

CHILD WELFARE POLICY

CLANWILLIAM F.C.



**UNDERLINING OUR COMMITMENT
TO A SAFE AND ENJOYABLE
SPORTING ENVIRONMENT
FOR CHILDREN**

CLANWILLIAM F.C.

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Policy Statement

Clanwilliam F.C. is committed to provide the opportunity and encouragement for each child to enjoy rugby in a safe environment. It is the club's priority to ensure that children's rights, safety, welfare and dignity are respected. Special effort will be made to foster self discipline, enjoyment, physical fitness and high standards of rugby.

Introduction

Clanwilliam F.C. is committed to ensuring that all necessary steps will be taken to protect and safeguard the welfare of children who participate in rugby-related sports. This Policy Document clearly demonstrates the importance placed by Clanwilliam F.C. on the welfare and safety of children who participate.

All children who participate in Rugby should be able to do so in a safe and enjoyable environment. While doing so they should be protected from any form of abuse, be it physical, emotional, sexual, neglect or bullying. The responsibility for protecting children lies with all adults involved in this club.

Clanwilliam F.C. recognises and accepts its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and by protecting them from physical, emotional or sexual harm and from neglect or bullying.

These clear policies, practices and procedures in addition to relevant training programmes will ensure that everybody at Clanwilliam F.C. knows exactly what is expected of them in relation to protecting children within the activities of the club. It is vital that children who participate in Clanwilliam F.C. activities are able to do so in a safe, enjoyable and quality environment. In pursuit of this Clanwilliam F.C. will endeavour to:

1. Advise all members of Clanwilliam F.C. (coaches, players, and parents) of their responsibilities in relation to the welfare of children who participate in club activities.
2. Operate within the recommended ISC/IRFU codes best practice guidelines for youth sport.
3. Appoint a Club Child Welfare Officer in line with IRFU and ISC requirements.

Aims of this Policy

1. To provide appropriate guidance, procedures and advice to all club members (players, coaches, volunteers, spectators and parents) in all matters concerning child welfare and protection.
2. To demonstrate best practice in the area of child welfare and protection.
3. To promote ethics and best practice standards throughout the club membership.

Guiding Principles

Rugby for children at Clanwilliam F.C. will be based on the following principles that will guide the development of young people within rugby (as outlined in Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport).

Needs of the child

All children's sport experiences should be guided by what is best for children. This means that adults should have a basic understanding of the emotional, physical and personal needs of young people. The stages of development and ability should guide the types of activity provided within rugby. The first priority is the children's safety and enjoyment of rugby. All children have a right to be protected from abuse of any kind regardless of their age, gender, disability, culture, language, racial origin, religious beliefs or sexual orientation.

Integrity in relationships

Adults interacting with young people in sport should do so with integrity and respect for the child. There is a potential concern that sporting contexts can be used to exploit or undermine children. All adult actions in sport should be guided by what is best for the child and in the context of quality, open working relationships. Verbal, physical, emotional or sexual abuse of any kind is unacceptable within sport.

Quality atmosphere and ethos

Sport for young people should be conducted in a safe, positive and encouraging atmosphere. A child-centred ethos will help to ensure that competition and specialisation are kept in their appropriate place.

Equality

All children should be treated in an equitable and fair manner regardless of age, ability, sex, religion, social and ethnic background or political persuasion. Children

with disability should be involved in sports activities in an integrated way, thus allowing them to participate to their potential alongside other children.

Fair Play

Fair play is the guiding principle of the ISC Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport.

All children's sport should be conducted in an atmosphere of fair play. Ireland has contributed 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 with the right spirit. Fair play is defined as a way of thinking, not just behaving. It incorporates issues concerned with the elimination of opportunities, excessive commercialisation and corruption.

Competition

Too often competitive demands are placed on children too early and results in excessive levels of pressure on them and as a consequence, high levels of drop out from sport. A balanced approach to competition can make a significant contribution to the development of young people, while at the same time providing fun, enjoyment and satisfaction. Sports leaders should aim to put the welfare of the child first and competitive standards second. A child-centred approach will help to ensure that competition and specialisation are kept in their appropriate place.

Partnership

It is essential that Clanwilliam F.C. works in partnership with children and their parents/guardians and comply with statutory responsibilities. The HSE has a statutory responsibility to safeguard and protect the welfare of children and Clanwilliam F.C. is committed to cooperating fully with the HSE in accordance with procedures as outlined in "Children First" National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children.

