



***(Blessington Football Club)***

***Players Code of Conduct  
Parent, coaches and volunteer code of conduct***

In (BFC) we want children in to have fun and develop skills in a safe and ***Fair Play*** environment where standards of behaviour are just as important as winning.

We recognise that competition and winning is an important goal but winning at all costs does not meet the needs of young players.

(BFC) are aware that recent research would suggest that increasing numbers of children leave sport between the ages of eight and thirteen. A number of the most common reasons given were; that sport was no longer fun, they did not get to play and overemphasis on winning.

Therefore we have to make every effort to ensure that we keep a balanced approach to competition, make sure all players get a chance to play and strive to keep the fun in soccer. BFC have therefore adopted that approved FAI and Sport Council of Ireland; Code of Conduct for players Coaches, parents and Volunteers. This guidelines and policy are there to ensure that all children, coaches, parents and volunteers involved in the club have an enjoyable experience.

All members of the club should read the following and be aware of the code of conduct of the club. The club will require all members parents, children, coaches and volunteers to confirm via signure that they have made themselves familiar with this document.

**BFC aim is in making sport fun.**

In promoting "Sport for Fun" we in (BFC) will insist on:

- Encouraging participation and fun
- Promoting the development of skills as opposed to winning at all costs
- Ensure a minimum playing time per match per player in line with club and appropriate league guideline
- Emphasising and praising effort
- Acting **as a good role model**
- Insisting on **Fair Play** (we will take off offending players)
- Being realistic with our expectations
- Being aware of children's feelings
- Teaching players to respect different cultures
- Teaching players that standards of behaviour are just as important as winning

### **Children in (BFC) 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.
- (BFC) will aim that all players are entitled to a minimum playing time of per match in line with Club and League guidelines.
- Be happy, have fun and enjoy soccer
- Have a voice in the running of the club
- Be listened to and to be believed
- Make a complaint in an appropriate way and have it dealt with through a proper and effective complaints procedure
- Be afforded appropriate confidentiality

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

### **In this regard children in (BFC) should undertake to:**

- play fairly, do their best and have fun
- be on their best behaviour at all times
- abide by all club guidelines and rules
- 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, parents, coaches' volunteers in (BFC) should not:**

- cheat
- use abusive language, or argue with, the referee, officials, teammates or opponents, volunteers or spectators.
- use violence,
- 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
- behave in any manner that may bring the name of (BFC) into disrepute
- use mobile phone or any recording or photography devices in the club or other club changing rooms or other places as directed by club and coaches (eg Away trips bedrooms ect)

## **Mobile Phones**

Mobile phones are often given to children for security, enabling parents to keep in touch and make sure they are safe. However such technology has also allowed an increase in direct personal contact with young people, in some cases used to cross personal boundaries and cause harm. Within clubs there is a need to encourage responsible and secure use of mobile phones.

### **In this respect Coaches/Club are advised to:**

- Use group texts for communication among athletes and teams and inform parents of this at the start of the season
- It is not appropriate to have constant communication for individual athletes
- Don't use the phone in certain locations; inappropriate use of your camera phone may cause upset or offence to another person, e.g. changing rooms

## **Best Practice and Code of Conduct for Coaches:**

### ***BFC have adopted the FAI Best Practice Code of Conduct for Coaches.***

In keeping children and young people at the forefront of planning and practice, our coaches can be confident that participants will enjoy their football experiences and that their actions are regarded as safe and in keeping with the principle that the safety and welfare of children is of paramount consideration.

Our Coaches are given a position of trust by parents/guardians and players and are expected to operate to the highest standards of behavior whilst in the company of underage players (under 18years). Our coaches are also expected not to engage in any activity that could reasonably be viewed as bringing the club or soccer in general into disrepute.

It is important to for our coaches to note that in adhering to these guidelines ensures not only a safe environment for children but also a safe environment in which coaches and volunteers can operate.

Most coaches work in an environment where it is recognised that, in a sporting context, certain types of coaching require a 'hands on approach', i.e., it may be necessary to support a participant in order to physically demonstrate a particular technique. This should only occur when necessary and in an open and appropriate way with the knowledge, permission and full understanding of the participant concerned and his/her parents/guardians.

Coaches must realise that certain situations or friendly actions could be misinterpreted, not only by the player, but by outsiders motivated by jealousy, dislike or mistrust and could lead to allegations of sexual misconduct or impropriety. Therefore coaches should be aware of, and avoid all situations conducive to risk.

