

Lucan Sarsfields Player Welfare Policy 2024

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General Introduction:

Lucan Sarsfields is committed to promoting the welfare, health, and safety of all players involved in Gaelic Athletic activities within our club, including both adult and juvenile sections, across all four codes: Gaelic Football, Hurling, Camogie, and Ladies Football. Our player welfare policy is guided by the following principles:

One Club: The GAA, Ladies Gaelic Football Association and Camogie Association are separately constituted organisations each having their own set of rules. However, it is critical for the running of a well-run club that there is a robust and clearly defined structure of governance. The suggested practical guidelines for achieving this are as follows:

- The GAA Club Constitution forms the cornerstone of the governance of the overall Club. It is important that everyone involved in the Club is accountable to the club's governing body. This can be best achieved by players and mentors of all codes and all other participants being affiliated as members of the GAA.
- Under the GAA Constitution, the Club Executive has overall responsibility for running the affairs of the club. Where players and mentors of all codes, including Ladies Football and Camogie, are members of the GAA and affiliated to Lucan Sarsfields, it provides for a governance structure whereby the overall running of the affairs of the club is under the control of the Club Executive.
- It is imperative that each of the playing codes is adequately represented on the Club Executive.
- All properties currently vested in the GAA will remain so vested.
- The GAA Club, Ladies Gaelic Football Club and Camogie Club names are formally registered with their respective associations. However, reference to the Ladies Football and Camogie should be made in the day to day promotion of the club e.g. "Lucan Sarsfields GAA, Football, Hurling, Ladies Gaelic Football and Camogie Club".

1. **Duty of Care:** We prioritize the well-being and safety of all players above all else. Every decision made within the club considers the best interests of the players. As a voluntary organisation it is the responsibility of all members, mentors, players and parents to contribute to a healthy club and to our players welfare.

2. **Equality and Inclusion:** We ensure that all players, regardless of age, gender, race, religion, or ability, are treated with respect, fairness, and equality. Our club fosters an inclusive environment where everyone feels welcome and valued.

3. **Education and Training:** We provide comprehensive education and training to coaches, volunteers, and parents on player welfare issues, including first aid, injury prevention, concussion management, and child protection.

4. **Medical Support:** First Aid courses will be arranged annually for every volunteer. Ideally this volunteer would be in attendance at matches. Each team will ensure that a first aid kit is maintained and available at matches. In the event of injury, prompt and first aid will be provided. If the injury occurred during a GAA training or practice match, and the other terms of the GAA Injury Benefit fund are met, costs for such consultations other than related physiotherapy treatment, can be claimed via the Injury Benefit Fund

Hurling and Football: - <https://learning.gaa.ie/node/281085>

LGFA [Injury Fund - Ladies Gaelic Football](#)

More details are also in the download section of the club

5. **Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults:** We have clear policies and procedures in place to safeguard the welfare of children and vulnerable adults involved in our club. All coaches and volunteers undergo background checks and receive training on child protection protocols.

6. **Physical and Mental Health:** We recognize the importance of both physical and mental health in the well-being of our players. We promote healthy lifestyles, provide support for mental health issues, and encourage open communication and access to resources for those in need.

7. **Anti-Doping:** We adhere to the rules and regulations set forth by the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) regarding anti-doping measures. Rule 1.13 Official Guide Part 1 (2023) states: 'The Association forbids the use of prohibited substances or methods, a practice generally known as doping in sport. The Rules of the Association regarding doping are the Irish Anti-Doping Rules as adopted by Sport Ireland and as amended from time to time ("the ADR"). The latest version can be downloaded from <https://www.sportireland.ie/anti-doping>. The Rules contained in the said ADR shall have effect and be construed as Rules of the Association'

Full details on the Irish Anti-Doping Rules are available on the GAA Learning Anti-Doping Page, Sport Ireland Website or the GAA Anti-Doping Booklet

We educate players on the dangers of doping and strictly prohibit the use of banned substances.

