

Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael

Code of Ethics and Best Practice

Code of Ethics & Good Practice for Sport for Young People in Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael, 2006

The guidelines in this document are based on the national guidelines as outlined in the following documents

Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport, Irish Sports Council, 2000.

Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children, Dept. of Health & Children 1999

Our Duty to Care, Dept. of Health & Children 2002

For Northern Ireland Clubs and organisations reference should also be made to

Children Act NI and Safeguarding Children

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1 Core Values of Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael in Sport for Young People

The work of Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael is based on the following principles that will guide the development of our sport for young people. Young People's experience of sport should be guided by what is best for the young person. The stages of development and the ability of the young person should guide the types of activity provided within the association. Adults will need to have a basic understanding of the needs of young people, including physical, emotional and personal.

Integrity in relationships:

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

Quality atmosphere and ethos

Sport for young people 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.

Equality

All children should be treated in an equitable and fair manner regardless of age, ability, sex, religion, social and ethnic background or political persuasion. Children with disability should be involved in sports activities in an integrated way, thus allowing them to participate to their potential alongside other children.

Fair Play:

Fair play is the guiding principle of the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Young People in Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael.

All children's 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 behaving. It incorporates issues concerned with the elimination of opportunities, excessive commercialisation and corruption. (European Sports Charter and Code of Ethics, Council of Europe, 1993).

Competition

A balanced approach to competition can make a significant contribution to the development of young people, while at the same time providing fun, enjoyment and satisfaction. However, often competitive demands are placed on children too early, which results in excessive levels of pressure on them. This can contribute to a high level of drop out from sport. Leaders should aim to put the welfare of the child first and competitive standards second. A child-centred approach will help to ensure that competition and specialisation are kept in their appropriate place.

2 Policy Statement

Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael, is fully committed to safeguarding the well being of its members. Every individual in the association should at all times, show respect and understanding for members' rights, safety and welfare and conduct themselves in a way that reflects the principles of the Association and the guidelines contained in the *Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Sport for Young People*.

In Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael our first priority is the welfare of the young people and we are committed to providing an environment which will allow participants to perform to the best of their ability, free from bullying and intimidation.

As part of our commitment we have adopted a code to protect our underage players (all players under 18 years of age), all leaders and members of Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael.

We shall ensure that the code of ethics and good practice for sport for young people in Camogie is adopted, agreed to, implemented and signed up to by all its members.

3

Guidelines and Codes of Conduct

Within the Code, Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael has outlined the codes of conduct for young players, parents and leaders within the association.

These guidelines should be used by Clubs and County Boards

It is recommended to display Codes of Conduct on Clubhouse notice boards. All signed Codes of Conduct should be kept with other club documents.

3.1 Code of Conduct for Young People

Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael wishes to provide the best possible environment for all young people involved in the sport. Young people deserve to be given enjoyable, safe sporting opportunities, free of abuse of any kind. These participants have rights, which must be respected, and responsibilities that they must accept. Young people should be encouraged to realise that they have responsibilities to treat other participants and sports leaders with fairness and respect.

Young players are entitled to:

- Be safe and to feel safe
- Be listened to
- Be believed
- Be treated with dignity, sensitivity and respect
- Have a voice in the club / organisation
- Participate on an equal basis
- Have fun and enjoy Camogie
- Experience competition at a level at which they feel comfortable
- Make complaints and have them dealt with
- Get help against bullies
- Say No
- Protect their own bodies
- Confidentiality

Young players should always:

- Treat Leaders with respect, (e.g. managers, coaches, selectors, officials).
- Play fairly at all times, do their best
- Respect team members, even when things go wrong
- Respect opponents, be gracious in defeat
- Abide by the rules set down by team managers when travelling to away events.
- Behave in a manner that avoids bringing the sport of Camogie into disrepute
- Talk to children's officer if they have any problems.

Young players should never:

- Cheat
- Use violence or physical contact that is not allowed within the rules
- Shout or argue with officials, team mates or opponents
- Harm team members, opponents or their property
- Bully or use bullying tactics to isolate another player
- Use unfair or bullying tactics to gain advantage
- Take banned substances
- Keep secrets, especially if they have been caused harm
- Tell lies about adults / young people
- Spread rumours

3.2 Guidelines for Parents

Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael believes that parents should....

