



## ***CODE OF CONDUCT***

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

Watergrasshill United aims to promote football in our community and is fully committed to the physical, social and personal development of all our members. It is our policy to encourage active participation by all players and members in the club, and to help them achieve their potential in a structured, safe and disciplined environment. The overall aim of the club is to create a community spirit for the benefit of all, through committing Watergrasshill United to excellence both on and off the playing fields.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The primary objective of this document is to define in a concise and comprehensive fashion the Club's policies relating to conduct of its member's. It is important that all members of Watergrasshill United familiarise themselves with the contents of this document. We continually set ourselves high standards for the betterment of the club and for these to be achieved it is vital that everyone involved in the various capacities within the club adhere to these policies and guidelines.

### **FOOTBALL AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

Football, like all sports, provides an excellent pathway for children and young people to learn new skills, become more confident and maximise their own potential. Through their participation, they can learn and develop life skills, have fun and enjoyment, make friends and experience life in a way that can enhance their personal growth throughout their lives.

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 clubs and other football organisations. Yet irrespective of their role or responsibility, they all share the common goal of providing football opportunities for young people.

Parents, coaches, mentors and administrators all have an important role to play in promoting good practice in children's sport. They should have, as their first priority, the children's safety and enjoyment of the sport.

Watergrasshill United, like the FAI, wants football to be safe, we want football to be fun and wants to ensure that no matter what level of the game young people are involved in, that it takes place in the spirit of 'FAIR PLAY'.

Fair play is the guiding principle of the Irish Sport's Council's Code of Ethics as well as the FAI's Code of Ethics and Good Practice program which is designed to provide guidance for those working with young people in football. It outlines the type of issues that need to be discussed and addressed to provide the safest and most enjoyable environment not only for young people but also the coaches and volunteers involved.

Focusing on individual participants' needs encourages young people to achieve and demonstrate enjoyment, equality and fair play. Through this they will come to realise that standards of behavior are equally as important as sports performance.



### **In taking this approach children are encouraged to:**

- Do their best – put in their best effort.
- Improve and develop their skills.
- Make friends.
- Play by the rules.
- Appreciate/accept everyone in the group, regardless of ability, race, religion, gender etc.

### **CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY STATEMENT**

Watergrasshill United is fully committed to safeguarding the well being of all its underage and adult members. We encourage 'best practice' in the coaching and playing of our games, and we are committed to providing an environment and ethos which will at all times show respect and understanding for member's rights, safety and welfare.

The achievement of 'best practice' is dependent on:

- Mentors, coaches, parents and club members setting a good example through their own behaviour at training and matches.
- The development of skill and well-being 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 and club environment
- Maximising the sense of achievement, fun and participation in order to develop player's and club members to their full potential and ensure their continued participation within Watergrasshill United.



## COACHES, MENTORS & OFFICIALS - CODE OF CONDUCT

Watergrasshill United recognises the key role coaches, mentors and club official's play in the lives and development of young players and for that reason it vitally important that mentors lead by example displaying appropriate behaviour while representing the club be it at training or matches.

In promoting "Fair Play" and "Sport for All" everyone involved in the organisation of football should:

- Encourage participation and fun.
- Promote the development of skills as opposed to winning at all costs.
- Act as a good role model.
- Insist on Fair Play.
- Be realistic with expectations.
- Be aware of children's feelings.
- Teach players to respect different cultures.

**Team coaches, managers, mentors and club officials** can ensure that our sport has a beneficial impact when they adhere to the following principles:

Watergrasshill United Mentors & Officials should maintain a child centred approach:

- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person and encourage the players you are mentoring to do likewise..
- Treat each person equally regardless of age, ability, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, cultural background or religion.
- Place an emphasis on learning and practicing the skills of football over competition.
- Encourage the development of respect for opponents, match officials, and other coaches.
- Be positive during coaching sessions so that participants leave with sense of well being and achievement.
- Be generous with praise and never ridicule or shout at players for making mistakes or for losing a game.
- Do not equate losing with failure and do not develop a preoccupation with medals and trophies. The level of improvement made by young players and their continued participation within the club is the best indicator of effective coaching.
- Own Team Selection.
- Zero tolerance on bullying.

**Watergrasshill United Mentors & Officials should lead by example:**

- Never use foul language or provocative language/gestures to their own players.
- Never engage in verbal or physical confrontations with opposing mentors & players.
- Only enter the field of play with the referee's permission.
- Do not question a referee's decisions or integrity.
- Encourage their players to respect and accept the judgement of match officials.
- Promote Fair Play.
- Promote the SPORT for ALL initiative.



