

CLG Dunshaughlin & Royal Gaels

Juvenile Boys Games

Mentors & Parents Handbook

2020

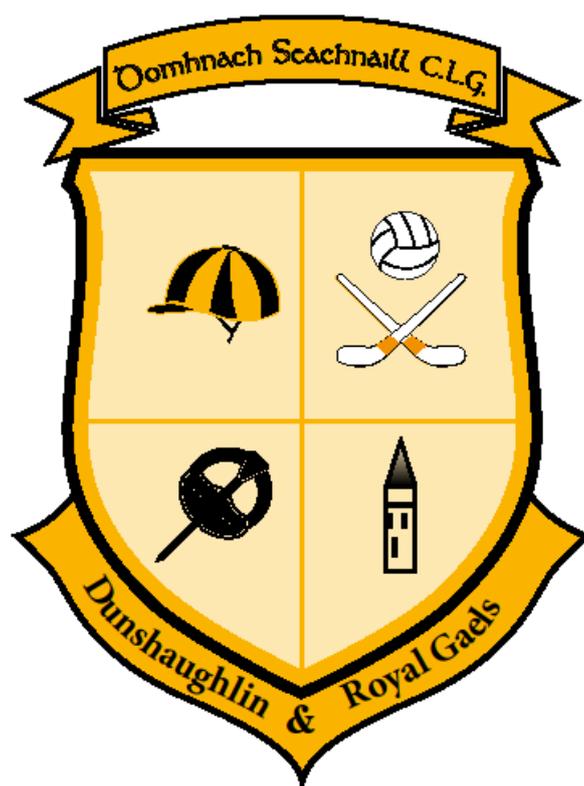


Table of Contents

Introduction	Page 3
Vision for Juvenile Boys section of the Club.....	Page 3

Section 1

Juvenile Club Structure.....	Page 4
Senior Club Executive 2020.....	Page 5
Key Boys Juvenile Club Contacts 2020.....	Page 5
Dates of Juvenile Mentors Meetings 2020.....	Page 6
Appointment of Mentors.....	Page 6
Club Subscription / Registration of Players.....	Page 6

Section 2

Role of Juvenile Mentor.....	Page 7
Benefits of Planning a Training Session.....	Page 7
Plan for the Season.....	Page 8
Player Pathway.....	Page 8
Coaching and Games Development.....	Page 8
Mentor Development.....	Page 8
Annual Parents Meeting.....	Page 9
Child Protection.....	Page 10
Garda Vetting.....	Page 10
Designated Child Safety Officer.....	Page 11
Complaints Procedure.....	Page 11
Communications including Social Media.....	Page 11

Section 3

Playing Games.....	Page 12
Purchase of Equipment.....	Page 12
Storing of Gear.....	Page 12
Mobile Goals / Goal Safety.....	Page 13
Mouth Guards / Gumshields.....	Page 13
Referees.....	Page 13
Challenge Matches.....	Page 13
Return of Match Results.....	Page 14
Away Trips.....	Page 14
GAA Central Player Injury Schemes.....	Page 15
Dunshaughlin & Royal Gaels Policy on Injury Schemes.....	Page 15
Club Policy on Playing outside of Age (One Year Up & Two Years Up).....	Page 16
Merging Age Groups.....	Page 17
Feile U14 Blitz.....	Page 18

Section 4

Pitches & Facilities.....	Page 18
Pitch Booking & Allocation of Grass playing pitches.....	Page 18
Astro Pitch Allocation & Astro Pitch Care.....	Page 18

Section 5

Frequently Asked Questions.....	Page 19 to 22
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Introduction

The Dunshaughlin & Royal Gaels Juvenile Section is one of the largest and most vibrant in County Meath. We cater for boys playing football from ages 4 to 19. We have teams at U7, U8, U9, U10, U11, U12, U13, U14, U15, U16, U17 & U19 currently playing our games and up to forty 4, 5 & 6 year old boys and girls playing in our nursery every Friday evening during the Summer.

Dunshaughlin & Royal Gaels is a very important part of the lives of our young members. Friendships made now will endure for many years to come. Everything we do in the Dunshaughlin & Royal Gaels Juvenile section is done on a voluntary basis by our mentors – some of whom played for years in Dunshaughlin, others who played at all levels for a variety of junior, intermediate & senior clubs all around the country. Some of our mentors knew nothing about Gaelic games until their children showed an interest. Everyone is welcome regardless of their experience playing sport. There is lots to be done when running a team and more people are involved the more fun it is for everyone and the lighter the load.

After our players, our mentors are the most important people in club. They train our boys and girls, arrange matches, wash jerseys, interact with parents, referees, mentors from other clubs, deal with bumps & bruises and watch young players grow through the ranks until as 19 year olds, they enter the adult section of the Club.

This handbook is a compilation of all the information we think mentors will need to carry out their role. It also gives parents a reference point for names / numbers of the contacts relevant for their own son(s). It is a work in progress. If you don't find the answers you are looking for, let us know and we will endeavour to get an answer for you.

