



# Kildorrery Juvenile GAA Coaching Policy

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# Kildorrery Juvenile GAA Coaching Policy

## 1 Aims / Objectives

At Kildorrery Juvenile GAA Club we want to ensure we have an organised and structured Coaching Policy and Coaching Plan in place which is developed and implemented to maximize the talents of our coaches and players. We want to ensure our coaches are properly trained, empowered and prepared to deliver a coordinated and enjoyable Coaching Plan which maximizes the potential of all our players.

This policy intends to outline clear consistent and fair team structures across all juvenile age groups within our club such that, we ensure maximum participation by all players regardless of skills or abilities and to retain players into adult competition whilst offering them the opportunity to play dual codes equally and helping them to achieve their full playing potential.

The future of our club is dependent on the work we do with our Juvenile section therefore it is vital that we as coaches, mentors and officers ensure that we provide a safe and fun environment for all players to develop within. We must recognise that there are now much more choices available to children to play different sports and therefore 'Fun and Enjoyment' in our games is a must. We must also be wary of poor models of coaching as it has the potential to turn players off the sport, waste their talent and disillusion all involved.

The Club recognises the benefit of a common Coaching Policy implemented across all Juvenile age groups which will promote Confidence, Competence, Character (the three C's) Fair Play, Build Social Cohesion, Self-Esteem, and enhance Health and Well-being of all players as well as supporting social and economic objectives. Our club wants our underage players to benefit from participation in Gaelic Football and Hurling in a SAFE and ENJOYABLE environment where our games are conducted in a spirit of FAIR PLAY.

We at Juvenile level are laying the foundations for Kildorrery to become more successful when the transition to competitive grades is made. This Coaching Policy provides guidelines to help coaches make progress with their teams, create a positive team spirit and therefore it is important that these guidelines are used, such that a standardised approach is taken towards coaching within the Juvenile Club.

## 2 Club Structure

The Juvenile club in Kildorrery GAA club is a sub-committee of Kildorrery GAA Club, and as such is subject to the rules and by-laws of the parent club. The Juvenile club is administered by the Juvenile club committee, which is headed by its Chairperson, Secretary & Public Relations Office (PRO) and may consist of additional club officers appointed by the Chairperson.



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## 3 Coaching Officer(s) / Coaching Committee

The Coaching Officer(s) will oversee the implementation of the Coaching Policy and Coaching Plan for the Club. A resource to the Coaching Officer will be the Coaching Committee who will help in all aspect of the roles and responsibilities of the Coaching Officer. The Coaching Committee should at a minimum be represented by coaches across all age groups to ensure effective rollout of any changes to policies and plans. All Coaching Committee members must be qualified to a minimum of Foundation Level in coaching.

The Coaching Policy is a live Policy meaning updates can be made throughout the coaching year should they be deemed necessary. All updates are subject to review by Coaching Committee, Juvenile Officers and Senior club Exec Officers.

Responsibilities of the Coaching Officer include but are not limited to:

- Develop links with local 'feeder' schools with a view to aiding and assisting in Coaching of Gaelic games within the schools.
- Appoint a club designate to help with Kildorrery pitch setup when Kildorrery N.S. games are being played.
- Ensuring coaching best practice is followed throughout the club-especially that the GO-Game philosophy is nurtured and developed in the clubs coaching program.
- Liaise with Cúl Camp co-ordinator to ensure a 'fun environment' is created and 'skill acquisition' is maximized for all players partaking.
- Coach Education - Promote the development of all coaches through education and qualification of all coaches in the club, thereby creating a philosophy of coaching in the club.
- Resource sharing should be encouraged and co-ordinated across the club especially in the area of game and drills development.
- Facilities & Resource Management - ensuring that adequate resources are available for each coach, liaising with the Equipment Officer to ensure all coaching aid equipment is available to coaches.
- Perform a yearly end of season review with all coaches & mentors of the Coaching Policy and Coaching Plan with a view towards 'continuous improvement'. Focus on 'What went well' and 'What areas could be improved on'. Tools such as SWOT Analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) may be used to aid in review. A mid-year review may also be performed if deemed necessary.

