

CODE OF ETHICS
&
GOOD PRACTICE
FOR YOUNG
PLAYERS

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POLICY STATEMENT

The St. Conleths Ladies Football Club is fully committed to providing safe, enjoyable and healthy opportunities for our members to take part in the activities of the Ladies Gaelic Football Association. We are also committed to safeguarding the well being of all our members.

Every individual in the club 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 club as contained in this document.

The club has elected a Children's Officer to establish a player centred ethos within the club. We have put in place codes of conduct for players, parents and mentors and guidelines for dealing with young players. Comprehensive Child Protection Procedures and an Anti-Bullying Policy have been adopted.

CODES OF CONDUCT

Role of Parents

St Conleths Ladies Football Club believes that parents play a key role in relation to volunteer support for the club and teams. Parents are a useful resource available to the club and they should be appreciated and respected. As adults involved with young players, parents also have a role and responsibility to play.

St Conleths Ladies Football Club believes that parents should:

- Be a role model for your child and maintain the highest standards of conduct when interacting with children, other parents, officials and organizers.
- Always behave responsibly and do not seek to unfairly affect the game or a player.
- Never intentionally expose any young players 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. Do not publicly question the judgment or honesty of referees, coaches or organisers. Respect referees, coaches, organisers and other players.
- 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 teammates and opponents.
- Support all efforts to remove abusive behaviour and bullying behaviour in all its forms.
- Read the Anti-Bullying policy within the club.
- Sign up to the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Young Players in Ladies Gaelic Football.
- Ensure that the club has adopted and implemented the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Young Players.
- Know the start and finish times of training - ensure that you arrive at the end of training.
- Volunteer to assist with training - helping with equipment, in dressing rooms, at games, when travelling to games.

Parents Code of Conduct

- 1.I will respect the rules and procedures set down in the St Conleths Ladies Football Club Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Young Players.
- 2.I will respect my child's teammates, mentors (e.g. managers, coaches, selectors) and other parents, as well as players, parents and coaches from opposing teams. I will encourage my child to treat other players, coaches, selectors and managers with respect.
- 3.I will give encouragement and applaud positive accomplishments whether from my child, her teammates, her opponents or the officials.
- 4.I will respect all officials and their authority during matches.
5. I will never demonstrate threatening or abusive behaviour or use foul language.
6. I will ensure that my daughter is collected after training or matches **at the time appointed**.

Role of Young Players

St Conleths Ladies Football Club wishes to provide the best possible environment for all young players involved in Ladies Gaelic Football. Young players deserve to be given enjoyable, safe sporting opportunities, free of abuse of any kind. These players have rights, which must be respected, and responsibilities that they must accept.

Young players are entitled to:

- Be safe and to feel safe.
- Be listened to and be believed.
- Be treated with respect, dignity and sensitivity.
- Have a voice in the club/organisation.
- Participate on an equal basis.
- Have fun and enjoy playing Ladies Gaelic Football.
- 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 **all** mentors (coaches, managers, selectors, club officials etc..) with respect.
- Play fairly.
- Abide by the rules of the Association both on and off the playing field.
- Respect team members - even when things go wrong.
- Respect opponents - be gracious in defeat.
- Behave according to the club's Code of Conduct when traveling to away events.
- Behave in a manner that avoids bringing the sport of Ladies Gaelic Football or the good name of the club into disrepute.
- Talk to the 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, teammates 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/other players.
- Spread rumours.

ROLE OF MENTORS

St. Conleths Ladies Football club recognises the key role mentors play in the lives of young players. Mentors should strive to create a positive environment for all young people playing Ladies Gaelic Football. Mentors have an overall responsibility to take the steps necessary to ensure that positive and healthy experiences are provided.

Mentor Behaviour

- Mentors must act as a role model and promote the positive aspects of Ladies Gaelic Football and maintain the highest standards of personal conduct – your behaviour to players, other officials and opponents will have an effect on the players in your care.
- Mentors should respect the rights, dignity and worth of every player and treat each player equally, regardless of ethnic origin, religion or ability.
- Encourage the development of respect for opponents, officials, selectors and other coaches and avoid criticism of mentors and officials.
- Avoid working alone at all times. 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.
- The use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco must be actively discouraged as being incompatible with a healthy approach to sporting activity. Mentors should avoid the use of alcohol, before coaching, during events and on trips with young players.
- When travel/overnight stays are involved, the mentors travelling with a child must sign a separate agreement. Parents and players will also be asked to sign permission forms in these instances.

