

Drogheda Town FC Club Policies

Mission Statement

“To foster an environment which is safe, where players can enjoy all aspects of the sport and experience personal development. Educate and support coaches, managers and leaders. Ensure respect for others”

Players Code of Conduct

Junior members of Drogheda Town FC are entitled to:

1. Be safe, be treated with dignity, sensitivity and respect.
2. Participate in soccer on an equal basis, appropriate to their age/ability and stage of development.
3. Experience competition at a level at which they are comfortable.
4. Be happy, have fun and enjoy soccer in an environment where winning at all costs is **not** the priority.
5. Make a complaint in an appropriate way and have it dealt with through a proper and effective complaints procedure.
6. Be afforded appropriate confidentiality.
7. Be listened to.
8. Have a voice in the running of the club.

We do encourage players to realise that they also have responsibilities; to treat other children, fellow players, coaches and volunteers with the same degree of fairness and respect they expect in return.

In this regard junior members of Drogheda Town FC must undertake to:

1. Play fairly, do your best, have fun & be on your best behaviour at all times.
2. Abide by all club rules & have high standards of Fair Play.
3. Respect opponents remembering they are not the enemy, they are friends/partners in a sporting event.
4. Line up and shake hands before and after the match, whoever wins.
5. Thank the referee at end of game.
6. Give opponents a hand if they are injured, if in possession put the ball out of play so they can get attention.
7. Accept any apologies offered by opponents when they are offered.
8. Respect fellow team members, support them when they do well and when things go wrong.
9. Treat everyone equally.
10. Exercise self control and tolerance for others, even if others do not.
11. Be modest in victory and be gracious in defeat. “Be A Sport”.
12. Approach the club Child Welfare Officer (details below) with any questions or concerns you might have.

Junior members of DroghedaTown FC must not:

1. Cheat.
2. Bully or use bullying tactics.
3. Use abusive language or argue with referees or officials, team mates, opponents or coaches.
4. Use violence, harm others or their property.
5. Tell lies about adults or other children.
6. Spread rumours.
7. Take banned substances to improve performance.
8. Keep secrets about any person who may have caused them, or others, harm.
9. Behave in any manner that may bring the name of Drogheda Town FC into disrepute.

10. Misbehave at training sessions and/or matches by refusing to participate or being generally disruptive.

Child Welfare Officer:

**Trine Kelly : 0879334673
trinekelly@gmail.com**

Any breaches of Club policy could result in you being suspended or expelled from the club.

Code of Conduct for Parents/Guardians & Spectators

1. Encourage but do not force your children to play football. Your own instincts will tell whether they are ready to start playing.
2. Encourage and assist your children in attending all training sessions and matches throughout the season. Ensure they arrive on time and collect them promptly. Be mindful of others when using the carpark. Respect our coaches and managers by letting them know in good time if players will not be available for training or matches.
3. Transport arrangements for your child to and from away games are strictly your responsibility.
4. The use of foul or abusive language will not be tolerated in the presence of any child at Drogheda Town FC. You will be asked to leave our grounds if you fail to comply with this. Verbal abuse of players, referees or opposing supporters cannot be accepted.
5. Welcome and respect all your teams' opponents. Without them there would be no match. Do not argue with opposition players/coaches/parents or supporters.
6. Promote and teach FAIR PLAY. Applaud good play, sportsmanship and best effort by the visiting team as well as your own. Show approval for effort, not just results.
7. Teach your child to treat referees, other players, coaches, officials and spectators with respect regardless of difference.
8. Let the referee do their job and teach your child to respect the decisions of referees.
9. Encourage your child to appreciate all on the team, regardless of ability.
10. Lead, as most parents do, by good example. Condemn the use of violence in all forms at every opportunity.
11. Do not shout instructions to your child as they may conflict with managers/coaches instructions and will only lead to confusion for our players. Don't interfere with the coach. Your job is to support your child and offer only positive encouragement.
12. You are encouraged to establish regular contact with the individual/s responsible for coaching your child.
13. Refrain from any negative commentary concerning players and/or managers/coaches at all times and especially in the company of children. If you are unhappy or wish to lodge a complaint about any issues please do so through the correct complaint procedures and same will be fully considered and addressed by the Committee.
14. Any support and assistance that parents/guardians can provide is greatly appreciated. Don't be too shy to ask.
15. Please do not ignore or dismiss complaints or concerns expressed by your child which relate to his/her involvement in football. These should be relayed back to the Committee so that, if necessary, corrective action can be taken.
16. Under no circumstances should a child be ridiculed or shouted at for losing a game or making a mistake. Do not admonish your child, or any other child, for the standard of their performance.
17. Ensure your child is adequately prepared for the weather.
18. Inform coaches/managers and other relevant Club personnel of any medical needs your child has that should be known.
19. Please remember that although children play organised soccer they are not professionals. Don't place excessive pressure on children to perform to unrealistically high expectations. Children play soccer to develop their skills and have fun.
20. Remain in the spectator area. During games at Under 8 to Under 11 all parents and spectators must remain 5 metres away from the pitch, or in the designated spectator area, No spectators are allowed at the end lines.
21. Please do not approach a manager/coach with any issues you may have about a game until at least 48 hours has passed, as often emotions can take over.
22. Remember that coaches and managers are volunteers and congratulate them on a job well done.
23. The behaviour of a team's supporters will often be remembered long after the result of the game. Be remembered for the right reasons"

Any breaches of this policy could result in you being suspended or expelled from the club.