## **MANAGERS/COACHES- CODE OF CONDUCT**

- Managers should arrive early before training/matches to ensure sufficient preparation time and bring necessary gear. Balls, Bibs, Cones, Jerseys water bottles and a first aid kit.
- Managers are responsible for the conduct of all their players during training and matches in line with the club code of conduct.
- Managers should ensure their players football experience is one of fun and improvement in skill as opposed to winning at all costs.
- Players should never be shouted at, lectured or ridiculed for making mistakes or losing a game.
- Managers should encourage good sportsmanship from the players and parents.
- Managers should have the safety of their players as first priority at all times.
- Managers should demonstrate respect for referees at all times and actively discourage players / parents from abusing referees, team mates or opponents and insist on Fair Play.
- Managers should act as a good role model for players and teach them to respect different cultures.
- Managers need to show respect for the club, other managers, club members and any grievances to be dealt with accordingly under the grievance policy of the club.
- Managers accept adherence to the Watergrasshill United Managers Code of Conduct as outlined on the Club Website
- Managers accept adherence to the Watergrasshill United No Pay No Play Policy
- Managers agree to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner and any grievances they may have will be dealt with in line with the clubs grievance policy.
- Managers acknowledge and accept the Constitution of Watergrasshill United and all policies referenced therein.
- Managers acknowledge and accept the Watergrasshill United Player Policy in relation to age groups and player eligibility.
- Managers accept adherence to the rosters and rotas drafted by the club as needed.
- Managers accept that any breaches of the above or any other action that brings the club into disrepute is open to appropriate disciplinary action by the disciplinary panel. Such action may take the form of a warning (verbal or written), suspension of membership for a period of time as determined by the Committee or expulsion from the Club. This disciplinary action will be at the discretion of the disciplinary panel.



## **PARENTS/GUARDIANS - CODE OF CONDUCT**

**Watergrasshill United - Parents/Guardians** play an important role in promoting children's happiness and success in football and sport in general. They have an influential role to play in assisting and encouraging their children to adopt a positive attitude and in encouraging them to maintain an involvement in sport. They should always be a good role model for their children.

Parents / guardians need to be aware of why children want to play football. Children want to learn new skills, make new friends, be part of a group, to win and be successful, experience challenges, excitement and action.

While winning is important, it must be remembered that winning at all costs does not meet the needs of players. Results are not necessarily a good indicator of coaching effectiveness or ability, the improvement level of players and their level of enjoyment is.

### **Support and encouragement from parents / guardians will contribute to children having:**

- A sense of personal achievement.
- An enjoyment of football.
- Improved physical fitness.
- Higher self-esteem.
- A greater level of skill.
- Improved social skills.

It is important for parents / guardians to find out what their children want from football, and help them to set realistic targets to achieve this. This may involve controlling their own aspirations and avoiding the desire to force their own dreams or unfulfilled ambitions on them.

It is important to:

- Encourage but not force children to be active.
- Know when he / she is ready to play.
- Encourage healthy lifestyle habits.
- Ensure child attends training.
- Attend games where possible.
- Promote and teach FAIR PLAY, play by the rules
- Teach your child to treat referees, other players, coaches, officials and spectators with respect regardless of race, creed, colour, sex or ability.
- Help children to set realistic targets.
- Help children with decision making.



### **Watergrasshill United Parents/Guardians should “LEAD BY EXAMPLE”:**

- Ensure that they obtain a copy and read in full the club’s ‘Code of Conduct’, and comply with the ideals set out in it.
- Ensure in particular that their child also reads and understands what is expected from them in relation to this code.
- Respect Watergrasshill United mentors, and let coaching and game related issues to the team management. No parent should be in the team dressing room at any time unless asked by the team management.
- Respect official’s decisions and encourage children to do likewise. Never abuse the referee under any circumstances.
- Do not enter the field of play or play area unless invited to do so by an official in charge.
- Applaud good play from all teams and show respect to parents, mentors and players from opposing teams.
- Walk away from any potential or actual confrontation and maintain your dignity and discipline. Should you become involved in any incident during a game, ensure that the club officials are informed immediately.
- Dug outs are for Watergrasshill United players and Mentors, Support team from the side of pitch and not from behind the goals in an open pitch.
- Inform the team manager if your child is unable to attend a training session.
- Parents should know the drop off and collection times for training and matches. These will be provided in writing (SMS) to younger children and verbally to older ones. If you are unsure of any details clarify them with the team management as soon as possible.
- Always behave responsibly and do not seek to unfairly affect the game or a player.
- Do not exert undue pressure on your child and never admonish them or any other child for their standard of play.
- Encourage your child to value learning the skills of football over winning competitive games. Be realistic with your expectations for them and don’t criticise playing performances; identify how improvements may be made.
- Do not take the safety and well being of your child for granted. If you have any worries contact the team liason officer or a club official in full confidence.

