



Charlestown Sarsfields Bord na nÓg Handbook 2026

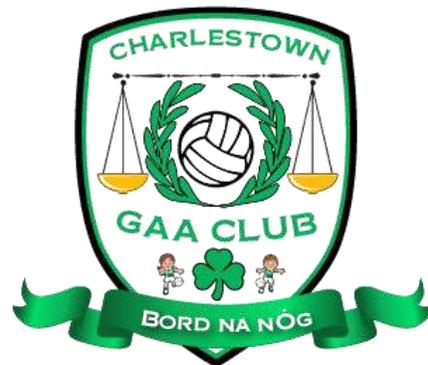


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The Charlestown Sarsfields Club was founded in 1888 and is now in its 138th year in existence. The club has a long and proud history and tradition in Mayo G.A.A. circles and continues to make its presence felt and punch above its weight on the play fields.

The Club have top-class facilities with Fr O'Hara Park and the recently opened Colm Horkan Memorial Pitch, the jewels in the crown, and two of the finest playing surfaces in Mayo and beyond. Fr O'Hara Park was officially opened in 1953 and was named after Fr Eddie O'Hara a man who spread the gospel of G.A.A. in the community at the time and who was instrumental in the purchase and subsequent development of the land together with a core of dedicated and committed club members, who were instrumental in the purchase and subsequent development of the land together with a core of dedicated and committed club members.

We have a bord na nÓg committee in place that looks after all the underage needs and activities in the club, with over 300 children participating in underage football from under-6 up to minor. We have enjoyed some wonderful successes at underage level over the years. The county minor league and championship double of 1988 stands out, as do the county under 21 successes of 1975, 1991, 1998 and 1999, respectively. The under-16 teams of 1974 and 1997 also captured county titles with several teams at different age grades also coming close in several finals over a long period. The ladies' LGFA club has seen a huge growth in our club in the last decade and we have a very vibrant and active ladies wing who field teams from under-8 up to senior. This is the fastest growing area of interest in the club now with interest in the club and membership continuing to rocket and it's exciting to see what the future holds for all our teams.

Charlestown Sarsfields Executive Committee 2026

Name	Position
Ryan O'Connor	Chairman
Kevin Deignan	Secretary
Tom McCloughlin	Treasurer
Stephen Healy	PRO
Brian McDermott	Schools Liaison Officer
Donal Healy	Children's Officer
Kiefer Craig	Coaching Officer

Charlestown Sarsfields bord na nÓg Executive Committee 2026

Name	Position
Donal Healy	Chairman & DLP, Children's Officer (087) 4165612
Neil O' Connor	Secretary
Michael Doherty	Treasurer
Brian McDermott	Schools Liaison Officer

Child Safeguarding Behaviour Hearings Committee

Name	Position
Ryan O' Connor	Chairman, Charlestown Sarsfields GAA
Siobhan Durkan	Chairperson, Charlestown Sarsfields LGFA
Neil O'Connor	Secretary, Charlestown Sarsfields bord na nÓg

Club Child Safeguarding Determining Committee

Name	Position
Kevin Deignan	Secretary, Charlestown Sarsfields GAA
Tom McLoughlin	Treasurer, Charlestown Sarsfields GAA

3.1 Code of Conduct

The value of providing a joint Code for our members enables us to jointly promote the legislative, organisational and statutory guidance that supports our work with young people and children.

This will assist and direct our members in our work and provide a platform and support for those working with young people and children at all levels in the club. Our club, in common with others who work with young people and children, will continue to abide by and integrate child welfare legislation and statutory guidance into our work. In upholding this principle, the welfare of the child shall always be our paramount consideration, whether it is on the playing fields, in the training of our underage players, the recruitment of our coaches, the active involvement of parents in our work on a daily and weekly basis. Young people will spend some of the most enjoyable days of their lives playing Gaelic football and socialising with their friends. They will do so during some of the most important developmental years of their lives. Our role and our responsibility are to ensure that they benefit from and participate in our Gaelic Games in a safe and enjoyable environment where our games are conducted in a spirit of fair play with everyone who works on our behalf emphasising respect, equality, safety and non-discrimination in all aspects of our work with children and young people. Each member of our club has a responsibility to accept and implement this Code as it directs us in such work. Breaches of the Code may be enquired into and if required sanctions may be applied in accordance with other provisions of the Code. For the purpose of ease of access, this Code will be distributed amongst our members, parents and volunteers and where appropriate the players themselves and will form part of our joint Safeguarding Training. In the interest of clarity and accuracy, any

amendments to the Code shall appear in our Code of Behaviour (Underage) document available on our club website www.charlestowngaa.com

3.2 Child Safeguarding

On an annual basis the club are obliged to adopt and put on display what is termed a Child Safeguarding Statement. This legislative requirement in many jurisdictions is now enshrined in the Code of Behaviour (Underage). Prior to agreeing to a Child Safeguarding Statement, the club is required to carry out a risk assessment, i.e. a risk assessment as to the risk of harm that could come to a child in the club's care, following which the club can then put their Child Safeguarding Statement on display. By putting the Child Safeguarding Statement on display, prominently at Fr. O'Hara Park, it draws positive attention to the procedures, policies and practices we have in place to safeguard children, as far as practicable, from risk when they are attending our games or training activities. It identifies that as a basic right, that we recognise that all children have the right to be protected from harm. The club is required to complete this procedure at the Club Executive level and must record, sign and date when this takes place and furnish a copy of the completed document to the County Children's Officer. The appendices (section 5.1) of this document will be updated to contain our 2026 Child Safeguarding Statement, which may be adopted in full or amended and subsequently put on display following the completion of the risk assessment process. Charlestown Sarsfields is committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for all young people who participate in our Gaelic Games. We shall take all practicable steps to protect them from discernable forms of abuse, from harm, discrimination or degrading treatment and shall respect their rights, wishes and feelings and the Risk Assessment and Child Safeguarding process contributes to this aim.

Please see a copy of our current child safeguarding statement in the Appendices section 5.1.

3.3 Maintaining Appropriate Behaviour

Young Players can benefit greatly from sports in terms of personal development and enjoyment. Players representing Charlestown Sarsfield's are encouraged to realise that as a result of their participation in Gaelic Games that they also have a responsibility to treat other players and officials with fairness and respect. With rights there will always be responsibilities. The term 'young players' also refers to children, i.e., any person under 18 years of age, regardless of what team or age group they play with. Young Players and those who work with them in our club are required to 'sign up' and abide by this Code of Behaviour and any other policies or codes in our Club.

YOUNG PLAYERS SHOULD BE ENTITLED TO:

- Be safe and feel safe.
- Have fun and experience a sense of enjoyment and fulfilment.
- Be treated with respect, dignity and sensitivity.
- Comment and make suggestions in a constructive manner.
- Be afforded appropriate confidentiality.
- Participate in games and competitions at levels with which they feel comfortable.
- Be afforded adequate and meaningful playing time to assist in the development of their playing skills, within their own age group and in accordance with Rules.
- Make their concerns known and have them dealt with in an appropriate manner.
- Be protected from abuse.
- Be listened to.

YOUNG PLAYERS SHOULD ALWAYS:

- Play fairly, do their best and enjoy themselves.
- Respect fellow team members regardless of ability, cultural or ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation or religious beliefs.
- Support fellow team members regardless of whether they do well or not.
- Represent their team, their Club and their family with pride and dignity.
- Respect all Coaches, Officials and their opponents.
- Be gracious in defeat and modest in victory.
- Shake hands before and after a game as part of the Give Respect Get Respect initiative, irrespective of the result.
- Inform their Coach/Mentor/Manager in advance if they are unavailable for training and games.
- Take due care of Club equipment.
- Know that it is acceptable to talk to the Club Children's Officer with any concerns or questions they may have.
- Adhere to acceptable standards of behaviour and their Club's Code of Discipline.
- Tell somebody else if they or others have been harmed in any way.

YOUNG PLAYERS SHOULD ENGAGE IN GOOD PRACTICE:

- Never cheat –always play by the rules.
- Never shout at or argue with a game's official, with their Coach, their teammates or opponents and should never use violence.
- Accept the decisions of referees and other officials.

- Never use unfair or Bullying tactics to gain advantage or isolate other players.
- Never spread rumors.
- Never tell lies about adults or other young people.
- Never play or train if they feel unwell or are injured.
- Never use unacceptable language or racial and/or sectarian references to an opponent, a fellow player or official by words, deeds or gestures.
- Never consume non-prescribed drugs or performance-enhancing supplements.
- Never use social media to discuss teammates, opponents, coaches, match officials, or others.

COACHES, MENTORS AND TRAINERS

All Coaches, Mentors and Trainers involved with the club should ensure that young people and children benefit significantly from our games by promoting a positive, healthy and participatory approach to our work with underage players. In developing the skills levels of every player, coaches should always encourage enjoyment and fun while ensuring meaningful participation in our games and activities. Coaches should always remember that they are role models for the players in their care.

RECRUITMENT OF COACHES

All coaches in the Charlestown Sarsfields Club, working with young people and children are required to be suitable for their chosen role(s), and will be appropriately trained, qualified and supported to fulfil such roles. All people working or volunteering for such roles are required to:

- Undertake agreed vetting and background Garda checks within the jurisdiction(s) in which they operate
- Attend relevant Gaelic Games child safeguarding training
- Possess a coaching qualification relevant to their role as recognised by the GAA
- Adult team coaches, including any player under 18 years of age, must also undertake the vetting, child safeguarding training and coaching requirements as outlined above.

COACHES SHOULD MAINTAIN A CHILD-CENTRED APPROACH

- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person.
- Treat each person equally regardless of age, gender, ability, ethnic origin, cultural background or religion
- Be positive during coaching sessions, games and other activities so underage players always leave with a sense of achievement and increased self-esteem.
- Recognise the development needs and capacity of all underage players, regardless of their ability, by emphasising participation for all while avoiding excessive training and competition. Skills development and personal satisfaction should have priority over competition when working with underage players.
- Ensure all those eligible to participate in any team within the club are given an opportunity to do so with preference given to their age group.
- Develop an understanding of relevant coaching methods and ensure that they have the appropriate level of coaching accreditation.

- Do not equate losing with failure, and do not develop a preoccupation with medals and trophies. The level of improvement made by underage players is the best indicator of effective coaching.

COACHES SHOULD LEAD BY EXAMPLE

- Never use foul language or provocative language/gestures to a player, opponent or match official.
- Only enter the field of play with the Referee's permission.
- Do not question a Referee's decisions or integrity.
- Encourage players to respect and accept the judgement of match officials.
- Promote Fair Play and encourage all players and fellow officials to always play by the rules of the game.
- Do not encourage or threaten a player by deed or gesture to act in any unacceptable manner towards an opponent, fellow player or official.
- Promote the RESPECT campaign amongst your players, fellow coaches, parents and supporters.
- Do not smoke while working with underage players.
- Do not consume alcohol or non-prescribed drugs immediately prior to or while underage players are in your care.
- Encourage parents to become involved in your team and Club activities wherever possible.

CONDUCT OF COACHES WHEN WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

- Develop an appropriate working relationship with children based on mutual trust and respect.
- Challenge bullying in any form, whether physical or emotional. Bullying is not acceptable, be it from a young person, coach, parent/guardian, spectator or match official.
- Don't shout at or lecture players or reprimand/ridicule them when they make a mistake. Children learn best through trial and error. Children and young people should not be afraid to make errors to learn.
- The use of any form of physical punishment is prohibited, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour unless it is by way of restraint
- Avoid incidents of horseplay or role play or telling jokes, etc. that could be misinterpreted.
- Never undertake any form of therapy or hypnosis in the training of children.
- Never encourage players to consume non-prescribed drugs or take performance-enhancing supplements.
- Do not make energy-enhancing products available to children.

AVOID COMPROMISING YOUR ROLE AS A COACH

Some activities may require coaches to come into physical contact with underage players in the course of their duties. However, coaches should.

- Avoid taking coaching sessions on your own.
- Only deliver one-to-one coaching, if deemed necessary, within a group setting.
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact with an underage player and never engage in inappropriate touching of a player.

- Be aware that any necessary contact should be determined by the age and development of the player and should only take place with the permission and understanding of the player and in an open environment in the context of developing a player's skills and abilities
- Where a team consists of both boys and girls, and for the avoidance of doubt, the coaching team must also consist of both male and female personnel. Male-only teams must include at least one male coach, and female-only teams must include at least one female coach.

BEST PRACTICE

- Ensure that all our players are suitably and safely attired to play their chosen sport. e.g., gum shields (Football)
- As a coach, always be punctual and properly attired.
- Be accompanied by at least one other adult at coaching sessions, games and in underage team dressing rooms.
- Abide by supervision ratios that recommend a ratio of one adult for 8 children under 12 years of age teams and a ratio of 1:10 for children over 12 years of age. While abiding by such ratios, a coach must always be accompanied by at least one other suitably qualified adult.
- Set realistic but achievable –performance goals for your players and teams.
- Keep a record of players' and coaches' attendance at training and games.
- Rotate the team captaincy and the method used for selecting teams so that the same children are not always selected to the exclusion of others.

- Afford meaningful playing time to young players to assist in the development of their playing skills, within their own age groups.
- Keep a record of any injuries and actions subsequently taken. Ensure that another official referee/team mentor is present when a player is being attended to and can corroborate the relevant details.
- Make adequate provision for First Aid services.
- Do not encourage or permit players to play while injured.
- Always inform parents/guardians if their child has been injured or becomes unwell at games or training
- Be aware of players' special medical or dietary requirements as indicated on the medical consent/registration forms or as informed by parents/guardians.
- Be willing to keep the necessary and emergency medication of players in a safe and accessible place in accordance with the wishes and permission of the parents/guardians.
- Do not administer medication or medical aid unless you are willing to do so and have received the necessary training to administer such aid.
- Use mobile phones, if deemed appropriate, only via a group text or email system for communicating with the parents/guardians of players. Any exception to this form of group texting can only be proceeded with following permission from parents/guardians.
- Do not communicate individually by text, email or via social network sites and or apps with underage players unless given permission by parents/guardians.
- Do not engage in communications with underage players via social network sites.

