

**Laune Rangers GAA Club**

**Code of Ethics and Good Practice**

**For**

**Young Players**

## Laune Rangers Code of Ethics

1	Core Values .....	4
2	Policy Statement.....	5
3	Guidelines .....	6
3.1	Code of conduct for Young Players .....	6
3.2	Code of conduct for Parents/Guardians .....	8
3.3	Code of conduct for Mentors.....	9
3.4	Guidelines for Children's Officers.....	11
4	General Guidelines .....	12
4.1	Mentor Recruitment / Selection policy.....	12
4.2	Traveling with young players .....	12
4.3	Supervision .....	13
4.4	Away Trips/ Overnight Stays.....	13
4.5	Safety.....	14
4.6	Touching .....	15
4.7	Guidelines on use of photographic and filming equipment.....	15
5	Child Protection Procedures.....	16
5.1	Dealing with a complaint.....	16
5.1.1	Forming a complaint.....	16
5.1.2	Appointment of Disciplinary Committee .....	16
5.1.3	Complaint Procedure .....	17
5.1.4	Sanctions.....	17
5.1.5	Appeal Procedure .....	17
5.2	Dealing with Suspected Abuse .....	18
5.2.1	Reporting abuse.....	18
5.2.2	Response to a young player.....	18
5.2.3	Allegation against Mentors .....	19
5.2.4	Dealing with the Mentor.....	19

## Laune Rangers Code of Ethics

5.3	False Allegations .....	20
5.4	Confidentiality.....	20
5.5	Anonymous Complaints.....	21
5.6	Rumors .....	21
6	Appendices.....	22
6.1	Mentor Recruitment Form.....	22
6.2	Travel Forms.....	24
6.3	Format for Disciplinary Committee's Report .....	25
6.4	Anti-Bullying Policy.....	26
6.5	Grounds for Concern.....	28
6.6	Categories of Abuse.....	29
7	Useful list of Contact Numbers.....	31
8	References .....	37

## **1 Core Values**

Laune Rangers GAA Club is based on the following principles that will guide the development of our sport for young players. The stages of development of the young person should guide the types of activity provided within the Association. Adults will need to have a basic understanding of the physical, emotional and personal needs of young players.

### **Integrity in relationships:**

Adults interacting with young players in Laune Rangers GAA Club should do so with integrity and respect for the child. There is a danger that sporting contexts can be used to exploit or undermine children. All adult actions should be guided by what is best for the child and in the context of quality, open working relationships. Verbal, physical, emotional or sexual abuse of any kind is unacceptable within Gaelic Athletic Association and Ladies Gaelic Football Association.

### **Quality atmosphere and ethos**

Laune Rangers GAA Club involving young players should be conducted in a safe, positive and encouraging atmosphere. A child-centred ethos will help to ensure that competition and specialization are kept in their appropriate place.

### **Equality**

All children should be treated in an equitable and fair manner regardless of age, ability, sex, religion, social and ethnic background or political persuasion. Children with disability should be involved in an integrated way, thus allowing them to participate to their potential alongside other children.

### **Fair Play:**

Fair play is the guiding principle of the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Young Players in Laune Rangers GAA Club.

All sport should be conducted in an atmosphere of fair play. Ireland has contributed and is committed to the European Code of Sports Ethics, which defines fair play as: "much more than playing within the rules. It incorporates the concepts of friendship, respect for others and always playing with the right spirit. Fair play is defined as a way of thinking, not just a way of behaving. It incorporates issues concerned with the elimination of cheating, gamesmanship, unequal opportunities, excessive commercialisation and corruption".

(European Sports Charter and Code of Ethics, Council of Europe, 1993).

### **Competition**

A balanced approach to competition can make a significant contribution to the development of young players, while at the same time providing fun, enjoyment and satisfaction. If competitive demands are placed on children too early, excessive levels of pressure are placed on them and thus contributing to a high level of dropout from sport. Mentors should aim to put the welfare of the child first and competitive standards second.

## 2 Policy Statement

The Laune Rangers GAA Club is fully committed to safeguarding the well being of its members. Every individual in the Association should at all times, show respect and understanding for members rights, safety and welfare and conduct themselves in a way that reflects the principles of the Association and the guidelines contained in the *Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Young Players*.

In Laune Rangers GAA Club, one of our first priorities is the welfare of young players and we are 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 our commitment, we have adopted a code to protect our underage players (all persons under 18 years of age) and all mentors and members involved with our underage teams.

In compliance with the Code Laune Rangers GAA Club will:

Ensure that the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Young Players is adopted, agreed to, implemented and signed up to by all members

Amend, as necessary, the Constitution to reflect a safe and clearly defined method of recruiting, selecting and managing

Appoint a National Children's Officer

Ensure that effective disciplinary, complaints and appeals procedures are in place

Have in place procedures for dealing with a concern or complaint made to the Statutory Authorities against a committee member or mentor

Ensure that the club is fully affiliated and signed up to the Code

Be represented by appropriate personnel at all education/ training workshops dealing with the Code

Review child protection procedures regularly through open discussion to its members, Sports Councils and Statutory Authorities

Examine and take appropriate action in response to any reports of unusual incidents (high rate of transfers, dropouts) received from clubs

### 3 Guidelines

#### 3.1 Code of conduct for Young Players

*Laune Rangers GAA Club wish to provide the best possible environment for all young players involved in Gaelic Football. Young players deserve to be given enjoyable, safe sporting opportunities, free of abuse of any kind. These players have rights, which must be respected, and responsibilities that they must accept.*

