

ABBEYSIDE AFC



SAFEGUARDING POLICY



SOGS '2024

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ABBEYSIDE AFC - PLAYERS CODE OF CONDUCT

All players at Abbeyside AFC must read this code of conduct and sign their name giving a n understanding that they will follow this code of conduct at all times.

As a player at Abbeyside AFC I will:

- Make every honest effort to develop my sporting ability, to include fitness, skill, technique and tactical ability.
- Strive to set a positive example for younger players and supporters.
- Safeguard the physical fitness of opponents, avoid violence and rough play and where possible help injured opponents.
- Give maximum effort and strive for the best possible performance during each game.
- Refrain from using inappropriate foul and/or abusive language, particularly to referees/officials and other players.
- Make every effort consistent with fair play and the laws of the game to help my team win.
- Abide by the laws and rules of the game at all times.
- Accept victory and defeat with equanimity.
- Be respectful and supportive of my own team mates
- Be respectful to your opponents at all times.
- Be respectful to match officials at all times.
- Accept the decision of the match officials without protest.
- Avoid words or actions which may mislead a match official.
- Abide by the lawful instructions and directions of mentors and team officials.
- Be respectful to the opposing teams' mentors and match officials.
- Demonstrate due regard for the interest of supporters.
- Not act or speak so as to incite or encourage supporters to act in a way that may endanger the safety of anyone attending or participating in the game.
- Have regard to the best interests of the game when publicly expressing an opinion on the game or on others involved in the game.
- In making public comments on a particular fixture or on the game in general, I will be mindful of upholding and promoting the good name of the game, the club and others involved in it in the wider community.

I understand that any failure to adhere to this Code of Conduct may result in appropriate investigation and disciplinary actions being undertaken by my club, league or the FAI.

Abbeyside AFC Management reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to initiate appropriate investigation and disciplinary actions, up to and including a disciplinary hearing and to impose applicable club sanctions, where deemed necessary.

SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____



ABBEYSIDE AFC - EQUALITY POLICY

Football belongs to, and should be enjoyed by everyone equally. The aim of this policy is to ensure that everyone is treated fairly and with respect and that Abbeyside AFC is equally accessible to all. The club is responsible for setting standards and values to apply throughout the club at every level. Our commitment is to encourage equal opportunities, and confront and eliminate discrimination by reason of:

- Gender
- Sexual orientation
- Marital Status
- 'Race', Nationality
- Ethnic origin
- Colour, religion or belief
- Ability or disability

This policy is fully supported by the club officers who are responsible for the implementation of this policy. The club, in all its activities, will not discriminate, or in any way treat anyone less favourably, on the grounds of gender, sexual orientation, marital status, 'race', nationality, ethnic origin, colour, religion or belief, ability or disability. This means that Abbeyside AFC will ensure that it treats people fairly and with respect and that it will provide access and opportunity where possible for all members of the community to take part in and enjoy its activities.

Abbeyside AFC will not tolerate harassment, bullying, abuse or victimisation of an individual, which for the purposes of this policy and the actions and sanctions applicable is regarded as discrimination. This includes sexual or racial harassment or other discriminatory behaviour, whether physical or verbal. The club will work to ensure that such behaviour is met with appropriate action in whatever context it occurs.

Abbeyside AFC is committed to taking decisive action where inequalities exist, and to the development of a programme of on-going training and awareness-raising events and activities in order to promote the eradication of discrimination and promote equality in football. The club is committed to a policy of equal treatment of all members and requires all members to abide by and adhere to the policies and the requirements of the relevant legislation:

- Equal Status Acts, 2000-2018
- Employment Equality Acts, 1998-2004
- Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act, 1989
- Any amendments to these acts and any new legislation

The club commits itself to the immediate investigation of any claims, when it is brought to its attention, of discrimination on the above grounds and where such is found to be the case, a requirement that the practice stop and sanctions imposed as appropriate.
(Further information on the FAI Anti-Discrimination Rule can be found in the FAI rule book).