Child Safeguarding Policy

Safeguarding Policy

Drogheda Town FC is committed to ensuring that all necessary steps will be taken to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people who participate in activities in our Club.

All children and young people who participate in Club activities should be able to do so in a safe and enjoyable environment. While doing so they should be protected from any form of abuse, be it physical, emotional, sexual, neglect or bullying.

The responsibility for protecting children lies with all adults involved in this Club.

These policies and procedures, in addition to relevant training programmes, will ensure that everybody in Drogheda Town FC is aware of what is expected of them in relation to protecting children and young people within the Club.

In pursuit of this goal Drogheda Town FC will:

- Advise all members of Drogheda Town FC (coaches, players, parents/guardians and spectators) of their responsibilities in relation to the welfare and protection of children and young people who participate in soccer.
- Operate within the recommended FAI Codes of Conduct and best practice guidelines as set out in the Children First Act 2015 and Tusla's Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice.
- Appoint a Club Child Welfare Officer.
- Endeavour to provide child protection and welfare courses to all managers/coaches at Drogheda Town FC.
- Endeavour to provide emergency first aid courses for all coaches and staff.
- Ensure that all coaches and staff of Drogheda Town FC are Garda Vetted.

The aims of this Drogheda Town FC Child Protection Policy are:

- To be pro-active in order to best protect all children and young people who participate in activities at Drogheda Town FC.
- To provide appropriate guidance and advice to all Club members (players, coaches, volunteers, spectators and parents) in all matters concerning child welfare and protection.
- To promote best practice in child welfare and protection.
- To promote ethics and best practice standards throughout the Club.

The key principles underpinning this Policy are that:

- The welfare of the child is the first and paramount consideration.
- The safety and welfare of children is everyone's responsibility.
- All children and young people have a right to be protected from abuse of any kind regardless of their age, gender, disability, culture, language, racial origin, religious beliefs or sexual identity.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse/poor practice must be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- The Club will cooperate fully with the statutory authorities in accordance with procedures as outlined in the Children First Act 2015.

Drogheda Town Child Welfare Key Personnel & Roles:

The Child Welfare Officer and the Relevant Person for the purpose of Children First 2015 is

Trine Kelly Tel: 0879334673 Email: trinekelly@gmail.com

Roles:

Relevant Person: Responsible for leading the development of guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures and for ensuring that policies and procedures are consistent with best practice. The relevant person is the first point of contact in relation to the Clubs' Child Safeguarding Statement and Safeguarding Policy.

FAI Mandated Person:

The Mandated Person for the FAI is **James Geraghty** Tel: 01-8999319 Email:james.geraghty@fai.ie

Recruitment Policy

Drogheda Town FC will take all reasonable steps to ensure that all coaches, managers and volunteers are suitable to work with children and young people.

- All new volunteers must first submit a volunteer application.
- All appointments are subject to approval and ratification by the Committee.
- All managers/coaches and volunteers associated with the Club must be Garda Vetted through the FAI.
- All new coaches and volunteers must first be Garda Vetted before they commence working with children young persons.
- All coaches, managers and volunteers are expected at all times to abide by all Club rules, policies and procedures.

In the event of failure by any volunteer to abide by Club rules and by the highest standards of ethics and good practice the Club may issue an immediate stand down order. Once recruited the Club will make all efforts to support coaches, managers and volunteers.

Safeguarding training:

The Club will endeavour to provide approved Safeguarding training for all managers/coaches. Records of Safeguarding training for volunteers will be kept.

Categories and indicators of abuse:

The Club encourages all managers/coaches/volunteers to be aware of the signs and types of abuse that may be experienced by young players involved in the Club.

Further informations on categories of abuse and statutory guidelines can be found at www.tusla.ie/children-first.

Safe management of activities:

Policies and procedures that support the safe management of activities in Drogheda Town include:

- Supervision Policy;
- Code of Conduct for Players;
- Code of Conduct for Managers/Coaches;
- Code of Conduct for Parents/Guardians & Spectators;
- Incident/Accident Reporting Procedure;
- Anti-Bullying Policy;
- Complaints & Disciplinary Procedure.

FAI Guidelines:

The Football Association of Ireland's regulations in regard to child welfare and protection are defined in the rulebook as:

RULE 71. THE PROTECTION AND WELFARE OF CHILDREN

(a) In line with legislation and Government Guidelines (The Child Care Act 1991 and the Protection for Persons Reporting Abuse Act 1998) in relation to child protection and welfare, it is mandatory that all participants, clubs,

leagues, divisional associations and other football bodies shall be bound by the FAI recommended codes of conduct and best practice guidelines

(b) Any act, statement, conduct or other matter which harms a child or children, or poses or may pose a risk of harm to a child or children, shall constitute behaviour which is improper and brings the game into disrepute.

(c) Breaches shall become a disciplinary offence. Any member issued with a ban from football activity shall have their name notified to all League Secretaries for onward dissemination to all Club Secretaries. The notification shall state the name of the individual and the fact a ban has been issued.