## 4 Coach Education

A 'Foundation Level' coaching qualification is the minimum requirement for coaching and coaches must be committed to following the 'Code of Behaviour (Underage)' and "Maintaining Appropriate Levels of Behaviour in our Work with Children & Young People" as jointly agreed by LGFA, Camogie Association & GAA. Particular attention must be paid to instilling the highest levels of respect & discipline in players/coaches /mentors & supporters. All coaches and mentors must be Garda Vetted and have completed 'Safeguarding 1' course 'Child Protection Workshop', a record of which must be furnished to the Club Childrens Officer. These steps are now mandatory in law and must be completed before taking up any role that involves working with children.



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It is the responsibility of Coaches and Mentor to furnish Certifications from Safeguarding to the Childrens Officer.

Garda Vetting must be renewed every 3 years. 'Safeguarding 1' workshop expires after three years at which point it may be renewed online by completing a refresher course. Only two online renewals are allowed in total before a workshop has to be completed again. Always check and follow current guidelines regarding e-vetting and child safeguarding

Coaches are requested to be available where at all possible to attend all workshops and coaching courses provided and to implement any new coaching methods to their training. It is envisaged that a high percentage of coaches will progress to Award 1 of 3 Awards in Coaching.

## 5 Responsibilities

### 5.1 Coaches and Mentors

All coaches and mentors working with young people and children are required to be suitable for their chosen role(s), and should be appropriately trained, qualified and supported to fulfil such roles. All persons working or volunteering for such roles are required to:

- Undertake agreed vetting and background checks
- Attend relevant Child Safeguarding Training
- Coaches and Mentors must put player's interests first.
- Coaches must possess a recognised coaching qualification relevant to their code
- Coaches must ensure a First Aid Bag is available for all training sessions and games, pitch side first aid should only be administered by trained individuals.
- It is club policy that each grade must have at least one Coach qualified to Foundation Level.
- One designate from each age group must ensure that all players are registered prior to commencement of Training or Playing Games such that players are covered by Player Injury Fund.
- Ensure that all players are suitably and safely attired to play, Helmets (Hurling) and Gum Shields (Football). Shin Guards for Hurling (for the very young) and textured gloves for Football may be worn.
- For age groups up to and including U13, prohibit the use of metal bands on hurleys unless the metal bands are taped over.
- During training sessions and games ensure that players are not wearing jewellery or body piercings that could endanger themselves or others.
- Communicate with players to bring their own water bottle to training/games to mitigate against the passing of colds/flu's etc.
- Ensure that players are wearing the correct Kildorrery colours while representing the club in competitive games.
- Ensure that under no circumstances should an overage player be played in competitive games.
- Coaches must not participate in any grievance procedures where there is a conflict of interest, if this situation arises a designate must be appointed.



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- Engage in meaningful dialogue with other coaches & mentors to resolve any issues that may occur
- Follow the guidance contained in any Coaching Policies issued by the club.
- Abide by any determinations made by disciplinary proceedings
- Any abuse of players, mentors or officials will not be tolerated and will be promptly dealt with by the club in accordance with the clubs Code of Conduct and Club Constitution.

## 6 Coaching Philosophy

We are all aware that whilst children love playing games, they will not continue to improve if they come to training and the ball is just thrown in for a match. It is beneficial to allow the children a few minutes of each session for creative practice, where they are encouraged to practice a skill in whatever way they choose. Modified games, such as 2v2 or 3v3 etc., scoring or possession games, are a great way of improving a players performance.

The basic structures of a session which should be followed are:

- Warm-up
- Skill development using I.D.E.A.L method, see section 7.4
- Modified/conditioned games
- Match, in which the learned skills are practiced

All fitness work should be completed using the football or hurley & sliotar unless there is a justified reason to do otherwise.

It is critical that coaching is age and ability appropriate - this allows players to develop in a safe and constructive environment. Refer to the Juvenile Coaching Plan which outlines the core skills that are age appropriate. Each coach should develop challenging training sessions that are appropriate to players needs and level of ability with a goal of allowing all players make progress in their abilities.

The challenge for the coach is to let the young players 'do it' as much as possible, observe and provide both positive and constructive feedback as appropriate. Always lead with a positive when providing feedback and then follow up with a constructive if needed i.e. you could improve your skill by doing the following. Negative feedback should never be provided to a player.

All players should be encouraged to develop both sides (left/right) in their game.



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## 7 Coaching Best Practice

### 7.1 Ball / Sliotar Ratio

If children are to improve their Football/Hurling game, they need as much practice with the football /hurley & sliotar as possible. The more ball/sliotar contacts our players get in training, the more improvement there will be in their handling and overall skills. It is recommended that for each player to improve their skill level, they need a minimum of 200 ball/sliotar contacts per session. To achieve this figure, ideally you need a minimum of one ball per two children.

