



HOLYCROSS AFC

CHILD SAFEGUARDING, CODE OF ETHICS & GOOD PRACTICE

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 Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children – Dept. of Children & Youth Affairs 2017
- ✓ Football Association of Ireland Code of Ethics and Best Practice as amended and extended
- ✓ All enabling legislation

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Introduction

CORE VALUES

The work of Holycross FC is based on the following principles that will guide the development of sport for young people in this club. Children and young peoples' experiences should be guided by what is best for the child or young person. The stages of development and the ability of the child should guide the types of activity provided within the club. Adults will need to have a basic understanding of the needs of young people, including physical, emotional and personal.

Integrity in relationships

Adults interacting with young people in soccer should do so with integrity and respect for the child. All adult actions in soccer 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 soccer.

Quality atmosphere and ethos

Soccer for young people should be conducted in a safe, positive and encouraging atmosphere. A child-centred ethos will help ensure that competition and specialisation are kept in their appropriate place. Too often unhealthy competitive demands are placed on children too early and results in excessive levels of pressure on them and as a consequence, high levels of dropout from sport.

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 sports activities in an integrated way thus allowing them to participate to their potential alongside other children.

Fair Play

The Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport (written by the Irish Sports Council) states "all children's sports 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". Fair play incorporates the concepts of friendship, respect for others and always playing with the right spirit. It should also be developed as a way of thinking, not just behaving.

Competition

A balanced approach to competition can make a significant contribution to the development of young people, while at the same time providing fun, enjoyment and satisfaction. Coaches / managers should aim to put the welfare of the child first and competitive standards second. A child-centred approach will help to ensure that competition and specialisation are kept in their appropriate place.

Policy Statement

Holycross FC is fully committed to ensuring that all necessary steps will be taken to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people who participate in soccer. This Policy document clearly demonstrates the importance placed by Holycross FC on the protection and safety of children and young people who participate in club activities.

Holycross FC recognises and accepts its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people by protecting them from physical, emotional or sexual harm and from neglect or bullying.

It is vital that children and young people who participate in Holycross FC activities are able to do so in a safe, enjoyable and quality environment.

In pursuit of this goal Holycross FC will:

- Advise all members of Holycross FC (coaches, players, parents 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 Football Association of Ireland codes of conduct and best practice guidelines.
- Appoint a Club Children's Officer in line with FAI requirements.

The aims of Holycross FC Child Protection Policy are:

- To develop a positive and pro-active position in order to best protect all children and young people who participate in soccer, in order for them to do so in a safe and enjoyable environment.
- To demonstrate best practice in the area of child welfare and protection.
- 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 ethics and best practice standards throughout soccer.

The key principles underpinning this Policy are that:

- The welfare of the child is the first and paramount consideration.
- 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 will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately. It is essential that we work in partnership with children and young people and their parents/carers. Health Boards have a statutory responsibility to safeguard and protect the welfare of children and Holycross FC is committed to cooperating fully with them in accordance with procedures as outlined in "Children First" National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children.
- Holycross FC will cooperate fully with the FAI National Children's Officer, Gardai, Tusla & HSE in any investigation of child abuse in soccer.

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

Rule 68. The Protection and Welfare of Children

- (a) In line with recent 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 National Associations, Divisional Associations and Affiliated Leagues should operate to the FAI recommended codes of conduct and best practice guidelines (see FAI Code of Ethics & Good Practice for Under Age Soccer for Players, Coaches, Parents and Spectators).
- (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 that is improper and brings the game into disrepute.
- (c) Breaches will become a disciplinary offence.

Holycross FC through confirming this policy document has demonstrated its commitment to ensuring that children and young people can participate in all soccer activities with their safety and welfare being of paramount importance.

It is essential that this document represents a process of continual improvement in the area of child protection and welfare in soccer. It is the responsibility of all adults involved in soccer to actively promote safe and best practice standards whilst being ever vigilant and aware of their responsibilities to children and young people in their care.

Chapter 1 – Practicing the Policy

1.1 SAFE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Coaches, parents and administrators all have an important role to play in promoting good practice in children's sport. They should have as their first priority the children's safety and enjoyment of the sport.

Safe management practices involve:

- Good management practices
- Supervising children in all activities
- Knowing how to deal with discipline and challenging behaviour
- Providing training for all coaches
- Supervision and support of coaches

Safe management practices will not only enable an organisation to run smoothly and efficiently, but it will also help to minimise the opportunities for accidents or harm to happen to children. The following pointers should be considered:

- Know the children
- Have defined criteria for membership of the organization
- Have a registration system for each child

Keep records of:

- Accidents – *Coaches to report accidents to committee and Secretary to keep an incident book (accident records should be reviewed regularly and any unusual patterns reported to chairman)*
- Consent forms – *part of online registration.*
- Any complaints or grievances - *Coaches to report any issues to committee and Secretary to keep a record book (records should be reviewed regularly and any patterns emerging are to be reported to Child Welfare Officer)*

Know the Coaches

- Respond to any allegations or complaints made about coaches
- Make sure there are always sufficient coaches of either sex to supervise activities

Pay attention to health and safety matters making sure that:

- Any buildings being used are safe and meet required standards
- Toilets, shower areas and washing facilities are up to standard
- Fire precautions are in place
- First aid facilities and equipment are adequate

- Equipment is checked regularly
- Insurance cover is adequate

Supervising children in all activities

Children are less likely to experience accidents or other harms if they are supervised properly. Activities should be organised so that they maximise participation, fun and learning, but also safety.