(d) Any participant who is the subject of a Statutory Inquiry in relation to any child welfare concern must stand down from all football activities pending the outcome of that inquiry and any subsequent internal disciplinary proceedings.

(e) Any member convicted of an offence by the Irish Courts or Courts of any other jurisdiction involving the welfare of children shall be automatically banned from membership of the Association. For the avoidance of doubt no disciplinary or other hearing shall be necessary in order to implement this automatic ban.

RULE 95. PROTECTION AND WELFARE OF CHILDREN

All participants, clubs, leagues, divisional associations and other football bodies shall be bound by the FAI rules, codes of conduct and guidelines governing the protection and welfare of children, and breaches of such rules, codes and guidelines shall be subject to disciplinary sanction.

The disciplinary body may impose any sanction it deems appropriate.

Any act, statement, conduct or other matter which harms a child or children, or poses or may pose a risk of harm to a child or children, shall constitute behaviour which is improper and brings the game into disrepute.

Any participant who is the subject of a statutory inquiry in relation to any child welfare concern must stand down from all football activities pending the outcome of that inquiry and any subsequent internal disciplinary proceedings.

Procedure for Reporting Child Abuse Concerns or Allegations

Overview

It is important to note that the investigation of suspected child abuse is the responsibility of the Statutory Authorities (Tusla and/or the Gardaí) and therefore will not be undertaken by the Club Child Welfare Officer or any other Club personnel.

It is not the role of the person who conveys a complaint or suspicion about abuse to determine the guilt or innocence of the accused but every complaint must be made and acted upon without delay.

All allegations of child abuse **must** be referred to the Child and Family Agency, **Tusla**, or in the event of an **emergency to the Gardaí**. Referrals to Tusla should be done by completing a **Standard Reporting Form**, available from [tusla.ie](https://www.tusla.ie).

All Club personnel have a duty to report any concerns they may have for the protection or welfare of a child or young person.

When an allegation is received by the Club it will be assessed promptly and carefully. It will be necessary to decide if a formal report should be made to Tusla. This decision should be based on reasonable grounds for concern.

Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children states that “Tusla should always be informed when a person has reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been, is being, or is at risk of being abused or neglected”.

The following examples would constitute reasonable grounds for concern:

- Evidence of an injury or behaviour, that is consistent with abuse and is unlikely to have been caused in any other way;
- Any concern about possible sexual abuse;
- Consistent signs that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect;
- A child saying or indicating by other means that he or she has been abused;
- Admission or indication by an adult or a child of an alleged abuse they committed;
- An account from a person who saw a child being abused.

Wherever appropriate, any issues should be checked with the parents/guardians when considering whether a concern exists, unless doing so may further endanger the child or the person considering making the report.

Abuse is not always committed through personal contact with a child or young person and may be perpetrated through social media or the use of information and communication technology.

Concerns will be passed on by the Club Child Welfare Officer and/or Designated Liaison Person to the Statutory Authorities if we do receive any complaints with reasonable grounds for concern.

Procedure:

Step One

Any allegation of abuse must in the first instance be brought to the attention of the Child Welfare Officer of the Club.

Should the Child Welfare Officer be unsure whether reasonable grounds for concern exist they can informally consult with the local duty social worker, who will advise whether or not the matter requires a formal report.

In cases of emergency, where a child appears to be at immediate and serious risk and the Child Protection Officer is unable to contact a duty social worker, the Gardaí shall be contacted. Under no circumstances should a child be left in a dangerous situation pending intervention by the Statutory Authorities.

Managers/coaches/volunteers may be subjected to erroneous or malicious allegations. Therefore, any allegation of abuse should be dealt with sensitively and every appropriate support should be provided for volunteers including counselling where necessary.

Formal reporting of allegations of abuse will be by submission to Tusla of a Standard Reporting Form.

Step Two

Should Drogheda Town FC become aware of an allegation of abuse of a child or children by a volunteer during the execution of that volunteer's duties, the Child Welfare Officer will privately inform the coach/volunteer of the following:

1. The fact that the allegation has been made against him/her;
2. The nature of the allegation;
3. Inform the volunteer that they must step down from all duties within the Club until the investigation has reached its full conclusion.

Step Three

The volunteer should be afforded an opportunity to respond.

The Club will note the response and pass on this information when making the formal report to the Statutory Authorities.

The report to Tusla should be factual and contain observations, dates, times, locations and contexts in which the incident occurred or suspicion was aroused, together with any other relevant information.

Records on child protection concerns, allegations and disclosures will be kept securely and in line with Data Protection legislation.

Step Four

Our Child Welfare Officer/ Designated Liaison Person, if reporting suspected 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 any statutory investigation.

It should be noted that should a formal notification be made, we are not accusing anyone of child abuse, rather we are passing on concerns for investigation by the appropriate Statutory Authorities in keeping with the principle that “the welfare of the child is the first and paramount consideration”.

Step Five

All subsequent actions following an allegation of abuse against a coach/volunteer will be taken in consultation with the Statutory Authorities and An Garda Síochána. An immediate meeting will be sought with these two agencies for this purpose. The Football Association of Ireland National Children’s Officer is also available to provide support and advice.

Step Six

Under Football Association of Ireland rules, any coach/volunteer/manager who is the subject of a statutory investigation into alleged child abuse, is required to stand down from all soccer activities until the investigation is completed. Therefore the FAI National Children’s Officer must be informed immediately of any formal notification to the Statutory Authorities.

