

ST BRIGID’S GFC

CODE OF ETHICS, CONDUCT AND PRACTICE

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10. **Introduction and Aim of Club**

St Brigid’s GFC (the ‘Club’) is governed by its constitution. The Club caters for children under 18 (‘Minors’ or ‘Child(ren)’ as appropriate) and adult players alike.

The purpose of this document (drawn from the GAA Code of Behaviour when working with underage players handbook) is to:

1. Help ensure the protection of Minors and all those involved with the Club while involved with Club activities;
2. Define the roles and responsibilities of the children, parents and sports leaders involved in the Club;
3. Provide support for the Minors and adults of the Club;
4. Demonstrate and ensure that the Club is run to the highest possible standards.

As a Club we are fully committed to safeguarding the well-being of all Club officials, officers, members, mentors and players. Every individual in the Club should, at all times, show respect and understanding for their rights, safety and welfare, and conduct themselves in a way that reflects the principles of the Club. The rights, dignity and worth of every person must be respected and no person should feel threatened, vilified or insulted.

The aims of the Club are;

1. To encourage and promote the playing and enjoyment of Gaelic Football in the community;
2. To provide a safe and fun environment for Minors who wish to play with the Club;
3. To provide an opportunity for character development in a sporting environment;
4. To promote the concepts of physical well-being and fitness among members;
5. To ensure the welfare and protection of Minors takes precedence and where the guiding principles will be those of equity and fair play

It is the responsibility of all members to be familiar with this document and for parents to explain and help enforce its contents with their own Minors.

1. **Role of the Club**

All Clubs that cater for Minors must do so with a child centred approach and philosophy that recognises that the welfare of the child is paramount, thus ensuring that those chosen by them to work with Minors are at all times competent and confident as their roles and responsibilities.

The Club must provide these people with the necessary supports and ensure in the best interests of the Minor and the adult that all those chosen to work on the Club’s behalf have been selected following thorough recruitment, selection, training and coaching procedures.

The Club should promote quality participation by;

1. Adopting this Code of Ethics, Conduct and Practise as a basic level of agreement between the Club and their players, mentors, parents and guardians;
2. Leading by example and ensuring that a user friendly and Minor centred approach is adopted in our work with young people and that equal opportunities are available for all to participate in our games and activities, regardless of an individual’s ability;
3. Developing effective procedures for responding to and recording all attendances incidents, accidents and injuries;
4. Accessing relevant information on Alcohol and Substance Abuse Prevention Programmes and promoting relevant training in this area of health awareness for relevant Club personnel;
5. Distribute information on Anti Bullying strategies in our work with Minors and by adopting and implementing an anti-bullying statement in the Club;
6. Appoint a Children’s Officer whose role shall include the monitoring of the child centred ethos of the Club and ensure compliance with the Code of Ethics, Conduct and Practice.
7. **Roles and Responsibilities within the Club**

The Club’s officers are appointed at the Club’s AGM. The role of the officers is to provide leadership and teamwork skills to ensure the Club is run in an efficient and progressive manner.

* 1. **Chairperson**

It is the responsibility of the Chairperson to chair all Club meetings, ensure that Club rules are implemented, liaise with other clubs in the group and to ensure fundraising structures are in place. S/he will also encourage proper debate on issues relevant to the Club. The Chairperson will also ensure the AGM is held at the appropriate time each year and that proper notification is given of the AGM.

* 1. **Secretary**

The Secretary will provide the administrative skills to ensure that the Club runs smoothly. All Club correspondence and documentation is held and filed by the Secretary. It is also the role of the Secretary to keep the Club’s sports leaders and members informed of Club activities and developments and to provide notice, minutes and agendas of meetings.

* 1. **Treasurer**

It is the responsibility of the Treasurer, in conjunction with the other officers, to administer the funds and bank accounts of the Club.

* 1. **Public Relations Officer (PRO)**

The PRO communicates the Club’s activities to the members and wider local community. It is the responsibility of the PRO to identify, and to liaise with, media outlets which can promote the Club’s activities and to see out advertising and sponsorship opportunities for the Club.

* 1. **School Liaison Officer (SLO)**

The SLO promotes the Club’s activities in the local primary school. S/he will also identify opportunities for the promotion of the Club as part of the school’s physical activity programme.

* 1. **Registrar**

The Registrar ensures all players partaking in the Club’s activities are registered with the Club and will maintain a registration list for each age group, as appropriate.

* 1. **Coaching Officer**

It is the responsibility of the Coaching Co-ordinator to review the Club’s coaching programmes and advise on how best to implement consistent, age appropriate, and best practice coaching policies for the long term development of players.

