

Annacurra GAA Club

Áth an Churraigh CLG

**Club Code of Behaviour**

**May 2016**

**NOTE - Draft Only**

Comments to [secretary.annacurra.wicklow@gaa.ie](mailto:secretary.annacurra.wicklow@gaa.ie) or in writing to any committee member. Code will be then discussed and adopted into the club constitution at a general meeting of the club.

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**Introduction.**

This document outlines the codes, policies and procedures adopted by Annacurra GAA to carrying out its day to day business and provides best practice guidelines for all of its members, parents of players and supporters. The purpose of this document is to provide a realistic and common sense approach to the practices within the Club. The content of this document is up-to-date and in line with the current best practice and legal requirements of the GAA and the Irish Sports Council for the protection and welfare of young members. While the detail in this document has been carefully correlated, it is accepted that errors and omissions may occur and it is expected that the spirit of the document will be adopted by Club members in achieving best practice.

**Policy Statement and Club Principles....**

**Club Policy Statement**

Annacurra GAA Club’s philosophy is one of participation, enjoyment and skills development in a setting of respect for all and having fun. Realising this philosophy requires a full awareness and clear understanding of the policy by everyone involved in the Club, including juveniles, adults, mentors and parents. Everyone has a vital role to play in setting and maintaining standards of behaviour which our Club can be proud of.

Annacurra GAA Club is fully committed to safeguarding the well-being of its 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 manner that reflects the principles of the Club and the guidelines contained in the Irish Sports Council Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children’s Sport and the GAA Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport.

In Annacurra GAA Club, one of our first priorities is the welfare of players and the Club is committed to providing an environment, which will allow players to perform to the best of their ability, free from bullying and intimidation. As part of the Clubs commitment, it has adopted codes, policies and procedures to guide our players, members and volunteers involved with our teams. The Club will take all practicable steps to protect our young players from discernible forms of abuse, harm, discrimination or degrading treatment. To ensure, that the best practice is followed, the Club will work closely with our Governing Body in Croke Park.

In order to promote the best practice the Club will:

* Adopt and implement relevant sections of the Irish Sports Council Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children’s Sport and the GAA Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport as an integral part of the Club’s policies and procedures.
* Have its constitution approved and adopted by Club members at an AGM or EGM.
* Clearly define the roles of committee members, Mentors and parents/guardians.
* Ensure that all Mentors and volunteers are carefully recruited and selected and that they accept responsibility for ensuring the wellbeing of young members in their care.
* Appoint a least one Children’s Officer and a Designated Person to deal with any issues in relation youth welfare.
* Ensure best practice is delivered by disseminating the Club’s codes, policies and procedures, to all its members.
* Have an anti-bullying policy in place.
* Have in place procedures for dealing with a concern or complaint made against any Mentor, player or other members of the Club.
* Respond swiftly and appropriately to protect the welfare of youth members who participate in any activity in the Club.
* Review the effectiveness of the Club codes, policies and procedures on an annual basis.

**Club Principles**

Annacurra GAA operates on principles outlined below which facilitates and encourages best practice in youth sport within the Club. It is important that all young players are valued and treated with the highest level of respect throughout these important years of their personal, physical and social development.

The Club will provide our young players with a period in their life that enables them to have fun, make friends and present them with opportunities to improve their levels of skill.

**Importance of Childhood/Young Players**: The importance of childhood/young players should be understood and valued by everyone in the Club. The right to happiness of the child/youth should be recognised. The Club’s provision of sporting experiences should be guided by what is best for the child or youth.

The following principles will apply:

* The welfare of the young person is paramount.
* All young members, whatever their age, have right to protection from harm.
* All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously, will be responded to swiftly and in an appropriate manner.

**Integrity in relationships and Needs of Young Players:**  Mentors interacting with players in Annacurra GAA are in a position of trust and influence. Mentors should have a basic understanding of the emotional, physical and personal needs of the young person. The stages of development and ability of youths will guide the types of activity provided by the Club. All Mentors actions will be guided by what is best for the player and carried out in the context of respectful and open relationships. Neglect, verbal, physical, emotional or sexual abuse of any kind (or threats of such abuse) is totally unacceptable behaviour within Annacurra GAA (see appendix 3 for examples).

