on Anti Bullying strategies in our work with young people and by adopting and implementing an Ant Bullying Statement in the club.
- Ensuring that the Irish Sports Council Code of Ethics training is undertaken by all persons working in an official capacity with children and young people on behalf of the club.



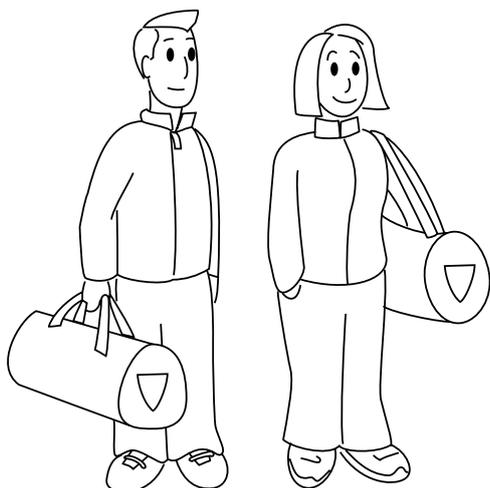
Encourage the Participation of Club Members by:

- Communicating regularly with your Mentors and clearly agree and define their roles.
- Adopting and implementing clearly defined recruitment and selection procedures when choosing mentors to work with children and young people.



Encourage the Participation of Young Players

- Ensuring that the types of programmes, rules, equipment, length of games and training schedules are structured to facilitate greater participation by all young players, are suitable to all age categories, and to the ability and maturity level of young players.
- Respecting the rights, dignity and worth of all players by treating them equally regardless of their age, gender, ability, ethnic origin, cultural background or religion.
- Creating pathways for young people to participate in your games not just as players but afford other developmental opportunities including training to become a referee, coach etc.
- Ensuring that on the occasions when the team may travel away overnight, that separate sleeping facilities must be provided for all adults and, similarly, for each gender. If both genders are in your group, male and female mentors must be present.



Encourage the Participation of Parents/ Guardians by:

- Encouraging parents/guardians to become members of their club and to make themselves aware as to the running of juvenile games and activities and to the rules and codes that direct us in our work.
- Encouraging the participation of parents and guardians in all aspects a club's activities and events and in the organising and delivery of our games.
- Welcome all parents/guardians to attend the games and training sessions that relate to their children. Information relating to such events should be made known to them at all times.
- Informing parents/guardians as to the identity of their Children's Officer. This person should be available to assist with any concerns or enquiries that parents/guardians may have regarding the welfare and safety of children and young people in the club.

Develop Best Practice in Club Structures and Administration by:

- Ensuring that the Juvenile Section of the club is structured in accordance with good practice guidelines and that young people are afforded a role in decision making at an appropriate level.
- Ensuring that all club members are aware as to their responsibilities to all children and young people.
- Appointing a Children's Officer* whose role shall include the monitoring of the child centred ethos of the club and compliance with the Code of Ethics and Good Practice (Irish Sports Council/SportsNI) and with any policies and guidelines as issued by the club, by their National Governing Bodies, or by statutory authorities and agencies.
- Appointing a Designated Person* whose role shall include liaising with Statutory Authorities and their Governing Body in relation to the reporting of allegations and/or suspicions of child abuse.
- Ensuring that all players are covered by their relevant Injury Scheme and that all premises etc in use by your club and players are equally covered for property/liability insurance as deemed necessary.
- Ensuring that on the occasions when the team may travel away overnight, that separate sleeping facilities are provided for all adults and, similarly, for each gender. When a group consists of males and females you will be obliged to have male and female mentors present.
- Seeking the agreement of parents/guardians when their sons/daughters under 18 years of age are invited into adult squads. Boundaries of behaviour in adult groups are normally different from the boundaries that apply to under age teams and squads.



Let us ensure that everyone working on our behalf emphasises **FAIR PLAY, RESPECT, EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES** and **SAFETY** in all aspects of our work with children and young people



3.6 ROLE OF CHILDREN'S OFFICER

Your Children's Officer is key to the implementation of your Code of Ethics and selection of your Children's Officer requires careful attention. The Executive Committee of your Club/County Board should consider the qualities of and the role of the Children's Officer when selecting a suitable candidate.

