

2.1 Child Protection and Welfare Policy

2.1.1 Club Policy and Procedures

Ballymun United FC is committed to ensuring that all necessary steps will be taken to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people who participate in soccer. This policy document clearly demonstrates the importance placed by Ballymun United FC on the protection and safety of children and young people who participate in soccer.

This Child Protection and Welfare Policy is informed by:

Legislation:

- The Child Care Act 1991
- The Protection for Persons Reporting Abuse Act 1998

International Conventions:

- UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child 1989 (Adopted by Ireland Sept. 1992)
- European Convention on Human Rights
- Council of Europe Sports Ethics 1993

Government Guidelines:

- Code of Ethics & Good Practice for Children's Sport in Ireland 1996
- Children First 1999 National Guidelines for the Protection & Welfare of Children in Ireland
- Code of Ethics & Good Practice for Children's Sport (Irish Sport's Council 2000)
- Our Duty to Care 2001
- FAI Code of Ethics & Good Practice 2003

All children and young people* who participate in soccer should be able to do so in a safe and enjoyable environment. While doing so they should be protected from any form of abuse be it physical, emotional, sexual, neglect or bullying. The responsibility for protecting children lies with all adults involved in soccer.

Ballymun United FC recognises and accepts its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people by protecting them from physical, emotional or sexual harm and from neglect or bullying.

Clear policies, practices and procedures in addition to relevant training programmes will ensure that everyone in Ballymun United FC knows exactly what is expected of them in relation to protecting children and young people within soccer.

It is vital that children and young people who participate in Ballymun United FC activities are able to do so in a safe, enjoyable, quality and a fun environment.

In pursuit of this goal Ballymun United FC will:

- Advise all members of Ballymun United FC (coaches, players, parents and spectators) of their responsibilities in relation to the welfare and protection of children and young people who participate in soccer.

- Operate within the recommended Football Association of Ireland codes of conduct and best practice guidelines.
- Appoint a Club Children's Officer in line with FAI requirements.
- Provide a child protection and welfare module in staff induction and development programmes.

The aims of Ballymun United's' Child Protection Policy are:

- To develop a positive and pro-active position in order to best protect all children and young people who participate in soccer, in order for them to do so in a safe and enjoyable environment.
- To provide appropriate guidance and advice to all club members (players, coaches, volunteers, spectators and parents) in all matters concerning child welfare and protection.
- To demonstrate best practice in the area of child welfare and protection.
- To promote ethics and best practice standards throughout soccer.

The key principles underpinning this policy are that:

- The welfare of the child is the first and paramount consideration.
- All children and young people have a right to be protected from abuse of any kind regardless of their age, gender, disability, culture, language, racial origin, religious beliefs or sexual identity.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse/poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately. It is essential that we work in partnership with children and young people and their parents/carers. Health Boards have a statutory responsibility to safeguard and protect the welfare of children and Ballymun United FC is committed to cooperating fully with them in accordance with procedures as outlined in "Children First" National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children.
- Ballymun United FC will cooperate fully with the FAI National Children's Officer, Gardaí and Health Boards in any investigation of child abuse in soccer.

The Football Association of Ireland's regulations in regard to child welfare and protection are defined in the rulebook as:

Rule 68. - The Protection and Welfare of Children

(a) In line with recent legislation and Government Guidelines (The Child Care Act 1991 and the Protection for Persons Reporting Abuse Act 1998) in relation to child protection and welfare, it is mandatory that all National Association, Divisional Associations and Affiliated Leagues should operate to the FAI recommended codes of conduct and best practice guidelines (See FAI Code of Ethics & Good Practice for Under Age Soccer for Players, Coaches, Parents and Spectators).

(b) Any act, statement, conduct or other matter, which harms a child or children, or poses or may pose a risk of harm to a child or children, shall constitute behaviour which is improper and brings the game into disrepute.

(c) Breaches will become a disciplinary offence.

Ballymun United FC through confirming this policy document has demonstrated its commitment to ensuring that children and young people can participate in all soccer activities with their safety and welfare being of paramount importance.

It is essential that this document represent a process of continual improvement in the area of child protection and welfare in soccer. It is the responsibility of all adults involved in soccer to actively promote safe and best practice standards whilst being ever vigilant and aware of their responsibilities to children and young people in their care.

(* - Children are defined in Irish Law as being any person under 18 years of age.)

