

Náomh Mhuíre Ros Eárcaín



Codes of Conduct and Disciplinary Complaints and Appeals Procedures

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This document has been produced by the Development Committee of St. Mary's GAC, Rasharkin in conjunction with The Club Development Plan and as part of the ongoing application for Club Maith; this is required within the "Policies and Procedures" section of the Club Maith Governance Assessment, Section A.

Recommendations

- **Ongoing Amendments.** This Disciplinary Policy and the Codes of Conduct should be seen as an evolving policy and the Club Committee can add, delete or amend as necessary over time. The policy, if agreed, should be adopted as the Disciplinary Policy of our club as a whole and not seen as something promoted by a small number of individuals.
- **GAA Official Guide.** Any disciplinary matters from the playing of our games or covered in the Gaelic Athletic Association Official Guide will be dealt with using the usual procedures of the GAA.
- **Standards of Behaviour Policy.** The club demands the highest standards of behaviour from all its players (senior and juvenile). It is the club's policy to encourage, acknowledge and reward high standards of behaviour, wherever possible. However, it is the club's policy not to tolerate unacceptable behaviour from any player towards fellow players, mentors, referees, opponents, parents or any other club members.
- **Minor Indiscretions.** Minor disciplinary matters should be dealt with within team groupings by the mentors and players involved. It should be borne in mind that, for players, our Disciplinary Policy and Codes of Conduct have been drawn up to cover senior and juvenile members within our club. Mentors should meet with their panel at the start of each season and discuss the Codes of Conduct and add to it as they see necessary.
It is impossible to be fully prescriptive on every possible scenario of unacceptable behaviour but the following is a brief guide.

Behavioural List	Sanctions for Offensive Behaviour (The sanctions below will be applied according to the severity of the offensive behaviour)
A. Minor Don'ts	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persistent talking and disruption whilst mentors are coaching. • Cheek or disrespect towards mentor(s) or helpers. • "Horseplay" which has not caused injury. • Continuous non-compliance with instructions of mentor or helper. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal warning. • Taken aside and a second verbal warning. • "Sin-bin" for 5 minutes. • "Sin-bin" for 15 minutes or longer as deemed appropriate.
B. Serious Don'ts	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offensive language or gestures towards another player or mentor or others. • "Horseplay" which has caused injury – accidental or otherwise. • Persistent non-compliance of instructions of mentor or helper. • Cheating the rules. • Tell lies about adults or other players. • Spread rumours. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A formal warning with another mentor present (a sanction may be warranted). • "Sin-bin" for 15 minutes or longer as deemed appropriate. • A formal warning (in the case of a juvenile with parent present) with suspension from the next training session or match as deemed appropriate.
C. Critical Don'ts	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullying – in any form (verbal, physical, sexual etc.) • Wilful damage to an individual or club property. • Theft from individuals or club property. • Shouting and arguing with an official. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A written warning. • Parents advised and suspension for two weeks. • Total suspension from club activities and membership.

- **Fair Play.** “Fir fer/ cothrom na feinne” has long been associated with the Celts. It is defined as a way of thinking, not just of behaving. The club should encourage and expect this spirit of fair play and respect for discipline amongst all its members. It is imperative that our club members embrace this respect for discipline and fair play for all.
- **Club Disciplinary Committee.** The club should set up a Club Disciplinary Committee. This committee should have five members, one of whom should be appointed as Chairperson of the committee. This committee should deal with any disciplinary matters arising within the club which have not been dealt with by match officials or not covered within the Official Guide procedures. When disciplinary matters are reported to Club Committee, it is advisable that the matter is immediately referred to the Club Disciplinary Committee. Any discussion at the Club Committee meeting could be deemed to be prejudicial to a fair hearing. The Club Disciplinary Committee will require a minimum of three members present before it can operate (i.e. the quorum). Ideally the committee should meet within 7 days of a club disciplinary matter being referred to the Club Disciplinary Committee Chairperson. In his/her absence the Club Disciplinary Committee Chairperson should nominate one of the committee as a stand-in Chairperson. The person alleged to have committed an “offence” should be invited to the meeting. In the case of a juvenile (under 18 years), the invitation has to be made through a parent/guardian and the parent/guardian or other adult must accompany the juvenile to the meeting. After hearing the evidence, the Club Disciplinary Committee should make their decision and what, if any, penalty they deem appropriate to impose. The offender must then be informed of this decision. The “offender” then has two choices; either accept the decision or decide to appeal as below. Before the hearing, the members of the Club Disciplinary Committee should declare if they have a vested interest in the hearing either by involvement in the issue (for example, as manager of the team) or by way of being related to the “alleged offender”. It would be advisable for parents, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts and grandparents to declare a vested interest. If necessary, the Chairperson of the Club Disciplinary Committee may have to co-opt members to ensure a quorum. The Chairperson of the Club Disciplinary Committee must ensure that a clear and concise written account of the hearing is recorded and presented to the next Club Executive Committee meeting.
- **Grievances.** If a Club Member has a grievance with a matter relating to discipline they should contact the Chairman of the Club Disciplinary Committee.