Alan Quirke
Juvenile Chairman (Boys Section) Dunshaughlin & Royal Gaels
January 2020

Vision for Dunshaughlin & Royal Gaels Boys Juvenile Section

To bring as many players as possible through to adult level with the necessary skills to perform (under match conditions) at a grade that is appropriate to their ability.

To proactively promote all the skills so that all players are fully proficient with both left / right hand and left / right foot.

We want our players to enjoy playing Gaelic football and to achieve their potential in playing Gaelic games.

We want our players to be proud of their community & village, their association with their club and to build lasting friendships through the Club.

We want to concentrate on player retention so that the weakest boys are given as much attention as the strongest.

Section 1

Juvenile Structure

<u>Juvenile Games Boys Chairman</u>	Alan Quirke	Co-ordinate the Juvenile Committee / Mentors Group Represent Juvenile section at club executive meetings Chair Juvenile meetings
<u>Juvenile Games Boys Vice Chairman</u>	Kieran O Riordan	Support Chairman at Juvenile Committee Sit on various sub-committees as required.
<u>Juvenile Secretary</u>	Caroline Malone	Facilitate communication between Meath County Board and Juvenile Coordinators / Mentors Team Entry into competitions Juvenile report for AGM Attend and minute meetings of Juvenile Games Committee
<u>Nursery Coordinator</u>	Stephanie Faughnan, Thomas McWeeney, Martin Reilly, Niall Kelly, Eric Lavelle, Peter Kenefick & Liodain O Neill	Boys and Girls 4yrs – 6yrs
<u>Boys U7</u>	Simon Farrell, Pat Sheridan, Des Keane, Fergal Gogan	Co-ordinate training & matches for team / parents. Liaise with parents Represent team at Juvenile Mentor Meetings
<u>Boys U 8/ U9</u>	Owen McGrath, John Roche, Ed O Donoghue, Paul O Donoghue, Paudie Herlihy, Graham Dowd, John Roche, Ronan O Dwyer	Co-ordinate training & matches for team / parents. Liaise with parents Represent team at Juvenile Mentor Meetings
<u>Boys U10 / U11</u>	Mick McCarthy ,Alan Quirke, Enda McNally, David Summerville, Brian Wall , Noel McTighe, Stephen Coyne, Ian Forrestal, Neil Young.	Co-ordinate training & matches for team / parents. Liaise with parents Represent team at Juvenile Mentor Meetings
<u>Boys U12 / U13</u>	Des Keane, Roy Sheridan	Co-ordinate training & matches for team / parents. Liaise with parents Represent team at Juvenile Mentor Meetings
<u>Boys U14 / U15</u>	Stephen Claire Alan O Dwyer Shane Claire Michael McHale	Co-ordinate training & matches for team / parents. Liaise with parents Represent team at Juvenile Mentor Meetings

<u>Boys U16 / U17</u>	Kieran O Riordan , Ultan Blake Paul Nestor	Co-ordinate training & matches for team / parents. Liaise with parents Represent team at Juvenile Mentor Meetings
<u>Boys U18/ U19</u>	Seamus Traynor, Andy Byrne, Paul Murphy	Co-ordinate training & matches for team / parents. Liaise with parents Represent team at Juvenile Mentor Meetings
Juvenile Membership Officer	To be confirmed	Support Club Registrar and Juvenile mentors to ensure juvenile membership records are up to date and club subs are paid
<u>GPO</u>	Pauraic Burke	Coaching Strategy Mentor Support/Training School Support Nursery Mini Leagues Summer Camps / Cul Camps
<u>PRO</u>	Ultan Blake	Put reports of all matches on Facebook Update club website with match reports. Publicise all club fundraising and social events.

Senior Club Executive Relevant Contacts 2020

Position	Name
Chairman	Colum Bracken
Vice Chairman	Frank Gallogly
Secretary	Jim Gilligan
Treasurer	Bernie Dunne
Registrar	Camilla O Connor
PRO	Naoise Blake / Ultan Blake
Juvenile Girls Chairman	Hughie McCarthy
Juvenile Boys Chairman	Alan Quirke
Children's Officer	Ger Reid & Eadaoin Slattery
Sponsorship officer	Dave McEntee

Key Boys Juvenile Club Contacts 2020

Position	Name	Mobil e No.	Email
Juvenile Boys Chairman	Alan Quirke	087 81260 36	alan.quirke@phasor.ie
Juvenile Secretary	Caroline Malone	086 08651 26	Secretarybng.Dunshaughlin.meath@gaa.ie
Children's Officer	Ger Reid & Eadaoin Slattery	087 65758 90 & 087 23889 32	Geraldinereid28@gmail.com
GPO (Games Promotion Officer)	Pauric Burke	087 96034 16	pauric.burke.gda.meath@gaa.ie