- Be a role model for your child and maintain the highest standards of conduct when interacting with children, other parents, with officials and organisers
- Always behave responsibly and do not seek to unfairly affect the game / player
- Never intentionally expose any young participant to embarrassment or disparagement by the use of flippant or sarcastic remarks
- Always recognise the value and importance of the volunteers who provide sporting/recreational opportunities for your child.
- Respect referees, sports leaders and other players. Do not publicly question the judgement or honesty of referees or sports leaders.
- Encourage your child to play by the rules. Teach your child that honest endeavour is as important as winning and do all you can to encourage good sportsmanship.
- Set a good example by applauding good play on both sides. Encourage mutual respect for team mates and opponents.
- Parents should support all efforts to remove abusive behaviour and bullying behaviour in all its forms.
- Read bullying policy within the club / organisation's guidelines.
- Sign up to the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Young People in Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael.

3.2.1 Parents Code of Conduct:

1. I will respect the rules and procedures set down in Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael's Code of Ethics for Young People in Sport.
2. I will respect my child's leaders, (e.g. managers, coaches, officials), her team mates and their parents, as well as players, parents and coaches from opposing teams. I will encourage my child to treat other participants, coaches, selectors, and managers with respect.
3. I will give encouragement and applaud only positive accomplishments whether from my child, her team mates, their opponents or the officials.
4. I will respect my child's leader(s) and support his/her efforts
5. I will respect the officials and their authority during matches
6. I will never demonstrate threatening or abusive behaviour or use foul language.

Name: _____ Name of Child(Children) _____

Date _____

3.3 Guidelines for Sports Leaders

Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael recognises the key role sports leaders play in the lives of children in sport. They have an overall responsibility to take the necessary steps to ensure that positive and healthy experiences are provided. All Leaders (managers, coaches, selectors, etc) should have as their first priority the children's safety and enjoyment of Camogie and should adhere to the guidelines and regulations set out in the Code of Ethics.

Leaders will be given a copy of the association's code of ethics and they should be made aware of the procedures contained within the association's code.

Leaders will be expected to go through appropriate recruitment and selection procedures. (see section 4.1)

3.3.1 Personal Conduct of Sports Leaders

- Once appointed the Leader must act as a role model and promote the positive aspects of sport and of Camogie and maintain the highest standards of personal conduct.
- The use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco must be actively discouraged as being incompatible with a healthy approach to sporting activity. Leaders should not use alcohol, tobacco or drugs before coaching, during events, while away on trips with young people or at any time while young people are in their care.
- Remember your behaviour to players, other officials, and opponents will have an effect on the players in your care. You are the role model for the children in your care.

3.3.2 Dealing with Players

- Leaders must respect the rights, dignity and worth of every child and must treat everyone equally, regardless of sex, ethnic origin, religion or ability.
- Be generous with praise and never ridicule or shout at players for making mistakes or for losing a game. All young players are entitled to respect.
- Set realistic goals for the participants and do not push young players.
- Be careful to avoid the “star system”. Each child deserves equal time and attention.
- Care must be taken not to expose a child intentionally or unintentionally to embarrassment or disparagement by use of sarcastic or flippant remarks about the child or her family.
- Physical punishment or physical force must never be used. Never punish a mistake – by verbal means, physical means, or exclusion.
- Insist that players in your care respect the rules of the game. Insist on fair play and ensure players are aware you will not tolerate cheating or bullying behaviour.
- Remember that young players play for fun and enjoyment and that skill development and personal satisfaction have priority over highly structured competition. Never make winning the only objective.
- Encourage the development of respect for opponents, officials, selectors and other coaches and avoid criticism of fellow coaches.
- When travel/overnight travel is involved, the Leaders travelling with children must sign a separate agreement. Parents and participants will also be asked to sign permission forms in these instances. (see appendix).
- Keep a record of injuries and actions taken both during training sessions and during games.
- Keep a record of problem/action/outcomes if behaviour problems occur.

3.3.3 Relationship with Players

- Leaders are responsible for setting and monitoring the boundaries between a working relationship and friendship with players. It is advisable for coaches not to involve young players in their personal life i.e. visits to coaches home or overnight stays.
- When young players are invited into adult groups/squads, it is advisable to get agreement from a parent/carer. Boundaries of behaviour in adult groups are normally different from the boundaries that apply to junior groups/squads.
- Avoid working alone and ensure there is adequate supervision for all activities. It is important to realise that certain situations or friendly actions could be misinterpreted by the participant or by outsiders.
- Leaders who become aware of a conflict between their obligation to their players and their obligation to the association must make explicit the nature of the conflict and the loyalties and responsibilities involved, to all parties concerned.
- Leaders should communicate and co-operate with medical and ancillary practitioners in the diagnosis, treatment and management of their players’ medical or related problems. Avoid giving advice of a personal or medical nature if you are not qualified to do so. Any information of a personal or medical nature must be kept strictly confidential unless the welfare of the child requires the passing on of this information
- The nature of the relationship between leader and a participant can often mean that a leader will learn confidential information about a player or player’s family. This information must be regarded as confidential and except where abuse is suspected, must not be divulged to a third party without the express permission of the player/family
- Parents should always be informed when problems arise except in situations where informing parents may put the player at risk.