- **Club Disciplinary Appeal Committee.** When the Club Disciplinary Committee has made its decision, the “offender” has the right to appeal this decision in writing to the Club Disciplinary Appeal Committee within 7 days of being informed of their penalty. It is anticipated that appealing such decisions should be seen as the exception rather than the rule. The appellant cannot take part in any club games until their appeal has been heard. The Club Disciplinary Appeal Committee should consist of five members from within the Club Executive Committee including the Club Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer (again the quorum shall be 3 people). The Club Disciplinary Appeal Committee must not contain any members of the Club Disciplinary Committee. The Club Chairperson should ensure that any appeal is heard within 7 days of the appeal being received. The decision of the Club Disciplinary Appeal Committee is final; they can decide either to allow the original decision to stand or to reduce or indeed increase the original penalty. Within the GAA Club Constitution, the Club Executive Committee has the power to investigate any matter, and to remove privileges, warn, fine or disqualify Members from Club activities for breach of this Constitution and Rules of the Official Guide or for conduct considered to have discredited or harmed the Club or the GAA. In extreme cases, the club can recommend expulsion to the County Committee. Before the appeal, the members of the Club Disciplinary Appeal Committee should declare if they have a vested interest in the appeal either by involvement in the issue (for example, as manager of the team) or by way of being related to the “alleged offender”. It would be advisable for parents, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts and grandparents to declare a vested interest. The Chairperson of the Club Disciplinary Appeal Committee must ensure that a clear and concise written account of the hearing is recorded and presented to the next Club Executive Committee meeting.
- **Club membership.** It is recommended that the club revisit its membership with all members completing a new club membership form which makes reference to acceptance of the Club Disciplinary Procedures and the Club Codes of Conduct. Members should have access to copies of the Club Disciplinary Procedures and should be provided with a copy of the Club Codes of Conduct. This initial membership will also make reference to acceptance of any ongoing alterations or additions to the Club Disciplinary Procedures or Club Codes of Conduct. Once this initial membership form has been completed, members will simply renew their membership annually by paying the appropriate annual membership fee. Membership should be viewed as membership of St. Mary’s GAC, Rasharkin, subject to payment of the annual membership fee and adherence to the rules of the club and the GAA. Members are deemed to have full knowledge of the Rules and Regulations of The Official Guide and shall be bound by them. Initially, club members should be given a copy of the Club Disciplinary Procedures and the Codes of Conduct. The Club

Disciplinary Procedures will be available for viewing on the club website. The Club Codes of Conduct will be available for viewing on the club website and will also be posted on the notice boards in the Changing rooms and the Committee Room. Subsequent amendments to the Club Disciplinary Policy and Codes of Conduct will be notified via the "Latest News" section of the club website and via the club weekly bulletin. The onus is on club members to keep up to date with any alterations to the Club Disciplinary Policy and Codes of Conduct; lack of knowledge will not be deemed to be an acceptable excuse.

- **Codes of Conduct.** These codes reflect the way in which our club expects our members and supporters to behave whilst representing their club. We must also be conscious of the fact that although we cannot be responsible for how our club members behave whilst not undertaking club duties, there are general principles of behaviour that we would expect of our members in any walk of life. This is particularly so, if members or supporters are wearing club colours whilst not undertaking club activities. Please always remember that as a player, mentor or supporter, you are representing your club, St. Mary's GAC, Rasharkin. Bear in mind that, even when not involved with official club business, you are still a member of the club and your behaviour should reflect this. In addition, all Club Committee Members should be provided with a current copy of the "GAA Code of Conduct for Officers/Officials". The Club Codes of Conduct should be seen as standard for all members; however, mentors and their respective players may add other items to their code of conduct by mutual agreement. Our Club Codes of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures cover the activities of members during club activities and out with the club.
- **Visitors.** We should provide a visible statement of welcome to visitors to our premises. This should be displayed at the Pay-in Kiosk, outside the Pavillion and on the notice-board within the Changing Room building and Committee Room. This should welcome visitors to our grounds and premises but ask them to respect our club, its premises and grounds. In particular, other clubs within Antrim should be notified by letter of our rule "to keep everyone off the pitch during games with the exception of those players, mentors and officials directly involved in the game".

