

## **AWAY TRIPS WITH UNDERAGE TEAMS RANELAGH GALES CODE OF BEHAVIOUR**

### **For organisers, coaches, carers, parents/guardians and children**

Many teams and Clubs participate in trips away from home throughout the year. These trips are seen as additional to the regular games that take place as part of a County Fixtures schedule or during inter Club blitzes. Trips away from home are often viewed as a means by which young teams and players may be rewarded for their endeavours at the end of their season or as a means by which greater team morale and camaraderie can be developed, regardless of age.

An example of rewarding a team or organising a trip is to invite the team or a number of teams to attend inter-county matches. This is a popular means by which young people may see and attend games where their chosen code is played at a high level of skill and competitiveness. Visiting other Clubs and playing matches against teams of a similar age group in other areas or counties will also give younger players an insight into the broad geographical nature and community ethos attached to our Games while creating greater camaraderie with their colleagues and within their own Clubs. The pre-planning and detailed organising of such trips for younger players will require a high degree of care and preparation and adults should always remember the key roles of responsibilities they have during such trips on behalf of their Club, on behalf of parents and on behalf of the young people themselves.

#### **PRE-TRIP PREPARATIONS**

- A detailed programme of activity should be approved in advance at Club level following agreement with the other Club(s) involved in the away trip.
- Where possible a member of your organising group should be familiar with the away venue, should visit the venue in advance if deemed necessary and ensure themselves that the venue can cater for the planned programme of activities. This is particularly relevant should an overnight stay be required.
- Parental/guardian consent must be obtained in writing so as to permit any young person under 18 years of age participate in any organised trip. Contact details for all parents/guardians must be obtained in advance of the trip.
- Young people (of an appropriate age) and their parents/guardians should sign a form agreeing to abide by the programme and to any agreed procedures that relate to the organised trip.
- ***An agreed Code of Behaviour, specifically designed for the trip, should be discussed, outlined and agreed with all players and adults that are participating on the trip.***
- Medical information, deemed relevant by the parents/guardians of players, should be made known to the leaders of the Club's trip and what action, if any, may be required of them in the case of an emergency.
- Such information, including food or other related allergies should have previously been recorded on the annual/registration form of each underage Club member.
- A detailed programme which includes the following should be presented to all players and their parents/ guardians:
  - A time schedule of departure and arrival at your destination.
  - Full information about the trip; including all activities and events planned.
  - Emergency contact numbers of Club personnel who are accompanying the group during the trip and contact details for parents/guardians
  - All adults accompanying the underage team should be made aware as to what their responsibilities are and what role(s) they may have during the trip.
  - It is the Club's responsibility to ensure that the trip itself and all activities taking place throughout the trip adhere to insurance cover, that all participants are eligible members of their Association's relevant injury scheme and that the activities of the trip do not compromise the conditions of their injury scheme or any additional insurance policy.
  - Where it is deemed necessary the organisers of all such trips should seek and gain the permission of their County Board prior to announcing the details of the programme to their members.

## **DURING THE TRIP**

- It is essential that at least one individual with first aid qualifications be part of your organising group and that this individual be present or available throughout the trip.
- Young people must be adequately supervised throughout the trip as per our recommended ratios of adults to young people. This ratio may differ depending on the age group of participants, the activities to be undertaken, whether there is an overnight stay, if the trip is abroad etc.
- Supervision ratios will depend on the nature of the activity, the age of the players and any special needs of the group. It is recommended that a minimum ratio of 1:8 for under 12 years of age players and a ratio of 1:10 for players over 12 yrs. of age. When abiding by such ratios a coach must always be accompanied by at least one other suitably qualified adult at all times.
- Organisers of Club trips should always be mindful of ensuring that additional adults accompany their group on trips away for supervision purposes and in case of emergencies or unforeseen circumstances. These adults are subject the same vetting and child safeguarding requirements as are coaches.
- There must be at least two adults of each gender with mixed groups.
- Adults are required to be familiar with the agreed rules on smoking and on the consumption of alcohol during the trip, as outlined in the GAA Code of Behaviour. As a basic minimum, adults are required to avoid smoking while working with young players and must not consume alcohol or non-prescribed drugs while young players are in their care.

## **OVERNIGHT STAYS**

When participating in an overnight stay a number of matters require careful preplanning and agreement.

By agreement with all parties, including players and parents, a decision is required whether the Club will avail of hotel or guest house accommodation or if invited will avail of a hosting arrangement by the host Club in the houses of their Club members.

Regardless of what form of accommodation is agreed upon adequate and specific supervisory ratios of adults to children must be agreed in advance. This ratio, which is very dependent on the age category of the children/young people, may also vary should the group be participating in certain outdoor activities or in water sports and will also vary if the group is a mixed gender group.

## **HOTEL OR GUEST HOUSE ACCOMMODATION**

- Check out the proposed accommodation for children/young people and Club mentors. Ensure that it complies with health and safety regulations, is accessible, is of a suitable standard and is appropriate for the particular age group and programme of events.
- When availing of overnight accommodation adults (except parents) should not share a room with a child. If exceptional or emergency circumstances so dictate and the presence of an adult is deemed necessary there should be more than one child in the room with the adult at all times.
- Where children are sharing a room it must be with others of the same age grouping and gender.
- All children should be provided with a bed each and should not have to share a bed with another child.
- It is also preferably that the sharing of rooms be done with fellow Club members at inter Club event and that such arrangements are made known in advance of the trip to the each child's parents.