**Quality Atmosphere and Ethos:**  Annacurra GAA promotes a positive and encouraging atmosphere that involves all players. The Club is committed to providing an environment which will allow players to perform to the best of their ability. A player-centred ethos will help ensure that competition of the highest level is attained. Standards of behaviour for Mentors and players should be as important as the standards set for sport performance.

**Equality:** Players participating in the Club will be treated in a fair and reasonable manner, regardless of age, ability, sex, religion, social, political and ethnic background. Players, irrespective of ability or disability, should be involved in an integrated and inclusive way, whenever possible thus allowing them to participate along with other team mates..

**Fair Play:** All activities in the Club will be conducted in an atmosphere of fair play. The principles of fair play should always be emphasised. The importance of participation, best effort and enjoyment should be stressed rather than winning. Players should be encouraged to win in an open and fair way. Behaviour which constitutes cheating in any form must be discouraged. “Much more than playing within the rules, it incorporates the concepts of friendship, respect for others and always playing within the right spirit. Fair play is defined as a way of thinking, not just a way of behaving. It incorporates issues concerned with the

elimination of cheating, gamesmanship, doping, violence, exploitation, unequal opportunities, excessive commercialisation and corruption”. (European Sports Charter and Code of Ethics of Europe 1993)

**Competition:** In Annacurra GAA we will attempt to strike a balance between a young player’s desire to win and a young player’s right to participate, irrespective of ability. Success is not the same as winning and failure is not the same as losing. A balanced approach to competition will make a significant contribution to the development of the player, while at the same time providing fun, enjoyment and a sense of satisfaction and achievement. If unreasonable competitive demands are placed on a child/young player too early in their career it can result in undue pressure which in turn often contributes to player dropout. It should be kept in mind that the welfare of the player comes first and competitive standards second.

**Code of Behaviour.**

Annacurra GAA will ensure that all those who work with young people are at all times competent and understand their roles and responsibilities. The Club will provide them with the necessary supports so that the best interests of the players are maintained at all times. Any volunteer working on the Club’s behalf will be selected using thorough recruitment procedures and will receive appropriate training and coaching courses. The Club will:

* Promote Quality Participation by: Adopting this Code of Behaviour as a basic level of agreement between the Club and players, Mentors, parents/guardians and supporters. The Club will have a user friendly and youth centred approach to its work and it will provide an equal opportunity to all who wish to participate in GAA games and activities, regardless of ability. The Club will develop effective procedures for responding to and recording all attendances, incidents, accident and injuries. It will implement an anti-bullying policy and make this available to all members in the Club.
* Encourage Participation of Club Members by: The Club will communicate regularly with our Mentors and clearly agree and define their roles. It will ensure that relevant training is undertaken, by all persons working our young players.
* Encourage Participation of Young Players by: Ensuring that the types of programmes, rules and training schedules are structured to facilitate participation by all young players. It will also ensure that training is suitable for the various age categories, ability and maturity level of young players involved. The rights and dignity of all young players will be respected. Our young players will be encouraged to participate in other aspects of the Club such as coaching in the Nursery, programme selling, attending refereeing courses, etc.
* Encourage the Participation of Parents/Guardians by: Parents and guardians will be encouraged to become members of the Club and participate in the running of juvenile games and training. They are welcome to partake in all aspects of our Club’s activities and events. Information relating to such events will be made known to them via the Club web site and Club texts. Information in relation to the Children’s Officers will be published on the Club web site and should be contacted to assist with any concerns or enquiries that parents/guardians may have regarding the welfare and safety of children and young people in the Club.
* Develop Best Practice in Club Structures and Administration: The juvenile section of the Club is structured in accordance with best practice guidelines. The juvenile section will ensure that all Club members are aware of their responsibilities to children and young people. The Children’s Officers will monitor the child centred ethos in the Club and ensure that the Club complies with the Irish Sports Council Code of Ethics and Good Practice and the GAA Code of Best Practice in Youth in Sport. The Club will appoint a Designated Person who will liaise with the Statutory Authorities in relation to child protection issues. The Club will ensure that all players are covered by appropriate insurance and injury schemes; however, this can only happen when the annual subscription is paid.