### 7.2 Session Guidelines

Have clear Targets and Goals for each Session and Season and utilising **S.M.A.R.T**

**Specific:** Goals should be very specific. For example, it is our goal to ensure that all of our players can kick a ball over 20 yards with both feet

**Measurable:** Objectives should be measured frequently. For example, we are going to make sure that all of our players get at least 30 minutes in every match, by keeping a record in our logbook.

**Action related:** Aims must be associated to an action. For example, Kildorrery U13 Hurling team are going to spend 10 minutes of each session working on a specific skill that is posing some learning challenges.

**Realistic:** Aims must be realistic. There is no point in having a goal of winning every game by 20 points, as it is not realistic.

**Timescale:** set a time or date by which you want to achieve your goal. For example, we want every player to be able to solo with left and right foot by July!!!!

It is very important for coaches to set goals for themselves, and for their team, as it gives the coaching team and players a target to aim for.

### 7.3 Warm-Up

It is preferable to make all the sessions as much fun as possible, however the warm up should always be fun. Fun games are a perfect way to start a training session. They should involve as much movement/ changes in direction/ jumping/ side stepping/ changes in pace etc which help to mimic a game situation.

Fun games such as tag, flush the toilet, simon says, ball tag, bulldog, catch the tails, stuck in the mud, trucks and trailers & opposites are examples of fun games to use. Coaches should be encouraged to create their own fun games for integration into sessions.



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## 7.4 Skills Development

The I.D.E.A.L model should be used to show players the different ways of practicing the skill.

- Introduce the skill
- Demonstrate the skill
- Explain the skill
- Action – Players practice
- Looking – Coach observe the players with a view of fixing if necessary

## 7.5 Games Based Coaching

‘Games Based’ coaching should be used across the juvenile club. ‘Games based Coaching’ is the philosophy of using a variety of games to teach something as opposed to drills. Instead of teaching a concept using a drill, games are designed to teach the player the same concept as they play in an actual game situation. E.g in football, create a modified game whereby only the ‘hand pass’ is used to move the ball, similarly in hurling create a modified game whereby only striking the sliotar is allowed to pass the ball.

## 7.6 Practice

The most important practice of all is completed at home with family or friends. This cannot be emphasised enough. After each session when a new skill is introduced / practiced the coach should set home practice for all the team.

It is advisable to show players the different ways of practicing the skill, perhaps against a wall or with a friend. Coaches should constantly encourage home practice.

A Team Motto such as: **‘A Good Player always comes to training and a Great Player always Practices’** can be adopted to keep emphasizing the importance of practice.

Equally ‘the three things we have to do to get better are’: **‘Practice, Practice, Practice’** can also be used to emphasise the importance of practice.

## 8 Player Development

Kildorrery Juvenile GAA Club will coach players based on best practice as learnt through Coach Education. Coaches will be encouraged at all stages to follow the Long Term Player Development Pathway (LTPD) to create players of a high standard of technical ability so as to be able to perform at the highest level.

We wish to develop adaptable players who have the following qualities:

- Hard workers
- Team players
- Play with intensity
- Have developed all the skills



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- Can adapt to different tactics and styles of play
- Can self-reflect in order to create a development focus for the future

At competitive grades, in particular at U15 upwards engage with teams and facilitate reflective practice. Allow the team to self-reflect on their strengths, weaknesses and development focus for the future. As a club we want to build players to be strong decision makers, reflective practice is a tool that helps to this end. Coaches should use the feedback from the reflective practice to make changes to any problematic areas highlighted by the players.

Coaches need to start influencing players from a very young age about playing with Kildorrery, Avondhu and Cork development squads to build their ambitions. Visits by senior club players to Juvenile teams should be encouraged to provide Juvenile players with role models, insight into the senior game and an opportunity to ask questions.

Coaches need to engage with players as to how they are getting on with School or in any other development squads they are part of. The Club's PRO should be informed of their achievements such that it can be published with a view to recognising success and promoting the Club.

## 9 Player Welfare

All Coaches must ensure that players are afforded adequate rest and recovery periods between training sessions/games and have appropriate diagnosis and treatment of injuries. The Coaching Officer should mediate between the variety of team coaches that young players find themselves working with to ensure that players are not subjected to an over intensive programme of games.