Clanwilliam F.C. will cooperate fully with the IRFU National Child Welfare Officer, Gardai and the HSE in any investigation of child abuse in rugby activities.

Allegations of child abuse will be dealt with as per IRFU Guidelines for Dealing with Allegations of Abuse.

Safety

Clanwilliam F.C. will endeavour to:

- Ensure activities are suitable for age and stage of development of players.

- Keep a record of any specific medical conditions of the players, where parents/guardians have advised the club of these.
- Keep a record of emergency contact numbers for parents / guardians, where these have been provided to the club.
- Such records should be readily available.
- Ensure any necessary protective gear is used.
- Keep First Aid kit stocked up and ensure it is close at hand with access to qualified first-aider.
- Know the contact numbers of emergency services and easy access to medical personnel.
- If an incident occurs, make a brief record of injury and action taken. Note the problem, action and outcome.
- Contact the players' parents and keep them informed of all details of relevant incidents.
- Members of the Club who act in the capacity of a referee should ensure that games are played in a manner that is consistent with the Referee Code of Ethics.
- All players should know and adhere to the rules of rugby, keeping in mind that many rules are in place for safety.
- Ensure that the IRFU insurance is in place for all activities.
- Ensure when required parents / guardians are present at finishing time of sessions or events.

Physical Contact

Coaching, at certain times, may require a 'hands on approach', e.g., it may be necessary to support a child learning a new skill but the following should be taken into consideration:

- Avoid unnecessary physical contact.
- Any necessary contact should be in response to the needs of the player and not the Coach/Volunteer.

- It should be in an open environment with the permission and understanding of the player
- It should be determined by the age, gender and developmental stage of the player - do not do something that a player can do for themselves.
- Never engage in inappropriate touching.

Away Trips

Attention to the following will help to promote safety:

- All away trips must be for the purpose of fulfilling fixtures or other approved activities of Clanwilliam FC.
- Written permission of parents/guardians shall be obtained for all overnight trips.
- Parents/guardians' contact numbers should be maintained by coaches/leaders on all away trips.
- The roles and responsibilities of adults participating in away trips shall be clearly defined.
- Clanwilliam Football Club will appoint a Group Leader for all overnight trips. She/he will have overall responsibility for the children's well being, behaviour and sleeping arrangements. She/he will be appointed as an official of Clanwilliam Football Club for the duration of the trip. All coaches/volunteers are accountable to the Group Leader.
- Children will be informed at the outset of who they can report any concerns they might have to. They shall be clearly encouraged to tell anybody if they have a concern.
- Where there are mixed teams there shall be at least one female in the management/coaching structure.
- The Group Leader shall submit a verbal report to the Clanwilliam Football Club Age Grade Committee as soon as possible after the trip.
- Adults should not share a room with children. Where the presence of an adult is required there must be more than one adult in the room with the children. If children are sharing, it should be with those of the same age and gender.

- Coaches/volunteers are advised to avoid being alone with one child. If talking separately do so in an open environment, in view of others.
- Adequate child ratios should always be maintained (This can depend on the ages of the children and the nature of the activity involved) in line with common standards of practice.
- Adequate supervision should be maintained at all times. On all away trips parents are encouraged to attend, when this is reasonably practicable.
- Clanwilliam Football Club shall ensure that there is adequate insurance cover for the trip.
- When driving, coaches/volunteers are required to ensure adequate insurance and do not carry more than the permitted number of passengers. Ensure the use of seat belts, only busses with seat belts should be used to carry children on away trips. Responsibility for complying with these requirements rests with the driver/transport operator. Relevant sections of the codes of conduct for parents and volunteers will apply.
- Coaches/Volunteers are discouraged from traveling alone in their cars with one child.
- Lights out times should be enforced.
- Coaches will endeavor to ensure compliance with relevant age restrictions on access to alcohol/drugs.

Personnel Recruitment

Clanwilliam F.C. will take all reasonable steps to ensure that coaches and volunteers are suitable to work with children. There are three stages for new coaches: -

- All coaches and volunteers are required to complete an application/self declaration form, giving the names of two referees who may be contacted.
- Applicant must be proposed and seconded by two members at an Age Grade Committee meeting.
- Must complete courses as stipulated by the club during year of application, where suitable courses are made available by the IRFU

- All coaches/volunteers are subject to Garda clearance for involvement in the coaching of age-grade children.
- All appointments are subject to approval and ratification by the Age Grade Committee of Clanwilliam F.C..
- All coaches and volunteers will be subject to a sign up procedure in which they undertake to abide by Clanwilliam F.C. club rules and IRFU codes of conduct and good practice. (Appropriate confidentiality will be maintained in regard to all application and reference forms).
- Once accepted as a coach or volunteer, Clanwilliam F.C. will make all efforts to support coaches and volunteers with the aim that no person is expected to work alone with children.

