

# Balbriggan F.C.

## *Code of Practice for Coaches & Volunteers*



Balbriggan F.C (the "club", "us", "we", or "our") set out below the code of practice which all volunteers (coaches, managers, committee members, administrators) must abide by at all times.

The club recognises and greatly appreciates the efforts of all our volunteers who take time out of their busy weeks to ensure the community of Balbriggan has the best facilities and football coaching available on their doorstep. The purpose of the code of practice is not to discipline or restrict the actions of our volunteers but to protect the volunteers in their duties and protect our players.

### **Club Ethos**

Balbriggan F.C is a community football club. Our players experience of soccer is core to our ethos and the work of the club is guided by what is best for the player, his/her family and the local community.

Adults interacting with young people in the club 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 Balbriggan FC.

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

Fair play is the guiding principle of how Balbriggan F.C operates. 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 should aim to put the welfare of the child first and competitive standards second.

### **Supporting Balbriggan F.C and the Community**

Balbriggan F.C is a non-profit sporting organisation which receives no funding to run our activities. Each volunteer receives no payment for their contribution to the club whether that be coaching or administrative duties.

Operating one of the largest football clubs in Dublin is an expensive task. As such, we ask that all volunteers support our club fundraisers to the best of their ability and encourage their team's players and parents to do likewise.

Balbriggan F.C is lucky to have the use of purpose built and high quality facilities. Not only to these facilities serve our club but are also an amenity to other local organisations and the wider community. We ask all volunteers to respect the club's facilities and help keep them in good order.

### **Coach and Volunteer Recruitment Policy**

Balbriggan F.C will take all reasonable steps to ensure that coaches, managers and volunteers are suitable to work with children and young people.

All volunteers are required to complete an application/self declaration form (available at [BalbrigganFC.ie/volunteer](http://BalbrigganFC.ie/volunteer)) before commencing duties. All volunteers will be required to provide the names of two referees who will then be contacted. Written references will then be verified and kept on file.

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

All volunteers are subject to Garda Vetting and this step is a mandatory part of our application process. All volunteers must undertake to abide by Balbriggan F.C code of practices and other policies, and codes of conduct and good practices set out by our associate bodies. Appropriate confidentiality will be maintained in regard to all application and reference forms as set out by our Data Protection Policy.

All appointments are subject to approval and ratification by the executive committee of Balbriggan F.C.

### **Coach Education Policy**

Once recruited, Balbriggan F.C will make all efforts to support and manage coaches, managers and volunteers ensuring that no person is expected to work alone. Ideally, each manager should identify and appoint an assistant manager from the teams' parents.

The Committee of Balbriggan F.C 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. The club offers financial assistance to any coach who wishes to undertake coaching qualifications. In particular, we mandate that all coaches complete the FAI Safeguarding course and encourage all coaches to attend the relevant PDP courses for their age range.

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. Coaches are encouraged to share ideas, expertise and support other club volunteers in any way they can.

### **Club Apparel and Playing Kit Policy**

Balbriggan F.C. teams play in a red shirt with green shorts and red socks. The alternative jersey consists of a black shirt. Our official manufacturing partner is Proteam Sports and no other manufacturer should be used.

The club has an official leisurewear range which is available to purchase on our website. No leisurewear should be purchased from other manufacturers.

### **Travel Policy**

When travelling with young people, coaches of Balbriggan F.C should:

- Ensure that there is adequate insurance cover.
- Not carry more than the permitted number of passengers in any vehicle.
- Ensure the use of safety belts by all passengers.
- Keep to the rules of the road
- Avoid being alone with any one player. While carpooling is often necessary to transport players to matches, at least two adults should travel in each car with players being dropped in central locations to be picked up by their parents/guardians.

### **Substance Abuse Policy**

At Balbriggan F.C the use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco shall be actively discouraged as being incompatible with a healthy approach to sporting activity. Volunteers shall not smoke when taking a session or drink alcohol before taking a session. Volunteers should never smoke or consume alcohol in the presence of any player under the age of 18 years regardless of occasion.

In relation to our under-age teams Balbriggan F.C shall endeavour to organise receptions and celebrations in a nonalcoholic 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 volunteers shall act as role models for appropriate behaviour and refrain from drinking alcohol at such functions.

Balbriggan F.C strictly disapproves of the abuse of all substances (both prescription and illegal drugs). Any volunteer found to be abusing substances may be subject to disciplinary procedures by our nominated executive committee.

## **Maintaining Safety**

All volunteers 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.

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 or volunteer works alone.
- 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
- Parents/guardians should be informed in advance 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. A defibrillator is stationed in the clubhouse should the need ever arise.
- Parents/Guardians should be notified of injuries/illness which their children incur while participating in any Balbriggan F.C activity.

All incidents involving players or representatives of the club should be reported to the club secretary within 24 hours. In particular, incidents involving red cards, discipline, injuries or any incident involving the safety and welfare of players. In the event of injury to a player, a written record of details should be kept by the coach.

## **Disciplinary Procedures**

Discipline in football 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. The use of sanctions is an important element in the maintenance of discipline. However, coaches should have a clear understanding of where and when particular sanctions are appropriate. 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 by all players and parents in advance of the start of the season.
- A warning should first 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 never be used as threats. If a rule is broken, the appropriate sanction/s should be implemented consistently, fairly and firmly
- Once a sanction/s has been imposed, it is important to make the child feel they are a valued member of the team again
- A child should not be sanctioned for making errors whilst playing football.
- 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 they should learn to enjoy. Remember Soccer has to be Fun if participants are to continue playing

While many concerns can be dealt with in an informal manner to the satisfaction of all concerned, complaints may be escalated by any member of the club to the club's disciplinary committee. The

disciplinary committee will consist of at least three members of the appointed executive committee including the secretary and chairperson of the club.

The club's disciplinary procedure is set out as follows:

1. Any person who has a complaint or concern should bring it to the attention of the secretary and/or chairperson. The complaint or concern should be in writing and should outline all relevant details and other parties involved in line with procedure.
2. The disciplinary committee will 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.
3. The disciplinary committee will then hear the case of all parties involved and decide if a rule or regulation has been infringed.
4. The disciplinary committee will then inform in writing those involved of their decision and any sanctions that are to be imposed. This notification will be in writing, setting out the reasons for the sanction (Written notification will be forwarded to parents if the proceedings involve a participant under eighteen years of age).
5. Any party unhappy with the findings of the disciplinary committee/panel can appeal the decision in writing to their respective superior body.

The above procedures covers all disciplinary matters other than suspected child abuse which must be referred to the statutory authorities.

### **Breach of Policy**

Breach of any policy may be dealt with using the disciplinary procedures set by our nominated executive committee and, in serious cases, may be treated as gross misconduct leading to a suspension, ban from membership of the club and / or dismissal of duties.

### **Changes to our Policy**

Changes to our policy may be made with the majority agreement of our nominated executive committee. Changes will take effect 28 days after the date of the vote. All changes will be reflected on this document and posted to the main page of our website.

This policy was last modified on 1st March 2018.