

CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY STATEMENT

Merlin Woods Code of Conduct Policy Statement

Merlin Woods United is fully committed to safeguarding the wellbeing of its members. We encourage '*best practice*' in the playing of our games and we are committed to providing an environment and ethos which will at all times, shows respect and understanding for members rights, safety and welfare.

Young players in particular, deserve to be given enjoyable, safe sporting opportunities, free of abuse in any form. These players have rights which must be respected, and rules that as members, they must accept.

Generalised Code of Conduct and Best Practice

The full *Code of Conduct and Best Practice* is provided to all members on joining our club. The code is in accordance with the guidelines produced by the Football Association in their Code of Best Practice for Youth Sport approved for use by the Irish Sports Council and the Sports Council of Ireland. Additional copies are available from the Club Secretary.

The achievement of '*best practice*' is dependent on:

- the development of skill and wellbeing through the playing, coaching and promotion of our games
- the adoption of the principles of *fair play* and *good behaviour* at all times
- the development of a positive, constructive, supportive and encouraging team environment
- maximising the sense of achievement, fun and participation in order to develop players to their full potential

Merlin Woods United is founded on the core values of mutual respect, valuing each person, and support and encouragement among team members, managers, coaches, mentors and other members of the club.

Our coaching resources and activities are firmly rooted in the local community. We are committed to providing an environment that promotes a '*sense of belonging*' in our club and an ethos that will allow players to perform to the best of their ability, free from bullying and intimidation.

Inappropriate behaviour by any member of the club (or any person/persons associated with the club) that undermines these values is unacceptable and will be considered a breach of the club's Code of Conduct. Such behaviour will be subject to the disciplinary procedures of the club. The *Code of Conduct and Best Practice* forms part of our clubs constitution and ethos, and as such, it is part of the rules and regulations that bind the operation of the club and its members.

All persons associated with Merlin Woods United are expected to uphold and promote this ethos in all roles that they undertake on behalf of Merlin Woods United.

Code of Conduct / Mentors / revised March 2023

MERLIN WOODS

Code of Conduct and Best Practice for Youth Sport

Policy Statement - Mentors

Players First - Winning Second!

A balanced approach to competition can make a significant contribution to the development of young players, while at the same time providing fun, enjoyment and satisfaction. If competition demands are placed on young players too early, excessive levels of pressure and anxiety are placed on them. Often

this results in a high level of drop-out from the sport. Club mentors should place the welfare of the person, and retention of players first and competition second.

Code of Conduct

Merlin Woods recognises the key role mentors play in the lives and development of young players.

Team coaches, managers, selectors and mentors can ensure that our sport has a beneficial impact when they adhere to the following principles;

Treatment of players:

- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every player and treat each player equally, regardless of age, gender, ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation, background or ability.
- Encourage the development of respect for opponents, officials, selectors, and other coaches, and avoid criticism of mentors and officials.
- Be positive during coaching sessions so that participants leave with sense of wellbeing and achievement.
- Be generous with praise and never ridicule or shout at players for making mistakes or for losing a game.
- Be careful to avoid the "star" system. Each player deserves equal time, opportunity and attention.
- Do not equate losing with failure.
- Do not use any form of physical force or verbal punishment.
- Do not use foul or provocative language.
- Ensure that personnel connected with the team do not speak to another person in a manner that threatens, disparages, vilifies or insults.

Safety & Protection

- Avoid working alone with children at all times. At least TWO adults must be in attendance with each squad/team at all times for all activities (training and matches). If this is not possible, the activity should be cancelled. (It is important to realise that this is essential for player safety and child protection, and also for the protection of mentors from any misinterpretation or mis-reporting of actions, and from unfair or malicious accusations.)
- Make adequate provision for First Aid and do not allow players to perform while injured.
- Be responsible for setting and monitoring the boundaries between a *working* relationship and *friendship* with players. It is advisable for coaches not to involve young players in their personal life i.e visits to coaches home or overnight stays.
- Do not allow the use of cameras, videos, camera-phones etc., in changing rooms. The inappropriate use of images of underage players must be reported.
- If overnight stays are required for matches or trips, players and mentors must observe and sign a separate agreement in accordance with club regulations. For juvenile members, parents must also sign permission forms. No child should be allowed to travel without such a form.
- Avoid any inappropriate physical contact, or contact which could be misconstrued as such when assisting players to perform a technique or when called upon to perform First Aid
- Texts, e-mails, memos and phone calls for players from U/16 level and below, must always be communicated through parents/guardians.
- The nature of the relationship between mentors and players is based on trust and confidence. Occasionally, mentors may acquire information of a confidential nature about their players. This information must remain confidential and *except* where abuse is suspected, must not be divulged to a third party.
- Parents should always be informed immediately when problems arise with young players *except* in situations where informing parents may put the player at risk. In such a situation the relevant club officer(s) should be contacted immediately.