Education & Support

Volunteers

Clanwilliam F.C. is indebted to our volunteers who give freely of their valuable time in providing a stimulating, challenging, safe, supportive and fun experience to children in the club engaged in all aspects of Rugby. The Committee will endeavour to support these coaches and volunteers in their work by providing an environment where all activities are carried out safely, and in a manner which ensures the spirit of “Fair Play” is adhered to at all times.

Clanwilliam F.C. will make all reasonable efforts to assist new volunteers and coaches in whatever way they can. Clanwilliam F.C. needs to promote a clear understanding of the role of the volunteer within the club. To this end Clanwilliam F.C. will provide all new volunteers/coaches with access to club rules, policies and procedures and expected codes of behaviour for children, coaches and parents/spectators.

Clanwilliam F.C. recognises the value of having appropriately qualified personnel in the club, and therefore will support as required in the coach education process. Coaches and volunteers can rely on the support of the Committee in dealing with issues that arise under this policy. Also, coaches and volunteers are encouraged to share ideas, expertise and support other club personnel in any way they can.

Parents

Parents play a key role in promoting an ethical approach for children in sport and it is important that the club and parents cooperate in supporting the children’s enjoyment of playing rugby. Clanwilliam F.C. will organise a registration day at the start of each

season and publish/provide a information package for parents and contact points for sports leaders within the club. Comments, suggestions and complaints from parents will be dealt with in a prescribed manner ensuring appropriate confidentiality.

Children

Children should be encouraged to show fairness and respect in their dealings with other children, sports leaders and the club.

The rules of the club and disciplinary procedures will be made available to the children's parents and it is expected that children will behave themselves accordingly. Comments, suggestions and complaints from children will be dealt with in a prescribed manner ensuring appropriate confidentiality. The Child Welfare Officer has a key role to play in having the voice of the child heard.

Use of Photographic, Filming Equipment and Mobile Phones

Any person wishing to engage in any video, zoom or close range photography or the use, dissemination or publication of those photographs/videos must ensure that they are in full compliance with the Clanwilliam FC and IRFU Codes of Conduct.

General Policy

No photography is allowed in the changing room/dressing areas. This includes the use of Camera phones. Children should also be advised of this rule.

Photographers/film/video operators wishing to record an event or practice session should seek permission/accreditation with the Children's Welfare Officer, team manager/coach and/or event organiser of session. The club should:

- Indicate what is considered appropriate in terms of content and behaviour
- Take reasonable steps to inform players and parents that a photographer will be in attendance at an event and ensure they consent to both the taking and publication of films or photographs
- Not allow unsupervised access to players or one to one photo sessions at events
- Not approve/allow photo sessions outside the events or at a child's home.
- However, the Club cannot be responsible for parents/supporters who take photographs of their own children or teams.

Club Publications

If a child is named, avoid using their photograph. If a child's photograph on their own is published, avoid naming the player. Ask for parental permission to use a child's image publicly. This ensures that they are aware of the way the image is to be used to represent the sport. Only use images of players in suitable dress to reduce the risk of inappropriate use. The content of the photograph should focus on the sport or activity and not on a particular child.

Videoing as a coaching aid

Video equipment can be used as a legitimate coaching aid. However, permission should first be obtained from the player and the player's parent/guardian. Anyone concerned about any photography taking place at events/matches or training sessions should bring their concerns to the attention of the committee/team manager/coach or child welfare officer.

Mobile Phones

Clanwilliam FC encourages responsible and secure use of mobile phones by adults and young people. Clanwilliam FC advises its Age Grade Players as follows:

- If you receive an offensive photo, email or message, do not reply, save it, make a note of times and dates and tell a parent or the Child Welfare Officer if it relates to rugby activities within the club.
- Be careful about who you give your number to and do not respond to unfamiliar numbers.
- Consider changing your phone number in cases of bullying or harassment.
- Avoid using your phone in certain locations – inappropriate use of your camera phone may cause upset or offence to another person, e.g. in the changing rooms.
- Treat your phone as you would any other valuable item so that you guard against theft.

Clanwilliam FC recommends the use of group texting among players and parents to inform them of activities and matches.