**Young Players:** Annacurra GAA Club has a registration procedure whereby parents agree for you to become a Club member. Becoming a Club member, you agree to abide by the Code of Behaviour and to other policies, codes and procedures in the Club. It is your responsibility to behave in an appropriate manner both on and off the field of play when representing the Club. Breaches of Club codes will be dealt with at a disciplinary meeting with Juvenile Games Chairperson. As a young player you are entitled to be safe and feel safe, have fun and experience a sense of enjoyment and fulfilment. You will be treated with respect, dignity and sensitivity. You are entitled to comment and make suggestions in a constructive manner and will be listened to. You will participate in games and competitions at a level with which you feel comfortable with. You can make your concerns known and have them dealt with in a confidential and appropriate manner.

**As a young player of Annacurra GAA you must:**

* Respect all Mentors, coaches, selectors, Club officials and opponents.
* Demonstrate fair play.
* Play fairly, to the best of your ability and enjoy yourself.
* Abide by the rules, codes, policies and procedures of the Club both on and off the playing field.
* Respect your team members regardless of their ability, ethnic/cultural background or religion.
* Support fellow team members whether they do well or not.
* Represent your team, the Club and your family with pride and dignity.
* Shake hands before and after the game irrespective of the outcome.
* Respect your opponent; be gracious in defeat and modest in victory.
* Inform Mentor when you are unavailable for training or games.
* Take due care of Club equipment.
* Adhere to acceptable standards of behaviour and the Club’s code of Behaviour.
* Behave in a manner that avoids bringing the Club into disrepute.
* Talk to Club Officers/Children’s Officer with any concerns or questions you may have. Tell somebody else if you or others have been harmed in any way
* Challenge bullying in any form whether physical or emotional. Bullying is not acceptable behaviour in Annacurra GAA.

**As a young player of Annacurra GAA you must never:**

* Cheat, always play by the rules.
* Use violence or physical contact that is not allowed within the rules.
* Shout at or argue with an official, team mates or opponents.
* Harm team members, opponents or their property in any way.
* Play or train if you feel unwell or are injured.
* Use unacceptable language or racial and/or sectarian references.
* Use unfair or bullying tactics to gain advantage or isolate other players.
* Take banned substances.
* Keep secrets, especially if they cause harm.
* Tell lies or spread rumours about Mentors/other players.

**Juvenile Mentors:** Annacurra GAA will support Juvenile Mentors in providing a child centred approach to coaching and training. The Club will use agreed procedures for recruitment and selection of Juvenile Mentors and provide them with the necessary training and education to perform their roles. The Club will have in place procedures to assist Juvenile Mentors to deal with various situations that may arise, such as misconduct, complaints, discipline, etc. The Club expects parents and guardians to support the work of volunteer Juvenile Mentors.

**Maintain a child centred approach**

* Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person and treat each one equally regardless of age, gender, ethnic/cultural background, religion or ability.
* Ensure that nobody involved with the team acts towards or speaks to another person in a manner that threatens, disparages, vilifies or insults another person.
* Never shout at or lecture players or reprimand/ridicule them when they make a mistake (young people learn best through trial and error, they should not be afraid to make mistakes in order to learn).
* Be positive during coaching sessions, games and other activities so that the players leave with a sense of achievement and an increased level of self-esteem.
* Develop a good understanding of the GAA coaching manuals and ensure that you have the appropriate level of coaching accreditation.
* Don’t equate losing with failure and do not develop a preoccupation with medals and trophies. (the level of improvement made by young players is the best indicator of coaching effectiveness).