In addition, a network of Sport Ireland trained, GAA Anti-Doping Tutors are available to present on request to Inter-County Panels, Development Squads, Clubs, Higher Education and Post Primary teams. Requests can be made via e-mail to the GAA Player Welfare Manager eoghan.tuohey@gaa.ie

8. **Concussion Management:** We have protocols in place for the identification, assessment, and management of concussions. Any player suspected of sustaining a concussion will be removed from play immediately and will not return to play until passing the relevant concussion protocols or as cleared by a qualified healthcare professional. Everyone involved at any level of Gaelic Games is encouraged to complete the short educational module available here <https://learning.gaa.ie/lms/mod/scorm/view.php?id=165013>

Further information on UPMC Concussion Network Services can be accessed here - <https://upmc.ie/services/concussion>

9. **Player Development:** We are committed to the holistic development of our players, both on and off the field. We provide opportunities for skill development, leadership training, and personal growth to help players reach their full potential.

10. **Communication and Feedback:** Receiving feedback without fear of retribution fosters a culture of openness, trust and continuous improvement. We encourage open communication between players, coaches, parents, and club officials. Players are encouraged to voice any concerns or feedback they may have regarding their welfare or the welfare of others within the club.

By adhering to these principles and implementing robust policies and procedures, Lucan Sarsfields strives to create a safe, supportive, and nurturing environment where all players can enjoy Gaelic Athletic activities to the fullest extent while prioritizing their welfare above all else, *club is family*.

Participation Guidelines

To build a strong competitive structure and accommodate participation at all competitive levels, the club asks that all adult players commit to the full league and championship season. This will allow for structured development of our teams, club and most importantly the players, it will also assist appropriate participation levels and integration of our younger players to the adult section. At All levels players must prioritise their team and we ask mentors and parents to support the player by considering the suggested training and rest periods. The club have also adopted a best practice guide for Juvenile [Team Composition Supporting Participation & Player Welfare](#) which should be considered and is available for download from the website [here](#).

Rule Adoption

At Juvenile level, players can only play one year up. It must be agreed with the players team mentor to release the player to the requesting team. The requesting team will make the request considering both codes and any possible clash of fixtures.

Minor Player Participation

1st year minor players are not expected to play adult games. Second year minors are allowed to play on one adult team per code in any given season, within the guidelines of this policy of not exceeding four sessions per week. The minor player must prioritise their own team and it must be agreed with the minor mentor to release the player to the requesting adult team.

While we are mindful that rules may differ for each code, we ask that all codes respect the objectives within this policy. If a particular codes rules of participation differ from our clubs objectives, we still prioritise our club policy and when a rule differs then 1st year minors can only play on an adult team when absolutely necessary, rather than as regular participants. This participation should be treated as an exception and must adhere to the guideline of not exceeding four sessions per week.

Training and Rest Periods

To ensure appropriate levels of play and rest, players are limited to a maximum of four club sessions per week, including matches or training sessions. Codes are expected to cooperate and alternate their training regimes appropriately and cooperate to ensure adequate rest periods especially for dual players and players supporting other teams. One example of a suitable regime is to allow one hurling/camogie skills session one football skill session, one athletic session or gym session and a match in one week, this can be adapted but the general principle of not exceeding 4 sessions in one week must apply in all cases. If two matches occurred then only 2 training sessions would occur, regardless of code.

Competition Entry Criteria

An overview of current competitions entered by each code was reviewed for information purposes, including leagues, championships, cups, shields, and additional tournaments. Following this review the club feels that it is of size and has enough players that we only enter team into leagues when we can adequately provision that team without asking players to participate across teams from the start

of the season. It is necessary that Adult teams will only be entered into competitions when the team is populated by adults, supporting the agreed participation guidelines.

Advanced Programmes for Athletic development

The club recognises the pursuit of excellence for our elite players and teams. In these instances the executive will consider by exception the adoption of advanced athletic development programs once they are approved and planned by a professional inclusive of rest, recovery and nutrition plans.

Review of Implementation

The club can regularly review these guidelines, with specific attention given to any rules implemented by the association and other clubs, ensuring alignment and consistency.

Governance, Grievance and Disciplinary procedures

If a player has concerns about adherence to this policy they can address them with their mentors, the players rep or the director of code as they see fit.

At our AGM a players representative will be appointed to the executive committee to voice player welfare concerns.

Resolutions should be sought and agreed with the mentors of the team if concerns still exist then it should be directed to the directors of code and then if required escalated to the executive.

Disciplinary procedures for this policy will reflect those outlined in the Policy for Adult Mentors, section 12 clause 3.