3.4 Guidelines for Children’s Officers

The appointment of Children’s Officers is an essential element in the creation of a quality atmosphere. They act as a resource with regard to children’s issues.

Children’s Officers should review current policies in relation to young people, check that all activities are safe and fun, and inform adults of how to deal with any concerns that may arise in relation to the protection of young people.

Each Club and County Board should appoint a Children’s Officer. The Children’s Officer should be a member of, or have access to Management Committee

3.4.1 Club Children's Officer

Club Children's Officers should be child centred in focus and have as the primary aim the establishment of a child centred ethos within the club. She/he is the link between the children and the adults in the club. She/he also takes responsibility for monitoring and reporting to the Club Management Committee on how club policy impacts on young people and Sports Leaders.

The Children's Officer should be a member of or have access to, the Club Management Committee and should be introduced to the young people in an appropriate forum.

The Children's Officer should:

- Promote awareness of the Code of Ethics *within* the club, among young members and their parents/guardians.
- Influence policy and practice within the club in order to prioritise children's needs
- Establish contact with the County Children's Officer at governing body level.
- Ensure that children know how to make concerns known to appropriate adults or agencies.
- Encourage the appropriate involvement of parents/guardians in the club activities
- Act as an advisory resource to Sports Leaders on best practice in children's sport
- Report regularly to the Club Management Committee
- Monitor changes in membership and follow up any unusual dropout, absenteeism or club transfers by children or Sports Leaders
- Ensure that the children have a voice in the running of their club and ensure that there are steps young people can take to express concerns about their sports activities / experiences.
- Establish communication with other branches of the club, e.g. facilitate parent's information sessions at the start of the season
- Keep records on each member on file, including junior members, their contact numbers and any special needs of the child that should be known to leaders
- Ensure each member signs an annual membership form that includes signing up to the code of conduct

3.4.2 County Children's Officer should;

- Be familiar with *Children First* and *Our Duty to Care* to ensure they can act as an information source to other members of the association
- Be committed to attend appropriate training as required in order to act as a resource to members in relation to children's needs
- Ensure that each club within the county appoints a Children's Officer.
- Liaise on a regular basis with Club Children's Officer.
- Ensure that all County Teams have adopted the Code
- Ensure that all County Teams are aware of and have signed Travel Permission Forms and Overnight Permission Forms where relevant
- Deal with any complaints or suspected child abuse according to the Code
- Co-ordinate child protection courses within county
- Report regularly to the County Board Executive

4 Policies

4.1 Recruitment and Selection Policy

Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael will take all reasonable steps to ensure that leaders working with young people are suitable and appropriately qualified. Leaders will be expected to go through appropriate recruitment and selection procedures that apply to all persons with substantial access to young people, whether paid or unpaid.

The responsibilities of the role and the level of experience/qualifications required should be drawn up and clearly stated beforehand.

New Leaders should fill in an application form, giving names of two referees that can be contacted. Where possible all new leaders should be interviewed.

New Leaders should be checked by Garda vetting service when it becomes available

A probationary period is advisable.

There will be a "sign-up" procedure, whereby the appointed / reappointed leader, agrees to abide by the *Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Young People in Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael* and to the club / association's policies. (see appendix for forms).

4.1 Recruitment and Selection Policy continued

No exception should be made in relation to appropriate recruitment procedures.

Every effort should be made to manage and support appointed Leaders. Adequate supervision should always be provided; a leader should not have to work alone.

A decision to appoint a Leader 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.

All forms should be filed as a matter of record by the Club/County Board.

4.2 Disciplinary, Complaints and Appeals Procedure

All complaints must initially be dealt with by relevant management authority.

Complaints may be lodged by all members of the club/organisation.

They should be received in writing by the secretary of the club / organisation.

The complaint should outline all relevant details about other parties involved.

