



Doora Barefield Minor GAA Club

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

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1. Introduction

1.1 Core Values in Sport for Young People

The work of *Doora Barefield Minor GAA Club* is based on the following principles that will guide the development of sport for young people in this club, (as outlined in “Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport” and on the “Code of Best Practice for Youth Sport as issued by the Gaelic Athletic Association). 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 club. Adults will need to have a basic understanding of the needs of young people, including physical, emotional and personal.

1.1.1 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 sport.

1.1.2 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 specialization are kept in their appropriate place. Too often competitive demands are placed on children too early and results in excessive levels of pressure on them and as a consequence, high levels of dropout from sport.

1.1.3 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.

1.1.4 Fair Play:

Fair play is the guiding principle of the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport.

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)

1.1.5 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 of Doora Barefield Minor GAA Club

Doora Barefield Minor GAA Club is fully committed to safeguarding the well being of its members and all involved in its activities. Every individual in *Doora Barefield Minor GAA 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 organisation and the guidelines contained in the “Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport” and the “Code of Best Practice for Youth Sport” as issued by the GAA.

In Doora Barefield Minor GAA Club 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.

The following pages contains codes of conduct, rules and procedures for travelling away, supervision of young people, recruitment and selection and reporting procedures for child welfare and protection.

Signed:



Anthony O'Halloran - Cathaoirleach

Date: 18/01/2007

Signed:



Liam Murphy - Runaí

Date: 18/01/2007

Signed:



Bernard Hallinan - Child Welfare Officer

Date: 18/01/2007

3. Behavioural Requirements for All

This section of the document outlines the required codes of conduct and behaviour as expected from all parties who have an involvement as participants, organisers, leaders, helpers, parents, guardians or other in *Doora Barefield Minor GAA Club*.

3.1 Code of Conduct for Young People

Doora Barefield Minor GAA Club 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
- Participate on an equal basis
- Have fun and enjoy sport
- Experience competition at a level at which they feel comfortable
- Make complaints and have them dealt with
- Get help against bullies
- Say no
- To protect their bodies
- Confidentiality

Young players should always:

- Treat sports Leaders with respect including team managers, coaches, mentors, referees and match officials
- Play fairly at all times and do their best
- Respect team members
- Respect team members even when things go wrong
- Respect opponents and be gracious in defeat
- Abide by rules set down by team managers when travelling to away events
- Behave in a manner that avoids bringing Gaelic sport into disrepute
- Talk to Club Child Welfare Officer if they have any problems.

Young players should never:

- Cheat
- Use violence or physical contact that is not allowed within the rules
- Shout, use abusive language to or argue with officials, team mates or opponents.
- Harm team mates, 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 relate to harm that they have been caused
- Tell lies about others; young or old
- Spread rumours

3.2.1 Guidelines for Parents

Doora Barefield Minor GAA Club believes that parents should:

- Be a role model for their child and maintain the highest standard of behaviour when interacting with children, other parents, with officials and organisers
- Always behave responsibly and do not seek to unfairly affect the game, players, team or officials
- 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 and recreational opportunities for children.
- Do not publicly question the judgement or honesty of referees, coaches or organisers.
- Respect referees, match officials, team managers, coaches and organisers and their decisions.
- Encourage their children to play by the rules. Teach the child that honest endeavour is as important as winning. Do all that they 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 forms. Please see bullying policy on page 12

3.2.2 Parents Code of Conduct

Doora Barefield Minor GAA Club believes that all parents or guardians should commit to the following:

1. A respect of the rules and procedures of Doora Barefield Minor GAA Club
2. A respect for their child's team-mates, leaders [e.g. managers, coaches, etc], match officials and parents as well as players, managers and coaches of the opposing teams. I will encourage my child to treat other teams, participants, managers or coaches with respect
3. An undertaking to give encouragement and applause to positive accomplishments whether from their own child, his or her team mates, their opponents or the officials.
4. Respect for the child's leader(s) and coach(es) and support for his/her efforts
5. An undertaking to respect the officials and their authority during training sessions or matches
6. Never demonstrate threatening or abusive behaviour or use foul language at club matches, training sessions or other club events

3.3.1 Guidelines for Sport Leaders

Leaders in children's sport should strive to create a positive environment for the children in their care. They have an overall responsibility to take the necessary steps to ensure that positive and healthy experiences are provided to all participants.