When a person is asked to stand down it should be made clear that it is only a precautionary measure in keeping with standard procedures/guidelines and will not prejudice any later disciplinary proceedings.

The coach/manager/volunteer concerned will be advised that the procedures being undertaken are in accordance with statutory requirements. He or she should be treated with respect and fairness, and also be assured that all information will be dealt with in a sensitive and confidential manner.

Step Seven

The Club will carefully consider the outcome of the statutory investigation and will then assess if there are any outstanding disciplinary issues in relation to their internal rules or infringements of the Football Association of Ireland best practice guidelines. It must be remembered that 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.

Internal Club disciplinary proceedings can only be initiated after the Statutory Authorities have completed theirs.

Confidentiality

Where child protection and welfare concerns arise, information must be shared on a ‘need to know’ basis in the best interest of the child/young person with the relevant Statutory Authorities and with parents/guardians.

No undertakings regarding secrecy can be given. The proportionate provision of information to the Statutory Authorities necessary for the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality or data protection.

Parents/guardians and children/young people have a right to know if personal information is being shared, unless doing so could put the child/young person at further risk or may put the reporter at risk.

Disciplinary, Complaints and Appeals Procedure

While many concerns can be dealt with in an informal manner to the satisfaction of all concerned, it is advisable that detailed records are maintained in respect of all complaints and that all parties are advised of the formal complaints and appeals procedure. All reasonable efforts to resolve matters should be exhausted at local level before accessing the appeals procedure.

Step One

Any person who has a complaint or concern should bring it to the attention of the Club Secretary. The complaint or concern should be in writing and should outline all relevant details and other parties involved. The Club Secretary will acknowledge receipt of the complaint.

Step Two

The complaint or concern should then be brought to the attention of the Club Chairperson who will convene a disciplinary committee/panel, unless the complaint or concern relates to a child abuse matter or criminal offence that meets criteria for formal reporting to the statutory authorities.

The disciplinary committee/panel will comprise a minimum of three members. The Club Child Welfare Officer may be asked to sit on the panel if it is deemed necessary.

Where there are potential contentious issues, due consideration will be given to ensure the independence of the disciplinary committee/panel.

Step Three

The disciplinary committee/panel should furnish any participant with details of the complaint being made against them and afford them the opportunity of providing a response either verbally or in writing. In the event of a complaint against a child, the parents/guardians should be informed and advised of the process.

Step Four

The disciplinary committee/panel should then hear the case of all parties involved and decide if a rule or regulation has been infringed.

Step Five

The disciplinary committee/panel should then inform those involved of their decision and the sanctions, if any, that are to be imposed. This notification should be in writing, setting out the reasons for the sanction. Written notification will be forwarded to parents if the proceedings involve a participant under eighteen years of age.

Step Six

Any party unhappy with the findings of the disciplinary committee/panel can appeal the decision in writing to the club chairperson. Any such appeal must be made within fourteen days of the notification of the original decision.

Step Seven

The appeal will be heard by the executive committee of the Club. The case and all evidence will be considered. The executive committee will have the power to uphold or reject the appeal or to vary, alter or set aside any sanction imposed by the disciplinary committee/panel. Such decisions are final.

General Points:

All complaints relating to inappropriate behaviour/poor practice should be brought to the attention of the Chairperson of the Club. In all cases the safety and welfare of the child/children is paramount. All complaints will be checked out and handled in a confidential manner. All such complaints and actions taken will be recorded and kept on file.

Rumours

Rumours should not be allowed hang in the air. Any rumour/s relating to inappropriate behaviour/s circulating in the club should be brought to the attention of the Chairperson and checked out promptly. All ensuing information should be handled confidentially and with sensitivity.

False and misleading complaints will be dealt with appropriately.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is about managing information in a respectful, professional and purposeful manner. It is important that the rights of both the child and the person about whom the complaint has been made are protected. Therefore, appropriate confidentiality will be maintained in respect of all issues and people involved in concerns about the welfare of a child or bad practice within the club.

The following points will be borne in mind:

- A guarantee of confidentiality or undertakings regarding secrecy cannot be given, as the welfare of the child will supersede all other considerations.
 - All information will be treated in a careful and sensitive manner and will only be discussed with those who need to know.
 - Information will be conveyed to the parents/guardians of a child about whom there are concerns 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.
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Managers/Coaches Code of Conduct & Guidelines

Rationale

This code of conduct and the guidelines contained herein are designed to protect both our players and our Managers/Coaches and to help everyone uphold the laws and ethics of the game.

Coaches/Managers are key to the establishment of good ethics in football and their concept of ethics and their attitudes directly affects the behaviour and attitude of players under their supervision.

Coaches/Managers are expected to pay close attention to the moral aspects of their general conduct and to ensure it is consistent with the Club Ethos and in line with FAI Guidelines (available from the Committee).

Priorities

Most children and their respective Managers/Coaches would naturally prefer to be winning matches. That said, the best interests of children (especially at an early age) are served by providing a football environment that concentrates on improving and developing their football skills, allowing them to make friends and, above all, ensuring they have fun.