The complaint should be brought to the attention of the cathaoirleach of the relevant body who will convene the disciplinary committee, which may comprise a senior officer, the children's officer and one other ordinary member.

"Complaints submitted at local level are the responsibility of the relevant local body.

Complaints submitted at county board level are the responsibility of the relevant county board.

Complaints submitted at provincial level are the responsibility of the relevant provincial board.

Complaints submitted at national level are the responsibility of the national body.."

If the complaint involves a Child Protection Concern or a criminal offence the cathaoirleach should disband the disciplinary committee and talk to the children's officer. The statutory authorities will then be informed.

Any complaint pertaining to Child protection must be referred to Ardstiúrthóir.

The disciplinary committee should hear the case of all parties involved and decide if a rule or regulation has been infringed.

They should, in writing, inform those involved of the sanctions to be imposed. Written notification should be given to parents if the complaint is against a junior member.

Written records of all complaints should be safely and confidentially kept

If any party does not agree with the disciplinary committee they can appeal the decision in writing within 10-day period

The appeals committee is convened, whose cathaoirleach should be taken from the relevant executive committee and those who have not been on the original disciplinary committee.

The appeals committee should confirm or set aside or change any sanction imposed by the disciplinary committee.

"All efforts to resolve the issue at local level should be exhausted before moving on."

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 participants and any special needs of the group. As a guide a ratio of 1:8 for under 12 years of age and 1:10 for participants over 12 years of age. This is only a guide and will change depending on the circumstances, e.g. players with special needs or away trips
- All teams should have at least one female leader; if group is mixed there should be leaders of appropriate gender.
- Avoid being alone with one player, if you need to talk separately do so in an open environment, in view of others
- In changing rooms, ask parents to take responsibility and supervise in pairs of appropriate gender
- Leaders should not have to enter the changing rooms unless children are very young or need special assistance, where supervision should be in pairs of appropriate gender
- Clearly state time for start and end of training sessions or competitions, leaders should remain in pairs until all players have been collected
- Keep attendance records and record of any incidents / injuries that arise
- Ask parents to stay and supervise sessions, (for safety and supervision, not necessarily for their 'technical' expertise)

4.4 Travelling with children

There is extra responsibility taken on by leaders when they travel with children to events. When travelling with young people you should:

Ensure that there is adequate insurance cover

- Not carry more than the permitted number of passengers
- Ensure use of safety belts
- Avoid being alone with one player.
- Seek permission to transport an individual player on a regular basis from parent/guardian and clearly state times of pick- up and drop off. Where possible player should always travel in the back seat and drop off at agreed locations.
- Ensure all leaders/players/parents have signed Travelling Permission forms which should include contact numbers for parents.
- All forms should be kept on file within the Club/County Board.

4.5 Away trips / Overnight stays

- Separate permission forms should be signed by parents and players for overnight stays, containing emergency contact number
- Each overnight stay requires a separate permission form.
- Players should sign a code of conduct
- Appoint a group leader who will make a report on returning home
- A meeting with parents and participants 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 socialisation 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.
- There must be at least one female adult with each team. There should be a good adult – child ratio, 1:5/6, and proper access to medical personnel
- Lights out times should be enforced
- Young 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.

4.6 Safety

All clubs / organisation should have a safety statement, including specific and potential risks attached to their sport. 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
- Ensure any necessary protective gear is used
- Ensure First Aid kit is close at hand with access to qualified first-aid personnel
- Keep first aid kit stocked up
- Know the contact numbers of emergency services
- Ensure easy access to medical personnel if needed and have a emergency plan
- If an incident occurs, make a brief record of injury and action taken. Note the problem/action/outcome. Contact the players' parents and keep them informed of all details
- Officials (umpires, referees, etc.) should ensure the conduct of the game
- Players should know and keep the rules of Camogie, keeping in mind that many rules are there for safety
- Leaders should hold appropriate qualifications. (Consult with National Children's Officer).
- Ensure there is adequate insurance cover for all activities
- Ensure parents / guardians are present at finishing time of sessions or events

4.7 Physical Contact

Camogie can require a 'hands on approach', especially in a teaching or coaching situation, e.g., it may be necessary to support a child learning a new skill, but the following should be taken into consideration

- Avoid unnecessary physical contact
- Any necessary contact should be in response to the needs of the child and not the adult
- 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 – Don't do something that a child can do for themselves
- Never engage in inappropriate touching

4.8 Use of Photographic and Filming Equipment

Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael has adopted a policy in relation to the use of images of players on their websites and in other publications as there have been concerns about the risks posed directly and indirectly to children and young people through the use of photographs on sports websites and other publications. Remember having photographic and filming guidelines is not about preventing parents from taking pictures, it is to ensure that only those who have a right to take photographs do so. The purpose is to reduce the risk of inappropriate, unsolicited attention from people within and outside the sport. Group photographs where the club is identified rather than individuals are good for publicity without creating a risk to those in the photographs.