Dealing with Players

- Be generous with praise and never ridicule or shout at players for making mistakes or for losing a game.
- 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.
- Set realistic goals for the players and do not pressurise young players.
- Be careful to avoid the “star system”. Each player deserves equal time and attention.
- Care must be taken not to expose a player intentionally or unintentionally to embarrassment or disparagement by use of sarcastic or flippant remarks about the player 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.
- All mentors should keep an attendance record of all training sessions and matches.
- All mentors should ensure that parents are aware of training start and finishing times. All parents should be encouraged to assist with training or to assist in dressing rooms.
- All mentors should keep a brief record of injury(s) and action taken both during a training session and during a game. For convenience it is recommended that an injury report form is kept in the first aid bag at all times.
- When young players are invited into adult squads/groups, 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 squads/groups.

- Mentors 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 player requires the passing on of this information.
- Keep a brief record of problem/action/outcomes if behavioural problems arise.

Relationships with Players

- Mentors are responsible for settling 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 approached to take on a new player, ensure that any previous coach-student relationship has been ended by the student/others in a professional manner.
- The nature of the relationship between mentor and a player can often mean that a mentor 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 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.

ROLE OF CHILDREN'S OFFICER

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. S/he is the link between the young players and the adults in the club. S/he also takes responsibility for monitoring and reporting to the Management Committee on how club policy etc. impacts on young players and their mentors. The club must elect a Children's Officer. The Children's Officer should be a member of the Management Committee.

Role of Club Children's 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 practice 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 source on best practice in Ladies Gaelic Football.
- To liase 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 according to the procedures laid down.
- 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.

GUIDELINES FOR DEALING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

St. Conleths Ladies Football Club will take all reasonable steps to ensure that mentors working with young players are suitable and appropriately qualified. All mentors will be expected to go through appropriate recruitment and selection procedures.

Recruitment

The decision to appoint a mentor is the responsibility of St. Conleths Ladies Club and not of any one individual within it. The committee should ratify all recommendations for appointment.

Each mentor should undergo a “sign-up” procedure, whereby the appointed/reappointed mentors agree to abide by the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Young People and to the policies of the St. Conleths Ladies Football Club.

All mentors, new and existing, should fill in an application form and where possible all new mentors should be interviewed.

It is good practice to follow-up on named referees, especially if the new mentor is a stranger.

Existing mentors should not be excused from either the “sign-up” or application form procedure. It is not necessary for existing mentors to undergo an interview.

No exceptions should be made in relation to the recruitment procedures.

All forms should be filed as a matter of record.

All mentors should be given a copy of the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Young Players and they should be made aware of good practice procedures contained within the code.

Every effort should be made to manage and support appointed mentors. Adequate supervision should always be provided – a mentor should not work alone.

Supervision

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

All teams should have at least one female mentor.

Avoid being alone with any player; if you need to talk separately do so in an open environment, in view of others.

In changing rooms, ask parents to take responsibility and supervise in pairs of appropriate gender. Mentors should not need to enter changing rooms unless the players are very young or need special assistance and such supervision should be done by parents or in pairs of appropriate gender.

Mentors should remain in pairs until all players have been collected at the end of training or matches.

Keep attendance records and record any incidents/injuries that arise.

Travelling with Young Players

There is extra responsibility taken on by mentors when they travel with young players to games/tournaments.

When travelling with Young Players you should:

- Ensure that there is adequate insurance cover.
- Not carry more than the permitted number of passengers.
- Ensure use of safety belts at all times.
- Avoid travelling alone with one player, put the player in the back seat, drop off at the agreed locations or seek parental permission to transport the player on regular basis, state times of pick-up and drop off.
- Ensure all mentors, parents and players have signed Travelling Permission forms – these forms should include emergency contact numbers for the player's parents.
- The club should remind players of the Code of Conduct when travelling to games.

