



TORRO UTD AFC

Policies & Procedures (Code of Ethics)

The guidelines in this document are based on the national guidelines as outlined in the following documents:

Irish Sports Councils Code of Ethics & Good Practice for Children's Sport (2005)

Children First Act 2015

Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017
(Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth)

The National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012 - 2016

Our Duty to Care, Dept. of Health & Children 2002

Football Association of Ireland Code of Ethics & Best Practice

FAI Child Welfare & Safeguarding Policy (2019)

Clubs are advised to read these sample policies and procedures carefully and it is strongly advised that clubs should get their final document passed by their legal advisors before incorporating them into their club constitution.

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1. Torro Utd AFC Mission Statement

The work of **Torro Utd AFC** is based on the following principles that will guide the development of sport for young people in this club. Children's experience of soccer should be guided by what is best for the child or young person. The stages of development and the ability of the child should guide the types of activity provided within the club. Adults will need to have a basic understanding of the needs of young people, including physical, emotional and personal.

1.1 Integrity in relationships

Adults interacting with young people in soccer should do so with integrity and respect for the child. All adult actions in soccer should be guided by what is best for the child and in the context of quality, open working relationships. Verbal, physical, emotional or sexual abuse of any kind is unacceptable within soccer.

1.2 Quality atmosphere and ethos

Soccer for young people should be conducted in a safe, positive and encouraging atmosphere. A child-centred ethos will help to ensure that competition and specialisation are kept in their appropriate place. Too often unhealthy competitive demands are placed on children too early and results in excessive levels of pressure on them and as a consequence, high levels of dropout from sport.

1.3 Equality

All children should be treated in an equitable and fair manner regardless of age, ability, sex, religion, social and ethnic background or political persuasion. Children with disability should be involved in sports activities in an integrated way, thus allowing them to participate to their potential alongside other children.

1.4 Fair Play

Fair play is the guiding principle of the Irish Sports Councils Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport.

It states that "all children's sport should be conducted in an atmosphere of fair play". Ireland has contributed and is committed to the European Code of Sports Ethics, which defines fair play as: "much more than playing within the rules".

It incorporates the concepts of friendship, respect for others and always playing with the right spirit. Fair play is defined as a way of thinking, not just behaving. It incorporates issues concerned with the elimination of opportunities, excessive commercialisation and corruption. (European Sports Charter and Code of Ethics, Council of Europe, 1993).

1.5 Competition

A balanced approach to competition can make a significant contribution to the development of young people, while at the same time providing fun, enjoyment and satisfaction. Coaches/managers should aim to put the welfare of the child first and competitive standards second. A child-centred approach will help to ensure that competition and specialisation are kept in their appropriate place.

2. Child Protection & Welfare Policy Statement

2.1 Introduction

Torro Utd AFC 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 Torro Utd AFC on the protection and safety of children and young people who participate in soccer.

All children and young people¹ 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 this club and in soccer in general.

Torro Utd AFC 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.

These clear policies, practices and procedures in addition to relevant training programmes will ensure that everybody in Torro Utd AFC 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 Torro Utd AFC activities are able to do so in a safe, enjoyable and quality environment.

In pursuit of this goal Torro Utd AFC will:

- Advise all members of Torro Utd AFC (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 Football Association of Ireland requirements.
- Provide a child protection and welfare module in staff induction and development programmes

¹ Children are defined in Irish Law as being any person under 18 years of age.

3. Torro Utd AFC Child Protection Procedure

Clubs and Leagues are defined in the Children First Act 2015 as providing Relevant Services and as such have specific statutory obligations under the Act.

The requirements include:

- Keep Children safe from Harm while they are using the service
- Carry out a Risk Assessment to identify whether a Child could be harmed whilst receiving your services
- Develop a Child Safeguarding Statement that outlines the policies and procedures which are in place to manage the risks that have been identified
- Appoint a Relevant Person to be the first point of contact in respect of the Organisation's Child Safeguarding Statement.

Torro United will refer out to the 'FAI Child Welfare & Safeguarding Policy' (2019) for matters concerning Child Welfare and Safeguarding.

[FAI Child Welfare Safeguarding Policy.pdf](#)

4. Club Disciplinary, Complaints and Appeals Procedure (Covers all matters other than suspected child abuse which has to be referred to the Statutory Authorities)

While many concerns can be dealt with in an informal manner to the satisfaction of all concerned, it is advisable that detailed records are maintained in respect of all complaints and that all parties are advised of the formal complaints and appeals procedure. All reasonable efforts to resolve matters should be exhausted at local level before accessing the appeals procedure.

4.1 Step One

Any person who has a complaint or concern should bring it to the attention of the secretary under the relevant rules of the body concerned.

The complaint or concern should be in writing and should outline all relevant details and other parties involved in line with procedure.

4.2 Step Two

The complaint or concern should then be brought to the attention of the appropriate person in line with club rules who will convene the disciplinary committee/panel (best practice would advise that this committee/panel would consist of three members) **unless the complaint or concern relates to a child abuse matter or criminal offence that meets criteria for formal reporting to the statutory authorities.**

Where there are potential contentious issues, due consideration should be given to ensure the independence of the disciplinary committee/panel and therefore, it is advisable that members of the disciplinary committee/panel should not be Offices/Directors of the body concerned as lack of independence is often cited as a ground for appeal.