* 1. **Coaches & Selectors**

The primary responsibility of the coaches and selectors for the different age groups is to organise and run training sessions, to arrange challenge games with other clubs and to ensure, where relevant, County Board fixtures are fulfilled.

Coaches and Selectors are required to become members of the Club and to ensure that the Minors in the group for which they have responsibility have completed a Club Registration Form.

New Coaches and Selectors are required to complete the Club’s application form.

**Coaches and Selectors will be expected to attend relevant coaching courses organised by the Club or Meath County Board and obtain relevant coaching qualifications. All Coaches and Selectors must be Garda Vetted.**

* 1. **Parents/Guardians**

Parents/Guardians are welcome and encouraged to become involved in the Club either as coaches or officers, or by providing assistance and support, for example, by attending matches or assisting in travel arrangements.

Parents are asked to liaise with coaches and officers and ensure that Minors are registered with the Club and abide by the Club’s Code of Ethics, Conduct and Practices.

Parents and guardians are also asked to involve themselves in the fundraising activities of the Club.

1. **Code of Conduct**

**4.1 Code of Conduct for Officers, Coaches and Selectors**

All Officers should promote a positive, healthy and participatory approach to coaching and training. In developing the skills levels of every player the Officers should always encourage enjoyment and fun while insuring meaningful participation in all training sessions and activities. Officers should always remember that they are role models for the players in their care.

Officers should;

1. Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person;
2. Treat each person equally regardless of age, gender, ability, ethnic origin, cultural background or religion;
3. Be positive during coaching sessions, games and other activities so that young players always leave with a sense of achievement and an increased level of self-esteem;
4. Recognise the development needs and capacity of all players, regardless of their ability, by emphasising participation for all while avoiding excessive training and competition. Skills development and personal satisfaction should have priority over competition;
5. Develop an understanding of relevant coaching methods and ensure that they have the appropriate level of coaching accreditation;
6. Not equate losing with failure and do not develop a preoccupation with medals and trophies. The level of improvement made by players is the best indicator of effective coaching;
7. Challenge bullying in any form whether physical or emotional. Bullying is not acceptable behaviour be it from a player, coach, parent, spectator or match official;
8. Encourage parents/guardians to become involved in your team and Club activities wherever possible;
9. Report any injuries or incidents to parents, if appropriate, after each training session or game. For adult players, such incidents should be recorded on an incident report form and held on file;
10. Lead by example and promote fair play.

Officers should never;

1. Shout at, lecture, ridicule or reprimand players when they make a mistake;
2. Use any form of corporal punishment or physical force;
3. Use foul language or provocative language/gestures to a player, opponent or match official;
4. Enter the field of play unless with the match official’s permission;
5. Question a match official’s decision or integrity;
6. Smoke in the presence of a Minor or consume alcohol or non-prescribed drugs immediately prior to or while Minors are in their care;
7. Be alone with a player in their car or a dressing room;
8. Take player to their house alone;
9. Contact a Minor, by telephone call, text or email, without the express permission of their parent.

**4.2 Code of Conduct for Players**

Players can benefit greatly from sport in terms of enjoyment, personal development and learning new skills. As part of their development, players must be encouraged to realise that due to their participation they also have a responsibility to treat others with fairness and respect. Players shall sign up to this code and agree to abide by the contents.

Players should;

1. Be safe and feel safe;
2. Play fairly, do their best and enjoy themselves;
3. Respect fellow team members regardless of ability, ethnic origin, cultural background, gender or religion;
4. Support fellow team members whether they do well or not;
5. Represent their team, Club and their family with pride and dignity;
6. Respect all Officers, match officials and match opponents;
7. Be gracious in defeat and modest in victory;
8. Shake hands before and after games irrespective of the result;
9. Take due care of Club equipment and facilities;
10. Have fun and experience a sense of enjoyment and fulfilment;
11. Tell an adult if they, or any other player, have been hurt in any way.

Players should never;

1. Cheat;
2. Shout at or argue with a game’s official, their coach, their team mates or opponents;
3. Use violence;
4. Use unfair or bullying tactics to gain advantage or isolate other players;
5. Spread rumours, make false allegations or tell lies;
6. Play or train if feeling unwell or are injured;
7. Use unacceptable or foul language;
8. Place themselves in a position of danger where they, or others as a result of their actions, could get hurt in any way.

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

Parents/Guardians have an influential role to play in assisting and encouraging their Children to fully participate in Gaelic games, whether by playing our games or attending training sessions and games. In common with Officers, the parents/guardians of Minors should act as role models for their Children as they participate in Gaelic games.