Rules to guide use of photography:

- Ask for the player's and parental permission to use their image. This ensures that they are aware of the way the image is to be used to represent the sport.
- Try to avoid the use of the first name and surname of individuals in a photograph.
- Only use images of players in suitable dress to reduce the risk of inappropriate use. The content of the photograph should focus on the activity not on a particular child
- Where possible try to use models or illustrations when promoting an activity
- The inappropriate use of images of players should be reported to reduce the risks to players. Follow the child protection procedures, ensuring either the Children's Officer or, if necessary, the statutory authorities are informed.
- Photographers/film/video operators wishing to record an event or practice session should seek accreditation from the children's officer and / or leader at session. Where possible their professional identification should be sought and a record made.
- When commissioning professional photographers or inviting the press to a game or session ensure that they are clear about our expectations of them in relation to child protection.

Video as a coaching aid: Video equipment can be used as a legitimate coaching aid. However, permission should first be obtained from the player and the player's parent/guardian

Anyone concerned about any photography taking place at events or training sessions can contact the children's officer in relation to the matter.

Working in Partnership to protect young people

Photographs, when used with personal information, can be used as a means of identifying children. This practice can make a child vulnerable to an individual who may wish to "groom" that child for abuse. Furthermore the content of the photo can be used or adapted for inappropriate use. There is evidence of this adapted material finding its way onto child pornography sites. Adults and sports leaders need to work together to prevent those wishing to cause such harm to young people.

4.9 Mobile Phones

Mobile phones are often given to young people for security, enabling parents to keep in touch and make sure they are safe. Young people value their phones highly as it offers them a sense of independence. In addition mobile phones allow quick and easy contact, which 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.

As a young person remember

- If you receive an offensive photo, email or message, do not reply, save it, make a note of times and dates and tell a parent or children's officer within the club.
- Be careful about who you give your phone number to and don't respond to unfamiliar numbers
- Change your phone number in cases of bullying or harassment
- Don't use the phone in certain locations; inappropriate use of your camera phone may cause upset or offence to another person, e.g. changing rooms
- Treat your phone as you would any other valuable item so that you guard against theft

As a Leader remember

- Use group texts for communication among players and teams and inform parents of this at the start of the season
- It is not appropriate to have constant communication with individual players
- Don't use the phone in certain locations; inappropriate use of your camera phone may cause upset or offence to another person, e.g. changing rooms

5 Child Welfare and Protection Procedures

Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael accepts that organizations, which include young people among its members, are vulnerable to the occurrence of child abuse. Below are the procedures for dealing with any welfare or protection issue that may arise. Child welfare and the protection of young people is the concern of all adults at all times, irrespective of their role within the organization.

If there are grounds for concern about the safety or welfare of a young person you should react to the concern. Persons unsure about whether or not certain behaviours are abusive and therefore reportable should contact the duty social worker in the local health board or social services department where they will receive advice. Grounds for concern include a specific indication from a child, a statement from a person who witnessed abuse or an illness, injury or behaviour consistent with abuse. (See appendix for grounds for concern).

A report may be made by any member in the club but should be passed on to the Children's Officer (*name*), who may in turn have to pass the concern to the local Statutory Authorities. It is not the responsibility of anyone working within Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael, in a paid or voluntary capacity, or those working in affiliated organisations, to take responsibility or decide whether or not child abuse is taking place. That is the job of the local statutory authorities. However, there is a responsibility to protect children by assisting the appropriate agencies so that they can then make enquiries and take any necessary action to protect the young person.

Everyone should follow both procedures outlined below, firstly the procedure for responding to a child in distress and secondly the procedure for reporting the concern.