##### Young players are entitled to:

- Be safe and to feel safe
- Be listened to and be believed
- Be treated with respect, dignity and sensitivity
- Have a voice in the club / organisation
- Participate on an equal basis
- Have fun and enjoy sport
- Experience competition at a level at which they feel comfortable
- Make complaints and have them dealt with
- Get help against bullies
- Say No
- Protect their own bodies
- Confidentiality

##### Young players should always:

- Treat **all** mentors (coaches, managers, selectors, club officials etc.,) with respect
- Play fairly and do their best at all times
- Respect team members - even when things go wrong
- Respect opponents - be gracious in defeat
- Abide by the rules set down by team managers when travelling to away events
- Behave in a manner that avoids bringing the sport of Gaelic Football into disrepute
- Talk to children's officer if they have any problems.
- Wear club gear at all events.
- Inform team management verbally of attendance / absence from training or games.
- Wear no jewellery at any club field events.
- Never use cameras/camera phones in the dressing room.

##### Young players should never:

- Cheat
- Use violence or physical contact that is not allowed within the rules
- Shout or argue with officials, team mates or opponents
- Harm team members, opponents or their property
- Bully or use bullying tactics to isolate another player
- Use unfair or bullying tactics to gain advantage
- Take banned substances
- Keep secrets, especially if they have been caused harm
- Tell lies about adults / other players

## Laune Rangers Code of Ethics

- Spread rumours.
- Never intentionally expose any participant to embarrassment or disparagement by the use of flippant or sarcastic remarks

### 3.2 Code of conduct for Parents/Guardians

#### Laune Rangers GAA Club believes that parents / guardians should;

- Be a role model for your child(ren) and maintain the highest standards of conduct when interacting with children, other parents, referees, officials and organizers
- Always behave responsibly and do not seek to unfairly affect the game or a player
- Never intentionally expose any young players to embarrassment or disparagement by the use of flippant or sarcastic remarks
- Always recognize the value and importance of the volunteers who provide sporting/recreational opportunities for your child. Do not publicly question the judgment or honesty of referees, coaches or organizers. Respect referees, coaches, organizers and other players
- Encourage your child to play by the rules. Teach your child that honest endeavour is as important as winning and do all you can to encourage good sportsmanship
- Set a good example by applauding good play on both sides. Encourage mutual respect for team-mates and opponents
- Parents should support all efforts to remove abusive behaviour and bullying behaviour in all its forms
- Read the Anti-Bullying policy within the club guidelines.
- Sign up to the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Young Players in Laune Rangers GAA Club.
- Ensure that your child's club has adopted and implemented the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Young Players
- Know the start and finish times of training – ensure that you arrive at the end of training
- Volunteer to assist with training – helping with equipment, in dressing rooms, at games, when travelling to games.
- Be aware that players are not allowed to wear jewellery, or have cameras /camera phones in the dressing rooms.
- It is the parents / guardians responsibility to notify the club of any condition medical or otherwise of their child.

#### Parents / Guardians Code of Conduct:

1. I will respect the rules and procedures set down in the Gaelic Athletic Association and Ladies Gaelic Football Association's Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children in Sport
2. I will respect my child's team-mates, mentors (e.g. managers, coaches, referees, selectors) and parents, as well as players, parents and coaches from opposing teams. I will encourage my child to treat other players, coaches, selectors, and managers with respect
3. I will give encouragement and applaud positive accomplishments whether from my child, her team-mates, their opponents or the officials
4. I will respect my child's mentor(s) and support his / her effort.
5. I will respect all officials and their authority during matches
6. I will never demonstrate threatening or abusive behaviour or use foul language.
7. I agree to abide by the rules and guidelines of **Laune Rangers GAA Club** and of official guides as per **Rule 13 (a) (b) (c)** Gaelic Athletic Association and **Rule 248** Ladies Gaelic Football Association. (**Any member** of the association found guilty of conduct calculated to bring the Association into disrepute shall be liable for expulsion or suspension by the committee or council concerned.)

8. Should any player, official or supporter of a team be responsible for the termination of a game the team concerned shall be liable for disqualification.)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Child/(ren) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### 3.3 Code of conduct for Mentors

*Laune Rangers GAA Club recognises the key role mentors play in the lives of children in sport. Mentors should strive to create a positive environment for the young players playing Gaelic Football. Mentors have an overall responsibility to take the steps necessary to ensure that positive and healthy experiences are provided.*

#### **Mentor Behaviour**

Mentor must act as a role model and promote the positive aspects of Gaelic Football and maintain the highest standards of personal conduct - your behaviour to players, referees, other officials, and opponents will have an effect on the players in your care

Mentors should respect the rights, dignity and worth of every player and treat each player equally, regardless of ethnic origin, religion or ability

Encourage the development of respect for opponents, referees, officials, selectors and other coaches and avoid criticism of mentors, referees and officials

Avoid working alone at all times. Ensure there is adequate supervision for all activities. It is important to realize 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, before coaching, during events and on trips with young players

## Laune Rangers Code of Ethics

When travel/overnight stays are involved, the mentors travelling with child must sign a separate agreement. Parents and players will also be asked to sign permission forms in these instances.

Where possible avoid the need to text players outside of club activities.