PRO (Public Relations Officer)	Ultan Blake	085 72781 04	ultanblake@gmail.com
Nursery Co-Ordinator Boys Girls 4, 5 & 6 years old	Stephanie Faughnan	086 08571 60	stephaniemcguinness735@hotmail.com
Boys U7	Simon Farrell	087 64088 15	Simon.farrell@esbi.ie
Boys U8 / U9	Owen McGrath	087 12306 24	otmcgrath@yahoo.com jroche@printovate.ie
Boys U10 / U11	Alan Quirke / Brian Wall	087 81260 36 / 086 82938 99	alan.quirke@phasor.ie brianwall62@gmail.com
Boys U12 / U13	Des Keane	087 75906 97	deskeane@gmail.com
Boys U14 / U15	Stephen Claire	087 97876 70	stefclaire@hotmail.com
Boys U16 / U17	Kieran O Riordan	087 96761 29	oriordan.kieran@gmail.com
Boys U18 / U19	Seamus Traynor	086 04792 76	traynorseamus@gmail.com
Club Registrar	Camilla O Connor	086 25362 60	camilla.oc@hotmail.com

Dates for Juvenile Mentor Meetings 2020

Date	Location	Time
Dec 11 th 2019	Clubhouse	8pm
Thursday Feb 13 th 2020	Clubhouse	8pm
Thurs April 30 th 2020	Clubhouse	8pm
Thurs June 25 th 2020	Clubhouse	8pm
Thurs Aug 20 th 2020	Clubhouse	8pm
Thursday Oct 8 th 2020	Clubhouse	8pm

Appointment of Mentors

Mentors are ratified by the Juvenile Chairman / Vice Chairman at the first mentors meeting each year. This includes a review of their Garda Vetting and Membership Status and confirmation that they have completed the Foundation Course and Child Safety Course run by Meath County Board.

A lead mentor is appointed within each year group.

The Lead mentor is responsible for ensuring effective communication among their mentors and implementation of Club policies and initiatives. Lead Mentor contact details are listed at the end of this section.

Club subscriptions/ Registration of Players

Players need to be registered in the club in order to be registered with GAA Central in Croke Park. Any player who has not paid their subs are not insured and are thus not permitted to train or play matches.

All mentors and co-ordinators must be paid up members of the Club.

Membership forms are available online at www.dunshaughlingaa.com

Lists of paid up members are held by the club registrar.

Section 2

Role of Juvenile Mentor

Dunshaughlin & Royal Gaels is a voluntary organisation and all our activities are organised by our own members. Juvenile mentors, often parents and guardians of our young players, are the people who organise and manage training and matches.

Mentors are usually recruited when they first bring their children down to our Friday evening nursery on the club Astro-Pitch. A gentle tap on the shoulder to help out results in quick entry to the rank of mentor. This can be a very rewarding role – guiding young players who can barely kick a ball through the age grades, helping each one to play to the best of their ability. The Mentor's role is influenced by the personal capacity and drive of the individual and can encompass:

- Organising and running of training sessions.
- Communicating time and venue of fixtures and ensuring sufficient numbers to field teams.
- Organising and managing teams on match days.
- Coaching & developing juvenile players to get the best out of their ability.
- Encouraging players to give the best of themselves for the team.
- Ensuring teams have necessary equipment to train and play Gaelic games in a safe environment e.g. footballs, bibs, cones, stakes to tie down goals etc.
- Return of match reports to the Club PRO.
- Promoting and supporting the Club's social and fundraising activities.
- Ensuring that player's time spent with you is a positive experience.
- Establishing a Training and Development Plan for year ahead.
- Organising an annual meeting with the Parents of the players.

Benefits of Planning a Training Session

The Process of Planning

- Knowing where your players are now...Taking stock.
- Deciding where you want players to be...Goal setting.
- Working out how to get there...Planning.
- Understanding your own knowledge base as a coach... Implementing.
- Knowing when / if you have arrived ... Monitoring and evaluation.

Benefits of good planning

- Understanding-What to do.
- Confidence- The coach.
- Reduces time that the players are not active.
- Selecting appropriate activities.
- Trust from parents.
- Create goals for the player to achieve.

Plan for the Season

Coaches and mentors are encouraged to plan for the season ahead. The Dunshauglin & Royal Gaels Player Pathway covers the general way for developing players from nursery all the way through to adult ranks. Each group of mentors is responsible for planning the sessions for their own team and development of the team throughout the year.

Player Pathway

The Dunshaughlin & Royal Gaels Player pathway model maps out the incremental development of players starting from 4 yrs. of age up to minor. It maps out the player characteristics, skill competence and physical attributes of players as they grow and develop. Mentors are encouraged to adopt this Player Pathway model into their annual planning.



2020 Player Pathway
DRG.pdf.pdf

Coaching and Games Development

The Club's Games Promotion Officer (GPO) keeps mentors informed of training and coaching skills courses which are organised throughout the year. He will also work with mentors in devising training programmes for their teams and will run training sessions for teams. Feel free to contact him.

Mentor Development and Upskilling yourself as a coach

There are an increasing number of courses available for mentors to help them improve their Coaching skills. There is a series of courses run by GAA Central encompassing

Introduction to Gaelic Games course

The course is aimed at beginner coaches and will enable participants to assist a coach in the organisation of activities to develop Hurling or Gaelic football.