At schoolboy level Managers/Coaches at the Club must disassociate themselves from the “winning at all costs” mentality. This mentality inhibits player development and can lead to young players having a sense of frustration and failure. The Clubs' approach in this regard is consistent with FAI Guidelines for the development of young players which the Club fully supports.

The health, safety, welfare, moral education and skill development are Club priorities and MUST at all times be put before the achievement or reputation of any Manager and/or Coach.

Managers/Coaches should appreciate that children's reasons for playing football and their expectations and values are quite different from those of adults.

We would ask all Managers/Coaches to familiarise themselves with the following Club policies so they can understand and appreciate the expectations of the Club, the football development Committee, the Parents/Guardians and the Children:

- Players Code of Conduct
- Parents/Guardians & Spectators Code of Conduct
- Child Safeguarding Policy
- Reporting Procedures for Child Abuse Allegations & Concerns
- Bullying Policy & Guidelines

Garda Vetting & Volunteer Recruitment

It is a legal requirement that anybody working in a voluntary capacity with children must first be Garda Vetted through the FAI. Garda Vetting application forms are available from the Club Child Protection Officer or the website of the F.A.I.

In addition a Volunteer Registration form must be completed. These are available from the Committee Chairperson or the Club website.

If you recruit somebody to help with your team, that person MUST be approved by the Committee in advance. As with all volunteers they must first go through the Garda Vetting process.

Record Keeping

Managers/Coaches are encouraged to keep both match record sheets and attendance record sheets for training sessions. These are important to ensure there is an official record of attendance and playing time.

Coach Education & Development

Managers and Coaches are encouraged to develop their coaching skills by attending Coach Education Programmes such as FAI Kick Start 1, Kick Start 2, etc. The Club will pay or reimburse the cost of attendance. Such courses are advertised periodically, especially if they are being held at the Club grounds. Please consult with the Football Committee if you are interested in further developing your coaching skills.

The Club will endeavour to facilitate approved child welfare training for all Managers/Coaches e.g. Safeguarding 1

Ensuring Player Participation

There will be Roll on/Roll Off substitutes at all age levels.

The Club strongly discourages the use of permanent substitutes and advocates that all players should get minimum playing time, at least consistent with FAI player development guidelines.

In the interests of fair play the strongest team should not necessarily start every game. It's up to the Managers/Coaches to use their skills to field a combination of players at different stages of the game to achieve the best result making sure throughout that all players are treated fairly.

General Points

Managers/Coaches must be prepared to allow their players to move to other teams if it is felt by the Club to be in their best interests of the player's future development.

Avoid dictating to players on the on the side line as this only undermines their confidence and hinders their development. Appropriate advice and guidance can be given at half-time.

Age-Co-Ordinators or other Club Officials may seek assistance from Managers in collecting outstanding registration fees from time to time.

Registration fees are payable by all players who register with the club. Should a player leave the club and wish to receive a refund of Registration fees, the amount, if any, returned shall be determined by committee after consideration of all Club benefits enjoyed by the player during his/her stay with the Club.

Resist the temptation to engage in verbal squabbles, inappropriate language or gestures with match officials, opposition teams or parents as it reflects badly on the Club. Ignore any that may arrive in your direction from the opposition.

Cooperate fully with any person the Club appoints to work with your players or team. (e.g. other coaches, age-group coordinators)

Never have player contact details or phone numbers stored on your phone or any other place. Managers/Coaches should have Parent/Guardian contact details only.

Managers/Coaches should avoid situations where they are asked to give a child a lift in their car unless accompanied by others for the full duration of the trip. Encourage parents/guardians to take full responsibility for travel arrangements for their child.

Respect the rights, dignity and worth of each and every player on their team, and treat each player equally.

Ensure that the activities you advocate are appropriate for the age, maturity, experience & ability of your players.

First Aid Kits are available to Managers. If you do not have a First Aid Kit or you need to replenish an existing one please liaise with the Committee.

Breaches of codes of conduct or club policies will be dealt with through the clubs discipline and appeals procedure, and could result in offenders being suspended or expelled from the Club.

Some Key Principles in Managing/Coaching

1. Motivate your players positively – it builds their self-confidence and self-motivation.
2. Praise and encourage your players and give them the freedom to express themselves.
3. Let the players make their own decisions on the pitch. You have already coached and guided them before the game, at training sessions and also played training matches. Avoid constantly instructing them on what to do during a match. Coaches must accept that mistakes are part of the game and part of player learning and development.
4. Focus on the quality of play (when attacking, defending and in transition) rather than on winning games.
5. Set development goals on what you want to achieve with your team/players. For example, today we are focusing on attacking play, defending, closing down, maintaining possession, passing, keeping your heads up etc.
6. Engage with your players by asking questions, getting their views and opinions. Talk and discussion will create awareness of their role.
7. Use language that is simple and age appropriate.
8. Demonstrate and participate in the training routines what you want them to do so they fully understand.

Club Ethos

In promoting “Sport for Fun” the Club will insist on:

1. Encouraging participation and fun.
2. Promoting the development of skills as opposed to winning at all costs.
3. Ensuring fair playing time for every player.
4. Emphasising and praising effort.
5. Acting as good role models.
6. Insisting on Fair Play.
7. Being realistic with our expectations.
8. Being aware of children’s feelings.
9. Teaching players to respect different cultures.
10. Teaching players that standards of behaviour are just as important as winning.
11. Encouraging respect for referees, opposition players and managers/coaches.
12. Not having permanent substitutes on any teams.