- Encourage parents/guardians to play an active role in organising and assisting various activities for your teams and your Club.
- If it is necessary to transport a child/young person in your car, ensure that they are seated in a rear seat with seat belts securely fastened and that all drivers are adequately insured.
- With the exception of their own child, a coach should not transport a child alone, except in emergency or exceptional circumstances.
- Ensure that all dressing rooms and the general areas occupied by your players and other Club personnel prior to, during, or immediately following the completion of any match are kept clean and not damaged in any way.
- Should you be aware of or have concerns regarding the possible abuse of a child, you should report this to the relevant statutory authority or may seek the assistance of the club's Children's Officer and, where necessary, the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) so that they may assist you in forwarding the concern to the relevant statutory authority. All such reports must also be forwarded to the Association's Mandated Person without delay.

PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Parents and guardians have an influential role in assisting and encouraging their children to participate fully in Gaelic Games, whether by playing games or attending training or coaching sessions. Our club constantly seeks the active participation of all parents and guardians, particularly where the ethos of volunteerism forms the basis of our club.

Like coaches and Club personnel, the Parents or guardians of underage players should act as role models for their children as they participate in Gaelic Games.

PARENT / GUARDIAN SUPERVISOR POLICY

For our younger age groups (U-6 to U-12) parents/guardians must collect their children from the pitch after training and supervise them leaving the pitch, always exercising due care and attention, being mindful of children, cars, parents and other patrons using the car park & facilities. Under no circumstances should children aged 6-12 leave the pitch unaccompanied and walk through the busy car park. Children are to stay on the pitch and use the walkways available when leaving the pitch to ensure all children remain safe, particularly during busy times when there is a lot of traffic coming in and out of the football pitches and complex area.

PARENTS/GUARDIANS SHOULD ENCOURAGE THEIR CHILD TO:

- Always play by the rules.
- Improve their skill levels.
- Appreciate everybody on their team, regardless of ability.
- Maintain a balanced and healthy lifestyle regarding exercise, food, rest and play.
- Advice may be sought, if necessary, from Club officials on this issue.

PARENTS/GUARDIANS SHOULD LEAD BY EXAMPLE:

- Adopt a positive attitude to their children's participation in our games.
- Respect officials' decisions and encourage children to do likewise.
- Do not exert undue pressure on your child.
- Never admonish your own child or any other child for their standard of play.
- Be realistic in their expectations.
- Show approval for effort, not just results.

- Avoid asking a child or young person, 'How much did you score today?' or 'What did you win by?' or 'What did you lose by.' Ask them, 'Did they enjoy themselves.'
- Never embarrass a child or use sarcastic remarks towards a player.
- Applaud good play from all teams.
- Do not criticise playing performances. Identify how improvements may be made.
- Do not seek to unfairly affect a game or player.
- Do not enter the field of play unless specifically invited to do so by an official in charge.

PARENTS/GUARDIANS SHOULD:

- Complete the annual online registration/permission and medical consent forms for their child's participation in the Club.
- Inform the Coaches and any other relevant Club personnel of any changes in their child's medical or dietary requirements prior to coaching sessions, games or other activities.
- Ensure that their child punctually attends coaching sessions/games or other activities.
- Parents must provide their children with adequate clothing and equipment, including gum shields, as may be required for playing our games.
- Parents/guardians must collect their children from the coach after training and supervise them leaving training by exercising due care and attention and being mindful of children, cars, parents and other patrons using the car park & facilities
- Ensure that their child's nutrition/hydration and hygiene needs are met.
- Never encourage your child(ren) to consume non-prescribed drugs or take performance-enhancing supplements.
- Listen to what their child may have to say

- Show approval whether the team wins, loses or draws a game.
- Never attempt to meet their own needs and aspirations for success and achievement through their children's participation in games.
- If a parent has any concerns about their child's participation or performance on a team, they may discuss them with the team coach(es), but they should do so constructively and non-confrontationally and not in the company or vicinity of young players or other parents.
- Complaints about the conduct or practice of a coach should be brought to the attention of the relevant Club or County Children's Officer.
- Support your Club by becoming an active member and participating in Club activities.

PARENTS/GUARDIANS SHOULD ASSIST THE CLUB BY:

- Showing appreciation to volunteers, coaches and Club officials.
- Attending training and games on a regular basis.
- Assisting in the organising of Club activities and events as requested.
- Respecting the rights, dignity and worth of every person and treating each one equally regardless of age, gender, ability, ethnic origin, cultural background or religion.
- Not entering team dressing rooms unless deemed necessary by the team coach(es) to protect other underage players' privacy.

PARENTS/GUARDIANS HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

- Know their child is safe and make a complaint if they believe their child's safety is compromised.

- Be informed of problems/concerns relating to their child.
- Be informed if their child gets injured or becomes unwell.
- Complain to the relevant persons if they have concerns about the standard of coaching
- Have, as a member, a say in relation to decisions being made within the Club

SUPPORTERS

Young players are eager to enjoy and benefit from the support they receive from supporters, parents, guardians, friends, and other club members who attend our games. Active, loyal, and well-behaved supporters are always welcome to attend and support our teams, but they should be aware that their conduct will reflect on the team and players that they support and represent.

Fellow supporters are responsible for ensuring that all spectators always conduct themselves in an acceptable and well-behaved manner when attending our games and competitions.

Unacceptable conduct by supporters should be reported to stewards or officials in charge (if appropriate) or at the Club level to the Children's Officer.

Supporters should realise and consider that Young Players are encouraged to participate in Gaelic Games to enjoy themselves while also improving their skills.

SUPPORTERS ADD TO THE ENJOYMENT OF OUR GAMES BY:

- Applauding good performance and efforts from our players and from their opponents, regardless of the result.
- Condemning the use of violence in any form, be it by fellow spectators, coaches, officials or players.

- Demonstrating appropriate behaviour by not using foul language or harassing players, opposition supporters, coaches or officials.
- Not entering the field of play, before, during or after a game.
- Respecting the decisions of all officials.
- Never ridiculing or scolding a player for making a mistake during games or competitions.
- Showing respect to our teams' opponents. Without them there would be no games or competitions.
- Upholding the principles of FAIR PLAY and RESPECT for all.

REFEREES

Throughout this Code of Behaviour, emphasis has been placed on the need to cooperate with and facilitate those who organise and deliver our games and activities. Referees are key people in delivering our games and should be respected and assisted in their roles.

Referees are aware that they are instrumental in ensuring that our games are played in a sporting manner in accordance with the rules of the game.

Players, Coaches, Mentors, Parents/Guardians, and other Club personnel have a key role in delivering this aspect of our Gaelic Games, particularly when working with underage players. Our underage players will naturally scrutinise our acceptance of the role, authority, and decisions of a Referee very closely.

IN THEIR CAPACITY AS REFEREES OF UNDERAGE GAMES, WE EXPECT OUR REFEREES TO:

- Apply the playing rules on an impartial and consistent basis.

- Act with integrity and objectivity in all games.
- Communicate decisions to players and team officials in an effective and constructive manner in consideration of the age groups playing our games.
- Deal with dissent firmly and fairly.
- Work as a team with other match officials.
- Maintain composure regardless of the circumstances.
- Avail of assessments and supports to improve performance.
- Uphold and implement the Give Respect –Get Respect initiative at all levels.
- Report any misconduct of players, team officials or supporters' conscious of the fact that such matters may be followed up by Club or County Children's Officers.
- Undertake agreed vetting and background Police checks within the jurisdiction in which they work and attend relevant child safeguarding training.

Players, Coaches, Supporters, Parents/Guardians, and other Club personnel should recognise the pivotal role that Referees play in our underage games and support them at all times when they fulfill their roles.

GIVE RESPECT – GET RESPECT

Give Respect –Get Respect is an awareness campaign that seeks to ensure that Gaelic Games are promoted and played in a positive, fair and enjoyable manner and where Players, Coaches, Spectators and Referees Give Respect –Get Respect from each other.

The RESPECT campaign applies to all levels and players regardless of age, competition, or ability. The key participants in the Give Respect –Get Respect campaign are not just the Players but also Coaches, Clubs, Parents, Referees, and Supporters.

The Give Respect –Get Respect initiative is supported by the GAA, Ladies Gaelic Football Association, the Camogie Association, GAA Handball Ireland and the Rounders Council of Ireland.

THE RESPECT CAMPAIGN HIGHLIGHTS THE FOLLOWING GOOD PRACTICES:

- All players and coaches shake hands with their opponents and the referee before and after each game
- Mark out a designated spectators' area around the playing area.
- At relevant underage categories teams should strive to achieve the maximum participation of all players in accordance with agreed playing models.
- The host Club should welcome referees and opposing team to all games.
- Players and teams who uphold the RESPECT principles will receive a merit award based on sporting endeavour and fair play.
- Adopt and implement the Code of Behaviour when working with underage players as the minimum level of agreement between the Club and Players, Coaches, Parents, Guardians and Supporters at underage level.
- Organise half time exhibition games during Club and inter County League and Championship Games that promote the principles of the RESPECT campaign in association with schools, other Clubs and Cumann na mBunscol.

- Clubs should ensure that the coaches of underage teams are aware of and also implement the Give Respect –Get Respect initiative.

RESPECT

- Responsible
- Encouraging
- Supportive
- Positive
- Enabling
- Considerate
- Tolerant

THE CLUB

Charlestown Sarsfields adopts a child-centered approach and philosophy that recognises the child's welfare is paramount. We will ensure that those chosen to work on our behalf with underage players have been selected following thorough selection, training and coaching procedure which includes relevant vetting in accordance with the jurisdiction requirements in which we operate.

Several non-coaching roles with children carried out on behalf of the Club may also require that the chosen individuals be vetted via the required e-vetting procedures.

We will also strive to provide those who work on our behalf with the necessary support so as to enable them to fulfil their roles. We will ensure that those chosen to work with children and young

People are always competent and confident in their roles and have received relevant child welfare and sports-related training, as provided or instructed by the GAA's Governing Body, to enable them to fulfil such roles.

CHARLESTOWN SARSFIELDS PROMOTE QUALITY PARTICIPATION BY:

- Adopting the Code of Behaviour as a basic level of agreement between the Club and our players, their coaches, parents/guardians and supporters.
- Leading by example and ensuring that a user-friendly and child-centered approach is adopted in our work with young people and that equal opportunities are available for all to participate in our games and activities, regardless of an individual's ability.
- Developing effective procedures for responding to and recording all attendances, incidents, accidents and injuries.
- Access relevant information on Alcohol and Substance Abuse Prevention Programmes and promote relevant training for club personnel in this area of health awareness.
- Distributing information on Anti-Bullying strategies in our work with young people and by adopting and implementing an Anti-Bullying statement in the Club.

CHARLESTOWN SARSFIELDS ENCOURAGE THE PARTICIPATION OF THEIR MEMBERS BY:

- Agreeing the role of each coach or mentor working with young people.
- Ensuring that relevant Child Protection Training is undertaken by all people working in an official capacity with children and young people in the Club.

- Adopting and implementing clearly defined recruitment and selection procedures when choosing coaches and other relevant personnel to work with children and young people.

ENCOURAGE THE PARTICIPATION OF YOUNG PLAYERS BY:

- Ensuring that training schedules, playing rules, use of equipment and length of games are structured to facilitate greater participation by all young players and are suitable to all age categories and to the ability and maturity level of players.
- Not imposing responsibilities or roles on young people that may be inappropriate to their age.
- Respect the rights, dignity, and worth of all players and treat them equally regardless of their age, gender, ability, ethnic origin, cultural background, or religion.
- Creating pathways for young people to participate in our games not just as players but by affording them other developmental opportunities, including training to become referees, coaches etc. **(Please see the Charlestown Sarsfields Player Pathway Document for more information on www.charlestowngaa.com/bord-na-nog/)**
- Ensure that separate sleeping facilities are provided for all adults and young people when teams travel away and stay overnight. Similarly, for mixed groups, separate sleeping quarters for males and females shall be required.
- When a group consists of both males and females, an adequate adult-to-member ratio of male and female coaches is present.

ENCOURAGE THE PARTICIPATION OF PARENTS/GUARDIANS BY:

- Encouraging parents/guardians to become members of our Club and to make themselves aware of the running of juvenile games and activities and to the rules and codes that direct us in our work.
- Encouraging the participation of parents and guardians in all aspects of the Club's activities and events and in the organising and delivery of our games.
- Welcoming all parents/guardians to attend the games and training sessions that relate to their children. Information relating to such events will be made known to them at all times.
- Informing parents/guardians as to the identity of their Children's Officer. This person should be available to assist with any concerns or enquiries that parents/guardians may have regarding the welfare and safety of children and young people in the Club.

DEVELOP BEST PRACTICE IN CLUB STRUCTURES AND ADMINISTRATION BY:

- Ensuring that the Juvenile Section of the Club is structured in accordance with good practice guidelines and that young people are afforded a role in decision-making at an appropriate level.
- Ensuring all those eligible to participate in any team within the club are provided with an opportunity to do so.
- Ensuring that all Club members are aware of their responsibilities to all children and young people.
- Appointing a Children's Officer whose role shall include monitoring of the child-centred ethos of the Club and compliance with any policies and guidelines as issued by

the Club, by their National Governing Bodies, or by statutory authorities and agencies in their jurisdiction.