Adult Player Code of Conduct

1. Treat all managers, coaches and club officials with respect.
2. Shake hands with your immediate opponent before and after each game. If the opportunity arises, do likewise with the referee.
3. Dissent to referees, linesmen and umpires is unacceptable.
4. Use encouragement with your team-mates. Abusive criticism is unacceptable.
5. Play hard and fair but within the rules.
6. Don't use foul or offensive language at matches. Players should take note that they are seen as role models for those players in younger age groups.
7. Any player(s) who knowingly plays illegally in any competition shall be dealt with as per Official Guide by Club Disciplinary Committee.
8. Substitutes must remain within the dugout/along the sideline whilst not playing. Players who have been substituted must return to the substitute area along with the other members of their panel.
9. Be punctual for games, training or team meetings.
10. Let your coach know in advance of non-attendance at games, training or team meetings.
11. Treat dressing rooms with respect (clean boots before entering changing rooms, put rubbish in the bin etc.)
12. Treat equipment and kit with respect (return jerseys in the manner they were presented, i.e. not inside-out or rolled in a ball).
13. Members must not use mobile phones within changing rooms at our club grounds or at away grounds.
14. Respect your opponents and fellow Gaels.
15. Help to promote our Gaelic games within the community and encourage others to join our club. Do your best to actively support fundraising activities within our club.

16. Please always remember that as a player, mentor or supporter, you are representing your club, St. Mary's GAC, Rasharkin. Bear in mind that even when not involved with official club business, you are still a member of the club and your behaviour should reflect this.
17. When using text messaging, social networking media, internet message boards and similar means of electronic communication, Club members must show respect for fellow GAA members, refrain from criticising referees and officials, refrain from using foul or offensive language or making statements that would bring the Club or Association into disrepute.
18. The consumption of alcohol or use of prohibitive substances in changing rooms, club premises or on transportation to and from matches is totally prohibited.
19. Only those players, mentors and officials involved in a match should be inside the playing area from the time the players arrive on the field until the final whistle blows. Others are welcome to use our second pitch, the Jamesie McLernon Pitch.

The Club Disciplinary Committee of St Mary's GAC, Rasharkin reserve the right to deal with any breaches of discipline or any matter that brings the club into disrepute.

Youth Player Code of Conduct

1. Treat all managers, coaches and club officials with respect.
2. Shake hands with your immediate opponent before and after each game. If the opportunity arises, do likewise with the referee.
3. Dissent to referees, linesmen and umpires is unacceptable.
4. Use encouragement with your team-mates. Abusive criticism is unacceptable.
5. Never bully or make fun of a team-mate or an opponent.
6. Play hard and fair but within the rules.
7. Don't use foul or offensive language at matches.
8. Any player(s) who knowingly plays illegally in any competition shall be dealt with as per Official Guide by Club Disciplinary Committee.
9. Substitutes must remain within the dugout/along the sideline whilst not playing. Players who have been substituted must return to the substitute area along with the other members of their panel.
10. Be punctual for games, training or team meetings.
11. Let your coach know in advance of non-attendance at games, training or team meetings.
12. Treat dressing rooms with respect (clean boots before entering changing rooms, put rubbish in the bin etc.)
13. Treat equipment and kit with respect (return jerseys in the manner they were presented, i.e. not inside-out or rolled in a ball).
14. Youth members must not use mobile phones within changing rooms at our club grounds or at away grounds.
15. Respect your opponents and fellow Gaels.
16. Help to promote our Gaelic games within the community and encourage others to join our club. Do your best to actively support fundraising activities within our club.

17. Please always remember that as a player or supporter, you are representing your club, St. Mary's GAC, Rasharkin. Bear in mind that even when not involved with official club business, you are still a member of the club and your behaviour should reflect this.
18. When using text messaging, social networking media, internet message boards and similar means of electronic communication, Club members must show respect for fellow GAA members, refrain from criticising referees and officials, refrain from using foul or offensive language or bullying a team-mate or opponent.
19. The consumption of alcohol or use of prohibitive substances in changing rooms, club premises or on transportation to and from matches is totally prohibited.
20. Only those players, mentors and officials involved in a match should be inside the playing area from the time the players arrive on the field until the final whistle blows. Others are welcome to use our second pitch, the Jamesie McLernon Pitch.