So it is important to ensure that:

- Children are not normally left unattended
- Adequate numbers of coaches of both sexes are available to supervise the activities
- Dangerous behaviour is not allowed

Therefore we want children in soccer to have fun and develop skills in a safe and **Fair Play** environment.

Making sport fun -

In promoting “**Sport for Fun**” we:

- Encourage participation and fun
- Promote the development of skills as opposed to winning at all costs
- Emphasise and praise effort
- Act as a good role model
- Insist on **Fair Play** (take off offending players)
- Be realistic with your expectations
- Be aware of children's feelings
- Teach players to respect different cultures

Coaches and volunteers should also enjoy a sense of achievement and pleasure through their work with young people and should not be evaluated by performance or results of competition.

They should enjoy the respect of, and be supported in their work by the sports club/organisation and parents/guardians.

Coaches, volunteers, parents, administrators and players all have a role in ensuring that the highest standards of practice are maintained in soccer.

1.2 GUIDELINES FOR CHILDREN

Holycross FC wishes to provide the best possible environment for all children involved in soccer. Children deserve to be given enjoyable, safe sporting opportunities, free of abuse of any kind. These participants have rights, which must be respected, and responsibilities that they must accept.

Children should be encouraged to realise that they have responsibilities to treat other participants and sports leaders with fairness and respect.

Children in Soccer are entitled to:

- Be safe
- Be treated with dignity, sensitivity and respect
- Participate in soccer on an equal basis, appropriate to their ability and stage of development
- Be happy, have fun and enjoy soccer
- Make a complaint in an appropriate way and have it dealt with through a proper and effective complaints procedure
- Be afforded appropriate confidentiality
- Be listened to and to be believed
- Have a voice in the running of the club

Children should also be encouraged to realise that they also have responsibilities to treat other children, fellow players, coaches and volunteers with the same degree of fairness and respect.

In this regard children should undertake to:

- Play fairly, do their best and have fun
- Make high standards of Fair Play the standard others want to follow
- Respect opponents, they are not the enemy, they are partners in a sporting event
- Shake hands after the match, whoever wins
- Give opponents a hand if they are injured, put the ball out of play so they can get attention
- Accept apologies from opponents when they are offered
- Respect fellow team members and support them both when they do well and when things go wrong
- Treat players from minority groups with the same respect you show other people
- Be modest in victory and be gracious in defeat- **“Be A Sport”**
- Approach the club Children's Officer or coach with any questions or concerns they might have.
- Coaches and parents should encourage children to speak out and support them in doing so

Children should not:

- Cheat
- Use abusive language, or argue with, the referee, officials, team mates or opponents

- Use violence, use physical contact only when it is allowed within the rules
- Bully
- Tell lies about adults or other children
- Spread rumours
- Take banned substances including drink and alcohol
- Keep secrets about any person who may have caused them harm
- Behave in any manner that may bring the name of Holycross FC into disrepute

***“Sport for young people is about Fun and Participation,
Best Effort and Fair Play in a Safe Environment”***

1.3 BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES FOR TEAM MANAGERS/COACHES

Relationships

The good coach will be concerned primarily with the well-being, health and future of the individual player and only secondarily with the optimising of performance.

A key element in a coach/player relationship is the development of independence of the player.

Players must be encouraged to accept responsibility for their own behaviour and performance in training, competition, and in their social life.

The relationship between coach/player relies heavily on mutual trust and respect.

Coaches must not encourage players to violate the laws of the game and should actively seek to discourage such action. Furthermore, coaches should encourage players to obey the spirit of such laws.

Coaches must not compromise their players by advocating measures, which could be deemed to constitute seeking to gain an unfair advantage (cheating, diving, bullying).

Coaches must treat opponents and officials with due respect, both in victory and defeat and should encourage their players to act in a similar manner.

Coaches must accept responsibility for the conduct of their players insofar as they will undertake to discourage inappropriate behaviour.

Personal Standards

Coaches are given a position of trust by parents/guardians and players, and are therefore expected to show the highest standards of behaviour whilst in the company of under age players. As a coach of under age players, you act in “loco parentis” and therefore your duty of care is more onerous than that of a coach to an adult team.

The coach must consistently display high personal standards and project a favourable image of the game and of coaching - to other players, coaches, officials, spectators, the media and the general public.

Personal appearance is a matter of individual taste but the coach has an obligation to project an image of health, cleanliness and functional efficiency.

Coaches should not drink alcohol so soon before coaching that their judgement may be impaired and the smell of alcohol will still be on their breath when working with players.

Whilst players are present, consumption of alcohol should be avoided. When the event is a social one, with players present, consumption should be moderate.

As persons responsible for the well-being of young people, it is inappropriate to smoke in their presence or to behave in any fashion inconsistent with your position of responsibility.

Coaches/volunteers must respect the rights, dignity and worth of every human being and their ultimate right to self-determination. Specifically, coaches/volunteers must treat everyone equally within the context of their activity, regardless of sex, ethnic origin, religion or political persuasion.

Safe Practice

Coaches have a responsibility to ensure the safety of the players with whom they work as far as possible within the limits of their control. Therefore coaches should seek to create a safe and enjoyable environment in which to play and train.

Injuries should be recorded, with a note of action taken in relation to each one. It is recommended that each club maintain an accident/incident book with a specific report form to be completed by the coach/team manager.

A first aid kit should be available at all training sessions and matches.

Parents/guardians should be notified of injuries/illness which their children incur while participating in a sporting activity. It would also be advisable for coaches to inform parents if their child becomes upset for whatever reason. The reason why the child became upset may then be clarified. It could be that a child has misinterpreted something that has been said or it could be an indication of bullying.