### 9.1 Teams Struggling

Where an age group are struggling on an ongoing basis to be competitive at a competitive age group, Coaches must pay particular attention to the potential demoralizing impact on players and team moral. It is not in the best interests of a team competing at the competitive age grade to be totally overwhelmed in competitive games. If this situation arises the head coach must inform the club chairperson who in conjunction with the coaching Officer(s) will put a plan in place to counteract the issue.

Measures such as an internal club 7 a side Blitz pooling two age groups together is a means of bringing fun & participation back into teams that are struggling.

## 10 Player Retention

The Club needs to establish a system whereby there is a quick identification of a player who may have stopped playing for the Club. Coaches and Mentors should inform the club Chairperson of any player who has stopped playing or has not started playing with the Club so that efforts can be made to encourage them to play.





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## 11 Playing Up Policy

At times it may be necessary to supplement a team with a player from a younger team ('playing up'); e.g. an under-13 player plays with an under-15 team for competitive games.

The club policy supports 'Playing Up' in situations where players are needed to make up a team for competitive grades only. E.g. U13 is competitive so playing up is supported.

u11, u9 & u7 is non-competitive so 'Playing Up' is not supported.

The club policy on 'playing up' is outlined below, only the Chairperson in conjunction with the Coaching Officer(s) may sanction exceptions to this policy -

- Players must be selected from the team immediately below the age group in question, e.g. Age group in question is -U15 then a -U13 player may be selected to 'play up'.
- Using same example, if there is no player from -U13 available then a player at -u12 can be requested, a maximum of 2 years only is allowed for playing up.
- If a player is selected to 'play up' that player must continue to train and play with their own age-group as a priority.
- When a team needs a player to 'play up', the coach must seek permission of the coach of the younger team to provide a player. The coach of the younger team decides which of the team is offered the option to 'play up' and is responsible for communicating the offer to the parents of the player in question.

It is recommended that the selection of players to 'play up' must follow the following guidelines:

- Players selected to play up should be capable of competing at the higher age grade.
- Parental consent must be sought for a player to 'play up'.
- The coach must consult with the head coach of the other code if selecting a dual player.
- It is preferable to rotate the option to 'play up' among players from the younger team.

Juvenile players 'playing up' into adult grades is done wholly on the permission of parents.



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## 12 Team Selection Policy

- Within non-competitive age grades the club will use the 'Go Games' philosophy to provide each player regardless of ability, with an equal opportunity to play and always field mixed ability teams in order to maximize player development.
- Players should not be discriminated against (treated differently) for any reason.
- Where players are not selected to play due to indiscipline or poor attendance at training/games this communication, when being made should be made jointly to both the player & parent by the head coach and an assistant coach to avoid any mis-communication. This feedback must be constructive & positive in nature i.e. The coach should communicate that preference must be given to players who attend training/games most regularly and if player 'x' could attend more training sessions then player 'x' will receive more game time.
- Isolated incidents unlike repeated incidents of a player missing training or games should not be considered as a trend and therefore players should not be sanctioned. Coaches/Mentors must understand that players do have other sporting and otherwise developmental interests outside of the club.
- It is strongly advised that an attendance sheet is kept for training sessions at all competitive grades to assist in team selection.
- Players of Coaches/Mentors/Exec Club Committee should not be unfairly advantaged or disadvantaged; team selectors preferably should make impartial decisions.
- At competitive age grades the Head Coach/ Mentors have the autonomy to field a team of their choice but must always seek to develop all players **as a priority**, if players are left behind, they will simply drop out.
- If a situation arises at a competitive age grade whereby, a sufficient number of players are available to field two teams at the same age grade the chairperson will appoint a coach for the second team. The chairperson will also assign the coaching officer(s) to work collaboratively with both coaches with a view to assigning players to their respective team in a manner that is in the best interest of the players and the club. e.g. U13 team will play in A grade and second team will play in C grade.
  - In situations where two teams are created at an age grade the club will use the principle of 'play at the level (ability) the player is at' in order to best challenge the player therefore maximizing skills & personal development for the player.
  - If technical ability needs to be assessed a skills test for all players will be created by the Coaching officer(s) to assess proficiency of the age appropriate skills as outlined in the Coaching Plan.
  - Other factors that will be taken into consideration for team selection and assignment of players to teams will include but are not limited to:
    - Ability to play within a team
    - The players attendance at Training & Games
    - The players overall discipline



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## 13 Coaching Policy Complaints

A perceived breach of the Juvenile Coaching Policy in the form of a complaint may be received verbally or in writing. This procedure relates only to perceived breaches of Coaching Policy and not matters relating to Child Protection which are governed by Sport Ireland Code of Ethics and the Code of Behaviour (Underage).