(The Chairperson of the Club should not sit on the Disciplinary Committee)

4.3 Step Three

The disciplinary committee/panel should furnish any participant with details of the complaint being made against them and afford them the opportunity of providing a response either verbally or in writing. In the event of a complaint against a child, the parents/guardians should be informed and advised of the process.

4.4 Step Four

The disciplinary committee/panel should then hear the case of all parties involved and decide if a rule or regulation has been infringed.

4.5 Step Five

The disciplinary committee/panel should then inform in writing those involved of their decision and any sanctions if any that are to be imposed. This notification should be in writing, setting out the reasons for the sanction. (Written notification should be forwarded to parents if the proceedings involve a participant under eighteen years of age).

4.6 Step Six

Any party unhappy with the findings of the disciplinary committee/panel can appeal the decision in writing to their respective superior body as per rules. Clubs, leagues, divisional associations and other football bodies should review their rules to ensure they contain a provision that facilitates an appeals procedure in this respect.

4.7 Step Seven

The appeal body should then rehear the case and all evidence, should be considered. The appeals body should have the power to uphold or reject the appeal or to vary, alter or set aside any sanction imposed by the disciplinary committee/panel.

Written confidential records in relation to disciplinary proceedings should be safely and confidentially kept on file (procedures should clearly define the possession of such records in the event of election of new officers)

4.8 Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints can be difficult to deal with. However, they cannot be ignored. All complaints relating to inappropriate behaviour/poor practice should be brought to the attention of the Chairperson of the Club. In all cases the safety and welfare of the child/children is paramount.

All complaints should be checked out and handled in a confidential manner. It is important to record all such complaints and actions taken. Specific advice on dealing with anonymous complaints can be got from your local HSE duty social worker or alternatively the Football Association of Ireland National Children's Officer.

4.9 Rumours

Rumours should not be allowed hang in the air. Any rumour/s relating to inappropriate behaviour/s circulating in the club should be brought to the attention to the Chairperson and checked out promptly. All ensuing information should be handled confidentially and with sensitivity.

4.10 Confidentiality

Confidentiality is about managing information in a respectful, professional and purposeful manner. It is important that the rights of both the child and the person about whom the complaint has been made are protected. Therefore, appropriate confidentiality will be maintained in respect of all issues and people involved in concerns about the welfare of a child or bad practice within the club.

The following points will be borne in mind:

- A guarantee of confidentiality or undertakings regarding secrecy cannot be given, as the welfare of the child will supersede all other considerations
- All information should be treated in a careful and sensitive manner and should only be discussed with those who need to know
- Information will be conveyed to the parents/guardians of a child about whom there are concerns in a sensitive way. Giving information to others on a “need to know” basis for the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality

5. Coach Recruitment and Coach Education Policy

Torro Utd AFC will take all reasonable steps to ensure that coaches, managers and volunteers are suitable to work with children and young people.

- All coaches/volunteers subject to Garda clearance.
- All appointments are subject to approval and ratification by the committee of Torro Utd AFC.
- All coaches, managers and volunteers will be subject to a sign-up procedure in which they undertake to abide Torro Utd AFC by rules and FAI codes of conduct and good practice. (Appropriate confidentiality will be maintained in regard to all application and reference forms)
- Once recruited, Torro Utd AFC will make all efforts to support and manage coaches, managers and volunteers ensuring that no person is expected to work alone.
- Torro Utd AFC promotes FAI coach education within the club and will fund or subsidise any coach education course at PDP1 and PDP2 level.
- Where new applications to become a coach involve persons previously unknown to the club, the following form, including references, must be completed by the applicant.

Refer to Appendix A 'Volunteer Coach Application & Self Declaration Form' and Appendix B 'Reference Form' for sample forms.

6. Torro Utd AFC Coach, Manager, Volunteer Support Policy

The Committee of Torro Utd AFC are indebted to our coaches, managers and volunteers who give freely of their valuable time in providing a stimulating, challenging, supportive and fun soccer experience to children and young people in the Club.

The Committee will endeavour to support these coaches, managers and volunteers in their work by providing an environment where all activities are carried out in a safe, fun manner at all times conducted in the spirit of “Fair Play”.

Torro Utd AFC will make all efforts to assist all new volunteers, managers, coaches in whatever way they can.

Torro Utd AFC will provide an induction pack to all new volunteers/coaches which will familiarise them with Club rules, policies and procedures and expected codes of behaviour for children, coaches and parents/spectators.

Specifically, in relation to those with no soccer background, the Committee have introduced a “Buddy” system whereby new members will accompany one of our existing coaches for a (decide on a time frame) period during which they can familiarise themselves with the Club and its members adult and children and introduce them to some basic training routines and practice models.

The Committee of Torro Utd AFC recognise the value of having appropriately qualified personnel in the club, and therefore will endeavour to support any of our coaches in the coach education process (see Coach Recruitment/Education policy).

At no time will any coach, manager, volunteer be expected to work or deal with any problem alone and they will be assured of Committee assistance and support at all times. Also, coaches, managers and volunteers are encouraged to share ideas, expertise and support other club personnel in any way they can.