It is not appropriate to have constant communication with individual players.

Camera phones should not be used in changing rooms/dressing areas.

Child Welfare Officer

- The appointment of Club Child Welfare Officer is an essential element in the creation of a quality atmosphere in any club. She/he acts as a resource to members with regard to children's issues and also ensures that children have a voice in the running of the club and can freely talk of their experiences.
- Government guidelines advise that a Child Welfare Officer should be appointed by all clubs and this should be done in accordance with recommended selection and recruitment procedures. The appointment of this person should be made by the Committee and ratified on an annual basis at the start of each season.

Clanwilliam Football Clubs' Child Welfare Officer has the following functions:

- To promote the IRFU Child Welfare Policy Document & Irish Sport's Council Code of Ethics & Good Practice for Children's sport within the Club, among young members and their parents/guardians.
- To influence policy and practice and to prioritise children's needs.
- To make all reasonable efforts to ensure that children know how and whom they can report their concerns to within the club. Information disclosed by a child should be dealt with in accordance with the Department of Health and Children's Guidelines "Children First"
- To encourage the appropriate involvement of parents/guardians in club activities.
- To co-operate with parents to ensure that each child enjoys his/her participation in rugby.
- To act as a resource with regard to best practice in children's sport.
- To report regularly to the Club's Youth Officer/Age-Grade Committee
- To ensure that children have a voice in the running of their club and ensure that there are steps young people can take to express concerns about their rugby activities/experiences.
- To maintain liaison with the IRFU with respect to its Child Welfare reporting requirements.

Club Children's Welfare Officers do not have the responsibility of investigating or validating child protection concerns within the club and have no counselling or therapeutic role. This responsibility lies with the Health Service Executive and Gardai.

Clanwilliam Football Club will publish the name and contact details of the current Child Welfare Officer from time to time.

Abuse

Categories of Abuse

Abuse is normally categorised into four different types:

- Neglect
- Emotional Abuse
- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse

For detailed definitions of abuse, refer to Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children. The categories of abuse may be briefly summarised as follows:

Child Neglect

Neglect is normally defined in terms of omission, where a young person suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults, or medical care. It may also include neglect of a young person's basic emotional needs.

Neglect usually becomes apparent in different ways over a period of time rather than at one specific point. For instance, a young person who suffers a series of minor injuries is not having her needs for supervision and safety met. The threshold of significant harm is reached when the young person's needs are neglected to the extent that his/her well being and/or development is severely affected.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is normally to be found in the relationship between an adult and a young person rather than in a specific event or pattern of events. It is rarely manifested in terms of physical symptoms.

Examples of emotional abuse include

- Persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming
- Where the level of care is conditional on her behaviour
- Unresponsiveness, inconsistent or unrealistic expectations of a young person
- Premature imposition of responsibility on the young person
- Over or under protection of the young person
- Failure to provide opportunities for the child's education and development
- Use of unrealistic or over-harsh disciplinary measures
- Exposure to domestic violence, adult mental health problems and parental substance misuse may expose children to emotional abuse

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is any form of non-accidental injury that causes significant harm to a young person, including:

- Shaking, hitting or throwing
- Use of excessive force in handling
- Deliberate poisoning
- Suffocation or drowning
- Munchausen's syndrome by proxy (where parents/ guardians fabricate stories of illness about their child or cause physical signs of illness).
- Allowing or creating a substantial risk of significant harm to a young person
- For young people with disabilities it may include confinement to a room or cot, or incorrectly given drugs to control behaviour
- Burning or scalding

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse occurs when a young person is used by another person for his or her gratification or sexual arousal, or for that of others.

For example:

- Exposure of the sexual organs or any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of a young person
- Intentional touching or molesting of the body of a young person whether by person or object for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification
- Masturbation in the presence of a young person or involvement of the child in the act of masturbation
- Sexual intercourse with the young person, whether oral, vaginal or anal
- Sexual exploitation of a young person
- It may include non-contact activities, such as involving young people in looking at pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways

Clanwilliam F.C will treat any allegation of bullying or related abuse in a manner that is consistent with this Child Welfare Policy.

Grounds for Concern Regarding Abuse

Examples of reasonable grounds are:

- a specific indication from a player that she has been abused;
- an account from a person who witnessed abuse;
- evidence, such as an injury or behaviour which is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused another way;
- an injury or behaviour which is consistent both with abuse and with an innocent explanation but where there are corroborative indicators supporting the concern that it may be a case of abuse. As example of this would be a pattern of injuries, an implausible explanation, other indicators of abuse, dysfunctional behaviour; or
- consistent indication, over a period of time, that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect.

