



November 2019

NAOMH BRÍD GAC BELFAST
CLUB POLICIES IN CONNECTION
WITH CODE OF BEHAVIOUR AND
SAFE-GUARDING



Table of Contents

Section 1: Introduction to the Policy

Section 2: CLUB Policy Statement

Section 3: CLUB Principles

Section 4: CLUB Code of Behaviour Guidelines

Juvenile Players

Juvenile Mentors

Adult Players

Adult Mentors

Team Management

Parents/Guardians/Supporters/Members

Section 5: Club Communications

Section 6: Away fixtures, day trips and overnight stays

Section 7: Volunteer Recruitment and Selection

Section 8: Anti-Bullying Policy

Section 9: Child Abuse

Section 10: Safeguarding Protection Policy and Discipline Complaint Procedures

Section 11: Appendices

Appendix A – Police Vetting and Access NI

Appendix B – Glossary of Terms

Appendix C – Useful Information

Appendix D – Discipline and Code of Behaviour

Section One: Introduction to the Policy

Naomh Bríd GAC was founded in 1998 by a group of dedicated people who foresaw the need for a GAA club in the South Belfast area. In the intervening years, the club and the number of members has continued to grow thanks to the hard work of a large number of volunteers from the need to have gaelic games in South Belfast and is now in and should always remain, at the heart of that community.

Since its inception the club has been striving to set the highest standards in dealing with its most important asset, its young people. The club has maintained a spirit of community, fair play, camaraderie and respect through the good will and hard work of all its many volunteers and this contribution must never be taken for granted or forgotten.

As the Club continues to grow across codes it is timely that this document has been drawn up to inform all club members (playing and non-playing) of their duty of care when dealing with our young people. It has also been designed to provide support and guidance to our parents, mentors and supporters as they work with the club's children, and to re-enforce the club's commitment to providing safe, friendly, and good quality access to our games in the community.

A positive approach to discipline is one of the foundations upon which Naomh Bríd CLCG has been built, and the undertaking by our membership of all our Club activities in a disciplined fashion is essential to the sustainable growth of our Club. Discipline in all of our activities, both sporting and social, should always be positive in focus, providing a structure and rules which allow all of our membership to set their own goals and strive for them.

The purpose of this document is to provide a realistic and common-sense approach to the practices within the Club. The content of this document is in line with current best practice and legal requirements of the GAA and the Northern Ireland Sports Council for the protection and welfare of all members.

While the detail in this document has been carefully correlated, it is accepted that errors and omissions may occur and it is expected that the spirit of the document will be adopted by Club members in achieving best practice. This document will be reviewed on a yearly basis in order to remain current and up to date. Any amendments during the annual review should be ratified by the Executive Committee.

Our Club structures, and application of rules should help our playing members to become responsible about the decisions and choices they make within sport, particularly when they are likely to make a difference between playing fairly and unfairly. There is no place for fighting, excessive aggression, or, dangerous behaviour in sport, and our members should treat others in a respectful manner, and neither bully nor take unfair advantage of others.

Minor sanctions can be applied by mentors depending on the severity of the offensive behaviour. Minor sanctions may include a time-out during training or matches, a verbal warning or a formal warning with another mentor present. However, if a complaint is made to the Club Secretary in writing an investigation will be carried out.

Our non-playing membership, and supporters must behave appropriately, ensuring that they treat other members, players, mentors and the membership of other Clubs, and sporting organisations, in a respectful fashion which reflects the ideals of the Association. All parents/guardians are encouraged to play an active role in promoting a positive attitude toward all Club policies but especially the Code of Behaviour and Safeguarding.

The Gaelic Athletics Associations (GAA, LGFA and Camogie) provides comprehensive frameworks for the behaviour of all of its members, and associates, and Naomh Bríd is committed to the application of all National, and Provincial directions in respect of safe-guarding, behaviour and discipline. The basic aims of the Gaelic Games Associations include fostering and developing volunteers at Club, County, Provincial and National levels with the cooperation and support to safeguarding of children in the Associations to create a safe environment for young people to grow and develop.

For absolute clarity, the disciplinary policy of Naomh Bríd CLCG applies to:

- Playing members of all ages,
- Parents of playing members,
- Mentors, and volunteers engaged with all age groups,
- Supporters of Naomh Bríd
- Members of Naomh Bríd engaged in non-sporting activities

In circumstances where any conflict is identified between the policy of Naomh Bríd GAC, the National or Provincial policy guidelines will take precedence.

Section Two: Club Policy Statement

Naomh Bríd GAC philosophy is one of participation, enjoyment and skills development in a setting of respect for all and having fun. The motto for Naomh Bríd is *Mol an Óige* “encourage so we can flourish”. Realising this philosophy requires a full awareness and clear understanding of the policy by everyone involved in the Club, including primary age, juvenile, adult players, mentors, parents, supporters and other members. Everyone has a vital role to play in setting and maintaining standards of behaviour which our Club can be proud of.

Naomh Bríd GAC is fully committed to ensure safeguarding the well-being of all its members. Every individual in the Club should at all times show respect and understanding for members rights, safety, welfare and conduct themselves in a manner that reflects the principles and policy of the Club. The Club policy guidelines follow best practice and are closely in line with in the Irish Sports Council Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children’s Sport and the GAA Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport.

In Naomh Bríd GAC, one of our first priorities is the welfare of players and the Club is 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 the Clubs commitment, it has adopted codes, policies and procedures to guide our players, members and volunteers involved with our teams. The Club will take all practicable steps to protect our young players from discernable forms of abuse, harm, discrimination or degrading treatment. To ensure, that the best practice is followed, the Club will work closely with our Governing Body in Croke Park. In order to promote the best practice the Club will:

- Adopt and implement relevant sections of the Irish Sports Council Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children’s Sport and the GAA Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport as an integral part of the Club’s policies and procedures.
- Have its constitution approved and adopted by Club members at an AGM or EGM.
- Ensure that all mentors and volunteers are carefully recruited and vetted and that they accept responsibility for ensuring the wellbeing of young members in their care and attend a Child Protection and Safe Guarding course.
- Appoint a least one Children’s Officer and a Designated Person to deal with any issues in relation youth welfare.
- Ensure best practice is delivered by disseminating the Club’s codes, policies and procedures, to all its members.
- Have in place procedures for dealing with a concern or complaint made against any mentor, coach, parent, player or other members of the Club.
- Respond swiftly and appropriately to protect the welfare of all players and members who participate in any activity in the Club.
- Review the effectiveness of the Club codes, policies and procedures on an annual basis.

Section Three: Club Principles

Naomh Bríd GAC operates on a number of key principles in line with [GAA code of behaviour](#) that facilitates best practice in sport for young people to join, train, play matches, develop and compete in Gaelic games. It is the Clubs priority that all Club players and members are valued for their contribution, treated fairly and with the highest level of respect throughout the varying levels of social and physical development.

The Club will provide young players with a period in their life that enables them to have fun, make friends and present them with opportunities to improve their levels of skill. It is Naomh Bríd GAC intention to support and encourage all players to experience a positive atmosphere, fairplay, fun, equality, respect and competition.

Positive atmosphere: Naomh Bríd GAC promotes a positive and encouraging atmosphere that involves all players. The Club is committed to providing an environment which will allow players to perform to the best of their ability. A positive sporting experience from an early age are key to building blocks toward lifelong participation. Encouragement and support throughout a players career is essential to retain players up to senior level.

Fairplay: All activities and games in the Club will be conducted in an atmosphere of fair play. The principles of fair play should always be emphasised. The importance of participation, best effort and enjoyment should be stressed rather than winning. Players should be encouraged to win in an open and fair way. Younger players differ dramatically from adults and training should mirror this to avoid any injury, social exclusion, disappointment or dropout. Priority should not be given to the 'best' players to the exclusion of others. Priority should not be given to underage players, playing up an age category, over the age category of players within a particular group with an emphasis to win matches. Coaches should build participation around equitable opportunities for all players, whether through rotating positions during games or providing each player with the opportunity to 'have a go'. Fair Play should also be emphasised in terms of promoting sportsmanship, respect for coaches, match officials and ensuring the playing rules are adhered to at all times.

Fun: All activities for younger players in the Club need to start off in an atmosphere of fun. Playing sport increases confidence in of young players if there is an element of fun involved. The importance of fun and enjoyment should be included in warm-ups and during activities. This encourages younger players to make friends and feel part of a team. Focussing on play and learning places the needs of the child player first and will help create an experience where children are having fun, in an environment that assists and challenges them to achieve their True Potential.

Equality

Players participating in the Club will be treated in a fair and reasonable manner, regardless of age, ability, sex, religion, social, political and ethnic background. Players, irrespective of ability or disability, should be involved in an integrated and

inclusive way, whenever possible thus allowing them to participate along with other team mates. It is important to emphasise that all players develop at different rates and this should be respected.

Respect: Mentors interacting with players in Naomh Bríd GAC are in a position of trust and influence. Mentors should have a basic understanding of the emotional, physical and personal needs of young people. The stages of development and ability of youths will guide the types of activity provided by the Club. All Mentors' actions will be guided by what is best for the player and carried out in the context of respectful and open relationships. Neglect, verbal, physical, emotional or sexual abuse of any kind (or threats of such abuse) is totally unacceptable behaviour within Naomh Bríd GAC.

'Children don't always remember what you tell them... but they always remember the way you make them feel'

John Morrisson

A national campaign "**Give Respect-Get Respect**" is supported by the GAA, LGFA and the Camogie association. The campaign promotes the following good practices. Players to shake hands with their opponents and referee before and after each game. The host Club should welcome referees and opposing teams to all games. Ensure maximum participation of all young players in games. Adopt the code of behaviour when working with underage players, mentors, parents/guardians and supporters. Organise half time exhibition games during Club and inter-county league and championship games that promote principles of respect to include local schools and local clubs where possible. The campaign promotes the following acronym:

Responsible
Encouraging
Supportive
Positive
Enabling
Considerate
Tolerant

Competition: In Naomh Bríd GAC we will attempt to strike a balance between a young player's desire to win and a young player's right to participate, irrespective of ability. Success is not the same as winning and failure is not the same as losing. A balanced approach to competition will make a significant contribution to the development of the player, while at the same time providing fun, enjoyment and a sense of satisfaction and achievement. The important thing is to focus on the effort to win, as opposed to winning in itself. Competition will always be enjoyable provided winning is seen in its proper perspective. If unreasonable competitive demands are placed on a child/young player too early in their career it can result in undue pressure which in turn often contributes to player dropout. It should be kept in mind that the welfare of the player comes first and competitive standards second.