### **Dealing with Players**

Be generous with praise and never ridicule or shout at players for making mistakes or for losing a game

Remember that young players play for fun and enjoyment and that skill development and personal satisfaction have priority over highly structured competition. Never make winning the only objective – see Player Pathway

Set realistic goals for the players and do not pressurize young players

Be careful to avoid the "star system". 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 her family

Physical punishment or physical force must never be used. Never punish a mistake - by verbal means, physical means, or exclusion

Insist that players in your care respect the rules of the game. Insist on fair play and ensure players are aware you will not tolerate cheating or bullying behaviour

All mentors should keep an attendance record of all training sessions and matches

All mentors should ensure that parents are aware of training start and finishing times. All parents should be encouraged to assist with training or to assist in dressing rooms

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 are invited into adult groups/squads, it is advisable to get agreement from a parent/guardian. Boundaries of behaviour in adult groups are normally different from the boundaries that apply to junior 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. It is advisable for coaches **not** to involve young players in their personal life i.e. visits to coaches home or overnight stays

When approached to take on a new player, ensure that any previous coach-student relationship has been ended by the student/others in a professional manner

## Laune Rangers Code of Ethics

Mentors who become aware of a conflict between their obligation to their players and their obligation to the governing body 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

Parents / guardian should always be informed when problems arise except in situations where informing parents may put the player at risk

### **Laune Rangers GAA Club Mentor's Code of Conduct**

1. I will respect the rules and procedures set down in the Gaelic Football Association's Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Young Players
2. I will act as a role model and promote the positive aspects of sport and of Gaelic Football
3. I will respect all players and treat all players equally
4. I will encourage fair play and praise effort as well as results
5. I will not use any form of punishment (verbal or physical) on a player
6. I will not exert undue influence over a participant in order to obtain personal benefit or reward
7. I will respect the referees, officials and their authority during matches
8. I will never demonstrate threatening or abusive behaviour or use foul language

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Club: LAUNE RANGERS GAA CLUB**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **3.4 Guidelines for Children's Officers**

## **4 General Guidelines**

### **4.1 Mentor Recruitment / Selection policy**

Laune Rangers GAA Club will take all reasonable steps to ensure that mentors working with young players are suitable and appropriately qualified. All mentors will be expected to go through appropriate recruitment and selection procedures.

#### **Recruitment**

The decision to appoint a mentor is the responsibility of Laune Rangers GAA Club and not of any one individual within it. The Club committee should ratify all recommendations for appointment.

Responsibilities of the role and the level of experience/ qualifications required should be drawn up and clearly stated beforehand – it is recommended that all mentors hold appropriate qualifications

Each mentor should undergo a 'sign-up' procedure, whereby the appointed/ reappointed mentors agree to abide by the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Young People and to the policies of

Laune Rangers GAA Club.

All mentors, new and existing, should fill in an application form, giving names of two referees that may be contacted (Appendix 6.1) and where possible all new mentors should be interviewed and a probationary period is advisable.

Existing mentors should not be excused from either the 'sign-up' or application form procedure. If is not necessary for existing mentors to undergo an interview.

No exceptions should be made in relation to the recruitment procedures.

All forms should be filed as a matter of record.

All mentors should be given a copy of the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Young People and they should be made aware of good practice procedures contained within the Code.

Every effort should be made to manage and support appointed mentors. Adequate supervision should always be provided - a mentor should not have to work alone.

### **4.2 Traveling with young players**

There is extra responsibility taken on by mentors when they travel with young players to games/ tournaments.

When travelling with young players you should:

## Laune Rangers Code of Ethics

Ensure that there is adequate insurance cover

Not carry more than the permitted number of passengers

Ensure use of safety belts at all times

Avoid travelling alone with one player, put player in the back seat, drop off at central locations or seek parental permission to transport the player on a regular basis and clearly state times of pick-up and drop off

Ensure all mentors, parents and players have signed Travelling Permission forms (Appendix 6.2) – these forms should include emergency contact numbers for players' parents

Laune Rangers GAA Club should remind all players of the Code of Conduct when travelling to games

### 4.3 Supervision

Make sure there is an adequate adult: child ratio. This will depend on the nature of the activity, the age of the players and any special needs of the group. As a recommended guide a ratio of **\*1:8 for under 12 years** of age and **\*1:10 for players over 12 years** of age.

\*This is *only* a guide and will change depending on the circumstances, e.g. very young players, players with special needs or during away trips

All Ladies teams and mixed gender teams should have at least one female mentor

Avoid being alone with any player, if you need to talk separately do so in an open environment, in view of others

In changing rooms, ask parents to take responsibility and supervise in pairs of appropriate gender

Mentors should not need to enter changing rooms unless the players are very young or need special assistance and such supervision should be done by parents or in pairs by appropriate gender

Mentors should remain in pairs until all players have been collected at the end of training or matches

Keep attendance records and record any incidents / injuries that arise

### 4.4 Away Trips/ Overnight Stays

When a game requires an overnight stay a separate permission form should be signed by parents and players, containing emergency contact number for parents

All players should sign Laune Rangers GAA Club Code of Conduct agreement

Appoint a mentor who will make a report on returning home

A meeting with parents and players is useful to communicate travel times, competition details, other activities, gear requirements, medical requirements, special dietary needs and any other necessary details

## Laune Rangers Code of Ethics

Rooming arrangements – adults should not share rooms with young players, players share rooms with those of same age and gender and adults should knock before entering rooms

All group socialization should take place in communal areas (i.e. no boys in girls' rooms and vice versa)

Alcoholic drink, smoking or other illegal substances are forbidden to players

At least one female should travel with each ladies and mixed gender teams.

There should be a good adult-player ratio, 1:5/6, and proper access to medical personnel

Lights out times should be enforced

Players should be under reasonable supervision at all times and should never leave the venue or go unsupervised without prior permission

Parents should be encouraged to travel to assist with supervision especially with young players.

Access to Internet will be denied on away trips.

### **4.5 Safety**

All clubs should have a safety statement, including specific and potential risks attached to Gaelic Football. They should also have procedures in place for safeguarding against such risks.