5.1 Response to a Child Disclosing Abuse

When a young person discloses information of suspected abuse you should:

deal with any allegation of abuse in a sensitive and competent way through listening to and facilitating the child to tell about the problem, rather than interviewing the child about details of what happened
stay calm and not show any extreme reaction to what the child is saying. Listen compassionately, and take what the child is saying seriously
understand that the child has decided to tell something very important and has taken a risk to do so
The experience of telling should be a positive one so that the child will not mind talking to those involved in the investigation

5.1 Response to a Child Disclosing Abuse - continued

be honest with the child and tell them that it is not possible to keep the information a secret

make no judgmental statements against the person whom the allegation is made

not question the child unless the nature of what s/he is saying is unclear. Leading questions should be avoided. Open, non-specific questions should be used such as "Can you explain to me what you mean by that"

- a) check out the concerns with the parents/guardians before making a report unless doing so would endanger the child
- b) give the child 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.
- c) carefully record the details
- d) pass on this information to the Children's Officer (*name*)
- e) Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you

5.2 Reporting Suspected or Disclosed Child Abuse

The following steps should be taken in reporting child abuse to the statutory authorities:

- (a) Observe and note dates, times, locations and contexts in which the incident occurred or suspicion was aroused, together with any other relevant information
- (b) Report the matter as soon as possible to the designated officer with responsibility for reporting abuse eg the Children's Officer. If the Children's Officer has reasonable grounds for believing that the child has been abused or is at risk of abuse, s/he will make a report to the health board/social services who have statutory responsibility to investigate and assess suspected or actual child abuse
- (c) In cases of emergency, where a child appears to be at immediate and serious risk and the Children's Officer is unable to contact a duty social worker, the Garda Síochána/PSNI should be contacted. Under no circumstances should a child be left in a dangerous situation pending intervention by the Statutory Authorities
- (d) If the Children's Officer is unsure whether reasonable grounds for concern exist she/he can informally consult with the local health board/social services. She/he will be advised 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 an investigation

5.3 Protection for Persons Reporting

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 the Gardai The act also covers the offence of 'false reporting'. The main provisions of the Act are:

1. The provision of immunity from civil liability to any person who reports child abuse "reasonably and in good faith" to designated officers of Health Boards or any member of An Garda Síochána;
2. The provision of significant protections for employees who report child abuse. These protections cover all employees and all forms of discrimination up to and including, dismissal;
3. The creation of a new offence of false reporting of child abuse where a person makes a report of child abuse to the appropriate authorities "knowing that statement to be false". This is a new criminal offence designed to protect innocent persons from malicious reports.

This law does not exist in Northern Ireland, but an individual who reports concerns in 'good faith' is not deliberately attempting to slander another person's name. In Northern Ireland there is legislation, the Criminal Law Act (NI) 1967 which places the responsibility on everyone to report offences or to forward information to the police by emphasizing the, '*duty of every other person, who knows or believes,*

(a) *that the offence or some other arrestable offences has been committed; and*

(b) *that he has information which is likely to secure, or to be material assistance in securing, the apprehension, prosecution or conviction of any person for that offence'*

5.4 Allegations Against Sports Leaders

Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael has agreed procedures to be followed in cases of alleged child abuse against Leaders. If such an allegation is made against a Leader working within the club, two procedures should be followed:

- The reporting procedure in respect of suspected child abuse (reported by the children's officer), see 5.2
- The procedure for dealing with the Sports Leader (carried out by the club cathaoirleach or senior officer, or a person not already involved with the child protection concern) See 5.4.1

The safety of the child making the allegation should be considered and the safety of any other children who may be at risk. The club should take any necessary steps that may be necessary to protect children in its care

The issue of confidentiality is important. Information is on a need to know basis and the Leader should be treated with respect and fairness.

5.4.1 The Sports Leader

While the children's officer makes the report to the local health board, the cathaoirleach of the club should deal with the Leader in question.

- The cathaoirleach should privately inform the leader that
 - (a) an allegation has been made against him / her and
 - (b) the nature of the allegation.
- He / she should be afforded an opportunity to respond.
- His / her response should be noted and passed on to the health board / social services.
- The leader should be asked to step aside pending the outcome of the investigation. When a person is asked to step aside it should be made clear that it is only a precautionary measure and will not prejudice any later disciplinary proceedings.

The Ardstiúrthóir should be informed by the Children's Officer that the leader has been asked to stand aside

Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael can consider disciplinary action on the leader but should ensure that this does not interfere with the investigation of the Statutory Authorities. It is important that they consider the outcome of the investigation and any implications it might have. The fact that the alleged abuser has not been prosecuted or been found guilty does not mean that they are appropriate to work with young people in the future.

