



Kinnegad Juniors A.F.C

Code of Practice for Parents/Guardians*

The guidelines in this document are based on the national guidelines as outlined in the following documents.

- Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport, Irish Sports Council, 2000.

- Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, Department of Children and Youth Affairs 2017

- Our Duty to Care, Dept. of Health & Children 2002

- Football Association of Ireland Code of Ethics & Best Practice

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* For ease of reading, please note that wherever 'Parents' are mentioned in this document this also implies 'Guardians'. It should be noted that Kinnegad Juniors A.F.C. may, at its discretion, review and change this document as the need arises.

Role and Responsibilities of Parents/Guardians within Kinnegad Juniors A.F.C.

Parents 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 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.

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

- 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*.¹
- Be realistic with expectations.
- Be aware of children's feelings.
- Teach players to respect different cultures.
- Promote inclusion

¹ **Fair Play** is the guiding principle of the Irish Sports Council's Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport. It states that "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. (European Sports Charter and Code of Ethics, Council of Europe, 1993).

Support and encouragement from parents will contribute to children having:

- ✓ A sense of personal achievement
- ✓ An enjoyment of soccer
- ✓ Improved physical fitness
- ✓ Higher self-esteem
- ✓ A greater level of skill
- ✓ Improved social skills

It is important for parents to find out what their children want from football and help them to set realistic targets to achieve this. This may involve parents controlling their own aspirations and avoiding the desire to force their own dreams or unfulfilled ambitions on them. Thus, parents should encourage but not force children to be active. Parents should not put undue pressure on a child to please or perform well.

Parents should not ignore or dismiss complaints or concerns expressed by a child which relate to their involvement in soccer. It is also important that parents do not take safety for granted (e.g. refer to rules regarding dropping-off young players at Lagan Park²).

² **Rules regarding dropping-off young players at Lagan Park**

In the interest of safety all parents/guardians need to be aware that their child still remains their responsibility until the start of training practice. Please note we have a one way system in place in the car park at Lagan Park. We also ask that parents use the drop off lane if not parking in Lagan Park.

Similarly, with regards to late arrivals, it is imperative that parents/guardians remain with their child until such time as the Coaches/Managers open the gates to let the child in. As late arrivals interrupt the flow of training practice, parents/guardians need to be made aware that they may have to wait a while until the Coaches/Managers find a suitable time to pause the training session to allow for a smooth handover. Bearing this in mind, parents and players should arrive on time to training practice.

Parent / Coach Co-Operation

It is recommended that parents establish contact with the individual responsible for coaching their child.

Parents should:

- Support the coach and referee decisions. These individuals are only doing the best they can and they need support not anger.
- Inform the coach about any illness, injury etc. Similarly, parents will be notified as soon as possible if their child suffers any significant injury, accident or becomes unwell while participating in any Kinnegad Juniors A.F.C soccer activity.
- Attend training and games and support the team where possible.
- Communicate any concerns you may have to the coach.
- Ensure that the child has appropriate equipment/clothing/refreshments.
- Encourage *Fair Play* at home and do not instil a “win at all costs” attitude in children.
- Help their child understand that he/she is contributing to a team effort.
- Be positive or be quiet, negative comments are counterproductive.
- Conduct themselves in such a way that promotes the definition of *Fair Play*.
Be prepared to be asked to leave by officials/club personnel if behaviour is contrary to the definition of *Fair Play*

Parents should never:

- Insult players or club personnel.
- Argue with, or shout abuse at officials and they should actively discourage children from doing likewise. Teach your child to treat referees, other players, coaches, officials and spectators with respect regardless of race, creed, colour, sex or ability - **Kinnegad Juniors A.F.C. adopts a zero-tolerance approach to any form of racism.**
- Suggest or encourage cheating, aggressive or "dirty" play.
- Ridicule or shout at a child for losing a game or making a mistake nor should they criticise them during training practice (criticism does not improve performance). Players should never be humiliated.
- 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.
- Enter a dressing room at home or away as all adults that are in direct contact with children **must** be Garda vetted.
- Argue or use abusive language to another coach, parent or child.

Breaches of the code of practice

In the event of a serious breach of conduct, Kinnegad Juniors A.F.C. will form a Disciplinary Committee and disciplinary procedures will be adhered to, as set out by the FAI. The Disciplinary Committee will be Chaired by the Club Chairman, Darren Burbridge and will include other members of the Club Committee.