Section Four: Club Code of Behaviour Guidelines

Juvenile Players

Players aged 18 years and under are considered as juvenile players. Naomh Bríd GAC follows protocol by which a parent of a juvenile aged player must complete a registration form to become a member of the Club. By signing the registration form the juvenile player and parent/guardian agree to abide by the Code of Behaviour and to other Club policies, codes and procedures.

As a young player you are entitled to be safe and feel safe, have fun and experience a sense of enjoyment and fulfilment through training and playing Gaelic games. You will be treated with respect, dignity and sensitivity. You are entitled to comment and make suggestions in a constructive manner and will be listened to. You will participate in games and competitions at a level with which you feel comfortable with. You can make your concerns known and have them dealt with in a confidential and appropriate manner.

As a young player of Naomh Bríd GAC you must:

- Play fairly, do your best and enjoy yourself.
- Represent your team, Club and family with pride and dignity.
- Be gracious in defeat and modest in victory.
- Always shake hands with the opposing team and show respect and fair play.
- Respect all mentors, coaches, selectors, Club officials and opponents.
- Abide by the rules, codes, policies and procedures of the Club both on and off the playing field.
- Respect your team members regardless of their ability, ethnic/cultural background or religion.
- Support fellow team members whether they do well or not.
- Shake hands with opponents after the game, irrespective of the outcome.
- Turn up to training on time and be actively involved in participation.
- Inform your mentor when you are unavailable for training or games.
- Take due care of Club equipment, facilities and that of other Clubs.
- Assist mentors with tidying up equipment after training or matches.
- Ensure not to loiter or damage any Club equipment or facilities.
- Adhere to acceptable standards of behaviour and the Club's code of Behaviour.
- Behave in a manner that avoids bringing the Club into disrepute.
- Talk to Club Officers/Children's Officer (CPO) with any concerns or questions you may have.
- Tell somebody else if you or others have been harmed in any way.
- Talk to your mentor if you feel unwell or are injured, especially if there may be a possible [concussion](#).
- Challenge bullying in any form whether physical or emotional. Bullying is not acceptable behaviour in Naomh Bríd GAC. Any form of bullying or intimidation needs to be brought to your mentors' attention immediately.
- Players on Antrim squads should still play for their club when free to do so.

As a young player of Naomh Bríd GAC you must never:

- Cheat, always play by the rules.
- Use violence or physical contact that is not allowed within the rules.
- Shout at or argue with an official, team mates or opponents.
- Harm team members, opponents or their property in any way.
- Play or train if you feel unwell or are injured.
- Use unacceptable language or racial and/or sectarian references to opponents, fellow players or officials by words, deeds or gestures.
- Use social media or any other form of contact to bully team mates, other club members or any other team member.
- Never take photographs or videos of Club members in the changing rooms.
- Use unfair or bullying tactics to gain advantage or isolate other players.
- Take banned substances.
- Keep secrets, especially if they cause harm.
- Tell lies or spread rumours about mentors/other players.

It is the juvenile players responsibility to behave in an appropriate manner both on and off the field of play when representing the Club. Misconduct and breaches of Club codes will be dealt through the code of behaviour procedures and sanctions.

Juvenile Mentors

Naomh Bríd GAC will support juvenile mentors in providing a child centred approach to volunteering, coaching and training. The Club will use agreed procedures for recruitment and selection of juvenile mentors and support them in gaining access NI, a safeguarding course, young whistler course and with the necessary training and to perform their roles. The Club will have in place procedures to assist juvenile mentors to deal with various situations that may arise, such as misconduct, complaints, discipline, etc. The Club expects parents and guardians to support the work of volunteer juvenile mentors and assist where possible. The Club will support the volunteer work by assisting the juvenile mentors to achieve some type of certification of their service, such as the Goldmark award or other award programmes for volunteering.

Maintain a child centred approach:

- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person and treat each one equally regardless of age, gender, ethnic/cultural background, religion or ability.
- Ensure that nobody involved with the team acts towards or speaks to another person in a manner that threatens, disparages, vilifies or insults another person.
- Never shout at or lecture players or reprimand/ridicule them when they make a mistake (young people learn best through trial and error, they should not be afraid to make mistakes in order to learn).
- Be positive during coaching sessions, games and other activities so that the players leave with a sense of achievement and an increased level of self-esteem.

- Never take or allow team players to take photographs or videos of Club members in the changing rooms.
- Develop a good understanding of the GAA, LGFA and Camogie association coaching manuals and ensure that you have the appropriate level of coaching accreditation.
- Develop a good understanding of the signs, symptoms and procedures to follow for [concussion](#) of players.
- Never enter changing rooms if you mentor a team of the opposite gender without firstly checking if it is suitable to do so. If you are a male mentor, always have a female parent or other female coach present when you enter.
- A juvenile mentor should only enter the field with the referee's permission and should not question their decisions or integrity.

Coaching and Matches for all Mentors

Naomh Bríd GAC will support mentors in providing a child centred approach to volunteering, coaching and training. The Club will ensure that all new coaches have to complete Access NI, a safeguarding course and a foundation course within three months of joining a Fun Sunday or Juvenile team as a coach under the direction of a lead coach. This is to ensure your own safety, as well as that of the younger players. The Club will provide coaches with Club policies in safeguarding, discipline, games policy, complaints, bullying etc., and it is your responsibility to ensure you are fully up to date on any changes that occur.

Lead by example:

- Be aware of the Club's policies, and be prepared to work in conjunction with other coaches, Fun Sunday officer and Games coordinator within the Club, to ensure delivery of a coherent coaching and games policy.
- Be punctual to set up the training session and properly attired in Club gear.
- Plan and prepare appropriately for each training session and match and ensure proper levels of supervision.
- Never use foul language or provocative language/gestures to a player, opponent or match or Club officials.
- Any abuse of pitches or facilities are to be communicated to the Club officials.
- Maintain a record of attendance of players at training, and to matches
- Ensure that any injury (other than minor cuts and grazes) are recorded on the Club's Injury Report Form (available on Club website) which is issued to the Club secretary for Club records.
- Clearly communicate to parents, with sufficient notice, the details of training and match fixtures. See social media guidelines.
- Communicate results to the County Board and Club PRO.
- Ensure there is an allocated person to post match results and write-up to the Club website and social media platforms.
- Ensure that players are made aware that matches take priority over other Club activities such as training.

- Support juvenile players attend player development squads and other personal development courses, as this only enhances Club succession.
- Ensure games, activities and playing equipment is customised to suit the needs of those involved in terms of age, ability, experience and maturity.
- Skills development (physical and motor) and personal satisfaction should have priority over competition.
- Set realistic, stretching but achievable, performance goals.
- Never equate losing with failure and do not develop a preoccupation with medals and trophies (the level of improvement made by young players is the best indicator of coaching effectiveness).
- Be fully aware of all club policies, including respecting the different GAA codes offered within the club (no training, challenge matches, etc should clash with another pre-arranged training time or match fixture for another code).
- Be positive during coaching sessions so that participants always leave with a sense of achievement and an increased level of self-esteem.
- Praise and reinforce effort and commitment and always provide positive feedback.
- Juvenile mentors are encouraged to celebrate success in a manner that is suitable for the age group concerned. Adults should act as role models for appropriate behaviour.
- Recognise the development needs of young players and ensure that they are matched on an individual or team basis.
- Participation, skill development and enjoyment is a priority for all young players to retain the maximum numbers moving forward.
- Ensure that all young players play in their own age groups, in order to ensure physical compatibility and age-group 'bonding'.
- Younger players asked to 'play-up' in an older age group should only occur if there are not enough numbers available to field a team.
- Playing up needs to be approved by the players parents, and the coach at the younger age-group level.
- Ensure that all members of a squad get adequate game time and that the same players do not start as substitutes in every game. In particular, in younger teams (Under 12 and below) each player should play at least half of a match, if possible and depending on numbers. The Club follows the philosophies of "Go Games" and the "Player Pathway" i.e., 6 to 10 years of age FUNdamentals, 10 to 14 years of age train to train, 14 to 18 years of age train to compete, 18+ years of age train to win.
- Rotate the team captain and the method used for selecting teams so that the same children are not always last to be selected.
- Never use any form of corporal punishment or physically force goals.
- Each squad should aim to enter the maximum number of teams to County Board competitions that it can reasonably field to avoid having excessive amounts of substitutes.
- Never smoke while working with young players, either within Naomh Bríd facilities or other Club grounds.

- Do not consume alcohol or non-prescribed drugs immediately prior to or while young players are in your care.
- Challenge bullying in any form whether physical or emotional. Bullying is not acceptable behaviour be it from a young person, mentor, parent/guardian or Club member.
- Bring any altercation to the attention of the lead mentor and if necessary follow the correct disciplinary procedure.

Interaction with Young Players/Members - avoid comprising your role as Mentor

- Ensure that all physical contact is appropriate and has the permission or understanding of the player.
- Develop an appropriate working relationship with young people based on mutual trust and respect.
- Be aware of the Clubs policy in relation to social media and texting young players/members. Only use group texts and do not contact young players directly unless you have the express permission in writing from the parents or guardian. All parents should be included in all social media platforms, such as: WhatsApp, Viber, Snapchat and Teamer etc.
- All messages/circulars, etc. should be directed to the young person's parents or guardians and **never** directly to an underage player.
- Be aware of the Club policy in relation to away trips and overnight stays. When the team travels away, separate sleeping facilities must be provided for all adults. If both genders are in the group, male and female mentors must be present.
- Be aware of the Club policy in relation to younger players needing to go to the toilet during training and matches.
- Juvenile mentors are to be supported and encouraged to develop their own coaching skills in a mentorship environment.
- It is important to recognise that certain situations e.g. staying over at the Mentor's residence or friendly actions, like: e.g., horse play, role play, telling jokes, etc., could be misinterpreted and lead to allegations of serious misconduct or impropriety.
- Avoid a situation where you are alone in a car with a young player.
- Never enter a dressing room alone, always make sure you have another mentor or parent with you.
- Do not take coaching sessions on your own, ask parents to remain present and assist the training session when needed.
- Encourage and promote all parents to complete Access NI and a safeguarding course, especially if the parents are involved in any way with assisting the coach, lifts or administration work.
- Avoid any inappropriate touching when assisting players to perform a technique or when First Aid is being administered.
- Avoid taking young players to your home.