**Coaching and Matches - lead by example**

* Be punctual and properly attired in Club gear.
* Avoid at all times smoking while working with young players.
* Do not consume alcohol or non-prescribed drugs immediately prior to or while young players are in your care.
* Never use foul language or provocative language/gestures to a player, opponent or match official.
* A Mentor should only enter the field with the referee’s permission and should not question their decisions or integrity.
* No negative comments or criticism should be directed at the Club’s officials, match officials, opposition or players.
* Any abuse of pitches are to be communicated to the Club officials.
* Plan and prepare appropriately for each training session and match and ensure proper levels of supervision.
* Clearly communicate to parents, with sufficient notice, the details of training and match fixtures.
* Communicate results to the County Board and Club PRO.
* Ensure that players are made aware that matches take priority over other Club activities such as program selling and that this rule is applied by the Club.
* Ensure games, activities and playing equipment is customized to suit the needs of those involved in terms of age, ability, experience and maturity.
* Skills development and personal satisfaction should have priority over competition.
* Set realistic, stretching but achievable, performance goals.
* Be positive during coaching sessions so that participants always leave with a sense of achievement and an increased level of self-esteem.
* Praise and reinforce effort and commitment and always provide positive feedback.
* Recognise the development needs of young players and ensure that they are matched on an individual or team basis.
* Ensure that all members of a squad get adequate game time and that the same players do not start as substitutes in every game. In particular, in younger teams (Under 11 and below) each player should play at least half of a match. The Club follows the philosophies of “Go Games” and the “Player Pathway” i.e., 6 to 10 years of age FUNdementals, 10 to 14 years of age train to train, 14 to 18 years of age train to compete, 18+ years of age train to win.
* Never use any form of corporal punishment or physically force goals.
* Each squad should aim to enter the maximum number of teams to County Board competitions that it can reasonably field to avoid having excessive amounts of substitutes.
* Rotate the team captain and the method used for selecting teams so that the same children are not always last to be selected.
* Challenge bullying in any form whether physical or emotional. Bullying is not acceptable behaviour be it from a young person, Mentor, parent or guardian.
* If it is necessary to transport a child/young person in your car, ensure that they are seated in a rear seat with seat belts securely fastened.

**Interaction with Young Players/Members - avoid comprising your role as Mentor**

* Ensure that all physical contact is appropriate and has the permission or understanding of the player.
* Develop an appropriate working relationship with young people based on mutual trust and respect.
* Be aware of the Clubs policy in relation to texting young players/members. Only use group texts and do not contact young players directly unless you have the express permission in writing from the parents or guardian.
* All messages/circulars, etc. should directed to the young person’s parents or guardians.
* Be aware of the Club policy in relation to away trips and overnight stays. When the team travels away, separate sleeping facilities must be provided for all adults. If both genders are in the group, male and female Mentors must be present.
* Juvenile Mentors are encouraged to celebrate success in a manner that is suitable for the age group concerned. Adults should act as role models for appropriate behaviour.
* It’s important to recognise that certain situations e.g. staying over at the Mentor’s residence or friendly actions, like: e.g., horse play, role play, telling jokes, etc., could be misinterpreted and lead to allegations of serious misconduct or impropriety.
* Avoid a situation where you are alone in a car with a young player.
* Never enter a dressing room alone, always make sure you have another Mentor or parent with you.
* Do not take coaching sessions on your own.
* Avoid any inappropriate touching when assisting players to perform a technique or when First Aid is being administered.
* Avoid taking young players to your home.
* Never undertake any form of therapy – hypnosis etc, in the training of children.