It is expected that all Club Coaches and Mentors will attend at a minimum a Foundation Course in Coaching

The Club GPO often facilitates a Foundation Course for new Mentors. Please contact your Group Co-ordinator for more information.

Award 1 Child

Aimed at: Coaches of Juvenile Teams (U12 and below) with entry Requirements of Foundation Level / Foundation Award Course. Course Candidates will be 18 years or over. Candidates will be asked to abide by the GAA Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport

Award 2 Child

The Award 2 Coach Education course is the third award on the coaching pathway of Gaelic games. The course is aimed at coaches that have progressed through the Foundation Award and Award 1 programmes and have experience as a Coach and is aimed at: Coaches of Juvenile Teams (U12 and below).

Skill Specific Workshops

There is also an ongoing series of Coaching Workshops and the Club GPO will continue to provide information on these.

Annual Parents Meeting

Mentors are encouraged to have an annual meeting with the parents of the players group which they are managing. It is vitally important to keep the parents as involved as possible as their support will help keep the boys interested and also helps contribute to a positive environment in the overall player / mentor / parent group.

A suggested Agenda for this meeting is set out below

- Format of season ahead including any changes in rules from the previous year
- Training nights , times etc
- Fixture list of matches for Season, summer breaks etc
- Teams structure for the year or block ahead
- Reminder of importance of turning up for training and games
- Reminder of a timely response to mentor communications re matches and/or training
- Reminder on payment of Club fees.
- Update on team fundraising plans.
- Dietary discussion
- Details on Summer away day trip
- Support for Dunshaughlin & Royal Gaels general fund raising initiatives
- How can parents get more involved
 - setting up pitches
 - taking stats at matches

Child Protection

The Lead Mentor must supply the Child Safety Officer with a full list of their proposed Mentors, including phone and email contact details.

Each year the Dunshaughlin & Royal Gaels Executive ratifies the mentors who will be involved in working with our juvenile teams. This includes ensuring mentors have

1. undergone the GAA's Garda Vetting process
2. have completed the Code of Best Practice training
3. are paid up members of the Club

Garda Vetting in Dunshaughlin & Royal Gaels

It is worth noting that should any person who has not been vetted, and who has not previously worked with children in the GAA, and who subsequently seeks on our behalf to work with children and or vulnerable adults after the Act commences they will be in breach of the law. Should we employ or recruit a person to do this work who has not been vetted we also will be breaching the law.

Any person currently vetted by the GAA is covered under the Act as their vetting acceptance in essence transfers over under the new Act. For the purpose of clarification the National Vetting Bureau Act in GAA terms applies to any person who carries out a role of responsibility with an underage player i.e. a person who is under 18 yrs. of age. This also applies to any coach, manager, selector of a senior squad if that squad includes a person under 18 yrs. of age. The Act also covers those who work with vulnerable adults.

E-Vetting replacing paper vetting applications

On the commencement of the Act the National Vetting Bureau will introduce E-Vetting or a system of applying on line for vetting. The piloting of E-Vetting by the National Vetting Bureau indicates that we can get turnaround times for the processing of vetting forms down to a few days rather than many weeks as experienced in the past. All interaction with the vetting applicant will, following completion of an initial identity verification form, be done via email.

Who within the GAA needs to be Garda Vetted in accordance with the Act?

- Coaches: In the context of the GAA those members, i.e. coaches, trainers, mentors, parents and others who provide services to children and vulnerable adults, on behalf of the Association, and who are in direct contact with children or vulnerable persons in the GAA shall be vetted. It should be noted that it will be illegal for an individual to put themselves forward to work with children or vulnerable adults before successfully completing the Garda Vetting Bureau process.
- Committee members: As a policy of best practice, it is strongly recommended that Officers of Committees that oversee underage and juvenile activities at Club and County level should also be vetted.
- Referees: Referees of underage games must also be vetted.

Are there any exemptions from vetting for occasional or temporary roles?

While the preference of the GAA is to vet all persons who work in a role of responsibility with children and underage players there is a recognition that occasionally a guest coach may be invited to work in a supervised role with children. At the discretion of the local Club or unit it shall be

permissible for a person acting in an occasional or temporary role, who has not previously been vetted by the GAA, to fulfil this role as per the following conditions:

- The person must be known to the local Club or unit.
- A non-vetted individual may only carry out a 'temporary' role for a maximum of three occasions per year.
- All such persons must be over 18 yrs of age.
- They must, in advance of commencing their role, complete & submit a vetting application form.
- They must sign a copy of the Code of Behaviour (Underage).
- They must at all times be under the supervision of a vetted volunteer/staff person.

The Club will provide more information on the process and procedure to follow when applying to be vetted via the online system as soon as possible.

Designated Child Safety Officer

The Club is obliged to have a designated Child Safety Officer who is responsible for reporting allegations of abuse to the statutory authorities. Any disclosures of abuse or potential abuse must be reported to the designated Child Safety Officer.