Qualities of a Children's Officer

- Friendly
- Approachable
- Open-minded
- Good communicator

The Children's Officer should be player-centred in focus and should have as their primary aim the establishment of a player centred ethos within the club.

The Children's Officer is the link between the young players and the adults in the club.

Your Children's Officer should report regularly to the Executive of your Club/County Board.

Role of the Club Officer

- To promote awareness of the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Young Players within the club and particularly among the young players and their parents/guardians and mentors

- To influence policy and practice within the club in order to prioritise young players' needs
- To ensure all mentors are aware of practices within the code i.e Travel Permission Forms, Anti-Bullying Policy etc.
- To encourage the involvement of parents/guardians in the club activities and co-operate with parents/guardians in ensuring that each player enjoys her involvement in Ladies Gaelic Football
- To act as an advisory resource to mentors on best practice in Ladies Gaelic Football
- To liaise with the female mentors assigned to teams, ensuring that she is aware of good practices contained within the Code
- To ensure that young players know how to make concerns known to appropriate adults or agencies. Information disclosed by a player to the Children's Officer should be dealt with accordingly (see Section 5.2)
- To deal with any complaints or suspected child abuse according to the Code
- To report regularly to the Club Executive Committee
- To monitor changes in membership and follow up any unusual dropout, absenteeism or club transfers by young players or mentors
- To attend seminars in relation to Child Protection



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Children's Officer's Checklist

Has your club a Children's Officer? – Please appoint before working through the below framework as the Children's Officer is key to implementation of your Club Code.

- 1. Has your club a Code of Ethics?
- 2. Does this code include an Anti-Bullying Policy?
- 3. Have you undertaken training in relation to the Code and Child Protection?
- 4. Do you promote awareness of your Code within your Club?
- 5. Has your club a policy on selection and recruitment of mentors? Have all your mentors signed mentor recruitment forms, existing and new mentors?
- 6. Have all your mentors signed a code of conduct?
- 7. Have all your players signed a code of conduct?
- 8. Have all your parents signed (a) a code of conduct, (b) parental permission forms?
- 9. Have you held an information evening for all parents of underage players?
- 10. Have you Permission forms for all underage teams which include (a) travel, (b) text messaging, (c) photography and video?
- 11. Do you report regularly to your Executive Committee?
- 12. Do all your players know how to make concerns known and to whom they make them known to?
- 13. Have you a policy in place to deal with a code of ethics complaint?
- 14. Have you a system in place to monitor changes in membership and follow up on any unusual dropout, absenteeism or club transfers by underage players?
- 15. Have you passed your contact details to your County Children's Officer and National Children's Officer?
- 16. Have you a Code of Ethics folder containing all the above information?





Role of Designated Officer

The Designated Person will be responsible for dealing with any concerns about the protection of children in the Club. The designated person is responsible for reporting allegations or suspicions of child abuse to the County Board Designated Person, Health Service Executive (ROI) or Social Services (NI) and/or An Garda Síochána/Police Service of Northern Ireland.

It is recommended that this person is a senior club person. However, if there is difficulty identifying a separate individual to take this role, the Children's Officer can be appointed as designated person once the club/County is clear about the responsibilities of each role.

Role of the National Designated Person

- Have knowledge of the Code of Ethics and statutory guidelines
- Have a knowledge of categories and indicators of abuse
- Undertake training in relation to child protection
- Assist with the ongoing development and implementation of the organisation's child protection training needs
- Provide information and advice on child protection within the organisation
- Be familiar with and able to carry out reporting procedures
- Be aware of national and local services responsible for child protection i.e. principal and duty social workers, etc
- To inform Health Service Executive/Social Services and /or An Garda Síochána/PSNI of relevant concerns about individual children, using the Standard Reporting Form. Keep a copy of this form and ensure acknowledgment of receipt of this form
- Ensure appropriate information is available at the time of referral and that the referral is confirmed in writing, kept under confidential cover.
- Ensure mentors and administrators are aware of allegations against them
- Ensure that an individual case record is maintained of the action taken by the Association, the liaison with other agencies and the outcome
- Ensure records are kept in confidence in a secure location and access is on a 'need to know' basis