Away Trips/Overnight Stays

- When a game requires an overnight stay a separate permission form should be signed by parents and players, containing emergency contact numbers for parents.
- All players should sign a Code of Conduct agreement.
- Appoint a mentor who will report on returning home.
- A meeting with parents and players is useful to communicate travel times, competition details, other activities, gear requirements, medical requirements, special dietary needs and other necessary details.
- Rooming arrangements – adults should not share rooms with young players, players share rooms with those of same age and gender and adults should knock before entering rooms.
- All group socialization should take place in communal areas (i.e. no boys in girl's rooms and vice versa)
- Alcoholic drink, smoking or other illegal substances are forbidden to players.

- At least one female should travel with each team.
- There should be a good adult-player ratio, 1:5/6, and proper access to medical personnel.
- Lights out should be enforced.
- Players should be under reasonable supervision at all times and should never leave the venue or go unsupervised without prior permission.
- Parents should be encouraged to travel to assist with supervision especially with young players.

Safety

Ensure activities are suitable for the age and stage of development of players.

Keep a record of any specific medical conditions of the players. Keep a record of emergency contact numbers for parents/guardians – such records should be readily attainable.

Ensure any necessary protective gear is used.

Keep First Aid kit stocked up and ensure it is close at hand with access to a qualified first-aider.

Know the contact numbers of the emergency services and easy access to medical personnel if needed is recommended.

If an incident occurs, make a brief record of injury and action taken. Note the problem, action and outcome. Contact player's parents and keep them informed of all details.

Officials (umpires, referees, etc.) should ensure the safe conduct of the game.

All players should know and keep the rules of their sport, keeping in mind that many rules are in place for safety.

Ensure there is adequate insurance cover for all activities.

Touching

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

- Avoid unnecessary physical contact.
- Any necessary contact should be in response to the needs of the player and not the mentor.
- It should be in an open environment with the permission and understanding of the player.

- It should be determined by the age and development stage of the player – do not do something that a player can do for himself or herself.
- Never engage in inappropriate touching.

Use of Photographic and Filming Equipment

St. Conleths Ladies Club has adopted a policy in relation to the use of images of players on their website and in other publications as there have been concerns about the risks posed directly and indirectly to young players through the use of photographs on sports websites and other publications. Where possible we will try to use models or illustrations when promoting an activity and avoid the use of the first name and surname of individuals in a photograph. This reduces the risk of inappropriate, unsolicited attention from people within and outside the sport.

Rules to guide use of photography involving underage players:

- If a player is named, avoid using their photograph.
- If a photograph is used, avoid naming the player
- 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.
- The inappropriate use of images of underage players should be reported. Follow the child protection procedures ensuring either the designated officer or the social service and/or the Garda Síochána are informed.
- Photographers/film/video operators wishing to record an event or practice session should seek accreditation with the Children's Officer or mentor of session. Where possible their professional identification should be sought and a record kept.

Videoing 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/carer.

Anyone concerned about any photography, taking place at events or training sessions can contact the Children's Officer in relation to the matter

CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

Below are the procedures the St. Conleths Ladies Football Club has adopted for dealing with any welfare or protection issue that may arise within the club. A report may be made by any member in the club but should be passed on to the Children's Officer who may in turn have to pass the concern on to the Local Statutory Authorities.

It is not the responsibility of anyone involved with the club 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 responsibility to protect young players by assisting the appropriate agencies so that they can take any necessary action to protect the young person.

All members should follow both procedures outlined below, firstly the procedure for responding to a young player in distress and secondly the procedure for reporting a concern.

DEALING WITH A COMPLAINT

Forming a Complaint

All complaints should be submitted in writing either to the club's Children's Officer or to the Chairperson.

The Chairperson should be notified of the complaint.

Written records of all complaints should be safely and confidentially kept.

If, in the opinion of the Chairperson/Children's Officer, there are grounds for concern, the Statutory Authorities should be contacted.

Appointment of Disciplinary Committee

The Disciplinary Committee should consist of a representative from the Management Committee (e.g. the Chairperson), the Children's Officer and an ordinary registered member of the club. Regular turnover of the committee is recommended. The issue of confidentiality is important, information is on a need to know basis.