Complaints procedure

The Club has an official complaints procedure. The complaints procedure ensures the efficient, transparent and fair processing of complaints made against officers, officials, mentors, managers, members and supporters of the Club.

Any complaints should be addressed to the Clubs Childrens officers (Ger Reid / Eadoinn Slattery) who will address according to the GAA safeguarding policy.

Communications, including Social Media

Mentors should never communicate by text or email with an individual under age player.

All group texts / emails should be sent to parents. However if a parent wishes the mentor to send the group text or email to a different number / email address to their own (ie the child) they must put this request in writing to the mentor. The mentor must retain this written request.

If an underage player obtains a mentors phone number or email address and attempts to make direct contact with the mentor, he / she must instruct the child not to do so and inform their parent / guardian of same. The mentor should also seek advice from a member of the juvenile committee if this happens.

Section 3

Playing Games

Mentors need to be familiar with how games are organised for their group of players.

Boys games are organised by the Meath County Board of the GAA. It is worth becoming familiar with the County Board website www.meathgaa.ie.

Boys' juvenile games are organised into two sections:

U7, U8, U9, U10 & U11 are played under the rules of GO Games .

Rules for the various age-groups are available in the download section of meathgaa.ie

The different rules and regulations for the games, including Go Games and all older age-groups up to adult competitions are available at http://meath.gaa.ie/download_category/coiste-na-nog/

The County Board issues a master planner with fixtures and confirms these fixtures a week before each match with updates on games schedules and other relevant information. This is emailed to the Club's Juvenile Secretary who emails it on to relevant mentors.

To contact another club to confirm the fixture each club needs to request the contact details of the opposition mentor through our own club juvenile secretary.

Assignments for mentors

The vast majority of mentors are parents of players within their year. These parent mentors have an understandable interest in bringing their own child to their match and consequently be involved in mentoring that team. However as a mentoring team for the year it is important that they agree who is going to mentor each team. Every team needs a mentor(s) and the mentors that mentor together need to complement each other. It is also encouraged that mentors move to a different team from time to time. This is so that the players get different coaching perspectives. This is as much to benefit their own son(s) as much as for themselves.

Purchase of Equipment

Any request for training gear / match gear must be sent through the Juvenile Chairman to the Senior Club Treasurer. A group request will be sent at the beginning of the year for all teams in the boys juvenile section and any other requests through the year will be treated on an individual basis.

Storing of Club Gear

All club training gear and footballs balls should be stored in the store room beside toilets after training / matches. These should not be removed off the club premises so they are available to everyone in the club.

Jerseys and bibs can be removed to be washed but should also be stored in the storeroom at all other times.

Mobile Goals/ Goal Safety

For younger age groups mobile goals are used to create the correct pitch size for the games.

Mobile goals must be moved to the side of the pitch after use.

Mobile Goals must always be secured to the ground. Pegs for securing the goals are available in the container beside the dressing rooms.

There has been tragic accidents involving the use of the mobile goals so it is critical they are always properly secured.

Slalom poles or bollards may be used for younger groups – check rules on county board websites.

Slalom poles / bollards are also available in the gear container.

Mouth guards / Gumshields

All juvenile players must wear mouth guards for football, without exception. This is a GAA and a club ruling. This applies to training and matches and no mentor should allow a juvenile train or play without a mouth guard.

From at least 12 years of age up a custom fit mouth guard is advised. They provide better protection and are much more comfortable than the standard boil and bite.

Referees

For boys' matches up to U11, the Club provides home referees. Young whistlers should be used where possible. These are coordinated by the club juvenile secretary. Where young whistlers are not available then mentors who are familiar with the rules for that age group should be used. For older age groups, referees are appointed by the County Board.

Challenge Games

Croke Park must be informed at least 48 hours before every challenge game (Within & Outside County Meath).

The lead mentor must advise the Dunshaughlin Juvenile Boys Club Secretary (Caroline Malone) who will in turn advise the Meath Juvenile County Secretary that a challenge match has been arranged. You should allow 5 days notice in order to ensure the relevant permissions are obtained.

Do not contact the County Board directly yourself as this will not be considered by County Board as a valid approach.

Referees for Challenge Matches

If you wish to appoint a referee for a challenge match you need to co-ordinate this yourself with the club you are playing the match against.

Return of Match Results

Referees are responsible for returning results of matches from U13 upwards.

Results for U7, U8, U9 ,U10 & U11 do not need to be returned.

Away Trips

Away trips are of benefit to juvenile players and are a very enjoyable aspect of their membership of the Club.

- The Juvenile Club committee must be consulted in advance of any decision being taken to go on an away trip. The trip will be authorised by the committee once it has been made aware of the details.
- The trip cannot clash with any official county board fixtures
- Trips should include a social / fun element such as a visit to a park / team-building activity etc.
- Parents of players should be involved in the away trip. This helps to foster a great spirit within the group and is a great opportunity for children / parents and mentors to bond.

Signed permission slips must be obtained for all children travelling, even if the parent is also travelling.