ABBEYSIDE AFC - CODE OF CONDUCT FOR SPECTATORS

- Remember that although children play organised soccer they are not miniature professionals.
- Don't place excessive pressure on children to perform to unrealistically high expectations.
- Children play soccer to develop their skills, to have fun and enjoy the game.
- Be on your best behaviour and lead by example.
- The behaviour of a team's supporters will often be remembered long after the result of the game. Be remembered for the right reasons.
- Applaud good play, sportsmanship and best effort by the visiting team as well as your own.
- Welcome and respect all your teams' opponents. Without them there would be no match.
- Condemn the use of violence in all forms at every opportunity.
- Verbal abuse of players, match officials or opposing supporters cannot be accepted in any shape or form.
- Players or match officials should never be regarded as fair targets for ignorant or abusive behaviour.



ABBEYSIDE AFC - SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY

- In Abbeyside AFC, the use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco shall be actively discouraged as being incompatible with a healthy approach to sporting activity.
- Coaches/managers shall not smoke when taking a session or drink alcohol before taking a session.
- In relation to our under-age teams Abbeyside AFC shall endeavour to organise receptions and celebrations in a non-alcoholic environment and in a manner that is suitable for the age group concerned.
- Where this is not possible, the Club will comply with the Football Association of Ireland directive that under no circumstances whatsoever can any person under the age of 18 years consume alcohol and any and all appropriate steps should be taken to ensure that this policy is strictly adhered to.
- Our coaches/managers/committee shall act as role models for appropriate behaviour and refrain from drinking alcohol at such functions



ABBEYSIDE AFC - VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT POLICY

Abbeyside AFC (hereinafter called the club) existence depends on the voluntary effort of all its volunteers. Volunteers are the driving force of the club and without volunteers the club would not be in a position to offer football opportunities in our community. It is important that the club provides a healthy environment for volunteers and recruits the right people for the right job. The following recruitment steps will help to protect young people and assist in placing volunteers in a position to which they are suited and supported.

- 1. ROLE DESCRIPTIONS** – The club will provide a role description for all new volunteer positions that will include a set of tasks and a time commitment. The volunteer role will be publicised through the club’s communication channels.
- 2. GARDA VETTING** – In line with legislation and the FAI’s Child Welfare and Safeguarding Policy everyone working with children or vulnerable adults will require Garda Vetting before starting their role.
- 3. INDUCTION** – Every new volunteer will have received an induction to ensure that they are familiar with their surroundings, comfortable and made aware of the club’s policies and procedures.
- 4. SAFEGUARDING TRAINING** – All volunteers must complete the FAI Safeguarding training programme (SG1) that is offered through the FAI website and training offered on site by the FAI.
- 5. VOLUNTEERS** – All volunteers will adhere to the clubs and the FAI’s rules and code of conducts.



ABBEYSIDE AFC - PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH CHILD ABUSE CONCERNS OR ALLEGATIONS

Abbeyside AFC is committed to ensuring that children can participate in all football activities in a safe environment. Football provides an excellent opportunity to learn new skills, become more confident and maximise potential as members of teams and as individuals. The safety and welfare of all children is paramount. It is important to note that the investigation of suspected child abuse is the responsibility of the Statutory Authorities (Gardai, HSE) and should not be undertaken by Children's Officers or any other Club/League. All allegations of child abuse must be referred to the Statutory Authorities.

When an allegation is received it should be assessed promptly and carefully. It will be necessary to decide whether a formal report should be made to the HSE and this decision should be based on reasonable grounds for concern.

The following examples would constitute reasonable grounds for concern:

- (i) a specific indication from a child that (s)he was abused;*
- (ii) a statement from a person who witnessed abuse;*
- (iii) an illness, injury or behaviour consistent with abuse;*
- (iv) a symptom which may not in itself be totally consistent with abuse, but which is supported by corroborative evidence of deliberate harm or negligence;*
- (v) consistent signs of neglect over a period of time.*

Ref. Children First Act 2015

STEP ONE:

Any allegation of abuse must in the first instance be brought to the attention of the Chairperson of the Club. Should the Chairperson be unsure whether reasonable grounds for concern exist, the local HSE duty social worker can be informally consulted. Advice will be given as to whether or not the matter requires a formal report. Coaches/volunteers may be subjected to erroneous or malicious allegations. Therefore, any allegation of abuse should be dealt with sensitively and appropriate support should be provided for staff/volunteers including counselling where necessary.