7. Torro Utd AFC Safety Policy

All coaches/managers in Torro Utd AFC have a responsibility to ensure the safety of the players with whom they work as far as possible within the limits of their control. Therefore, coaches should seek to create a safe and enjoyable environment in which to play and train. *(Clubs are advised to carry out a risk assessment in relation to premises, training facilities and equipment and implement appropriate safety rules)*

In this respect:

- Adequate supervision must be maintained at all times. Best practice advice would advocate adult:child ratios of 2 Leaders to every 16 children (1:8), but no coach, manager or volunteer works alone (Individual Clubs would need to clarify this with their individual insurance company)
- Regular safety checks should be carried out in relation to premises, training facilities and equipment. Ensure that the FAI Goalpost safety policy is strictly adhered to at all times
- Club safety rules should be adhered to at all times
- Parents/guardians should be informed of the starting and finishing times of training sessions and matches.
- A first aid kit should be available at all training sessions and matches and injuries should be recorded, with a note of action taken in relation to each one. Never play injured players.
- Parents/Guardians should be notified of injuries/illness which their children incur while participating in any club activity.
- Records of attendance should be maintained

8. Torro Utd AFC Substance Abuse Policy

In Torro Utd AFC the use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco shall be actively discouraged as being incompatible with a healthy approach to sporting activity.

Coaches/managers shall not smoke when taking a session or drink alcohol before taking a session.

In relation to our under-age teams Torro Utd AFC shall endeavour to organise receptions and celebrations in a non-alcoholic environment and in a manner that is suitable for the age group concerned.

Where this is not possible, the Club will comply with the Football Association of Ireland directive that under no circumstances whatsoever can any person under the age of 18 years consume alcohol and any and all appropriate steps should be taken to ensure that this policy is strictly adhered to.

Our coaches/managers/committee shall act as role models for appropriate behaviour and refrain from drinking alcohol at such functions.

9. Torro Utd AFC Club Children's Officer/s

The appointment of Club Children's Officers is an essential element in the creation of a quality atmosphere in any club. They act as a resource to members, with regard to children's issues and also ensure that children have a voice in the running of the club and can freely talk of their experiences.

Government guidelines advise that a children's officer should be appointed by all clubs and this should be done in accordance with recommended selection and recruitment procedures. The appointment of this person should be carried out in consultation with juvenile members and their parent/guardians, if deemed appropriate by the club.

The Club Children's Officer should have the following functions:

- To promote the Code of Ethics & Good Practice
- To influence policy and practice and to prioritise children's needs
- To ensure that children know how and whom they can report their concerns to within the club. Information disclosed by a child should be dealt with in accordance with the Department of Health and Children's Guidelines "*Children First*"
- To encourage the participation of parents/guardians in club activities
- To co-operate with parents to ensure that each child enjoys his/her participation in soccer
- To act as a resource with regard to best practice in children's soccer
- To report regularly to the Club Management Committee
- To monitor changes in membership and follow up any unusual dropout, absenteeism or club transfers by children or coach/volunteers

Club/League Children's Officers do not have the responsibility of investigating or validating child protection concerns within the club and have no counselling or therapeutic role. This responsibility lies with the HSE and Gardai.

Torro Utd AFC have appointed Lesa Daly as our Children's Officer and she can be contacted at torrounitedchildrenofficer@gmail.com

10. Guidance on the Use of Photographic and Filming Equipment, & Social Media.

Many people use cameras and video equipment at soccer activities and the vast majority, do so for perfectly legitimate reasons. However, there is evidence that people have used sporting events to take inappropriate photographs and video footage of children and young people in vulnerable positions.

Torro Utd AFC has adopted a policy in relation to the use of images of players on their websites, and the club follow the guidelines of the FAI on the positives and negatives of posting on social media. Please see Torro Utd AFC website for full version of the **FAI Social Media Policy**.

Where possible we will try to use models or illustrations when promoting an activity and avoid the use of the first name and surname of individuals in a photograph. This reduces the risk of inappropriate, unsolicited attention from people within and outside the sport.

Posting club related pictures or videos on social media is subject to permission granted by the club, and with the consent of players/parents/guardians involved.

10.1 Rules to guide use of photography

- If the player is named, avoid using their photograph.
- If a photograph is used, avoid naming the player.
- Ask for the Players permission to use their image. This ensures that they are aware of the way the image is to be used to represent the sport. A player's permission form is one way of achieving this.
- Ask for parental permission to use their image. This ensures that they are aware of the way the image is to be used to represent the sport. A parental permission form is one way of achieving this.
- Only use images of players in suitable dress to reduce the risk of inappropriate use. The content of the photograph should focus on the activity not on a particular child.

Create recognised procedures for reporting the use of inappropriate images to reduce the risks to player's. Follow the child protection procedures, ensuring either the designated person or, if necessary, the health boards and/or gardai are informed.

Amateur photographers/film/video operators wishing to record an event or practice session should seek permission/accreditation with the children's officer, team manager/coach and/or event organiser of session. Torro Utd AFC will display the following information prior to the start of an event to inform spectators of the policy:

"In line with the recommendation in the Torro Utd AFC Code of Conduct, the promoters of this event request that any person wishing to engage in any video, zoom or close-range photography should register their details with the organisers. Children and young people should only be photographed or filmed with their permission and/or the permission of their parents/guardian, and such content should never be posted to social media without the consent of Torro Utd AFC (and Parents/Guardians)".

When commissioning professional photographers or inviting the press to an activity or event we will aim to ensure they are clear about our expectations of them in relation to child protection.

Professional photographers/film/video operators wishing to record an event or practice session should seek accreditation with the children's officer/event organiser/team manager by producing their professional identification for the details to be recorded.