Player Development:

We would like to draw all coaches attention to the Club Coaching Plan which has been circulated to everyone in conjunction with this policy document. We expect all coaches to implement the elements contained within the Club Coaching Plan and if they are unsure about any element to contact the Football Development Co-Ordinator.

1. Player Development Plan

As a club we must adhere to the the FAI Player Development Plan (insert link). We feel this is most important in terms of encouraging the style of play outlined in our club coaching plan and not focus purely and solely on winning. Our aim is to create the best future senior player we possibly can, not to be the best U8 team in Drogheda. We feel very strongly not only about equal playing time at the weekends for all players/team but ball rolling time in training, no laps for our youth players, no long sermons from our coaches, keep the ball rolling and coach in the flow.

2. Age Appropriate Training - Games

It is important to train a player appropriately in terms of load and content depending on the players physical and biological age. The Club Coaching Plan sets out what a training session should look like and the Football Development Co-Ordinator and Committee are available for advice and guidance at all times.

3. Positive Coaching Behaviour

We expect all coaches to create a player focused environment where all players feel empowered to try things on the pitch and take control of the game themselves. Players should not be critiqued in a way that makes them not want to try the risky pass, to take on a player etc for fear of been given out to. We want all coaches and players to wear club gear at training and games. No coaches should be smoking around players and parents should be spoken to about the expected behaviour from them also at the start of each season.

4. No joystick coaching on match days

Allow players to feel empowered to take ownership of their game on match days. Do not feel the urge to constantly commentate on the game as players need to develop their in game decision making and can only do this if they are allowed make decisions themselves. By all means encourage your players or speak to a player/s during natural breaks such as throw-ins, free kicks etc or wait until half-time but let them play. Match day is the day for you to assess are the players learning what you are teaching them in training and if not why not?

5. Encourage the player to develop to the best of their ability

It is important to recognise that players should be encouraged to develop to the absolute best of their ability. Unfortunately, for some players that may mean moving to a team playing in a higher division, league etc but if that's the case we should not block it but see it as a good job done by his coaches and encourage him/her to continue on their development pathway.

Match Day Protocol

Match results should be communicated to the schoolboy Secretary as soon as possible on the same day.

Two weeks' notice must be given for game cancellations (max 2 per season)

Any incidents or accidents during games or training must be reported to the Club Secretary immediately. (e.g. managers/parents being sent from grounds by match officials, Red Cards, injuries to players or any other incident which the Committee need to know about)

Managers / Coaches need to be on time and fully equipped for games. Checks include, have you brought Player id cards when appropriate, have you bib, cones, balls, pump, referees fees. Have you checked the colours to be worn by opposition, especially when playing at home as home team will be required to change when there is a clash of colours.

It is the Managers responsibility to ensure nets/corner flags are put up for games and taken down after games where appropriate and also to ensure goal posts are safe in accordance with FAI goal post regulations, When playing away, please check goal posts are securely staked down.

Travelling to Away Games

When travelling with young people Managers/Coaches must:

1. Ensure that you have adequate motor insurance cover in place.
2. Not carry more than the permitted number of passengers.
3. Ensure the use of safety belts & always keep to the rules of the road.
4. Never travel alone with one player.

Dealing with Injuries

1. Managers/Coaches should not treat injuries out of sight of others. Therefore use a "Two-Deep" (two personnel, or two players) supervision system.
2. Only personnel who are qualified in administering First Aid or treating sports injuries should attempt to treat an injury.
3. The comfort level and dignity of the player should always take priority. Example: Only uncover the injured area, or cover private areas of the player's body.
4. Any doubts of a medical nature should be passed on to a suitably qualified medical person.
5. Coaches must not play injured players.
6. First Aid Kits should be taken to all games. These should be adequately stocked.
7. Parents/Guardians should be notified of illness or injury which their children incur while participating in any Club activity.
8. All incidents should be recorded on an "Incident Report Form"
9. Any series injuries suffered by players must be reported immediately to the Club Secretary.
10. Managers/Coaches are asked to be familiar with the Club's Concussion Policy & Guidelines below.

Coach, Manager & Volunteer Support Policy

The Club is indebted to our Managers/Coaches and all other volunteers who give freely of their valuable time in providing a stimulating, challenging, supportive and enjoyable soccer experience for children in the Club.

The Club will endeavour to support these volunteers in their work.

The Club will make all efforts to assist new volunteers in whatever way they can. An induction pack will be provided to all new volunteers which will help them familiarise themselves with Club rules, policies and procedures and expected behaviour of children, parents/guardians & spectators and Managers/Coaches.

Managers/Coaches are not expected to deal with any problems alone and are assured of Committee assistance and support.