The following text should be appended to any trip information sheet that you issue.

I give permission for _____ to travel on the Dunshaughlin & Royal Gaels trip to

Signed _____(parent/guardian)

Contact No. _____

GAA Central Players Injury Schemes

Details of the various player injury schemes provide by the GAA are available on <https://www.gaa.ie/my-gaa/administrators/gaa-injury-benefit-fund>

These schemes do not seek to compensate for injury but to supplement other Schemes such as Personal Accident or Health Insurance.

If you have medical insurance such as VHI, Irish Life etc a claim must be made with your medical insurance provider in the first instance. The Schemes only provide cover for unrecoverable losses up to the limit specified under each scheme.

Mentors are reminded that any injury received in a match and that might potentially require treatment and result in a claim against the scheme should be reported to the referee for inclusion in his report and also to the Dunshaughlin & Royal Gaels juvenile secretary at Secretarybng.Dunshaughlin.meath@gaa.ie

Dunshaughlin & Royal Gaels Policy on Player Injury:

If any player is injured on training or in matches in Dunshaughlin then the injury needs to be noted in the diary located in clubhouse kitchen area.

All **registered** players are covered by the GAA, Camogie or Ladies Football Player Injury Schemes.

Dunshaughlin & Royal Gaels is not in a position to cover expenses incurred by players as a result of injury.

Club Policy on Outside of Age (One Year Up & Two Years Up)

Dunshaughlin & Royal Gaels is not a 'win at all costs club'. We would rather have a large number of happy juvenile players, playing to the best of their ability than a few elite teams who are focussed on winning at the exclusion of all else.

The issue of "playing up" whether from a lower division team, or from a younger age group, and the matter of players "not getting their game" causes huge debate at juvenile level.

It is impossible to adjudicate in advance of specific games and circumstances. The juvenile committee have attempted to provide guidelines here, which mentors should adhere to, and which can be openly explained to players and parents. Any questions should be directed back to the Juvenile Club Chairman who will in return bring it to the attention of the juvenile committee for discussion.

1. County Board rules take precedence and mentors must be familiar with the rules and regulations surrounding playing up. At present boys games do not restrict playing up but fair play is expected.

2. Mentors make their team selections based on many reasons including:

The recent form of players, attendance and punctuality at training sessions, the fitness of a player who may be suffering or recovering from a recent or ongoing injury. Mentors are expected to make their selections with due consideration for every player on their panel and players and parents are expected to respect these decisions.

3. The following is the policy ratified by the Executive Committee regarding juvenile players playing within their own age groups:

Playing One Year out of Age (One Year Up)

- a. Juveniles must play and train with their appropriate year group.
 - b. Juveniles may also play, on occasion, on a team one year above the appropriate aged team bracket provided that:
 - i. the managers of the both age groups have given consent
 - ii. the parents of the child playing up has given consent
 - iii. juveniles of the higher age are not being deprived of sport. *This means that we are not playing younger players ahead of appropriately aged players just to be competitive.*
4. Occasionally due to circumstances such as holidays / communions / confirmations teams may struggle to field a full second or third team because of the reduced numbers within their group. These teams can be supported from the team below them but the relevant permissions must be obtained from parents.
 5. In this scenario where an age group (or a 2nd team within an age group) needs consistent support from the younger age group then this should be discussed at the start of the year between the mentors from both age groups. The younger team mentors are encouraged to support the older team so as to ensure that the Club helps to retain those older players by having a viable team in place. In this scenario the express permission from the relevant Group Coordinator must be requested at the start of the year. Mentors of the lower age groups should use this opportunity to rotate players willing and able to play up.

Playing 2 years out of age (2 years Up)

In exceptional circumstance, it may happen that a team cannot secure enough players from the group one year younger and then can consider approaching the group 2 years younger. This is not encouraged and should be considered a last resort. Player welfare should always come before competition considerations and this is especially true in the event the children are being asked to play 2 years out of their own age group.

Before proceeding with this option there are a number of questions to answer as follows

- a. What is the total number of age appropriate players available across the wider group that could support the group fixtures?
- b. Has the group looked within itself to balance its own playing numbers across teams etc for the fixture in question?
- c. What support has been requested and received (or not) from the group one year below across A, B teams etc for the fixture(s) in question?
- d. What is the minimum team size that you are allowed field for the fixture(s) in question?
- e. Can the fixture be rescheduled when more age appropriate players or players from the year one year below are available?
- f. Has the mentor from the 2 year younger group agreed to request of their players parents to support?

Other considerations

1. Mentors of both teams should give due consideration to only allowing these younger players to play up on the basis that both from a skill and physicality perspective that they will not be out of their depth
2. 2 year younger players should not be asked to play on an A team as this higher level is more likely to have increased speed and physicality.
3. Parents of the 2 year younger players should fully understand what team their child is being asked to play on and parental consent is required
4. The number of 2 year younger players on teams to be restricted to 3

The juvenile committee have decided that written permission must be received from the parents of all boys playing two years up. One permission slip will be deemed acceptable for the entire year and a separate slip is not required for each match. This applies to all boys up to U15. The responsibility for collecting this written permission falls with the lead mentor of the team who is requesting the players to play up onto their team.