**Young Player Welfare**

* Do not play an un-registered player, they are not insured.
* Make adequate provision for First Aid and do not encourage or allow players to play while injured.
* Keep an adequate record of each injury and ensure that another official, referee or team Mentor is present when a player is being attended to.
* Check that the referee has recorded the injury in his/her match report.
* Ensure players are safely attired in Club gear for all games and training, i.e., helmets are mandatory at all training sessions/matches and gum shields are recommended.
* Avoid excessive training or over coaching or making demands on a young person that can lead to burnout e.g. insisting upon set (stereotyped) playing patterns where individual decision-making and creativity are stifled or where young people are confined to playing in set positions on a continuous basis.
* Do not pressurise a young person to perform at a level that is beyond his/her capacity based on age or maturation level.
* Inform the County Board of any unscheduled matches or trips away.
* Ensure that each player observes a high standard of personal hygiene.
* Ensure that all dressing rooms and areas occupied by the Team, prior to, during or immediately following any match are kept clean and are not damaged in any way.
* Encourage parents/guardians to play an active role in organising and assisting activities and to be aware of the Club’s Code of Behaviour for everyone involved, including children.

**Parents and Guardians:** In Annacurra GAA, Parents/Guardians play a key role in the promotion of sport and their children’s enjoyment and development in sport. Parents have an influential role in assisting and encouraging your children and young people to adopt a positive attitude and encouraging their child to maintain their involvement in sport. Parents/Guardians should always act as good role models for your children. Parents/Guardians therefore need to be aware, informed and involved in promoting the safest possible environment, for their children to enjoy their participation in Gaelic games. To assist in the promotion of good practice in our Club Parents/Guardians should:

**Encourage their child to:**

* Play by the rules.
* Improve their skill levels.
* Appreciate everybody on your team, regardless of ability.
* Maintain a balanced and healthy lifestyle with regard to exercise, food, rest and play.
* Focus on efforts rather than performance.

**Lead by example:**

* Respect Officials decisions and encourage your child to do likewise.
* Do not exert undue pressure on your children or young players.
* Never criticise your own child or any other child for their standard of play.
* Be realistic in your expectations.
* Show approval for effort, not just results.
* Never embarrass a child or use sarcastic remarks towards a player.
* Applaud good play from all teams.
* Don’t criticise playing performances. Identify how improvement can be made.
* Do not seek to unfairly affect a game or player.
* Do not enter the field of play or play area or dressing rooms, unless invited to do so by a Mentor in charge.
* Behave responsibly on the sideline.

**Parents/Guardians should:**

* Complete and return the registration/permission and medical consent forms on time for your child’s participation in Annacurra GAA Club.
* Be aware of the team Mentors and their role within the Club.
* Support the Mentors in conveying the fair play message in Annacurra GAA.
* Inform Mentors of any change in your child’s medical or dietary requirements prior to training sessions/games or other activities.
* Inform Mentors if your child is not available to attend training or a match.
* Ensure that your child punctually attends training sessions/games/other activities.
* Ensure that you know of training/match finish times and collect your child on time.
* Provide your child with proper Club clothing and equipment. e.g., gum shields, helmets, shin-guards, warm clothes/wet gear.
* Ensure that the nutrition/hydration and hygiene needs of your child are met.
* Avoid asking your child “did you score today/what did you win by/what did you lose by?” Ask them “did you enjoy yourself”
* Listen to what young people have to say.
* Show approval whether the team wins, loses or draws a match.
* Never attempt to meet your own needs and aspirations for success and achievement through your children’s participation in games.
* Know that Annacurra GAA has an Anti-Bullying policy.
* Be aware of the Club Children’s Officers.
* Parents/Guardians should promote the procedures of good practice by:
* Showing appreciation to volunteers, Mentors and Club Officers.
* By attending training and games, on a regular basis.
* Become members of Annacurra GAA Club, where feasible and take an interest in the running of the Club.
* Assist in organizing of Club activities and events as requested.
* Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person and treat each one equally regardless of age, gender, ability, ethnic origin, cultural background or religion.

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

* Know their child is safe and to make a complaint if you believe that your child’s safety is in any way compromised.
* Be informed of problems/concerns relating to your child.
* Be informed if your child gets injured.
* Complain if you have concerns about the standard of coaching.
* Have a say in relation to decisions being made within the Club.

**Parents/Guardians should not:**

* Ignore or dismiss complaints or concerns by your child, which relate to his/her involvement in Annacurra GAA.
* Take safety for granted.
* Treat the Club as a child-minding service.