Parents/guardians should be informed of the starting and finishing times of training sessions and matches.

Besides necessary manipulation of limbs in teaching technique, physical contact is not appropriate. In the sporting context certain types of coaching requires a "hands on approach" i.e. it may be necessary to support a child in order to physically demonstrate a technique.

This should only occur when necessary and in an open and appropriate way with the knowledge, permission and full understanding of the child concerned and where appropriate the parents/guardians.

Coaches should not treat injuries out of sight of others. Use a "Two-Deep" (two personnel, or two players) supervision system. Only personnel who are qualified in administering First Aid or treating sports injuries should attempt to treat an injury.

The comfort level and dignity of the player should always be the priority. Example: Only uncover the injured area, or cover private areas of the athlete's body.

Generally, physical contact between players or coach and players should not involve touching genital area, buttocks, breasts, or mouths and should only occur when others are present. ("Two Deep" supervision)

Any doubts of a medical nature should be passed on to a suitably qualified medical person.

Coaches should not play injured players.

Comforting/congratulating players is an important part of the relationship between coaches and players.

Guidelines for this type of touch are:

Limit touching to "safe" areas, such as hand-to-shoulder. It should not involve touching genital area, buttocks, breasts, or mouths.

Make your intention to congratulate or comfort clear to the player.

Get permission from the player before embracing them - remember that personnel are in the position of power.

Respect a players discomfort or rejection of physical contact.

Be sure that touching occurs only when others are present.

Good Practice

Coaches are responsible for setting and monitoring the boundaries between a working relationship and friendship with their players. This is particularly important when the coach and players are of opposite sex and/or when the player is a young person.

Young players need a coach whom they can respect, therefore it is important that coaches should lead by example.

Young players play for fun and enjoyment therefore skill development and playing for fun take precedence over highly structured competition. Winning is not the only objective.

Coaches should set realistic goals for both the team and individual players and should not push young players into inappropriate or over competitive adult like competitions.

In relation to young players, coaches should ensure that all players participate and "average" players require and deserve equal time and attention. Do not over-burden younger players with too much information.

Coaches should help and encourage young players to develop basic skills and sportsmanship and they should avoid over-specialisation in positional play during their formative years.

Coaches should ensure that all players are aware that "bullying" whether verbal or physical will not be tolerated.

Coaches should advise players and parents on how and whom to go to if they wish to make a complaint. All clubs should have a systematic complaints procedure.

A coach must not attempt to exert undue influence over the player's performance in order to obtain personal benefit or reward.

The coach must realise that certain situations or friendly actions could be misinterpreted, not only by the player, but by outsiders motivated by jealousy, dislike or mistrust and could lead to allegations of sexual misconduct or impropriety. Therefore coaches should be aware of, and avoid all situations conducive to risk.

The coach will on occasion be required to travel and reside with players in the course of coaching and competitive matches. On such occasions, ensure separate sleeping accommodation for officials and players.

Coaches who use their own vehicles to transport players must ensure that they have adequate insurance cover and be careful not to carry more than the permitted number of passengers.

Coaches should be careful not to expose children especially younger participants to extreme weather conditions. Decisions in this regard should be made from the child's perspective.

Where the team is composed of both genders, there should be a male and female official present.

The coach should never be in a room alone with a player. Where this is unavoidable, leave the door open and be within earshot of others. ("Two Deep" Supervision)

Officials should avoid situations where they are alone with young players in changing rooms. Wherever practicable, there should always be two or more adults in changing rooms.

Physical relationships with under-age players are illegal. **Children are defined in Irish law as any person under the age of 18 years.**

The use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco should be actively discouraged as being incompatible with a healthy approach to the playing of the game.

Coaches should strive to eliminate all unfair practices, including the use of drugs which effect performance.

The Football Association of Ireland has amended its rules to include a child protection element in line with recent child welfare legislation and Government Guidelines. Specifically coaches/volunteers are required to operate within these recommended codes of conduct and best practice. Breaches of this code may constitute a disciplinary offence.

Where possible, coaches should avoid:

- spending excessive amounts of time with children away from others
- taking sessions alone (always employ "Two Deep" supervision)
- taking children to their homes
- taking children on journeys alone in their car

Coaches should not

- use any form of corporal punishment or physical force on a child
- exert undue influence over a participant in order to obtain personal benefit or reward
- engage in rough physical games, sexually provocative games or allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any kind.
- make sexually suggestive comments about, or to a child.
- take measurements or engage in certain types of fitness testing without the presence of another adult. ("Two Deep" supervision)
- undertake any form of therapy (hypnosis etc.) in the training of children.
- ridicule or shout at a child for making a mistake or losing a game
- put undue pressure on a child to please or perform well

1.4 CHILD WELFARE GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS / GUARDIANS

As a parent, you play an important role in promoting your child's happiness and success in soccer. Your expectations and behaviour have a significant bearing on your child's attitude and behaviour while participating in soccer.

Support and encouragement from you will contribute to your children having:

- A sense of personal achievement
- An enjoyment of soccer
- Improved physical fitness
- Higher self-esteem
- A greater level of skill
- Improved social skills

Parent/Coach co-operation

- It is important that you establish contact with the individual responsible for coaching your child.
- Encourage **Fair Play** and do not instil a "win at all costs" attitude in your children
- Be positive or be quiet, negative comments are counter productive
- Conduct yourselves in such a way which promotes the definition of **Fair Play**
- Be prepared to be asked to leave by officials or sport personnel if your behaviour is contrary to the definition of Fair Play.
- Communicate any concerns you may have to the coach.
- Give the coach help when asked and show appreciation for a job well done.
- Support the coach's and referee decisions. These individuals are only doing the best they can and they need your support not your anger.
- Refrain from contacting the coach unless it is necessary, respect they have a private life.
- Inform the coach about any illness, injury, holidays, etc.
- Make an effort to attend training and games.
- Make sure your child has appropriate equipment/clothing/refreshments

Undesirable behaviours may include:

- Insulting players, personnel, e.g. name-calling, slagging.
- Arguing with, or shouting abuse at officials.
- Suggesting or encouraging cheating, aggressive or "dirty" play.
- Placing undue or inappropriate criticism on a player, causing the player unnecessary or unhealthy levels of stress.