Complaint Procedure

It is the responsibility of the Disciplinary Committee to resolve problems relating to the conduct of club members. A complaint of any incident of suspected misconduct, including bullying, but does not relate to child abuse should be dealt with by the Disciplinary Committee.

The Disciplinary Committee should inform the individual with details of the complaint being made against him/her and afford him/her the opportunity of providing a response either verbally or in writing.

It is recommended that the Disciplinary Committee meet with all parties involved, affording each party the same rights and opportunities. An underage player should be accompanied by parents/guardians. If parents/guardians are involved in the complaint, the underage player should be accompanied by an independent adult of their choice.

The Disciplinary Committee should form a written report outlining the procedure followed, findings, conclusions and any disciplinary action to be taken. All parties should receive a copy of this report. This report should be signed by all of the Disciplinary Committee members and kept on record

The Disciplinary Committee should, as soon as possible, inform the Management Committee of the progress and conclusions of the disciplinary process.

Sanctions

Where it is established that an incident of misconduct has taken place, the Disciplinary Committee should inform the member of any sanction being imposed. The notification should be made in writing, setting out the reasons for the sanction. If the member is under 18 years of age, correspondence should be addressed to parents/guardians.

Appeals Procedure

If the member against whom the complaint was made is unhappy with the decision of the Disciplinary Committee s/he should have the right to appeal the decision to an Appeals Committee (independent of the Disciplinary Committee). Any appeal should be made in writing **within 7 days** after issue of the decision of the Disciplinary Committee. The Chairperson of the Appeals Committee should be a member of the Management Committee or elected by members at an AGM. The Appeals Committee has the power to confirm, set aside or change any sanction imposed by the Disciplinary Committee.

If any party is not satisfied with the outcome, the matter can be referred to the National Children's Officer. However efforts to resolve the issue at local level should be exhausted before the National Children's Officer is engaged in attempts to resolve the matter. The Management Committee will hear any appeal submitted at National level, with their decision being final.

DEALING WITH SUSPECTED ABUSE

Reporting Abuse

If there are grounds for concern about the safety or welfare of a young player you should react to the concern. If unsure about whether or not certain behaviours are abusive and therefore reportable, you should contact the duty social worker in the Local Health Board or Social Services Department where you will receive advice. Grounds for concern include a specific indication from a player, a statement from a person who witnessed abuse or an illness, injury or behaviour consistent with abuse.

Steps for reporting abuse –

- (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 within the club responsible for reporting abuse, e.g. Children's Officer. If the Children's Officer has reasonable grounds for believing that the player 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 player appears to be at immediate and serious risk and the Children's Officer is unable to contact a duty social worker, the Garda Authorities should be contacted. Under no circumstances should a player 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 s/he can informally consult with the local health board/social services. S/he will be advised whether or not the matter requires a formal report.

Any Children's Officer 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 player or undermine an investigation.

Response to a Young Player

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

- (a) Deal with any allegation of abuse in a sensitive and competent way through listening to and facilitating the player to tell about the problem, rather than interviewing about details of what happened
- (b) Stay calm and not show any extreme reaction to what the player is saying. Listen compassionately and take what the player is saying seriously
- (c) Understand that the player 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 player will not mind talking to those involved in the investigation
- (d) Be honest with the player and tell them that it is not possible to keep this information a secret
- (e) Make no judgemental statements against the person whom the allegation is made
- (f) Not question the player unless the nature of what she 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 meant by that"

- (g) Check out the concerns with the parents/guardians before making a report unless doing so would endanger the player
- (h) Give the player 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 player may have been threatened and may feel vulnerable at this stage
- (i) Carefully record the details
- (j) Pass on this information to the designated officer within the club, the Children's Officer.

Always reassure the player that they have done the right thing in telling you.

Allegations Against Mentors

If an allegation of alleged child abuse is made against a mentor working within the club the following procedure should be followed:

- The reporting procedure in respect of suspected child abuse.
- The procedure for dealing with the mentor.

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

The issue of confidentiality is important – the mentor should be treated with respect and fairness.