**Adult Players:** Annacurra GAA has a registration procedure whereby when you become a member you agree to abide by the Club codes, procedures and policies. Players who have not paid their subscription will not be registered and therefore not insured and must not part take in any games.

**Respect**

* Co-operate with and show respect to Managers, fellow players, Club officers, supporters, match officials, referees and opposition.
* All players should arrive at the appointed meeting time for games and observe “start times” for training sessions (including injured, suspended and resting players).
* Preparation for games/training must consistent with the aims and objectives of your team and the Club.
* All players must arrive in a “fit” state to represent your team. Players are expected to rest in the days before games i.e., no alcohol, sufficient sleep, hydration and nutrition.
* Bookings and sending off as a result of abusive or violent Behaviour will require the player/manager to appear at a disciplinary hearing with the Adult Games Committee.
* Players are expected to adhere to the Club policy regarding clashes of training and games. Commitment
* Players are expected to give 100% commitment on and off the field of play. Regular attendance at training is required. Specific standards will be set by each squad to meet their aims and objectives e.g. minimum 80% attendance is required, (except by special arrangement which would include injuries, suspension, or resting players).
* 100% attendance record required for games, except by special arrangement (which would include injuries, suspension, or resting players).
* Players who fail to attend a fixture for their primary team without giving sufficient notice to their Mentors will not be available for selection at another grade on that weekend or that day in the case of a mid-week game.
* Holidays should be planned around the official summer break; bank holidays, off-season times (December, January and February) and other periods identified when there are no matches. Where exceptional situations occur it is the player’s responsibility to notify and discuss with team management.

**Responsibility**

* Phone or advise in person, the Mentor if you cannot attend a game or training session as early as is possible. When unsure about meeting time arrangements, etc., it is your responsibility to clarify in advance.
* Every player must pay their annual Club subscription on time: 31st January each year. If the annual subscriptions are not paid, you are not insured and a rigid “no pay, no play” policy will be implemented.
* Ensure that you are properly attired and wear the correct Club gear for all games.
* It is your responsibility to know and understand the rules of the GAA and those of the Club (see website: [www.Annacurragaaclub.com](http://www.Annacurragaaclub.com)).
* It is your responsibility to behave in an appropriate manner both on and off the field when representing the Club. Breaches of Club code will be dealt with at disciplinary meeting with Adult Games Committee.

**As a player and member of Annacurra GAA you should undertake to:**

* Treat all Mentors (selector, Club officials, etc.) with respect.
* Demonstrate fair play. Play fairly and do your best.
* Abide by the rules and policies of the Club both on and off the playing field.
* Respect team members - even when things go wrong. Give them full support both when they do well and when things go wrong.
* Respect opponents - they are not enemies they are partners in a sporting event.
* Accept apologies from opponents when they are offered.
* Give opponents a hand if they are injured or have problems with equipment.
* Respect officials and accept their decisions with grace, not a grudge.
* Uphold the Club Code of Behaviour when travelling to away events.
* Behave in a manner that avoids bringing the Club into disrepute.
* Talk to Club officers if you have any problems.
* Be modest in victory and gracious in defeat.
* Exercise self-control and tolerance for others, even if others do not.
* Show appropriate loyalty to your Club and all its participants.
* Make high standards of fair play the example for others to follow.
* Take due care of Club equipment.

**As a player of Annacurra GAA you should not:**

* Cheat.
* Use violence or physical contact that is not allowed within the rules.
* Shout or argue with the referee, officials, team mates or opponents.
* Harm team members, opponents or their property.
* Bully or use bullying tactics to isolate another player.
* Use unacceptable language or racial and/or sectarian references.
* Use unfair or bullying tactics to gain advantage.
* Take banned substances to improve performance.
* Tell lies about Mentors/other players.
* Spread rumours.
* Keep secrets about any person who may have caused them harm.
* Play or train if you feel unwell or are injured. Inform your Mentor.

