

Code of Conduct: Coaches

All Coaches and Coach Assistants & Coach Assistants should ensure that young people and children benefit significantly from athletics activity by promoting a positive, healthy and participatory approach in our work with underage athletes.

In developing the skills levels of every Athlete, Coaches and Coach Assistants should always encourage enjoyment and fun while ensuring meaningful participation in our events and activities. Coaches and Coach Assistants should always remember that they are role models for the Athletes in their care.

Recruitment of Coaches and Coach Assistants

All Coaches and Coach Assistants working with young people and children are required to be suitable for their chosen role(s), and should be appropriately trained, qualified and supported to fulfil such roles. All persons working or volunteering for such roles are required to undertake agreed Garda vetting and to attend coaching and training courses relevant to their roles.

Coaches and Coach Assistants should maintain a child centered approach

- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person.
- Treat each person equally regardless of age, gender, ability, ethnic origin, cultural background or religion.
- Be positive during coaching sessions, events and other activities so that underage Athletes always leave with a sense of achievement and an increased level of self-esteem.
- Recognise the development needs and capacity of all underage Athletes, regardless of their ability.
- Ensure training & competition is appropriate for the age group and ability of the athletes being coaches.
- Skills development and personal satisfaction should have priority over competition when working with underage Athletes; however the athlete should be provided with the tools necessary to ensure they enjoy competing.
- Develop an understanding of relevant coaching methods and ensure that they have the appropriate level of coaching accreditation.
- Do not equate losing with failure and do not develop a preoccupation with medals and trophies. The level of improvement made by underage Athletes is the best indicator of effective coaching.

Coaches and Coach Assistants should lead by example

- Never use foul language or provocative language/gestures to an Athlete, Parent or Event Official.
- Promote Fair Play.
- Promote the respect.
- Do not smoke while working with underage Athletes.
- Do not consume alcohol or non-prescribed drugs immediately prior to or while underage Athletes are in your care.
- Encourage parents to become involved in Club activities wherever possible.

Conduct of Coaches and Coach Assistants when working with young people

- Develop an appropriate working relationship with children based on mutual trust and respect.
- Challenge Bullying in any form whether physical or emotional. Bullying is not acceptable behavior be it from a young person, coach parent/guardian, spectator or event official.

- Don't shout at or lecture athletes or reprimand/ridicule them when they don't perform in competition. Children learn best through trial and error.
- The use of any form of physical punishment is prohibited as is any form of physical response to misbehavior, unless it is by way of restraint.
- Avoid incidents of horse play or role play or telling jokes etc. that could be misinterpreted.
- Never undertake any form of therapy or hypnosis, in the training of children.

Avoid compromising your role as a coach

Some activities may require Coaches and Coach Assistants to come into physical contact with underage Athletes in the course of their duties. However, Coaches and Coach Assistants should;

- Avoid taking coaching sessions on your own.
- Only deliver one to one coaching, if deemed necessary, in a group setting.
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact with an underage Athlete and never engage in inappropriate touching of an Athlete.
- Be aware that any necessary contact should be determined by the age and development of the Athlete and should only take place with the permission and understanding of the Athlete and in an open environment in the context of developing an Athlete's skills and abilities.

Best practice

- As a coach always be punctual and properly attired.
- Ensure that all of your Athletes are suitably and safely attired to participate in training and competition.
- Keep a record of attendance at training.
- Set realistic – stretching but achievable – performance goals for your Athletes.
- Make adequate provision for First Aid services.
- Do not encourage or permit Athletes to run while injured.
- Be aware of any special medical or dietary requirements of Athletes as indicated on the medical consent/registration forms or as informed by parents/guardians.
- With the expressed permission of parents/guardians be willing to keep necessary and emergency medication of Athletes in a safe and accessible place for administration in accordance with the wishes of the parents/guardians.
- Do not administer medication or medical aid unless you are willing to do so and have received the necessary training to administer such aid.
- Use mobile phones, if deemed appropriate, only via a group text or email system for communicating with the parents/guardians of Athletes. Any exception to this form of group texting can only be proceeded with following permission from parents/guardians.
- Do not communicate individually by text/email with underage Athletes.
- Do not engage in communications with underage Athletes via social network sites.
- Encourage parents/guardians to play an active role in organising and assisting various activities for your teams and your Club.
- If it is necessary to transport a child/young person in your car, ensure that they are seated in a rear seat with seat belts securely fastened.
- With the exception of their own child a coach should not transport a child alone, except in emergency or exceptional circumstances.