Young Player Welfare

- Do not play an un-registered player, they are not insured.

- Make adequate provision for First Aid and do not encourage or allow players to play while injured.
- Keep an adequate record of each injury and ensure that another official, referee or team mentor is present when a player is being attended to.
- Complete the Club incident report and send a copy to the Club secretary.
- Possible [concussion](#) must be taken very seriously and acted upon appropriately.
- Check that the referee has recorded injuries/incidents in his/her match report.
- Ensure players are safely attired in Club gear for all games and training, i.e., helmets (hurling/camógie) and gum shields (football) are mandatory at all training sessions/matches.
- Avoid excessive training or over coaching or making demands on a young person that can lead to burnout or injury e.g. where young people are confined to playing in set positions on a continuous basis.
- A high number of our young members play many other sports, it is the parents responsibility to inform coaches of other commitments and work together to ensure the health and wellbeing of the young player is a priority, so to minimise injury or burn out.
- Do not pressurise a young person to perform at a level that is beyond his/her capacity based on age or maturation level.
- Inform the County Board well in advance via the Club Secretary or Juvenile Secretary of any unscheduled matches or trips away.
- Ensure that all dressing rooms and areas occupied by the Team, prior to, during or immediately following any match are kept clean and are not damaged in any way and left clean and tidy.
- Encourage parents/guardians to play an active role in organising and assisting activities and to be aware of the Club's Code of Behaviour for everyone involved, including children.

Adult Players

As a player and member of Naomh Bríd GAC you should undertake to:

- Treat all Mentors (selector, manager, Club officials, etc.) with respect.
- Demonstrate fair play, play fairly and do your best.
- Abide by the rules, procedures and policies of the Club both on and off the playing field.
- Respect team members - even when things go wrong. Give them full support both when they do well and when things go wrong.
- Respect opponents - they are not enemies they are partners in a sporting event. Accept apologies from opponents when they are offered.
- Give opponents a hand if they are injured or have problems with equipment.
- Respect officials and accept their decisions with grace, not a grudge.
- Uphold the Club Code of Behaviour when travelling to away events.
- Behave in a manner that avoids bringing the Club into disrepute, both on and off the pitch.

- Talk to Club officers if you have any problems or concerns about health and wellbeing.
- Develop a good understanding of the signs, symptoms and procedures to follow for [concussion](#), for both your own safety and that of fellow players.
- Be modest in victory and gracious in defeat.
- Exercise self-control and tolerance for others, even if others do not.
- Show appropriate loyalty to your Club and all its participants.
- Show high standards of fair play as the example for others to follow.
- Take due care of Club equipment and facilities, including opposing Clubs.
- Volunteer some time to Club administrative activities and support juvenile teams to ensure the Club continues to grow in all codes.
- Always showcase professionalism when using social media platforms.

As a player of Naomh Bríd GAC you should not:

- Cheat in any form.
- Use violence or physical contact that is not allowed within the rules.
- Shout or argue with the referee, officials, team mates or opponents.
- Harm team members, opponents or their property.
- Damage home or away Club property.
- Bully or use bullying tactics to isolate another player.
- Use unacceptable language or racial and/or sectarian references.
- Use unfair or bullying tactics to gain advantage or isolate other players.
- Take banned substances to improve performance.
- Drink alcohol before or during any game.
- Tell lies or spread rumours about mentors/other players.
- Keep secrets about any person who may have caused them harm.
- Do not record or photograph team members or opposing Club teams in any changing facilities.
- Play if you are un-registered as you are not insured by the Club if you get injured.
- Play or train if you feel unwell, are injured or have possible concussion.
- Use social media or any other form of contact to bully team mates, other Club members or any other team member.

Adult Mentors

Naomh Bríd GAC recognises the key role mentors play in the lives of adult players in sport. All persons involved in adult team management will be selected using the Club recruitment and selection procedures. Mentors should enjoy a sense of achievement through their work with adults. Mentors should strive to create a positive environment for the players playing Gaelic games. Mentors have an overall responsibility to take the steps necessary to ensure that positive and healthy experiences are provided. It is the Mentors' responsibility to be fully familiar with the rules of the GAA, LGFA, Camogie association and those of the Club. Mentors need to develop an understanding of relevant coaching methods and ensure that they have the appropriate level of coaching accreditation.

Lead by Example:

- Mentors must act as a role model and promote the positive aspects of the Club and maintain the highest standards of personal behaviour.
- Your behaviour to players, supporters, game officials, and opponents will have an affect on the players in your charge.
- Mentors should respect the rights, dignity and worth of every player and treat each player equally, regardless of ethnic origin, religion or ability.
- Mentors should encourage the development of respect for opponents, officials, selectors and other coaches and avoid criticism of mentors and officials.
- Mentors should encourage fair play and treat participants equally.
- Avoid working alone at all times. Ensure there is adequate assistance for all activities. It is important to realise 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 or smoking, before coaching, during events and on trips with players.
- When travel/overnight stays are involved, the mentors and players are ambassadors for the Club.
- **After gaining Access NI (see Appendix A), all Mentors must complete a Safeguarding Course with the Club CPO or Ulster Officer and minimum a Foundation Coaching Course in the relevant Code. After 3 years Mentors are expected to complete on-line training to upskill on [Child Safeguarding](#).**

Dealing with Players:

- Be generous with praise and never ridicule or shout abuse at players for making mistakes or for losing a game.
- Set realistic goals and targets for the team and individual players.
- 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 their 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 charge 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 players are aware of training start and finishing times.
- 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 (minors) are invited into adult groups/squads, it is required to seek agreement from their parents and mentors. **Mentors should follow the rules set out in the section on Adult Player Care and Selection in this regard. Boundaries of behaviour in adult groups are** normally different from the boundaries that apply to junior, juvenile or minor 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. Mentors have a crucial leadership role to play in sport. It is advisable for mentors not to involve players in their personal life.
- When approached to take on a new player, ensure that any previous coach-player relationship has been ended by the player/others in a professional manner.
- Mentors who become aware of a conflict between their obligation to their players and their obligation to the Club executive, 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.

General Rules for Team Management:

- Team management must keep up to date with advancements in training techniques and game strategies. It is an aim of the Club Adult Games and Executive Committee that all mentors attain at least a Foundation Course but aim for a Level 1 coaching standard.
- Team Management must ensure that training sessions are well organised and that time arrangements for training and games are well communicated.
- A member of the management team will be appointed as the contact point for Club Notes, match reports and PRO updates.
- It is the mentors' responsibility to ensure co-operation exists with regard to the training and game demands placed on dual players or under age players to avoid conflict or player burnout.

- It is the mentors' responsibility that juvenile players feel supported in their participation on player development squads and other personal development courses.
- It is the team management's responsibility to mind Club equipment and gear.
- One member of the management team should be appointed to ensure gear is kept in good repair and that balls, sliotars, bibs and jerseys are not unnecessarily lost or left behind at matches or training. It is imperative that jerseys are accounted for after matches and any losses or damage are reported to the Kit Committee.
- Ensure that all dressing rooms and the general areas that are occupied by your players and other Club personnel, prior to, during or immediately following the completion of any match or training session are kept clean and are not damaged in any way.
- Make adequate provision for First Aid Services.
- Do not encourage or permit players to play while injured.
- Be punctual and properly attired in Club gear.
- Ensure that all players are suitably and safely attired to play or train e.g., gum shields/helmets, no jewellery etc.

Adult Player Care and Selection

The Club philosophy is to encourage participation of all players at the highest level they are capable. It is expected that all mentors and players would fully support this philosophy. However, it must be recognised that players may have different expectations and commitment levels. The Club will endeavour to provide a level of activity to meet the needs of all its members and respect each and every player/mentor in whatever decision they make.

Naomh Bríd GAC is aware of player burn out and the need to protect players from themselves in some instances. The following set of rules attempts to put in place the necessary guidelines that will ensure players have the best opportunity to represent the Club at their highest level and be available to give their best when called upon.

- Changes to any of the rules will require the approval of the Games Coordinator and his/her decision will be subject to Club Executive Committee for final approval.
- Breaches of the following rules will result in players or mentors being brought before the Clubs Disciplinary Committee. Sanctions may be imposed on any player or mentor who is found to have broken these rules.
- For the purposes of clarity in following sections, the day after/before/prior or two days after/before/prior etc refers to the actual full day(s). Thus, the 3 days before a game that is fixed for a Sunday for example, includes Thursday and so means the period from and including Thursday until the game is played on Sunday.

Challenge Games/Rearranged Games:

The following rules shall apply to Challenge matches.

- All Challenge games within Antrim and games rearranged by mentors must be notified to the Adult Games Officer and Secretary at least three days ahead for approval prior to confirmation of fixture and so that the fixture can be notified to the Co. Board for insurance purposes. The notice period is a minimum of five days for Challenge matches outside Antrim.
- No dual players should be asked to play Challenge Games in the 3 days prior to League or Cup Games.
- No dual player shall be asked or expected to play in a Challenge Game in the 7 days prior to a knock-out Championship, Round Robin Championship, Championship or League play-off game.
- No dual player should be expected to play in a Challenge game the day after playing in an official fixture. However, if a player expresses a keenness to play, his wish can be accommodated but mentors should be cognisant that the player could be tired and not able to last the full match.
- As with normal fixtures, postponed or back matches which are scheduled by Antrim County Board as part of their revised fixture scheduling, will take priority over Challenge matches.

Dual Players:

Naomh Bríd GAC promotes football, ladies football, hurling and camogie on an equal basis. It is important the Club operates as one unit where the aims and objectives of each code, team, and all players and families are aligned and mutually respected. It is Club policy to develop all codes to their full potential and dual players should be encouraged in every way possible. The Club is committed to providing an environment which will allow players to develop and perform to the best of their ability in their chosen code or codes. The Club motto of Mol an Óige encapsulates the child-centred and player-centred ethos necessary to ensure that our young people and players have opportunities to compete at the highest level in each code. Fundamental to this objective is communication between coaches/mentors to ensure the effective management of our dual players and the avoidance of any potential conflicts.