Doora Barefield Minor GAA Club recognises the key role leaders (coaches, selectors and team managers, match officials, etc) play in the lives of children in sport.

All Leaders including managers, coaches and mentors should have as their first priority the children's safety and enjoyment of the sport and should adhere to the guidelines and regulations set out in the Associations Code of Best Practice for Youth Sport.

Leaders must respect the rights, dignity and worth of every child and must treat everyone equally, regardless of sex, ethnic origin, religion or ability.

Leaders working with young people in Gaelic sport should be suitable and appropriately qualified. Leaders will be expected to go through appropriate recruitment and selection procedures, (see application and reference forms), that apply to all persons with substantial access to young people; whether paid or unpaid. References will be needed and will be followed up.

There will be a "sign-up" procedure whereby the appointed/reappointed leaders agree to abide by the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children in Sport and to the policies and code of the club.

Leaders will be given a copy of the association's code of Best Practice for Youth Sport and they should be familiar with the procedures contained within the club / association's policies.

The use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco must be actively discouraged as being incompatible with a healthy approach to sporting activity.

Remember your behaviour to players, other officials, and opponents will have an effect on the players in your care.

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.

Be careful to avoid the "star system" whereby the talents and abilities of some higher achieving players are over emphasised with potential negative effects on the other team or panel members. Each child deserves equal time and attention. Remember today's average player may be next years star performer.

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 his/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

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and personal satisfaction have priority over highly structured competition. Never make winning the only objective.

Managers must ensure that where players are brought from a younger age grouping to play with an older team that this does not expose the young player to “player burn-out”, excessive pressure or physical danger.

Managers must also ensure that any involvement of players from a younger group in a particular team or squad does not have a negative impact on players who are part of that age group by merit of age. **The ideal situation is for all participants to be involved and play at their respective age grouping. Prior approval must be sought from player’s parent or guardian and manager of age related group for any such playing at higher age level. Under no circumstances must a young player play at an age group that is more than one level above the appropriate player age group [i.e. an under 10 player may play at under 12 but not at under 14; an under 12 player may play at under 14 but not at under 16; etc]**

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.

Set realistic goals for the participants and do not push young players. Create a safe and enjoyable environment

Encourage the development of respect for opponents, officials, selectors and other coaches and avoid criticism of fellow coaches.

When travel or 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.

Leaders are responsible for setting and monitoring the boundaries between a working relationship and friendship with players. It is advisable for managers or a coach not to involve young players in their personal life i.e. visits to coaches home or overnight stays.

Avoid working alone with children 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.

When approached to take on a new player, ensure that any previous relationship with a club or team is not interfered with by the new participation and that previous club or management is aware of and considers the new arrangement appropriate.

Leaders who become aware of a conflict between their obligations to their players and their obligation to their governing body 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

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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 or family

Do not criticise other leaders, (officials, coaches, and selectors). You are the role model for the children in your care.

Leaders should avoid the use of alcohol, before coaching, during events or on trips with young players

3.3.2 Managers/Coaches/Leaders Code of Conduct

Leaders / Coaches should familiarise themselves with the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport and with the Gaelic Athletics Association Code of Best Practice for Youth Sport and follow the procedures if they suspect or receive complaints of abuse of any sort.