Coaching, competition and other activities

- Recognise the development needs of young players (avoid excessive training or competition, and adhere to club rules and guidelines in this regard) and ensure players are matched on an individual and team basis.

- Insist that players under your care respect the rules of the game. Insist *on fair play* and ensure players are aware that you will not tolerate cheating or bullying behaviour.
- Set realistic (challenging but achievable goals) performance goals.
- Be punctual, properly attired, and lead by example.
- Avoid the use of alcohol before training and matches, during events and on trips with young players.
- Ensure that games, activities and playing equipment are customised to suit the needs of those involved in terms of age, ability, experience and maturity.
- Ensure players are suitably attired and officially registered with club.
- Ensure that all dressing rooms, facilities and areas occupied/used by the team (whether at home or away) are not abused or damaged in any way.

KEY PRINCIPLES/ REQUIREMENTS OF MENTORS

- **Mentors, coaches, selectors and all those associated with Merlin Woods must work within the rules and guidelines laid down in the club's 'Code of Conduct and Best Practice'.**
- Each Mentor must familiarise themselves fully with the most updated Code of Conduct and Best Practice and must verify that they have read and will abide by it at the beginning of each season, or on taking up mentoring duties during the season.
- Mentors must also ensure each year (or on joining the club during the year) that all parents of young players are familiar with the full code of conduct, and that young players are made familiar with the young players section of the code.
- **Mentors, coaches and selectors must take and adhere to instruction and guidance from the club management in relation to coaching, best practice, and administration of club affairs, and must abide by the decisions of club officers, particularly in the event of any disagreement or dispute.**

Remember that young players play for fun and enjoyment and that skill development, and personal satisfaction have priority over highly structured competition.

Never make winning the primary or sole objective!

Code of Conduct / Young Players / revised March 2023

MERLIN WOODS Code of Conduct and Best Practice for Youth Sport

Policy Statement - Young Players

Young players deserve to be given enjoyable, safe sporting opportunities, free of abuse and intimidation in any form. These players have rights which must be respected, and rules that as members, they must accept.

Young players can ensure that our sport has a beneficial impact when they adhere to the following principles. Young players should;

- treat all mentors (coaches, managers club officials, selectors etc.) with respect
- play fairly and respect your opponents
- respect fellow team members - even when things go wrong
- respect opponents - be humble in victory and gracious in defeat
- behave in a manner that avoids bringing the sport and our club into disrepute
- never cheat, use violence, verbal abuse or engage in 'name-calling'
- never shout or argue with officials
- never bully or use bullying tactics to isolate another player
- never use bullying tactics to gain an unfair advantage
- never engage in 'name-calling'
- always accept apologies from opponents when offered

- should not spread rumours, or tell lies about adults or other players
- represent their family, club and county with pride and dignity
- shake hands with their opponents before and after the game irrespective of the result
- adhere to proper standards of behaviour and the club's *Code of Conduct and Best Practice* when travelling to away events
- have fun, participate on an equal basis
- have complaints treated in confidence and acted upon
- talk to the club's children's officer / youth officer and/or parents/guardians if they have any problems
- let the coach/mentor know (through your parents if U/16) when they are unavailable for training and competition
- respect club property and the personal belongings of others and in particular, that dressing rooms, equipment and facilities are not damaged in any way
- abide by the rules of the Association and club regulations

Code of Conduct / Adult Players / revised March 2023

MERLIN WOODS

Code of Conduct and Best Practice for Youth Sport

Policy Statement - Parents

Merlin Woods recognises that parents play a key role in relation to volunteer support for clubs and teams.