We will then:

- Provide a clear brief about what is considered appropriate in terms of content and behaviour
- Issue the photographer with identification which must be worn at all times
- Keep a record of accreditations
- Inform players and parents that a photographer will be in attendance at an event and ensure they consent to both the taking and publication of films or photographs
- Not allow unsupervised access to athletes or one to one photo sessions at events
- not approve/allow photo sessions outside the events or at an athlete's home

10.2 Videoing as a coaching aid

Video equipment can be used as a legitimate coaching aid. However, permission should first be obtained from the player and the player's parent/carer.

Clubs should also be aware of the dangers of permitting camera phones in dressing rooms and should apply appropriate safety rules.

Anyone concerned about any photography taking place at events/matches or training sessions should bring their concerns to the attention of the committee/team manager/coach children's officer.

10.3 Mobile Phones

Mobile phones are often given to children for security, enabling parents to keep in touch and make sure they are safe. Young people value their phones highly as it offers them a sense of independence. In addition, mobile phones allow quick and easy contact, which can make a safe and efficient way to carry out club business. However, such technology has also allowed an increase in direct personal contact with young people, in some cases used to cross personal boundaries and cause harm to young people. Therefore, Torro Utd AFC encourages responsible use of mobile phones by adults and young people, especially in the use of social media or group messaging.

Therefore, club personnel should advise children:

- If you receive an offensive photo, email or message, do not reply, save it, make a note of times and dates and tell a parent or children's officer/designated person within the club.
- Be careful about who you give your phone number to and don't respond to unfamiliar numbers
- Change your phone number in cases of bullying or harassment

- Don't use the phone in certain locations; inappropriate use of your camera phone may cause upset or offence to another person, e.g. changing rooms
- Treat your phone as you would any other valuable item so that you guard against theft

As a coach/manager remember:

- Use only group texts for communication among players and teams and inform parents of this at the start of the season
- It is not appropriate to have constant communication for individual players

Don't use the phone in certain locations; inappropriate use of your camera phone may cause upset or offence to another person, e.g. changing rooms.

11. Torro Utd AFC Child Supervision Policy

It is the policy of Torro Utd AFC to ensure that no Coach/Parent/Adult be alone in the company of any minor in a changing room, or with a group of minors when dressing or undressing may occur,

Coaches are advised to inform players of a time period in which changing will occur, unsupervised by an adult, and to ensure no adult enters the area during this time frame.

11.1 Missing or Found Child Procedures

In the event of a child being reported missing during club activities, all activity should cease immediately, and attention should be focused on the whereabouts, and locating, of the individual of concern. Coaches must use their own discretion to decide when it is appropriate to contact a Parent/Guardian of such a matter.

Please Note: Torro Utd AFC recommends Parents/Guardians are present for all club events, or otherwise inform their respective team coach.

The club will inform the Gardai as soon as possible if they feel the matter is escalating beyond their control or capabilities.

11.2 Travelling Guidelines

When travelling with young people coaches/volunteers of Torro Utd AFC should:

- Ensure that there is adequate insurance cover
- Not carry more than the permitted number of passengers
- Ensure the use of safety belts
- Keep to the rules of the road
- Avoid being alone with one player; if with one player you could: put the passenger in the back seat, drop off at central locations, get parental permission for transporting children on a regular basis, and clearly state times of pick off and drop off.

11.3 Touching Guidelines

All managers/volunteers of Torro Utd AFC are advised that:

Any necessary physical contact should be in response to the needs of the child and not the adult

It should be in an open environment with the permission and full understanding of the player

It should be determined by the age and developmental stage of the player. You should not anything that a child can do for him/herself

Coaches should not treat injuries out of sight of others. Use a "Two-Deep" (two personnel, or two players) supervision system. Only personnel who are qualified in administering First Aid or treating sports injuries should attempt to treat an injury.

The comfort level and dignity of the player should always be the priority. Example: Only uncover the injured area or cover private areas of the athlete's body.

Any doubts of a medical nature should be passed on to a suitably qualified medical person.

Coaches should not play injured players.

11.4 Comforting/congratulating players is an important part of the relationship between coaches and players.

Guidelines for this type of touch are:

Limit touching to "safe" areas, such as hand-to-shoulder. It should not involve touching genital area, buttocks, breasts, or mouths.

Make your intention to congratulate or comfort clear to the player.

Get permission from the player before embracing them - remember that personnel are in the position of power.

Respect a player's discomfort or rejection of physical contact.

Be sure that touching occurs only when others are present.

Avoid unnecessary physical contact and never engage in inappropriate touching

12. Torro Utd AFC Guidance on the use of Sanctions

12.1 Discipline in Soccer

Discipline in soccer should always be positive in focus, providing the structures and rules that allow players to set their own goals and strive for them. It should encourage players to become more responsible for themselves and their actions and therefore more independent.

Discipline should be a positive reinforcement for effort. It should encourage the development of emotional and social skills as well as skills in soccer. Players have to be helped to become responsible for the decisions and choices they make within soccer, particularly when it is likely to make a difference between playing fairly or unfairly.

There is no place in soccer for fighting, bullying, over aggressive or dangerous behaviour.

At all times, players should treat others in a respectful manner. They should never bully, interfere with or take unfair advantage of others.

The use of sanctions is an important element in the maintenance of discipline. However, Coaches/Managers/Volunteers and Administrators should have a clear understanding of where and when particular sanctions are appropriate.

It should be remembered that effectively controlled organisations and successful coaches/managers/volunteers are characterised by the sparing use of sanctions. The age and developmental stage of the child should be taken into account when using sanctions.

Sanctions should always be fair, consistent and applied evenly, and in the case of a persistent offence, should be progressively applied.