**Adult Mentors**: Annacurra GAA Club recognises the key role Mentors play in the lives of adult players in sport. All persons involved in adult team management will be selected using the Club recruitment and selection procedures. Mentors should enjoy a sense of achievement through their work with adults. Mentors should strive to create a positive environment for the players playing Gaelic games. Mentors have an overall responsibility to take the steps necessary to ensure that positive and healthy experiences are provided. It is the Mentors’ responsibility to be fully familiar with the rules of the GAA and those of the Club. Mentors need to develop an understanding of relevant coaching methods and ensure that they have the appropriate level of coaching accreditation.

**Lead by Example**

* Mentors must act as a role model and promote the positive aspects of the Club and maintain the highest standards of personal behaviour.
* Your behaviour to players, supporters, game officials, and opponents will have an affect on the players in your charge.
* Mentors should respect the rights, dignity and worth of every player and treat each player equally, regardless of ethnic origin, religion or ability.
* Mentors should encourage the development of respect for opponents, officials, selectors and other coaches and avoid criticism of Mentors and officials.
* Mentors should encourage fair play and treat participants equally.
* Avoid working alone at all times. Ensure there is adequate assistance 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 or smoking, before coaching, during events and on trips with players.
* When travel/overnight stays are involved, the Mentors and players are ambassadors for the Club.

**Dealing with Players**

* Be generous with praise and never ridicule or shout abuse at players for making mistakes or for losing a game.
* Set realistic goals and targets for the team and individual players.
* 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 their 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 charge 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 players are aware of training start and finishing times.
* 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 (minors) are invited into adult groups/squads, it is required to seek agreement from their Mentor. Boundaries of behaviour in adult groups are normally different from the boundaries that apply to junior, juvenile or minor groups/squads.
* 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.

**Relationship with Players**

* Mentors are responsible for setting and monitoring the boundaries between a working relationship and friendship with players. Mentors have a crucial leadership role to play in sport. It is advisable for Mentors not to involve players in their personal life.
* Mentors who become aware of a conflict between their obligation to their players and their obligation to the Club executive, must make explicit the nature of the conflict and the loyalties and responsibilities involved to all parties concerned.
* 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 the permission of the player/family.

**General Rules for Team Management:**

* Team management must keep up to date with advancements in training techniques and game strategies. It is an aim of the Club Adult Games and Executive Committee that all Mentors attain at least Level 1 coaching standard.
* Team Management must ensure that training sessions are well organised and that time arrangements for training and games are well communicated.
* It is the team managements’ responsibility to mind Club equipment and gear. One member of the management team should be appointed to ensure gear is kept in good repair and that balls, sliotars and jerseys are not unnecessarily lost or left behind at matches or training. It is imperative that jerseys are accounted for after matches and any losses or damage is reported to the Adult Games Officer.
* Ensure that all dressing rooms and the general areas that are occupied by your players and other Club personnel, prior to, during or immediately following the completion of any match are kept clean and are not damaged in any way.
* Make adequate provision for First Aid Services.
* Do not encourage or permit players to play while injured.
* Be punctual and properly attired in Club gear.
* Ensure that all players are suitably and safely attired to play or train e.g., gum shields, etc.

**Supporters**: Supporters have a responsibility to ensure that they conduct themselves in a manner that is acceptable and well behaved at all times when attending underage or adult games and competitions in the Club. Supporters should realise that young players participate in organized Club games for fun.

**Supporters should:**

* Applaud good performance and efforts from our player’s and from the opponents regardless of the result.
* Condemn the use of violence in any form, be it by fellow supporters, spectators, Mentors, officials or players.
* Encourage players to participate according to the rules and the referee’s decisions.
* Demonstrate appropriate social behaviour by not using foul language or harassing participants, Mentors or officials.
* Respect the decisions of all officials.
* Never ridicule or scold a player for making a mistake during games or competitions.
* Show respect to our Clubs opponents.
* Uphold the principles of Fair Play and Respect for all.