In some cases of child abuse the alleged perpetrator will also be a young person and it is important that behaviour of this nature is not ignored.

Grounds for concern will exist in cases where there is an age difference and/ or difference in power, status or intellect between the children involved. However, it is important to distinguish between normal sexual behaviour and abusive behaviour.

Persons unsure about whether or not certain behaviours are abusive and therefore reportable, should contact the Child Welfare Officer, where they will receive advice.

Responding to complaints or alleged or suspected child abuse

Clanwilliam FC accepts that organisations, which include young people among its members, must be vigilant to the occurrence of child abuse. Child welfare and the protection of young people is the concern of all adults at all times, irrespective of their role within the organisation. Below are the procedures for dealing with any welfare or protection issue that may arise.

A report may be made by any member in the club but should be passed on to the Child Welfare Officer who may in turn have to pass the concern on to the Local Statutory Authorities.

It is not the responsibility of anyone working within Clanwilliam FC in a paid or voluntary capacity, to take responsibility or decide whether or not child abuse is taking place - that is the job of the Local Statutory Authorities. However, there is a responsibility to protect young players by assisting the appropriate agencies so that they can take any necessary action to protect the young person.

All members should follow both procedures outlined below.

Reporting suspected abuse

If there are grounds for concern about the safety or welfare of a young player you should react to the concern. If unsure about whether or not certain behaviours are abusive and therefore reportable, you should contact the Child Welfare Officer. Grounds for concern include a specific indication from a player, a statement from a person who witnessed abuse or an illness, injury or behaviour consistent with abuse.

Steps for reporting suspected abuse

- Observe and note dates, times, locations and contexts in which the incident occurred or suspicion was aroused, together with any other relevant information.
- Report the matter as soon as possible to the designated Child Welfare Officer. If the Child Welfare Officer has reasonable grounds for believing that the player

has been abused or is at risk of abuse, s/he will make a report to the Health Service Executive/Social Services who have statutory responsibility to investigate and assess suspected or actual child abuse. The report should be copied to the Munster Branch Child Protection Officer.

- In cases of emergency, where a player appears to be at immediate and serious risk and the Children's Officer is unable to contact a duty social worker, the Garda authorities should be contacted. Under no circumstances should a player be left in a dangerous situation pending intervention by the Statutory Authorities.
- If the Child Welfare Officer is unsure whether reasonable grounds for concern exist s/he can informally consult with the local health board/social services. S/he will be advised whether or not the matter requires a formal report.
- Any Child Welfare Officer reporting suspected or actual child abuse to the Statutory Authorities should first inform the family of the alleged victim of their intention to make such a report, unless doing so would endanger the player or undermine an investigation

Response to a young player

When a young player discloses information of suspected abuse you should:

- Deal with any allegation of abuse in a sensitive and competent way through listening to and facilitating the player to tell about the problem, rather than interviewing about details of what happened;
- Stay calm and not show any extreme reaction to what the player is saying;
- Listen compassionately, and take what the player is saying seriously;
- Understand that the player has decided to tell something very important and has taken a risk to do so;
- The experience of telling should be a positive one so that the player will not mind talking to those involved in the investigation;
- Be honest with the player and tell them that it is not possible to keep this information a secret;
- Make no judgmental statements against the person whom the allegation is made;

- Not question the player unless the nature of what he/she is saying is unclear. Leading questions should be avoided. Open, non-specific questions should be used such as “Can you explain to me what you mean by that”;
- Check out the concerns with the parents/guardians before making a report unless doing so would endanger the player;
- Give the player some indication of what would happen next, such as informing parents/guardians, HSE or Social Services. It should be kept in mind that the player may have been threatened and may feel vulnerable at this stage.
- Carefully record the details;
- Pass on this information to the designated Child Welfare Officer; and
- Always reassure the player that they have done the right thing in telling you.

Allegations against Coaches / Volunteers

If an allegation of alleged child abuse is made against a coach/volunteer working within Clanwilliam FC, the following procedures should be followed:

- The reporting procedure in respect of suspected child abuse;
- The procedure for dealing with the coach/volunteer.

The safety of the player making the allegation should be considered and the safety of any other players who may be at risk. Clanwilliam FC should take any necessary steps that may be necessary to protect its players.

The issue of confidentiality is important - the coach/volunteer should be treated with respect and fairness.

