



SECTION  
01

**CODE OF BEHAVIOUR (UNDERAGE) AND  
CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY STATEMENT**

THIS GUIDANCE FORMS PART OF  
THE CODE OF BEHAVIOUR (UNDERAGE) &  
CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY STATEMENT



## GAELIC GAMES CODE OF BEHAVIOUR (UNDERAGE) & CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY STATEMENT

The publication by the Gaelic Athletic Association, the Ladies Gaelic Football Association, the Camogie Association, GAA Handball and GAA Rounders of Ireland of this joint Code of Behaviour (Underage) and Child Safeguarding Policy Statement provides our membership, and particularly those who work with young people and children, with specific direction and guidance when fulfilling their safeguarding and good practice roles at local and national level.

Such is the importance of child safeguarding and protection in our work that each of the Gaelic Games Associations have brought together the collective best practices based on many years of experience as we seek to provide a safe environment in which we can promote our games and enable young people and children to develop in a caring and respectful manner.

This Code applies to all persons under 18 yrs. of age who participate in our games or other activities and to those who work with them and assist them in any capacity on our behalf.

The value of providing one agreed Code for our members enables us to jointly promote organisational and statutory guidance and legislation that governs our work with young people and children. This will assist and direct our members and units and provide guidance for those working with young people and children.

The Code of Behaviour (Underage) contains all policy and guidance documents relevant for those who work with children in our Associations and also our Child Safeguarding Policy Statement. This is the Statement that Clubs, County Boards and our Associations at national level adopt, with amendments as necessary, every 24 months. The Statement is vital as it outlines the commitment we give to keep children safe from harm when attending our activities or playing our games. A Child Safeguarding Policy Statement is agreed at the relevant level following the completion of a Risk Assessment. Many funders and indeed statutory authorities seek a copy of the relevant Statement from our units and may do so at any time of the year.

Our Associations, in common with others who work with young people and children, will continue to abide by and integrate child welfare legislation and statutory guidance into our work, regardless of the jurisdiction in which we operate. In upholding this principle, the welfare of the child shall always be our paramount consideration and this applies to the safeguarding and safety from harm measures and practices we put in place whether it is on the playing fields, during games or at training sessions at Club, County or any other level.

It is a basic requirement in our Associations that the recruitment of our coaches and other personnel plus the active involvement of parents in our work all takes place in accordance with the provisions of the Code of Behaviour (Underage) so that we continue to provide a safe and enjoyable environment for all children who wish to play our games.

Young people will spend some of the most enjoyable days of their lives playing our games and socialising with their friends in our local Clubs. Whether attending or playing GAA matches, playing Ladies Football or Camogie, or participating in Rounders or Handball activities, they will do so during some of the most important developmental years of their lives.

We hope to see as many of these players as possible progressing to playing at adult level, to coaching and mentoring roles and to refereeing in the years ahead. The enjoyment they experience, the friendships they make, the winning and the losing will all be part of the development of these young people as will the bond they build within each of our Gaelic Games Associations.

Our role and our responsibility is to ensure that they benefit from and participate in our Gaelic Games in a safe, enjoyable and developmental environment where our Games are conducted in a spirit of fair play with everyone who works on our behalf emphasising respect, equality, safety and non-discrimination in all aspects of our work with children and young people. Each member of our Associations has a responsibility to accept and implement this Code of Behaviour (Underage), and how it directs us in such work.

## ALLEGED BREACHES OF THE CODE OF BEHAVIOUR (UNDERAGE)

Section 4 of this Code ‘Dealing with Alleged Breaches of the Code of Behaviour (Underage)’ outlines how alleged breaches may be dealt with informally through the services of the relevant Children’s Officer or if deemed more appropriate may be dealt with formally through a Code of Behaviour (Underage) Hearings.

Breaches of the Code, whether by an adult or a child, should always be addressed in a proportionate manner and should a sanction ever be required, following a breach of the Code, it should be applied in accordance with the provisions of the Code, as outlined for that purpose.

The Child Safeguarding Committee shall also have the authority to order that a team, unit or member, deemed to be safeguarding non-compliant, may not participate in any competitions, games or activities during their period of non-compliance. This is a temporary measure and is separate to the process involving a Code of Behaviour Hearings Committee and shall be subject to the same appeals procedure as would any other sanction imposed under the Code.

Clubs and County Boards must ensure that they have appointed a Code of Behaviour Determining Committee (2 people) from within the membership of their Club Executive or County Committee, who shall be responsible for initial consideration and investigation of any allegation forwarded to them.

Thereafter, and in order to formally hear an alleged breach of the Code each Club and County must also appoint a Code of Behaviour (Underage) Hearings Committee (3 people). The manner in which alleged breaches of the Code may be dealt with is outlined in great detail in Section 4 of the Code – Dealing with Alleged Breaches of the Code of Behaviour (Underage).

In the interest of clarity and accuracy, any amendments to the Code of Behaviour (Underage) shall be in accordance with the Code that is available on each of our Associations’ websites.

*Mol an Óige agus tiocfaidh sí.*

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