- Behaving with physical aggression towards another person (actual use of force or the threat of use of force).
- Any "harassment" type of behaviour

Parents/Guardians should not:

- Ignore or dismiss complaints or concerns expressed by a child that relate to his/her involvement in soccer.
- Ridicule or shout at a child for losing a game or making a mistake.
- Treat any club as a child minding service.
- Take safety for granted.
- Put undue pressure on any child to please or perform well.

Parental Involvement in Soccer

There are many ways in which you can become involved in your child's sport. You may find yourself trying to juggle commitments to make time for your child's sport. Be realistic about the input you are able to make.

You could:

- supply or organise transport to and from practices and competitions
- assist coaches with supervision during sessions, if requested
- become a coach or volunteer
- referee games if requested
- help out with administration if requested
- set up a parents' committee
- assist with the organisation of special events/activities

Find out what your child wants from soccer, and help set realistic targets to achieve this. This may involve controlling your own aspirations and avoiding the desire to force your own dreams or unfulfilled ambitions on them.

Remember Soccer is about:

Fair play
Fun
Participation
Development of skills

It is important to:

- encourage but not force your child to be active

- know when your child is ready to play
- encourage healthy lifestyle habits
- attend training and games
- promote and teach **Fair Play**
- teach your child to treat other players, coaches, officials and spectators with respect regardless of race, creed, colour, sex or ability.
- help children to set realistic targets
- help children with decision making

“Lead by Example”

1.5 ROLE OF THE CLUB CHILDREN'S OFFICER

The appointment of a Club Children's Officers is an essential element in the creation of a quality atmosphere in any club. They act as a resource to members with regard to children's issues and also ensure that children have a voice in the running of the club and can freely talk of their experiences.

Government guidelines advise that all clubs should appoint a children's officer and this should be done in accordance with recommended selection and recruitment procedures. The appointment of this person should be carried out in consultation with juvenile members and their parent/guardians.

The Children's Officer should have the following functions:

- To promote the Code of Ethics & Good Practice
- To influence policy and practice and to prioritise children's needs
- To ensure that children, within the club, know how and to whom they can report their concerns. Information disclosed by a child should be dealt with in accordance with the Department of Health and Children's Guidelines “*Children First*”
- To encourage the participation of parents/guardians in club activities
- To co-operate with parents to ensure that each child enjoys his/her participation in soccer
- To act as a resource with regard to best practice in children's soccer
- To report regularly to the Club Committee
- To monitor changes in membership and follow up any unusual dropout, absenteeism or club transfers by children or team manager/coach/volunteers

Children's Officers do not have the responsibility of investigating or validating child protection concerns within the club and have no counseling or therapeutic role.

This responsibility lies with Tusla, HSE and the Gardai.

Holycross FC have appointed **Sinead Warren** as our Children's Officer and she can be contacted at **(086) 1931136**. **John Cregan** has been appointed Designated Liaison Person and can be contacted at **(086) 8747778**. **Dave Clancy** is the Deputy Designated Liaison Person - **(086) 3607494**.

Chapter 2 –Policies & Procedures

2.1 RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION POLICY

Holycross FC will take all reasonable steps to ensure that people working with young people are suitable and appropriately qualified. Recruitment and selection procedures are therefore necessary and these procedures apply to all persons with substantial access to young people, whether paid or unpaid.

All adults taking responsibility for children in sport should undergo a recruitment process. The responsibilities of the role and the level of experience/qualifications required should be drawn up and clearly stated beforehand.

Holycross FC will adhere to the following recruitment/selection procedure:

1. All team managers, coaches and volunteers are required to complete an application form/self declaration form, giving the names of two referees that can be contacted.
2. All appointments of team managers, coaches and volunteers **may** be subject to Garda clearance **and will be subject to a committee meeting**.
3. A decision to appoint a team manager/coach is the responsibility of the Club Committee and not any one individual in it.
4. All appointments are subject to approval and ratification by the Club committee of Holycross FC.
5. There will be a sign-up procedure, whereby the newly recruited team manager/coach, agrees to abide by the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children in Sport and to the club's code and policies.
6. A two-month probationary period will apply to all appointments.
7. The club secretary will keep all records pertaining to the recruitment and selection of personnel for Holycross FC.
8. Once recruited, Holycross FC will make all efforts to support and manage coaches, team managers and volunteers ensuring that no person is expected to work alone.

2.2 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.

This following procedure affords all members, who are dissatisfied, the opportunity to register their complaint in a formal way and put an open process of investigation into action.

Holycross FC will adhere to the following disciplinary, complaints and appeals procedure:

1. Any person wishing to make a complaint should bring it to the attention of Holycross FC's secretary. The complaint or concern should outline all relevant details and other parties involved. The club committee will address same and agree the course of action to be taken in consultation with the child welfare officer. (unless the complaint or concern relates to a child abuse matter or criminal offence that meets criteria for formal reporting to the statutory authorities).

