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## 1. POLICY STATEMENT

Children are the most important members in our club.

We at Cill na Martra G.A.A. Club aim to promote the participation of children in our club by creating a culture of safety and fun.

*“Children have the right to be protected from all forms of violence. They must be kept safe from harm and they must be given proper care by those looking after them”*  
(Article 19: UN Convention on the Rights of the Child)

All children’s sport should be conducted in an atmosphere of fair play. Ireland has adopted and is committed to the European Code of Sport 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 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 (both physical and verbal), exploitation, unequal opportunities, excessive commercialism and corruption.”*  
(European Sports Charter and Code of Ethics, Council of Europe, 1993)

**The Children’s Act (2001)** is based on a clear and consistent set of principles designed with the common aim of promoting the welfare of children.

Children have the right to be safe. All coaches should ensure that this fundamental principle takes precedent over all other considerations.

All club members, through their actions reflect the principles and guidelines contained in the ‘Code of Ethics & Good Practice for Children’s Sport in Ireland.’. We promote the aims and ideals of our Association, adhere to its policy and nurture our Gaelic culture.

## **2. STANDARDS SET BY CILL NA MARTRA GAA CLUB WILL BE ACHIEVED THROUGH ENSURING THE FOLLOWING:-**

- Awareness of the issues which lead to children being harmed
- Safe recruiting procedures for coaches/volunteers, careful selection
- Provision of Irish Sports Council approved Child Protection awareness workshops for coaches and administrators
- Application of codes of behavior for coaches/volunteers
- Application of codes of behavior for children/young people
- Application of codes of behavior for parents
- Application of good and safe working/playing practices
- Establishment of procedures for dealing with child protection issues /recording of complaints/accidents, report books detailing facts, witnesses, circumstances etc.
- Procedures relating specifically to bullying, away trips and photography
- Identification and maintenance of parental responsibility
- Availability of information – each parent should receive a copy or have access to the Child Protection Policy
- Regular review and monitoring of Child Protection procedures by the management committee
- All children are treated equally; the club will promote anti-discriminatory practices.

The policy applies to all those involved in Cill na Martra GAA Club as coaches, administrators, officials, volunteer drivers, parents/guardians and children.

## **3. DESIGNATED PERSON (with respect to Child Protection)**

The ‘contact person’ or Designated Person within Cill na Martra GAA Club is:

Name: Gerard Healy  
Telephone number 086 8512095

The name of designated person shall be made known to all in the club. He/She is the person to whom child protection concerns will be addressed. If the concern is about the designated person, please report to the County Chairman.

The club has procedures in place for dealing with concerns or allegation of abuse or neglect either within the club or externally but the first point of contact for the child, parent/guardian or coach is the designated person. However, any individual has the right to contact Social Services or An Gardaí directly if they have concern about a child’s welfare.

#### **4. CLUB CHILDREN'S OFFICER (YOUTH OFFICER)**

The Children's Officer (CO) is the

Name: Tadgh MacSweeney

Telephone number: 085 1141145

The Children's Officer is the link between youth mentors, members and management. It is essential that this communication line is clear and working. CO may be assisted by others whose details, along with the club chairperson's, are prominently displayed in e.g. club changing rooms, offices, and pavilion. The Children's Officer's function is to engender a child-centered club ethos, promote ethics and good practice, influence club policy and report to the management committee and designated person.

#### **5. GUIDELINES FOR COMMUNICATION, IN PARTICULAR TEXTING.**

##### **What is the GAA proposing re texting information for underage players etc?**

Cill na Martra GAA Club strongly recommends that when we pass on information regarding games, training or other activities for our under age players that we do so via group texts and that these group texts should preferably be sent to the parents of under age players. Coaches and /or the Club Rúnaí should obtain these relevant contact numbers when an under age player is being registered. This recommendation only applies to underage players i.e. under 18 year of age.

##### **Are there any exceptions to the proposal on texting?**

If, for whatever reason, a parent/guardian insists or requests that the information is sent directly by the club to their child and gives this request in writing the club may, if they so wish, accede to this request. However, if the club accedes to the request the information can only be sent as part of a group text and cannot be communicated individually to the under age player.

Cill na Martra GAA Club would regard the individual texting of an under age player by their coach or mentor as being inappropriate and unnecessary. We do not wish to compromise the role of the coach and its best not to communicate by mobile in such instances where the coach would have the personal mobile telephone number of a child and the child or young person could equally have access to the coach's telephone number as well.

##### **How do we interpret an underage player?**

An under age player is a person who is eligible to play in a game or event for persons under 18 years of age. Legislation in Ireland also defines a child as any person less than 18 years of age and parents/guardians therefore have a particular level of responsibility for their child's welfare while they remain under 18 yrs of age. We use the terms child and young person frequently when we refer to under age players.

## **Can we text county underage development squads and minor squads?**

The recommended group text mechanism is still preferred but if you have parental/guardian permission to group text under age players you may avail of this option.

## **What if an underage player is on the club's senior panel?**

The same recommendation applies and parental/guardian permission must be sought if you wish to directly communicate with the young person as part of a group text scheme.

## **6a. GUIDELINES FOR REPORTING ACCIDENTS**

In the event of an accident the following procedure will be followed:

- Contact parents/guardians in the event of all accidents.
- Fill in 2 copies of the Accident Form for ALL accidents. One copy to incident book/folder, other to designated person for filing/further action.