Child Protection

1. No person representing the Club is permitted to instruct players in a manner that a child may feel intimidated or threatened during the course of a match and/or training sessions or whilst attending any other Club event.
2. Persons representing the Club should be sensitive to the risks involved in participating in contact sports or other activities.
3. While gentle physical contact may be considered a valid way of comforting, reassuring and showing concern for children, it should only take place in public view and when it is acceptable to all persons concerned.
4. No person representing the Club should ever physically punish or be in any way verbally abusive to a child, nor should they tell inappropriate jokes in the presence of children.
5. Club representatives should be sensitive to the possibility of developing favouritism, or becoming over involved or spending a great deal of time with any one child.
6. Children should be encouraged to report cases of bullying to either a Child Protection Officer, or a Club Representative of their choice. All concerns or complaints must be brought to the attention of the Schoolboy Committee immediately.
7. Everyone involved in the Club should respect the personal space, safety and privacy of individuals.

Player Contact

All managers/Coaches/volunteers of Drogheda Town FC are advised that:

1. Any necessary physical contact should be in response to the immediate needs of the child (such as First aid) and not the adult
2. It should be in an open environment with the permission and full understanding of the player

3. It should be determined by the age and developmental stage of the player. You should not do anything that a child can do for him/herself

Comforting/congratulating players - Guidelines:

1. Limit touching to "safe" areas, such as hand-to-shoulder, hand to hand.
2. Make your intention to congratulate or comfort clear to the player.
3. Avoid embracing players unless it's initiated by the player.
4. Respect a player's discomfort or rejection of physical contact.
5. Be sure that touching occurs only when others are present.

Guidance on Discipline and the use of Sanctions

Discipline in Soccer

Discipline in soccer should always be positive in focus, and it should therefore encourage players to become more responsible for themselves and their actions.

The use of sanctions is an important element in the maintenance of discipline. However Coaches/Managers should have a clear understanding of where and when particular sanctions are appropriate.

It should be remembered that successful coaches/managers/volunteers are sparing in the use of sanctions. The age and developmental stage of the child should be taken into account when using sanctions.

Sanctions should always be fair, consistent and applied evenly, and in the case of a persistent offence, should be progressively applied.

The following guidelines are suggested:

1. **Rules should be clearly stated and agreed.**
2. **A warning should be given if a rule is broken.**
3. **A sanction (e.g. use of time out) should be applied if a rule is broken for a second time.**
4. **If a rule is broken regularly the child should be spoken to and parents/guardians involved if necessary.**

Sanctions should only be used in a corrective way that is intended to help children improve both now and in the future.

Remember:

- Sanctions should never be used in retaliation.
- When violations of the team rules or other misbehaviours occur, sanctions should always be applied in an impartial and fair manner.
- Sanctions should never be used as threats.
- If a rule is broken, the appropriate sanction should be implemented consistently, fairly and firmly.
- Sanctions should not be applied if the coach/manager is not comfortable with them.
- If an appropriate action cannot be devised immediately, the child should be told that the matter will be dealt with later, at a specified time and as soon as is possible.
- Once a sanction/s has been imposed, it is important to make the child feel s/he is a valued member of the team again.
- A child should be helped, to understand if necessary why sanction/s are imposed.
- A child should not be sanctioned for making errors whilst playing soccer.
- Physical activity (e.g. running laps or doing push ups) should not be used as a sanction as to do so may cause a child to resent physical activity which is something that s/he should learn to enjoy throughout his/her life.
- Soccer is meant to be enjoyable and constant criticism and sanctioning can cause participants to turn away from Soccer and sport in general.

Payment of Fines

Should a player be sent off for violent conduct or verbally abusing a referee or opposing player/ manager they must pay their own fine issued by the league.

Managers who are removed from the field of play for verbally abusing a referee or club officials must pay the fine issued by the league.

It also will be reviewed by the committee and the offenders could be asked to attend a meeting.

This code of conduct and guidelines contained herein are designed to protect players and Managers/Coaches alike. All Managers & Coaches must follow these guidelines in the interest of player safety & welfare, and the enjoyment of all who participate in Soccer at Drogheda Town Football Club.

Concussion Policy & Guidelines

Concussion is the most common form of brain injury and must be taken seriously.

A concussion can be caused by a direct blow to the head, **but can also occur when a player takes a hard knock to another part of the body**, resulting in a rapid movement of the head, causing a disturbance of brain function.

1. Recognise the symptoms:

- Visual clues that suggest possible conclusion include lying motionless, inability to get up or stumbling.
- Common symptoms of concussion include headache, dizziness, memory and balance problems.
- Others include confusion, nausea, blurred vision, sensitivity to light, feeling groggy, just “not feeling right” or even pressure in the head.

2. React:

There will often be reluctance from players to leave the field of play and so this decision must be taken out of their hands.

Therefore it is the responsibility of the coach/parent/guardian/referee to remove the player from training/matches.

It may be necessary to call an ambulance.

Parents/Guardians should seek medical advice if there is a concern that a player has suffered concussion. Any player with suspected concussion should be assessed and monitored.

If a player returns to training/matches with a concussion they put themselves at risk of suffering post-concussion syndrome resulting in a long-term endurance of a collection of concussion symptoms, including headaches, depression, personality change, memory and concentration problems, sleep disturbance and mood swings.

Return to play can only be allowed after the player has been passed as medically fit.

Bullying Policy & Guidance

Bullying can be defined as repeated verbal, psychological or physical aggression conducted by an individual or group against others. It is behaviour which is intentionally aggravating and intimidating. It includes teasing, taunting, threatening, and use of violence or extortion by one or more children against a victim.