- If a parent breaches the code of practice for a minor misdemeanour of the rules he/she will receive a verbal warning. If there is a further breach a written warning will ensue.
- If a parent is consistently rude or aggressive, he/she may be asked to leave the premises and refrain from attending matches/ training.
- If a parent uses racist language, they will be immediately asked to leave the premises and disciplinary action will follow.

The protection and welfare of our young players

Please be advised that parents, along with club members, are responsible for the protection and welfare of children and young people who participate in soccer. Therefore, we would encourage parents to read Kinnegad Juniors A.F.C *Child Safeguarding Statement*, available on www.kinnegadjuniors.ie, which demonstrates our commitment to ensuring that all necessary steps will be taken to protect and safeguard the welfare of all children and young people in our club.

Kinnegad Juniors A.F.C acknowledges that the *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children*, clearly underlines that all children should be protected from any form of abuse be it physical, emotional, sexual, neglect or bullying and that all suspicions and allegations of abuse/poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately. Kinnegad Juniors A.F.C will cooperate fully with the Football Association of Ireland National Children's Officer, Gardaí and TUSLA in any investigation of child abuse in soccer in accordance with procedures as outlined in "Children First" National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011. It must be restated that the responsibility for protecting children lies with all adults involved in our club and in soccer in general.

Garda Vetting

Please be aware that all members of Kinnegad Juniors AFC club (coaches included), have been Garda Vetted. This is a mandatory requirement as stipulated in FAI Rule 72 which notes that all those engaging with persons under the age of eighteen (18) shall be Garda Vetted. Furthermore, as stipulated by the FAI, all Kinnegad Juniors AFC members have attended a Safe-Guarding course, which is a basic awareness training course in child welfare as part of their induction.

Bullying

Bullying in any shape or form is not acceptable or permitted in Kinnegad Juniors AFC. All parents, players and club members have a part to play in ensuring that nobody in soccer is the victim of any type of "bullying behaviour". Everyone should be aware that bullying of any kind will not be tolerated, and they have a duty to report any such behaviour to our coaches/volunteers who will in turn report to the club Committee. A Child Protection Officer should always be notified first if it concerns a child/young player.

Transport of Children

Parents have a responsibility to ensure that they are fully aware of any transport arrangements involving their children and that they are happy with them. Children should be collected promptly, and it is a matter for parents to make any necessary arrangements. In the event that a parent is late for collection or drop off immediate contact should be made with the contact person involved. It is a matter for parents to arrange transport to events for children unless specific arrangements are made. If a private arrangement is made between parents, they should be aware that there are extra responsibilities placed on persons who transport players to events. Please note our traffic flow in Lagan Park in note 2 above.

General Overview

- a) Kinnegad Juniors AFC is run by parents who volunteer their time and energy. If you feel something can be improved, please share your suggestions. You are also encouraged to step forward and become involved. We would welcome your participation in and help with any of our club activities.
- b) Parents can approach the manager/coach to give feedback or support, but this may best be done separately to the training sessions, or a match, when the manager/coach already has much to focus upon. Feedback can also be given through the club's Child Protection Officers (see contact details below).
- c) Parents must make sure they bring young players to and from training sessions/matches on time (see Lagan Park rulesⁱⁱ).
- d) Parents should not treat the club as a child-minding service.
- e) Parents must ensure that the players have proper football gear for training sessions and matches i.e. football boots, **shin-guards** (compulsory), socks, shorts, jersey/hoodie/raincoat, water bottle etc.

- f) When watching matches or training sessions, parents must refrain from giving any instructions to players, managers or referees. They should not “coach” their children during games as it can confuse the players and be conflicting.
- g) Parents should support their child by giving encouragement and showing interest in his/her team.
- h) Parents should be a positive role model and reinforce positive behaviour in others.
- i) Parents should show good sportsmanship during and after games.

We would encourage all parents to familiarise their children with Kinnegad Juniors A.F.C's **Code of Conduct for Children** which they agreed to abide by as per their registration/membership forms at the start of the season.

Please let a Child Protection Officer know of any problems a child/young player is having.
Feel free to approach them with any questions or concerns you may have.

CHILD PROTECTION OFFICERS

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