Dealing with the Mentor

While the designated Children's Officer makes the report to the local Health Board, the Chairperson of the club should deal with the mentor.

- The Chairperson should privately inform the mentor that
 - (a) An allegation has been made against him/her
 - (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 mentor should be asked to step aside pending the outcome of the investigation. When a mentor 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 Club Children's Officer should inform the National Children's Officer that the mentor has been asked to stand aside.

It is also the duty of club members to inform the National Children's Officer of a mentor who is under investigation by a Statutory Authority.

The club can consider disciplinary action on the mentor but should ensure that this does not interfere with the investigation of the Statutory Authorities – the outcome of the investigation and any implications it might have will be discussed during the Disciplinary procedure.

It should be noted that 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.

FALSE ALLEGATIONS

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 to the Gardaí. 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 the 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 discriminations 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.

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 player and the person about whom the complaint has been made are protected.

The following should be kept in mind:

- A guarantee of confidentiality or undertakings regarding secrecy cannot be given, as the welfare of the player will supersede all other considerations
- All information should be treated in a careful and sensitive manner and should only be discussed with those who need to know
- Information should be conveyed to the parents/guardians of the player about whom there are concerns in a sensitive way
- Giving information to others on a ‘need to know’ basis for the protection of a player is not a breach of confidentiality
- All persons involved in a protection process (the player, her parents/guardians, the alleged offender, her family, mentors) 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 to designated people
- The requirements of the Data Protection laws should be adhered to
- Breach of confidentiality is a serious matter

ANONYMOUS COMPLAINTS

Anonymous complaints can be difficult to deal with but should not be ignored. In all cases the safety and welfare of the player/s 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.

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.

ANTI-BULLYING 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 young people. It includes behaviours such as teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting and extortion behaviour by one or more players against a victim.

How do you know if a player 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)
- Stressed caused illnesses- 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 or An Garda Síochana, dealing with bullying behaviour is normally the responsibility of all Mentors within the club.

How can it be prevented?

- Ensure that all members follow the code of conduct, which promotes 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 with and help others, particularly new or different people
- Offer 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

'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 her own peer group?
- Ensure the victim that 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 lose 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, discusses 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 known that bullying or intimidating behaviour will not be tolerated.

APPENDIX 1

MENTOR APPLICATION FORM

Position applied for: -----

Full Name		
Any previous surname		
Current Address		
Date of Birth		
Telephone No's		
List previous experience/involvement in this or any other club. Include experience of working with young people in a voluntary or professional capacity. Include details of other sport involvement with young people.		
Sporting Qualifications.		
Do you agree to abide by the guidelines contained in the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for young players?	YES	NO
Do you agree to abide by the rules of St. Conleths Ladies Football Club and of the Ladies Gaelic Football Association?	YES	NO
Have you ever been asked to leave a sporting organisation? (if you have answered yes, we will contact you in confidence)	YES	NO
Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence or been subject to a caution, a Bound Over Order or are you at present the subject of criminal investigations? (if you have answered yes, we will contact you in confidence)	YES	NO

References

Please supply the name and address of one or 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/mentor in your last club/place of involvement.

Name & Contact details of Referee 1

Name & Contact details of Referee 2

I agree to abide by the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Young Players in St. Conleths Ladies Football Club and the Code of Conduct and policies.

SIGNED: -----

DATE: -----

APPENDIX 2

TRAVELLING PERMISSION FORM FOR UNDERAGE PLAYERS

Young Player

I have read and accept the conditions and rules set down in the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Young Players when travelling to matches and events. I agree to abide by the rules of St. Conleths Ladies Football Club.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian of Participant

I have read and accept the conditions and rules set down in the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Young Players when travelling to matches and events

Where private transport is used by the club the guidelines laid down on page 13 of the club's Code of Ethics – *Travelling with Young Players* – will apply.