- Appointing a Designated Liaison Person whose role shall include liaising with Statutory Authorities and assisting members in relation to the reporting of allegations, concerns and/or suspicions of child abuse.
- Ensuring that all players are covered by their relevant Injury Scheme and that all premises in use by our Club and players are equally covered for property/liability insurance as deemed necessary.
- Adopting procedures that facilitate the privacy and safety of all young people in the Club and that all such procedures are maintained and regularly reviewed so as to ensure that young people feel safe and are safe in the Club.
- Seeking the agreement of parents/guardians when their sons/daughters under 18 years of age are invited into adult squads. Boundaries of behaviour in adult groups normally differ from those that apply to underage teams and squads.
- Appointing a Club Code of Behaviour (Underage) Hearings Committee comprising three people. This Committee shall be appointed and mandated by the Club Executive to hear any alleged breaches of the Code of Behaviour (Underage) and to reach a determination following their enquiries as to what sanction, if any, may apply in the event of a breach of the Code of Behaviour (Underage)
- Adopting, on an annual basis, the Club Child Safeguarding Statement which will be made known to Club members and put on prominent display in the Club premises.

- Ensure that Club members are aware of our Child Safeguarding procedures, including the policy documents Code of Behaviour (Underage) and Guidance for Dealing and Reporting Allegations or Concerns of Abuse. We are responsible for reporting concerns and allegations of abuse to the relevant statutory authorities and to the Association's Mandated Person, as required.

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN – GAELIC GAMES ASSOCIATIONS' AGREED PROCEDURES

The Gaelic Athletic Association has agreed on a number of joint Child Safeguarding initiatives and policies to ensure, in so far as is practicable, the safety of children from harm while playing our games and participating in our activities.

The adoption of such agreed documents alone will not achieve this aim. However, the continuous commitment and implementation of such good practices by dedicated volunteers at our club, with the cooperation and support of an equally dedicated cohort of staff, will assist us as we seek to create a safe environment for young people in which to grow and develop. Equally so, the role of parents in supporting our work and the vigilance of our members as we jointly pursue this aim. In particular, agreed procedures now require that all coaches of underage teams or teams that include any person under 18 years of age must fulfil the following criteria.

- Undertake agreed vetting and background Garda checks within the jurisdiction(s) in which they operate.
- Attend relevant Gaelic Games child safeguarding training.
- Possess a coaching qualification relevant to their role as recognised by their Association.

Our agreed policies and procedures are in accordance with current legislative requirements and include:

- The publication of a Child Safeguarding Statement.
- Carrying out an annual Risk Assessment procedure at the club.
- A Code of Behaviour (Underage) which includes:
 - Recruitment policy for those working with children
 - Child safeguarding training requirements
 - Anti-Bullying Statement
 - Social Media Policy
 - Guidance for Dealing with and Reporting Allegations or Concerns of Abuse
 - Appointing Designated Liaison Persons at the club
 - Appointing a Children's Officer at the Club who shall be the Association's relevant person or first point of contact in respect of this statement

MANDATED PERSONS MAY BE CONTACTED AT: GAAMandatedperson@gaa.ie

3.4 Anti-Bullying Policy

While sports organisations are recognised for the overall developmental opportunities they give to young people, we are not immune to instances of poor or unacceptable behaviour that would be deemed as unacceptable and may, in fact, be deemed by us as breaches of our Code of Behaviour. A notable example of unacceptable behaviour that occurs in many walks of life is that of Bullying. Unfortunately, bullying may occur in schools settings, in communities, in the work

place, via social media interaction or within our sports associations where a small cohort of people may choose or even direct others to engage in Bullying behaviour.

Charlestown Sarsfields “aims to create a supportive environment where any form of Bullying in line with our NGB, and the club’s unacceptability of discrimination on the grounds of a person’s gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, or religion. We adopt ‘a whole organisational approach’ to addressing Bullying and are committed to implementing structures and relevant training to deal with allegations of Bullying. Incidents of Bullying are regarded as serious breaches of our Code of Behaviour (Underage). We are committed to achieving an ethos of respect to maximise the potential of all our members when playing or participating in our Gaelic Games”.

Our Club Anti-Bullying Statement is outlined in the club dressing rooms and a copy can be found here in the Appendices

IT IS WIDELY ACCEPTED THAT BULLYING CONTAINS SEVEN KEY FEATURES:

- An intention to be hurtful
- This intention is carried out
- The behaviour harms the target
- The bully overwhelms the target with his/her power
- There is often no justification for the action
- The behaviour repeats itself again and again
- The bully derives a sense of satisfaction from hurting the target

- Bullying can happen from any one person to another from a young person to an adult or from an adult to a young person, from adults to adults and from a young person to a young person.

PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH BULLYING INVOLVING YOUNG PEOPLE/ADULTS

The incident should be dealt with as a breach of the Code of Behaviour as follows:

- Report the matter to the Club's Children's Officer
- Confidentiality will be always maintained
- Initial assessment by the Club Children's Officer
- Children's Officer collates relevant information
- Club Children's Officer uses the acid test to determine whether this is an incident of bullying
- Club Children's Officer informs the alleged bully and target as to what procedures will follow
- Bullying is considered a breach of the Code of Behaviour (Underage) and is dealt with accordingly under the GAA procedural guidelines

3.5 Dealing with Breaches of Behaviour

Unfortunately, breaches of the Code of Behaviour (Underage) may occur from time to time, some of which may be minor and major breaches. Breaches may happen for several reasons including, but not limited to, carelessness, poor practice, and a lack of understanding or there may be, in some instances, deliberate or calculated breaches of the Code of Behaviour (Underage).

The safety and well-being of the child must take priority over concerns about adults against whom an allegation may be made. The welfare of the child shall always be paramount. Charlestown Sarsfields follows the procedures and guidelines for dealing with breaches of the code of behaviour as published in the GAA code of behaviour booklet (section 4), which is published on <https://charlestowngaa.com/bord-na-nog/child-safeguarding/>

Should any member of the club, parent/guardian, player, coach, mentor, supporter or volunteer become aware of any child protection concerns, these should be reported to the club's children officer, who will advise of the process and procedures involved. Any informal queries about any concerns about child abuse or welfare concerns can also be discussed with the Children's Officer.

Charlestown Sarsfields is committed to creating and maintaining a safe and enjoyable environment for all young people and children who participate in our games. In upholding this principle, the club will continue to abide by and integrate child welfare legislation and statutory guidance into our work in all jurisdictions in which we operate. The welfare of the child shall always be our paramount consideration, whether it is on the playing field, in the training of our underage players, in the recruitment of our coaches or the many other developmental and social opportunities that we offer our underage players on a regular basis.

3.6 Disciplinary Procedures

The Clubs Disciplinary Procedure is in accordance with the GAA's Code of Best Practice and the following rules in the GAA Club Constitution; 5.11.1, 5.11.2 & 5.11.3.

5.11.1 The Executive Committee shall have the power to investigate any matter and to expel, suspend, warn, fine or disqualify Members from Club activities for breach of this Constitution and Rules or the Official Guide or for conduct considered to have discredited or harmed the Club or the G.A.A.

5.11.2 Such people, if Full Members (including Honorary Members) or Youth Members, shall have the right to appeal to the Hearings Committee of the County Committee of the G.A.A. within seven days of being notified of such decision.

5.11.3 Unless the offence is brought to the notice of the County Committee of the G.A.A. by the Club, and that body, having considered the merits of the case and having regard to the rights of the player or member, confirms the penalty imposed, the member continues to be a legal member of the Association and is suspended from Club activities only.

Child Safeguarding Determining Committee

A GAA Club Child Safeguarding Determining Committee is a small group, usually consisting of two members from the club's executive, appointed to investigate and initially consider allegations of breaches of the Code of Behaviour (Underage). This committee focuses on the initial stages of assessing and understanding the details of the allegation, before it potentially moves on to a Hearing Committee for a formal hearing

Club Child Safeguarding Hearings Committee

- It is their responsibility to investigate any complaints that have been passed on to it by the Executive Committee using the procedure outlined in this document.

- Their responsibility will be to afford all individuals a fair and unbiased investigation.
- They will be responsible for recommending to the Executive if a sanction is warranted.
- They will not be responsible for imposing any sanctions; this will be the sole responsibility of the Club Executive Committee.

Hearings Committee

Will comprise the following:

- The Senior Club Chairperson
- The LGFA Club Chairperson
- The bord na nOg Secretary

Procedure

The disciplinary procedure will be defined in 3 categories: Player, Mentor and Parent.

Procedure for Player indiscipline

1. When dealing with a minor breach of discipline, team mentors are responsible for disciplinary matters within their own group. They can do this by speaking directly to the player.
2. If discipline is continuously breached, the mentor should advise the parent(s) or guardian to resolve the issue.
3. If the matter still cannot be resolved, or there is a serious breach of discipline, the mentor should report the matter to the relevant person, as outlined below in the section 'Making a Complaint'. As outlined above, the Hearings Committee will investigate the matter and report back to the Club Executive with its findings and recommendations.

Procedure for Mentor indiscipline

1. If a player, parent(s)/ Guardian, co-mentor, or club member feels a minor breach of discipline has occurred, they should speak directly to the mentor in question. A juvenile player should do this in the presence of a parent/ guardian.
2. If there is an alleged serious breach of discipline or a continuous breach of discipline, the player, parent(s)/ Guardian, co-mentor or member should make a complaint as outlined in the section below called 'Making a Complaint'. The Hearings Committee, as outlined above, will investigate the matter and revert to the Club Executive with their findings and recommendations.

Procedure for Parents Indiscipline

1. When dealing with a minor breach of discipline, team mentors are responsible for dealing with disciplinary matters within their own group. They can do this by speaking directly to their parents.
2. If there is an alleged serious or continuous breach of discipline, the mentor, player, or member should make a complaint, as outlined in the section below, 'Making a Complaint.' The Hearings Committee, as outlined above, will investigate the matter and report to the Club Executive with its findings and recommendations.

Sanctions

1. If it has been established that a breach of discipline has occurred, the Executive Committee, through the Club Secretary, will notify the person of any sanction being imposed on them.

2. The person will also be informed of their right to appeal any sanction within a given timeframe.

Appeals

1. If a player, mentor, or parent(s)/ Guardian is unhappy with the outcome of the investigation, a personal hearing will be granted if a request is made in writing to the Club Secretary. The request can be sent electronically to the secretary at Secretary.charlestown.mayo@gaa.ie. In the case of a juvenile player, the request should be made through their parent(s)/ guardian.

Making a Complaint

All complaints should be submitted in writing or verbally. If a written complaint is submitted, it must be sent to one of the following Club Officers using the following email address.

- The Club Secretary at Secretary.charlestown.mayo@gaa.ie
- The Club Juvenile Secretary at charlestownbordnanog@gmail.com
- The Children's Officer at childrensofficer.charlestown.mayo@gaa.ie

If you wish to make a complaint verbally, please contact either the Club Secretary or Club Juvenile Secretary for details on who to contact.

3.7 Recruitment of Coaches, Mentors and Volunteers

From their early years to their late teens young people continue to gain from the knowledge, experience and skills that adults, acting in a coaching role, bring in the promotion of our Gaelic Games. Such support gives these children a sense of achievement, an opportunity to develop their individual and team skills, and promotes a sense of fun and fair play in our underage games. This support, led primarily by adults who work in a voluntary capacity, must always be delivered in accordance with Association Child Safeguarding guidance and acceptable standards of coaching. We greatly rely on the support of adults, whether it is parents or coaches, who give freely of their time to our juvenile structures and underage membership, but equally recognise that their contribution must always be in accordance with our own guidance and statutory requirements.

Those who promote our games primarily at the club level have a responsibility to young people and to their parents and guardians to ensure that our coaches and mentors, who have been chosen to work in a supervisory and supportive capacity with children and young people, are selected supported and trained to fulfil their roles in a careful, sensible and effective manner.

This unique bond in sports is based on a trusting and mutually respectful relationship and can be enhanced by the recruitment, selection and up-skilling of adults who are suitable for such roles. While the role of the adult may vary from team to team and from age group to age group it is, however, essential that regardless of such variations in role that adults are fully aware at the

outset as to what is expected of them, what support they will receive and what levels of responsibility they themselves have on behalf of the team, the club, the parents and the young people in their care. This we can achieve by adopting good practice procedures and adhering to our Code of Behaviour when we recruit our managers, coaches and other personnel who work with children and young people on our behalf. Statutory guidance and legislative requirements are now more stringent when recruiting adults to work with children.

These requirements apply to our club as they do to all sports bodies, youth clubs, or other recreational or educational services. Our club is duty-bound to ensure that all adults who work with children and young people in our club are carefully chosen to carry out whatever tasks we ask of them.

This Code of Behaviour (Underage) affirms the policy position that all coaches who work with children and young people must:

- Undergo vetting or police background checks
- Must attend relevant child safeguarding training as approved by the GAA
- Must obtain a minimum coaching qualification

The following recruitment and selection guidelines are implemented as a support mechanism to ensure that those recruited adhere to the best possible standards, we have adopted to ensure that our Games are played and promoted in an enjoyable, safe, and developmental environment.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

All adults who have undertaken a role of responsibility with children and young people, whether in a paid or unpaid capacity, undergo a recruitment and selection procedure prior to commencing their role. The recruitment of adults to work with underage teams is coordinated by the bord na nÓg Clubs Executive Committee, with the advice or involvement of the Children's Officer. All such recruitment is done confidentially. The following procedures assist the club when choosing to place coaches and other personnel in the position to which they are best suited.

ROLE CLARIFICATION

The role and responsibilities envisaged, e.g. manager, coach, and the team's age group, are clearly known and stated at the outset. Any specific levels of experience or qualifications required are also clarified at the outset.

ROLE ASSISTANCE

The various supports available via the club, such as Foundation Level Coaching and Child Safeguarding Training, are basic good practice coaching requirements for adults who wish to work with underage teams to promote our Gaelic Games.

APPLICATION FORM

Applicants should complete an application form prior to commencing any coaching role.

REFERENCES

Applicants should submit references. These may refer to the person's character and, if applicable, to their previous background in sports and in Gaelic Games. References should be verified.