The following steps are suggested:

- Rules should be clearly stated and agreed
- A warning should be given if a rule is broken
- A sanction (use of time out for example) should be applied if a rule is broken for a second time
- If a rule is broken three or more times, the child should be spoken to and parents/guardians involved if necessary
- Sanctions should only be used in a corrective way that is intended to help children improve both now and in the future. They should never be used in retaliation or to make coach/manager/volunteer feel better or more powerful
- When violations of the team rules or other misbehaviours occur, sanctions should always be applied in an impartial and fair manner
- Sanctions should never be used as threats. If a rule is broken, the appropriate sanction/s should be implemented consistently, fairly and firmly

- Sanctions should not be applied if the coach/manager/volunteer is not comfortable with them. If an appropriate action cannot be devised immediately, the child should be told that the matter will be dealt with later, at a specified time and as soon as is possible
- Once a sanction/s has been imposed, it is important to make the child feel s/he is a valued member of the team again
- A child should be helped, to understand if necessary, why sanction/s are imposed
- A child should not be sanctioned for making errors whilst playing soccer
- Physical activity (e.g., running laps or doing push ups) should not be used as a sanction as to do so may cause a child to resent physical activity which is something that s/he should learn to enjoy throughout his/her life. Remember Soccer has to be Fun if participants are to continue playing
- Sanctions should be used sparingly. Constant criticism and sanctioning can cause participants to turn away from Soccer

Adapted from the Irish Sports Councils Code of Ethics & Good Practice for Children's Sport (2005)

13. Code of Conduct for Spectators

- Remember that although children play organised soccer they are not miniature professionals. Don't place excessive pressure on children to perform to unrealistically high expectations. Children play soccer to develop their skills, to have fun and enjoy the game.
- Be on your best behaviour and lead by example. The behaviour of a teams supporters will often be remembered long after the result of the game. Be remembered for the right reasons.
- Applaud good play, sportsmanship and best effort by the visiting team as well as your own.
- Welcome and respect all your teams opponents. Without them there would be no match.
- Condemn the use of violence in all forms at every opportunity.
- Verbal abuse of players, match officials or opposing supporters cannot be accepted in any shape or form. Players or match officials should never be regarded as fair targets for ignorant or abusive behaviour.

14. Players Code of Conduct (Children)

Children in Torro Utd AFC are entitled to:

- Be safe
- Be treated with dignity, sensitivity and respect
- Participate in soccer on an equal basis, appropriate to their ability and stage of development.
- Torro Utd AFC have decided that all players are entitled to a minimum playing time of minutes per match. (Consult League rules in this regard) Criteria for team selection should be clearly defined.
- Be happy, have fun and enjoy soccer
- Make a complaint in an appropriate way and have it dealt with through a proper and effective complaints procedure
- Be afforded appropriate confidentiality
- Be listened to and to be believed
- Have a voice in the running of the club

Children should also be encouraged to realise that they also have responsibilities to treat other children, fellow players, coaches and volunteers with the same degree of fairness and respect.

In this regard children in Torro Utd AFC should undertake to:

- play fairly, do their best and have fun
- be on their best behaviour at all times
- abide by all club rules
- make high standards of Fair Play the standard others want to follow
- respect opponents, they are not the enemy, they are partners in a sporting event
- shake hands before and after the match, whoever wins
- give opponents a hand if they are injured, put the ball out of play so they can get attention
- accept apologies from opponents when they are offered

- respect fellow team members and support them both when they do well and when things go wrong
- treat players from minority groups with the same respect you show other people
- be modest in victory and be gracious in defeat- ***“Be A Sport”***
- approach the club Children’s Officer with any questions or concerns they might have. Coaches and parents should encourage children to speak out and support them in doing so

Children in Torro Utd AFC should not:

- cheat
- use abusive language, or argue with, the referee, officials, team mates or opponents
- use violence, use physical contact only when it is allowed within the rules
- bully
- tell lies about adults or other children
- spread rumours
- take banned substances to improve performance
- keep secrets about any person who may have caused them harm
- behave in any manner that may bring the name of (insert club name here) into disrepute

In Torro Utd AFC we want children in Torro Utd AFC to have fun and develop skills in a safe and ***Fair Play*** environment where standards of behaviour are just as important as winning.

We recognise that competition and winning is an important goal, but winning at all costs does not meet the needs of young players.

Torro Utd AFC are aware that recent research would suggest that increasing numbers of children leave sport between the ages of eight and thirteen. A number of the most common reasons given were; that sport was no longer fun, they did not get to play and overemphasis on winning.

Therefore, we have to make every effort to ensure that we keep a balanced approach to competition, make sure all players get a chance to play and strive to keep the fun in soccer.

Making Sport fun.

In promoting “Sport for Fun” we in Torro Utd AFC will insist on:

- Encouraging participation and fun
- Promoting the development of skills as opposed to winning at all costs
- Ensure a minimum playing time of 15 minutes per match per player (time may vary according to League Rules)
- Emphasising and praising effort
- Acting as a good role models
- Insisting on **Fair Play** (we will take off offending players)
- Being realistic with our expectations
- Being aware of children’s feelings
- Teaching players to respect different cultures
- Teaching players that standards of behaviour are just as important as winning

15. Players Code of Conduct (Adult)

On and off the field I will:

- Adhere to the Laws of the Game.
- Display and promote high standards of behaviour.
- Promote fair play and behave within the spirit of the Laws of the Game.
- Always respect the match officials' decisions.
- Never engage in public criticism of the match official.
- Ask my captain to talk to the referee if I have a problem relating to the game.
- Never engage in offensive, insulting or abusive language or behaviour.
- Avoid bullying or intimidating behaviour.
- Treat my team-mates, coaches/managers, and opposition players with respect.
- Respect everyone involved in the game regardless of ability, gender, religion, or race.
- Remember that we all make mistakes.
- Shake hands with the opposing team and the match officials at the end of every game.

