

# **Rhode GAA Code Of Behaviour**

## **Position Statement**

In Rhode Gaelic Athletic Association we are committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for all young people who wish to participate in our Gaelic Games and activities. We will take all practicable steps to protect them from discernable forms of abuse, from harm, discrimination or degrading treatment and shall respect their rights, wishes and feelings. Every player, parent, coach, mentor and volunteer who registers with Rhode GAA Club will be asked to abide by our code of behaviour so we are urging you to be aware and read it carefully. It is all of our responsibility to ensure that best practice is implemented in Rhode GAA Club. **The Executive Committee of Rhode GAA is committed to ensuring that we follow the GAA “Code of Behaviour Underage” which is the code of best practice for all persons working with young people and vulnerable adults. We have nominated a Children’s’ Officer and Designated Person to ensure full implementation of the clubs Child Protection and Welfare Policy.**

**Our Children’s Welfare Officer and Designated Liaison Person is:**

Cathal Swords Phone no. 087 8250595

**In accordance with recent legislation a Child Safeguarding Statement which is binding on members is also in place.**

## **Rhode GAA Members Code of Conduct**

### **Code of Conduct for Players**

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

When a young person signs a membership form as a player with Rhode GAA Club they are agreeing to abide by this Code of Behaviour and to any other policies or codes in the 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 levels with which they feel comfortable.
- Make their concerns known and have them dealt with in an appropriate manner.
- Be protected from abuse.
- Be listened to.

#### **YOUNG PLAYERS should always:**

- Play fairly, do their best and enjoy themselves.
- Respect fellow team members regardless of ability, ethnic origin, cultural background or religion.
- Support fellow team members regardless of whether they do well or not.
- Represent their team, their club and their family with pride and dignity.

- Respect all coaches, mentors, officials and their opponents.
- Be gracious in defeat and modest in victory.
- Shake hands before and after a game, irrespective of the result.
- Ensure that their coach/mentor/manager is informed in advance if they are unavailable for training and games.
- Know that it is acceptable to talk to the Club Children's Officer with any concerns or questions they may have.
- Adhere to acceptable standards of behaviour.
- Tell somebody else if they or others have been harmed in any way.
- Take due care of club equipment.

**YOUNG PLAYERS should never:**

- Cheat – always play by the rules.
- Shout at or argue with a game's official, with their coach, their team mates or opponents and should never use violence.
- 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 injured.
- Use unacceptable language or racial and/or sectarian references.

**CODE OF CONDUCT FOR COACHES**

**All coaches, mentors and trainers should ensure that young people and children benefit significantly from our games by promoting a positive, healthy and participatory approach in our work with underage players.**

*In developing the skills levels of every player, Coaches should always encourage enjoyment and fun while ensuring meaningful participation in our games and activities. Coaches should always remember that they are role models for the players in their care.*

**Recruitment of Coaches**

All Coaches working with young people and children are required to be suitable for their chosen role and should be appropriately trained and supported to fulfil such roles. All persons working or volunteering for such roles are now required to undertake agreed Garda Vetting, to possess a Coaching Education Qualification and to attend Gaelic Games Child Safeguarding training relevant to their roles. Rhode GAA Children's Officer and the Club Executive monitor will seek verification of all of these.

**Coaches should maintain a child centred approach**

- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person.
- Treat each person equally regardless of age, gender, ability, ethnic origin, cultural background or religion.
- Be positive during coaching sessions, games and other activities so that underage players always leave the field with a sense of achievement and an increased level of self-esteem.
- Recognise the development needs and capacity of all underage players, regardless of their ability, by emphasising participation for all while avoiding excessive training and competition. Skills development and personal satisfaction should have priority over competition when working with underage players.
- Develop an understanding of relevant coaching methods and ensure that they have the appropriate level of coaching accreditation.
- Do not equate losing with failure and do not develop a preoccupation with medals and trophies. The level of improvement made by underage players is the best indicator of effective coaching.

**Coaches should lead by example**

- Never use foul language or provocative language/gestures to a player, opponent or match official.
- Only enter the field of play with the Referee's permission.
- Encourage players to respect and accept the judgement of match officials.
- Promote Fair Play.
- Promote the RESPECT campaign.
- Do not smoke while working with underage players.
- Encourage parents to become involved in your team and club activities wherever possible.

### **Conduct of Coaches when working with young people**

- Develop an appropriate working relationship with children based on mutual trust and respect.
- Challenge bullying in any form whether physical or emotional. Bullying is not acceptable behaviour be it from a young person, coach parent/guardian, spectator or match official.
- Don't shout at or lecture players or reprimand/ridicule them when they make a mistake. Children learn best through trial and error. Children and young people should not be afraid to risk error so as to learn.
- The use of any form of physical punishment is prohibited as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour, unless it is by way of restraint.
- Avoid incidents of horse play or role play or telling jokes etc. that could be misinterpreted.