### **Where possible, our coaches/volunteers should avoid:**

- Spending excessive amounts of time with children away from others.
- Taking sessions alone (always employ "Two Deep" supervision).
- Taking children to their homes.
- Taking children on journeys alone in their care.

### **Our Coaches/volunteers should never**

- Exert undue influence over a participant in order to obtain personal benefit or reward.
- Share a room with a young person alone on away trips.
- 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 or to a child.
- Use any form of corporal punishment or physical force on a young person.
- Take measurements or engage in certain types of fitness testing without the presence of another adult and permission from the Committee
- Undertake any form of therapy (hypnosis etc.) in the training of young people.

## **In promoting good practice and creating a child/player centred approach coaches should:**

- Act as good role models.
- Encourage and be positive during sessions so that players leave with a sense of achievement.
- Set challenging, realistic but achievable goals.
- Plan and prepare each session appropriately and ensure proper levels of supervision.
- Ensure that all activities are inclusive and allow all players to participate in an enjoyable way.
- Put the welfare and enjoyment of players first and strike a balance between this and winning or achieving results.
- Enforce the principles of fair play treating each player equally, with dignity and respect and ensure that all players play within the rules.
- Be aware of the developmental stages and needs of players.
- Avoid over training and over emphasis on competition.
- Involve parents/guardians and other club members in what we do.
- Be qualified and up to date with the latest coaching knowledge and skills.

*(Reference). Irish Sports Council, Code for Leaders*

## **Safety**

Coaches have a responsibility to ensure the safety of all players possible within the limits of their control. Therefore, coaches should seek to create a safe and enjoyable environment in which to play and train.

## **In this respect:**

- Regular safety checks should be carried out in relation to premises, training facilities and equipment. Any problems should be brought to the attention of the Committee
- Appropriate safety rules should be adopted and implemented and protective equipment should be used in any contact training session.
- Parents/guardians should be informed of the starting and finishing times of training sessions and matches.
- A first aid kit should be available at all training sessions /matches and injuries should be recorded, with a note of action taken in relation to each one.
- Parents/Guardians should be notified of injuries/illness which their children incur while participating in any football activity
- Never play injured players.

**Ensure that the FAI Goalpost safety policy is strictly adhered to at all times**

## **Code of conduct for parents and volunteers:**

### **Football and Young People**

The Football Association of Ireland is indebted to the countless number of volunteers who give of their time in providing football opportunities for children and young people. Like all sports, football, provides an excellent pathway for children and young people to learn new skills, become more confident and maximise their own potential. Through their participation, they can learn and develop life skills, have fun and enjoyment, make friends and experience life in a way that can enhance their personal growth throughout their lives. People become involved in football for young people for a variety of different reasons. They come from a variety of sporting backgrounds and take on various roles within clubs and other football organisations. Yet irrespective of their role or responsibility, they all share the common goal of providing football opportunities for young people.

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, children's safety and enjoyment of the sport. The FAI wants sport to be safe, to be fun and to ensure that no matter what sport young people are involved in, that it takes place in the spirit of '**FAIR PLAY**'. Fair play is the guiding principle of the Irish Sport's Council's Code of Ethics as well as the FAI's Code of Ethics and Good Practice which is designed to provide guidance for those working with young people in football. It outlines the type of issues that need to be discussed and addressed to provide the safest and most enjoyable environment not only for players but also the coaches and volunteers involved. Coaches achieve satisfaction from working with children and young people. Focusing on the individual participants' needs and performance encourages young people to achieve and demonstrate enjoyment, equality and fair play. They will come to realise that standards of behaviour are as important as sports performance. In taking this approach children are encouraged to:

- Do their best – put in their best effort.
- Improve and develop their skills.
- Make friends.
- Play by the rules.
- Appreciate/accept everyone in the group, regardless of ability, race, religion, gender etc.

### **Player Centred Approach**

Coaches and parents need to be aware of why children want to play soccer. They want to learn new skills, make new friends, be part of a group, to win and be successful, experience challenges, excitement and action. While winning is important, it must be remembered that winning at all costs does not meet the needs of players. Results are not necessarily a good indicator of coaching effectiveness or ability, the improvement level of players and their level of enjoyment is. Coaches should aim to provide a safe and enjoyable environment where children and young people are placed at the centre of all activities.

