



## 1. CORE VALUES

The Ladies Gaelic Football Association is based on the following principles that will guide the development of our sport for young players. The stages of development of the young person should guide the types of activity provided within the Association. Adults will need to have a basic understanding of the physical, emotional and personal needs of young players.

### Integrity in relationships

Adults interacting with young players in Ladies Gaelic Football should do so with integrity and respect for the player. There is a danger that sporting contexts can be used to exploit or undermine children. All adult actions should be guided by what is best for the young players and in the context of quality, and open working relationships. Verbal, physical, emotional or sexual abuse of any kind is unacceptable within Ladies Gaelic Football.

### Quality atmosphere and ethos

Ladies Gaelic Football involving young players should be conducted in a safe, positive and encouraging atmosphere. A child-centred ethos will help to ensure that competition and specialisation are kept in their appropriate place.

### Importance of Childhood

The importance of childhood should be understood and valued by everyone involved in the Ladies Gaelic Football Association. The right to happiness within childhood should be recognised and enhanced at all levels of our sport.

### Needs of a Child

All children's sporting experiences should be guided by what is best for children. This means that adults should have basic understanding of the emotional, physical and personal needs of young people. The stages of development and the ability of children should guide the types of activity provided within the sport. In Ladies Gaelic Football these activities are clearly outlined in our Player Pathway, which forms the basis of our Unlocking the Potential Coach Development Programme.

### Equality

All 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. Team Mentors should be aware of and seek to gain competence in addressing the needs of young people with disabilities or any other additional needs.

### Fair Play

Fair play is the guiding principle of the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Young Players in Ladies Gaelic Football. All sport should be conducted in an atmosphere of fair play. Ireland has contributed and is committed to the European Code of Sports Ethics, which defines fair play as: 'much more than playing within the rules. It incorporates the concepts of friendship, respect for others and always playing with the right spirit. Fair play is defined as a way of thinking, not just a way of behaving. It incorporates issues concerned with the elimination of cheating, gamesmanship, unequal opportunities, excessive commercialisation and corruption'. (European Sports Charter and Code of Ethics, Council of Europe, 1993).





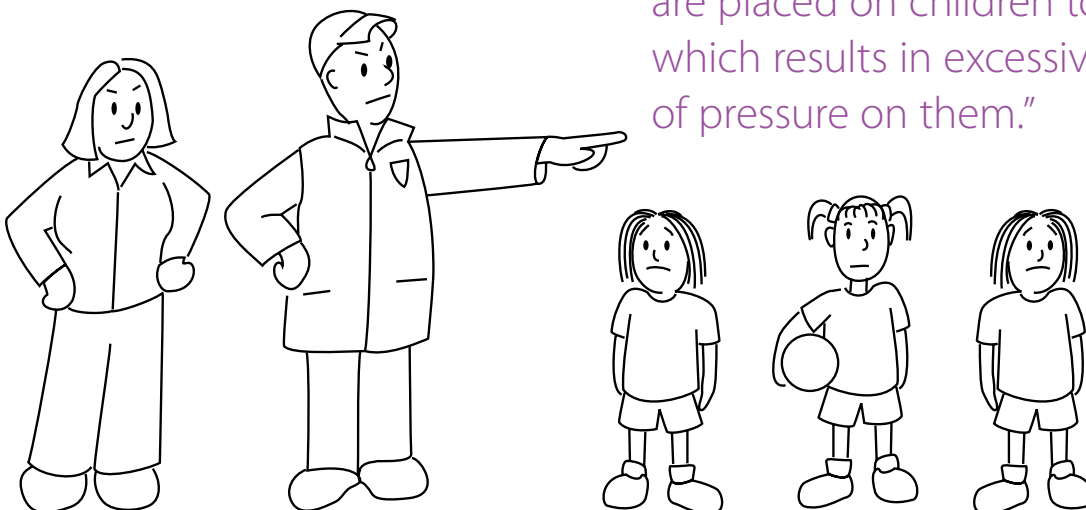
## Competition

Competition is an essential element of sport and should be encouraged in an age appropriate manner. A balanced approach to competition can make a significant contribution to children's development while at the same time providing fun, enjoyment and satisfaction. Through such competition children learn respect for opponents, officials and rules of the sport.



Too often competitive demands are placed on children too early, which results in excessive levels of pressure on them. This is one of a number of factors, which contribute to high levels of dropout in sport. It should always be kept in mind that the welfare of the player comes first and competitive standards come second. While under eight is a very different age group to under eighteen the same general principle should apply.

As adults we need to strike a balance between a young person's desire to win and a young person's right to participate, irrespective of ability. Remember that success is not the same as winning and failure is not the same as losing.



## Legislative Basis

While the Code of Ethics is not a legal document, it is based on the Child Care Act (IRL) 1991 and the Children (NI) Order 1993, as well as subsequent related legislation, such as Children's Act 2001, Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults Act (NI) 2003 and the Protection of Persons Reporting Act (IRL) 1998.

Furthermore Ireland is a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which acknowledges the right of the child to protection from all harm. Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child recognises the 'right of the child to engage in play and to have the chance to join in a wide range of activities.'

In order to promote this charter and in response to consultation with young people the Office of the Minister for Children (IRL) includes in its strategy the objective that 'children will have access to play, sport and recreation and cultural activities to enrich their experience of childhood.' The Officer of the Minister for Children appointed an Ombudsman for Children in 2004, while Northern Ireland appointed the Commissioner for Children and Young People in 2003.

This Code is intended to provide guidelines for those working with young people in Ladies Gaelic Football. It is not a definite legal interpretation of the legislation. While it is not a legal document, failure to comply may have legal implications or consequences.

"Too often competitive demands are placed on children too early, which results in excessive levels of pressure on them."