

Football Association of Ireland

Code of Ethics & Good Practice for Children's Soccer

Introduction

As with other sports, soccer contributes positively to the development of the individual. It is a vehicle of the mental, physical and emotional development, a development which is further enhanced if the under age player is guided by an informed, enlightened and caring coach/volunteer working within an acceptable ethical framework.

It is most important to establish and maintain standards of ethical behaviour especially in the coaching practices of young players. Key principles of responsibility and competence provide the core values of under age coaching and the fundamental framework of this document.

This Code of Ethics & Good Practice is informed by the following underpinning principles:

- ❖ Children's involvement in soccer should be an enjoyable experience

- ❖ The safety of children should always be the paramount concern of all adults responsible for providing soccer opportunities at whatever level that adult may be involved

- ❖ The appropriateness of the experience provided for children in soccer should be determined by and based on a child centred ethos which place the needs of the child at the centre of any activity taken

- ❖ Coaches/managers/volunteers should be properly recruited and managed with appropriate training made available to them

- ❖ All adults involved in soccer have a responsibility to be aware of child protection as an issue

The Football Association of Ireland recognises and accepts that in all matters concerning Child Protection, the welfare and protection of our under age players is a priority.

It is the policy of the Football Association of Ireland to safeguard the welfare of our under age players by protecting them from physical, emotional and sexual harm. In response to recent legislation and Government Guidelines, the Association has amended its rules to include:

Rule 68

(b) Any act, statement, conduct or other matter which harms a child or children, or poses or may pose a risk of harm to a child or children, shall constitute behaviour which is improper and brings the game into disrepute.

(c) Breaches will become a disciplinary offence.

Our under age coaches/volunteers play an important role in carrying out this policy as do the parents of children that participate in soccer. The co-operation of all is vital to this effort.

This publication is intended to be a source of information and advice for players, coaches/volunteers, parents, spectators and clubs on current best and safe practice guidelines in sport.

These guidelines are not only intended to create a safe environment for children, but also a safe environment in which coaches and volunteers can operate.

Other relevant guidelines are:

Code of Ethics & Good Practice for Children's Sport, The Irish Sports Council 2001

Our Duty To Care, Department of Health & Children, 2002

Children First, National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children 1999