Parents/Guardians should;

1. Encourage their Children to play by the rules;
2. Appreciate every Child on the Team, regardless of ability;
3. Adopt a positive attitude to their Children’s participation;
4. Respect official’s decisions and encourage their Children to do likewise;
5. Be realistic in their expectations;
6. Show approval for effort not just results;
7. Applaud good play from all teams;
8. Inform Officers and other relevant Club personnel, of any changes in their Child’s medical or dietary requirements prior to coaching sessions or games;
9. Ensure their Child is punctual and adequately clothed for training sessions and games;
10. Ensure that nutrition, hydration and hygiene needs of their Child are met;
11. Attend training sessions and games on a regular basis;
12. Assist in the organisation of Club activities and events as requested;
13. Complain if they have concerns about the standard of coaching;
14. Have a say in relation to decisions being made within the Club
15. Note that training times and venues, and match fixtures are at the discretion of coaches.

**4.4 Code of Conduct for Members**

Members are the backbone of the Club and therefore have a responsibility and a right of say in the running of the Club.

Members should;

1. Remember that they represent the Club and therefore should behave in an appropriate manner at all Club functions/games/events;
2. Pay membership on time to the relevant Club official;
3. Respect Match Officials, Club Officials and Players and encourage others to do likewise;
4. Attend as many games, functions and fundraising events as possible;
5. Actively participate in the fundraising efforts of the Club and help in the upkeep of the Club grounds as requested;
6. Attend the Club’s AGM and have a say in relation to decisions being made within the Club: complain if they have concerns about how the Club is being run.

The above lists are not exhaustive.

1. **Club Discipline**

In the event of a breach of the code of conduct by a member of the Club, Player, Officer or Parent/Guardian, disciplinary measures will be taken.

Misconduct will result in a warning issued by a coach or Club official. If the misconduct is repeated, minor sanctions, such as time out from a training session will be invoked. If the misconduct continues still, further sanctions will be taken, and in the case of a Minor, the parents/guardians will be informed.

Serious misconduct, for example, physical violence, bringing the Club into disrepute, or repeated refusal or failure to abide by the Club’s Code of Ethics, Conduct and Practice, will result in an appearance before the Club disciplinary Committee. This committee will consist of the Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer and a coach nominated by the Chairperson. In the event that one of the members of the disciplinary committee was involved in the incident they will be required to temporarily resign from the committee with a suitable replacement being appointed by the Chairperson.

The following sanctions may be issued after such a hearing;

1. Issue warning as to future behaviour;
2. Suspension from training;
3. Suspension from attending Club games/functions
4. Suspension from Club teams;
5. Suspension from Club;
6. Expulsion from Club.
7. **Safety Procedures**
8. At least one coach in each age group/team should undertake a first-aid course. A first-aid kit will be made available by the Club for all games and training sessions;
9. Coaches and Selectors are to have access to relevant emergency and parent contact numbers at all sessions;
10. Injuries and dangerous occurrences are to be reported by coaches in writing to the Club Chairperson;
11. The Club endeavours to ensure that indoor and outdoor facilities are safe and suitable environments for players and members;
12. The use of mobile phones/tablets and other devices capable of recording data, in dressing rooms and shower areas is strictly prohibited. Coaches should also refrain from the use of such devices during training sessions/games when in the presence of Minors. Notices are to be placed in prominent areas in the Clubrooms to reflect this.
13. **Recruitment of Officers, Coaches and Selectors**

All officers of the Club are nominated and appointed at the Club’s AGM. Coaches are generally parents of Minors playing and/or members of the Club.

Coaches must;

1. Obtain relevant coaching qualifications;
2. Attend the Code of Ethics Course, facilitated by Meath Coaching and Games, and be certified as having done so,
3. Be Garda Vetted;
4. Be a fully paid up member of the Club or GAA.
5. **Anti-Bullying Policy**

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

DEFINITION:

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

THE GAA SEEKS TO ENSURE THAT:

Incidents of bullying behaviour are addressed appropriately.

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

DEALING WITH BULLYING:

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



**Code of Ethics, Conduct and Practice Declaration of Understanding**

**Player Declaration -**

I confirm that I have read, or my parent has read to me, and that I understand section 4.2 ‘Code of Conduct for Players’ and section 5 ‘Club Discipline’. I agree to play by the rules set out by the Club.

Signed - \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Parent Declaration –**

I confirm that I have read the Club Code of Ethics, Conduct and Practice and have aided my child/children with their understanding of this document, agreeing to promote the code and its contents with them.

Signed - \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_