Merging Age Groups

In special circumstances the juvenile committee may agree to merge age groups where numbers dictate that greater playing time will be enjoyed if two or more age groups play together. No precedent will be set and the grouping will be reviewed on an ongoing basis and at the end of that playing year.

Feile (U14 Blitz)

It is club policy that every child should be given an equal opportunity during Feile. Panels need to be a minimum of 19 and a maximum of 25. Every child needs to be given equal playing time .

In a year where a team does not have 25 players of the required year then mentors are allowed to make up the panel from the year directly below. Precedence of playing time on the pitch should be given to the players of the relevant year for that particular Feile.

Rules of Feile must be adhered to and observed at all times.

<https://www.gaa.ie/my-gaa/getting-involved/feile-na-ngael>

Section 4

Pitches and Facilities

Given the number of teams which the Club fields at juvenile and adult levels across ladies / men and boys / girls there is a high demand on the two grass pitches and single astro pitch at our disposal.

Pitch Bookings for training / matches.

Until further notice all booking and enquiries regarding bookings for matches and training slots must be sent to the pitch coordinators at:

geraldinereid28@gmail.com

camilla.oc@hotmail.com

Secretary.dunshaughlin.meath@gaa.ie

Our new pitch booking App should be available and up and running on club website during 2020.

The fixtures co-ordinators have sole responsibility for pitch allocations and bookings.

Allocation of Grass Playing Pitches

1. Priority will be given at all times to the maintenance of a top-class playing surface on the two club pitches.
2. The Pitch Committee will be assigned responsibility for pitch maintenance and will decide as to whether the club's pitches are in playable condition. This decision should be taken as soon as possible but no later than the day before scheduled match activity, except in exceptional circumstances where weather conditions change dramatically. The Pitch Committee will liaise with the juvenile secretary.

Allocation of the Astro Pitch

1. The Astro pitch has a limited number of training slots. This makes the assignment of training slots a difficult process so compromise is needed to ensure that each age group gets a slot. Therefore it is important that each age group understands the general principles used when allocating training slots.
2. The allocation of training slots is done by the Juvenile Games secretaries.

3. Older age groups take priority in the assignment of training slots.
4. Younger age groups are preferentially allocated earlier slots.

Pitch Care Guidelines

All training should be carried out away from the main goal areas. All four corners and areas around pitch are to be used.

Leave pitches as you would expect to find them. Take away rubbish, put out barriers, etc.

Astro Pitch Pitch Care

Under no circumstances should metal studs / metal blades be worn on the all weather pitches.

Section 5

Frequently Asked Questions

There are so many issues that arise regarding the playing of our games, we have provided answers below to some Frequently Asked Questions. If there are other questions you think we should include here please email our [Juvenile Secretary](#).

I have a son and a daughter playing in the Club but there seems to be different arrangements for organising games for both. Why?

Not everyone realises this but boys games are organised by the GAA and girls games are organised by two separate bodies – the Ladies Football Board and the Camogie Board. Boys games are coordinated so that football and hurling are played on separate weekends and fixtures do not clash. Ladies Football and Camogie usually play both codes on the same weekend. This is gradually changing with the younger groups, and it is becoming more common to alternate weekends.

How do I go about playing a friendly/challenge match?

The Club encourages teams to play friendly/challenge matches provided they do not clash with official fixtures and that playing facilities are available. It is also possible to arrange to play your challenge match at the other team's home pitch. When you have sourced a pitch also email the relevant juvenile secretary to let them know about the fixture and request permission from the relevant county board. If you do not have permission, then you do not have player injury scheme cover.

If you wish to provide refreshments after the match parents must provide the refreshments and make the teas/coffees etc. and clean up afterwards.

If a child is not showing up for training do I still have to play him/her in matches?

The ethos of Dunshaughlin & Royal Gaels is inclusivity for all children. Depending on circumstances some families may not be able to make all training sessions. In general, in younger age groups, any child who shows up for a match should get a reasonable amount of play. As the children get older and teams are graded it is inevitable that a child who does not attend training will end up on a

second team. They should still be afforded the opportunity to play when they attend matches although you may choose not to start them.

We have players from younger age groups playing with us because they want to be with their friends. Is there a Club policy on this?

The Club policy is that players play at the appropriate age. We have so many children playing that a child playing up actually deprives other children of game time by increasing the numbers we have to field. This issue arises every year but it is really best dealt with by being firm at U8 level and encouraging younger players to stay with their relevant age group and make friends there. Parents can often be insistent on moving up as they may think their child is too big or skilled for their own age group. Long experience in the Club tells us this is not the case. Once this rule is applied consistently eventually everyone accepts it. Long-term, it is in the best interests of the child to play at the appropriate age grade.

One of the children in our group is constantly messing and disrupting the training session. Can I tell him/her not to bother coming down?