The following guidelines must be applied to ensure dual players are fully accommodated in developing their skills in both codes and conflict situations are avoided:

- i. Team managers/lead coaches from the respective teams in each code in every age group are expected to liaise with each other throughout the year to support the participation and development of dual players.
- ii. Dual players should be facilitated to attend training sessions at each code as appropriate, with agreement reached before the start of each season as to when football/ladies football and hurling/camogie training will take place to ensure there is no clash/overlap in planned sessions for dual players. Where designated days are decided/set for training and matches for each code, no activity for the other code will be arranged, save in certain circumstances set out below and agreed between team managers/lead coaches.

- iii. It is the team manager's/lead coach's responsibility to ensure through ongoing respectful communication and dialogue that an agreed arrangement for training/matches is reached and communicated in a clear manner to the respective players and parents.
- iv. In cases where consensus cannot be achieved between team managers/lead coaches they must refer the matter to the respective Club committee officers (juvenile football and hurling officers) to discuss and arrive at a reasonable solution. If, in the unlikely event a dispute remains, the matter will be referred to the Club committee who will make a final decision as appropriate.
- v. Under no circumstance should a player be placed in a position of conflict between teams/codes. No player should be made choose a code by any coach/mentor. Cooperation between team managers/lead coaches will ensure the players are not put in the unfair position of having to choose between training sessions/matches or in any way feel under pressure.
- vi. League and championship matches take precedence over training and participation in a league or championship match in one code must not prejudice selection and participation in future games in the other code.
- vii. Training sessions in one code should be arranged so that they do not clash with league or championship matches in the other code. Challenge matches and participation in blitz tournaments should be arranged so that they do not occur on the designated day or at the same time as a training session in the other code without consultation and prior agreement with the team manager/lead coach of that code.
- viii. It is Naomh Bríd GAC policy to encourage participation in County squads and development squads. When a player is participating in a County squad or Development squad activity, they should advise the team manager/lead coach of the County squad schedule as soon as that schedule is available. Team managers/lead coaches should facilitate the player's attendance at County sessions and liaise with the player/player's parent, where appropriate, to ensure the player can attend Club training/County training as appropriate for their development and full participation in the Club squad.
- ix. Attendance at a County squad or Development squad in one code must not prejudice selection and participation in future Club games in the other code.
- x. Where the progress of a team in one code has ended and the fielding of a competitive team is not an issue, and where the team in the other code continues to compete in any league or championship fixture, dual players will be available to the code still competing and coaches/mentors shall facilitate reasonable requests for additional training sessions/challenge matches on days designated for the other code.
- xi. School, college and exam schedules should be taken into consideration when agreeing attendance levels at games and training across both codes, bearing in mind the additional commitment required for dual players.
- xii. Any concern or request to deviate from these guidelines should be raised with the Club juvenile football and hurling officers and will be discussed with the Club committee. The Club committee decision is final regarding the permission or otherwise to deviate from the guidelines.

- xiii. The welfare and wellbeing of our young people and players is paramount. All players have the right to participate in the code or codes of their choice. All team managers/lead coaches have the responsibility to ensure the young people they coach and mentor can develop as a person and as a player.
- xiv. The application of these guidelines should be based on a common sense, cooperative approach and mutual respect for fellow Gaels in the playing and promotion of our games.

Parents/Guardians/Supporters/Members

Parents/guardians/members/supporters have a responsibility and key role to promote Gaelic games and players enjoyment and development in the sport. You also must ensure that you conduct themselves in a manner that is acceptable and well behaved at all times when attending underage or adult games and competitions in the Club. It is important to note that young players participate in organised Club games for fun.

Parents/Guardians/Supporters/Members should:

- Support Naomh Bríd GAC across all age categories and codes in conveying the fair play message.
- Support Naomh Bríd mentors and their role within the Club
- Inform mentors of any change in your child's medical or dietary requirements prior to training sessions/games or other activities.
- Inform mentors if your child is not available to attend training or a match.
- Ensure that your child punctually attends training sessions/games/other activities.
- Ensure that you know of training/match finish times and collect your child on time.
- Provide your child with proper Club clothing and equipment. e.g. gum shields, helmets, shin-guards, club playing shorts, socks, warm clothes/wet gear (weather dependant).
- Ensure that the nutrition/hydration needs of your child are met.
- Avoid asking your child "did you score today/what did you win by/what did you lose by?" Ask them "did you enjoy yourself"
- Applaud good performance and efforts from our player's and from the opponents regardless of the result.
- Condemn the use of violence in any form, be it by fellow supporters, spectators, mentors, officials or players.
- Encourage players to participate according to the rules and the referee's decisions.
- Be aware of the following Club policies and familiarise yourself with them: Anti-Bullying policy, Dual Player, Overnight stays and Social Media.
- Be aware of the Club Children's Officer.
- Ensure that their children are appropriately supervised while attending Club sporting and non-sporting activities. It is the parents' responsibility to judge whether it is safe and appropriate to leave their child unaccompanied at training or games, when a child needs to go to the toilet. All

parents/guardians of Club members under the age of 8 years should remain at the venue in a supporting capacity.

- Ensure Club members aged 8 years and under have adequate supervision levels. If a player needs to use the toilet Club policy will allow two players to go together, this age follows NSPCC guidelines. Any parent/guardian that has a grievance with this policy needs to remain at the facility during the training session or game. Alternatively, arrange by agreement, with a relative or friend to ensure responsibility (this constitutes a private agreement outside of the responsibility of the Club).
- Parents/Guardians of Fun Sunday and juvenile players are strongly encouraged to complete a safeguarding course and to be vetted through access NI, as they are involved in many Club activities that directly involved children. These non-coaching roles are parents who regularly drive players to training/games, help out during Club Day (Lá na gClubanna), Féile, blitzes, trips away, hosting events and cultural activities etc.
- Demonstrate appropriate social behaviour by not using foul language or harassing participants, mentors or officials.
- Assist (where possible) in team activities, such as administratively, writing up reports, fundraising and remaining at the sideline especially for younger players.
- Have a responsibility to report to team mentors if a child was medically diagnosed with concussion (while playing other sports or involved in Club activities). Medical certification should be provided before the players return to showcase the child is fit to play.

Parents/Guardians should promote the procedures of good practice by:

- Showing appreciation to volunteers, Mentors and Club Officers.
- Attending training and games, on a regular basis.
- Become members of Naomh Bríd GAC Club.
- Where feasible, take an interest in the running of the Club and support club fundraisers.
- Assist in organising of Club activities and events as requested.
- Show respect to our Clubs opponents.
- Respect the decisions of all officials.
- Uphold the principles of Fair Play and Respect for all.
- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person and treat each one equally regardless of age, gender, ability, ethnic origin, cultural background or religion.
- Be aware that all Club activities, particularly games related, are undertaken by volunteers.
- Considering bringing their concerns to the attention of the respective team mentors, before elevating such concerns to a complaint via this Policy

Parents/Guardians have the right to:

- Know their child is safe and to make a complaint if you believe that your child's safety is in any way compromised.
- Be informed of problems/concerns relating to your child.

- Be informed if your child gets injured.
- Complain if you have concerns about the standard of coaching, if this is having an impact on their child.

Parents/Guardians should not:

- Ignore or dismiss complaints or concerns by your child, which relate to his/her involvement in Naomh Bríd
- Take safety for granted – thus drop children into the training session or match not near-by, and ensure mentors are present
- Never ridicule or scold a player for making a mistake during games or competitions.
- Treat the Club as a child-minding service.

Naomh Bríd is committed to the implementation of the Code of Behaviour and Child Safeguarding procedures as outlined. The Club intends to keep young players and members safe and from harm. The Club is also committed to promoting respect and positive behaviour across all players and members. Nonetheless, bad behaviour or in particular any child protection issues raised will be taken very seriously within the Club following the National policy as a guideline to dealing with the issue in a timely manner.

Player Welfare and Protection Policy/Procedure

Youth Officers/Designated Persons

Club Children’s Officer: Naomh Bríd GAC will have in place a **Child Protection Officer (CPO)** who will be child centred in focus and will have a primary aim to establish a child centred ethos in the Club. Naomh Bríd GAC CPO is Deirdre Webb:

deirdre.webb@hotmail.com

The CPO will be a member of or have access to the Executive Committee and will be introduced to the young players in an appropriate forum. The CPO is the link between the young players and the adults in the Club. The CPO does not have the responsibility to investigate or validate child protection allegations or concerns within our Club. A Designated Person will be appointed by the Club to deal with concerns such as allegations of abuse.

The Club Designated Liaison Person (DLP): The DLP will be responsible for dealing with any concerns about the protection of children in the Club. This person will be a senior member of the Club, such as the Chair person. The DLP does not have a counselling or therapeutic role or a responsibility for investigating or validating child protection concerns within the Club. The responsibility for validating/investigating child protection issues lies with the Statutory Authorities as outlined in Children’s First and Our Duty to Care publications. It is however possible that child protection concerns will be brought to the attention of our Children’s Officer(s). In this event it is essential that the correct procedure is followed.

Note: It is important to note that the investigation of suspected child abuse is the responsibility of the Statutory Authorities and should not be undertaken by the

Club's Children's Officers/Designated Persons or other Club Official or Executive member. The standard reporting procedures outlined in the GAA and Statutory Authorities Guidelines will be followed by the Club and adhered to by all our members.

Section 5: Communications and Social Media

This section of the Code of Behaviour (Underage) seeks to ensure that while we respect the rights of all members to use social media it is important to be mindful of the benefits and at times its negative impact can have on our members and particularly children and young people. The Club guidelines are closely aligned to GAA [Social Media](#) policy.

Social Media/Texting/Web Usage

It is Club policy that when passing on information regarding games, training or other activities for our under age members that it is done so via group texts and that these group texts should be sent to the parents of under-age players and **not** directly to the players themselves. Mentors and/or Club officials should obtain these relevant contact numbers when an under-age player is being registered. (Note; an under-age player is one who is under the age of 18 years). While the Club uses a number of communication platforms to send information such as website, email, news letter and Social Media, the GAA do not endorse the use of WhatsApp due to the lack of control of images and content that can be forwarded to others without the consent or control of the administrators.