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Mentor Code of Conduct

1. Respect all players under your care.
2. Be punctual and well prepared for games, training and team meetings.
3. Promote understanding and mutual respect among players both on an individual and team basis.
4. Allow players the opportunity to express their opinion or give feedback where this is reasonable within the constraints of team management.
5. Ensure all players (particularly at juvenile levels) have the opportunity to play in game situations.
6. Ensure that your team has access to an in-date First Aid Kit for training and home and away fixtures.
7. Ensure that each player understands what is expected of him/her. The team should also fully understand what is expected of it as a whole.
8. Use positive comment and praise where possible.
9. Never get involved in physical or verbal disagreements with the opposition players, mentors or supporters.
10. Respect the match officials and don't let bad decisions deflect you from running the team.
11. Any mentor(s) who knowingly play illegal players in any competition shall be dealt with as per Club rules by Club Disciplinary Committee.
12. Do not use abusive or offensive language, smoke or consume alcohol in the presence of juvenile members.
13. Ensure all hurlers under 21 years of age are wearing hurling helmets with protective faceguards during hurling games or training.
14. Only send messages to juveniles via parents/guardians. The exception to this is the use of "group texts". Mentors must not engage in "one to one" mobile phone communication with juveniles.
15. Children and adults must not use mobile phones within changing rooms at our club grounds or at away grounds.
16. Ensure you are fully aware of the club Child Protection Policy.

17. Ensure match officials are welcomed prior to and thanked after home fixtures.
18. Be prepared to ask for and listen to the opinions of others.
19. Do your best to actively support fundraising activities within our club.
20. Each team grouping must allocate time at the commencement of each season to discuss the Club Codes of Conduct.
21. Please always remember that as a player, mentor or supporter, you are representing your club, St. Mary's GAC, Rasharkin. Bear in mind that even when not involved with official club business, you are still a member of the club and your behaviour should reflect this.
22. When using text messaging, social networking media, internet message boards and similar means of electronic communication, Club members must show respect for fellow GAA members, refrain from criticising referees and officials, refrain from using foul or offensive language or making statements that would bring the Club or Association into disrepute.
23. The consumption of alcohol or use of prohibitive substances in changing rooms, club premises or on transportation to and from matches is totally prohibited.
24. Only those players, mentors and officials involved in a match should be inside the playing area from the time the players arrive on the field until the final whistle blows. Others are welcome to use our second pitch, the Jamesie McLernon Pitch.

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Officials, Club Members, Parents and Spectators Code of Conduct

1. Always remember that you are a member of St Mary's GAC.
2. Support players and mentors in a positive manner. Motivate by praising.
3. Respect the opposition and don't vilify opposing players.
4. Foster good post-match relations with the opposition.
5. Refrain from criticising referees and match officials as to do so will only be to the detriment of our teams' prospects.
6. Don't use foul or offensive language at matches. Be aware that children are present.
7. Do not get into verbal slanging matches between spectators, officials, mentors and opposition players.
8. Please always remember that as an official, player, mentor or supporter, you are representing your club, St. Mary's GAC, Rasharkin. Bear in mind that even when not involved with official club business, you are still a member of the club and your behaviour should reflect this.
9. Remember 1-8 above also apply when members are using text messaging, social networking media, internet message boards and similar means of electronic communication.
10. The consumption of alcohol or use of prohibitive substances in changing rooms, club premises or on transportation to and from matches is totally prohibited.
11. Children and adults must not use mobile phones within changing rooms at our club grounds or at away grounds.

12. Only those players, mentors and officials involved in a match should be inside the playing area from the time the players arrive on the field until the final whistle blows. Others are welcome to use our second pitch, the Jamesie McLernon Pitch.
13. Club Committee Members should familiarise themselves with the current "GAA Code of Conduct for Officers/Officials" and follow its guiding principles.
14. Do your best to actively support fundraising activities within our club.
15. Always uphold the principles of FAIR PLAY for ALL.

The Club Disciplinary Committee of St Mary's GAC, Rasharkin reserve the right to deal with any breaches of discipline or any matter that brings the club into disrepute.

Welcome to our visitors

The Chairperson and members of St. Mary's GAC, Rasharkin warmly welcome any visitors to our club.

Only those players, mentors and officials involved in a match should be inside the playing area from the time the players arrive on the field until the final whistle blows. Others are welcome to use our second pitch, the Jamesie McLernon Pitch.

We hope that you enjoy your visit (win, lose or draw!) and ask that you respect our grounds and all people present.

The Club Executive Committee of St. Mary's GAC, Rasharkin reserve the right to ask any person to leave their grounds/premises.