STEP TWO:

Should Abbeyside AFC become aware of an allegation of abuse of a child or children by a manager/coach/volunteer during the execution of that manager/coaches/volunteers duty, the Chairperson will privately inform the manager/coach/volunteer of the following:
the fact that the allegation has been made against him/her and the nature of the allegation

STEP THREE:

The manager/coach/volunteer should be afforded an opportunity to respond. The Chairperson will note the response and pass on this information when making the formal report to the HSE.

The report to the HSE should contain observations, dates, times, locations and contexts in which the incident occurred or suspicion was aroused, together with any other relevant information.

In cases of emergency, where a child appears to be at immediate and serious risk and the Chairperson is unable to contact a duty social worker, the Gardai shall be contacted.

Under no circumstances will a child be left in a dangerous situation pending intervention by the Statutory Authorities

STEP FOUR:

Our Chairperson, if reporting suspected or actual child abuse to the Statutory Authorities will first inform the family of their intention to make such a report, unless doing so would endanger the child or undermine any statutory investigation.

STEP FIVE:

All subsequent actions following an allegation of abuse against a manager/coach/volunteer will be taken in consultation with the HSE and An Garda Síochána. An immediate meeting will be sought with these two agencies for this purpose. The Football Association of Ireland National Children's Officer is also available to provide support and advice.

STEP SIX:

Under Football Association of Ireland rules, any manager/coach/volunteer who is the subject of a statutory investigation into alleged child abuse, is required to stand down from all soccer activities until the investigation is completed. Therefore the FAI National Children's Officer must be informed immediately of any formal notification to the Statutory Authorities. When a person is asked to stand down it should be made clear that it is only a precautionary measure in keeping with standard procedures/guidelines and will not prejudice any later disciplinary proceedings. The manager/coach/volunteer concerned should be advised that the procedures being undertaken are in accordance with statutory requirements. He or she should be treated with respect and fairness, and also be assured that all information will be dealt with in a sensitive and confidential manner.

STEP SEVEN:

Abbeyside AFC will carefully consider the outcome of the statutory investigation and will then assess if there are any outstanding disciplinary issues in relation to their internal rules or infringements of the Football Association of Ireland best practice guidelines. It must be remembered 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.

Internal Club disciplinary proceedings can only be initiated after the Statutory Authorities have completed theirs.

LINKS

FAI Child Welfare Policy

- https://www.fai.ie/sites/default/files/atoms/files/FAI_Child_Welfare_Policy_-_2014.pdf
- *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children*
- <https://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/Publications/ChildrenFirst.pdf>



ABBEYSIDE AFC - CODE OF CONDUCT AND BEST PRACTICE 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 behaviour 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. The comprehensive FAI Codes of Ethics & Best Practice guidelines is available at:

FAI Code of Conduct and Good Practice for Coaches

https://www.fai.ie/sites/default/files/atoms/files/FAI_code_of_conduct_for_coaches.pdf

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.
- Safety guidelines for coaches

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



ABBEYSIDE AFC - CODE OF CONDUCT FOR TRAVELLING TO AWAY GAMES

INTRODUCTION

As a club, we do not provide buses to underage players for away games as part of the membership policy. This document sets out the requirements of coaches for impacted teams.

CLUB POLICY

It is the clubs policy that all areas below are fully adhered to and any amendments are done with the full written agreement of the management committee only.

For coaches driving kids to away games:

Underage players should not travel with any club coaches to away games.

The coach is the club representative and therefore should monitor the behaviour of all players ensuring that they:

- Follow any instruction from the driver
- Remain seated throughout the journey
- Wear seatbelts where available and when appropriate
- Always behave in a respectful manner
- Coaches should adhere to the Code of Conduct and Best Practices set out in https://www.fai.ie/sites/default/files/atoms/files/FAI_code_of_conduct_for_coaches.pdf

Expectation is that any behaviour by a player that is not acceptable would be informed to the parent/guardian and where necessary/appropriate advised to the club.