## **Best Effort and Fair Play in a Safe Environment"**

### **In promoting "Sport for Fun" coaches should:**

- 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.
- Actively discourage children/young players from abusing referees, officials, team mates or opponents (take off offending players).
- 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.

### **In taking this approach children are encouraged to:**

- Do their best – put in their best effort.
- Improve and develop their skills.
- Make friends.
- Play by the rules.
- Appreciate/accept everyone in the group, regardless of ability, race, religion, gender etc.

## **Guide for Parents / Guardians**

Parents / guardians play an important role in promoting children's happiness and success in football and sport in general. Parental expectations and behaviour have a significant bearing on children's attitude and behaviour while participating in football. Parents / guardians need to be aware of why children want to play football. Children want to learn new skills, make new friends, be part of a group, to win and be successful, experience challenges, excitement and action.

While winning is important, it must be remembered that winning at all costs does not meet the needs of players. Results are not necessarily a good indicator of coaching effectiveness or ability, the improvement level of players and their level of enjoyment is.

### **Support and encouragement from parents / guardians will contribute to children having:**

- A sense of personal achievement.
- An enjoyment of soccer.
- Improved physical fitness.
- Higher self-esteem.

It is important for parents / guardians to find out what their children want from football, and help them to set realistic targets to achieve this.

**This may involve controlling their own aspirations and avoiding the desire to force their own dreams or unfulfilled ambitions on them.**

### **It is important to:**

- Encourage but not force children to be active.
- Know when he / she is ready to play.
- Encourage healthy lifestyle habits.
- Attend training and games where possible.
- Promote and teach **FAIR PLAY**.
- Teach your child to treat referees, other players, coaches, officials and Spectators and volunteers with respect regardless of race, creed, colour, sex or ability.
- Help children to set realistic targets.
- Help children with decision making.

### **Parents/Guardians should not:**

- Ignore or dismiss complaints or concerns expressed by a child which relate to his/her involvement in soccer.
- Ridicule or shout at a child for losing a game or making a mistake.
- Treat any club as a childminding service.
- Take safety for granted.
- Put undue pressure on any child to please or perform well.

### **Most importantly parents / guardians should: "Lead by example"**

#### **Parent / Coach Co-Operation**

It is important that parents / guardians establish contact with the individual responsible for coaching their child.

#### **In addition, parents / guardians should:**

- Give the coach help when asked and show appreciation for a job well done.
- Support the coach's and referee decisions. These individuals are only doing the best they can and they need support not anger.
- Refrain from contacting the coach unless it is necessary, respect they have a private life.
- Inform the coach about any illness, injury, holidays, etc.
- Make an effort to attend training and games.
- Communicate any concerns you may have to the coach.
- Make sure the child has appropriate equipment/clothing/refreshments.
- Encourage **FAIR PLAY** at home and do not instil a "win at all costs" attitude in children.
- Be positive or be quiet, negative comments are counter productive.
- Conduct themselves in such a way which promotes the definition of **FAIR PLAY**.
- Be prepared to be asked to leave by officials or club personnel if behaviour is contrary to the definition of **FAIR PLAY**.

#### **Parents / Guardians should never:**

- Insult players or club personnel of their home and away club.
- Argue with, or shout abuse at coaches, referees, volunteers, team mates and other players officials and they should actively discourage children

or young players from doing likewise.

- Suggest or encourage cheating, aggressive or "dirty" play.
- Placing undue or inappropriate criticism on a player, causing the player unnecessary or unhealthy levels of stress.
- Behave with physical or verbal aggression towards another person (actually use force or threaten the use of force).
- Engage in any "harassment" type of behaviour.

**In promoting "Football for Fun" everyone involved in the organisation of football should:**

- 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**.
- Be realistic with expectations.
- Be aware of children's feelings.
- Teach players to respect different cultures.

This policy/guideline has been adopted from the FAI codes of conduct

**For further information or advice see:**

FAI Code of Ethics & Best Practice which is available on website [www.fai.ie](http://www.fai.ie)

Or contact: FAI Code of Ethics Programme Co-ordinator / National Children's Officer,  
80 Merrion Square, Dublin 2. Tel. 087 9691422 Email: [codeofethics@fai.ie](mailto:codeofethics@fai.ie)