



## **Child Protection Policy Statement**

Clane Athletic Club is committed to ensuring that all young people who play sport have a safe and positive experience. The club is committed to developing and implementing policies and procedures to ensure that everyone knows and accepts their responsibility in relation to a duty of care for young people. Clane AC recognises that it is not the responsibility of those individuals working within the club to determine if abuse has taken place, but it is their responsibility to act upon and report any concerns.

If any person within the club has a doubt to this policy's relevance to their role and duties then please contact the clubs Child Welfare Officers –

- Sinead Lawlor Tel: 086 8375038
- Michael Kilbride Tel: 086 3856268

The Club and those involved with the club will abide by the following principles and statements:

- All young people within Clane AC, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation, ability or disability, have the right to be protected.
- All young people participating in sport have a right to do so in a safe environment.
- All adults involved with the club will endeavor to provide a safe, positive and fun & sporting experience for young people.
- All volunteers, coaches and officials will understand and be supported in their role and responsibility with regard to the duty of care for young people.
- All suspicions and allegations will be taken seriously, managed and dealt with appropriately and/or referred to an appropriate service.
- The club will assist coaches, volunteers and officials to remain up-to-date with the latest safeguarding and child protection issues.
- The club will appoint a Child Welfare Officer whose role is to be responsible for issues concerning child welfare at the club.



## **Clane AC Anti-Bullying Policy**

### **What is Bullying?**

Bullying can be defined as repeated aggression be it verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against others. It is behaviour that is intentionally aggravating and intimidating and occurs mainly in social environments such as schools, clubs and other organisations working with children and young people. It includes behaviours such as teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting and extortion behaviour by one or more children against a victim.

### **How would you know if a child is being bullied?**

All bullies operate using furtiveness, threats and fear. Bullying can therefore only survive in an environment where the victim does not feel empowered to tell someone who can help or in which it is not safe to do so. The following indicators are warning signs that a young person might be getting bullied:

- Reluctance to come to a venue or take part in activities.
- Physical signs (unexplained bruises, scratches, or damage to belongings).
- Stress-caused illness – headaches, and stomach aches which seem unexplained.
- Fearful behaviour (fear of walking to a meeting, going different routes, asking to be driven).
- Frequent loss of, or shortage of, money with vague explanations.
- Having few friends.
- Changes in behaviour (withdrawn, stammering, moody, irritable, upset, distressed).
- Not eating.
- Attempting suicide or hinting at suicide.
- Anxiety (shown by nail-biting, fearfulness, tics).

There are other possible reasons for many of the above.



### **Who should deal with bullying?**

While the more extreme forms of bullying would be regarded as physical or emotional abuse and are reported to the health board or An Garda Síochana, dealing with bullying behaviour is normally the responsibility of all Leaders within the club.

### **How can it be prevented?**

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



## **What is the 'No Blame' Approach?**

### Step 1 – Interview with the victim

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

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

### Step 2 – Meet with all involved

Arrange to meet with all those involved; this should include some bystanders, those who may have colluded, those who joined in and those who initiated the bullying.

- Have a maximum of six to eight in the group – keep the number controllable.
- Make a point of calling a 'special' meeting.
- Ensure the severity of the topic is understood by all.
- Speak only of the hurt caused in general terms with no reference to the victim.
- Play on the conscience of all – ask questions like: How would you feel?
- Would you like it done to you?

### Step 3 – Explain the problem

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



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

#### Step 4 – Share the responsibility

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

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

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

#### Step 6 – Leave it to them

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

#### Step 7 – Meet them again

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



## **Coaches, Officials and Volunteers Code of Conduct**

The essence of good ethical conduct and practice is summarised below. All coaches, officials and volunteers at the club should:

- Consider the wellbeing and safety of participants before the development of performance.
- Develop an appropriate working relationship with participants, based on mutual trust and respect.
- Make sure all activities are appropriate to the age, ability and the experience of those taking part.
- Promote the positive aspects of the sport (e.g. fair play)
- Display consistently high standards of behaviour.
- Follow all guidelines laid down by the national governing body and the club.
- Hold appropriate qualifications and insurance cover.
- Never exert undue influence over participants to gain personal benefit or reward.
- Never condone rule violations, rough play or the use of prohibited substances.
- Encourage participants to value their performances and not just results.
- Encourage and guide participants to accept responsibility for their own performance and behaviour.
- Never use foul or inappropriate language.
- Never engage in any form of sexual relations with anyone under the age of 18, or vulnerable adults.
- Read, understand and put into practice all club policies and procedures.

I have fully read and understand the above code of conduct and will ensure that my conduct and practice reflects the above points.

Signed: .....Name: .....Date:.....



## **Code of Conduct for Parents / Guardians**

- Encourage your child to learn the rules and play within them.
- Discourage unfair play and arguing with officials.
- Help your child to recognise good performance, not just results.
- Never force your child to take part in sport.
- Set a good example by recognising fair play and applauding good performances of all.
- Never punish or belittle a child for losing or making mistakes.
- Publicly accept officials' judgments.
- Support your child's involvement and help them to enjoy their sport.
- Use correct and proper language at all times.
- Encourage and guide performers to accept responsibility for their own performance and behaviour.