

Birr Town Football Club – Code of Conduct

Introduction

Birr Town Football Club (BTFC) is indebted to the countless number of volunteers who give their time in providing football opportunities for children and young people in our community. Like all sports, football in our club should provide a pathway for children and young people to learn new skills, become more confident and maximise their own potential. BTFC recognises that people become involved in football for young people for a variety of different reasons. They come from a variety of sporting backgrounds and take on various roles within the club. Irrespective of their role or responsibility, they all share the common goal of providing football opportunities for young people in the club. Coaches, parents and administrators all have an important role to play in promoting good practice in children's sport. They should have, as their first priority, children's safety and enjoyment of the sport.

It is in this context BTFC has outlined this code of Conduct for ALL members of the club to become familiar with and accept as a condition of their membership.

In promoting good practice and a child-centered approach coaches should:

- Act as good role models.
- Encourage and be positive during sessions so that players leave with a sense of achievement.
- Set challenging, realistic but achievable goals.
- Plan and prepare each session appropriately and ensure proper levels of supervision.
- Ensure that all activities are inclusive and allow all players to participate in an enjoyable way.
- Put the welfare and enjoyment of players first and strike a balance between this and winning or achieving results.
- Enforce the principles of fair play treating each player equally, with dignity and respect and ensure that all players play within the rules.
- Be aware of the developmental stages and needs of players.
- Avoid over-training and over-emphasis on competition.
- Involve parents/guardians and other club members in what we do.
- Coaches must adhere to all guidelines laid down by participating leagues and the football governing body
- Coaches must consistently display high standards of behaviour and present themselves appropriately at all times.

- Coaches must not use or tolerate inappropriate language.

Safety

Coaches are responsible for ensuring 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.

In this respect:

- Regular safety checks should be carried out on premises, training facilities, and equipment.
- Appropriate safety rules should be adopted and implemented.
- 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 to each one. Never play injured players.
- Parents/Guardians should be notified of injuries/illnesses which their children incur while participating in any football activity a positive approach to the involvement of children in sport.
- All coaches, managers and volunteers with a team keep up to date with their vetting, complete their safeguarding, and supply copies of these to the club's Child Welfare Officer.

Sport for Fun

In promoting "Sport for Fun" coaches should:

- Encourage participation and fun.
- Promote the development of skills as opposed to winning at all costs.
- Emphasise and praise effort.
- Act as a good role model.
- Actively discourage children/young players from abusing referees, officials, teammates or opponents (take off offending players).
- Insist on FAIR PLAY (take off offending players).
- Be realistic with your expectations.
- Be aware of children's feelings.
- Teach players to respect different cultures

Expectations from Players

A player should: -

- Make every effort to develop his own sporting abilities. In terms of skill, technique, tactics and stamina. Give maximum effort and strive for the best possible performance during a game,
- Set a positive example for others, particularly younger players and supporters.
- Avoid all forms of time wasting and gamesmanship.
- Always have regard to the best interests of the game, including where expressing an opinion on the game or any aspect of it or that of others involved in the game.
- Do not use inappropriate language.
- As much as possible make themselves equally available for away games as well as home ones

Obligations towards one's own team. A player should: -

- Make every effort consistent with fair play and the laws of the game to help his own team win.

Respect for the laws of the game. A player should: -

- Know and abide by the laws, rules and spirit of the game and competition rules.
- Accept success and failure, victory and defeat, equally.
- Do not use any banned substances or techniques.
- Treat opponents with due respect at all times, irrespective of the result of the game.
- Avoid violence and rough play, safeguard the physical fitness of and help injured opponents.

Respect towards match officials. A player should: -

- Accept the decision of the match officials without protest.
- Avoid words or actions which may mislead match officials.
- Show due respect towards match officials.

Expectations from Supporters & Parents

Parents have a significant influence on children's enjoyment and success in football. Children play football because they first and foremost love the game – it's FUN. Please remember children's football is a time for them to develop and learn. We want them to win but not at all costs. We ask supporters and parents to play your part by supporting your child by aiming to do the following:

- Remember that children play for FUN.
- Applaud effort and good play.
- Always respect the match officials' decisions.
- Remain outside the field of play or within the Designated Spectators' Areas.
- Let the coach do their job and not confuse the players by telling them what to do.
- Encourage your child, and others, or be quiet. Praise effort and performance, not results.
- Encourage the players to respect the opposition, referee and officials.
- Avoid criticising a player for making a mistake – mistakes are part of learning.
- Never engage in, or tolerate, offensive, insulting, or abusive language or behavior.
- Support the coach's decisions and discuss any concerns directly with the coach and not via shared WhatsApp groups or social media.
- Aim to travel or arrange for the players to attend away fixtures as much as possible

Mobile Phones

Mobile phones are often given to children for security, enabling parents to keep in touch and make sure they are safe. 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. Within the club, there is a need to encourage responsible and secure use of mobile phones.

In this respect Coaches are advised to:

- Use group texts for communication among athletes and teams and inform parents of this at the start of the season
- Any communications such as that through groups on WhatsApp are with parents/guardians only. No underage children are to be included in these groups, including up to U18 levels (or minors playing on senior teams)
- It is not appropriate to have constant communication for individual athletes
- 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