Dealing with the Coach/Volunteer

While the designated Children Welfare Officer makes the report to the local Health Service Executive, the President of Clanwilliam FC should deal with the coach/volunteer.

- The President should privately inform the coach / volunteer that:
 1. An allegation has been made against him / her;
 2. The nature of the allegation.

- He / she should be afforded an opportunity to respond
- His / her response should be noted and passed on to the HSE/ Social Services
- The coach / volunteer should be asked to step aside pending the outcome of the investigation.
- When a coach / volunteer is asked to step aside it should be made clear that it is only a precautionary measure and will not prejudice any later disciplinary proceedings
- Clanwilliam FC's Child Welfare Officer should inform the Munster Branch Welfare Officer that the coach / volunteer has been asked to stand aside and is under investigation by a statutory authority.
- The IRFU and Clanwilliam FC can consider disciplinary action on the coach / volunteer, but should ensure that this does not interfere with the investigation of the Statutory
- Authorities - the outcome of the investigation and any implications it might have will be considered during the Disciplinary procedure.
- It should be noted that the fact that the alleged abuser has not been prosecuted or been found guilty does not mean that they are appropriate to work with young people in the future.

False Allegations

The law provides immunity from civil liability to persons who report child abuse 'reasonably and in good faith' to the HSE or the Gardaí. The law also covers the offence of 'false reporting'.

The main provisions of the Act are:

- The provision of immunity from civil liability to any person who reports child abuse "reasonably and in good faith" to designated officers of Health Boards or any member of An Garda Síochána
- The provision of significant protections for employees who report child abuse. These protections cover all employees and all forms of discrimination up to and including dismissal
- The creation of a new offence of false reporting of child abuse where a person makes a report of child abuse to the appropriate authorities "knowing that statement to be false". This is a new criminal offence designed to protect innocent persons from malicious reports.
- Where a report of alleged child abuse is established to be knowingly false, the club may take whatever disciplinary action is deemed appropriate in the circumstances.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality should be maintained in respect of all issues and people involved in cases of abuse, welfare or bad practice. It is important that the rights of both the player and the person about whom the complaint has been made are protected. The following points should be kept in mind:

- A guarantee of confidentiality or undertakings regarding secrecy **cannot** be given, as the welfare of the player will supersede all other considerations;
- All information should be treated in a careful and sensitive manner and should be discussed only with those who need to know;
- Information should be conveyed to the parents / guardians of the player in a sensitive way about whom there are concern;
- Giving information to others on a 'need to know' basis for the protection of a player is not a breach of confidentiality;
- All persons involved in a protection process (the player, his/ her parents/ guardians, the alleged offender, his/her family, volunteers) should be afforded appropriate respect, fairness, support and confidentiality at all stages of the procedure;
- Information should be stored in a secure place, with limited access to designated people
- The requirements of the Data Protection laws should be adhered to;
- Breach of confidentiality is a serious manner.

Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints can be difficult to deal with but should not be ignored. In all cases the safety and welfare of the player/s is paramount. Any such complaints relating to inappropriate behaviour should be brought to the attention of the Child Welfare Officer. The information should be checked out and handled in a confidential manner.

Rumours

Rumours should not be allowed to hang in the air. Any rumours relating to inappropriate behaviour should be brought to the attention of the Child Welfare Officer and checked out without delay.

Anti-Bullying Policy

This is adapted from the Scouting Ireland Child Protection Policy, Badminton Union of Ireland and The Irish Sports Council code of ethics and Good Practice for Children's sport

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 young people. It includes behaviours such as teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting and extortion behaviour by one or more players against a victim.

How would you know if a player 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 coaches/volunteers within the Clanwilliam Rugby Football Club

How can it be prevented?

- Ensure that all members follow the code of conduct, which promotes the rights and dignity of each member.
- Encourage a discussion between coaches and players about bullying, at least once in each season.
- Deal with any incidents as they arise.
- Consider using 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-operative and help others, particularly new or different children
- Offer victim immediate support
- 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 lose 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 at regular intervals to ensure it is known that bullying or intimidating behaviour will not be tolerated.

Codes of Conduct

This section contains:

Code of Conduct for Leaders/Coaches

Code of conduct for Players

Code of Conduct for Parents

Code of Conduct for Spectators

Code of Conduct for Referees

Code of Conduct for Leaders/Coaches

All Leaders/Coaches in Clanwilliam FC should familiarise themselves with the *Code of Ethic and Good Practice for Children's Sport* and with the IRFU Child Welfare Policy Document and follow the procedures if they suspect or receive complaints of abuse of any sort.

