



Ballymena United Youth Academy **Code of Practice for Volunteers working with children.**

The volunteers of Ballymena United Youth Academy will be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect children in their care and themselves from false allegations. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate within our Club.

All staff will comply with the following principles of ethical practice.

1. The volunteers of Ballymena United Youth Academy for the purposes of this code of practice will be all committee members, team managers, coaches, assistants and other volunteers involved in the supervision, control or care of the children affiliated to Ballymena United Youth Academy.
2. Volunteers will respect the rights, dignity and worth of every child and treat everyone equally.
3. Volunteers will endeavour to make football **fun**.
4. Staff will place the well-being and safety of the participant above the development of performance or the success of the team.
5. Coaches and volunteers will ensure that the activities they direct or promote are appropriate to the age, maturity, experience and ability of the individual child. Volunteers will recognise the developmental needs and capacity of the children, including those with a disability – avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will.
6. Volunteers will ensure that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it is provided openly and according to agreed guidelines. If physical support is needed, the volunteers will talk aloud to the child explaining what they will be doing and why as it is difficult to maintain hand positions when a child is constantly moving. Volunteers must agree that children should always be consulted before they are touched and their agreement gained. The Parent/carers views about manual support will always be carefully considered.
7. Appropriate insurance cover will be provided.
8. Volunteers will develop an appropriate working relationship with the children, based on mutual respect and trust. Volunteers will not seek to enhance their own reputation or reward through exerting undue influence.
9. Volunteers will be excellent role models. This includes not smoking, drinking alcohol, using foul/racial/sectarian language or taking drugs in the company of children. Coaches and volunteers will promote the positive aspects of the sport, for example, Fair Play and never condone or encourage rule violations or the use of illegal or prohibited substances. Coaches will consistently display high standards of behaviour and appearance and provide an example for the children to follow.
10. Volunteers will encourage and guide the child to accept responsibility for his/her own behaviour and performance.



11. Volunteers will give enthusiastic and constructive feedback, encouraging achievements rather than using negative criticism.
12. Coaches will hold up to date and nationally recognised coaching qualifications and be currently recognised by the Irish Football Association.
13. Coaches and staff will conduct an Induction procedure for members where it will be clarified exactly what is expected of the child and what the child is entitled to expect from the coach.
14. Parent/carers will be made aware of the Ballymena United Youth Academy Child Protection / Safeguarding Policy when their child enrolls with the Club.
15. Coaches will cooperate fully with other specialists in the best interests of the young footballer, for example, Physiotherapist, Doctor, other coaches, officials of the IFA etc.
16. Coaches and volunteers will respect the child's right to personal privacy.
17. Children will be made aware of access to talk to others about any concerns they have.
18. Volunteers will have separate sleeping accommodation from children on occasions when teams are playing away from home, necessitating an overnight stay.
19. Volunteers will always work in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging an open environment, e.g. no secrets). Volunteers will maintain a safe and appropriate distance with players (e.g. it is not appropriate to have an intimate relationship with a child). Coaches and volunteers will protect themselves from false accusations by not spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others, by never taking children to their home and by not administering First Aid involving the removal of children's clothing unless in the presence of others.
20. Coaches and volunteers will avoid physical horseplay, such as wrestling and tickling children.
21. Coaches and volunteers will not:-
 - Permit abusive peer activities such as initiation ceremonies, ridiculing or bullying
 - Indulge in any inappropriate physical or verbal contact with children or other adults in the presence of children
 - Jump to conclusions about others without checking the facts
 - Allow themselves as coaches to be drawn into inappropriate attention seeking behaviour by people, such as tantrums or crushes
 - Ignore, exaggerate or trivialise Child Abuse issues
 - Show favouritism to any individual
 - Make suggestive or risqué remarks or gestures
 - Will not permit any use of sectarian, bigoted or racist remarks or gestures towards any individual or group.



22. Ballymena United Youth Academy will operate an “open door” policy whereby parent/carers or other volunteers, coaches, officials, potential members or interested parties may visit and view activities without appointment. Activities will be planned so that there are at least two adults present, or which are at least within sight and hearing of other adults.
23. Coaches and volunteers will involve parent/carers wherever possible (e.g. for the responsibility of their children in the changing rooms) provided they have been successfully vetted, are of the appropriate gender and work in pairs.
24. Confidentiality will be maintained in an appropriate manner. Matters which involve abuse of a physical, emotional, sexual or neglect of a child will be dealt with using the Ballymena United Youth Academy reporting procedures. In this case confidentiality cannot be upheld but the coach or volunteers member will report only to the designated Child Protection Officer. The case will be treated in confidence with other professionals, such as a Social Worker.
25. Coaches and volunteers should ensure that attendance records are kept of all recognised Club sessions and social activities with the attendance of each member noted appropriately. A Club Accident Report Form must be used to record any accidents or injuries. The Club’s Incident Report must be used to record any Child Protection/Safeguarding issues or untoward events.
26. Coaches and volunteers must be fully aware of the Ballymena United Youth Academy emergency procedures and reporting procedures and follow these at all times. In particular,
 - ensure that there is access to first aid equipment;
 - make telephone contact with the parent/carers if the member is a minor, i.e., under 18 years old;
 - make telephone contact to the emergency services if necessary;
 - if they are the witness to the accident or injury the staff must complete a written record of the accident or injury on the Club’s Accident Report form provided by the designated team manager. A copy of the completed Accident Report form will be held by the designated team manager who will also forward a copy of the report to the Child Protection Officer.
27. All coaches and volunteers will have the right to:
 - Access to on-going training and information on all aspects of leading/managing football for children, particularly with regard to Child Protection/Safeguarding;
 - Support in the reporting of suspected abuse;
 - Access to professional support services;
 - Fair and equitable treatment by the Club and the Committee;
 - Be protected from abuse by children, other adult members and parent/carers.
28. Practices that volunteers must avoid:
 - Avoid spending any time alone with children away from others.
29. Practices that must never be sanctioned by coaches and volunteers:
 - Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay;
 - Share a room/tent/changing room/bath or shower with a child;
 - Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching;



- Allow children to use foul, abusive, sectarian or racial language unchallenged;
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun;
- Reduce a child to tears as a form of control;
- Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon;
- Undertake personal care for children;
- Invite or allow children/children to stay with me at their home.

Ballymena United Youth Academy recognises the right of every individual to participate in the sport of football regardless of race, gender, ability, religious belief, cultural identity, sexual orientation or political opinion.

Ballymena United Youth Academy have an “open door” policy which all members will abide to, endeavouring to create a well-balanced, carefree environment for all. The aim of this Code of Conduct is to ensure that those working with children in Ballymena United Youth Academy at all times provide a quality sporting and social programme for the children by working to an agreed philosophy and set of standards. Enforcement of this Code of Conduct is the responsibility of every member of Ballymena United Youth Academy. Any queries about the Code of Conduct should be referred to the Secretary of the Ballymena United Youth Academy Committee or the designated Safeguarding Officer.

Reviewed May 2021