**Breeches of Code & Complaints**

The vast majority of breeches of the code are best resolved informally and at the closest point in the club to where the breech occurred. If the matter cannot be resolved locally then the following steps should be followed:

**Receiving a Complaint/Report**

* All complaints and reports of breeches should be submitted in writing to the Club Chairman, Club Secretary or the Children’s Officer.
* The report/complaint should be acknowledged within 5 working days of its receipt.
* The Mentor/Player/Parent/Guardian/Supporter against whom the complaint has been made should be notified of the nature of the complaint by telephone and in writing.
* If a complaint made against a Mentor is of a serious nature, the Mentor should be asked to temporarily step aside during the investigation and a care taker Mentor should be put in place.
* All letters of complaint should be kept safely and confidentially.
* Letters of complaint remains the property of the Club. They will remain confidential and will not be read at a meeting or circulated to any person.

**Appointment of Investigation Committee:**

* An investigation committee consisting of the Chairperson, the Children’s Officer and an ordinary member of the Club will be set up. If any member of the investigating committee has a vested interest in the complaint, they must step aside from the investigation.
* It is recommended that this committee is put in place at the beginning of the year.
* The investigating committee will deal all incidents of suspected misconduct including of bullying, however, any complaint concerning child abuse will be referred to the appropriate Statutory Authorities.

**Dealing with the Complaint:**

* On receiving a complaint the investigation committee will inform the individuals involved with details of the complaint being made.
* Each party to the complaint will be afforded the opportunity of providing a response verbally at a meeting with the investigation committee.
* If either party does not attend the meeting, they will be offered the opportunity of providing a response in writing.
* If either party fails to co-operate with the investigating committee, the investigation will continue.
* An underage player must be accompanied by a parent/guardian.
* If a parent/guardian is party to the complaint, an underage player should be accompanied by an independent adult of their choice.
* In certain circumstances the investigation committee will enlist the assistance of professional help.
* In delivering its findings, the investigating committee will furnish a written report giving details of the procedures followed, investigation conclusions and recommendations or any actions to be taken.
* The written report will be signed by all members of the investigating committee.
* All parties to the complaint will receive a copy of the investigating committee’s findings.

**Sanctions:**

* Where it is established that an incident of misconduct has taken place, the investigation committee will notify the member (verbally and in writing) of any sanctions or corrective actions being imposed and the reason why.
* If the member is under 18 years of age, correspondence should be addressed to his/her parents/guardian.
* If there is any issue raised within a Referees Report the Club will request receipt of the report from the County Board. When the report is received the Club will discuss the contents with the Club Officers, manager of the team involved together with the personnel named within the report. A decision will be made on a course of action following such a discussion.
* If the County Board lays down a punishment which includes a fine as a direct result of a proven allegation (to the satisfaction of Annacurra G.A.A. Club Officials) then the person who caused the levy of the fine may be requested to pay a portion of the fine as retribution for the offence caused. It should be stressed that this will only be done following a discussion with the person concerned in the report.

**Appeals:**

* If either party to a complaint is unhappy with the outcome of the investigation committee they have the right to appeal the decision to an appeals committee (independent of the investigation committee).
* All appeals should be made in writing within 7 days of the issuing of the investigating committees findings.
* At least one member of the Executive will be a member of the appeals committee.
* The appeals committee will have the power to confirm, set aside or change any corrective action imposed by the investigation committee.
* Having exhausted all procedures to resolve a complaint, if any party is still not satisfied with the outcome, the matter will be referred to the Dublin County Board Children’s Officer and then to the National Children’s Officer.
* The National Management Committee’s decision on any appeal will be final.

**Filing of Complaints:**

* All correspondence, reports, minutes and findings will be treated with confidence, securely filed and will remain the property of the Club.
* The provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998 and 2003 will be adhered to i.e., information will be obtained fairly, it will be kept for one or more specified, explicit and lawful purposes, it will be used only in ways compatible with the purposes for which it was given, it will be kept safe and secure, it will be kept accurate and up to date, the data collected will be adequate, relevant and not excessive and finally it will not be retained longer than is necessary.