For more serious accidents:

- Contact emergency services/G.P. if necessary
- Record detailed facts surrounding accident, witnesses etc.
- Complete accident form/book as above
- All serious accidents should be reported through County Secretary to Croke Park

## **6b. GUIDELINES FOR REPORTING ALLEGATIONS/INCIDENTS**

- Record all incidents reported or observed on an incident form, forward to the designated person.
- Ensure confidentiality – a 'need to know basis'
- The designated person is responsible for report security
- Adhere to An Cumann Lúthchleas Gael's *Guidelines for Dealing with Allegations of Abuse 2*

## **7. GOOD AND SAFE WORKING/PLAYING PRACTICES**

### **Cill na Martra G.A.A. Club will ensure:**

- Promotion of a healthy lifestyle by practice and example
- Proper supervision of children within the club with adequate numerical and gender coach : child ratio
- Use of safe recommended equipment
- Supervision of equipment used
- A clearly defined, fenced play area that is safe from vehicular traffic
- Public Liability Insurance covering all members of the club
- Only children of similar age will train/play together, no children training/competing with children two or more age groups older than their own age group
- First aid assistance and first aid equipment is available in case of accident, with accident/incident books documented where necessary
- N.B. All accidents will be reported to parents/guardians
- Transport will be provided and supervised by volunteers in possession of driving licences and roadworthy vehicles only. Prior parental permission is essential as per registration form
- A safe environment for members
- Ongoing training and information for Leaders
- Implementation of policy and procedures in line with guidance from the *Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport*
- Facilitation of open discussion on member protection issues
- Support to members who report allegations of abuse
- Suspected abuse information is treated confidentially
- Coaches to be made aware of any special needs (disability) relating to a child and respond accordingly
- Appropriate action is taken if members breach standards of reasonable behavior
- The establishment and maintenance of a coaching register
- The setting of standards of good practice
- The Designated Officer has knowledge of child protection procedures and responsibility in reporting concerns
- That parents/guardians are kept informed and have access to the club's policy guidelines for away trips/overnight stays and use of photography/videos
- The implementation of good and safe working practice is developed to the mutual benefit of the member, local area and community

### **Cill na Martra G.A.A. Club has the right to:**

- Expect leaders to comply with its Code of Conduct
- Expect all children to maintain standards of reasonable behavior
- Take appropriate action if members breach the Code of Conduct or Child Protection Policy
- Expect all members to undertake appropriate training when advised to
- Expect leaders will not abuse children physically, emotionally or sexually
- Take appropriate action in the event of accusations
- Acquire pre-employment checks on all coaches

- Maintain records on individuals in line with advice from data protection agency, i.e. only hold records on individuals that they have justifiable reason for holding
- Adhere to An Cumann Lúthchleas Gael's *Guidelines for Dealing with Allegations of Abuse*
- Adhere to An Cumann Lúthchleas Gael's *Code of Best Practice for Youth Sport*

## ***CODES OF BEHAVIOUR FOR CHILDREN***

### **Children are expected to:**

- Enjoy their GAA activity
- Keep within the defined area of the playing/coaching area
- Behave acceptably and listen to the coach
- Respect GAA personnel and equipment
- Refrain from using bad language and racial/sectarian references
- Refrain from bullying and rough/dangerous play
- Respect other children and adults
- Keep safe
- Report inappropriate behavior and risky situations
- Play fairly
- Respect officials and accept decisions
- Show appropriate loyalty and be gracious in defeat
- Respect opponents and team mates
- Not cheat
- Not use violence

### **Children have the right to:**

- Safety
- Be listened to
- Respect
- Privacy
- Enjoyment of sport in a safe environment
- Referral to professional help if necessary
- Protection from abuse
- Equality and fair involvement
- Experience competition and a healthy desire to win
- Be believed
- Ask for help

Any misdemeanors and general misbehavior will be dealt with by the immediate coaches and reported to the designated person where deemed necessary. Persistent misbehavior will result in dismissal from the club. Parents/guardians will be informed.

Dismissal can be appealed with final decisions taken by the club committee.

## ***CODES OF BEHAVIOUR FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS***

### **Parents/Guardians are expected to:**

- Complete and return club registration form for Cill na Martra G.A.A. Club.
- Deliver and collect children punctually
- Ensure child is properly attired for weather conditions
- Ensure proper kit is worn at all times
- Detail any health concerns or special needs pertaining to the child on the consent/registration form, particularly respiratory problems, and allergies. Any health concerns should be notified to the coach before a match/training
- Inform the coach beforehand if the child is to be collected early
- Encourage the child to play to his/her best, fairly
- Show good example
- Encourage all children's efforts, listen and be positive
- Behave responsibly on sidelines
- Appreciate and respect the coach
- Be realistic
- Ensure child's hygiene and nutritional requirements are met
- Promote child's participation for fun

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

- Know the child is safe
- Be informed of problems or concerns relating to the child
- Be informed if the child is injured
- Have consent sought for issues such as trips
- Contribute to decisions within the club
- Complain if there is concern about the standard of coaching
- Have access to any policies or procedures

Any misdemeanor or breach of this code of conduct will be dealt with individually by a club official. Persistent misbehavior will result in the parent/guardian being asked not to attend if their presence is detrimental to child welfare.

The ultimate action would be regrettably asking the child to leave the club.

**Cill na Martra GAA Club, March 2012**