I understand that if I do not follow the Code of Conduct, action may be taken by my club, league, or national association.



ABBEYSIDE AFC - SAFETY POLICY

All coaches/managers in Abbeyside AFC have a responsibility to ensure the safety of the players with whom they work as far as 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:

- Adequate supervision must be maintained at all times.
- Best practice advice would advocate adult:child ratios of 2 Leaders to every 16 children (1:8), but no coach, manager or volunteer works alone.
- Regular safety checks should be carried out in relation to premises, training facilities and equipment. Ensure that the FAI Goalpost safety policy is strictly adhered to at all times.
- Abbeyside AFC safety rules should be adhered to at all times.
- 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 and matches and injuries should be recorded, with a note of action taken in relation to each one. Never play injured players.
- Parents/Guardians should be notified of injuries/illness which their children incur while participating in any Abbeyside AFC soccer activity.
- Records of attendance should be maintained.
- Ensure the use of any recommended safety equipment.



ABBEYSIDE AFC - ROLE OF CHILDREN'S OFFICER

The key role of the Club Children's Officer is to ensure the implementation and promotion of the FAI Child Welfare and Safeguarding Policy so as to ensure that young people can participate, enjoy and benefit from football in safe and enjoyable surroundings.

All Clubs are required to have a Children's Officer in place in order to fulfil the Child welfare and safeguarding roles. The appointment of a Children's Officer is an essential element in the creation of a quality atmosphere in any club.

Role of the Children's Officer is to:

- To influence policy and practice and to prioritise children's needs
- To ensure that children know how and whom they can report their concerns to within the club
- To encourage the participation of parents/guardians in club activities
- To co-operate with parents to ensure that each child enjoys his/her participation in soccer
- To act as a resource with regard to best practice in children's soccer
- To report regularly to the Club Management Committee
- They act as a resource to members with regard to Children's issues and also ensure that Children have a voice in the running of the club and can freely talk about their experiences.
- To undertake the role of Children's Officer, the individual must have completed the Safeguarding 1 and Safeguarding 2 courses.

Children's 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 Gardaí, Tusla or the HSE.

Abbeyside AFC have appointed Joe O'Donnell as our Children's Officer and can be contacted at (087)3600234.



ABBEYSIDE AFC - SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE ADULTS

All adults have the right to be safe and to live a life free from abuse. All persons are entitled to this right, regardless of their circumstances. It is the responsibility of all service providers, statutory and non-statutory, to ensure that, service users are treated with respect and dignity, have their welfare promoted and receive support in an environment in which every effort is made to promote welfare and to prevent abuse." Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse – National Policy and Procedures' (2014).

The "Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse - National Policy and Procedures", which applies to all HSE and HSE funded services, outlines a number of principles to promote the welfare of vulnerable people and safeguard them from abuse. These include a requirement that all services must have a publicly declared "No Tolerance" approach to any form of abuse and must promote a culture which supports this ethos.

Some of the principles underpinning the policy include:

- Respect for human rights
- A person centred approach to care and services
- Promotion of advocacy.
- Respect for confidentiality
- Empowerment of individuals
- A collaborative approach.
- There are a number of different types of abuse.

Physical Abuse includes slapping, hitting, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate sanctions.

Sexual Abuse includes rape and sexual assault, or sexual acts to which the vulnerable person has not consented, or could not consent, or into which he or she was compelled to consent.

Psychological Abuse includes emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation, or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.

Financial or Material Abuse includes theft, fraud, exploitation; pressure in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions; or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits. Institutional Abuse may occur within residential care and/or acute settings including nursing homes, acute hospitals, and any other in-patient settings and may involve, for example, poor standards of care, rigid routines or inadequate responses to complex needs.

Neglect and Acts of Omission include ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life such as medication, adequate nutrition and/or heating.