#### **In addition clubs should:**

Ensure activities are suitable for age and stage of development of players

Keep a record of any specific medical conditions of the players

Keep a record of emergency contact numbers for parents / guardians

Such records such be readily attainable

Ensure any necessary protective gear is used (gum shields are highly recommended)

Keep First Aid kit stocked up and ensure it is close at hand with access to qualified first-aider

Know the contact numbers of emergency services and easy access to medical personnel if needed is recommended. All clubs should have an emergency plan, which all club members are aware of

If an incident occurs, make a brief record of injury and action taken. Note the problem, action and outcome. Contact the players' parents and keep them informed of all details

Officials (umpires, referees, etc.) should ensure the conduct of the game

All players should know and keep the rules of Football, keeping in mind that many rules are in place for safety

Ensure there is adequate insurance cover for all activities

#### **4.6 Touching**

Coaching, at certain times, may require a 'hands on approach', e.g., it may be necessary to support a child learning a new skill but the following should be taken into consideration

Avoid unnecessary physical contact

Any necessary contact should be in response to the needs of the player and not the mentor

It should be in an open environment with the permission and understanding of the player

It should be determined by the age and developmental stage of the player – do not do something that a player can do for themselves

Never engage in inappropriate touching

#### **4.7 Guidelines on use of photographic and filming equipment**

Anyone concerned about any photography, taking place at events or training sessions, can contact the Children's Officer in relation to the matter. The use of cameras and/or camera phones is prohibited in dressing rooms at any time.

## 5 Child Protection Procedures

*Laune Rangers GAA Club accepts that organizations, which include young people among its members, are vulnerable to the occurrence of child abuse. Child welfare and the protection of young people is the concern of all adults at all times, irrespective of their role within the organization.*

Below are the procedures for dealing with any welfare or protection issue that may arise.

A report may be made by any member in the club but should be passed on to the Children's Officer who may in turn have to pass the concern to the Local Statutory Authorities.

It is **not the responsibility** of anyone working within **Laune Rangers GAA Club** in a paid or voluntary capacity, or those working in affiliated organisations, to take responsibility or decide whether or not child abuse is taking place - that is the job of the Local Statutory Authorities.

However, there is a responsibility to protect young players by assisting the appropriate agencies so that they can take any necessary action to protect the young person.

All members should follow both procedures outlined below, firstly the procedure for responding to a young person in distress and secondly the procedure for reporting a concern.

### 5.1 Dealing with a complaint

#### 5.1.1 Forming a complaint

**All** \*complaints should be submitted in writing either to the **Children's Officer** or to the Chairperson.

Club/ County Chairperson should be notified of the complaint

Written records of all complaints should be safely and confidentially kept.

If, in the opinion of the Chairperson/ Children's Officer, there are grounds for concern, the Statutory Authorities should be contacted. (See section 5.2)

\*If the complaint is submitted at **Club level** it is the responsibility of the Club to deal with the complaint.

\*If the complaint is submitted at **County Board Level** the County Board must take responsibility to deal with the complaint.

#### 5.1.2 Appointment of Disciplinary Committee

The Disciplinary Committee should consist of a representative from the Management Committee (e.g. the Chairperson), the Children's Officer and an ordinary registered member of the club. Regular turnover of this committee is recommended. The issue of confidentiality is important. Information is on a need to know basis.

### 5.1.3 Complaint Procedure

It is the responsibility of the Disciplinary Committee to resolve problems relating to the conduct of its members. A complaint of any incident of suspected misconduct, including bullying, but does not relate to child abuse should be dealt with by the Disciplinary Committee.

The Disciplinary Committee should inform the individual with details of the complaint being made against him/her and afford him/her the opportunity of providing a response either verbally or in writing.

It is recommended that the Disciplinary Committee meet with all parties involved, affording each party the same rights and opportunities.

The Disciplinary Committee should form a written report outlining the procedure followed, findings, conclusions and any disciplinary actions to be taken. All parties should receive a copy of this report. This report should also be kept on record.

The Disciplinary Committee should, as soon as possible, inform the Management Committee of the progress and conclusions of the disciplinary process.

### 5.1.4 Sanctions

Where it is established that an incident of misconduct has taken place, the disciplinary committee should notify the member of any sanction being imposed. The notification should be made in writing, setting out the reasons for the sanction. If the member is under 18 years of age, correspondence should be addressed to parents/guardians.

### 5.1.5 Appeal Procedure

If the member against whom the complaint was made is unhappy with the decision of the Disciplinary Committee s/he should have the right to appeal the decision to an Appeals Committee (independent of the Disciplinary Committee).

Any appeal should be made in writing **within 7 days** after issue of the decision of the Disciplinary Committee. The Chairperson of the Appeals Committee should be a member of the Management Committee or elected by the members at an **AGM**.

The Appeals Committee have the power to confirm, set aside or change any sanction imposed by the Disciplinary Committee.

If any party is not satisfied with the outcome, the matter can be referred to the National Children's Officer. However efforts to resolve the issue at local should be exhausted before the National Children's Officer is engaged in attempts to resolve the matter.

Any appeal submitted at National level will be heard by the Management committee, with their decision being final.

## **5.2 Dealing with Suspected Abuse**

### **5.2.1 Reporting abuse**

If there are grounds for concern (**Appendix 6.5**) or (see code 5-13-1 page 41) about the safety or welfare of a young player you should react to the concern. If unsure about whether or not certain behaviours are abusive (**Appendix 6.6**) or (see code 5-13-2 page 42) and therefore reportable, you should contact the duty social worker in the Local Health Board or Social Services Department where you will receive advice. Grounds for concern include a specific indication from a player, a statement from a person who witnessed abuse or an illness, injury or behaviour consistent with abuse.