Please note that if the complaint or concern involves a child abuse matter or a criminal offence the chairperson will talk to the children's officer. The statutory authorities must then be informed.

2. The club committee will furnish any individual/s 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 shall be informed and advised of the process.
3. The club committee will then hear the case of all parties involved and decide if a club rule or regulation has been infringed.
4. The club committee will then inform in writing those involved of their decision and any sanctions, if any are to be imposed. (Written notification will be forwarded to parents should the proceedings involve a club member less than eighteen years of age).
5. Any party unhappy with the findings of the club committee can appeal the decision in writing to the Committee of the relevant League.

2.3 DISCIPLINE AND THE USE OF SANCTIONS

Discipline in Soccer

Discipline in soccer should always be positive in focus, providing the structures and rules that allow players to set their own goals and strive for them. It should encourage players to become more responsible for themselves and their actions and therefore more independent.

Discipline should be a positive reinforcement for effort. It should encourage the development of emotional and social skills as well as skills in soccer. Players have to be helped to become responsible for the decisions and choices they make within soccer, particularly when it is likely to make a difference between playing fairly and unfairly.

There is no place in soccer for fighting, bullying, over aggressive or dangerous behaviour.

At all times, players should treat others in a respectful manner. They should never bully, interfere with or take unfair advantage of others.

Guidance on the use of Sanctions

The use of sanctions is an important element in the maintenance of discipline. However team managers/coaches/volunteers and administrators should have a clear understanding of where and when particular sanctions are appropriate.

It should be remembered that effectively controlled organisations and successful team managers/coaches/volunteers are characterised by the sparing 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 are suggested:

1. Rules should be clearly stated and agreed
2. A warning should be given if a rule is broken
3. A sanction (use of time out for example) should be applied if a rule is broken for a second time
4. If a rule is broken three or more times, the child should be spoken to and parents/guardians involved if necessary
5. Sanctions should only be used in a corrective way that is intended to help children improve both now and in the future. They should never be used in retaliation or to make a team manager/coach/volunteer feel better or more powerful
6. When violations of the team rules or other misbehaviours occur, sanctions should always be applied in an impartial and fair manner
7. Sanctions should never be used as threats. If a rule is broken, the appropriate sanction(s) should be implemented consistently, fairly and firmly
8. Sanctions should not be applied if the team manager/coach/volunteer 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
9. Once a sanction has been imposed, it is important to make the child feel s/he is a valued member of the team again
10. A child should be helped, to understand if necessary why sanctions are imposed
11. A child should not be sanctioned for making errors whilst playing soccer
- 12. 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. Remember soccer has to be Fun if participants are to continue playing**
13. Sanctions should be used sparingly. Constant criticism and sanctioning can cause participants to turn away from soccer

2.4 BULLYING POLICY

What is Bullying?

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 and occurs, mainly in social environments such as schools, clubs and other organisations working with children.

It includes behaviour such as teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting or extortion behaviour by one or more children against a victim. While the more extreme forms of bullying would be regarded as

physical or emotional abuse and are reportable to Health Board or Gardai, dealing with bullying behaviour is normally the responsibility of the club where it is taking place.

It is important to recognise the impact that bullying and discrimination can have in the lives of young people. Some people may not regard bullying and discrimination as child abuse because of the settings in which this often takes place and also because it is often other young people who are responsible for the behaviour.

Holycross FC recognises that bullying is an increasing problem. It is imperative that clubs should have in place a policy to deal with bullying, and that volunteers/coaches are aware of this policy and of procedural guidelines to deal with bullying.

In situations where the incident is serious and where the behaviour is regarded as potentially abusive, the club should consult the relevant Health Board with a view to drawing up an appropriate response such as a management plan. (Children First 1999)

All team managers/coaches/volunteers/players/parents/guardians have a part to play in ensuring that nobody in Holycross FC is the victim of any type of "bullying behaviour". Everyone in the club should be aware that bullying of any kind will not be tolerated and they have a duty to report any such behaviour to our team managers/coaches/volunteers who will in turn report to the committee.

Peer Abuse

In some cases of child abuse, the alleged perpetrator will be a child. In these situations, the child protection procedures should be adhered to for both the victim and alleged abuser, that is, it should be considered a child protection issue for both children.

Work must be done to ensure that perpetrators of abuse, even when they are children themselves, take responsibility for their behaviour and acknowledge that the behaviour is unacceptable.

It is important that clarity exists in respect of which behaviours constitute peer abuse, particularly child sexual abuse. Consultation with the Health Board should help to clarify the nature of any sexual behaviour by children which gives rise to concern.

Bullying is often defined in terms of three components:

- It must occur over time, rather than being a simple aggressive attack
- It involves an imbalance of power, the powerful attack the powerless
- It can be psychological, verbal, or physical in nature

Types of Bullying

Child to child – includes physical aggression, verbal bullying, intimidation, damage to property, stealing property and isolation

Adult to child - this includes the use of repeated gestures or expressions of a threatening or intimidatory nature, or any comment intended to degrade a child

Child to adult - this includes the use of repeated gestures or expressions of a threatening or intimidatory nature by an individual or group of children

A study found that the most common experiences of bullying and discrimination reported by young people was at the hands of other young people.

This included:

- 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 physically assaulted or threatened with violence;
- Being ignored.

In the study, boys were most likely to experience physical bullying or threats, have property stolen or damaged. Girls on the other hand, were more likely to be ignored or not spoken to.

Bullying by adults was a less common experience however one in ten reported this. Of this type of bullying the most common reported experiences were:

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

What makes a child more likely to be bullied?