5.5 Confidentiality

Confidentiality should be maintained in respect of all issues and people involved in cases of abuse, welfare or bad practice. It is important that the rights of both the child and the person about whom the complaint has been made are protected.

The following points should be kept in mind:

- A guarantee of confidentiality or undertakings regarding secrecy cannot be given, as the welfare of the child will supersede all other considerations
- All information should be treated in a careful and sensitive manner and should be discussed only with those who need to know
- Information should be conveyed to the parents / guardians of the child in a sensitive way
- Giving information to others on a 'need to know' basis for the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality
- All persons involved in a child protection process (the child, his/her parents/guardians, the alleged offender, his/her family, Leaders) should be afforded appropriate respect, fairness, support and confidentiality at all stages of the procedure.
- Information should be stored in a secure place, with limited access only to designated people.
- The requirements of the Data Protection laws should be adhered to.
- Breach of confidentiality is a serious matter.

5.6 Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints can be difficult to deal with but should not be ignored. In all cases the safety and welfare of the child/children is paramount. Any such complaints relating to inappropriate behaviour should be brought to the attention of the Children's Officer. The information should be checked out and handled in a confidential manner.

5.7 Rumours

Rumours should not be allowed to hang in the air. Any rumours relating to inappropriate behaviour should be brought to the attention of the Children's Officer, and checked out without delay.

6.1 Application Form:

New Leaders

Position applied for: _____

Full Name: _____

Any surname previously: _____

Current Address: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Telephone No(s): _____

List previous experience / involvement in this or any other club. Include experience of working with young children in a voluntary or professional capacity.

Sporting/ NGB Qualifications: _____

Do you agree to abide by the guidelines contained in the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Young People? Yes No Please tick

Do you agree to abide by the rules of Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael and name Camogie Club? Yes No Please tick

Have you ever been asked to leave a sporting organisation? Yes No Please tick
(If you have answered yes, we will contact you in confidence)

Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence or been the subject of a caution; a Bound Over Order; or are you at present the subject of criminal investigations? Yes No Please tick

References:

Please supply the name and address of two people who we can contact and who, from personal knowledge, are willing to endorse your application. One of these names should be, where possible, the name of an administrator / leader in your last club / place of involvement

Name and Address of Referee 1: _____

Name and Address of Referee 2: _____

I agree to abide by the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Young People in Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael and the Code of Conduct.

Signed _____ Date: _____

Leader's / Coach's Code of Conduct

I have familiarised myself with the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Sport for Young People of Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael. I agree to respect and abide by this code.

I will act as a role model and promote the positive aspects of sport and of Camogie.

I will respect all players and treat them equally.

I will encourage fair play and praise effort as well as results

I will not use any form of physical punishment.

I will respect officials and their authority during matches and will encourage young people to do likewise.

I will never demonstrate threatening or abusive behaviour or use foul language.

I will not engage in rough physical games, sexually provocative games or allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any kind, and/or make sexually suggestive comments about, or to, a player.

I will plan and prepare appropriately for training and matches.

I will keep a record of attendance at training.

I will keep a brief record of injuries and of behavioural problems.

I will involve parents where possible and inform parents when problems arise.

I have read and agree to abide by the above guidelines

_____ (signed) _____ (date)

6.3 Permission Form
Travelling with Underage Players

EVENT: _____

VENUE: _____

DATES: _____

Travelling Volunteer

I hereby agree to abide by the guidelines and regulations contained in the *Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Young People* of Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael and the Code of Conduct.

Name: _____ Role _____

Date: _____

Parent / Guardian of Participant

I have read and accept the conditions and rules set down by Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael for children travelling to matches and events.

Parents/Carers Name: _____ Date: _____

Emergency Contact Number(s)

Player

I have read and accept the conditions and rules set down by Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael for children travelling to matches and events. I agree to abide by these rules

Name _____ Date _____

6.4 Permission Form
Overnight Travelling of Underage Players

EVENT: _____

VENUE: _____

DATES: _____

Details of overnight accommodation: _____

Contact Number: _____

Travelling Volunteer

I hereby agree to abide by the guidelines and regulations contained in the Code of Conduct of Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael.

Name: _____ Role _____

Date: _____

Parent / Guardian of Participant

I have read and accept the conditions and rules set down by Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael for children travelling to matches and events which involves overnight stay.