Coaches/Leaders should:

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

Where possible Coaches/Leaders should avoid:

- Spending excessive amounts of time with children away from others
- Taking sessions alone
- Taking children on journey's alone in their car

Coaches/Leaders should not:

- Use any form of inappropriate discipline on a child

- Exert undue influence over a participant in order to obtain personal benefit or reward
- Engage in rough physical games, sexually provocative games or allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any kind, and/or make sexually suggestive comments about, to, or in the company of a child
- Take measurements or engage in certain types of fitness testing without the presence of another adults

Code of Conduct for Players

- Play for enjoyment and become part of the rugby family. Respect the 'Game of Rugby' and play within the Laws of the Game.
- Accept the referee's decision and let your captain or coach ask any relevant questions.
- Play with control. Do not lose your temper.
- Always do your best and be committed to the game, your team and your club.
- Be a 'good sport'. Applaud all good play whether by your team or the opposition.
- Respect your opponent. Treat all players as you would like to be treated. Do not 'bully' or take advantage of any player.
- Rugby is a team sport and make sure you co-operate with your coach; team mates and members of your club.
- Remember that the goals of the game are to have fun, improve your skills and feel good.
- At the end of the match thank your opponents and the referee for the match.
- Always remember that you owe a duty of care to your opponents. Tackle hard but fairly, do not intend to hurt your opponent.
- Winning and losing is part of sport: Win with humility – lose with dignity.
- As part of the team it is important that you attend training regularly and listen to your coach and help your team.

- As a team sport it is important to understand that all members are important to the team!
- Remember you are representing your team, club, family and the Game of Rugby.

Code of Conduct for Parents

- Remember, young people play rugby for their enjoyment.
- Encourage your child always to play by the Laws of the Game.
- Teach young children that honest endeavor is as important as winning, so that the result of each game is accepted without disappointment.
- Help young people to work towards skill improvement and good sportsmanship.
- Set a good example by applauding good play on both sides.
- Never ridicule, humiliate or shout at young players for making a mistake or losing a match.
- Do not place emphasis on winning at all costs.
- Do not force an unwilling child to participate in the playing of rugby. If the child is to play, he/she will do so in good time through your encouragement.
- Support all efforts to remove verbal & physical abuse from rugby.
- As a spectator do not use profane language or harass referees, coaches or players.
- Do not publicly question the referee's judgment and never their honesty.
- Recognise the value and importance of volunteer referees and coaches.
- Identify and acknowledge the good qualities of the Game of Rugby and uphold these values.
- Remember you and your child's contribution to the Game of Rugby is very important to the IRFU and be proud of your contribution.
- Understand the value of team sport and its importance.

Code of Conduct for Spectators

- Remember that although young people play organised rugby they are not 'miniature internationals'.
- Be on your best behaviour and lead by example. Do not use profane language or harass referees, players or coaches.
- Applaud good play by the visiting team as well as your own.
- Show respect for your team's opponents. Without them there would not be a match.
- Condemn the use of violence in all forms at every opportunity.
- Verbal abuse of players or referees cannot be accepted in any shape or form.
- Players or referees are not fair targets for ignorant behaviour.
- Encourage young players to play by the Laws of the Game.
- Spectators can contribute to the enjoyment of the event and all involved.
- Be proud of your club and the Game of Rugby.

Code of Conduct for Referees

- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every child and treat everyone equally, regardless of gender, disability, ethnic origin, religion, etc.
- All referees must be a member of their Branch Referees Association.
- Act as a role model and promote the positive aspects of rugby and maintain the highest standards of personal conduct.
- Be responsible for monitoring the boundaries between a working relationship and friendship with players.
- Avoid being alone with underage persons.
- Never deal with injuries unless qualified to do so.
- Encourage coaches/parents to act responsibly and to be responsible for the behaviour and performance of players.
- Ensure that safety is paramount in all games.
- Follow agreed protocols regarding shower arrangements after matches.
- Agree appropriate times for entry to changing rooms to deal with match preparation and ensure members of the team management are present.
- Be punctual, prepared and well presented.
- Ensure players and officials comply with the Laws of the Game.
- Never criticise individual players and or coaches or parents.
- 14. Adhere to all rules and procedures as agreed by the Branch Referees Association

Glossary

Age Grade Committee

A committee formed to oversee the running of age-grade rugby at Clanwilliam F.C.