- Being different in any obvious way, (e.g. having a physical disability, an unusual tone of voice, being timid or belonging to an ethnic or racial group).
- Lacking confidence and not being able to mix. This can result in name-calling, slagging or physical abuse.
- Being very clever or good at what you do. Others may be jealous and you may get a cruel nickname (e.g. "Lick").
- Being very weak intellectually. Children can be very hurt and distressed by name-calling (such as "thick", "spa", or "dummy").
- Children from homes where there are problems are also vulnerable. Children can have an alcoholic or drug user in the family, a family member in jail or a relative with mental problems who sometimes acts in a bizarre manner in public.
- An overprotective parent can also attract unwarranted attention.
- Children whose hobbies are different and are not in line with mainstream culture, anything that can be misinterpreted by others as making them "snobby" or "different".
- Children's physical appearance, prominent physical features (teeth, eyes, ears, lips, nose), wearing different or old-fashioned clothes, being awkward or clumsy, too big or small or fat.
- Sexual undertones. Children can be jeered about their perceived sexuality or their lack of experience of sexual matters.
- Children who react easily. The child who gets upset easily and is quick to react to jeering.
- Wearing glasses, teeth braces.

Response to Bullying

Vigilance is the most potent deterrent against bullying so that children and young people who bully will know that it will be dealt with, and the victims of bullying will have confidence in this.

“Ensure adequate supervision at all times”

There needs to be open discussion about bullying and a clear statement of its unacceptability. Team managers/coaches/children/parents should be advised at the start of every season that “bullying” in any shape or form is not acceptable or permitted in Holycross FC.

In confronting the bully or bullies in relation to specific incidents it is important to:

- 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.

Who should deal with bullying?

While the more extreme forms of bullying would be regarded as physical or emotional abuse and are reported to Tusla, HSE or An Garda Síochána, dealing with bullying behaviour is normally the responsibility of all team managers/coaches/volunteers in this club.

How can it be prevented?

- Ensure that all members follow the code of conduct, which promotes the rights and dignity of each member
- Ensure adequate supervision at all times
- Deal with any incidents as they arise
- Use a whole group policy - working with the group helping them to understand the hurt that bullying causes, this makes the problem a ‘shared concern’ of the entire group
- Reinforce that there is a ‘permission to tell’ culture rather than a ‘might is right’ one
- Encourage young people to negotiate, co-operate and help others, particularly new or different children
- Offer the victim immediate support
- Never tell a young person to ignore bullying, they can’t ignore it, and 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 that there is nothing wrong with them and it is not their fault
- All incidents of bullying should be reported to the secretary of Holycross FC and the Child Welfare Officer

Club personnel are advised that they are not expected to deal with all situations on their own as sometimes bullying can be very difficult to deal with. They can be assured that the committee of Holycross FC are available to provide support and advice and if necessary professional assistance.

2.5 AWAY TRIPS POLICY

If the activities of a Holycross FC team/group involve staying away from home overnight, attention should also be paid to the following:

1. All away trips must be approved and sanctioned by the committee of Holycross FC.
2. Holycross FC shall ensure that there is adequate insurance cover for all approved away trips.
3. Written permission of parents/guardians shall be obtained for all overnight trips. A medical form should be completed by parents/guardians disclosing any medical conditions or special needs of their child/children.
4. Adults/Coaches accompanying or participating in an away trip shall complete a medical form disclosing any medical conditions or special needs to the Club in advance.
5. All adults who travel on away trips with children will be carefully chosen.
6. The roles and responsibilities of adults participating in away trips should be clearly defined.
7. Adequate adult/child ratios should be observed and adequate supervision will be maintained at all times.
8. Holycross FC will appoint a Head of Delegation for all away trips. He/She will have overall responsibility for the children's safety, behaviour and sleeping arrangements. He/She will be appointed as an official of Holycross FC for the duration of the trip. Children will be informed at the outset of whom they can report any concerns they might have to. They shall be clearly encouraged to tell anybody if they should have a concern. On no account should they keep secrets.
9. On away trips, all coaches, team managers and volunteers are accountable to the Head of Delegation in all non-performance related matters.
10. Where there are mixed teams there shall be at least one female in the delegation.
11. The Head of Delegation should submit a report to the club as soon as possible on completion of the trip.
12. Appropriate and well-supervised sleeping arrangements will be adhered to. As a norm, adults should not share a room with a child. Where the presence of an adult is required there should be more than one child in the room with the adult. If children are sharing a room, it should be with those of the same age and sex.
13. Team managers/coaches/volunteers are advised to avoid being alone with one child.
14. When driving, team managers/coaches/volunteers are required to ensure adequate insurance and do not carry more than the permitted number of passengers. Ensure the use of seat belts if provided.
15. There should be clearly stated pick-up and drop off locations and times.
16. Special care should be taken by the host and visiting clubs in the selection of homes for overnight stays and where practicable more than one child should be placed with each host family.

17. Parents/Guardians should be informed as soon as possible should their child suffer a significant injury or accident.

2.6 SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY

In Holycross FC, the use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco shall be actively discouraged as being incompatible with a healthy approach to sporting activity.