- Note that for minor teams, mentors may communicate directly with minor players where the consent of parents/guardians to do so has been obtained.
- Mentors should not use any social networks (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, What's App etc.) to communicate with a young player. These forms of communication should not be used to conduct any Club business.
- Mentors under no circumstances should misuse texting or social media to identify, contact or groom children and be fully aware of any potential safeguarding concerns.
- If, for whatever reason, a parent/guardian insists or requests that the information is sent directly by the Club to their child and gives this request in writing, the Club may, if they so wish, accede to this request. However, if the Club accedes to the request the information can only be sent as part of a group text and cannot be communicated individually to the under-age member.
- The Club would regard the individual texting of an under-age members by their mentor as being inappropriate and unnecessary. The Club recommends that mentors do not keep the mobile numbers of young members on their personal phones.
- If a young player is a member of a development squad, the group text mechanism is the preferred method of communication with the young players, that includes parents in that group.
- If a young player plays up for adult teams, the same rules apply and parental/guardian permission must be sought if you wish to directly communicate with the young person as part of a group text scheme.

Photographic and Recorded Images

- Taking photographs of players, using the Club website to publicise GAC activities and the video recording of events, games and training sessions are normal activities. However, care must be taken in the dissemination, storage and use of such material. No one particular child should be easily identifiable, such as first and surname, along with a matching picture.
- The GAA Code of Best Practice in Young Sport does not seek in any way to eliminate or curtail these activities but proposes safeguards so as to ensure that the Club minimise the risk of threats that inappropriate use of photographs or the recording of images may pose, particularly for young people.
- Young players, parents and adult players are asked to give permission for the recording of photographic and recorded images as part of the player's registration/subscription process.
- Photography and the recording of images in a public place do not generally require explicit or prior consent. However, if at an event such as a game or training session is taking place a mentor, parent or player is entitled to request a person to refrain from taking photos if they feel that it may be inappropriate.
- All young people featured in recordings must be appropriately dressed.
- A photograph or recording of a young player should focus on the activity rather than the young person.
- Phones in changing rooms are never to be used to record or take photographs, under **no** circumstances.
- Parents and spectators taking photos and recordings should seek permission in advance from the Club and should also be prepared to identify themselves if requested and state the purpose for photos/videos.
- Group and team photos may be taken but it is not necessary to match the player's name with the position they are standing or seated in the photo i.e., the photo may appear with the player's name recorded but need not be in the order in which they appear in the photo.
- Parents should not upload photos with other children in the picture to their social media accounts.
- On certain occasions individual players may receive recognition and may be presented with an award. In the case of an underage player certain levels of sensitivity and common sense are required and a balance should be drawn between the publication of a photograph of a young player, who may or may not be named and the safety aspects of the publication.
- Any instances of inappropriate images should be reported to the Club PRO and/or the Children's Officer who will ensure that appropriate action is taken.
- Particular care needs to be taken about the content put up on social media networks and websites. It should be for information purposes only in relation to training and fixtures.

Section 6: Away fixtures, day trips and overnight stays

Naomh Bríd often travel to away fixtures, blitzes, competitions, training camps or Féile, that almost inevitably involve significant travel or an overnight stay. While these trips can offer many young people exciting and positive experiences, they also bring particular challenges for those charged with their care. They raise safeguarding issues that need to be addressed to ensure the safety of young people and the mentors/volunteers/parents that are charged with their care. When organising a Club trip always be mindful of ensuring that additional adults accompany the group in case of emergencies or unforeseen circumstances. When participating in an overnight stay a specific ratio of adults to children should be agreed in advance. This ratio, is dependent on the age category of the children/young people, whether it is a single or mixed gender group and whether the group may be participating in other sports outside of Gaelic games, such as outdoor activities or in water sports etc. When planning a trip, you should allow sufficient time to cover the various elements listed below, choosing the appropriate level of detail according to the particular event.

- Planning (where, when, how long, who is going, players, detailed programme of events/schedule, mentors/volunteers and cost)
- Communicating with parents and carers (transport, destination, venue, accommodation, costs, kit, all travelling parents to complete a safeguarding course, emergency contact details, code of behaviour and competition details)
- Preparing the athletes (code of behaviour policies, competition/event requirements, chores/roles, spending money and any issues that may arise such as bullying/homesick etc.)
- Assessing the risks (hazards, safety issues/measures, emergency details, supervision requirements/times)
- Transport (passenger safety, supervision requirements, journey time, distance, driver vetting, vehicle standards/safety, insurance cover, traffic conditions and weather)
- Emergency procedures (First Aid, local emergency numbers, insurance cover, specific medical information on players, access to and administration of medication)
- Insurance cover (transport, liability, accident, medical)
- Accommodation (location, payment schedule, meals, valuables, supervision, refreshments, room lists/sleeping arrangements, arrival/check out times, catering)
- General advice (ratio of mentors to players, male/female ratio, clear responsibilities, arrange group meetings, rules/curfews, money, confirm procedures with staff, briefings and de-briefings/review for future teams)

The above lists are not exhaustive. It is the organising committee who are responsible to ensure that all possible safeguarding requirements are put in place for any away or overnight trips. For a more detailed outline, please refer to the [NSPCC Safe Events policy](#).

Section 7: Volunteer Recruitment, Selection and Vetting

For volunteer recruitment and selection processes, please (see Appendix A). All Lead coaches should be aware of the process of recruiting new coaches/mentors. The following procedures will be used when recruiting mentors and volunteers:

- **Role Clarification:** The role of the volunteer will be clearly defined and role descriptions are available from the Club Secretary e.g. Mentor, Committee Member etc.
- **Role Assistance:** An official representative of the Club will meet each new volunteer to ensure that they are aware of their role(s) and to use the occasion to clarify any issues that may arise and identify any coaching support and up-skilling needs as appropriate. For new mentors, induction meetings will be held in the Club where a copy of the Club Codes, Policies and Procedures will be made available to every new volunteer.
- **Application/Subscription Form:** Volunteers should complete a club membership application form prior to formally commencing their role in the Club. This is particularly important for new Mentors as they must be registered in order to be covered by insurance. Signing an application form requires the volunteer to agree to abide by the Clubs Codes, Policies and Procedures, and to attend a initial meeting within 14 days. During the course of this Meeting, the requirements of the Association in respect of vetting will be explained, and arrangements made to assist the volunteer to fulfill his / her section of the vetting process. The volunteer will also be informed that the process must be repeated every three years.
- **Volunteer Support:** Continuous supports will be made available to all mentors and volunteers to enable them to full fill their roles successfully. The Club Executive and the Children's Officers will be available to support all roles in the Club.
- **Police Vetting:** All Club mentors/volunteers must complete a mandatory Vetting process prior to commencement of their role(s) as per [GAA guidelines](#). See Appendix A below to apply for Access NI.
- All Lead coaches need to ensure all new mentors complete this process within four weeks of commencement, and during that period Lead Coaches must supervise (physical presence) the activities of a new mentor.
- The Club Executive encourage all **non-coaching roles** where parents/volunteers help out with underage players such as parents who regularly drive players to games, help out during Club Day (Lá na gClubanna), Féile, blitzes, trips away, hosting events and cultural activities etc., to be vetted.
- All data gathered regarding Club registration, Cúl Camps, distribution lists, events, attendance and Access NI etc., follows GAA [GDPR](#) best practice.
- **Mentors** must also attend a Child Protection Course (within three months of commencing volunteering) and do the relevant GAC foundation Coaching Course.
- **Mentor Ratification:** All Mentors (new and existing) will be reviewed and ratified by the Club Executive on an annual basis.

Section 8: Anti-Bullying Policy

All Gaelic Codes aim to create a supportive environment where any form of bullying is unacceptable. There are three key documents in relation to Bullying to adhere to:

- Give Respect, Get Respect
- Code of Behaviour
- Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport

Bullying behaviour can be defined as repeated aggression. It can be verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against others. It includes behaviours such as teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting or extortion by one or more children against a victim.

Bullying contains seven key features:

1. An intention to be hurtful.
2. The intention is carried out.
3. The behaviour harms the target.
4. The bully overwhelms the target with his or her power.
5. There is often no justification for the action.
6. The behaviour repeats itself again and again.
7. The bully derives a sense of satisfaction from hurting the target.

Many young people are reluctant to tell adults that they are being bullied. Older youths or children are even more reluctant. A constant need for vigilance and encouragement will be underlined in the Club to report bullying.

Forms of Bullying:

- Direct bullying - where the behaviour is obvious and bystanders are aware of it e.g. physical or verbal.
- Indirect bullying - where the behaviour is more difficult to recognise e.g. intimidation or isolation.
- Verbal bullying - including slandering, ridiculing, slagging, abusive telephone calls, voice recordings, name calling etc.
- Physical bullying - including pushing, shoving, assaults, damage to person's property.
- Gesture bullying - includes non-verbal gestures/glances which convey threatening or frightening messages/intent.
- E-bullying/cyber bullying - using web pages, What's App, Facebook or any other forms of social media, emails or texts, to abuse, intimidate and attack others, either directly or indirectly.
- Relational bullying - behaviour which sets out to deliberately damage another person's friendship or feelings of inclusion in a friendship group e.g. exclusion, isolation etc.

- Extortion - the deliberate extortion of money or other items of property accompanied by threats.
- Homophobic bullying - bullying that is typically aimed at young people who are LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual or Transgender) or who are perceived to be LGBT. It will include name-calling, isolation and violence.
- Racial bullying - can be expressed physically, socially, or psychologically when one is labelled negatively as being different from others according to one's race.

Mobbing - This means that the target is being bullied by a group of perpetrators and not just one perpetrator. All types and forms of bullying are unacceptable. It is important to be aware, that bullying of a child may be carried out by other children (young and old) either individually or as part of a group or by an adult or adults. Bullying is a matter for the whole Club. This means that everyone in the Club have a part to play in countering bullying. It is the responsibility of the Club, whether through the Children's Officer(s), mentors or other Club Officers to deal with any instances of bullying.

"Children have the right to protection from all forms of violence (social, physical and mental). They must be kept safe from harm and they must be given proper care by those looking after them" (The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 19).

Responsibility within the Anti-Bullying Policy: It is the responsibility of all members of Naomh Bríd GAC to help develop a caring and supportive atmosphere where any form of bullying is unacceptable. Everybody must work together to stop bullying, the child, the parent, the mentor, the officials of the Club. Bullying can be distinguished from bossiness and boisterous play. A bossy child will boss whoever is around. Mostly, it is due to lack of self-control or skills of negotiation or compromise. Boisterous play can be dangerous, but it does not involve young people willfully setting out to hurt or victimise. Young people often grow out of this kind of behaviour as they grow older. What distinguishes bullying from bossiness or boisterousness is that the bully always picks on someone less powerful and more vulnerable. Persistent "slagging" which has the same devastating effects as bullying, shouldn't be ignored.