The Club's policy is that anyone who wants to play and train can. However, there has to be commitment on both sides to make this work. Depending on the age of the child it may be appropriate to talk to them directly or with their parent/guardian to explain how their behaviour is causing issues for mentors and other players. Any discussion should be carried out in a positive way, allowing the player/parent to express any issues or difficulties they are having. If this does not work it may be necessary to refer the matter to the lead mentor of the group or the coordinator to bring about a resolution.

Who pays the referee?

Mentors pay the referee on the day and then claim back from the Club, usually once or twice a year. Claim forms are available from the juvenile secretary who must also sign off on them before submission to the assistant treasurer. Only fees for official fixtures are covered. Fees for challenge games must be covered by the team.

I played in Dunshaughlin when I was a kid. There were no committees and rules and coordinators then. Why do we need them now?

We need them because the Club is much bigger now than it was 15 or 20 years ago. There were far fewer girls playing back then and most boys age groups had no more than one team. It is very different now and it takes a huge amount of organisation and goodwill to get all our teams out playing every weekend. That's why we had to develop a juvenile structure to organise and share the workload so all mentors, parents and players are asked to cooperate with the structure and rules we have in place.

I didn't play Gaelic games myself – how can I be a mentor?

There is so much to do organising our games, particularly at the younger age levels where numbers are highest that everyone can play a useful role. For a start, training in coaching skills is available to all mentors. Our Games Promotion Officer organises coaching courses for all levels during the year. Also, we need mentors to organise teams, send texts, sort out equipment etc so don't rule yourself out. Kids love to have their parents involved with their teams so it is a great opportunity to get new skills and be involved and also to get to know people within the Club.

I am concerned about the behaviour of another mentor

This is obviously a tricky issue. If possible discuss your concerns with the lead mentor in your group or another mentor you respect. Following this you may wish to raise the issue directly with the mentor concerned or to bring your concerns to the attention of the lead mentor of the group.

You also have the option to raise the issue with the juvenile chairman. The safety and well being of all children playing our games is paramount. If you are concerned please raise the issue rather than letting things lie.

Any issues to do with child welfare may be referred to our Children's Officers.

Contact details are listed earlier in this handbook.

We are moving from the nursery to U8. What do we need to focus on?

Firstly, there is a lot of help and advice available to mentors, both formally and informally as they move through the different sections of the Club. Your first port of call is our GPO who will advise you. Talk to the mentors of the year above you and find out what worked and didn't work for them. Set up a structure among mentors for both communication and sharing the workload. Remember to communicate with parents as well. It's all new for everyone so just keep the communication flowing.

How do we contact parents to let them know when matches and training are on etc.?

Each year group usually sets up Whatsapp Groups for contacting parents. Mentors should never communicate (text / email) with an individual under age player. All group texts / emails should be sent to parents. However if a parent wishes the mentor to send the group text or email to a child's number / email address they must put this request in writing to the mentor. The mentor must retain this written request.

If an underage player obtains a mentors phone number or email address and attempts to make direct contact with the mentor, he / she must instruct the child not to do so and inform their parent / guardian of same.

How do we get keys for the store room to get equipment etc?

One set of keys per team are available from the juvenile chairman. These keys give access to the front gates, the equipment room, the toilets / dressing rooms and gate for the astro-pitch. Keeping the equipment room neat and organised is vital to ensuring that everyone can get the equipment they need at the right time. All mentors are asked to ensure that they put equipment back in the relevant place, as all mentors, collectively, are responsible for the tidiness of this room.

Who looks after first aid at matches and training?

Inevitably injuries can occur during matches or training so mentors should ensure they have a first aid kit with them at matches and training or have delegated a parent to bring one. The first aid kit is for injuries which are not too serious and can be dealt with on the field. If the injury seems more serious the child's parent should take over (or whoever has brought them to the match). Make sure the referee makes a note of any serious injuries.

Should we bring water bottles to matches?

Ideally every child should bring their own water to matches. It is unhygienic to be sharing water bottles. The best time to create this habit is when the children are younger. However, given that they will forget from time to time mentors should also have water available, particularly when the weather is hot.

We would like to take some photos of our team for the club website / team Whatsapp group. Are there club procedures in place?

Yes. The club has adopted the GAA Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport. This policy booklet outlines best practice in relation to all interaction with children (includes all under 18 year olds). In relation to

the taking of photographs parents are asked each year upon registration to inform team mentors if they do not want their child included in club photographs.

It is best practice;

- Not to publish matching names and photographs of children.
- Personal details should never be included.
- If a child is being photograph on their own eg. an award - only include their first name with the photo.

Can parents take photographs at matches?

Parents may at times wish to take photographs, but if any club personnel are unhappy about any matter relating to such photography, the permission granted should be withdrawn immediately.

Has the club a policy on Bullying?

The club has adopted the GAA Code of Behaviour and Code of Conduct as Club Policy. The club's Childrens' Officers / Designated Liaison Officer should be contacted in relation to any concern regarding bullying behaviour.