- Team managers/coaches/volunteerers shall not smoke when taking a session or drink alcohol before taking a session
- In relation to our under-age teams Holycross FC shall endeavour to organise receptions and celebrations in a non-alcoholic environment and in a manner that is suitable for the age group concerned.
- Our team managers/coaches/volunteers/committee shall act as role models for appropriate behaviour.
- The Football Association of Ireland has directed that under no circumstances whatsoever can any person under the age of 18 years consume alcohol and any and all appropriate steps should be taken to ensure that this policy is strictly adhered to.
- Our team managers/coaches/volunteers shall promote fair competition through the development of sound training practice and should actively discourage the use of any substance that is perceived to offer short cuts to improved performances or to by-pass the commitment and hard work required to achieve success.
- Team managers/coaches /volunteers will also try to ensure that those in their charge are aware of the harmful side effects or the illegality of proscribed drugs or other banned performance-enhancing substances.
- In relation to our under-age teams Holycross FC shall refrain from seeking sponsorship from alcohol and tobacco companies.

Chapter 3 – Dealing With Allegations & Complaints

3.1 ADVICE TO COACHES

Child abuse might come to light because a child tells someone, or because someone sees it happening. However, this does not always happen, and it is often a question of someone feeling uneasy and concerned about a child, and needing to find out more. There are roughly three stages in recognising child abuse to the point where a worker/volunteer/coach knows that action must be taken. These are:

- **Considering the possibility** – if a child has a mark, bruise or injury for which there is no reasonable explanation, or if she or he is behaving unusually or seems fearful or anxious in the presence of anybody.
- **Looking out for signs** – a cluster of signs is likely to be more indicative of abuse than a single one. Sometimes children will hint or directly tell that they are being harmed – these disclosures should always be listened to and the information accepted as true in the first instance (see below for guidance on this).

- **Recording the information** – observations about suspected child abuse should be recorded with dates, times and any other relevant information about the incident or behaviour. Child abuse can be difficult to recognise and can take many different forms.

Team managers/coaches/volunteers should always be alert to the possibility of abuse. However, it is important to remember that no one sign should be seen as certain evidence of abuse, and there may be other explanations for it.

Team managers/coaches/volunteers who are suspicious about child abuse can seek advice from the club children's officer and reports should then be made to the Gardai and/or Tusla & HSE. Advice can also be sought from the FAI's National Children's Officer.

Response to a Child reporting abuse

- Deal with any allegation of abuse in a sensitive and competent manner through listening to and facilitating the child to tell about the problem.
- Stay calm and do not show any extreme reaction to what the child is saying and take it seriously.
- It should be understood that the child has decided to tell about something that is very important and has taken a risk in doing so. The experience of telling should be a positive one so that the child will not mind talking to those involved in the investigation.
- Permit the child to speak without interruption, accepting what is said.
- The child should not be questioned 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 meant by that"?
- Reassure the child that he/she was right to tell, and that he/she will be helped.
- Alleviate feeling of guilt and isolation, while passing no judgement on the person against whom the allegation is made.
- False promises should not be made such as saying no-one else will be told.
- Indicate what should happen next, such as informing parents, Club Children's Officer, reporting to statutory authority etc.
- Any and all consultations with others should be entirely confidential and should not involve investigative procedures.
- Write a detailed account of any discussion regarding alleged or suspected abuse, as soon as possible after the discussion has taken place. In the event of a child disclosing, make a note of the actual phraseology/words used by the child.
- Do not trivialise child abuse issues or trivialise or exaggerate what the child has told you.

Remember:

A suspicion, which is not supported by any objective signs of abuse, would not constitute a reasonable suspicion, or reasonable grounds for concern.

In some situations, team managers/coaches/volunteers/parents may receive information about adults who are not involved with their own organisation, but who are in contact with children through other organisations. It is important that these organisations should be made aware of any concerns. The statutory agencies will give advice on how this should be handled.

Children First recommends that: If the designated person, on behalf of an organisation, decides that reasonable grounds for reporting the incident or suspicion to Tusla, HSE or An Garda Síochána do not exist, the individual who referred the matter should be given a clear written statement of the reasons why the club/organisation is not taking action.

The team manager/coach/volunteer/parent should be advised that, if they remain concerned about the situation, they are free to consult with, or report to Tusla, HSE or An Garda Síochána themselves.

3.2 CONFIDENTIALITY

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

The following points should 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 should be treated in a careful and sensitive manner and should only be discussed with those who need to know
- Information should 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

Dealing with Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints can be difficult to deal with, however they cannot be ignored. All complaints relating to inappropriate behaviour/poor practice should be brought to the attention of the Chairperson. In all cases the safety and welfare of the child/children is paramount.

All complaints should be checked out and handled in a confidential manner. It is important to record all such complaints and actions taken. Specific advice on dealing with anonymous complaints can be got from your local Health Board duty social worker or alternatively the FAI National Children's Officer.

Rumours

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

Should the Chairperson have reasonable grounds for concern that a child has been abused s/he should report the matter to the Statutory Authorities. Should there be any doubt about the requirement to report the substance of a rumour, advice can be sought from your local Health Board duty social worker or alternatively the FAI National Children's Officer. It is important that children are actively encouraged to report concerns or problems directly to the Club's Children's Officer and/or to their parents/guardians, or any trusted adult, regardless of how minor or serious their concern might be.

Parents/guardians should also encourage their children to inform them of any concern or problem they might have. Open trusting relationships between adults and children will help ensure that important issues are dealt with in an appropriate and constructive manner.