Name of Child(ren): _____

Parent/Carers Name: _____ Date: _____

Emergency Contact Number(s): _____

OVERNIGHT TRAVELLING PERMISSION FORM FOR UNDERAGE PLAYERS

GAME: _____

VENUE: _____

DATES: _____

Pick Up Time: _____ **Pick Up Location** _____

Drop Off Time: _____ **Drop Off Location** _____

Overnight Accommodation: _____

Contact Number: _____

Young Player

I have read and accept the conditions and rules set down in the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Young Players when travelling to matches and events, which involves overnight stays. I agree to abide by the rules of St. Conleth's Ladies Club.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian of Participant

I have read and accept the conditions and rules set down in the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Young Players when travelling to matches and events, which involves overnight stays.

Name of Child(ren): _____

Parents/Carers Name: _____ Date: _____

Emergency Number(s): _____

APPENDIX 3

FORMAT FOR DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Below is a suggested outline of how to write up a report following a complaint. Additional information may be added to the format.

Complaint

State the nature of the complaint and individuals involved

Procedure

State

1. Who the Disciplinary Committee consisted of
2. Who the Disciplinary Committee met with
3. Any additional parties who the Disciplinary Committee met with/spoke to, for example the Health Board may have been contacted informally.

Conclusion

Summarize the main findings from the above meetings and the final decision made by the Disciplinary Committee following these meetings

Sanctions

State any sanctions which the Disciplinary Committee has imposed on any individuals as a result of the complaint

Recommendations

State any recommendations, which the Disciplinary Committee feel, are necessary to prevent such a complaint from reoccurring e.g. all club members involved with underage players attend a Child Protection course.

Signature

All members of the Disciplinary Committee should sign and date the report.

APPENDIX 4

CATAGORIES OF ABUSE

1.Neglect

2.Emotional Abuse

3.Physical Abuse

4.Sexual Abuse

1.Neglect

Neglect is normally defined in terms of omission, where a young person suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults, or medical care. It may also include neglect of a young person's basic emotional needs.

Neglect usually becomes apparent in different ways over a period of time rather than at one specific point. For instance, a young person who suffers a series of minor injuries is not having her needs for supervision and safety met. The threshold of significant harm is reached when the young person's needs are neglected to the extent that her well-being and/or development are severely affected.

2.Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is normally to be found in the relationship between an adult and a young person rather than in a specific event or pattern of events. It is rarely manifested in terms of physical symptoms.

Examples of emotional abuse include

- Persisted criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming
- Where the level of care is conditional on her behaviour
- Unresponsiveness, inconsistent or unrealistic expectations of a young person
- Over or under protection of the young person
- Failure to provide opportunities for the child's education and development
- Use of unrealistic or over-harsh disciplinary measures
- Exposure to domestic violence, adult mental health problems and parental substance misuse may expose children to emotional abuse

3.Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is any form of non-accidental injury that causes significant harm to a young person, including

- Shaking, hitting or throwing
- Use of excessive force in handling

- Deliberate poisoning
- Suffocation or drowning
- Munchausen’s syndrome by proxy (where parents/guardians fabricate stories of illness about their child or cause physical signs of illness)
- Allowing or creating a substantial risk of significant harm to a young person
- For young people with disabilities it may include confinement to a room or cot, or incorrectly given drugs to control behaviour
- Burning or scalding

2. Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse occurs when a young person is used by another person for his or her gratification or sexual arousal, or for that of others.

For example

- Exposure of the sexual organs or any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of a young person
- Intentional touching or molesting of the body of a young person whether by person or object for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification
- Masturbation in the presence of a young person or involvement of the child in the act of masturbation
- Sexual intercourse with the young person, whether oral, vaginal or anal
- Sexual exploitation of a young person
- It may include non-contact activities, such as involving young people in looking at pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways

Signs of Abuse

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Unexplained bruising in soft tissue areas -Repeated injury -Black eye(s) -Injuries to mouth -Torn or bloodstained clothing -Burns or scalds -Bites -Fractures -Marks from implements -Inconsistent stories, excuse relating to injuries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Unexplained changes in behaviour – becoming withdrawn or aggressive -Regressive behaviour -Difficulty in making friends -Distrustful of adults or excessive attachments to adults -Sudden drop in performance -Change in attendance pattern -Inappropriate sexual awareness, behaviour or language -Unusual reluctance to remove clothing -Reluctance to go home