3.7.1 Vetting and Safeguarding

All applicants are required to complete Garda Vetting and/or Police Checks, as appropriate, before their role(s) begins with young people in the club.

CHILD SAFEGUARDING TRAINING AND COACHING QUALIFICATION

All people working with underage players must undertake recognised Child Safeguarding Training as promoted by the Gaelic Games Associations and possess a coaching qualification.

MEET THE APPLICANT

Club representatives meet with applicants to ensure that they are aware of the role(s) allocated to them. They may use this opportunity to clarify any issues that may arise and identify any coaching or up-skilling needs as appropriate.

SUPPORT AND REVIEW

Continuous support is available to all coaches, etc., so as to enable them to fulfil their roles as requested. The role of the Club 'Coiste na nÓg' and of the Club Children's Officer co-ordinate such support. The club reviews the role of all coaches annually.

VETTING IN THE GAELIC GAMES ASSOCIATIONS

The Gaelic Games Associations comprising of the GAA, LGFA, Camogie, Rounders and Handball Associations, have a long-established principle of vetting any person who, on our behalf works with children or vulnerable adults in any of our Associations. This principle is enshrined in the rule through our Code of Behaviour (Underage) and has become part of the overall recruitment and selection process for those who wish to work with children in our Associations, whether it be in a voluntary or paid role. For clarification, the GAA administers vetting for GAA Clubs and members.

The GAA does not provide a vetting service for members of the public, but if a non-member has been invited to coach or train under-18-year-olds, they may avail of the GAA's vetting services. The Association's vetting services are currently overseen by its Offices in Croke Park.

LEGISLATION

The National Vetting Bureau (Children & Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 - 2016 commenced on 29th April 2016, and from that date, a statutory obligation was placed upon our Associations to ensure that all persons who, on our behalf, undertake 'relevant work' with children are vetted prior to taking up that role in Ireland. The Act also established the National Vetting Bureau (NVB) to oversee the e-vetting services previously administered by the Garda Central Vetting Unit.

WHO NEEDS TO BE VETTED?

In the Gaelic Games Associations, any person who carries out a role of responsibility such as coaching, managing or training underage teams or, indeed, adult teams that contain any player under 18 yrs. of age must be vetted. This requirement also applies to organising underage

activities or refereeing underage games, to bus drivers employed by a club or a team and to physios working with our underage players. Thereafter, each club shall decide if the other specific roles merit a person being vetted.

IS IT AN OFFENCE TO WORK WITH CHILDREN IF YOU ARE NOT VETTED?

It is a criminal offence for a person acting on behalf of the Gaelic Games Associations to permit any person to commence working with children on our behalf without that person first obtaining a vetting disclosure from the National Vetting Bureau in respect of the role of which they have been recruited. It is also a breach of Association rules if you are working with children or vulnerable adults on behalf of any of our Associations and have not been vetted.

WHAT IF THE VETTING APPLICANT IS UNDER 18 YRS. OF AGE?

Gaelic Games Association's vetting is available to any person over 16 who is fulfilling a role of responsibility with children or vulnerable adults. For persons between 16 and 18, a parental consent form, the NVB Parent/Guardian Consent Form, must be completed in advance of applying.

E-VETTING IN THE GAELIC GAMES ASSOCIATIONS

The following outlines the vetting process carried out by the National Vetting Bureau in collaboration with the GAA via what is termed an online or E-Vetting system. Since the Vetting Acts came into being on 29 April 2016, our Associations have replaced previous 'paper vetting applications' with the new online or E-vetting system.

HOW CAN A MEMBER AVAIL OF THE GAA E-VETTING SERVICES?

Please contact the Charlestown Sarsfields bord na nÓg for more information

charlestownbordnanog@gmail.com

RECOGNITION OF VETTING BETWEEN EACH OF THE GAELIC GAMES ASSOCIATIONS

A long-standing agreement between each of the Gaelic Games Associations, any person vetted by, for example, the GAA will have their vetting outcome recognised by the LGFA, Camogie, Rounders, and Handball and will not have to undertake additional vetting by either of these Associations. A reciprocal arrangement exists between each of the Associations.

RE-VETTING

The Vetting Act provides for the re-vetting of all applicants. The Gaelic Games Associations' Vetting Policy stipulates that as part of our good practice procedures, members shall be re-vetted at a minimum within a three-year period. A vetting acceptance letter issued by the GAA shall cease to be valid three years after the date of issue.

3.7.2 Club Children's Officer

The appointment of Children's Officers is essential in creating a quality atmosphere and establishing a child and youth-centered ethos within the Charlestown Sarsfields Club. The role of Children's Officer has continued to evolve as we observe greater diligence in our work with children, as we oversee the implementation of mandatory requirements for coaches and Clubs and as legislation and statutory guidance guide us in our roles. The Children's Officer has now become a central and key figure in ensuring that the club implements our legal responsibilities when working with children. While deemed essential, the appointment of a Children's Officer is

also a mandatory requirement. These Officers fulfil a key role at Club level and are members of the relevant Club Executive.

Charlestown Sarsfields is committed to creating and maintaining the safest environment for all young people participating in our Games and activities. In our work with young people and adults, several national policy documents and requirements act as a resource and govern our commitments. The Children's Officer is responsible for ensuring that each of these policy requirements is made known to our membership and is adhered to and implemented.

- **Code of Behaviour (Underage)** – developed as a joint policy document by the Gaelic Athletic Association, the Camogie Association, the Ladies Football Association, the GAA Rounders and GAA Handball Ireland. The Code of Behaviour (Underage) is a major reference and policy publication covering many aspects of good practice procedures required in running the local Club and outlines each association's responsibilities and procedures for dealing with the welfare and safety of underage players when playing our games and participating in our activities. This Code outlines the minimum level of good practice behaviour and practice that we require of our underage players, their parents/guardians, our Clubs, our coaches and supporters Please visit <https://charlestowngaa.com/bord-na-nog/child-safeguarding/> to review the GAA Code of Behaviour Booklet
- **Safeguarding Training Workshops**—The Gaelic Games Associations have developed three levels of child safeguarding training for our members, based on and reflecting similar training programmes initiated by Sport Ireland.

- **Safeguarding 1** The Child Protection in Sport Awareness workshop for coaches and others who work with children.
- **Safeguarding 2** is the workshop for Club Children's Officers.
- **Safeguarding 3** is the Designated Liaison Person workshop.

The Club Children's Officer Duties

- The Club Children's Officers assist in promoting a child and youth-centred ethos in the Club.
- The Club Children's Officer is the link between the children/young people and the adults within the Club and shall be the primary protagonist of the Code of Behaviour (Underage) in the Club.

In taking up this role, the Club Children's Officer will:

- Have good communication skills, be approachable and open-minded
- Have knowledge of and be familiar with our Child Welfare and Protection Codes and

Guidelines

- Understand relevant child welfare/protection legislation
- Have undertaken a Garda Vetting/Access NI/CRB check relevant to their jurisdiction
- Have attended the relevant awareness training on child welfare and protection and availed of Children's Officer training

Children's Officer Role

- The key role of the Club Children's Officer is to ensure the implementation and promotion of the relevant Child Welfare and Protection Codes and Guidelines for good practice in their Club to ensure that young people can participate, enjoy and benefit from our Gaelic Games in safe and enjoyable surroundings.

- The Code of Behaviour (Underage) is the agreed good practice reference and policy document that is central to guiding the Children's Officers in their roles.

Responsibilities

- Promote awareness of the joint Code of Behaviour (Underage) within the Club
- Ensure that all persons, in accordance with their allocated roles, fulfil their vetting, child safeguarding and coach educational requirements as appropriate
- Identify the need and facilitate the delivery of Child Protection in Sport Awareness Workshops and other relevant Child Protection and Welfare training within the Club
- Distribute and oversee the implementation of the Code of Behaviour – when working with underage players and ensure in so far as possible, that all Players, Coaches, Team Mentors, Parents, Guardians, Officials and Spectators adhere to the Code
- Promote an Anti-Bullying ethos in the Club and deal with instances or allegations of Bullying in a fair, impartial and constructive manner and in collaboration with others as appropriate
- Display the Association's Anti-Bullying Statement and ensure it is adopted at the Club level
- Ensure that each underage member signs and submits an annual membership form and a parental consent form as required (away trips, etc.) and that the necessary medical information of an underage player, as deemed relevant, is made known to the Club and/or the team coaches
- Support the implementation of the RESPECT initiative at the Club level in cooperation with team personnel, underage members, referees, spectators, parents/ guardians and the Club Executive

- Influence policy and practice in the Club to prioritise the needs of our underage players and make an annual report at the Club AGM
- Promote greater consultation with underage players and participation by them in Club activities and planning and that young people are afforded the opportunity to express concerns about their sports activities/experiences within the Club
- Encourage the involvement of parents/guardians in organising Club activities
- Develop good practice procedures in the recruitment and selection of persons working with young people in the Club
- Retain Vetting ID documentation of Club members as part of the vetting process if required
- Oversee the implementation of Garda Vetting/Access NI/CRB checks, as appropriate and for relevant personnel, within the Club
- Monitor, in association with team coaches, any significant trends or developments relating to the participation of young people in Gaelic Games and report accordingly to the Club Executive or Management Committee
- Maintain ongoing contact with the County Board Children's Officer and with other Club Children's Officers and, as required, with the National Children's Officer
- Report regularly to the Club Executive as required
- Deal with breaches of the Code of Behaviour (Underage) as per relevant guidelines
- Make referrals of alleged allegations of abuse to the Club Designated Person
- Oversee the carrying out of the annual risk assessment procedure and thereafter put an agreed Child Safeguarding Statement on display in the Club.

Whatever a person's role in our club, they are, where applicable, required to attend the relevant

training as provided. Training developed and delivered by the Gaelic Games Associations also reflects the statutory legislation and guidance for the jurisdiction in which it is delivered.

- **Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment** – Each year, our club shall be obliged to carry out a risk assessment procedure and thereafter put on display an agreed
- **Child Safeguarding Statement.** Much of this work shall be overseen or directed by the relevant Children’s Officer in cooperation with the Club Executive.
- **Recruitment criteria for coaches** – The relevant Children’s Officer shall ensure that all coaches fulfil the following requirements:
 - Have undertaken Vetting (Garda/Police) checks as directed by their Association within the jurisdiction in which they operate
 - Attend relevant child safeguarding training
 - Possess a coaching qualification relevant to their role as recognised by their Association
 - Have signed the Joint Code of Behaviour
- **Relationship with Designated Liaison Person** – The Children’s Officer should develop an understanding of roles and a good working relationship with their Club or County Designated Liaison Person. While both roles are part of the Association’s child safeguarding strategies, they may be an issue or area of work that could overlap at any time.

For details on the appointed Children’s Officer in the Charlestown Sarsfields Club visit

<https://charlestowngaa.com/bord-na-nog/board-na-nog-committee/>

3.7.3 Designated Liaison Person

The Designated Liaison Person at Club level, appointed by the Club Executive Committee, is responsible for dealing with concerns relating to the possible abuse of children. The appointed person must complete the Gaelic Games Designated Liaison Persons Safeguarding Training workshop, regardless of any external prior training or additional qualifications, and can approach child welfare and protection matters in a sensible, balanced, facilitative and non-threatening manner and should be aware of the responsibilities that they are required to fulfil on behalf of the Club and their Association.

The DLP must be familiar with the safeguarding and child welfare roles and responsibilities of statutory authorities and agencies within their jurisdiction and with the role of the National Designated Person and Mandated Persons. It is important to note that the Designated Liaison Person does not have a counselling or therapeutic role or a responsibility for investigating or validating child protection concerns within the Club or County. If the Club DLP is conflicted in relation to the parties to or the subject matter of an allegation/concern, the matter should be referred to the Deputy DLP. If, for whatever reason, the Deputy DLP may also be conflicted, then the matter should be notified to the Chairperson of the Club, and a temporary DLP should be appointed to address the matter or refer it to the National DLP for their consideration.

The Club Designated Liaison Person is responsible for ensuring the reporting of allegations or suspicions of child abuse to Tusla and/or An Garda Síochána, having established reasonable grounds for concern.

THE CLUB-DESIGNATED LIAISON PERSON SHALL:

- Be aware and committed to the Association's Guidance for Dealing with & Reporting Allegations or concerns of Abuse and our Code of Behaviour (Underage)
- Have knowledge of relevant child protection and safeguarding legislation in the jurisdiction in which they operate
- Have a knowledge of categories and indicators of abuse
- Undertake relevant child safeguarding training (Safeguarding 1 & 3)
- Be aware of local contacts and services in relation to child protection i.e., principal and duty social workers and their contact details, Gardai/Tusla/Gateway teams
- Consult informally with statutory authorities on child abuse concerns or allegations, if deemed necessary
- Communicate with parents and/or Statutory Agencies as and when appropriate
- Follow reporting procedures and inform Statutory Agencies and their Association's DLP/Mandated Person of any concerns or allegations as a matter of urgency
- Maintain regular contact with their National DLP/Mandated Person and seek their advice whenever required
- When reasonable grounds for concern exist where a child may have been, is being or is at risk of being abused, a report should be made without delay to Tusla and/or An Garda Síochána or to the relevant Gateway Team
- A report may be made by the Club DLP or the County DLP, as appropriate, or as a joint report with a Mandated Person (ROI) and must be done without delay
- Always forward a copy of reported concerns and allegations received, whether reported to statutory authorities or not, to your Association's DLP/Mandated Person
- Advise club administrators on issues of confidentiality, record keeping & data protection
- Inform the National DLP/Mandated Person if you are aware that a member of the Association in the Club is or has been subject to a statutory investigation, a prosecution or a conviction in relation to the abuse of a child or an adult

- Be aware of and maintain regular contact with their National DLP/Mandated Person and always inform the National DLP/Mandated Person of any concerns or reports made and seek advice from the National DLP/Mandated Person as appropriate
- Make themselves known to the general membership of the Club and in particular, to team mentors, managers and parents

For details on the appointed DLP in the Charlestown Sarsfields Club, visit

<https://charlestowngaa.com/bord-na-nog/board-na-nog-committee/>

3.8 Additional Club Policies

In addition to our standard club policies, there are further additional policies which are applicable

3.8.1 Players Injury Scheme & Insurance

The Gaelic Games Associations provide injury benefit funds or schemes in the case of members of the GAA and Ladies Gaelic Football Associations.