In addition, parents / guardians should:

- Give the coach help when asked and show appreciation for a job well done.
- Support the coach’s and referee decisions. These individuals are only doing the best they can and they need support not anger.
- Refrain from contacting the coach unless it is necessary, respect they have a private life.
- Inform the coach about any illness, injury, holidays, etc.
- Make an effort to attend training and games.
- Communicate any concerns you may have to the coach.
- Make sure the child has appropriate equipment/clothing/refreshments.
- Encourage FAIR PLAY at home and do not instill a “win at all costs” attitude in children.
- Be positive or be quiet, negative comments are counter productive.
- Conduct themselves in such a way which promotes the definition of FAIR PLAY.
- Be prepared to be asked to leave by officials or club personnel if behavior is contrary to the definition of FAIR PLAY.

**Watergrasshill United Parents/Guardians should not:**

- Ignore or dismiss complaints or concerns expressed by a child, which relate to his/her involvement in football.
- Ridicule or shout at a child for losing a game or making a mistake.
- Treat any club as a child minding service.
- Take safety for granted.
- Put undue pressure on any child to please or perform well.
- Insult players or club personnel.
- Attest manager's team decisions.
- Argue with, or shout abuse at officials and they should actively discourage children or young players from doing likewise.
- Contact the coach unless it is necessary, respect they have a private life.
- Suggest or encourage cheating, aggressive or "dirty" play.
- Placing undue or inappropriate criticism on a player, causing the player unnecessary or unhealthy levels of stress.
- Behave with physical or verbal aggression towards another person (actually use force or threaten the use of force).
- Engage in any "harassment" type of behavior.

If you have any ideas or suggestions for improvements that we can make feel free to discuss them with Club officials at the appropriate time. We actively encourage parents to become involved in the club and if you are interested in volunteering to become a team mentor or an administrator please approach a club official.

Remember everyone involved in Watergrasshill United does so on a voluntary basis to provide a sporting outlet for young people. If we all work together, appreciate each other's position and adhere to our codes, our children will benefit most



## UNDERAGE PLAYERS - CODE OF CONDUCT

**Under age Players** deserve to be given enjoyable, safe sporting opportunities, free of abuse and intimidation in any form. All players are encouraged to participate in a Watergrasshill United team, make friends and have fun. Participating as a 'Watergrasshill United Player' should be a creative and positive experience in the development of each individual. Underage players have rights which must be respected, and rules that as members, they must accept.

**Under age Players** are entitled to:

- Be safe.
- Be treated with dignity, sensitivity and respect.
- Participate in football on an equal basis, appropriate to their ability and stage of development.
- Be happy, have fun and enjoy football.
- Make a complaint in an appropriate way and have it dealt with through a proper and effective complaints procedure.
- Be afforded appropriate confidentiality.
- Be listened to and to be believed.
- Have a voice in the running of the club.

**Underage players can ensure that our sport has a beneficial impact when they adhere to the following principles. Underage players should:**

- Treat all mentors, (coaches, manager's club officials, selectors etc.) with respect.
- Be committed to fair play at all times.
- 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.
- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every player and treat each player equally, regardless of age, gender, ethnic origin, religion, background or ability.
- 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.
- Talk to the clubs children's officer/youth officer and or parents/guardians if they have any problems.
- Respect club property and the personal belongings of others and in particular, that dressing rooms, equipment and facilities are not damaged in any way.
- Not use cameras, videos, camera-phones etc. in changing rooms. Observe the law on drugs and use of alcohol and tobacco





Children should also be encouraged to realise that they also have responsibilities to treat other children, referees, fellow players, coaches and volunteers with the same degree of fairness and respect.