### **Avoid compromising your role as a Coach**

Some activities may require coaches to come into physical contact with underage players in the course of their duties. However, coaches should;

- Avoid taking coaching sessions on your own.
- Only deliver one to one coaching, if deemed necessary, in a group setting.
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact with an underage player and never engage in inappropriate touching of a player.
- Be aware that any necessary contact should be determined by the age and development of the player and should only take place with the permission and understanding of the player and in an open environment in the context of developing a player's skills and abilities.

### **Best practice**

- As a Coach always be punctual and properly attired.
- Ensure that all of your players are suitably and safely attired to play their chosen sport, e.g. helmets, shin guards, mouth guards.
- Keep a record of attendance at training and at games by both players and coaches.
- Ensure that all dressing rooms and the general areas that are occupied by your players and other club personnel, prior to, during or immediately following the completion of any match are kept clean and are not damaged in any way.
- Be accompanied by at least one other adult in underage team dressing rooms.
- Set realistic – stretching but achievable – performance goals for your players and team.
- Keep a record of any injuries and action subsequently taken. Ensure that another official/team mentor is present when a player is being attended to and can corroborate the relevant details.
- Make adequate provision for First Aid services.
- Do not encourage or permit players to play while injured.
- Be aware of any special medical or dietary requirements of players as indicated on the medical consent/registration forms or as informed by parents/guardians.
- With the expressed permission of parents/guardians be willing to keep necessary and emergency medication of players in a safe and accessible place for administration in accordance with the wishes of the parents/guardians.
- Do not administer medication or medical aid unless you are willing to do so and have received the necessary training to administer such aid.
- Use mobile phones, if deemed appropriate, only via a group text or email system for communicating with the parents/guardians of players. Do not communicate individually by text/email with underage players.

- Do not engage in communications with underage players via social network sites.
- Encourage parents/guardians to play an active role in organising and assisting various activities for your teams and your Club.
- If it is necessary to transport a child/young person in your car, ensure that they are seated in a rear seat with seat belts securely fastened.
- With the exception of their own child a coach should not transport a child alone, except in emergency or exceptional circumstances.

### **Code of Conduct for Parents/Guardians**

**Parents/Guardians have an influential role to play in assisting and encouraging their children to fully participate in Gaelic Games, whether it is when they are playing our games or attending training or coaching sessions. They should act as role models for their children as they participate.**

#### **Parents/Guardians should encourage their child to:**

- Always play by the rules.
- Improve their skill levels.
- Appreciate everybody on their team, regardless of ability.
- Maintain a balanced and healthy lifestyle with regard to exercise, food, rest and play.

#### **Parents/Guardians should lead by example:**

- Adopt a positive attitude to their children's participation in our games.
- Respect officials' decisions and encourage children to do likewise.
- Do not exert undue pressure on their child.
- Never admonish their own child or any other child for their standard of play.
- Be realistic in their expectations.
- Show approval for effort, not just results.
- Avoid asking a child or young person, 'How much did you score today?' or 'What did you win by?' or 'What did you lose by?' Ask them 'Did they enjoy themselves?'
- Never embarrass a child or use sarcastic remarks towards a player.
- Applaud good play from all teams.
- Do not criticise playing performances. Identify how improvements may be made.
- Do not seek to unfairly affect a game or player.
- Do not enter the field of play unless specifically invited to do so by an official in charge.

#### **Parents/Guardians must:**

- Complete and return the registration/permission and medical consent forms for their child's participation in the Club.
- Inform the coaches, and any other relevant Club personnel, of any changes in their child's medical or dietary requirements prior to coaching sessions, games or other related activities.
- Ensure that their child punctually attends, coaching sessions, games or other related activities.
- Provide their child with adequate clothing and equipment as may be required for the playing of our games, including for example helmets, shin guards, gum shields etc.
- Ensure that the nutrition/hydration and hygiene needs of their child are met.
- Listen to what their child may have to say.
- Show approval whether the team wins, loses or draws a game.
- Never attempt to meet their own needs and aspirations for success and achievement through their children's participation in games.
- Always collect your child on time and never leave him waiting for your return.
- Make sure club officials have your details.

#### **Parents/Guardians should assist the 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.
- Respecting the rights, dignity and worth of every person and by treating each one equally regardless of age, gender, ability, ethnic origin, cultural background or religion.

**Parents/Guardians have the right to:**

- Know their child is safe and to make a complaint if they believe that their child's safety is in any way compromised.
- Be informed of problems/concerns relating to their child by their team manager.
- Be informed if their child gets injured.

**Code of Conduct for 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 and supporters. Active, loyal and well behaved supporters are always welcome to attend and support our games but should be aware that their conduct will reflect upon the team, players and Clubs that they support and represent.**

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

Supporters should realise and consider that Young Players are encouraged to participate in Gaelic Games so that they may enjoy themselves while also improving their skills levels.

**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 behaviour by not using foul language or harassing players, coaches 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

**Referees**

Throughout this Code of Behaviour emphasis has been placed on the need to co-operate with and facilitate those who organise and deliver our games and activities.