Child

A 'child' or young person is any person under the age of 18 as defined under the Child Care Act, 1991 (ROI)

Child Welfare Officer

The individual in the club who acts as a resource for children and who represent them within the club including full access to the clubs main committee.

Clanwilliam F.C./the club

Clanwilliam Football Club

Committee

The governing committee of Clanwilliam F.C.

Designated Officers

Duty social worker in the Health Service Executive or any member of An Garda Síochána to whom abuse is reported or with whom the validity of concerns about abuse can be discussed.

Designated Person

A person within the Club who is authorised by the Club to deal with child protection issues with respect to a defined sector of age grade players in the Club.

IRFU

Irish Rugby Football Union

ISC

The Irish Sports Council

Parent

Parent shall mean parent, guardian or carer.

Statutory Authorities

Refers to those who have statutory responsibility for the welfare and protection of young people in Ireland, namely An Garda Síochána and the Health Service Executive (HSE)

Volunteers

All adults involved in children's sport. Typical leadership roles are coaches/trainers, club/organisation officers, youth administrators, Development Officers, managers, Children's Officers, Designated Persons and other volunteers with substantial access to children.

Reference Documents

Much of this policy is based on the national guidelines as outlined in the following documents.

- Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport, Irish Sports Council, Revised 2005.
- Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children, Department. of Health & Children 2008.
- IRFU Child Welfare Policy Document

Clanwilliam F.C. FC - Coach/Volunteer Application & Self Declaration Form

(Please use block capitals) Name: _____

email address _____

Address: _____

Date of Birth: _____

PPS No. _____

Tel. (H) _____ (Mobile) _____

Sport Coaching Qualifications

Name of Course	Award Held	Date of Award
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Previous experience/involvement in sport? Please give details.

Have you ever been asked to leave a sporting organisation in the past? (If you have answered yes we will contact you in confidence)

Yes No

Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence? If so give details

(Having a criminal record does not necessarily preclude anyone from working with children. If you have answered "yes" you will be contacted in confidence)

Referee: Please supply the names, addresses and telephone numbers of two people whom we can contact and who from personal knowledge is willing to support your application. (If you have had a previous involvement in sport, one of these names should be that of an administrator/leader of your last club/place of involvement)

Name _____ Title _____ Tel. _____

Address _____

Name _____ Title _____ Tel. _____

Address _____

I agree to work within Clanwilliam Football Club's approved codes of conduct & best practice guidelines. The information I have supplied in this form is true and correct and I indemnify Clanwilliam F.C. fully in the event that such information is not true or correct.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Reference Form

Private and Confidential

Name: _____

Address: _____

Contact Number: _____

The above has sought to act as a Coach/Volunteer within Clanwilliam Football Club and has supplied your name as a referee. As an organisation committed to the safety/protection and well being of children, we are anxious to know if you are satisfied that this person is suitable to work with children in a sporting capacity.

How long have you known this person?

In what capacity?

Are you satisfied that the above named person is suitable to work with children in a sporting capacity?

Yes No

(If you have answered no, we will contact you in confidence)

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Underage Discipline and Disciplinary Procedure

Clanwillian FC expects all its underage players to behave in a responsible manner. Coaches should make it known to players the basic code of conduct (ref page x) required and agree these 'rules of engagement' with players.

Where behavior is not appropriate, coaches have the clubs authority to apply sanctions where deemed necessary. Coaches should have a clear understanding of where and when particular sanctions are needed. The age and development stage of the child should be taken into consideration when using sanctions. Sanctions should be used sparingly and the child needs to understand why a sanction is imposed.

Sanctions may include explanation of the misbehavior, verbal warnings, time-outs, meeting with parents or in more serious cases invoking the clubs disciplinary procedure.

The club recognises two categories of discipline.

1. Minor offences
Dealt with by the coach with the possibility of elevating to the mini-cordinator or Youth officer for persistent minor offending
2. Serious offences
 - Can be defined as continous breaches of discipline
 - Refusal to comply with coaches instruction
 - Wilful damage to club property or that of visiting team
 - Bringing the club into disrepute through the players actions during a training session, match or event organised by the club.

In the event of such incidents the coach together with mini-cordinator and Youth officer can refer the matter to the Age Grade Committee. The Age Grade Committee can decide to elevate the matter to the Club Committee (for consultation only) and in exceptional disciplinary offences it may be deemed necessary to convene a disciplinary review group to deal with the specific situation. This review group will be an ad-hoc group of three members formed by the club President to address the case under review.