Role of Club/County Designated Person

- Have knowledge of the Code of Ethics and statutory guidelines
- Have a knowledge of categories and indicators of abuse
- Undertake training in relation to child protection
- Be familiar with and able to carry out reporting procedures
- Communicate with parents and/or agencies as appropriate

- Assist with the ongoing development and implementation of the Club/Counties child protection training needs
- Liaise with the National Children's Officer in relation to child protection training needs
- Be aware of local contacts and services in relation to child protection i.e. principal and duty social workers and their contacts
- To inform the local duty social worker in the Health Services Executive Local Area Board/ local Social Services and/or An Garda Síochána/PSNI of relevant concerns about individual children, using the Standard Reporting Form. Keep a copy of this form and ensure acknowledgement of receipt of this form

It is important to note that Children's Officers and Designated Persons do not have a counselling or therapeutic role or a responsibility of investigating or validating child protection concerns within your club or County.

Investigations of alleged abuse are carried out by the relevant Statutory Authorities as outlined in Children First and Our Duty to Care or by specially appointed trained personnel in counselling, psychological and child therapeutic services.

Role of County Children's Officer

- To ensure that each club within the County has elected a Children's Officer
- To liaise with all Club Children's Officers on a regularly basis
- To ensure that all County Teams have adopted the Code and all players and mentors have signed up to the Code
- To ensure that all County Teams are aware of and have signed Travel Permission Forms and Overnight Permission Forms where relevant
- To act as an advisory resource to mentors on best practice in Ladies Gaelic Football
- To deal with any complaints or suspected child abuse according to the Code
- To attend National Seminars in relation to Child Protection
- To co-ordinate child protection courses within county
- To report regularly to the County Board Executive

Role of National Children's Officer

- Ensuring that the Ladies Gaelic Football Association develops an appropriate sport specific code, which includes a policy statement, codes of conduct, recruitment and selection policy, etc
- Familiarise Children's Officers with our Duty to Care, to ensure they can act as an information source to other members of the organisation
- Commitment to attendance at appropriate training as required in order to act as a resource to members in relation to children's needs

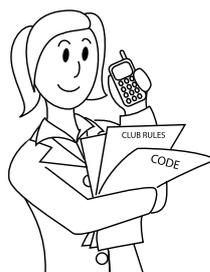


- Co-ordination of training for others
- The promotion of the values, attitudes and structures which make sport enjoyable for children
- Circulation of all relevant information and resource materials to clubs and County Boards
- Communication with Club and County Children's Officers to ensure the distribution of the Code and the promotion of related education programmes
- Liaison with all clubs to examine the rules, regulations and structures to ensure that they are child-centred, e.g. equal playing time, appropriate competition structures, bullying policy, etc
- Liaison with clubs to ensure drop-out rates and transfers are monitored so that unusual developments or trends can be addressed, including transfer of mentors.

Best Practice

- Produce information leaflets, establish age-group specific or underage team notice boards
- Hold regular information meetings for the young players, their parents/guardians and mentors
- Hold a registration day (for example first Sunday of month) – as each under-age player registers they are informed of the Code and Bullying Policy. The player and their parent/s sign up to the Code on registration

- Hold a Code of Ethics information night, inviting youth members, parents and mentors – it is important that the young players are aware of who the Children's Officer is and how to contact them, e.g. mobile number of Children's Officer is placed in dressing rooms or club notice board
- Distribute an information sheet on training times, pick up times, club rules and regulations, codes of conduct, safety policies, guidelines for away trips
- Distribute a list of games/fixtures planned for the year to parents and young players



- Provide one permission slip for parents signature at the beginning of the year containing all games and fixtures, both home and away
- Hold a 'sign up' night for mentors – inform mentors of guidelines in Code and good practice procedures

“Distribute an information sheet on training times, pick up times, club rules and regulations, codes of conduct, safety policies, guidelines for away trips”