Parents/Guardian's Name: _____ Date: _____

Emergency Contact Number(s) _____

Player

I have read and accept the conditions and rules set down by Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael for children travelling to matches and events which involve overnight stay. I agree to abide by the rules

Name _____ Date _____

6.5 Grounds for Concern

The following examples would constitute reasonable grounds for concern:

- (i) specific indication from the child that (s)he was abused;
- (ii) an account by a person who saw the child being abused;
- (iii) evidence, such as an injury or behaviour which is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused another way;
- (iv) 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 case of abuse. An example of this would be a pattern of injuries, an implausible explanation, other indications of abuse, dysfunctional behaviour;

- (v) consistent indication, over a period of time, that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect.

Anti-Bullying Policy

This is adapted from the Scout Association of Ireland's Child Protection 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 children and young people. It includes behaviours such as teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting and extortion behaviour by one or more children against a victim.

How would you know if a child is being bullied?

All bullies operate using furtiveness, threats and fear. Bullying can therefore only survive in an environment where the victim does not feel empowered to tell someone who can help or in which it is not safe to do so.

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
- Physical signs (unexplained bruises, scratches, or damage to belongings)
- Stress-caused illness – headaches, and stomach aches which seem unexplained
- Fearful behaviour (fear of walking to a meeting, going different routes, 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
- Attempting suicide or hinting at suicide
- Anxiety (shown by nail-biting, fearfulness, tics)

There are other possible reasons for many of the above

Who should deal with bullying?

While the more extreme forms of bullying would be regarded as physical or emotional abuse and are reported to the Health Board, Garda Síochana, PSNI, dealing with bullying behaviour is normally the responsibility of all Leaders within the club / organisation.

How can it be prevented?

- Ensure that all members follow the code of conduct, which promotes the rights and dignity of each member.
- Deal with any incidents as they arise.
- Use a whole group policy or 'no-blame approach', i.e., not 'bullying the bully' but working with bullies and the group of young people, helping them to understand the hurt they are causing, and so make the problem a 'shared concern' of the group, (see below)
- Reinforce that there is 'a permission to tell' culture rather than a 'might is right'
- Encourage young people to negotiate, co-operate and help others, particularly new or different children
- Offer the victim immediate support and put the 'no blame approach' into operation
- Never tell a young person to ignore bullying, they can't ignore it, it hurts too much
- Never encourage a young person to take the law into their own hands and beat the bully at their own game
- Tell the victim there is nothing wrong with them and it is not their fault

What is the 'No Blame' Approach?

Step 1 – Interview with the victim

If you find that there has been an incident of bullying, first talk to the victim. At this stage find out who was involved and what the victim is now feeling. Try asking the following questions:

- Was it verbal or physical intimidation?
- How hurt is the victim
- Was it within his/her own peer group?
- Ensure the victim that his/her name will not come out in the investigation
- Actively listen

Step 2 – Meet with all involved

Arrange to meet with all those involved; this should include some bystanders, those who may have colluded, those who joined in and those who initiated the bullying.

- Have a maximum of six to eight in the group – keep the number controllable
- Make a point of calling a ‘special’ meeting
- Ensure the severity of the topic is understood by all
- Speak only of the hurt caused in general terms with no reference to the victim
- Play on the conscience of all – ask questions like: How would you feel? Would you like it done to you?

Step 3 – Explain the problem

The distress being suffered as a result of the bullying incident is explained. At this stage the details of the incident or the allocation of the blame is not discussed. Explain the feelings of loneliness, feeling left out, rejected, laughed at. Try asking questions:

- Would they like it if it happened to them
- “Someone here in this group was bullied by someone within the group, what could we do to see it does not happen again?”
- Listen, watch out for reactions, and pick up on any without isolating anyone

Step 4 – Share the responsibility

Explain what steps / controls may have to be introduced to prevent further incidents and how everyone will loose out as a result

Step 5 – Ask the group for their ideas

At this stage the group is encouraged to suggest ways that would make the victim feel happier. All positive responses are noted. Use phrases “if it were you” to encourage a response. Listen to all suggestions and note them.

Step 6 – Leave it to them

Now the problem has been identified, solutions suggested, the problem is now handed over to the group to solve. Arrange to meet again in a week’s time. Pass responsibility over to the group and give a time frame within which something must be done

Step 7 – Meet them again

Each member of the group, including the bully, discuss how things are going, who is doing what and have there been other incidents. This allows for continual monitoring and also keeps all involved in the process.

Again enforce the idea of the ‘team’ looking after each other at regular intervals to ensure it is know that bullying or intimidating behaviour will not be tolerated.