#### **Steps for reporting suspected abuse**

Observe and note dates, times, locations and contexts in which the incident occurred or suspicion was aroused, together with any other relevant information

Report the matter as soon as possible to the designated officer within the club responsible for reporting abuse, e.g. Children's Officer. If the Children's Officer has reasonable grounds for believing that the player has been abused or is at risk of abuse, s/he will make a report to the Health Board/Social Services who have statutory responsibility to investigate and assess suspected or actual child abuse

In cases of emergency, where a player appears to be at immediate and serious risk and the Children's Officer is unable to contact a duty social worker, the Garda Authorities should be contacted. Under no circumstances should a player be left in a dangerous situation pending intervention by the Statutory Authorities

If the Children's Officer is unsure whether reasonable grounds for concern exist s/he can informally consult with the local health board/social services. S/he will be advised whether or not the matter requires a formal report.

Any Children's Officer reporting suspected or actual child abuse to the Statutory Authorities should first inform the family of their intention to make such a report, unless doing so would endanger the player or undermine an investigation

### **5.2.2 Response to a young player**

#### **When a young player discloses information of suspected abuse you should:**

Deal with any allegation of abuse in a sensitive and competent way through listening to and facilitating the player to tell about the problem, rather than interviewing about details of what happened

Stay calm and not show any extreme reaction to what the player is saying. Listen compassionately, and take what the player is saying seriously

Understand that the player has decided to tell something very important and has taken a risk to do so. The experience of telling should be a positive one so that the player will not mind talking to those involved in the investigation

Be honest with the player and tell them that it is not possible to keep this information a secret

Make no judgmental statements against the person whom the allegation is made

## Laune Rangers Code of Ethics

Not question the player unless the nature of what he/she is saying is unclear. Leading questions should be avoided. Open, non-specific questions should be used such as "Can you explain to me what you mean by that"

Check out the concerns with the parents/guardians before making a report unless doing so would endanger the player

Give the player some indication of what would happen next, such as informing parents/guardians, Health Board or Social Services. It should be kept in mind that the player may have been threatened and may feel vulnerable at this stage.

Carefully record the details

Pass on this information to the designated officer within the Club, the Children's Officer.

Always reassure the player that they have done the right thing in telling you

### **5.2.3 Allegation against Mentors**

If an allegation of alleged child abuse is made against a mentor working within Laune Rangers GAA club, the following procedures should be followed:

The reporting procedure in respect of suspected child abuse (5.2.1)

The procedure for dealing with the mentor (5.2.4)

The safety of the player making the allegation should be considered and the safety of any other players who may be at risk. Laune Rangers GAA Club should take any necessary steps that may be necessary to protect its players.

The issue of confidentiality is important - the mentor should be treated with respect and fairness.

### **5.2.4 Dealing with the Mentor**

While the designated Children's Officer makes the report to the local Health Board, the Chairperson of Laune Rangers GAA club should deal with the mentor

The Chairperson should privately inform the mentor that

(a) an allegation has been made against him / her

(b) the nature of the allegation.

He / she should be afforded an opportunity to respond

His / her response should be noted and passed on to the Health Board/Social Services

## Laune Rangers Code of Ethics

The mentor should be asked to step aside pending the outcome of the investigation. When a mentor is asked to step aside it should be made clear that it is only a precautionary measure and will not prejudice any later disciplinary proceedings

Laune Rangers GAA club Children's Officer should inform the National Children's Officer that the mentor has been asked to stand aside and is under investigation by a statutory authority.

Gaelic Athletic Association/Ladies Gaelic Football Association can consider disciplinary action on the mentor but should ensure that this does not interfere with the investigation of the Statutory Authorities - the outcome of the investigation and any implications it might have will be considered during the Disciplinary procedure.

It should be noted 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.

### 5.3 False Allegations

The Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998 provides immunity from civil liability to persons who report child abuse 'reasonably and in good faith' to the Health Board or the Gardaí (See 5.13.1 – ISC. Code). The act also covers the offence of 'false reporting'.

#### The main provisions of the Act are:

1. The provision of immunity from civil liability to any person who reports child abuse **"reasonably and in good faith"** to designated officers of Health Boards or any member of An Garda Síochána
2. The provision of significant protections for employees who report child abuse. These protections cover all employees and all forms of discrimination up to and including dismissal
3. The creation of a new offence of **false reporting of child abuse** where a person makes a report of child abuse to the appropriate authorities "knowing that statement to be false". **This is a new criminal offence designed to protect innocent persons from malicious reports.**

**This law does not exist in Northern Ireland**, but an individual who reports concerns in 'good faith' is not deliberately attempting to slander another person's name.

**In Northern Ireland there is legislation**, the **Criminal Law Act (NI) 1967** which places the **responsibility on everyone** to report offences or to forward information to the police by emphasizing the, 'duty of every other person.

**Who knows or believes**, (a) that the offence or some other arrestable offences has been committed and (b) that he has information which is likely to secure, or to be material assistance in securing, the apprehension, prosecution or conviction of any person for that offence'

### 5.4 Confidentiality

Confidentiality should be maintained in respect of all issues and people involved in cases of abuse, welfare or bad practice. It is important that the rights of both the player and the person about whom the complaint has been made are protected.

