



South Galway Athletics Club wishes to provide the best possible environment for all young people involved in the sport. Young people deserve to be given enjoyable, safe sporting opportunities, free of abuse of any kind. These participants have rights, which must be respected, and responsibilities that they must accept. Young people should be encouraged to realise that they have responsibilities to treat other participants and sports leaders with fairness and respect.

This document outlines Guidelines and Codes of practices relating to people involved with juvenile and junior members of South Galway Athletic Club. It also sets out the roles and responsibilities of coaches, age group coordinators, team leaders, young athletes and their parents. The aim of which is to ensure a child centred approach to athletes and the provision of an environment where young athletes enjoy and participate freely in the various events, competitions and training sessions. South Galway Athletic Club is run on a voluntary basis and people freely give their time to coach, coordinate and support young athletes. As there are limited numbers of people willing or available to do this the club may from time to time depend on the cooperation of parents to ensure a ratio of young athletes to coaches/age group coordinators/supervisors. Without this cooperation from parents this ration may not be met. South Galway Athletic Club expects persons involved in athletics and parents to read and up hold the contents of this document.

NOTE: Children involved in athletics are not allowed in the adjacent playground during their athletic session. South Galway Athletic Club does not accept any responsibility for children who do not follow the instructions of their age group coordinators/coaches/supervisors by leaving the athletics area when informed not to do so. Therefore parents must instruct their children to follow the instructions of age group coordinators, coaches and/or supervisors. Parents/Guardians must accompany their children to training on time, they may not leave their children unaccompanied at the training ground earlier than the start of training and must collect their children on time at the end of each athletics session. Parents/guardians failing to do so will be contacted by the age group coordinator and the issue discussed.

South Galway Athletic Club has a designated Child officer for issues relating to children.

Code of Conduct for Young Athletes:

Young athletes are entitled to:

- Be listened to
- Be believed
- Be safe and to feel safe
- Be treated with dignity, sensitivity and respect
- Have a voice in the club / organisation

- Participate on an equal basis
- Be happy, have fun and enjoy sport
- Experience competition at a level at which they feel comfortable
- Make complaints and have them dealt with
- Get help against bullies
- Say no
- To protect their own bodies
- Confidentiality

Young athletes should always:

- Treat Sports Leaders with respect
- Play fairly at all times, do their best
- Respect team members, even when things go wrong
- Respect opponents, be gracious in defeat
- Abide by the rules set down by team managers when travelling to away events.
- Behave in a manner that avoids bringing the sport of Athletics into disrepute
- Talk to children's officer if they have any problems.

Young athletes should never:

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

Guidelines for Parents

Athletics Ireland believes that parents should: Be a role model for their child and maintain the highest standards of conduct when interacting with children, other parents, with officials and organisers.

Always behave responsibly and do not seek to unfairly affect the competition or training their child is participating in.

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

Always recognise the value and importance of the volunteers who provide sporting / recreational opportunities for their child. Do not publicly question the judgement or honesty of officials, coaches, organisers, or other athletes.

Encourage their child to participate within the rules. Teach their child that honest endeavour is as important as winning and do all they can to encourage good sportsmanship.

Set a good example by applauding other participants. Encourage mutual respect for individual competitors, team mates and all participants in specific events.

Parents should support all efforts to remove abusive behaviour and bullying behaviour in all its forms.

Parents Code of Conduct

- I will respect the rules and procedures set down in Athletics Ireland's Code of Ethics for Children's Sport.
- I will respect my child's team-mates, leaders (e.g. Manager, Coaches, Officials, Judges), and parents, as well as all athletes, parents and coaches. I will encourage my child to treat other participants, coaches, selectors, officials and managers with respect.
- I will give encouragement and applaud only positive accomplishments whether from my child, his/her team-mates, their opponents or the officials.
- I will respect my child's leader(s) and support his/her efforts.
 - I will collect my child/children on time from training sessions
 - I will if asked supervise training sessions that my child/children are partaking
 - I will address any concerns, issues or complaints that I have to the Child Officer
- I will respect the officials and their authority during sessions and events
- I will never demonstrate threatening or abusive behaviour or use foul language.

Guidelines for Sports Leaders, Coaches, Team Managers and Administrators:

Leaders in children's sport should strive to create a positive environment for the children in their care. They have an overall responsibility to take the necessary steps to ensure that positive and healthy experiences are provided.

South Galway Athletics Club recognises the key role leaders (coaches, selectors and team managers etc) play in the lives of children in sport.

All Leaders e.g. coaches, officers, administrators, team managers should have as their first priority the children's safety and enjoyment of the sport and should adhere to the guidelines and regulations set out in the Code of Ethics.

Leaders must respect the rights, dignity and worth of every child and must treat everyone equally, regardless of sex, ethnic origin, religion or ability.

Leaders working with young people in South Galway Athletics Club should be suitable and appropriately qualified.