All bullies operate using furtiveness, threats and fear. Bullying therefore can 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 player might be a victim of bullying:

- Reluctance to come to a venue or take part in activities;
- Physical signs (unexplained bruises, scratches, or damage to belongings, physical pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching, etc.);
- Stress-caused illness – headaches and stomach aches which seem unexplained;

- Frequent loss of, or shortage of, money with vague explanations.
- Fearful behaviour (fear of walking to a meeting, going different routes, asking to be driven);
- Having few friends.
- Changes in behaviour (withdrawn, stammering, moody, irritable, upset, distressed).
- Not eating.
- Attempting suicide or hinting at suicide.
- Anxiety.

Bullying behaviour can be prevented by:

- Ensure that all Club members follow the Code of Behaviour, which promotes the rights and dignity of each member;
- Deal with any incidents as they arise;
- Use “no blame approach” 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;
- Reinforce that there is a “permission to tell” concept in the Club and that is it alright to tell;
- Encourage our young players to negotiate, co-operate and help others, particularly different or new people;
- Offer victim immediate support and put the “no blame approach” into operation;
- Never tell a young player to ignore bullying, they cannot ignore it, it hurts too much;
- Never encourage a young player 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.

Dealing with Bullying (Listen, Learn, Involve and Resolve)

To support the young person, your initial reaction is vital. When dealing with a case of bullying the following steps should be followed:

Step 1 – Interview the victim and actively listen: If you find that there has been an incident of bullying, first talk to the victim and find out who was involved and what the victim is now feeling. Try asking the following questions:

- Was it verbal, cyber or physical intimidation? (e.g., jokes, name calling, teasing, sarcasm, offensive language, offensive songs, or physical contact, hitting, spitting, shoving etc.).
- How it hurts 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 all involved. Arrange to meet all those involved. This should include 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 of the hurt caused in general terms with no reference to the victim.
- Play on the conscience of all – ask questions: 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 blame should not be discussed. Explain the feelings of loneliness, being feeling left out, rejected or laughed at. Try asking questions:

- Would they like it if it happened to them?
- If someone here in the group was bullied by someone else within the group, what could we do to ensure 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 lose 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 the responsibility over to the group and give a time frame within which something must be done.

Step 7 - Meet with 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 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 and intimidating behaviour will not be tolerated.

Naomh Bríd adopts a zero tolerance approach to any behaviour where it is regarded as a serious breach of the Code of Behaviour and shall be dealt with accordingly. The Club follows Our the [Code of Behaviour](#) for the GAA includes the Anti-Bullying Policy, which aims to adopt a whole organisational approach to addressing bullying and provide advice and support to players and members in the area of Safeguarding.

Section 9: Child Abuse

The Children (NI) Order 1995 uses the term 'significant harm' rather than 'child abuse'. This includes ill treatment, and the impairment of health or the impairment of development (physical, intellectual, emotional, social, and behavioural). It can take many forms, but the three main types are:

1. Physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, and theft)
2. Verbal (e.g. racist or sectarian remarks, threats, and name-calling)
3. Emotional (e.g. isolating an individual from the activities and social acceptance of his peer group)

Dealing with allegations or concerns of Child Abuse

The GAA, Ladies Gaelic Football Association, the Camogie Association, GAA Handball Ireland and the GAA Rounders all actively work in the promotion of our Games amongst young people and must be alert to the possibility that children with whom we are working may be suffering from abuse or neglect.

Reasonable Grounds for concern

The term 'Reasonable Grounds for Concern' is used whereby if an individual has such grounds for concern that a child may have been, is being, or is at risk of being abused or neglected they should inform the relevant statutory authorities. Similarly, if an individual had such concerns about an adult, they should report such matters to the relevant statutory authority.

It is not necessary for an individual to prove that abuse has occurred when they who to report such matters. It is the role of the statutory authority to carry out their enquires and assess each case on its own merits. The Associations Mandated Person or the Club Designated Liaison Person may assist an individual in making a report or passing on a concern or if they so wish.

Reasonable grounds for a child protection or welfare concern include:

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

The safety and well-being of a child must take priority over concerns about adults against whom an allegation may be made. The welfare of the child shall always be paramount.

Category Indicators

Abuse	Physical	Behavioural
Physical	Unexplained bruising in soft tissue areas Bites Burns and scalds	Becoming withdrawn or aggressive. Reluctance to change clothing
Emotional	Drop in performance Crying	Regressive behaviour. Excessive clinginess
Neglect	Weight loss Untreated fractures	Changes in attendance. Reluctance to go home
Sexual	Torn or bloodstained clothing Inappropriate sexual awareness behaviour or language	Distrustful of adults. Sudden drop in performance

The above is only a sample list and is not exhaustive

The above table is taken from Sport NI

Confidentially

It is important that all parties dealing with concerns of allegations of abuse have a clear understanding as to what constitutes 'confidentiality' and what is permissible in the exchange of information.

- All information regarding concern or assessment of child abuse or neglect should be shared on 'a need to know' basis in the interests of the child
- No undertakings regarding secrecy can be given. Those working with a child and family should make this clear to all parties involved, although they can be assured that all information will be handled in a confidential manner taking full account of legal requirements.
- The provision of information to the statutory agencies for the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality or data protection.
- It must be clearly understood that information gathered for one purpose must not be used for another without consulting the person who provided that information.
- All persons involved in a child protection and welfare process (the child, his/her parents/guardians, the alleged offender, his/her family, coaches) should be afforded appropriate, fairness, support and confidentiality at all stages of the procedure.
- Information should be stored in a secure place, with limited access internally only by the relevant Designated Persons or Association Mandated Person
- Breaches of confidentiality shall be deemed a serious matter and dealt with accordingly within the GAA, Ladies Gaelic Football Association, the Camogie Association, GAA Handball Ireland and GAA Rounders.

Responding to Child Abuse

If a young person 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 child to talk about the problem, rather than interviewing the child about details of what happened
- Stay calm and not show any extreme reaction to what the child is saying
- Listen compassionately, and take what the child is saying seriously

- Understand that the child has decided to tell something very important and has taken a risk to do so. The experience of telling should be as positive as possible so that the child may be less concerned if talking to those involved in any further investigation
- Be honest with the child and tell them that it is not possible to keep information a secret
- Make no judgmental statements about the person against whom the allegation is made
- Not question the child unless the nature of what s/he 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 child or compromise any further investigation
- Give the child some indication of what would happen next, such as informing parents/guardians or Health and Social Care Trusts (HSCT). It should be kept in mind that the child may have been threatened and may feel vulnerable at this stage
- Carefully record the details
- Pass on this information to the Designated Safeguarding Children's Officer
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you

Never:

- Question unless for clarification
- Make promises you cannot keep
- Rush into actions that may be inappropriate
- Make/pass a judgment on alleged abuser
- Take sole responsibility; you consult the Designated Safeguarding Children's Officer so you can begin to protect the child and gain support for yourself

Recording:

Record keeping is of critical importance. Recording should avoid:

- Use of judgmental language
- Giving your personal opinion

Recording should be:

- Factual, accurate and legible
- Written in best interests of the child
- Recorded using the child's exact words, where possible

Any report of abuse needs to be immediately brought to the attention of the Club Child Protection Officer, Deirdre Webb: deirdre.webb@hotmail.com

Section 10: Safeguarding Protection Policy and Discipline Complaint Procedure

The Club demands the highest standards of behaviour from all players/members. It is the Club's policy to encourage, acknowledge, and reward high standards of behaviour, wherever possible. However, it is also the Club's policy not to tolerate unacceptable behaviour from any player towards fellow players, Mentors, referees, opponents, parents, any other Club members or opposing Clubs. This procedure will apply to any situation in which a member is representing the Club, i.e., training, travelling to and from games, fun days, games (home and away) or Club events.

Naomh Bríd closely aligns its behaviour policy with the Our Games – Our Code, the joint Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport that outlines the minimum levels of behaviour agreed by the GAA, LGFA and the Camogie Association for those involved in underage games and activities. The Code applies equally to underage players, coaches, to parents and guardians, to our supporters, referees and Club officials. While the promotion of the Code at Club level may be seen as a core responsibility of the Club Children's Officer, ultimately it is everybody's responsibility to ensure that the Code is fully implemented and at all level of our Association.

Breaches of the Code will unfortunately occur from time to time, some minor and some of major consequences. This may happen as a result of carelessness, poor practice, lack of understanding or there may in some instances be deliberate or indeed calculated breaches of the Code. When an alleged breach of the Code has been reported it should be dealt with in a fair and impartial manner with the presumption of innocence maintained until otherwise proven.

Minor instances of poor practice may be dealt with at Club or County level by the Children's Officer in an informal manner and by agreement. This could necessitate meeting with the person who may be responsible for the poor practice or the minor breach of the Code and resolving the issue amicably and by agreement. All such outcomes should be noted by the Children's Officer. However, breaches of the Code of a more serious nature may have to be dealt with in a more formal manner.

Dealing with Alleged Breaches of the Code of Behaviour and Discipline

In the event that a player's behaviour is deemed unacceptable by a mentor the following disciplinary procedure should be applied. All minor behaviour issues will firstly be resolved and dealt with by players and mentors as near in time as possible to the incident that gave rise to the grievance. The vast majority of complaints are best resolved informally and at the point when it occurred.

If deemed necessary there is a more serious discipline or safeguarding issue a complaint in writing needs to be sent to the Club Secretary as soon as possible within seven days of the occurrence:

secretary.stbrigidsbelfast.antrim@gaa.ie

There are a number of stages in the Complaints Procedure that should be followed:

- Written Complaint received by the Club Secretary within seven working days
- Appointment of an Investigation Committee
- Three stages of the Complaint Process
- Sanctions
- Appeal Procedure

Once a complaint has been received by the Club Secretary the following process will take place.

The Complaint

There are two directions a complaint can take. If the complaint involves a young player then the Child Protection Officer carries out the investigation assisted if deemed appropriate by the Club, by a designated investigatory panel.

If the complaint involves players/members/mentors over the age of 18 years than the child protection officer is not involved in the complaint procedure. The 'Disciplinary and Safe-Guarding' process within Naomh Bríd GAC is managed by the 'Discipline and Safe-Guarding Committee'. Throughout the process, the Discipline and Safe-Guarding Committee will:

- i. manage the process, and the communications associated with the process to all parties associated with the complaint, and to the membership of the Club Management Committee;
- ii. manage the privacy of the parties, and will be solely responsible for determining if or when the parties to any complaint are identified in reports, and documentation associated with any complaint;
- iii. be responsible for reporting to the Club Management Committee, on a monthly basis, in relation to each complaint.