**The following points should be kept in mind:**

## Laune Rangers Code of Ethics

A guarantee of confidentiality or undertakings regarding secrecy cannot be given, as the welfare of the player will supersede all other considerations

All information should be treated in a careful and sensitive manner and should be discussed only with those who need to know

Information should be conveyed to the parents / guardians of the player in a sensitive way about whom there are concern

Giving information to others on a 'need to know' basis for the protection of a player is not a breach of confidentiality

All persons involved in a protection process (the player, his/ her parents/ guardians, the alleged offender, his/her family, mentors) should be afforded appropriate respect, fairness, support and confidentiality at all stages of the procedure

Information should be stored in a secure place, with limited access to designated people

The requirements of the Data Protection laws should be adhered to

Breach of confidentiality is a serious manner

### **5.5 Anonymous Complaints**

Anonymous complaints can be difficult to deal with but should not be ignored. In all cases the safety and welfare of the player/s is paramount. Any such complaints relating to inappropriate behaviour should be brought to the attention of the Children's Officer. The information should be checked out and handled in a confidential manner.

### **5.6 Rumors**

Rumours should **not** be allowed to hang in the air. Any rumours relating to inappropriate behaviour should be brought to the attention of the Children's Officer and checked out without delay.

## 6 Appendices

### 6.1 Mentor Recruitment Form

#### Laune Rangers GAA Club Mentor Application Form

Position applied for: \_\_\_\_\_

Full Name	
Any Surname previously	
Current Address	
Date of birth	
Telephone No(s)	
List previous experience/ involvement in this or any other club. Include experience of working with young children in a voluntary or professional capacity	

Laune Rangers Code of Ethics

Sporting NGB Qualifications		
Do you agree to abide by the guidelines contained in the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport?	Yes	No
Do you agree to abide by the rules of Laune Rangers GAA Club	Yes	No
Have you ever been asked to leave a sporting organization?  (If you have answered yes, we will contact you in confidence)	Yes	No
Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence or been the subject of a caution: a Bound Over Order: or are you at present the subject of criminal investigations?  (If you have answered yes, we will contact you in confidence)	Yes	No

**References**

***Please supply the name and address of two people who we can contact and who, from personal knowledge, are willing to endorse your application. One of these names should be, where possible, the name of an administrator/ mentor in your last club/ place of involvement.***

**Name and Contact Details of Referee 1**

**Name and Contact Details of Referee 2**

**I agree to abide by the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Young Players in Gaelic Athletic Association/Ladies Gaelic Football and Laune Rangers club's Code of Conduct and policies**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **6.2 Travel Forms**

**Permission Form for Travelling with Underage Players.**

**(Laune Rangers GAA Club. )**

**EVENT:** \_\_\_\_\_

**VENUE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATES:** \_\_\_\_\_

### **Travelling Volunteer**

I hereby agree to abide by the guidelines and regulations contained in Laune Rangers GAA Club's Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Young Players

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Role \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Parent / Guardian of Participant**

I have read and accept the conditions and rules set down by the Gaelic Athletic Association/ Ladies Gaelic Football Association for young players travelling to matches and events.

Name of Child(ren): \_\_\_\_\_

Parents/Carers Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact Number(s): \_\_\_\_\_

### Young Player

I have read and accept the conditions and rules set down by Laune Rangers GAA for young players travelling to matches and events. I agree to abide by the rules of my Club and Association

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### 6.3 Format for Disciplinary Committee's Report

#### Format for Disciplinary Committee's Report

Below is a suggested outline of how to write up a report following a complaint. Additional information may be added to the format.

#### **Complaint:**

State the nature of the complaint and individuals involved

#### **Procedure:**

State

1. Who the Disciplinary Committee consisted of

2. Who the Disciplinary Committee met with

3. Any additional parties who the Disciplinary Committee met with/ spoke to, for example the Health Board may have been contacted

#### **Conclusion:**

Summarize the main findings from the above meetings and the final decision met by the Disciplinary Committee following these meetings

#### **Sanctions:**

State any sanctions, which the Disciplinary Committee have imposed on any individuals as a result of the complaint

**Recommendations:**

State any recommendations which the Disciplinary Committee feel are necessary to prevent such a complaint occurring again e.g. all club members involved with underage players attend a Child Protection course

**Signature:**

All members of the Disciplinary Committee should sign and date the report

## 6.4 Anti-Bullying Policy

### Anti-Bullying Policy

*This is adapted from the Scout Association of Ireland's Child Protection Policy*

#### What is Bullying?

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

It is behaviour that is intentionally aggravating and intimidating and occurs mainly in social environments such as schools, clubs and other organisations working with young people. It includes behaviours such as teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting and extortion behaviour by one or more players against a victim.

#### How would you know if a player is being bullied?

- All bullies operate using furtiveness, threats and fear. Bullying can therefore only survive in an environment where the victim does not feel empowered to tell someone who can help or in which it is not safe to do so.
- The following indicators are warning signs that a young person might be getting bullied.
- Reluctance to come to a venue or take part in activities
- Physical signs (unexplained bruises, scratches, or damage to belongings)
- Stress-caused illness – headaches, and stomach aches which seem unexplained
- Fearful behaviour (fear of walking to a meeting, going different routes, asking to be driven)
- Frequent loss of, or shortage of, money with vague explanations
- Having few friends
- Changes in behaviour (withdrawn, stammering, moody, irritable, upset, distressed)
- Not eating
- Attempting suicide or hinting at suicide
- Anxiety (shown by nail-biting, fearfulness, tics)
- *There are other possible reasons for many of the above*
- **Who should deal with bullying?**
- While the more extreme forms of bullying would be regarded as physical or emotional abuse and are reported to the health board or An Garda Síochána, dealing with bullying behaviour is normally the responsibility of all Mentors within the Laune Rangers GAA Club
- **How can it be prevented?**
- Ensure that all members follow the code of conduct, which promotes the rights and dignity of each member.