Leaders should:

- Be positive during sessions and games, praise and encourage effort as well as results
- Plan and prepare appropriately
- Put welfare of young person first, strike a balance between this and winning and results
- Encourage fair play and treat participants equally
- Recognise developmental needs
- Be qualified and up-to-date with knowledge and skill of sport for young people. Involve parents, where possible, and inform parents when problems arise
- Keep record of attendance at training
- Ensure that a properly stocked first aid kit is always available during games or sessions
- Keep a brief record of injury(s) and action taken
- Keep a brief record of problem/action/outcomes, if behavioural problems arise

Where possible Leaders should avoid:

- Spending excessive amounts of time with children away from others
- Taking sessions alone
- Taking children to your home
- Taking children on journey's alone in their car

Sports Leaders should not:

- Use any form of punishment or physical force on a child
- Exert undue influence over a participant in order to obtain personal benefit or reward. 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 child
- Take measurements or engage in certain types of fitness testing without the presence of another adult
- Undertake any form of therapy (hypnosis etc.) in the training of children

4. Disciplinary, Complaints and Appeals Procedure

While *Doora Barefield Minor GAA Club* endeavours to nurture and encourage youth and young people it is equally aware of the requirements for good behaviour on the part of all involved. Indiscipline on the part of any parties involved in club activities whether as participant, sports leader, spectator or other role will not be accepted. To this end, Doora Barefield Minor GAA Club has laid down in sections 3.1, 3.2 & 3.3 of this document guidelines and codes of conduct expected of various parties involved.

4.1 Reporting of Indiscipline or Unacceptable Behaviour

It is the responsibility of sports leaders and coaches to make any persons under their stewardship or control aware of the unacceptability of indiscipline, use of bad language or other bad behaviour when such is experienced. If such behaviour does not cease, in the case of persons under the age of eighteen, the parents or guardians should be informed of the behaviour and its unacceptability. If the problem persists it should be reported to the club secretary of the *Doora Barefield Minor GAA Club* who will in turn inform the chairman.

4.2 Disciplinary Committee

A disciplinary Committee has been put in place to assess and adjudicate on any incidents of indiscipline or breaches of the aforementioned guidelines and codes of conduct, deemed serious by parties involved.

On receipt of a report of indiscipline from the secretary, the chairman shall convene a meeting of the Disciplinary Committee, where possible at a time convenient to all parties. The party being requested to appear before the Disciplinary Committee or in the case of persons under the age of eighteen years, the parent or guardian of the party shall be given adequate written notice and a brief outline of the disciplinary matter to be discussed at the meeting.

In the case of any person over the age of eighteen requested to appear before the disciplinary committee that person may be accompanied by another adult of their choice. In the case of a person under the age of eighteen that person must be accompanied by their parent or guardian.

Wherever possible it is hoped to resolve any raised issue in a manner acceptable to all. However the *Doora Barefield Minor GAA Club* reserves the right to terminate the membership or involvement of any party in the club or the clubs activities.

4.3 Appeals Procedure

If any of the involved parties is not satisfied with the findings or outcome of any disciplinary hearing they may lodge a complaint to the Doora Barefield Senior GAA Club who will investigate the matter.

This complaints procedure has been put in place by *Doora Barefield Minor GAA Club* in order to allow all members or their parents or guardians who are dissatisfied for whatever reason to register their complaint in a formal way and to provide an open process of investigation that can be put into action if required.

- Complaints may be lodged by all members of the club/organisation or parents or guardians
- They should be sent or given in writing to the secretary of the club.
- The complaint should outline all relevant details about the situation or incident that is the reason for the complaint and details of other parties involved.

- The complaint should be brought to the attention of the Chairperson by the Secretary, who will notify and convene the disciplinary committee.
- If the complaint involves a criminal offence the chairperson should disband the Disciplinary Committee meeting and talk to the Child Welfare Officer. The statutory authorities will then be informed.
- 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.
- Keep all records on file for a period of at least six years.
- If any party does not agree with the disciplinary committee they can appeal the decision in writing within 10-day period to the *Doora Barefield Senior GAA Club*.
- The appeals committee should confirm or set aside or change any sanction imposed by the disciplinary committee.

See Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport, page 22 and page 42 for 'Discipline in Children's Sport'

5. Leader Recruitment and Selection Policy

Doora Barefield Minor GAA Club will take all reasonable steps to ensure that people working with young people are suitable and appropriately qualified. Recruitment and selection procedures have therefore been drawn up and put in place and these procedures apply to all persons with substantial access to young people, whether paid or unpaid.

Recruitment Procedures

All adults taking responsibility for children or young people and their coaching or training in the club shall undergo recruitment and vetting process. To facilitate this all managers and coaches will be asked to voluntarily submit to a simple vetting procedure. All managers, where possible should hold, at least, a foundation level qualification in coaching. The responsibilities of the role and requirements thereof may require higher level of qualification and/or experience. Any requirements in this regard will be made known to any candidates for leadership roles.

Volunteers shall be expected to complete an application form, giving names of two referees that can be contacted. (See sample application form attached in Appendix). Where deemed appropriate there will be an interview.

There will be a probationary period in the role

There will be a sign-up procedure, whereby the newly recruited volunteers, agree to abide by the Code of Practice for Youth Sport and to the club's Codes, rules and policies.

The *Doora Barefield Minor GAA Club* is ever mindful that potential candidates for sports leader positions may find this intrusive but is also ever conscious of its duty of care to all young people attending the club or activities organised or facilitated by it.

All information submitted to or collected by the club in the course of the vetting process will be treated with appropriate confidentiality.

Every reasonably practicable effort will be made to manage and support appointed Sport Leaders. A leader will not be expected to work alone.

A decision to appoint a Sports Leader is the responsibility of the club and not of anyone individual within it. It shall be the role of the club committee to ratify all appointments.

6. Anti-Bullying Policy

6.1 What is Bullying?

Bullying can be defined as repeated aggression whether it is 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, and hitting and extortionist behaviour by one or more children against a victim.

6.2 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 possible 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

6.3 Who should deal with bullying?

While the more extreme forms of bullying would be regarded as physical or emotional abuse and shall be reported to the health board or An Garda Síochana, dealing with bullying behaviour is normally the responsibility of all leaders within the club.

6.4 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” culture
- Encourage young people to negotiate cooperate and help others, particularly new or children that may not conform to the norm of the group
- 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

6.5 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, details of the incident or the allocation of blame is not discussed. Explain the feelings of loneliness, feeling left out, rejected or laughed at. Try asking questions:

- Would you like if it happened to you?
- “Someone here in this group was bullied by someone in this group, what could we do to see it does not happen again?”
- Listen, watch out for reaction, 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 such as “if I were you” to encourage a response. Listen to all suggestion 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 in which something must be done.

Step 7 – Meet them again

Each member of the group, including the bully, discuss how things are doing, 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.

7. Guidelines on General Issues

7.1 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 there is adequate insurance cover
- Not carry more than the permitted number of passengers
- Ensure use of seat belts
- Avoid being alone with one participant, put passenger in the back seat, drop off at central locations or seek parental permission to transport an individual participant on a regular basis and clearly state times of pick-up and drop-off

7.2 Supervision

- Make sure there is an adequate adult to 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 individual leaders need to consider all circumstances associated with the activity when organising numbers of helpers required.
- Where there are mixed groups there should be leaders of both genders
- Avoid being alone with one participant. 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 and competitions.
- Leaders should remain in pairs until the participants have been collected
- Keep attendance records and record any incidents or injuries that arise
- Ask parents to stay and help to supervise sessions, [for safety and supervision, not necessarily for their “technical” expertise].

7.3 Away trips / Overnight Stays

- Separate permission forms should be signed by parents and participants, containing emergency contact numbers for parents or guardians
- Young participants should sign a behaviour agreement
- Appoint a 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
- Requirements /restrictions with regard to money to be brought by children should be agreed
- Rooming arrangements- adults should not share rooms with children, children share rooms with those of similar 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 adult of each gender with a mixed party; there should be a good adult-child ratio; 1:5/6.
- There should be proper access to medical personnel

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- 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

7.4 Safety

The *Doora Barefield Minor GAA Club* has generated a safety statement, including specific and potential risks attached to their sport. Procedures are in place for safeguarding against such risks.