Discriminatory Abuse includes ageism, racism, sexism, based on a person's disability and other forms of

harassment, slurs or similar treatment. All vulnerable people have a right to be protected against abuse and to have any concerns regarding abusive experiences addressed. They have a right to be treated with respect and to feel safe, regardless of the setting in which they live. If anyone has a concern about abuse or neglect of a vulnerable person in a HSE or HSE funded residential facility, they should report it to a health care professional (e.g. public health nurse, physiotherapist, GP etc.) or to the Safeguarding and Protection Teams (SPTs) in each of its nine Community Healthcare Organisations (CHOs).

HSE NATIONAL SAFEGUARDING OFFICE

A National Office was established in December 2015 in accordance with the HSE's Social Care Division Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse National Policy & Procedures. The core function of the office is to oversee the implementation, monitoring, review and ongoing evaluation of the Safeguarding Policy as well as coordinating the development and roll-out of safeguarding training.

A recommendation at the time of the policy launch was that the policy would be subject to review within a short period. This was designed to take account of the impact of its application and any legislative or policy changes that could impact on its implementation. The Review was commenced in 2017 has been undertaken on a staged project plan basis.

PHASE 1 – This initial phase undertook an analysis of the workings of the current policy including its strengths/weaknesses and considered the messages from a detailed international literature review. This phase considered how the policy is experienced and working in practice for users.

PHASE 2 – This phase was the listening phase undertaken with a wide range of stakeholder groups. We had excellent feedback via 173 formal submissions to the NSO and 33 roundtable focus group meetings held throughout the country. Importantly, service user and advocacy engagement was a central component of this phase. This phase considered key issues on areas such as scope, roles, operational models and potential use of thresholds in a revised policy. This phase has now completed and reports of the findings are being circulated to the subgroups.

PHASE 3 - This is the current stage which involves revision and drafting of the document.

To contact the National Safeguarding Office please e-mail safeguarding.socialcare@hse.ie or phone 061 46 1165 (9am to 5pm Monday to Friday).

SAFEGUARDING IRELAND

Safeguarding Ireland was established to promote the safeguarding of adults who may be vulnerable, protect them from all forms of abuse by persons, organisations and institutions and develop a national plan for promoting their welfare. This will be achieved by promoting inter-sectoral collaboration, developing public and professional awareness and education, and undertaking research to inform policy, practice and legislation in the Republic of Ireland. In December 2017, Safeguarding Ireland published its first Strategic Plan which spans a five year period until the end of 2021.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH - ADULT SAFEGUARDING

A new National Adult Safeguarding Policy is to be developed for the health sector. The safety and protection of vulnerable people is a key objective of the Government and society. A range of legislation and policy-based measures to that end is already in place in Ireland but it is acknowledged that there is a need to identify gaps in legislation and also that promoting awareness and cultural change is key to effective safeguarding You can find out more here



ABBEYSIDE AFC - CHILD SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT

The Abbeyside AFC Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed in line with requirements under the Children First Act 2015, (the Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017), and Tusla's Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice).

Abbeyside AFC has the following procedures in place as part of our Safeguarding Policies:

- Procedures for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct by staff or volunteers against a child availing of our activities;
- Procedures for the safe recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers to work with children in our activities;
- Procedures for provision of and access to child safeguarding training and information, including the identification of the occurrence of harm;
- Procedure for reporting of child protection or welfare concerns to Statutory Authorities;
- Procedures for maintaining a list of the persons in the relevant service who are mandated;
- Procedure for appointing a relevant person.
- All procedures/policies listed are available on request. FAI Policies and the FAI Rulebook are available on www.fai.ie
- Abbeyside AFC recognise that implementation is an ongoing process. Our club committee is committed to the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement and the accompanying child welfare and safeguarding policies and procedures that support our intention to keep children safe from harm while participating in our activities. This Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed 12th of February 2026 or as soon as practicable after there has been material change in any matter to which the statement refers.
- This statement has been published on the Abbeyside AFC website; www.abbeysideafc.com and displayed in a prominent place on the premises.
- It has been provided to all staff, volunteers and any other persons involved with the service. It is readily accessible to parents and guardians on request. A copy of this Statement will be made available to Tusla and members of the public if requested.

SIGNATURE 1: *Nathan Burke*

DATE: 12/09/2024

POSITION: ABBEYSIDE AFC YOUTH ACADEMY DIRECTOR, 2024.