

ARKLOW TOWN FOOTBALL CLUB



CHILD PROTECTION GUIDELINES



BRIDGEWATER CENTRE PARK, LAMBERTON, ARKLOW, CO WICKLOW



ARKLOW TOWN FC - CHILD PROTECTION GUIDELINES

According to *"Children First - National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children"* (Department of Health and Children - September 1999), "child" means a person under the age of eighteen years, excluding a person who is or has been married. Both the *Children (NI) Order 1995* and the *United Nations Convention on the rights of the Child* define a child as a person under the age of eighteen.

POLICY STATEMENT

Arklow Town Football Club is committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for children and young people to train and play.

We do this by:

- ✓ Recognising that all children have the right to freedom from abuse.
- ✓ Ensuring that all our Team Managers / Coaches and volunteers are carefully selected and accept responsibility for helping to prevent the abuse of children in their care.
- ✓ Responding swiftly and appropriately to all suspicions or allegations of abuse and providing parents and children with the opportunity to voice any concerns they may have.
- ✓ Appointing a Designated Children's Officer who will take specific responsibility for child safety and act as the main point of contact for parents, children and outside agencies.
- ✓ Ensuring access to confidential information is restricted to the Children's Officer or the appropriate external authorities.
- ✓ Reviewing the effectiveness of our Child Protection Policy and activities on an ongoing basis.

The Club Designated Children's Officer is: Paul Breslin (087-9853259)

BULLYING

It is vital that everyone connected to Arklow Town Football Club understands that bullying, in any form, will not be tolerated.



Bullying is not always easy to define, can take many forms and is usually repeated over a period of time. The three main types are:

- Physical - e.g. hitting, kicking or theft
- Verbal - e.g. name calling, threats or racist behaviour
- Emotional - e.g. isolating an individual from activities

All three types of bullying include deliberate hostility and aggression towards the victim and an outcome for the victim which is always painful and distressing.

Anti-Bullying Procedures

In the event that a Manager / Coach is confronted with, or informed of, a possible case of bullying, he / she must be prepared to:

- § Take the matter seriously.
- § Investigate the incident / report.
- § Talk to the alleged bully and victim separately.
- § Inform the designated Club Children's Officer.
- § Inform the parents of the bully.
- § Always inform the parents of the victim.

The Manager / Coach must also decide on an appropriate action. Depending on the nature of the bullying this could be as simple as an apology from the bully to the victim. The bully must also be strongly encouraged and supported to change his / her behaviour. If a bully persists with this type of behaviour sanctions will be imposed. In cases of persistent bullying the designated Club Children's Officer must always be informed.



CHILD ABUSE

Arklow Town Football Club recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people within the club by protecting them from physical, sexual or emotional harm and from neglect.



The FAI "Code of Ethics" (2003) provides the following definition of abuse:

"Abuse is any action, physical or verbal, which exploits or potentially harms or damages a child's physical, emotional or psychological health in a sports context".

Child abuse can be categorised under four main headings:

Physical Abuse:

- ✓ Where a child is made to do excessive physical exercise as punishment.
- ✓ Where training methods are inappropriate for the development age of the child.
- ✓ When children are allowed to play with an injury.

Sexual Abuse

- ✓ Where there is inappropriate touching.
- ✓ Where a child is exposed to or invited to participate in sexual contact, activity or behaviour.
- ✓ Where inappropriate photographs are taken or adapted.

Emotional Abuse

- ✓ Where a child is made fun of, criticised, discriminated against or put under unrealistic pressure to perform by parents, coaches or spectators who abuse their power.

Neglect

- ✓ Where a child is not provided with appropriate levels of care and supervision. In soccer, neglect can occur if children do not have proper supervision, clothing, drinks or food or if they are encouraged to play when injured.

REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE - GUIDELINES FOR MANAGERS

It is important to remember that reporting suspected child abuse in good faith is not the same as making an accusation - REPORTING DOES NOT MEAN ACCUSING.

The "Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act" (1988) provides immunity from civil liability to persons who report child abuse "*reasonably and in good faith*" to the club designated person. The designated person appointed by Arklow Town FC is Paul Breslin.

The following procedure should be followed where a child discloses child abuse to any Manager, Coach or Committee Member of Arklow Town FC.

- § Listen to the child rather than questioning them. Offer reassurance without making any promises. Most importantly, take what the child says seriously.
- § Do not stop a child who is freely recalling significant events. Explain what you have to do, who you have to tell and the procedures that need to be followed. Record your conversation with the child in writing - either at the time or as soon as possible afterwards - and then inform the Club Designated Person.
- § Do not question the child. It is vitally important that a child does not feel intimidated when recalling an incident. Ask questions to clarify a point but do not "interrogate" a child.
- § Record the discussion as accurately and as soon as possible after the discussion - even if it contains information that you do not understand or feel happy to write down. Try to remember any specific words or phrases used by the child.
- § Contact the Designated Person for advice and guidance. The matter may need to be referred onward to the relevant local or State authorities. In the event that you feel it is inappropriate to approach or inform the Designated Person then you should make personal contact with the local Social Work Team (Tel: 0404-60800). Ask to speak to the Team Leader or duty Social Worker for the South Wicklow Social Work Team. Remember if contact is made with a member of the Social Work Team record any response to your concerns and ask that your call be acknowledged in writing.
- § If a child is in immediate danger of abuse - notably physical or sexual - the Gardai should be informed immediately. Where possible this should be done through the Designated Person / Club Chairman however in the event that the Designated Person is not available contact can be made directly.

Further Information

Additional information and advice on the issue of child protection can be obtained by contacting the following organisations:

ISPCC - CHILDLINE	1800-666-666
CARI	1800-924-567
EHB Social Work Department	0404-60800
CHILDREN'S OFFICER - ATFC	087-9853259

Arklow Town FC, in providing these guidelines, does not attempt to give professional advice in relation to these issues and any parties with a legal query should seek appropriate legal advice on the issues concerned.