## Laune Rangers Code of Ethics

- Deal with any incidents as they arise.
- Use a whole group policy or 'no-blame approach', i.e., not 'bullying the bully' but working with bullies and the group of young people, helping them to understand the hurt they are causing, and so make the problem a 'shared concern' of the group, (see below)
- Reinforce that there is 'a permission to tell' culture rather than a 'might is right'
- Encourage young people to negotiate, co-operative and help others, particularly new or different people
- Offer victim immediate support and put the 'no blame approach' into operation
- Never tell a young person to ignore bullying, they can't ignore it, it hurts too much
- Never encourage a young person to take the law into their own hands and beat the bully at their own game
- Tell the victim there is nothing wrong with them and it is not their fault

### **'No Blame' Approach**

#### **Step 1 – Interview with the victim**

If you find that there has been an incident of bullying, first talk to the victim. At this stage find out who was involved and what the victim is now feeling. Try asking the following questions:

- Was it verbal or physical intimidation?
- How hurt is the victim
- Was it within his/her own peer group?
- Ensure the victim that his/her name will not come out in the investigation
- Actively listen

#### **Step 2 – Meet with all involved**

- Arrange to meet with all those involved; this should include some bystanders, those who may have colluded, those who joined in and those who initiated the bullying.
- Have a maximum of six to eight in the group – keep the number controllable
- Make a point of calling a 'special' meeting
- Ensure the severity of the topic is understood by all
- Speak only of the hurt caused in general terms with no reference to the victim
- Play on the conscience of all – ask questions like: How would you feel? Would you like it done to you?

#### **Step 3 – Explain the problem**

The distress being suffered as a result of the bullying incident is explained. At this stage the details of the incident or the allocation of the blame is not discussed. Explain the feelings of loneliness, feeling left out, rejected, laughed at. Try asking questions:

- Would they like it if it happened to them
- "Someone here in this group was bullied by someone within the group, what could we do to see it does not happen again?"
- Listen, watch out for reactions, and pick up on any without isolating anyone

#### **Step 4 – Share the responsibility**

Explain what steps / controls may have to be introduced to prevent further incidents and how everyone will loose out as a result

### **Step 5 – Ask the group for their ideas**

At this stage the group is encouraged to suggest ways that would make the victim feel happier. All positive responses are noted. Use phrases "if it were you" to encourage a response. Listen to all suggestions and note them

### **Step 6 – Leave it to them**

Now the problem has been identified, solutions suggested, the problem is now handed over to the group to solve. Arrange to meet again in a week's time. Pass responsibility over to the group and give a time frame within which something must be done

### **Step 7 – Meet them again**

Each member of the group, including the bully, discuss how things are going, who is doing what and have there been other incidents. This allows for continual monitoring and also keeps all involved in the process.

Again enforce the idea of the 'team' looking after each other at regular intervals to ensure it is known that bullying or intimidating behaviour will not be tolerated.

## **6.5 Grounds for Concern**

Examples of reasonable grounds are:

1. a specific indication from a player that she has been abused
2. a statement from a person who witnessed abuse
3. an illness, injury or behaviour consistent with abuse
4. a symptom which may not itself be totally consistent with abuse, but which is supported by corroborative evidence of deliberate harm or negligence
5. Consistent signs of neglect over a period of time

In some cases of child abuse the alleged perpetrator will also be a young person and it is important that behaviour of this nature is not ignored.

Grounds for concern will exist in cases where there is an age difference and/ or difference in power, status or intellect between the children involved.

However, it is important to distinguish between normal sexual behaviour and abusive behaviour.

Persons unsure about whether or not certain behaviours are abusive and therefore reportable, should contact the duty social worker in the local Health Board or Social Services department where they will receive advice.

## **6.6 Categories of Abuse**

1. Neglect
2. Emotional Abuse
3. Physical Abuse
4. Sexual Abuse

### **1. Neglect**

Neglect is normally defined in terms of omission, where a young person suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults, or medical care. It may also include neglect of a young person's basic emotional needs.

Neglect usually becomes apparent in different ways over a period of time rather than at one specific point. For instance, a young person who suffers a series of minor injuries is not having her needs for supervision and safety met. The threshold of significant harm is reached when the young person's needs are neglected to the extent that his/her well being and/or development is severely affected.

### **2. Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is normally to be found in the relationship between an adult and a young person rather than in a specific event or pattern of events. It is rarely manifested in terms of physical symptoms.

Examples of emotional abuse include

- Persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming
- Where the level of care is conditional on her behaviour
- Unresponsiveness, inconsistent or unrealistic expectations of a young person
- Premature imposition of responsibility on the young person
- Over or under protection of the young person
- Failure to provide opportunities for the child's education and development
- Use of unrealistic or over-harsh disciplinary measures
- Exposure to domestic violence, adult mental health problems and parental substance misuse may expose children to emotional abuse

### **3. Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse is any form of non-accidental injury that causes significant harm to a young person, including:

- Shaking, hitting or throwing
- Use of excessive force in handling
- Deliberate poisoning

- Suffocation or drowning
- Munchausen's syndrome by proxy (where parents/ guardians fabricate stories of illness about their child or cause physical signs of illness.
- Allowing or creating a substantial risk of significant harm to a young person
- For young people with disabilities it may include confinement to a room or cot, or incorrectly given drugs to control behaviour
- Burning or scalding

#### **4. Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse occurs when a young person is used by another person for his or her gratification or sexual arousal, or for that of others.