Where an informal verbal complaint is made, the Club Chairperson should make all efforts to resolve the complaint to all party's satisfaction without further escalation. The Chairperson may also appoint a mediator to help with the resolution of a complaint.

Where a perceived breach of the Coaching Policy is received in writing the Club Chairperson should follow the following process.

### 13.1 Complaints Stage 1

The Club Juvenile Chairperson will notify the coach(s) or mentor(s) against whom the complaint has been made against and meet with them. Every effort will be made to resolve the complaint at this level without further escalation. The Chairperson may also appoint a mediator to help with the resolution of the complaint. If a satisfactory conclusion is reached between all parties, the Chairperson must document this conclusion.

### 13.2 Complaints Stage 2

- Failing a satisfactory outcome from stage 1, the complaint will be referred to the Coaching Officer who will establish a disciplinary committee comprising of at least two members of the Coaching Committee nominated by the Coaching Officer for the purpose of reviewing the Complaint. The Coaching Officer will chair all meetings regarding the complaint.
- The Coaching disciplinary committee, having received the written complaint and a written report from Club Chairperson, will meet with all parties to the complaint and attempt to resolve the complaint.
- The Coaching disciplinary committee must record all minutes of all meetings with all parties to the complaint throughout the complaints process and furnish a written report with conclusions, recommendations or any actions to be taken. The written report will be signed by all members of the disciplinary Committee.
- Any sanction must be ratified by Juvenile Club Committee and the Senior Club Executive Committee and must be in accordance with Club Constitution.
- All parties to the complaint will receive a copy of the disciplinary committee's conclusions.

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## 14 Coach Parent Relationship

Parents play a pivotal role in encouraging and supporting their child's participation, success and fun when playing our games. Therefore, it is essential that each Head Coach for each age group communicates with parents so that both coach and parent are working towards a common developmental goal.

Information Page "Role of the Parent" published by [rebelogcoaching.com](http://rebelogcoaching.com) should be distributed to all parents on a yearly basis by Juvenile club PRO or by each Head Coach (preferably) when active games are being played.

[www.rebelogcoaching.com](http://www.rebelogcoaching.com)



## Role of the Parent

Relax and don't take yourself so seriously, Remember, it's just a game!

Challenge yourself to redefine what success means. Success can mean being ahead on the score board at the end of the game, but success can also mean improving on skills or playing an outstanding game. Look for the little successes your child makes in the game and focus on them more than on the final score. This will help your child to develop a sense of accomplishment and competence.

Don't compare your little Johnny to little Bobby who lives next door. Each child is equally wonderful in his own unique and special way. Focus on the wonderful qualities in your own child.

Remember that children all grow and develop at different rates. Two children who have the same birth date could be years apart developmentally. When it comes to sports, use your child's own developmental status to gauge what experiences they are ready for.

Focus on creating a love of sports and physical activity at a young age. This can go a long way to helping your child attain and maintain a healthy active lifestyle as an adult, which is something many of us lack in this country.



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## 15 How We Measure Success

As Coaches and as a Club we must also remind ourselves of the Cornerstones upon which our Organisation was founded, we are: Games Based, Player-Centered, Values Driven, Community Enriching and Socially & Culturally Inspired.

The basic premise of playing our Games is that 'Winning' is not the only objective or Ultimate Goal. Instead growth and development of our players and all our club members is the most important goal. This pursuit includes gaining lifelong values and qualities such as sportsmanship, leadership, teamwork, perseverance, determination, humility, commitment and many others, as a consequence of playing our games. As coaches we measure success through the three C's, team Confidence, Competence and Character. These may seem intangible measures of success but can be measured clearly by the commitment, participation and retention of players in our club through their playing careers and beyond.

## 16 Conclusion

It is the responsibility of all Coaches/Mentors in conjunction with the Coaching Officer(s) and Club Executive Committee to nurture young players and to provide a consistent program of games, supported and complimented by quality coaching sessions.

We cannot depend on our hopes and aspirations that children will make the choice to play our games, we have to give children something more to ensure they will 'want' to play our games.

## 17 Revision History

REV	Date	CHANGES
A	20 Apr 2021	Initial Release as ratified by Kildorrery GAA Club meeting 19 <sup>th</sup> Apr 2021