Bullying is deemed to be repetitive behaviour. It must occur over time, rather than being a single aggressive act.

Managers/coaches/parents/guardians should be aware that bullying of players can occur beyond the confines of the Club grounds through the internet and social media.

It is important to recognise the impact that bullying can have in the lives of young people. Therefore **all coaches/managers/volunteers/players/parents have a part to play in ensuring that nobody in Drogheda Town is the victim of any type of bullying behaviour.**

Everyone should be aware that bullying of any kind will not be tolerated and they have a duty to report any such behaviour to our managers/coaches/the Schoolboy Committee or the Child Welfare Officer.

Common experiences of bullying and discrimination by young people include:

- Being called names, insulted or verbally abused;
- Being deliberately embarrassed and humiliated by other children;
- Being made to feel different or like an outsider;
- Being lied about; being ignored;
- Being physically assaulted or threatened with violence;

Adult to child bullying includes the use of repeated gestures or expressions of a threatening or intimidating nature, or any comment intended to degrade a child. Common experiences of this type of bullying include:

- Being deliberately embarrassed or humiliated;
- Being unfairly treated, verbally abused, ignored or not spoken to.

Prevention

Vigilance is the best deterrent against bullying. Children who bully will know that it will be dealt with, and the victims of bullying will have confidence in this.

There needs to be open discussion about bullying and **a clear statement of its unacceptability.**

Managers/coaches/children/parents/guardians should be advised at the start of every season that “bullying” in any shape or form is not acceptable or permitted in Drogheda Town.

Managers/coaches should insist that all members follow the Code of Conduct for Players at all times.

Key Actions for all Drogheda Town members:

- **Recognise** what bullying is;
- **Reject** all bullying behaviour;
- **Respond** in a calm, positive and active manner.

Key message for all child members of Drogheda Town:

- **Remember bullying continues only when we all stay silent**

Responding to Bullying

- Deal with incidents as they arise;
- Be absolutely certain about the known facts;
- Confront the “bully/bullies” with the allegations;
- Make it clear that the behaviour is unacceptable;
- See each “bully” separately if appropriate;
- Be specific about sanctions if the bullying does not stop;
- Follow up to check that the behaviour has ceased;
- Record all instances of bullying and action taken.

Strategies to use

- Use a whole group approach: work with the bully/bullies and the entire group - make the problem a 'shared concern' of the group.
- Reinforce that there is 'a permission to tell' culture.
- Encourage young people to negotiate, cooperate and help others, particularly with new members.
- Offer immediate support to any victim. Reassure them that it is not their fault.
- Never tell children to ignore bullying. Do not encourage them to take the law into their own hands.
- Incidents of bullying should be reported to the Schoolboy Committee.

Checklist of easy bystander actions to tell the group:

- **Do say "No" or "Stop" when you see someone behaving unfairly.**
- **Do tell when you know a player is being bullied. This is not "ratting". It is telling to be safe.**
- **Do include people that are being left out. Your support may make all the difference.**
- **Do report online bullying.**
- **Don't join in bullying behaviour by laughing or slagging when someone starts bullying.**
- **Don't cheer on a bully.**

Social Media Policy

The Club respects the rights of a person to use Social Media for personal use. However it is important to be mindful of the impact of its usage can influence people's perception of Drogheda Town and its members. Therefore:

- Do not upload, post or forward any content belonging to another Club member/volunteer unless you have that person's consent.
- Don't discuss coaches/players/officials/competitors/club volunteers etc. without their prior approval.
- Do not engage with children/young people/parents or coaches on a public forum
- As a manager, coach, club official, judge or club volunteer you **should not**
 - Accept any young person who is under 18 as a friend on your personal Social Media page.
 - Communicate with any person under 18 through Social Media, text message, phone or email. All communications concerning under 18's should be made through parents / guardians.
- When communications relate to Club matters, members should follow Club values, use sound judgement and common sense. When in doubt, do not post. Do not disclose confidential information.
- When disagreeing with the opinions of others online, keep it appropriate and polite. It is also important not to respond in the heat of the moment, in a way you may regret later. In particular do not engage with irate players, parents or coaches on a public forum.
- Do not upload, post, forward or post a link to any abusive, obscene, discriminatory, harassing, derogatory or defamatory content.
- No images or personal information of children should be posted online without prior written consent from each parent/guardian. Children's names or additional detailed information about them should not accompany any image or video.

Working Effectively

1. It is the policy of Drogheda Town FC to deal with any issues and problems in a constructive, effective and efficient manner and to deal with these in a timely manner so they do not grow into a major trouble.
2. It is the policy of Drogheda Town FC to pay particular attention to working relationships and to support staff, volunteers and board members to resolve any difficulties that may arise.
3. The preferred first step for addressing issues is for those involved to resolve the matter themselves in an amicable and respectful manner.
4. Where this has not resolved the matter, Drogheda Town FC will provide assistance from someone in the organisation not directly involved in the matter.
5. Where this does not resolve the matter, informal mediation will be sought with a view to ensuring early and effective resolution.
6. The intention is to address any issues informally and quickly without the need to go to formal complaint or grievance.

7. This policy is based on the recognition that unresolved conflict, especially concerning working and interacting relationships, is a major cause of ineffective organisational functioning, and Drogheda Town FC fully commits to an early resolution focus.