

Children in Soccer are entitled to:

- ❖ Be safe
- ❖ Be treated with dignity, sensitivity and respect
- ❖ Participate in soccer on an equal basis, appropriate to their ability and stage of development
- ❖ Be happy, have fun and enjoy soccer
- ❖ Make a complaint in an appropriate way and have it dealt with through a proper and effective complaints procedure
- ❖ Be afforded appropriate confidentiality
- ❖ Be listened to and to be believed
- ❖ Have a voice in the running of the club

Children should also be encouraged to realise that they also have responsibilities to treat other children, fellow players, coaches and volunteers with the same degree of fairness and respect.

In this regard children should undertake to:

- ❖ play fairly, do their best and have fun
- ❖ make high standards of Fair Play the standard others want to follow
- ❖ respect opponents, they are not the enemy, they are partners in a sporting event
- ❖ shake hands before and after the match, whoever wins
- ❖ give opponents a hand if they are injured, put the ball out of play so they can get attention
- ❖ accept apologies from opponents when they are offered
- ❖ respect fellow team members and support them both when they do well and when things go wrong
- ❖ treat players from minority groups with the same respect you show other people
- ❖ be modest in victory and be gracious in defeat- *“Be A Sport”*

- ❖ approach the club Children's Officer with any questions or concerns they might have. Coaches and parents should encourage children to speak out and support them in doing so

Children should not:

- ❖ cheat
- ❖ use abusive language, or argue with, the referee, officials, team mates or opponents
- ❖ use violence, use physical contact only when it is allowed within the rules
- ❖ bully
- ❖ tell lies about adults or other children
- ❖ spread rumours
- ❖ take banned substances to improve performance
- ❖ keep secrets about any person who may have caused them harm

Coaches, parents and administrators all have an important role to play in promoting good practice in children's sport. They should have as their first priority the children's safety and enjoyment of the sport.

“Sport for young people is about Fun and Participation, Best Effort and Fair Play in a Safe Environment”

Therefore we want children in soccer to have fun and develop skills in a safe and ***Fair Play*** environment.

Ireland has adopted and is committed to the European Code of Sports Ethics which defines ***Fair Play*** as:

“much more than playing within the rules. It incorporates the concepts of friendship, respect for others and always playing within the right spirit. Fair Play is defined as a way of thinking, not just a way of behaving.”

“It incorporates issues concerned with the elimination of cheating, gamesmanship, doping, violence (both physical and verbal), exploitation, unequal opportunities, excessive commercialism and corruption.”

(European Sports Charter and Code of Ethics. Council of Europe, 1993)

Recent research would suggest that up to seventy per cent of children leave sport between the ages of eight and thirteen. One of the most common reasons given was that sport was no longer fun. Therefore we have to make every effort to ensure that we keep the fun in soccer.

Making sport fun.

In promoting “Sport for Fun” we:

- ❖ Encourage participation and fun
- ❖ Promote the development of skills as opposed to winning at all costs
- ❖ Emphasise and praise effort
- ❖ Act as a good role model
- ❖ Insist on ***Fair Play*** (take off offending players)
- ❖ Be realistic with your expectations
- ❖ Be aware of children’s feelings
- ❖ Teach players to respect different cultures

Coaches and volunteers should also enjoy a sense of achievement and pleasure through their work with young people and should not be evaluated by performance or results of competition.

They should enjoy the respect of, and be supported in their work by the sports club/organisation and parents/guardians.

Coaches, volunteers, parents, administrators and players all have a role in ensuring that the highest standards of practice are maintained in soccer.