Leaders will be expected to go through appropriate recruitment and selection procedures that apply to all persons with substantial access to young people, whether paid or unpaid. References will be needed and will be followed up.

All Leaders, coaches, team managers and administrators must undergo Garda Vetting.

There will be a 'sign-up' procedure, whereby the appointed/reappointed leaders agree to abide by the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children in Sport and to their policies.

Leaders will be given a copy of the Athletics Ireland Code of Ethics and they should be made aware of the procedures contained within the Code.

Once appointed the leader must act as a role model and promote the positive aspects of sport and of Athletics Ireland and maintain the highest standards of personal conduct.

The use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco must be actively discouraged as being incompatible with a healthy approach to sporting activity.

Remember your behaviour to athletes, other officials, and opponents will have an effect on the athletes in your care.

Be generous with praise and never ridicule or shout at athletes for making mistakes or not performing as expected. All young athletes are entitled to respect.

Be careful to avoid the "star system". Each child deserves equal time and attention, at all times during his/her involvement in athletics.

Care must be taken not to expose a child intentionally or unintentionally to embarrassment or disparagement by use of sarcastic or flippant remarks about the child or his/her family.

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

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

Remember that young athletes compete for fun and enjoyment and that skill development and personal satisfaction have priority over highly structured competition. Never make winning the only objective.

Encourage the development of respect for opponents, officials, selectors and other coaches and avoid criticism of fellow coaches.

When travel/overnight travel is involved, the Managers / Coaches / Leaders travelling with young athletes must sign a separate agreement. Parents and participants will also be asked to sign permission forms in these instances.

Leaders are responsible for setting and monitoring the boundaries between a working relationship and friendship with athletes. It is advisable for coaches not to involve young athletes in their personal life i.e. visits to coaches home or overnight stays.

All Leaders should avoid working alone and ensure there is adequate supervision for all activities. It is important to realise that certain situations or friendly actions could be misinterpreted by the participant or by outsiders.

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

When young athletes are invited into adult groups/squads, it is advisable to get agreement from a parent/carer. Boundaries of behaviour in adult groups are normally different from the boundaries that apply to junior groups/squads. Athletics Ireland will set out a policy document reflecting this.

Leaders who become aware of a conflict between their obligation to their athletes and their obligation to Athletics Ireland must make explicit the nature of the conflict and the loyalties and responsibilities involved, to all parties concerned.

Leaders/Coaches should communicate and co-operate with medical and ancillary practitioners in the diagnosis, treatment and management of their athlete's 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 child requires the passing on of this information.

The nature of the relationship between leader/coach and a participant can often mean that a leader will learn confidential information about an athlete'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 express permission of the athlete/family.

Set realistic goals for the participants and do not push young athletes. Create a safe and enjoyable environment.

Do not criticise other leaders, (officials, coaches, and selectors). You are the role model for the children in your care.

Leaders should avoid the use of alcohol, in any activity involving young athletes.

Leader's / Coaches Code of Conduct

Leaders / Coaches should familiarise themselves with the Athletics Ireland Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport and with the South Galway Athletics Club Code of Conduct and follow the procedures if they suspect or receive complaints of abuse of any sort.

Leaders should:

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

Where possible Leaders should avoid:

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

Sports Leaders should not:

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

DISCIPLINE IN CHILDREN'S SPORT

Discipline in sport should always be positive in focus, providing the structure and rules that allow participants to learn to set their own goals and strive for them. It should encourage young people to become more responsible for them and therefore more independent. Children should be helped to become responsible about the decisions and choices they make within athletics, particularly when they are likely to make a difference between 4 20 21 Code of Ethics & Good Practice for Children in Athletics playing fairly and unfairly. There should be no place for fighting, over-aggressive or dangerous behaviour in sport.

THE USE OF SANCTIONS

The use of sanctions is an important element in the maintenance of discipline. The age and developmental stage of the child should be taken into consideration when using sanctions. Sanctions should be fair and consistent and in the case of persistent offence, should be progressively applied. They should never be used to retaliate or to make a Leader feel better. The following steps are suggested and should always be used in conjunction with the code of conduct for young people:

- Rules should be stated clearly and agreed
- A warning should be given if a rule is broken
- A sanction (for example, use of time out) should be applied if a rule is broken for a second time. The use of green, yellow and red cards are encouraged
- If a rule is broken for the third time the child should be spoken to, and if necessary, the matter will be discussed with the parents/guardians of the child, the leader of the age group and the Child Officer of the club.
- Sanctions should not be applied if a Leader is not comfortable with them. If an appropriate action cannot be devised right away, the child should be told that the matter will be dealt with later, at a specified time and as soon as possible
- A child should not be sanctioned for making errors
- Physical activity (e.g. running laps or doing push-ups) should not be used as a sanction. To do so only causes a child to resent physical activity, something that s/he should learn to enjoy throughout his/her life
- Sanctions should be used sparingly. Constant sanctioning and criticism can cause a child to turn away from sport