16. Best Practice for Coaches

In keeping children and young people at the forefront of planning and practice, our coaches can be confident that participants will enjoy their football experiences and that their actions are regarded as safe and in keeping with the principle that the safety and welfare of children is of paramount consideration.

Our Coaches are given a position of trust by parents/guardians and players, and are expected to operate to the highest standards of behaviour whilst in the company of underage players (under 18years). Our coaches are also expected not to engage in any activity that could reasonably be viewed as bringing the club or soccer in general into disrepute. It is important for our coaches to note that in adhering to these guidelines ensures not only a safe environment for children but also a safe environment in which coaches and volunteers can operate.

Most coaches work in an environment where it is recognised that, in a sporting context, certain types of coaching require a 'hands on approach', i.e., it may be necessary to support a participant in order to physically demonstrate a particular technique. This should only occur when necessary and in an open and appropriate way with the knowledge, permission and full understanding of the participant concerned and his/her parents/guardians.

Coaches must realise that certain situations or friendly actions could be misinterpreted, not only by the player, but by outsiders motivated by jealousy, dislike or mistrust and could lead to allegations of sexual misconduct or impropriety. Therefore, coaches should be aware of, and avoid all situations conducive to risk.

Where possible, our coaches/volunteers should avoid:

- Spending excessive amounts of time with children away from others.
- Taking sessions alone (always employ "Two Deep" supervision).
- Taking children to their homes.
- Taking children on journeys alone in their care.

Our Coaches/volunteers should never:

- Exert undue influence over a participant in order to obtain personal benefit or reward.
- Share a room with a young person alone on away trips.
- Engage in rough physical games, sexually provocative games or allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any kind, and/or make sexually suggestive comments about or to a child.
- Use any form of corporal punishment or physical force on a young person.
- Take measurements or engage in certain types of fitness testing without the presence of another adult and permission from the Committee
- Undertake any form of therapy (hypnosis etc...) in the training of young people.

15.1 The “48 Hour Rule”

As a club, Torro Utd AFC ask all club officials, coaches, and parents of players to abide by the “48 Hour Rule”.

Where grievances are felt, we believe it is best practice to employ a cooling off period of at least 48 hours from the time of incident.

Certain time frames are regarded as unsuitable to address issues:

- Directly after matches have finished
- Before matches commence
- Before training sessions commence

Torro Utd AFC advise that any grievances be aired when training sessions finish, never in the presence of children, and conducted in a reasonable manner. Where practicable, club officials should be informed of the issue prior to contact.

17. Torro Utd AFC Managers Code of Conduct

- Remember that as a coach of underage teams, you must act as a guardian and as such your duty of care is more onerous than that of the coach of an adult team.
- Remember young people need a coach whom they can respect. Lead by example.
- Be generous with your praise, players of all levels need encouragement in order to develop.
- Never ridicule or shout at players for making mistakes or losing a match.
- Teach your players respect for the laws of the game which no one should break.
- Ensure that all players participate in sessions and matches, and at a standard suitable to ability, to ensure their enjoyment.
- Insist on fair and disciplined play. Do not tolerate foul play, fighting or foul language. Be prepared to take off an offending player.
- Encourage young players to develop basic skills and sportsmanship. Where possible, try to avoid over specialisation in positional play during their formative years.
- Create a safe and enjoyable environment in which to train and play.
- Make a commitment to keep yourself informed on sound coaching principles and make an effort to attend any coaching education courses offered by Torro Utd AFC.
- Ensure that all players know that bullying whether verbal or physical will not be tolerated.
- Always thank match officials. If you feel they have made decisions that require clarification, try to apply the “48hour rule”, and consult Torro Utd club committee where necessary.

16.1 Safety Best Practice

Coaches have a responsibility to ensure the safety of all players possible within the limits of their control. Therefore, coaches should seek to create a safe and enjoyable environment in which to play and train.

In this respect:

- Regular safety checks should be carried out in relation to premises, training facilities and equipment. Any problems should be brought to the attention of the Committee.
- Appropriate safety rules should be adopted and implemented, and protective equipment should be used in any contact training session.
- Parents/guardians should be informed of the starting and finishing times of training sessions and matches.
- A first aid kit should be available at all training sessions /matches and injuries should be recorded, with a note of action taken in relation to each one.
- Parents/Guardians should be notified of injuries/illness which their children incur while participating in any football activity.
- Never play injured players.
- **Ensure that the FAI Goalpost safety policy is strictly adhered to at all times.**

18. TORRO UNITED AFC - CLUB GRADING POLICY

17.1 Player Grading and Selection Policy

This policy document relates to team composition as well as match playing time and has been developed from the club's philosophy of '*being inclusive of players of all skill levels and the drive to help all players to develop to be the best that they can be*'.

17.2 Policy Overview

The aim of this policy is to assist players and their parents to understand the clubs process of placing players into a team that best suits their level of ability.

It is a requirement of Torro United AFC that all players wishing to participate in teams from U9's and up be graded into teams according to their ability. It is the club's policy to grade players every year to ensure that all players have the opportunity to progress.