In addition clubs aspires to:

- Ensure activities are suitable for age and stage of development of participants
- Keep a record of any specific medical conditions of the participants
- 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-aider where reasonably practical
- Know the contact numbers of emergency services
- Keep first aid kit stocked up
- 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. Make a brief record of the problem/action/outcome. Contact the participant's parents and keep them informed of all details. Officials (umpires, referees, etc.) should ensure the conduct of the game. Participants should know and keep the rules of their sport, keeping in mind that many rules are there for safety
- Leaders should hold appropriate qualifications required by the governing body
- Ensure there is adequate insurance cover for all activities
- Ensure parents / guardians are present at finishing time of sessions or events

7.5 Touching

- **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 participant**
- **It should be determined by the age and developmental stage of the participant - Don't do something that a child can do for themselves**
- **Never engage in inappropriate touching**

7.6 Use of Photographic and Filming Equipment

Doora Barefield Minor GAA Club will adopt a policy in relation to the use of images of club members or personnel on their websites and in other publications in line with standard practices and procedures within the Gaelic Athletic Association.

The club reserves the right to refuse permission for the filming or the taking of pictures of club members or personnel at club events, at matches or on club grounds, facilities or premises.

8. Child Welfare and Protection Procedures

Doora Barefield Minor GAA Club accepts that organisations, 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 organisation.

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
- An illness, injury or behaviour consistent with abuse

A report may be made by any member in the club but should be passed on to the Children's Welfare Officer who may in turn have to pass the concern to the local Statutory Authorities. It is not the responsibility of anyone working within *Doora Barefield Minor GAA Club*, 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.

8.1 Response to a Child Disclosing Abuse

When a young person 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 child to tell about the problem, rather than interviewing the child about details of what happened
- b) Stay calm and not show any extreme reaction to what the child is saying. Listen compassionately, and take what the child is saying seriously
- c) 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
- d) Be honest with the child and tell them that it is not possible or correct to keep information a secret
- e) Make no judgmental statements against the person whom the allegation is made
- f) Not question the child unless the nature of what he/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 mean by that"
- g) Check out the concerns with the parents/guardians before making a report unless doing so would endanger the child
- h) 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.
- i) Carefully record the details
- j) Pass on this information to the Designated Person (the Children's Welfare Officer)
- k) Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you

8.2 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 [Children's Welfare Officer]. If the Designated Person has reasonable grounds for believing that the child has been abused or is at risk of abuse, he/she will make a report to the health board/social services that 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 Designated Person is unable to contact a duty social worker, the police authorities should be contacted. Under no circumstances should a child be left in a dangerous situation pending intervention by the Statutory Authorities
- d) If the Designated Person is unsure whether reasonable grounds for concern exist he/she can informally consult with the local health board/social services. He/she 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 will first inform the family of their intention to make such a report, unless doing so would endanger the child or undermine an investigation

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 (See 5.13.1 - ISC. Code). 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"*

8.3 Allegations against Sports Leaders

Doora Barefield Minor GAA Club has agreed procedures to be followed in cases of alleged child abuse against Sports leaders. If such an allegation is made against Sports leader working within the club, two procedures should be followed:

- The reporting procedure in respect of suspected child abuse (reported by the designated person / Children's Welfare Officer), see previous page
- The procedure for dealing with the Sports Leader (carried out by the club Chairperson or senior officer, or a person not already involved with the child protection concern)

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 Sports leader should be treated with respect and fairness.

8.3.1 The reporting procedure

If the designated person has reasonable grounds for concern, (page 41, Section 5.13.1, Code), the matter should be reported to the local health board / social services, following the standard reporting procedure. (Section 5.13.2, page 42).