Chapter 4 – Codes of Conduct & Good Practice

4.1 CODE OF CONDUCT FOR PLAYERS

- Do your best, have fun, play fairly
- Improve and develop your skills
- Play by the rules & accept everyone in the group
- Respect opponents, they are partners in a sporting contest
- Shake hands before and after the match whoever wins
- Help opponents who are injured, put the ball out of play
- Accept apologies when they are offered
- Respect / support fellow team mates if they do well and if things go wrong
- Be modest in victory, gracious in defeat – **BE A SPORT**
- Approach the CHILD WELFARE OFFICER with your concerns - don't be afraid to speak
- Do not cheat, use bad language, argue with officials or other players
- Do not bully, tell lies, spread rumours
- Do not take banned performance enhancing substances
- Do not keep secrets if anyone has caused you harm
- Do not behave in any way that brings your club into disrepute
- Be safe, make a complaint to your coach / parent if you are unhappy
- Otherwise contact / text:
 - Club Child Welfare Officer - or
 - League Children's Officer –**or**
 - FAI National Children's Officer

You will be believed and treated in confidence, only those who need to know will know

**Remember we want you to play fair, have fun, develop your skills and above all
be happy and safe**

4.2 CODE OF CONDUCT FOR TEAM MANAGERS/COACHES

Team Managers/Coaches should familiarise themselves with the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport and with the Holycross FC - Code of Ethics & Good Practice and follow the procedures if they suspect or receive complaints of abuse of any sort.

Team Managers/Coaches should ::

- Be positive during training sessions and matches, praise and encourage effort as well as results
- Plan and prepare appropriately
- Put welfare of children first and strike a balance between this and winning / results
- Encourage fair play, treat participants equally
- Recognise developmental needs
- Qualified and up-to-date with the knowledge and skill of soccer for young people
- Involve parents where possible and inform them when problems arise
- Keep record of attendance at training/matches
- Keep a record of injury(s) and action taken
- Keep a brief record of problem/action/outcomes, if behavioural problems arise

Where possible Team Managers/Coaches should avoid:

- Spending excessive amounts of time with children away from others
- Taking sessions alone
- Taking children to their home
- Taking children on journey's alone in their car

Team Managers/Coaches should not:

- Use any form of punishment or physical force on a child
- Exert undue influence over a participant in order to obtain personal benefit or reward
- Engage in rough physical games, sexually provocative games or allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any kind, and/or make sexually suggestive comments about, or to a child
- Take measurements or engage in certain types of fitness testing without the presence of other adults
- Undertake any form of therapy (hypnosis etc.) in the training of children

4.3 CODE FOR SPECTATORS

- Remember that although children play organised soccer they are not miniature professionals. Don't place excessive pressure on children to perform to unrealistically high expectations. Children play soccer to develop their skills, to have fun and enjoy the game.
- Be on your best behaviour and lead by example. The behaviour of a team's supporters will often be remembered long after the result of the game. Be remembered for the right reasons.
- Applaud good play, sportsmanship and best effort by the visiting team as well as your own.
- Welcome and respect all your team's opponents. Without them there would be no match.
- Condemn the use of violence in all forms at every opportunity.
- Verbal abuse of players, match officials or opposing supporters cannot be accepted in any shape or form. Players or match officials should never be regarded as fair targets for ignorant or abusive behaviour.
- Encourage young players to play within the rules of the game in the spirit of **Fair Play**.

Appendix – useful forms:

(1) Incident/Accident Report Form

(2) Risk Assessment Form

(3) Activity Attendance Sheet

See Overleaf.....

Incident/ Accident Report Form

NAME OF TEAM: _____

1. GROUND SITE WHERE INCIDENT/ACCIDENT TOOK PLACE

2. NAME OF PERSON IN CHARGE (of session/competition/game)

3. NAME OF INJURED PERSON _____

4. ADDRESS _____

5. DATE AND TIME OF INCIDENT/ACCIDENT _____

6. NATURE INCIDENT/ACCIDENT

7. DETAILS OF ACTIVITY (training/playing/changing etc.)

8. ACTION TAKEN INCLUDING FIRST AID (please detail name of first aider)

9. WERE THE FOLLOWING CONTACTED (tick where appropriate)

Gardai ☐ Ambulance ☐ Doctor ☐ Parent/Guardian ☐

10. WHAT HAPPENED TO THE INJURED PERSON AFTERWARDS (e.g. went home, went to hospital, played on)

I hereby declare that the information detailed above is a true and accurate record of events

Signed: _____ Position: _____

Name Printed: _____ Date: _____

Risk Assessment Form

1. VENUE _____

2. NAME OF ASSESSOR _____

3. POSITION _____

1. ASSESSMENT DETAILS :

Inspection Criteria	Yes/No
Is the playing/training area free from obstacles?	
Is the playing/training area fit or safe for the playing of sport?	
Is the playing/training area appropriate for the activity?	
Are the goalposts safe and appropriate for the activity?	
Is the players' register up to date and available?	
Does the players' register list medical information and contact details?	
Are participants properly attired?	
Is first aid and a qualified first-aider available?	
Are emergency numbers clearly displayed?	
Is there clear access to the area for emergency vehicles?	
Are evacuation procedures published where necessary?	
Is safety information/procedures available to all personnel?	
List hazards or unsafe equipment if any:	
Does the club need to take any further corrective actions:	

I hereby declare that the information detailed above is a true and accurate record of events

Signed: _____ Position: _____

Name Printed: _____ Date: _____

Activity Attendance Sheet

NAME OF TEAM: _____

1. TYPE OF ACTIVITY (tick where appropriate):

Training ☐ Match ☐ Club Activity ☐ Other (please specify) ☐

2. LOCATION OF ACTIVITY: _____

3. DATE AND TIME OF ACTIVITY: _____

4. LIST OF PERSONS ATTENDING:

Name of Player	Name of Player
1.	13.
2.	14.
3.	15.
4.	16.
5.	17.
6.	18.
7.	19.
8.	20.
9.	21.
10.	22.
11.	23.
12.	24.

Signed: _____ Position: _____

Name Printed: _____ Date: _____