GAA INJURY BENEFIT FUND

WHAT IS THE GAA INJURY BENEFIT FUND?

The mandatory benefit fund provides benefits to registered members playing the national games of Hurling, Gaelic Football, Handball and Rounders' whose Clubs are registered with the fund.

The GAA Injury Benefit Fund is a Self-funded benefit fund funded entirely from GAA funds with no outside involvement. The GAA Injury Benefit Fund does not seek to compensate fully for Injuries sustained but to supplement other Schemes such as Personal Accident or

Health Insurance. Playing our national games involves the risk of injury, and each registered player is responsible for familiarising themselves with the terms and benefits of the GAA Injury Benefit Fund. The Injury Benefit Fund only covers unrecoverable losses up to the specified limits. The responsibility to ensure adequate cover lies with the individual member, and members should not use the fund as their only recourse or depend on it to fully compensate them for any losses associated with the injury sustained.

WHO IS COVERED UNDER THE GAA INJURY BENEFIT FUND?

The GAA Injury Benefit Fund only applies to:

1. Registered Players, as per the Official Guide, who play on a team registered with the GAA Injury Benefit Fund who incur accidental bodily injury* while playing Hurling, Gaelic Football, Handball or Rounders' only, either in the course of an official competitive Fixture or an Official Sanctioned challenge match or the course of an official supervised training session.
2. Match officials' i.e. referees, linesmen or umpires injured while officiating at an official competitive fixture of Hurling, Handball, Gaelic Football or Rounders' as specified in 1.1 above.
3. Voluntary coaches, team managers, selectors and members of official team parties injured during games or training, as specified in point 1 above

The GAA Injury Benefit Fund covers Adult and Youth members of the GAA. Please note that the GAA Membership Year runs from January 1st – December 31st annually, and it is

The official guide requires that all members register annually through the Membership system. Playing Members are not permitted to participate in training or fixtures until they have registered for the current playing year.

When a player is injured at any official GAA training or matches:

- They should **IMMEDIATELY** inform the Manager **AND** the Club Secretary
- If medical attention is required, this should be sought immediately
- The Club Secretary will keep an ongoing record of all incidents reported to him.
- Once injured, a player must not resume training or matches until fully fit. Returning to active duty prematurely may result in the Administrators refusing to pay for a subsequent related injury.
- Players with injuries which may require medical expenses and/or possible absence from work **MUST** complete the appropriate GAA Injury Scheme form (www.gaa.ie) with the required signatures and submit in hard copy to the Club Secretary within 45 days of the injury. The Club Secretary will ensure the forms are submitted to initiate a claim if appropriate. Outstanding documentation, such as receipts or medical letters, can be forwarded at a later date. Any person not doing this will **NOT** be eligible for reimbursement of expenses from the GAA Injury Scheme or Charlestown Sarsfields GAA club
- Incidents brought to the club's attention after 60 days cannot be sent to the GAA Injury Scheme.
- A copy of the Referee's Report must accompany each claim. If a player is injured during a match, it **MUST** be brought to the attention of the referee at the end of the game so

that it is in the referee's report. There must be a record of when and where the incident occurred. A referee's report for a match or a manager's report from a training session is required. For a claim to proceed to the GAA Injury Scheme, there must be a record of when and where the incident occurred. If an incident is not reported to the match referee, then a claim cannot be put forward to the GAA Injury Scheme, and the Club will not be held accountable for any medical expenses on foot of the incident. The injured player/parent's sole responsibility is to record the initial incident/injury.

- There is no cover for injuries sustained at unauthorized/unofficial competitions or training sessions.

Players and Mentors must take all reasonable precautions to ensure injuries are minimised (e.g., mouth guard and appropriate footwear).

ACUTE INJURIES:

Players should attend either:

- Local Injury Unit, Mayo General Hospital
- Your own GP
- Accident and Emergency. Players are reminded that attending Accident and Emergency with a referral letter from their G.P. will reduce waiting times & incur only G.P. visit cost.
- Charlestown Sarsfields agree to reimburse players G.P. fee/A&E fee (receipt required) for players injured at either official GAA training/matches, when appropriate receipts are presented to the Club Secretary. The Accident and Emergency Department charge

- (€100) will be paid in full only where it was deemed necessary to attend A&E directly and only where it cannot be reclaimed from your own insurance.
- Charlestown Sarsfields will only reimburse fees to access the public health service. If a player opts to attend a private Health Clinic (e.g. The Galway Clinic), then Charlestown Sarsfields will only reimburse the equivalent Emergency Department charge (i.e. €100). Players with private medical insurance may have coverage to attend some of these clinics, but it is each player's responsibility to consult their own policy and perhaps contact the clinic prior to attending. For players wishing to claim against the GAA Injury Scheme and who also have private health insurance (VHI, Brennan's Insurances Personal Accident Scheme for school-going children, etc.), a claim must be made to your private insurance before claiming against the GAA Injury Scheme. If the private policy covers the claim, that is the matter's end. However, if there is an excess on the private policy, which exceeds the claim, then the GAA Injury Scheme will accept the claim. A statement of account outlining their position on the claim will be required from the private health insurer if you wish to claim through the GAA Scheme.

CLAIMS PROCESS

Please contact Secretary.charlestown.mayo@gaa.ie for more information

3.8.2 Alcohol & Substance Abuse Policy

The use of drugs and tobacco and misuse of alcohol is not permitted by any members, players, coaches or volunteers whilst representing teams associated with Charlestown Sarsfields GAA club. Charlestown Sarsfields GAA club believe that we need to work towards creating a safe, healthy club environment where we can develop the skills and attitudes necessary to cope with drug and alcohol-related issues. All Club members, officials, coaches and volunteers as part of this club shall follow the law when it comes to illegal drugs, alcohol and tobacco and shall display leadership and good example, particularly when dealing with underage members. This policy shall apply to all users of the club buildings and grounds.

Aims and Objectives

The aim of this policy is to ensure that all GAA members in our club are kept safe from substance-related harm when involved in club activities.

Our objectives are:

- To promote the health and well-being of all club members.
- To adopt a consistent approach to drug-related issues by all club members.
- To develop procedures and protocols that address drug-related issues in the club.
- To establish clear procedures for managing specific incidents of suspected drug misuse.
- To provide onward referral to specialist services for members presenting with Substance-related issues.

Scope & Limitations

Cumann Lúthchleas Gael is committed to discouraging the use of drugs and tobacco and the misuse of alcohol on the basis that such activity is incompatible with a healthy approach to sporting activity. It understands that such behaviours can have detrimental social and health consequences on the individuals involved, and on those to whom they are connected.

Charlestown Sarsfields GAA club believes that we must work towards creating a safe, healthy club environment where we can develop the skills and attitudes necessary to enjoy our health to the fullest. All club members, officials, coaches, and volunteers shall follow the law regarding illegal substances, tobacco, and alcohol and shall display leadership and good example, particularly when dealing with underage members. This policy applies to all members and users of the club's buildings and grounds.

This policy has been kept as succinct as possible for practical purposes. It was developed from a template provided by the GAA's Community & Health department (see www.gaa.ie/community for more information on substance use).

Definition of Drugs

For the purpose of this policy, the term 'substance' shall be used to cover any chemical which alters how the body works or how the person behaves or feels and may include all mood-altering substances, both legal and illegal. Examples include:

- Alcohol and Tobacco
- Over-the-counter medicines that may be misused, such as those containing codeine (e.g. Solpadeine), paracodal, cough medicines, antihistamines, laxatives, paracetamol.

- Volatile substances such as aerosols, glues, petrol, cigarette lighter fuels etc.
- Products and substances sold online and in “headshops” that cause intoxication.
- Controlled drugs like cannabis, ecstasy, amphetamines, magic mushrooms, cocaine, etc.
- Performance enhancing sports related drugs as outlined by the World Anti-Doping Agency, and covered under Rule 1.16 of the Official Guide Book (for more information, see <https://www.gaa.ie/my-gaa/players/anti-doping>)

List of actions (these are recommended, and others can be inserted as required)

The Chairperson and Executive of the club shall adopt and implement actions from the following list, taking into account available resources and support.

Charlestown Sarsfields GAA club shall take the following actions:

- Adhere to GAA Rules 1.18 (l) (i) & (ii) prohibiting the sponsorship of teams catering exclusively for young players under 18 years of age by alcohol companies, including the branding of any gear and equipment.
- Club members, officials, coaches and volunteers shall not present themselves at official club activities while under the influence of alcohol or any other substances (unless previously declared and prescribed by a medical professional). Where alcohol is being served at an official club function, it must be consumed responsibly.
- Coaches and Club Officials shall not smoke/vape, drink alcohol, or use any other substances (unless previously declared and prescribed by a medical professional) while representing their club at matches or training sessions.

- All efforts shall be made to ensure Under 18 players/members are not brought to public houses following matches, outings, or training sessions.
- Alcohol shall not be served at functions exclusively for players aged under 18
- Every effort will be made to ensure juvenile medal ceremonies and other juvenile events are not held in public houses.
- Illegal substances, tobacco and alcohol will not be permitted in changing rooms or at pitch-sides.

All persons associated with our club can help prevent substance-related harm from occurring during club activities.

Recommended roles within the Charlestown Sarsfields GAA club

Club Members

- Will be aware of the details of and adhere to the club's Substance Use Policy

Parents and Guardians

- Will support the club in the development and implementation of this policy including procedures for handling incidents of suspected substance use.

Coaches & Mentors

- Will be aware of the possibility of substance use among players and work with the Club Chairperson and Executives with the aim of preventing harm.

Club Chairperson and Executive

- All relevant information about a potential breach of this policy should be brought to the attention of the Club Chairperson. The chairperson shall consult with the necessary parties and informed by this policy, decide on the appropriate action, if any. If the Chairperson is not available to discharge these duties, this responsibility will then fall to the Vice Chairperson or Secretary.

Education programme about drugs and alcohol

- The Club Chairperson and Executive shall decide with local drug, alcohol, youth or health promotion services to provide drug education for interested youths and adults associated with the club. More information can be found at www.gaa.ie/community

Protocol for dealing with incidents:

Charlestown Sarsfields GAA club shall endeavour to respond to all substance-related incidents in a firm but fair manner, with due respect for the safety and welfare of individuals involved, other members of the club and the wider community and shall also fulfil any legal obligations that might apply. The points below offer guidance to the club in handling incidents involving illicit drugs both during club activities and relating to members in a wider societal context.

- The use of illicit drugs is viewed as unacceptable by Charlestown Sarsfields GAA club and may be dealt with by way of warnings, suspensions and expulsions as deemed appropriate by the decision of the County Executive, on a case-by-case basis, with proportionality considered. It is also unacceptable for members or officials to present

themselves for county duties while under the influence of a drug. (Suspension, if issued, will mean that the member involved cannot represent the club in any way during their term of suspension.) Considerations may be made for incidents involving members that occur outside official county activities or events.

- In a case where a club becomes aware that a member has been charged with the illegal supply of drugs, the Club Executive will ask this individual to stand aside from club activities until the matter has been dealt with in a court of law, notwithstanding the individual's right of a presumption of innocence until proven guilty. (Where it is known that a club member is being charged with the illegal supply of drugs, the matter must be brought to the attention of the Community & Health Department in Croke Park, who can give guidance on the appropriate response on a case-by-case basis.)
- Members of the Club Executive should arrange to meet with those involved in an incident concerning this policy. Details recorded in critical incident forms should be discussed, and appropriate support should be offered to those involved. The same members of the executive should also consider a separate meeting with the club members who have negatively impacted the club in relation to drug, alcohol or tobacco use. Consideration should be given to the health and well-being of the person, with signposting to appropriate drug, alcohol and psychological supports. (See contacts at end of the policy). It should be made clear to all parties involved that media requests should be handled by Croke Park Head Quarters.

Appeal and Review process

A suspended member has the right to appeal to the Hearings Committee of the County Executive, where a member of the Club Executive and the suspended member will be heard. Normal Standing orders will apply to such a meeting.

Reporting of Incidents

Alleged or confirmed incidents of breach of this policy shall be referred to the Club Chairperson and, if they apply to Children under 18, to the Children's Officer of Bord na nOg. Matters relating to the supply of drugs MUST also be brought to the attention of the chair of the County Health and wellbeing Committee, who can give guidance on the appropriate response on a case-by-case basis.

Recording of Information

Information regarding alleged or confirmed incidents in breach of this policy shall be recorded in writing. The recording of information only is recommended, and all opinions shall be stated as such. Responses to cases shall also be recorded in this way. Only in confirmed cases shall the names of individuals be recorded.

Confidentiality

While guaranteeing is impossible, every effort shall be made to respect confidentiality.

Involving Parents/Guardians

Incidents involving any person under 18 years of age will require their parents/guardians to be informed. Parents/guardians shall be invited to discuss what has happened and shall be

informed of any course of action to be taken by the club. The Club Chairperson shall nominate a person to inform parents/guardians in each case.

Garda Síochána

Incidents that involve the illegal supply of drugs shall require Garda Síochána involvement. In all other drug-related incidents, each case shall be considered on an individual basis and the decision shall rest with the Club Chairperson on whether the Garda Síochána is involved.