All reports to the Club Management Committee regarding complaints will detail:

- a The existence of a complaint,
- b The nature of the complaint,
- c Where deemed appropriate, the identity of the parties to the report,
- d Where necessary, the existence of statutory reporting requirements,
- e The stage of the investigatory process,
- f A timetable for completion of the process.

The Discipline and Safe-Guarding Process

The 'Disciplinary and Safe-Guarding' policy, as it is named, is a single policy which addresses the safety and security of all members, where breaches of discipline are identified. The 'Disciplinary and Safe-Guarding Committee' (DSG) is a group of three

individuals appointed on an annual basis by the Club Management Committee, the composition of which will accord with the following requirements:

- i. will be composed of members of the Club
- ii. will be members of the Club Management Committee
- iii. will include a minimum of one woman
- iv. will include a minimum of one member with specific professional experience in the field of child protection / safeguarding.

The Child Protection Officer of the Club acts independently of the DSG, and the Club Management Committee, in compliance with National Guidelines, and good practice. The process which underpins the 'Disciplinary and Safe-Guarding' policy is recorded in 'flow-chart' format, in Appendix D. The DSG describes three inter-related stages:

Stage 1

The process by which a complaint crystallises and the initial determination by the 'Disciplinary and Safe-Guarding' of the nature of the complaint. In the first instance, and in all cases, any complaint made by any person, in relation to the behaviour of any member, or person associated with the Club must be made to the Club Secretary. A complaint must be made in writing. Should the complaint be related to matters of discipline, or safe-guarding, the complaint will be passed from the Club Secretary to the DSG, who also act as the 'Determining Committee' for the purposes of child safe-guarding within the Club.

The initial assessment by the DSG is intended to ensure that appropriate responses are formulated for differing types of complaints. In all cases where a person of less than eighteen years is involved in, or, related to, the complaint, the Child Protection Officer (CPO) will be consulted, and asked to undertake a review of the then known facts, in order to establish if the complaint does, or, may, constitute a matter of safe-guarding.

Where identified as a matter of safeguarding, the CPO, if required so to do, will act in accordance with contemporary statutory requirements, and, will report accordingly to the DSG. At all times, the CPO will, act independently of the Committee, and the Club, in regard of safe-guarding matters, where so directed by statute, or by safe-guarding guidance from the Association.

Option 1 (Refer to Flowchart, Appendix D)

The process by which a complaint of any nature, about, or involving, an individual of less than eighteen years is considered as a 'possible safe-guarding' issue. Should the CPO identify a possible safe-guarding issue, the CPO will carry out an investigation based on the known facts, supplemented by additional enquiries deemed appropriate by the CPO, before reporting the outcome of the investigations to the DSG.

The DSG acts on behalf of the Club Management Committee when considering the outcome of the investigations, and having considered the investigatory report, determines the appropriate course of action, based on the report provided by the CPO. Again, at all times, the CPO will, act independently of the DSG, and the Club Management Committee, in regard of safe-guarding matters where so directed by statute, or by safe-guarding guidance from the Association.

Option 2 (Refer to Flowchart, Appendix D)

The process by which an identifiable disciplinary issue is addressed, which disciplinary issue may arise as a result of the behaviour of an individual associated with the Club, of any age. Irrespective of age, should a disciplinary issue be identified, being behaviour within or outside the Club environment, by any person subject to this policy, which is deemed inappropriate, and in contravention of this policy, the process described as Stage 2 will commence, and the policy will apply

Option 3 (Refer to Flowchart, Appendix D)

The process by which an identifiable disciplinary issue is addressed, which disciplinary issue may arise as a result of the behaviour of an individual associated with the Club, of any age. Should DSG establish that there has not been a breach of Rule or Policy, no further action will be taken.

Investigatory Process

When deemed by the DSG to be an issue of discipline, the DSG will appoint a three-person 'Disciplinary Hearings Committee' which, will be drawn from the 'hearings panel'; see below.

The Hearings Panel

The 'Hearings Panel' is a **group of nine individuals**, appointed every three years by the 'Disciplinary and Safe-Guarding Committee', the composition of which will accord with the following requirements will:

- i. be comprised of members of the Club, or those with direct associations with the Club;
- ii. include a number of women;
- iii. comprise of a maximum of three members of the legal profession;
- iv. comprise of a maximum of three members with specific professional experience in the field of child protection / safe-guarding;
- v. not include active coaches and mentors of players active within the Club.
- vi. Not include any members of the Club Management Committee

The members will, where possible be recruited, on foot of expressions of interest, sought by advertisement to the local environs of the Club, and the wider Association. In circumstances where an actual or perceived 'conflict of interest' is identified by the inclusion of any of the members of the 'Hearings Panel', the DSG, at their sole discretion, will nominate an alternative member.

Investigatory Process

When appointed, the Disciplinary Hearings Committee will be provided with a description of the complaint, and 'terms of reference' for the investigation, by the DSG. The Disciplinary Hearings Committee will act in compliance with the requirements of Rule 7.3 of the Official Guide of the Association.

The Disciplinary Hearings Committee will undertake the investigation of the complaint, and will be responsible for preparing a report, with recommendations, following completion of the investigations.

Ratification

The report and recommendations of the 'Disciplinary Hearings Committee' will comprise a report, with reasoned recommendations, in relation to the issues investigated and the 'application of rule', alongside a recommended sanction based on the sanctions described in the policy of the Club, or, if deemed appropriate by the 'Disciplinary Hearings Committee', the Official Guide of the Association (Section 7.2).

The report and recommendations of the 'Disciplinary Hearings Committee' will at all times be ratified by the DSG, except in cases of demonstrable manifest unfairness. The DSG, is the 'decision maker' for the purposes of all disciplinary matters within Naomh Bríd CLG. Upon receipt of the report and recommendations and subject only to consideration of manifest unfairness, DSG will communicate the result of the investigation, and, where appropriate, the sanction, to both parties.

Appeal Against Sanction

In circumstances where a sanction is not accepted, an appeal may be submitted to the 'Appeal Committee'. An appeal hearing will be arranged and convened by the DSG within 7-days from the date of the appeal, and the 'Appeal Committee' will deliver a decision in regard of the appeal, within 3-days of the final hearing. An appeal in relation to a disciplinary or a safe-guarding matter exists only within the Club structure, and no appeal may be made to anybody or group outside the Club in relation to a disciplinary or safe-guarding matter.

Publication of Sanctions

7-calendar days after the date of the award of the sanction, where no appeal is submitted against a sanction, the DSG will communicate the decision, and sanction, if appropriate, to the next meeting of the Club Management Committee.

Sanctions for infractions are determined by the Club and closely aligned with the Association's Official Guide. In circumstances where an appeal is submitted against a sanction, the DSG will communicate the decision of the 'Appeal Committee' and the resulting sanction, if appropriate, to the next meeting of the Club Management Committee. In the case of members less than eighteen years, the complainant will not be identified, but the complaint, and sanction imposed may be published, at the discretion of the Club Management Committee acting under advice from the DSG.

Naomh Bríd ‘Disciplinary Hearings Committee’

The members of the ‘Disciplinary Hearings Committee’ (DHC) are directly appointed by the ‘Disciplinary and Safe-Guarding Committee’ (DSGC).

The Rules of Evidence for Consideration by the ‘Disciplinary Hearings Committee’ Evidence which may be produced to DHC references, and makes use of the content of Rule 7.3(a) of the Official Guide, and the relevant sections are repeated below for clarity. In general, evidence at a Hearing shall be oral, except that:

The Defending Party may call witnesses to give evidence on its behalf, and it is its own responsibility to secure the attendance of such witnesses.

1. Agreed matters of fact may be stated in writing;
2. The Hearings Committee shall attach to documentary evidence (including video evidence) such level of reliability as befits it in the circumstances of the Hearing;
3. Video evidence introduced by any party shall be admissible provided that;
 - a copy has been furnished to all other parties within a reasonable period prior to the Hearing, and
 - the Hearings Committee is satisfied that the video evidence is compliant with the applicable Rules of the Association at the time of the Hearing.
4. Age may be proved by the Club Secretary;
5. Where the Defending Party is in the exclusive or best position to prove or disprove a disputed allegation (e.g. for a Club to prove the identity of one of its members) and does not take the opportunity to give evidence on the matter, the Hearings Committee may draw adverse inference from that failure;
6. A Referee’s Report where forming an element of the complaint, shall be presumed to be correct in all factual matters.
7. No evidence shall be given or submissions made in the absence of any party to the Disciplinary Action unless they fail to attend at the Hearing without reasonable explanation. If evidence is so given through inadvertence, it shall be repeated in the presence of all parties, so that no prejudice is caused to the party previously absent.
8. Any Member found by the Hearings Committee to have given deliberately false evidence, whether orally or in writing, or to have deliberately misled any Hearing, shall be suspended for a minimum of 48 weeks, without a further Hearing.
9. Evidence or information shall not be accepted or considered unless applicable to a period not longer than 6 weeks prior to the date of the Hearing.

Decisions by ‘Disciplinary Hearings Committee’

The DSG is the decision maker in relation to ‘discipline’ and ‘related matters’ which are the subject of any reference in accordance with the ‘Disciplinary and Safe-Guarding’ policy. The final power to determine all matters of fact and all sources of evidence submitted resides with the Disciplinary Hearings Committee in a context, where, any alleged “infraction”, is to be treated as proved if, in the opinion of the

Disciplinary Hearings Committee the alleged infraction is ‘more likely to have occurred’ than not to have occurred”. The Policy conveys to the ‘Disciplinary Hearings Committee’ the authority to impose such penalties as it deems fit, subject only to the application of the minimum sanctions described in the schedule of infractions.

The Decision

The Chairperson of the Disciplinary Hearings Committee will communicate the recommendations of Disciplinary Hearings Committee to the DSG, in the form of a written report, with, ‘reasoned’ recommendations. The DSG will be responsible for communicating the decision, and sanction, if appropriate, to the Complainant and Defending Party. The DSG Committee will be responsible for communicating the decision, and sanction, if appropriate, to the Club Management Committee.