Referees are key people in the delivery of our games and should be respected and assisted in their roles. Referees are conscious of the fact that they are instrumental in ensuring our games are played in a sporting manner in accordance with the rules of the game.

Players, Coaches, Mentors, Parents/Guardians and other Club personnel have a key role to play in the delivery of this aspect of our Gaelic Games particularly when working with underage players. The manner in which we accept the role, authority and decisions of a Referee will naturally be scrutinised very closely by our underage players.

**IN THEIR CAPACITY AS REFEREES OF UNDERAGE GAMES WE EXPECT OUR REFEREES TO:**

- Abide fully with the Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport: Our Games – Our Code
- Apply the playing rules on an impartial and consistent basis.
- Act with integrity and objectivity in all games.
- Communicate decisions to players and team officials in an effective and constructive manner.
- Deal with dissent firmly and fairly.
- Work as a team with other match officials.

- Maintain composure regardless of the circumstances.
- Avail of assessments and supports to improve performance.
- Uphold and implement the Give Respect – Get Respect initiative at all levels.

Players, Coaches, Supporters, Parents/Guardians and other Club personnel should recognise the pivotal role that Referees play in our underage games and should support them at all times when fulfilling their roles.

## **GIVE RESPECT - GET RESPECT**

**Give Respect – Get Respect** is an awareness campaign that seeks to ensure that Gaelic Games are promoted and played in a positive, fair and enjoyable manner and where Players, Coaches, Spectators and Referees Give Respect – Get Respect from each other.

The **RESPECT** campaign applies at all levels and amongst all players regardless of age, competition or ability. The key participants in the Give Respect – Get Respect campaign are not just the Players themselves but Coaches, Clubs, Parents, Referees and Supporters.

The **Give Respect – Get Respect** initiative is supported by the GAA, Ladies Gaelic Football Association, the Camogie Association, GAA Handball Ireland and the Rounders Council of Ireland.

THE RESPECT CAMPAIGN HIGHLIGHTS THE FOLLOWING GOOD PRACTICES:

- All players and coaches shake hands with their opponents and the referee before and after each game. Mark out a designated spectators' area around the playing area.
- At relevant underage categories teams should strive to achieve the maximum participation of all players in accordance with agreed playing models.
- The host Club should welcome referees and opposing teams to all games.
- A merit award, based on sporting endeavour and fair play, shall be awarded to players and teams who have upheld the RESPECT principles.
- Adopt and implement the Code of Behaviour when working with underage players as the minimum level of agreement between the Club and players, coaches, parents, guardians and supporters at underage level.
- Organise half time exhibition games during Club and inter County League and Championship Games that promote the principles of the RESPECT campaign in association with Schools, other Clubs and Cumann na mBunscol.

## **Rhode GAA Anti-Bullying Policy Statement.**

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

### **DEFINITION**

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

### **Rhode GAA SEEKS TO ENSURE THAT:**

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

### **DEALING WITH BULLYING**

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

## **" Dealing with Alleged Breaches of the Code of Behaviour underage at club level.**

**The Code of Behaviour Underage**, is the joint Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport and outlines the minimum levels of behaviour that we require of those that are involved in underage games and activities. The Code applies equally to underage players, coaches, to parents and guardians, to our supporters, referees and officials. While the promotion of the Code may be seen as the responsibility of the Children's Officer ultimately it is everybody's responsibility to ensure that the Code is fully implemented.

Breaches of our Code will unfortunately occur from time to time, some minor and some of major consequences. This may happen as a result of carelessness, poor practice, lack of understanding or there may in some instances be deliberate or indeed calculated breaches of the Code.

Minor instances of poor practice may quite appropriately be dealt with at Club level by the Children's Officer in an informal manner and by agreement. This could necessitate meeting with the person who may be responsible for the poor practice or the minor breach of the Code and resolving the issue amicably and by agreement. All such outcomes will be noted by the Club Children's Officer. However, other alleged breaches of the Code may have to be dealt with in a more formal manner as outlined in the diagrams on pages 28 of the booklet

### **"Maintaining appropriate levels of behaviour in our work with children and young people**

**A detailed publication titled Code of Behaviour Dealing with Alleged Breaches of the Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport is available in CD format from Croke Park and from the GAA website. It will be made available on request to anyone who requests it through the club Children's Officer.**

## **Code Declaration /Signatory.**

**This Code of Behaviour addresses the minimum levels of behaviour, practise and conduct required from our Young Players, Coaches, Officials, Managers, Supporters, Parents and Clubs.**

### **DECLARATION**

**I \_\_\_\_\_ (print name) acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Code of Behaviour (Underage), which I have read and understood in full.**

**I agree to be bound by the principles set out in the Code when participating, playing or attending our Gaelic Games.**

**Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Player) Date:**  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Parent/Guardian) Date:**  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Coach/Referee) Date:**  
\_\_\_\_\_