Media guidelines

Any incident that attracts or potentially attracts media interest or attention should be reported to Croke Park. The club will not engage in any discourse with the media, rather should signpost them to the Communications Department in Croke Park. Email: communications@gaa.ie

Search

The Club Chairperson retains the right to direct a search of any part of club property if there is reasonable cause to believe a substance in breach of this policy is contained therein. Two officials of the club shall conduct the search. Club officials are not allowed to search an individual or their personal property. Where there is reasonable cause to believe a person has in their possession a substance in breach of this policy, they shall be asked to volunteer the substance. If they refuse, the Garda Síochána may be called in to conduct a search.

Disposing of suspected illegal substances

If a suspected illegal substance is found on club property, it should be brought to the attention of the Club Chairperson. The substance should be stored securely, and the Chairperson shall contact Garda Síochána to collect it or inform them who from the club will deliver it to them and when. Two club officials will record and witness any movement of suspected illegal substances shall be recorded and witnessed by two club officials. At no time should a suspected illegal substance be removed from club property without the knowledge of the Garda Síochána.

Dealing with drug litter/paraphernalia

Drug paraphernalia, when it is not disposed of properly, is known as drug litter. Drug paraphernalia is any equipment or material that is used for making, using or carrying drugs. Some such materials can pose considerable health risks (especially syringes). To find out more about the proper disposal of such materials, see: <http://www.drugs.ie/resources/dealing-with-drug-litter/safe-disposal-ofdrug-litter-and-paraphernalia/>

Availability, use and storage of solvents and gases

Many solvent-based products have the potential to be abused (e.g. deodorants, paints, thinners, cleaning fluids, etc). All solvent-based materials and gases shall be stored securely and safely away from public access.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy is always in force and during all activities conducted under the aegis of Cumann

Lúthchleas Gael. This policy shall be evaluated annually and after every drug-related incident. This policy shall come into effect on 01\01\2026 and shall be reviewed annually thereafter by the Club Executive Committee

3.8.3 Away Trips, Hosting & Transport

Many teams and Clubs participate in trips away from home throughout the year. These trips are seen as an additional to the regular games that take place as part of a County fixtures schedule or during inter Club blitzes. Trips away from home are often viewed as a means by which young teams and players may be rewarded for their endeavours at the end of their season or as a means by which greater team morale and camaraderie can be developed, regardless of age. An example of rewarding a team or organising a trip is inviting the team or several teams to attend intercounty matches. This is a popular means by which young people may see and attend games where their chosen code is played at a high level of skill and competitiveness. Visiting other Clubs and playing matches against teams of a similar age group in other areas or counties will also give younger players an insight into the broad geographical nature and community ethos attached to our Games while creating greater camaraderie with their colleagues and within their own Clubs. The pre-planning and detailed organising of such trips for younger players will require a high degree of care and preparation and adults should always remember the key roles of responsibilities they have during such trips on behalf of their Club, on behalf of parents and on behalf of the young people themselves.

PRE-TRIP PREPARATIONS

- A detailed programme of activities should be approved in advance at the Club level after agreement with the other Club(s) involved in the away trip.
- Where possible a member of your organising group should be familiar with the away venue, visit the venue in advance if deemed necessary and ensure that the venue can cater for the planned programme of activities. This is particularly relevant should an overnight stay be required. A full review of the premises/venue should be carried out to ensure it is suitable from a child safeguarding perspective and if any associated risks identified please highlight to Clubs Children Officer in advance of confirming trip
- Parental/guardian consent must be obtained in writing so as to permit any young person under 18 years. of age participate in any organised trip. Contact details for all parents/guardians must be obtained in advance of the trip.
- Young people (of an appropriate age) and their parents/guardians should sign a form agreeing to abide by the programme and any agreed-upon procedures related to the organised trip.
- An agreed Code of Behaviour, specifically designed for the trip, should be discussed, outlined and agreed upon with all players and adults who are participating in the trip.
- Medical information deemed relevant by the parents/guardians of players should be made known to the leaders of the Club's trip and what action, if any, may be required of them in the case of an emergency. (See Appendix 1)
- Such information, including food or other related allergies, should have previously been recorded on the annual/registration form of each underage Club member

- A detailed programme which includes the following should be presented to all players and their parents/ guardians: **(Please see Away Trip Consent Form in Appendices section 5.4)**
 - A time schedule of departure and arrival at your destination.
 - Full information about the trip; including all activities and events planned.
 - Emergency contact numbers of Club personnel who are accompanying the group
 - During the trip, contact details for parents/guardians must be provided
 - All adults accompanying the underage team should be made aware of what their responsibilities are and what role(s) they may have during the trip.
 - It is the Club's responsibility to ensure that the trip itself and all activities taking place throughout the trip adhere to insurance cover, that all participants are eligible members of their Association's relevant injury scheme and that the activities of the trip do not compromise the conditions of their injury scheme or any additional insurance policy.
 - Where necessary, the organisers of all such trips should seek the permission of their County Board before announcing the details of the programme to their members.

DURING THE TRIP

- At least one individual with first aid qualifications must be part of the organising group and be present or available throughout the trip.
- Young people must be adequately supervised throughout the trip, as per our recommended ratio of adults to young people. This ratio may differ depending on the

- age group of participants, the activities to be undertaken, whether there is an overnight stay, whether the trip is abroad, etc.
- Supervision ratios will depend on the activity's nature, the players' age and any group's special needs.
- There is a ratio of 1:10 for players under 12 years of age and 1:10 for players over 12 years of age. When abiding by such ratios, a coach must always be accompanied by at least one other suitably qualified adult.
- Club trip organisers should always ensure that additional adults accompany their group on trips away for supervision purposes and in case of emergencies or unforeseen circumstances.
- These adults are subject the same vetting and child safeguarding requirements as are coaches.
- There must be at least two adults of each gender with mixed groups.
- Adults are required to be familiar with the agreed rules on smoking and the consumption of alcohol during the trip, as outlined in the GAA Code of Behaviour. As a basic minimum, adults are required to avoid smoking while working with young players and must not consume alcohol or non-prescribed drugs while young players are in their care.

OVERNIGHT STAYS

- When participating in an overnight stay, several matters require careful preplanning and agreement

- A decision must be made by agreement with all parties, including players and parents, whether the Club will stay in a hotel or guest house or, if invited, whether the host Club will host the club members in their houses.
- Regardless of the accommodation form, adequate and specific supervisory ratios of adults to children must be agreed upon in advance. This ratio, which is very dependent on the age category of the children/young people. It may also vary if the group participates in certain outdoor activities or water sports, and it will also vary if the group is mixed gender.

HOTEL OR GUEST HOUSE ACCOMMODATION

- Check out the proposed accommodation for children/young people and Club mentors. Ensure that it complies with health and safety regulations, is accessible, is of a suitable standard, and is appropriate for the age group and event programme.
- Adults (except parents) should not share a room with a child when availing of overnight accommodation.
- If exceptional or emergency circumstances dictate and the presence of an adult is deemed necessary, more than one child should always be in the room with the adult.
- Children sharing a room must be with others of the same age, grouping, and gender.
- All children should be provided with a bed each and should not have to share a bed with another child.
- It is also preferably that rooms be shared with fellow Club members at inter-club events and that each child's parents are informed of such arrangements in advance of the trip.

HOMESTAY ACCOMMODATION

- When availing of homestay accommodation, the host Club is responsible for choosing a host family that has been recommended to them and has been satisfactorily vetted in accordance with Association requirements.
- When availing of homestay accommodation, adults (except parents) should not share a room with a child.
- If exceptional or emergency circumstances dictate and the presence of an adult is deemed necessary, more than one child should always be in the room with the adult.
- When availing of homestay accommodation, Children must not share a room with adults from the host family.
- All children should be provided with a bed each and should not have to share a bed with another child.
- Children sharing a room must be with others of the same age, grouping, and gender. It is also preferable to share rooms with fellow Club members at an inter Club event and that such arrangements are made known in advance of the trip to the child's parents.

REVIEW OF TRIP

All club participants should be involved in a full review of the trip. The review's results should be retained and reviewed when the group intends to organise another similar trip or if the Club intends to revisit the area or the host Club again.

Hosting

Hosting a scheduled game, a challenge match, an underage blitz or an inter Club tournament is now seen as a normal event for most Clubs. While such events are generally organised by age category and by code to provide inter-games and offer skill development opportunities, these events can also provide young people of all ages with a positive social experience, allowing them to gain independence within a safe environment. The safeguarding criteria and guidance that apply to away trips, recruitment, travel, health and safety also apply to hosting an event with the additional responsibility when hosting, we organise the games or the event for more than our Club or team.

Several ground rules apply to hosting an event.

1. Don't be pressured into offering to host an event if you cannot do it or if you do not have adequate resources or facilities to cater for the proposed event.
2. Be clear that you have the full support of the Club when embarking on hosting an event
3. Clarify with those that requested of you host the event (e.g. Juvenile Board, Féile Committee ...) what is required of our Club
4. Form an organising team, with a nominated person in charge, to oversee the hosting
5. Allocate specific responsibilities to each member of the organising team
6. Agree a timescale and a plan for the delivery of all of your actions (see draft action plan)
7. Agree your plan or outline your plan with the governing body who requested our Club to host the event (e.g. Juvenile Board, Féile Committee ...)
8. Meet regularly to review all work-in-progress

9. If you are providing a homestay option for guest Clubs, we must abide by the guidance given under the Home Stay Accommodation
10. Never presume that somebody else had done it!

EVENT ACTION PLAN

EVENT: INTER CLUB UNDER 14 TOURNAMENT

It is very useful to draw up an event action plan that can guide all those working on the event and serve as a checklist for the organising committee to review their progress to date.

In the Appendices (section 5.4) is the commencement of a sample Event Action Plan for an U14 Inter Club Tournament that our Club has been invited to organise by the County Board. It contains some identified actions and sufficient blank spaces for identifying and delivering other actions. You have eight weeks' notice of the event. Complete this event plan in advance of meetings and as your preparations develop and are completed.

Transport

Adequate preparation and an insistence on the use of safe transport arrangements regardless of the length of the journey are key elements of good practice when considering any trip taken by an underage team or players. This applies regardless of the length of journey or the mode of transport, whether it is public, private or personal transport. The transport arrangements for underage players are a priority safety matter for sports organisations, Clubs, parents and young people themselves. While it may be preferential to avail of private bus or coach transport, it is also recognised that in some instances, this is not feasible, and in Charlestown

Sarsfields GAA club, we could not operate without the goodwill of volunteers and parents who ensure that children are transported to an event or a match and are returned safely.

In so far as we rely on many parents to provide transport in our club the challenge we face is ensuring that all such services are provided in a safe environment that complies with our own standards of good practice and with local or national legislative requirements

It is recognised that private cars are used by people in our club and teams as a common practice when transporting children to games as part of a county fixtures schedule or as part of inter Club blitzes. It is, however, advisable, if possible, not to use members' cars when travelling on away trips of great distance. In such circumstances, the club, on occasion, will seek to avail of bus or coach transport, and it is essential that all aspects of the transport arrangements are checked out and agreed upon in advance. The safety and welfare of children are paramount and must always be considered a priority when transporting our underage players from one venue to another.

Where possible, Charlestown Sarsfield's Club endeavours to comply with the GAA travel policy as detailed in section 8 of the GAA Code of Behaviour Booklet, which can be found on <https://charlestowngaa.com/bord-na-nog/child-safeguarding/>

3.8.4 Player Pathway

Charlestown Sarsfields Bord na nÓg have developed a 'Player Pathway Programme' - 'The Sarsfields Way' which will lay out the club's vision for our underage teams. Player Pathways are, essentially, what clubs are all about. Starting at an early age, and helping players through

the various age levels, providing learning and enriching experiences for our players so that they are still playing GAA at the end of their youth careers, then also prepared and ready for the challenges they face as they progress to the adult ranks in our club. Players develop at varying rates, and we must be aware of that therefore, the “Pathway” as laid out here is a “reference point” only, and we understand and expect that coaches will use their own valuable experiences as they shape their own “team” for the season/s ahead.

The aim here is to have clear goals with visible progression through each age level that is linked via joined-up thinking within the club and relevant to our team needs for all coaches and, thereby, our players during each season. It will assist us if we all possess a clear vision or “Focus for all our Underage Activity” of what exactly we should be trying to achieve during a given season to help give credence to all this modern-day underage activity.

The Pathway sets out our vision as to how we manage and develop our underage teams and can be viewed here <https://charlestowngaa.com/bord-na-nog/>

3.8.5 Player Membership & Registration

Player registration and membership for both our senior club(s) and underage club is the lifeblood of the club. To be eligible to play for Charlestown Sarsfields, a player must be a Full or Youth Registered Member of the Club. Any non-playing members who have not paid their membership fee by the yearly deadline shall cease to be members from that date. Players who have not registered to play with the club by the deadline are not permitted to partake in official club training or matches and are not covered under the GAA.

Registration for club members is available online at www.charlestowngaa.com, and for underage players, it is on www.klubfunder.com. Committee members are available to assist with any queries about how to become a member. Once membership is paid and processed, the player will be insured to play. The application for Membership must be accompanied by full payment of the Club's Annual Subscription.

Please note that the GAA Membership Year runs from January 1st – December 31st annually and it is a requirement as per the official guide that all members are registered via the Membership system annually. Playing Members are not permitted to participate in training or fixtures until they have been registered for the current playing year.

3.8.6 Physio Policy

- Please note that Physiotherapy is **NOT** covered under the GAA Injury Scheme.
- Physiotherapy is ONLY covered under the scheme following a surgical procedure and if it is an integral part of recovery as recommended by the surgeon (a maximum of € 320 is allowed).
- Subject to the approval of the Bord na nÓg committee and Team Manager, injured players under the age of 18 are required to attend the club Physiotherapist, Alan Dunne, for injury assessment. The cost of attending the **first two physio sessions** is covered by bord na nÓg, and after that, the player will be responsible for any fees due for subsequent visits and treatments
- If a player chooses to attend a physiotherapist other than Alan Dunne, then it will be at their own expense.