The Hearing

DSG will be represented at the Hearing in an ‘observer’ status in order to offer guidance and facilitate the undertaking of the hearing, but will withdraw from the considerations / discussions of the Hearings Committee. The complainant and/or respondent will be invited to attend separately, and independently in accordance with arrangements made by the DSG.

Should the respondent to the complaint decline to attend when invited, the Hearing will proceed, and will consider only that information provided by the respondent prior to the Hearing. There will be an introduction by each member of ‘Disciplinary Hearings Committee’ panel, with each member identifying the status of his or her Club membership. A Hearing convened by the ‘Disciplinary Hearings Committee’, will follow the agenda described below:

- i. The attending complainant and/or defendant will make similar introductions, and will identify any witnesses which they intend to bring before the Disciplinary Hearings Committee’;
- ii. The attending members of the Defending Party’s club, will make introductions;
- iii. The responding party will be asked to confirm that it has no concerns about the constitution of the membership of the panel, in terms of perceived conflicts of interest, or possible bias;
- iv. The responding Party’s continued attendance at the hearing will be deemed to signify its agreement that perceived conflicts of interest, or possible bias do not exist;
- v. The complainant, or, alternatively an individual appointed by the Club, representing the complaint or complainant, be this an individual or the Club, will be invited to present the complaint;
- vi. The responding Party will be invited to question the content of the evidence presented by the complainant;
- vii. The responding party will be invited to present its case;

- viii. The complainant, will be invited to question the content of the evidence presented by the Defending Party;
- ix. The complainant will be afforded the opportunity to summarise its submission to the Hearing;
- x. The responding party will be afforded the opportunity to summarise its submission to the Hearing;
- xi. Members of the DHC panel will be permitted to examine the evidence presented by both parties;
- xii. The Chairperson of the DHC panel will close the hearing, and the parties will depart.

The Appeal

Either the Complainant or the Respondent to a Complaint may 'appeal' the Decision of the Disciplinary and Safe-Guarding Committee but, an appeal shall be limited to the matters raised in the original complaint and response, ie. the Appeal Hearing will not permit a re-hearing of the events surrounding the original infraction, and shall be upheld only where:

- I. There has been a clear infringement or misapplication of Rule by the Disciplinary and Safe-Guarding Committee', and,
- II. The right of the appealing party to a fair hearing, which right has been compromised to such an extent that a clear injustice has occurred.

The 'Appeal Committee' comprises the following:

- I. The Chair of the Club,
- II. The Vice-Chair of the Club
- III. One other Club Officer

In circumstances where an actual or perceived 'conflict of interest' is identified with the inclusion of any of the members of the 'appeals committee', the Chair may nominate an alternative member, who will be a member of the Club Management Committee.

Further Appeal

The right of appeal is confined to the structures within the Club, and no member has a right to appeal to the Association, other than where specific provision is made within the Official Guide of the Association.

Appendix A

Police Vetting and Access NI

The Club aligns closely with the all Gaelic codes in [vetting](#) all mentors. In order to comply with legislation in the 6 Counties and the rules of the Association, all persons working with children or young people in a voluntary or paid capacity, must be vetted prior to commencing their role.

Ulster GAA procedures for Access NI

- 1) Applicant fills out the Online Application Form
- 2) A Club Officer signs ID Document Copies and the Ulster GAA [Access NI cover form](#) and forwards same to Ulster GAA
- 3) Ulster GAA approve the form and the ID and send to Access NI
- 4) Access NI Process the form and issue the Disclosure Certificate directly to the applicant
- 5) Ulster GAA write to the applicant to confirm their vetting acceptance.

The procedure for Access NI is as follows:

Ulster GAA have an [e-application process for Access NI](#). Before applying on-line you will need a passport, driving licence and NINO (National Insurance Number). You will not be able to complete the application on-line without these three documents.

1. Go to the [Access NI website](#) for an **enhanced check** through a **registered body**.
2. You will be prompted to enter the Club 6 digit PIN, which is **833021**.
3. At the end of the process you will get a **10-digit case reference number**, please save the number.

To complete the application you need to get your three forms of ID checked and signed by a Club executive committee member. For example: a passport, driving licence and a bank statement/utility bill with your address (within three months - full list on the NIDirect website or the Ulster cover form). **Please remove all personal financial figures in statements, as it is not relevant to the process. All data gathered will comply with GAA [GDPR](#) regulations.**

The final step is to return your signed and completed Ulster cover form (see link below or ask a Club executive member for a PDF). that matches up with the other 3 ID documents and 10 digit case reference number to the Club Nominated Officer or the person who asked you to complete the Access NI application.

Failure to submit a completed Ulster GAA Access NI cover form and the three identity documents will result in a delay in your application form being processed as these are required by Ulster Council GAA to sign off with the matching online Access NI application.

Appendix B

Glossary of Terms

Abuse: Includes physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, sexual abuse and bullying as outlined in the Guidance for Dealing with Allegations and Concerns of Abuse.

Child Safeguarding Statement: This is the statement that each Club and County Board is obliged to put on display, in a prominent position, having previously completed a Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment document.

Child: Child means a person under the age of 18 years other than a person who is or has been married.

Club: The term 'Club' refers to Naomh Bríd C.L.C.G., Belfast, a club registered with the Gaelic Athletic Association, and active in all areas of gaelic sports and culture.

Club Children's Officer (CPO): A person/persons appointed to ensure that there is recognition and development of a child/youth centered ethos within the Club. They will act as the link between the young members and adults. The CPO is the person designated as the child protection officer by the Club Management Committee.

Club Designated Person: A person/persons whose prime responsibility is reporting allegations or suspicions of child abuse to the Statutory Authorities. This person will also be responsible for dealing with any concerns about the protection of young members and will report to the relevant committee within the GAA.

Club Management Committee: A group elected by the membership of the Club, at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Club.

Club Officer: Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer and Committee members who are appointed to oversee Club activities and developments.

Coach/Manager/Mentor: Within the Code this refers to a coach, manager, trainer, mentor or any other title (if any) given to a person who assists in a role of responsibility with an underage teams or individuals or as appropriate with an individual on a team which may play at adult level.

Code of Behaviour (Underage): outlines the standards of practice required of those participating in underage games and activities, regardless of what role they may fulfil and in doing so, brings together the collective good practice experiences of our Associations while also recognising legislative, organisational and statutory guidance that governs our work with young people and children.

Code of Behaviour (Underage) Hearings Committees: Each Club, County Committee and the National Child Safeguarding Committee shall appoint a Code of Behaviour (Underage) Hearings Committee (Code Hearings Committee) consisting of three individuals to hear allegations of breaches of the Code of Behaviour (Underage) in accordance with the provisions of the Code.

Designated Liaison Persons (DLP): The DLP at Club, County or National level is the person who shall assist members who wish to have allegations or concerns of abuse

processed internally and with the statutory authorities in accordance with our Guidance on Dealing with Allegations or Concerns of Abuse.

Disciplinary and Safe-Guarding Committee: A group of three individuals appointed on an annual basis by the Club Management Committee.

Gaelic Athletic Association Gaelic (GAA): The GAA is Ireland's largest sporting organisation. It is celebrated as one of the great amateur sporting associations in the world. It is part of the Irish consciousness and plays an influential role in Irish society that extends far beyond the basic aim of promoting Gaelic games.

Mentor: A Mentor is a person appointed by the Club to oversee the effective management of a team. A Mentor (coach) undertakes this role often with the help of assistant Mentors. This role is carried out in line with GAA and Naomh Bríd's policy of fair play, respect, participation, enjoyment and skills development. All Mentors have a role to play in ensuring that procedures as described in this document are agreed, followed and reviewed on a regular basis.

Official: An Official is an individual charged with the responsibility of ensuring that the rules of an activity are adhered to in a formal way. This category includes referees, umpires, lines men, etc.

Parents/Guardians: The terms Parents/Guardians are used in this Code to indicate the legal parents and/ or guardians of our underage players.

Statutory Authorities: The government bodies who are responsible the welfare and protection of children and young people and who have a legal authority for the investigation and/or validation of suspected child abuse.

Vetting: Refers to the legal and Association requirements that all persons who wish to work with children in our Associations must undertake vetting or police background checks prior to commencing any such role.

Youth/Young Players/Children/Young People: For the purpose of these codes, policies and procedures youths, young players, children, and young people are recognised as persons under 18 years of age. Legislation in certain jurisdictions stipulates that a child is a person under 18 years who is not or has not been married.

Appendix C

Useful Information

Useful Information Categories/Definitions of Child Abuse

Abuse can take place in various different ways; neglect, emotional, physical, sexual or bullying. This section defines the different categories of abuse and provides some practical examples of how they may arise in the GAC context.

Neglect is normally defined in terms of an 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 is the persistent failure to meet a youth's basic physical/psychological needs that can lead to significant harm. Some examples of neglect would include; consistent lack of team supervision, exposing players to undue heat (and the lack of necessary re-hydration fluids), cold, injury and exposure to risk or injury during games (lack of protective gear).

Emotional abuse is persistent emotional ill treatment, normally found in the relationship between a caregiver and a youth rather than in a specific event or pattern of events. It occurs when a youth's need for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met. It is rarely manifested in terms of physical symptoms. Examples would include; persistent criticism and negative comments by mentors or parents of young players, seeking unrealistic expectations of a young player beyond their capabilities or age level, promoting a win only ethic in the coaching and playing, downplaying a player's attempts at skill improvement and the use of un-realistic or harsh disciplinary measures.

Physical abuse is the deliberate injury to a youth or any form of non-accidental injury that causes significant harm to a youth. Possible examples of physical abuse would include; over playing/training, excessive training regimes which disregard a player's physical capacity/development, imposing performance enhancing substances or dietary programmes, shaking or physically hitting a player.

Sexual abuse occurs when a youth is used by another person for their own gratification or sexual arousal or for that of others. Examples of sexual abuse would include; intentional touching a player at training sessions or games in an inappropriate manner, exploitation of a young player for sexual gratification, creating/forwarding or exchanging sexually explicit images/messages in any e-communication format or sexual relationships with a young person or a child.

Bullying has been covered in Section 5 under the Anti Bullying procedure. Some common scenarios that occur would include; bullying carried out by young players or by adults against other young players or against adults, Mentors pursuing a "win at all costs" ethos with players, a player being intimidated by another player/players, bullying that may have commenced outside of the Club but continue on the playing fields or in dressing rooms, teasing/taunting or physical bullying.

Appendix D

Disciplinary and Code of Behaviour Flow Charts