The club encourages players and parents not to focus on which team a player is selected in, but rather, on the player's own development during the season. It is also important that parents are supportive of their children during the grading process.

As a club we follow the FAI's National Curriculum and as such our grading and selection policies is based on the building blocks which underpin the curriculum framework, namely, to ensure all players are playing at the level appropriate for their age and skill level.

There will not be a single grading session and coaches will grade players based on what they know of players from the previous season(s) and performances and behaviours during the early season training sessions. Our training setup, in these early sessions, will allow coaches to move players between training groups in order to assess their mental and physical development when matched against players of different skill levels.

17.3 Positives and Negatives of Player Grading

There are some advantages in not grading players, such as maintaining friendships and family social groups; however, this soon becomes an issue in several ways.

- **Peer pressure** – Other players will soon let their feelings be known when it comes down to ability. Our experience is that this often does more damage than any ill feelings resulting from the grading itself.
- **Exodus of talented players** – Players of above average skills and their parents will become frustrated and eventually leave for another club that does grade their players in the hope their child is put into a better team. The player's development will also stagnate because they are not being challenged to improve.
- **Reduced enjoyment** – Players who play in a grade significantly above their skill level will often feel left out as the more skilful players take control of games. Often this can result in the less skilful player leaving soccer in search of another sport.

To not grade the children based on ability would take away the opportunity for some to progress to representative soccer at a later stage. Soccer is a competitive sport. If you would like your child to play at a less competitive level, then ask the grading staff and coaches if they can be placed in a lower grade when grading is conducted at the start of the season.

It's hard for coaches to decide between several players of near equal ability knowing that some will be separated from their friends. We cannot however, make exceptions based on friendships as this will undermine the whole procedure. Children at this age tend to make new friends quickly and this also means that they extend their circle of friends.

An integral part of grading is the information available about the player from his or her coach in the previous year. The grading staff will seek input from previous coaches regarding player attributes and playing ability.

Grading will be conducted early in the pre-season so as to give teams and coaches the maximum amount of time to work together before the season starts.

Teams will be selected based on skill, attitude and attendance at training.

Players and parents need to be aware that from U12 onwards playing position will also be a factor in grading. For example, the ten most skilled players may not necessarily be selected in the same team if they are all strikers or all goalkeepers.

17.4 Team Selection and Player Grading Guidelines

- Matches from U9 to U11 are graded using colour codes, example: Green/Yellow/White.
- Competitions for U12 to U18 are graded as A, B, or C, level or similar.
- Grading involves selecting a balanced team with the best ability from the pool of players in any age group.
- Grading will be conducted by the team coach together with the appropriate Coaching Coordinator.
- All players in an age group above under 8 will be graded and players will be assigned to teams based on their ability and experience.
- Where it applies, team grading will take place pre-season with at least 4 training sessions occurring before preliminary team assignments are made.
- The process must involve consultation between age group coaches and coordinators, parents may also be consulted if deemed appropriate by the Coaching Coordinator.
- All players, new or returning, will be required to attend these training sessions.
- If at the start of the season there are excess players in an age group or there is no appointed coach, players will be advised ASAP so as to provide them with an opportunity to register at another club.
- Coaches always have the right to request that their children are allocated to the team they are coaching.
- Where there are players of similar ability and limited age group vacancies, preference will be given to returning players.
- Once grading is complete and teams selected, a player cannot change teams without approval from the Coaching Coordinator. Players may be asked to move up or down grades within an age group due to a player's level of ability or to

cover for absent or injured players in other grades, any such movements will be at the advice of the player's coach in consultation with their parents.

- Once assigned to a team, players will train with their respective team and coach.

Ideally, all teams in an age group will train at the same time to allow interaction between teams as the coaches deem fit. However, this is not always possible as training times are dependent on the schedules of each individual coach.

Coaches will meet regularly to discuss their teams and players' capabilities.

The coaches in any age group should act for the benefit of all players in that age group and not just for the members of their team. All players should play in their own age group unless there is a valid reason for playing in an older group.

(Refer to Section 17.6 'Playing above your age group').

During the regular season, players in an existing team may be invited to play in a team in an age group that is higher than their normal age group as a cover player. That player should not displace or deny adequate playing time to the normal roster players as a result of that player being brought in.

Players who have not paid fees, owe fees from prior seasons, or not registered with Torro United AFC will not be eligible for team selection.

17.5 Grading Appeals Process

Parents and players are able to appeal a grading decision they feel is unfair or inappropriate by:

- Making a submission in writing to the Coaching Coordinator requesting a review of the players grading, outlining why they think the grading is not correct.
- If the Coaching Coordinator refuses to conduct another grading or reconfirms the original grading then the player or parent may then make a written submission to the Club Chairman, outlining why they think the grading is not correct.
- The Chairman will consider this submission in consultation with the Committee and the Committee will then make a decision on whether or not to change the player's grading.
- The Chairman/Committee's decision is final.

17.6 Playing above your age group

Torro United AFC believes, regarding player development, that it is important that children are constantly challenged, or they will get bored. Therefore, it is our club policy that if a player has the ability, the club may move them from one age level to another after consultation with the child's parent. Alternatively, if a child is finding it difficult in their age format then it may be necessary to step back to a younger format.

Players that will be considered for playing above their age group are those deemed by the coaches and Coaching Coordinator to be highly skilled / talented. To be considered, players need to be playing comfortably in the highest level at the club for their age group and demonstrate that they can cope with the demands of the higher age group both physically and mentally. Decisions are made based on what is best for the player's development.