Parents should not attempt to meet their own needs for success and achievement through their children's participation. Parents must also realise and accept the rules and procedures set down in the **MERLIN WOODS**, '*Code of Conduct and Best Practice for Youth Sport*'.

Parents can ensure that our sport has a beneficial impact when they adhere to the following principles.

Parents should:

- ensure that they obtain a copy and read in full the club's '*Code of Conduct and Best Practice for Youth Sport*'.
- ensure in particular that their child also reads and understands what is expected from them in relation to this code.
- be a role model for your child and maintain the highest standards of conduct when interacting with children, other parents, officials and organisers.
- always behave responsibly and do not seek to unfairly affect the game or a player.
- never intentionally expose young players to embarrassment or ridicule by the use of flippant or sarcastic remarks.
- always recognise the value and importance of volunteers.
- do not publicly question the judgement or honesty of officials, organisers and mentors.
- set a good example by applauding good play on *both* sides.
- show approval and give praise and encouragement to your own child and their team-mates for effort, skill and improvement, and not just results. Praise in defeat is particularly important.
- support all efforts to remove abusive behaviour and bullying.
- inform club mentors/officials if your child is unable to attend matches.
- know the start and finish times of training and matches.
- reply, where necessary to communications issued by club mentors/officials.
- arrange to collect your child after training and matches.
- attend games on a regular basis.
- give advice to their child on the importance of maintaining a balanced lifestyle and attitude.
- listen to what young people have to say.
- should not criticise playing performance .

- The academy encourages parents to attend all training sessions and games. However, for children who are under six years of age on the first of January, it is compulsory that parents are in attendance.
- where possible, assist in helping with equipment and organisation of activities associated with your child's participation in Merlin Woods United.
- bring any concerns they may have in relation to club activities to the attention of their child's mentor, or to the club's Youth Liason Officer, or the Juvenile Chairperson.
- Contact details may be found on the club's web-site ().

Code of Conduct / Adult Players / revised March 2023

MERLIN WOODS

Code of Conduct and Best Practice for Adult Players

Policy Statement - Adult Players

Merlin Woods United is fully committed to safeguarding the wellbeing of its members. We encourage 'best practice' in the playing of our games and we are committed to providing an environment and ethos which will at all times, shows respect and understanding for members rights, safety and welfare. We aim to assist our adult players in achieving their true potential by fair and ethical means. In accordance with this guiding philosophy, our sport must be drug free and played in accordance with a spirit of fair play and sportsmanship.

Code of Conduct

Adult players can ensure that our sport has a beneficial impact when they adhere to the following principles. Adult players should;

- respect the rights, dignity and worth of every player and treat each player equally, regardless of age, gender, ethnic origin, religion, background or ability
- encourage the development of respect for opponents, officials, selectors, and other coach's, and avoid criticism of mentors and officials
- never bully or use bullying tactics to isolate another player
- never use bullying tactics to gain an unfair advantage
- respect fellow team members - even when things go wrong
- respect opponents - be humble in victory and gracious in defeat
- behave in a manner that avoids bringing the sport and our club into disrepute
- accept apologies from opponents when offered
- should not spread rumours, or tell lies about officials or other players
- represent their family, club and county with pride and dignity
- shake hands with their opponents before and after the game irrespective of the result
- adhere to proper standards of behaviour and the club's *Code of Conduct and Best Practice* when travelling to away events
- let the coach/mentor know when they are unavailable for training and competition
- respect club property and the personal belongings of others and in particular, that dressing rooms, equipment and facilities are not damaged in any way
- be generous with praise and never ridicule or shout at players for making mistakes or for losing a game
- be punctual, properly attired, and lead by example
- not equate losing with failure
- not use foul or provocative language
- not use cameras, videos, camera-phones etc., in changing rooms
- discourage the use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco on the basis that they are incompatible with a healthy approach to sporting activity
- display leadership and good example particularly when dealing with underage members
- should observe the law in relation to illegal drugs and the use of alcohol and tobacco

- bring any concerns they may have in relation to club activities to the attention of their mentors, or to the club's Chairperson. Contact details may be found on the club's web-site ().