For example:

- Exposure of the sexual organs or any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of a young person
- Intentional touching or molesting of the body of a young person whether by person or object for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification
- Masturbation in the presence of a young person or involvement of the child in the act of masturbation
- Sexual intercourse with the young person, whether oral, vaginal or anal
- Sexual exploitation of a young person

It may include non-contact activities, such as involving young people in looking at pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

## 7 Useful list of Contact Numbers

### Eastern Health Board

<b>Area Child Care Manager</b>		
<b>Community Care Area</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Phone No</b>
Area 1	Tivoli Road Dun Laoghaire Co. Dublin	01 2808403
Area 2	Vergemount Hall Dublin 6	01 2698222
Area 3	The Malting Business Park 54/55 Marrowbone Lane Dublin 8	01 4544733
Area 4	Old County Road Crumlin Dublin 12	01 4542511
Area 5	The Lodge Cherry Orchard Ballyfermot Dublin 10	01 6268101
Area 6	Rathdown Road Dublin 7	01 8385034
Area 7	Rose Cottage Fairview Dublin 15	01 8575431

Laune Rangers Code of Ethics

Area 8	Cromcastle Road Coolock Dublin 5	01 8476122
Area 9	Popular House Popular Square Naas Co. Kildare	045 876001
Area 10	Glenside Road Wicklow	0404 60800

**Midland Health Board**

<b>Area Child Care Manager</b>		
<b>Community Care Area</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Phone No</b>
Social Work Dept, Longford	043 50584	
Mullingar	044 44877	
Athlone Health Centre	0902 75301	
Child and Family Centre, Portlaoise	0502 62300	
Social Work Dept, Tullamore	0506 22488	

**Mid-Western Health Board**

<b>Area Child Care Manager</b>		
<b>Community Care Area</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Phone No</b>

Laune Rangers Code of Ethics

Limerick	Unit 3 Camillus Hospital Shelbourne Road Limerick	061 483711
Clare	Tobartaoiscain Ennis Co. Clare	065 23921
North Tipperary	General Hospital Nenagh Co. Tipperary	067 31491

**North-Eastern Health Board**

<b>Area Child Care Manager</b>		
<b>Community Care Area</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Phone No</b>
Cavan/ Monaghan	Community Care Office Lisdarn Cavan	049 61822
Louth	Community Care Office Dublin Road Dundalk Co. Louth	042 9332287
Meath	Family Resource Centre Commons Road Navan Co. Meath	046 9021595

**North-Western Health Board**

Laune Rangers Code of Ethics

<b>Area Child Care Manager</b>		
<b>Community Care Area</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Phone No</b>
Donegal	Ballybofey Co. Donegal	074 9131391
Sligo/ Leitrim	Markievicz House Co. Sligo	071 9155133

**Southern Health Board**

<b>Area Child Care Manager</b>		
<b>Community Care Area</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Phone No</b>
South Lee	Abbey Court House Georges Quay Cork	021 923814
North Lee	Abbeycourt House Georges Quay Cork	021 965511
North Cork	Gouldshill Mallow Co. Cork	021 21484
West Cork	Hospital Grounds Skibbereen Co. Cork	028 21722
Kerry	18 Denny Street Tralee Co. Kerry	066 23400

**South-Eastern Health Board**

<b>Area Child Care Manager</b>		
<b>Community Care Area</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Phone No</b>
Community Care Centre Carlow	0503 36520	
Community Care Centre Kilkenny	056 52208	
Waterford	Community Care Centre Cork Road Waterford	051 842800
Wexford	South Eastern Health Board Ely House Wexford	053 47718/9
South Tipperary	Community Care Centre Western Road Clonmel Co. Tipperary	052 22011

**Western Health Board**

<b>Area Child Care Manager</b>		
<b>Community Care Area</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Phone No</b>
Galway	Community Care Offices 25 Newcastle Road Galway	091 523122 ext 6330
Mayo	Hill House Castlebar Co. Mayo	094 22333 ext 2183

## Laune Rangers Code of Ethics

Roscommon	Community Care Offices	0903 27089
	Ardsallagh	
	Roscommon	

### Northern Ireland

- Contractor Bureau (Out of hours) 028 9066 8247
- NSPCC 24hr Protection Helpline 0808 800 5000
- EHSSB Belfast 028 9032 1313
- Down/ Lisburn H&SST 028 9266 5181
- North & West Belfast H&SST 028 9032 7156
- Ulster Community & Hospitals Trust 028 9181 6666
- South & East Belfast H&SST 028 9079 0673
- NHSSB Ballymena 028 2565 3333
- Home First H&SST 028 2563 3700
- Causeway H&SST 028 7066 6000
- SHSSB Portadown 028 3833 6611
- Craigavon & Banbridge H&SST 028 3833 1983
- Armagh & Dungannon H&SST 028 3752 2262
- Newry & Mourne H&SST 028 3026 0505
- WHSSB Londonderry 028 7186 0086
- Foyle H&SST 028 7126 6111
- Sperrin Lakeland H&SST 028 8224 4127

### National Counselling Service

- Northern Area HB 1800 234 110
- East Coast Area HB 1800 234 111
- South Western Area HB 1800 234 112
- Midland HB 1800 234 113
- Western HB 1800 234 114
- Mid-Western HB 1800 234 115
- Southern HB 1800 234 116
- North Eastern HB 1800 234 117
- South Eastern HB 1800 234 118
- North Western HB 1800 234 119

**Confidential Garda Line** 1800 666 111 (24 hours)

## 8 References

**The guidelines in this document are based on the National Guidelines as outlined in the following documents**

- Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children’s Sport, Irish Sports Council, 2000.
- Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children, Dept. of Health & Children 1999
- Our Duty to Care, Dept. of Health & Children 2002
- For Northern Ireland Clubs and Organisations reference should also be made to Children Act NI and Safeguarding Children
- [www.sportprotects.org.uk](http://www.sportprotects.org.uk)