NOTE: Any player undergoing treatment or concerned over any aspect of the treatment (e.g., surgery) should contact the Club Secretary immediately, who will advise of the most prudent course of action. All players should familiarise themselves with the GAA Injury Policy (<https://www.gaa.ie/my-gaa/administrators/gaa-injury-benefit-fund>) and review its features, benefits and exclusions. The Pupil Accident Policy operated by the schools (The Brennan Insurances Personal Accident Scheme for school-going children) offers cover to pupils, and we have found that claims under this scheme are very efficient. Parents interested in knowing more about the school policy should contact their son/daughters' school and find out if they have 24-hour coverage, which means that accidents occurring while playing for Charlestown Sarsfields may be covered. It will be assumed that players and the parents of juvenile players training with the club and putting themselves forward for team selection are familiar with the Players' Injury Scheme and our Club Policy on Player Injury. The GAA Scheme is NOT an insurance scheme. It is a benefit scheme for the purpose of giving an injured player a "level of support" if they have no other recourse for their medical expenses.

All physio requests must be made using the below form for review and approval. Players must not confirm or attend appointments until approval is granted by the club. Bord na nÓg will not be paying for treatment which has not been approved in advance, and all requests must come from the team manager of the individual's team. For requests to attend physio, please click on the link below to complete the form

[Physio Request Form](#)

3.8.7 Team Meals Policy

It is bord na nÓg policy, that when teams reach finals of underage county competitions, this achievement should be acknowledged and rewarded. However, there are significant costs to Bord na nÓg associated with funding team meals, and to reduce the financial burden on board na nÓg, teams are encouraged to seek sponsorship where necessary to fund team meals. In the absence of securing sponsorship for team meals, the bord na nÓg policy in this regard is as follows: Team meals in restaurants funded by the LGFA and Bord na nÓg have been discontinued from the 2024 season onwards. For teams who reach finals and wish to go to restaurants, these costs are to be covered by parents within the team group or from sponsorship by local businesses or other means. bord na nÓg or LGFA will no longer fund this type of expenditure or contribute financially towards same as it is agreed by both committees that team meals in restaurants are unnecessary for young teams. For bord na nÓg (boys teams aged 13-18) and the LGFA (girls teams aged 13-18), where applicable, bord na nÓg and the LGFA will cover the costs of pizzas for teams who reach league and championship finals for consumption in the CBD complex or club dressing rooms after finals. Please note the club has an arrangement with Claudios Takeaway for the provision of pizzas at a special reduced price. For any queries on this policy, please email charlestownbordnanog@gmail.com

Should a team qualify for a final and to arrange food, please contact the bord na nÓg secretary Neil O Connor on (086) 6000690, who will assist.

End-of-season treats & meals

For the younger age groups up to U-12 level, teams are provided with end-of-season treats for their teams, usually during their last training session. It is generally left to each team to arrange this amongst themselves. For U-6 to u-10 teams, sweet bags are provided by Bord na nÓg at the last training session. For older teams it is left to the team managers to decide what they wish to do.

3.8.8 Pitch Booking Policy

The club uses the Sportskey (formerly known as Bookapitch) pitch booking platform to reserve pitches for training and matches. The club will only accept bookings made using the app. To avoid confusion, we ask all teams in both boys' and girls' grades to book their training and match slots, when known, as soon as possible so all teams and coaches know the schedule for the weeks and months ahead.

Teams are not permitted to use any of the club pitches without a valid booking on the app.

Once a booking is made, the club will confirm or reject it, depending on pitch availability at the time. All coaches can view all bookings for the pitch on the app.

To sign up as a coach to use the app please register your details on

<https://portal.sportskey.com/venues/615>

Once a booking is made on the app a confirmation or rejection will be sent to your email account within 24 hours. If for some reason you cannot avail of your training or match pitch

booking, please cancel your booking as soon as possible so another team may be available for this slot. If a team does not utilise their slot for two weeks in a row without cancelling the slot all future bookings will be cancelled, and slots put back into the system for another team to avail of. Please note we encourage all teams to be consistent with their weekly pitch bookings for team training and avoid switching training dates where possible. Games will always take priority over team trainings, and we ask for all teams to be fair in their use of pitches and booking slots. Pitch space is very tight during the week, and we again encourage teams to use weekend slots where possible where availability is plentiful.

At all times, the senior teams are given priority for using the main pitch and Colm Horkan Memorial Pitch. During July and August, given the increasing number of games on our pitches, the club requests that, where possible, challenge games be scheduled to be played on the opposing team's ground.

In addition, where there are potential clashes in relation to pitch availability, priority for the main pitch is given to older teams aged 13 and up. In instances like this and as often as possible during the season, noncompetitive games up to U-10 should be played on the back pitch. The opening of the new Colm Horkan Memorial Pitch is a great addition to our clubs' facilities. This pitch will not be available for underage training, but competitive matches will be scheduled on the pitch for underage teams accordingly, where possible, during the season.

Fundraising has long been an important activity for Charlestown Sarsfields bord na nÓg as the club continues to develop its facilities and ensure it can provide sufficient equipment and facilities to support our underage teams. There are ever-increasing demands on the bord na nÓg finances, and this guide puts a structure around fundraising activities for the club's underage section.

Fundraising and monies raised through fundraising activities for underage teams at all times are to be under the control of the bord na nÓg committee and, where applicable, with support from the LGFA committee. Individual teams in the club are **not permitted** to undertake fundraising activities for their own individual teams – the exception to this rule being special one-off events such as for boys and/or girls' teams who qualify for the National Feile competition, and there are guidelines around this process detailed below.

Fundraising activities are solely for the purpose of raising funds for the financial needs of bord na nÓg to ensure the club can continue to meet the needs of our club and to support our underage teams in providing critical funding support towards the significant annual costs of running the underage section of the club. Fundraising is not permitted for any other reason within the club's underage section unless for a specific cause and for which approval is granted by the bord na nÓg committee and LGFA committee where applicable.

As a club, we always have to be mindful and consider our place in the community and recognise that there are multiple other clubs and sports in our town and community who have similar financial challenges to ourselves to ensure they can maintain and run their clubs as best possible. When undertaking any fundraising activity, we must take into account what

needs these clubs and sporting organisations may have during the year. We are a small community and town, and we have to be respectful by not being seen to be overbearing on both the people and businesses in the area that have previously supported and continue to contribute to the club in any small way.

Special Events & Fundraising Committee

To support special one-off events such as e.g. annual Feile competitions, it is recommended that in the event that a boy's or girls' team(s) qualify for the annual National Feile competition, a fundraising committee will be established to put in place a fundraising plan to support these teams. The Committee will consist of the following members:

1. A member of the bord na nÓg committee
2. A member of the LGFA committee
3. 2 x parents of children involved with the teams
4. 1 x Coach from each team(s) who qualify for the competition

Once the fund-raising committee has been established and the financial requirements of the event have been identified, the next step will be to explore all fund-raising options and determine what is best suited to the needs of the event at the time and what is feasible to achieve from a fundraising perspective in the community in which the club exists. Agreed financial targets will then be agreed upon and a planned schedule of activity will be put in place. This schedule of activity and financial requirements will be presented to the bord na nÓg committee and LGFA committee, where applicable, for review. No fundraising

activity can commence without the approval of the bord na nÓg committee and LGFA committee where applicable.

Annual Fundraising Events

One major fundraising event will be held annually to support the ongoing running costs of the underage teams within bord na nÓg. This event may be an annual bucket collection in partnership with the LGFA or an additional or alternative fundraising initiative, which will be agreed upon at the beginning of the year.

Sponsorship

At the start of each season, Charlestown Sarsfields bord na nÓg publishes sponsorship packages which are available to businesses for the coming season. Our main priority is ensuring the club, and our underage teams have sufficient playing equipment to conduct training sessions to the highest possible standards. Our underage teams now have over 300 active participating players, aged U-6 up to U-18, and we are fortunate to have very strong participation levels across both our boy's and girls' teams.

Sponsorship of teams and sponsoring team jerseys is a basic requirement for all teams in our club. However, the costs involved in sponsoring a set of jerseys for a team are significant, and we are very fortunate to have welcomed several new sponsors to the club in recent years. The target is to strive to ensure all our teams playing matches aged U-8 to U-18, both boys and girls, would have a new set of jerseys. We are well on track in this regard and are hugely appreciative of all the new sponsors who have joined the club in recent times. Outside of this, the cost of providing all teams with sufficient training equipment and footballs, ensuring we have sets of goals for teams to train with, is the priority each year when seeking sponsorship.

It has always been the club policy that outside of the bord na nÓg committee seeking sponsors at the start of the year, coaches of the individual teams are encouraged to approach local businesses (that are not already targeted by the bord na nÓg committee) if a new set of jerseys are needed or some equipment is needed. Quite often a business might have a child involved with a team and might be happy to support in any way they can. In instances like this, where a coach has identified a sponsor – the sponsor must be approved by the bord na nÓg committee before any agreement is put in place. Any financial transactions involving sponsors must also, at all times, go through the official bord na nÓg committee account.

As an underage club, we must always be mindful that there are children involved, and any sponsor or business approached must be appropriate for involvement with underage boys and girls teams.

Charlestown Sarsfields GAA club respects the rights of all members to use social media. However, it is important to be mindful of the benefits and at times, its negative impact that can have on our members and particularly children and young people. We should additionally be conscious that any inappropriate or contentious public postings or language used by members associated with the club, regardless of what form of social media has been used, may lead to a negative perception. Members of our club shall be held responsible for their use of social media, and where such usage may at any time impact negatively on the general welfare of a child in our club or on the ethos of the GAA, disciplinary action may follow. We therefore propose general guidance in using social media, particularly for those working with children in our club. We also seek the cooperation of parents, whose children may have access to such social media apps and seek to ensure that sensible use of social media, as it may impact on children, can be agreed with parents.

Messaging apps have developed rapidly in recent years from devices that were originally utilised for making calls and texting to the current usage of mobiles for messaging, sharing pictures, videos, web links, e-documents and other such message-sharing apps. While technology is advancing, so also should our vigilance, particularly with respect of the involvement of young people. With such regular access to new and easy-to-use technology, certain ground rules relating to communication and the taking of photographs or recording of images may unfortunately be overlooked.

The Code of Behaviour (Underage) seeks to provide guidance, not in a manner that may prohibit the use of modern communication and recording technologies, but to urge caution and to have certain safeguards in place to prevent instances of harm or unacceptable behaviour. We seek in this Code to ensure, as far as is practicable, that social media apps are not misused so as not to negatively impact any child or those who work with them.

4.1 Communication relating to underage activities

All coaches in the Charlestown Sarsfields GAA club should make it known that our club's preferred option of communicating team information for underage teams is via the parental/guardian mobile phone of each player **and not via** the mobile phone of the child.

Whilst there are challenges associated with communicating via mobile phone and, in particular, WhatsApp, it is the club's experience that this is the most reliable and consistent form of communication to ensure parents receive messages relating to their child's club activity.

Whatsapp groups will be controlled by the coaches, as admins of the group, and only coaches will be allowed to post messages in the group to avoid unrelated activity being posted by parents either on purpose or by accident. Parents will complete 'polls' to advise of their child's availability for club activity. The club will continue to research improved means of communication to streamline and comply with GAA recommendations in this regard. If

requested by a parent to send messages regarding games or training via the mobile phone of the child, the coach/club should enquire as to the rationale of such requests and if in agreement, must receive any such request to be approved by the parent of the child. Coaches **are not permitted** to communicate individually via social media with children under the age of

18 years of age. Any form of individual social media communication by a coach with an underage player shall be deemed a serious breach of the Code of Behaviour (Underage).

4.2 Photography & Videoing

It should be noted that having photographic and filming guidelines is not about preventing parents and guardians from taking pictures but rather ensuring that only those who have a right to take photographs do so and that all images are captured in a sensible and non-intrusive way. These safeguards should still permit and facilitate the recording of relevant and suitable materials, should allow us to photograph the enjoyment gained by participating in our games should enable coaches to use the latest technology in the delivery of training skills and should also enable coaches, mentors and volunteers of the club to promote their activities in a safe and non-threatening manner. A commonsense approach is required when deciding on what may or may not be appropriate, as we do not wish to prohibit the recording of games, coaching or celebrations at the club level using photography or by recording on video equipment.

The key issues that we should address regarding the use of images and photographs of children/young people are:

- Ensuring agreement and permission of parents/ guardians in the taking and any use of images/ photographs – this is sought at the start of the year as part of the annual membership affiliation process on the website www.klubfunder.com
- Avoiding the individual identification of children in group or team photographs unless by agreement e.g. for special events, an award or achievements ceremony

- Ensuring prior accreditation is given to ‘professional photographers’ who may attend your games or events
- Ensuring that images/photographs chosen are suitable and in good taste with the images chosen or recorded focusing on activity rather than a particular child
- Clubs, coaches and volunteers permit the use of video equipment as a legitimate coaching aid and as a means of recording special occasions; however, care should be taken in the dissemination, storage and use of such material
- Parents and spectators taking photographs/recordings should, where possible, seek permission in advance from the Club/County Board and should also be prepared to identify themselves if requested and state the purpose for their photography/filming. If Club/County Board personnel are unhappy about any matter relating to such photography, the permission granted may be withdrawn immediately
- It should be noted that we have little or no influence on what photographs may be taken and published in local or national newspapers, as each type of photography is covered by a different set of guidelines. If we are ever unhappy with the publication of such photographs or images, we can address this matter with the individual newspaper, the Press Council of Ireland, or the Office of the Press Ombudsman
- The GAA generally discourages streaming underage games due to child safeguarding concerns but allows it under specific conditions with the approval of the relevant GAA unit. The primary focus is on protecting children and ensuring their well-being, especially in an online environment. Charlestown's Sarsfields will adhere to best practice and GAA recommendations regarding the streaming of underage football matches and

the required permissions will always be sought from the required GAA bodies and also from parents / guardians of children involved before any such streaming activity takes place

4.3 Social Media

The world of social and digital media is an enjoyable and engaging place, and it is itself a useful asset in promoting our teams and activities within the membership and to a wider audience. However, while these communication tools can be used to our advantage, vigilance is also required to ensure that our clubs' use of such communication methods is always appropriate.

