

CHILD WELFARE CODE of PRACTICE

Child Protection & Welfare Policy Statement

Introduction

Blarney United FC is committed to ensuring that all necessary steps will be taken to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people who participate in soccer. This Policy document clearly demonstrates the importance placed by Blarney United FC on the protection and safety of children and young people who participate in soccer.

All children and young people (*Children are defined in Irish Law as being any person under 18 years of age*) who participate in soccer 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 and in soccer in general.

Blarney United FC recognises and accepts its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people 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 in Blarney United FC knows exactly what is expected of them in relation to protecting children and young people within soccer.

It is vital that children and young people who participate in Blarney United FC activities are able to do so in a safe, enjoyable and quality environment.

In pursuit of this goal, Blarney United FC will:

- Advise all members of Blarney United FC (coaches, players, parents and spectators) of their responsibilities in relation to the welfare and protection of children and young people who participate in soccer.
- Operate within the recommended Football Association of Ireland codes of conduct and best practice guidelines.
- Appoint a Club Children's Officer in line with Football Association of Ireland requirements.
- Provide a child protection and welfare module in staff induction and development programmes

The aims of Blarney United FC Child Protection Policy are:

- To develop a positive and pro-active position in order to best protect all children and young people who participate in soccer, in order for them to do so in a safe and enjoyable environment.
- To provide appropriate guidance and advice to all club members (players, coaches, volunteers, spectators and parents) in all matters concerning child welfare and protection.
- To demonstrate best practice in the area of child welfare and protection.
- To promote ethics and best practice standards throughout soccer.

The key principles underpinning this Policy are that:

- The welfare of the child is the first and paramount consideration.

- All children and young people 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 identity.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse/poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately. It is essential that we work in partnership with children and young people and their parents/carers. The HSE has a statutory responsibility to safeguard and protect the welfare of children and Blarney United FC is committed to cooperating fully with them in accordance with procedures as outlined in "Children First" National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children.
- Blarney United FC will cooperate fully with the Football Association of Ireland National Children's Officer, Gardai and Health Boards in any investigation of child abuse in soccer.

The Football Association of Ireland's regulations in regard to child welfare and protection are defined in the rulebook as:

Rule 95. The Protection and Welfare of Children

In line with legislation and Government Guidelines (The Child Care Act 1991 and The Protection for Persons Reporting Abuse Act 1998) in relation to child protection and welfare, it is mandatory that all National Associations, Divisional Associations and Affiliated Leagues should operate to Football Association of Ireland recommended codes of conduct and best practice guidelines.

- 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.
- Breaches will become a disciplinary offence.
- Any Member or Participant who is the subject of a Statutory Inquiry in relation to any child welfare concern **must** stand down from all soccer activities pending the outcome of that inquiry and any subsequent internal disciplinary proceedings.

Blarney United FC, through confirming this policy document has demonstrated its commitment to ensuring that children and young people can participate in all soccer activities with their safety and welfare being of paramount importance.

It is essential that this document represents a process of continual improvement in the area of child protection and welfare in soccer.

It is the responsibility of all adults involved in soccer to actively promote safe and best practice standards whilst being ever vigilant and aware of their responsibilities to children and young people in their care.