Before moving to a higher age group, the player's skills will be assessed by the higher age group coach and the Coaching Coordinator. If both coaches agree that the child should be in the higher age group, then the move will be discussed with the parent.

19. Youths Participating in Adult Squad Activities (Training Sessions/Matches)

This section outlines Torro United AFCs' procedures and stance on Youth Players (persons under the age of 18) participating in training sessions or matches as a part of the clubs' Senior/Adult squads.

Torro United AFC have one Senior Women team and two Senior Men teams.

Youth Players are permitted to participate at Senior Level if:

(Non-Exhaustive List)

- Women's team – the player is 17 years of age or turns 17 in the calendar year of the season.
- Men's team – the player 17 years of age. Players must be 17 years old before they can participate.
- The player is deemed to be of sufficient strength, size/stature, mentality/maturity to safely participate at senior level.
- An agreement has been reached between all parties involved, i.e., the players parents, the players' coach (youth level), the senior coach, the club coaching coordinator/director of football, and the club chairperson.
- The player continues to play and train with their youth squad – players may only participate with senior squads if it does not affect their availability to perform with their youth squad.
- If a player is unavailable (i.e., through injury, work, holidays etc....) for youth team training/games in the lead up to senior training/game then the participation of the players in senior training/game must be sanctioned/granted permission by the players' coach at youth level in conjunction with the clubs coaching coordinator/director of football, and the club chairperson.
- In the event that the club don't have a youth team in any particular season then a player that meets the required criteria may be permitted to play adult football in the absence of youth team football.
- Players from outside the club will not be permitted to join the senior squads if they are still eligible for youth team football unless they also play for one of the club youth sides.

Torro United AFC hold the right to treat each case individually and make decisions based on what they feel is in the club or players' best interest.

20. Registration & Team Selections

19.1 Late Registrations

Once teams have been finalised with their maximum number of players, we will not add any late arriving players to a team and exceed the maximum team size. Should a vacancy arrive in a team because a player leaves during the season, then the coach and the Coaching Coordinator will assess the situation to determine whether it is necessary to replace that player and then decide on the grading process they will adopt.

19.2 Team Selection during Season

19.2.1 General

Preference will be given to children who regularly attend training, follow team rules and are reliable on game days.

Team selection will be at the discretion of the coaching group, and we seek your support to ensure that this policy is maintained.

19.2.2 Under 12 and above

Player rotation during the game remains the coaches' prerogative. All players will have equal time across the season meaning they could play for longer in some games than others. All players would also get a considerable amount of game time each game.

Once a player reaches this stage it is expected that positions will become more clearly defined and players will begin to play in more defined roles. However, all players would still be expected to play in a number of different positions during the season, and even during a game so as to continue their soccer development.

19.2.3 Under 7 to Under 11

Player rotation during the game remains the coaches' prerogative. However, all players will have equal game time and players will be expected to play in all positions at different stages throughout the season. Player rotations will take place in a manner which ensures players are not on the side-line for a lengthy time.

19.2.4 Grievances & Escalation during season

If a parent feels that a decision is taken which they feel unfairly disadvantaged their child, they should in the first instance contact the respective coach.

Should it not be resolved within 7 days of notifying the coach, the item should then be escalated to the relevant Coaching Coordinator for review.

If the Coaching Coordinator is not able to resolve the matter to a satisfactory conclusion within 10 days, the matter is then escalated to the club's committee who will review all the facts and make the final decision.

The club's committee always has the final say on any team selection or player grading and selection decisions.

21. Appendices

- Appendix 1 Volunteer Coach Application & Self Declaration Form
- Appendix 2 Reference Form

Appendix 1

Torro United AFC



Volunteer Coach Application & Self Declaration Form (Please use block capitals)

Name: _____ D.O.B _____

Address: _____

Landline: _____ (Mobile): _____

Email

Address: _____

Coaching Qualifications

Sport	Award Held	Date of Award

Previous experience/involvement in sport? Please give details.

Have you ever been asked to leave a sporting organisation in the past?
(If you have answered yes we will contact you in confidence)

Yes	No
-----	----

Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence? If so give details

(Having a criminal record does not necessarily preclude anyone from working with children. If you have answered "yes" you will be contacted in confidence)

Referee: Please supply the names, addresses and telephone numbers of two people whom we can contact and who from personal knowledge is willing to support your application.

(If you have had a previous involvement in sport, one of these names should be that of an administrator/leader of your last club/place of involvement)

Name _____ Title _____ Tel. _____

Address _____

Name _____ Title _____ Tel. _____

Address _____

I agree to work within Football Association of Ireland/Torro Utd AFC Rules and FAI approved codes of conduct & best practice guidelines. I also agree that I will refrain from getting involved in any behaviour that could bring the name of Torro Utd AFC or the sport of soccer into disrepute.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 2



Torro United AFC Reference Form

Private and Confidential

Name: _____

Address: _____

The above has applied for a post within the Torro Utd AFC and has supplied your name as a referee. As an organisation committed to the safety/protection and happiness of children, we are anxious to know if you are satisfied that this person is suitable to work with children in a sporting capacity.

How long have you known this person?

In what capacity?

Are you satisfied that the above named person is suitable to work with children in a sporting capacity?

Yes	
No	

(If you have answered no, we will contact you in confidence)

Signed: _____

Date: _____