- Everyone is responsible for any posting, comments or conduct while engaging with such sites
- Any social media site approved or promoted by the club is subject to terms and conditions regarding its usage and is under the direct monitoring of a nominated club person(s)
- Agree on a club policy on reporting of games, club news and the use of images or photography
- Club sites may be used to promote training times, fixtures and events
- We strive to ensure that content published on Club websites or social network pages is at all times factual and follows the parameters of good behaviour
- We strive to ensure that all members are aware of acceptable usage policies regarding communication between coaches or other adults and underage players

- The club does not approve of social media sites being used as a forum for exchanging views between other teams or irate members. Such usage will be terminated by the site controller of the club

For details on the GAA Policy on use of social media please visit

<https://www.gaa.ie/api/pdfs/image/upload/skjxfguu6n6lj6kx7fl2.pdf>

4.4 Mobile Phones

Except in exceptional circumstances, or in the case of very young children, most underage players between the ages of 12 and 18 attending our training or games generally have a mobile phone or access to a phone. While the ownership and general use of the mobile is primarily a matter between the child and their parents, the use or access of the mobiles at our events or in our clubhouses or dressing rooms is a matter for us to monitor and or pursue and if need be, to agree with parents. While we never wish to curtail the rights of a child, we can, in relation to the use of a mobile, limit the use of mobiles on our premises, and if doing so, we will inform the parents in advance. Guidance in relation to mobile phone usage includes:

- We do not permit the use of phones in dressing rooms shower area
- Avoid instances of individual communication via mobile phone with underage players unless in instances where permission has been given by the parent/guardian of the child
- If in agreement with other coaches, seek parental permission for all phones of underage players to be 'bagged' prior to a game and returned to the players after each game

- Be vigilant as to the use, or excessive use, of a mobile phone by any underage player while they are under the club's care
- Advise children that if they receive an offensive photo, email, or message, they should not reply but save the offensive materials, note the time and date of receipt, and inform their parents. Should any such incident regarding the use of mobile phones occur during their attendance at the Club, the team coach should note this and report the matter to the Club's Children's Officer.

4.5 Website Policy

The Charlestown Sarsfields Club Website and its operator(s) make all reasonable attempts to ensure that web pages adhere to the GAA's ethos and do not contain unacceptable content or links to questionable material. Links to external websites are meant for convenience purposes only.

- No endorsement of any third-party products or services should be expressed or implied by any information, material or content referred to included on, or linked from the Club website.
- The club's website content policy will promote our strategy for the safe use of the Internet. It will also outline the behaviour parameters and specify the consequences of breaching those parameters.
- The club strives to ensure that all Content published on its website or social network pages is factual and follows the parameters of good behaviour.
- All decisions on the appropriate use of photographic images and other similar content should be in accordance with the Guidelines for Photographic/Recorded Images.

- Avoiding the individual identification of children in group or team photographs or images unless by agreement e.g. for special events, an award or achievements ceremony.
- Advocacy of or opposition to any politically or socially controversial subjects, issues, or candidates is prohibited on Club websites.
- Disparagement or promotion of any person or class of persons is prohibited.
- Content that may be considered not to be in keeping with the ethos and dignity of Associations is prohibited

CHILD SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT

Charlestown Sarsfields GAA, Loupark, Charlestown, Mayo, Ireland, P12 8832

Charlestown Sarsfields Club (hereinafter GAA) in accordance with our Child Safeguarding Policy, our policies, procedures and our legislative requirements has agreed this Child Safeguarding Statement, which is binding on our members.

The basic aims of the Gaelic Athletic Association include fostering and developing our Gaelic Games and Irish cultural activities among young people and children. These games and related activities are organised and promoted by dedicated volunteers at Club, County, Provincial and National levels with the cooperation and support of an equally dedicated cohort of staff all of whom are committed to the safeguarding of children and young people in our Association as we seek to create a safe environment for young people to grow and develop.

This Child Safeguarding Statement was agreed by the Charlestown Sarsfields GAA Club Executive Committee on July 30, 2025



PRINCIPLES TO SAFEGUARD CHILDREN FROM HARM

This statement recognises that in accordance with legislative requirements, and our commitments in our Gaelic Games Child Safeguarding Policy, (see QR Code 1), to safeguard all children regardless of race, ability, ethnicity or sexual orientation from harm, that the welfare and interests of children are paramount in all circumstances. The Child Safeguarding Policy aims to ensure that children and young people have a positive, developmental and enjoyable experience of Gaelic Games and other activities and that they do so, as far as is practicable, in a safe and enjoyable environment in accordance with the Children First Act (2015) and the Children (NI) Order 1995.

PROCEDURES

Our Child Safeguarding Statement has been prepared in accordance with the legislative requirements contained in the Children First Act 2015, Children's First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017), the Children (NI) Order 1995, Tusla's Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice and as required by our Association rules and Child Safeguarding Policy.

PROCEDURES IDENTIFIED

The following procedures, addressed in our Child Safeguarding Policy (QR Code 1), support our intention to safeguard children while they are availing of our services and activities.

- Procedure in respect of the management of allegations against any member, non-member or staff/volunteer availing of our services (QR Code 3)
- Procedure for the safe recruitment and vetting of volunteers & staff to work with children and young people (QR Code 1)
- Procedure for provision of and access to Gaelic Games Child Safeguarding Training and information including the identification of the occurrence of harm (QR Code 1)
- Procedure for the reporting allegations of abuse, protection or welfare concerns of a child to the Association, Tuas or Gateway Team, availing as applicable (QR Code 3)
- Procedure for appointing a relevant person i.e. the Club Children's Officer who is the relevant person appointed for the purpose of this statement (QR Code 1)
- Our Club shall maintain a list of membership who, if known, and in accordance with the Children First Act 2015 are specified as mandated persons, regardless of what role (if any), they hold in the Club.

RISK ASSESSMENT

In preparing this statement we have completed a risk assessment under the following headings, and identified the list of procedures and policies for managing these risks which addresses the potential for harm* to children when they are participating in our games and attending our activities.

Our Club Risk Assessment was undertaken on July 30, 2025

- Club/County and Coaching Practices
- Communications and General Risk of Harm

- Complaints & Discipline
- Reporting Procedures
- Club Facilities
- Recruitment

* Harm means in relation to a child – Assault, ill treatment or neglect of a child in a manner that seriously affects or is likely to seriously affect the child's health, development or welfare or sexual abuse of a child.

RISK IDENTIFIED	PROCEDURES IN PLACE TO MANAGE RISK IDENTIFIED	QR CODE
Risk of harm to a child by an adult or a visitor or another child including definitions of abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child Safeguarding Policy Guidance for Dealing with & Reporting Concerns of Abuse Safeguarding Training Employee (Staff) Handbook GAA Protected Disclosure Policy 	QR Code 3
Risk of harm to a child when leaving an activity or away trip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child Safeguarding Policy Child Safeguarding Policy Directives on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment, Vetting and Safeguarding Training; Guidance for Coaches, Parents & Supporters on Maintaining Good Practice & Behaviour; Hosting events, Away Trips & Transport; Social Media Guidance; Photography, Recording & Streaming Guidance for Dealing with & Reporting Concerns of Abuse Employee (Staff) Handbook GAA Protected Disclosure Policy 	QR Code 1
Risk of harm to a child through lack of supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child Safeguarding Policy Directives on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment, Vetting and Safeguarding Training; Supervision Ratios Policy 	QR Code 1
Risk of harm to a child by bullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child Safeguarding Policy Directives on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anti Bullying Policy & Anti Bullying Statement 	QR Code 2
Risk of harm to a child of online abuse and social media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child Safeguarding Policy Social Media Guidance 	QR Code 1
Risk of harm to a child through inappropriate use of photography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child Safeguarding Policy Photography, Recording & Streaming Policy 	QR Code 1

MANDATED PERSONS AND SAFEGUARDING OFFICERS

Charlestown Sarsfields Children's Officer	Donal Healy	dohewesofficer@charlestown.mayo@gaa.ie
Charlestown Sarsfields Designated Liaison Person	Donal Healy	
GAA/Founders	Michelle Harro	mandate@person@gaa.ie
Camogie	Roberta Farrell	mandate@person@camogie.ie
Handball	David Britton	mandate@person@handball@gaa.ie
LGFA	Paula Prunty	mandate@person@lgfa.ie

IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

The Gaelic Athletic Association and Charlestown Sarsfields GAA are committed to the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement and the accompanying child safeguarding policies and procedures that support our intention to keep children and young people safe from harm while availing of our services. This Statement, adopted and endorsed by Charlestown Sarsfields GAA Club Executive Committee, shall be reviewed by July 30, 2027 or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

All policies and procedures listed above are available at www.gaa.ie/the-gaa-child-safeguarding-and-protection-child-safeguarding-policy

The Gaelic Games Association's **Child Safeguarding Policy and Child Safeguarding Statement** provides detailed guidance to our Clubs and other units on the minimum standards of good practice and behaviour that we seek from everybody, who on our behalf, work with children. The Child Safeguarding Policy seeks to safeguard children and young people who participate in our games and attend our activities.



Donal Healy

Charlestown Sarsfields GAA, Childrens Officer

6.2 Anti Bullying Statement 2026

The Gaelic Games Associations is currently reviewing the content of the 'Lets Tackle Bullying' training programme. This Section - Tackling Bullying in Your Club - shall be amended on completion of this review. Clubs are reminded to discuss and adopt the Anti-Bullying Policy Statement below and to use this statement when addressing any issues of bullying in their club.

ANTI-BULLYING STATEMENT

The GAA aims to create a supportive environment where any form of bullying is unacceptable. We adopt a whole organisational approach to addressing bullying and are committed to implementing structures and relevant training to deal with allegations of bullying. Incidents of bullying are regarded as serious breaches of our Code of Behaviour (Underage). We are committed to achieving an ethos of respect so as to maximise the potential of all our members when playing or participating in our Gaelic Games.

DEFINITION

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

THE GAA SEEKS TO ENSURE THAT:

- Incidents of bullying behaviour are addressed appropriately.
- All persons in membership of the Association or attending our games or activities are aware that bullying behaviour is unacceptable in the GAA.

DEALING WITH BULLYING

The **Code of Behaviour** when working with underage players provides good practice guidance in relation to the prevention of bullying.

If you are aware of or have a concern that bullying behaviour is happening within your Club you should report the matter to your Club Children's Officer.

We recognise that incidents of bullying are a breach of the **Code of Behaviour** and of our Give Respect - Get Respect initiative and all such incidents will be dealt with accordingly.

Rhonda Burke / Sinead Harkin

04/03/2026

Club Children's Officer

Date

Charlestown sarsfields

6.3 Away Trips Consent Form

Dear Parent/Guardian,

The Charlestown Sarsfields [INSERT TEAM NAME]. will visit [INSERT VENUE/CLUB] for a match hosted by [INSERT CLUB NAME] on [INSERT TIME AND DATE]. Please complete the form below and return to your child's mentors if you are happy for your child to attend/participate on this trip.

I _____ as Parent/Guardian of _____ give permission for the named, to attend and participate on the day / overnight trip outlined above organised by Charlestown Sarsfields bord na nog.

Childs name: _____ D.O.B: _____

Address: _____

Parent/Guardian contact telephone number: _____

Parent/Guardian email address: _____

Emergency contact person (if you are unavailable) _____

Telephone number: _____

Details of Child's special needs or medical history (i.e. details of any known allergies, conditions or medications). Parents/Guardians are obliged to disclose any information regarding medication which may impact on your child's welfare or behaviour while participating in our sports:

In the event of illness or injury, I give permission for medical treatment to be administered where considered necessary by a nominated first aider, or by suitably qualified medical practitioners. If I cannot be contacted and my child needs emergency hospital treatment, I authorise a qualified medical practitioner to provide emergency treatment or medication YES NO

By signing this form you are agreeing that you and your child abide by the programme and to any agreed procedures that relate to the organised trip and an agreed Code of Behaviour, specifically designed for the trip.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

ACTIONS	By When? (Date)	Responsibility? (Name)	Done? (Date)
APPROX. 8 WEEKS BEFORE EVENT			
Accept invitation to host event	8 weeks before	Relevant Club Committee	
Establish Organising Committee and named person in charge	8 weeks before	Appointed by Club Committee	
1st meeting of Tournament Committee	7 weeks before	Organising Committee Chair	
Allocate responsibilities at 1st meeting		Name the tasks and people	
Agree correspondence to visiting Clubs		Agree with Secretary	
Prepare budget at 1st meeting		Responsibility of Treasurer	
Identify sponsors (if appropriate)		Overseen by Treasurer	
Book pitches or venues as appropriate		A Committee member	
Agree on home stay option and plan accordingly (see Home Stay Section)			
APPROX. 6 WEEKS BEFORE EVENT			
Organising Committee meeting			
Post correspondence to visiting Clubs with relevant forms etc.			
Check insurance implications if any			
Complete event plan and circulate			
Check out all venues by visit			
APPROX. 4 WEEKS BEFORE THE EVENT			
Organising Committee meeting			
Confirm participating teams and Clubs			
Make 'draws' and circulate information			
Arrange for First Aid at tournament			
APPROX. 2 WEEKS BEFORE THE EVENT			
Organising Committee meeting			
A team withdraws from the Tournament			
APPROX. 1 WEEK BEFORE THE EVENT			
2nd team withdraws from tournament			
New sponsor seeks role in the Tournament			
DAY OF THE TOURNAMENT			
Up early!			
Register each team and their coaches			
Check dates of birth			
AFTER THE EVENT REVIEW			
Organising Committee meeting			
Financial report			
Event report			
Treat the organising Committee and all helpers!			