## **HOME STAY ACCOMMODATION**

- When availing of home stay accommodation the host Club is responsible for choosing a host family that has been recommended to them and have been satisfactorily vetted in accordance with Association requirements.
- When availing of home stay accommodation adults (except parents) should not share a room with a child. If exceptional or emergency circumstances so dictate and the presence of an adult is deemed necessary there should be more than one child in the room with the adult at all times.
- When availing of home stay accommodation Children must not share a room with adults from the host family.

- All children should be provided with a bed each and should not have to share a bed with another child.
- Where children are sharing a room it must be with others of the same age grouping and gender. It is also preferably that the sharing of rooms be done with fellow Club members at an inter Club event and that such arrangements are made known in advance of the trip to the child's parents.

### **REVIEW OF TRIP**

A full review of the trip should involve all who participated from the Club and the result of the review should be retained and reviewed if and when the group intend organising another or similar trip or if the Club intends re-visiting the area or the host Club again.

### **TRANSPORT**

Adequate preparation and an insistence on the use of safe transport arrangements regardless of the length of journey are key elements of good practice when considering any trip taken by an underage team or players. This applies regardless of the length of journey or indeed the mode of transport availed of, whether it is public, private or personal transport.

The transport arrangements for underage players is a priority safety matter for sports organisations, for Clubs, parents and for young people themselves. While it may be preferential to avail of private bus or coach transport it is also recognised that in some instances this is not feasible and certain Clubs and teams could not operate without the goodwill of volunteers and parents who ensure that children are transported to an event or a match and are returned safely. In so far as we rely on many parents to provide transport in our Clubs the challenge we face in ensuring that all such services are provided in a safe environment that compiles with our own standards of good practice and with local or national legislative requirements.

It is recognised that private cars are used by many Clubs and teams as a common practice when transporting children to games as part of a County fixtures schedules or as part of inter Club blitzes. It is however advisable if possible not to use members' cars when travelling on away trips of great distance. In such circumstances Clubs are advised to avail of bus or coach transport and it is essential therefore that all aspects of the transport arrangements are checked out and agreed in advance. The safety and welfare of children is paramount and must be considered a priority at all times when transporting our underage players from one venue to another.

### **A NUMBER OF BASIC REQUIREMENTS APPLY WHEN TRAVELLING TO GAMES AS FOLLOWS:**

- That every parent has supplied at least two emergency contact numbers to the team coaches that may be used in the event of an emergency concerning their child or the group or in the event of a change in schedule
- That all players have completed a travel consent form
- That any medical conditions of players are made known to team coaches in advance of any trip and as part of the annual registration process
- That parents are supplied with the contact telephone number of the team coach in charge on the day and of any other accompanying coaches
- That any particular rules or regulations relating to a trip are made known to parents and children alike and agreed in advance of departure
- That the Club is satisfied that the proposed trip has been planned and agreed in accordance with child welfare procedures where the safety of the child is paramount in all preplanning of the trip

### **BUS AND COACH TRANSPORT:**

The following should be considered when availing of bus and coach transport:

- The company chosen must be a reputable transport company with a proven track record in transporting children
- The driver must be vetted in advance of the trip by the bus company or your Club
- All vehicles should be well-maintained and roadworthy and should be properly taxed and insured
- Transport should be fully accessible for people with disabilities whether they are members of the group or for others who may accompany them

- Seat belts must be worn at all times on buses and coaches
- Alternative transport should be available in case of emergency
- Vehicles should be equipped with a First Aid kit and a fire extinguisher and leaders of the group should be familiar with how to use them
- When hiring a vehicle Club personnel should have no hesitation in enquiring as to the company's reputation and reliability
- Adult coaches should ensure that children remain safely seated at all times during the journey
- An adequate ratio of adults to children on the bus must be ensured at all times taking the age of the group members into consideration and the need for male/female ratios with mixed gender groups

### **PRIVATE TRANSPORT IN CARS**

If an adult has to transport a child/children there are a number of safety measures that should be agreed so as to minimise any potential child welfare or safety risks to their children and or adults:

- If a child is being transported by car the parents of the child should be informed as to who will be transporting their child, why this mode of transport has been chosen, how long the journey may take, the departure time and the estimated time of return
- It is important that children are comfortable with whoever may be the driver of the car in which they travel and are made aware as to what are the transport arrangements made for them by their Club
- Drivers must ensure that they have adequate insurance to carry the required number of passengers
- If the driver is in a paid position in the Club or in the Association or is in receipt of expenses for the trip they may be required to have additional insurance cover to enable them transport any passengers
- Central collection and drop off points are recommended when transporting children
- The driver (and other team personnel) should be contactable by mobile phone in case of emergencies
- With the exception of their own child an adult should not transport a child alone, except in emergency or exceptional circumstances
- In accordance with transport legislation where applicable children must use appropriate child restraints and seat belts when travelling in a car or other vehicles
- No driver should ever consume alcohol or non-prescribed drugs prior to driving
- No driver should smoke in the car when transporting children on behalf of the Club or Association
- Where a driver may be under medical care or taking prescribed medication he/she must ensure that such medication may not inhibit their driving abilities
- All drivers and persons who have access to children on our behalf should have undertaken a vetting background check in accordance with the Association's guidelines and should have been informed that their vetting application has been accepted

### **PUBLIC TRANSPORT**

When using public transport please ensure that

- That the full travel schedule is made known in advance to all parents and players
- That drop off and pick arrangements have been agreed in advance
- That where available, seat booking arrangements are agreed in advance e.g. trains
- That an adequate number of adults accompany the group in a supervisory role
- That a contingency plan is in place in case a scheduled public transport arrangement or booking is cancelled, is late, or has been missed by the group