8.3.2 The Sports Leader

While the designated officer makes the report to the local health board, the Chairperson of the club should deal with the Sports leader in question.

- The Chair 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 governing body should be informed by the Designated Person that the leader has been asked to stand aside

Governing bodies 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 governing bodies 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.

8.4 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 undertaking 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, Sports 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 manner.

8.5 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 Designated Person (Children's Welfare Officer). The information should be checked out and handled in a confidential manner.

8.6 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 Designated Person (Children's Welfare Officer), and checked out without delay



DOORA BAREFIELD MINOR GAA CLUB

Application Form for Sport Leader Role

Proposed role within the club:			
Full Name			
Address	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>		
Contact details	Tel Home: <hr/> Tel Work: <hr/> Mobile: <hr/> e-mail: <hr/>		
Any qualifications or previous experience / involvement in sport? <i>Tick as appropriate</i>		Yes	No
If yes give details?	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>		
Please outline the reason for getting involved in the club	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>		
Have you ever been asked to leave a sporting organisation in the past? <i>[If you have answered yes you will be contacted in confidence for further information]</i>		Yes	No
Do you agree to abide by the by the GAA and club policies, rules and procedures?		Yes	No
Reference: Please supply the names of two responsible people whom we may contact and who from personal knowledge are willing to endorse your application. If you have had previous involvement in sport one of these names should be that of an administrator / leader of <u>your</u> last club / <u>place</u> of involvement.			
Referees Name & Address			
Name: <hr/> Address: <hr/> <hr/>		Name: <hr/> Address: <hr/> <hr/>	
Applicants Signature:		Date:	
FOR CLUB USE ONLY			
Received on Behalf of Doora Barefield Minor Club:			
Name:		Role:	Date:



DOORA BAREFIELD MINOR GAA CLUB

Coach / Volunteer Reference Form

Name

Address

The above named person has expressed an interest in becoming involved in the Doora Barefield Minor GAA club in the role of _____ and has given your name as a referee. This post involves substantial access to children. As an organisation committed to the welfare and happiness of children, we are anxious to know if you are satisfied that this person is suitable to work with children in a sporting capacity.

How long have you known this person?

In what capacity have you known this person?

Are you satisfied that _____ is suitable to work with children in a sporting capacity?

Yes

No

If you have answered no, we will contact you in confidence for further information.

Referees Signature:

Date:

FOR CLUB USE ONLY

Date forwarded to Referee: ____/____/____

Received on Behalf of Doora Barefield Minor Club:

Name: _____ Role: _____ Date: ____/____/____



DOORA BAREFIELD MINOR GAA CLUB

Permission Form

TRAVELLING WITH UNDERAGE PARTICIPANTS.

EVENT: _____

VENUE: _____

DATES: _____

TRAVELLING VOLUNTEER / LEADER

I hereby agree to abide by the guidelines and regulations contained in the Doora Barefield Minor GAA Clubs Policy Document

Name [Please Print]: _____ **Role:** _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** ____/____/____

PARENT / GUARDIAN OF PARTICIPANT

I have read and accept the conditions and rules as set down by Doora Barefield Minor GAA Club for children travelling to matches and events

Parents / Guardians Name [Please Print]: _____ **Date:** ____/____/____

Parents / Guardians Signature: _____

Emergency Contact Number(s): [option 1: _____] [option 2: _____]

Please outline any medication that is used or any medical condition that the travelling child or young person has: _____

Please outline any other relevant requirements or information: _____

YOUNG PARTICIPANT

I have read and accept the conditions and rules as set down by Doora Barefield Minor GAA Club for children travelling to matches and events. I agree to abide by the rules and instructions of the leaders and other volunteers.

Participants Name [Please Print]: _____ **Date:** ____/____/____

Participants Signature: _____

FOR CLUB USE ONLY

Received on Behalf of Doora Barefield Minor GAA Club:

Name: _____ **Role:** _____ **Date:** ____/____/____