In this regard children should undertake to:

- Play fairly, do their best and have fun.
- Make high standards of Fair Play the standard others want to follow.
- Respect opponents, they are not the enemy, they are partners in a sporting event.
- Shake hands before and after the match, whoever wins.
- Give opponents a hand if they are injured, put the ball out of play so they can get attention.
- Accept apologies from opponents when they are offered.
- Respect fellow team members and support them both when they do well and when things go wrong.
- Treat players from minority groups with the same respect you show other people.
- Be modest in victory and be gracious in defeat "BE A SPORT".
- Approach the club Children's Officer with any questions or concerns they might have. Coaches and parents should encourage children to speak out and support them in doing so.

Children should not:

- Cheat.
- Use abusive language, or argue with, the mentor, referee, officials, team mates or opponents.
- Use violence, use physical contact only when it is allowed within the rules.
- Bully.
- Tell lies about adults or other children.
- Spread rumours.
- Take banned substances to improve performance.
- Keep secrets about any person who may have caused them harm.



## **ADULT PLAYERS - CODE OF CONDUCT**

Watergrasshill United is fully committed to safeguarding the well-being of its adult members. We encourage 'best practice' in the training for and 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. Watergrasshill United players should be committed to excellence and have a burning desire to succeed. Adult players should be aware that they are role models for our younger members and should strive to set the best example possible for them.

**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, selectors, and other coaches.
- Avoid criticism of match officials.
- Display leadership and good example particularly when dealing with underage members.
- Never bully or use bullying tactics to isolate another player.
- Respect fellow team members – even when things go wrong.
- Respect opponents – be humble in victory and gracious in defeat.
- Be generous with praise and never ridicule or shout at players for making mistakes or for losing a game.
- 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 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.
- Not use cameras, videos, camera-phones etc., in changing rooms.
- Should observe the law in relation to illegal drugs and the use of alcohol and tobacco.
- Have their club membership fee paid not later than the 31<sup>st</sup> October.



## **SUPPORTERS – CODE OF CONDUCT**

Club players, in particular young players, are eager to enjoy and benefit from the support they receive from parents, guardians, friends and other members of the club who attend our games as spectators. Active, loyal and well behaved supporters are always welcome and encouraged to attend and support our games but should be aware that their conduct will always reflect upon the team and upon Watergrasshill United in general.

Fellow supporters have a responsibility to ensure that all spectators conduct themselves in an acceptable and well behaved manner at all times when attending Watergrasshill games and competitions.

Supporters are encouraged to become involved in the workings of the club in any capacity they are able – we are an entirely voluntary organisation and the more people who volunteer to assist in club activities the stronger and more successful we will become.

### **Watergrasshill United Supporters are encouraged to:**

- Applaud good performance and efforts from your club's players and from your opponents, regardless of the result.
- Condemn the use of violence in any form, be it by fellow spectators, coaches, officials or players.
- Encourage players to participate according to the rules and the referees decisions.
- Demonstrate appropriate social behaviour by not using foul language or harassing opposing players, mentors or supporters.
- Walk away from any potential or actual confrontation and maintain your dignity and discipline. Should you become involved in any incident during a game, ensure that the club officials are informed immediately.
- Respect the decisions of all officials and not engage in abusing officials from the sidelines.
- Do not enter the field of play or play area unless invited to do so by an official in charge.
- Respect Watergrasshill United mentors, and let coaching and game related issues to the team management.
- Never ridicule or abuse a Watergrasshill United or opposition player for making a mistake during games or competitions

Dug outs are for Watergrasshill United players and Mentors, Support team from the side of pitch and not from behind the goals in an open pitch.



## **GRIEVANCE POLICY**

Watergrasshill United advocates a problem-solving approach to ensure that the behaviour complained of, if established in fact, is eliminated and that if possible relationships are restored.

This process aims to:

- Assess the allegation(s) and address them;
- Use agreed procedures;
- Be consistent, systematic, transparent and unbiased;
- Ideally have an intervention addressing the issue in place within three weeks of the complaint.
- Promote the restoration of harmony over the medium to long term.

A one off incident of conflict can result, for example, from a misunderstanding, miscommunication, a poorly judged comment, or loss of temper. In such circumstances it may be necessary for steps to be taken to resolve the issue. On occasions the use of a mediator such as a member of the club or other such intervention as deemed appropriate, may be employed to bring about a resolution. The rationale as to why the particular approach was adopted should be recorded.

A complaint must be made within one week of the alleged incident(s) in writing to the Club Secretary.

An offer of mediation may be made by the club. The first step in any informal resolution of a complaint will be to get the facts of the complaint, the specific issues complained of, when they occurred and to judge whether or not they are non-compliant with the Clubs code of conduct or any of the club policies.

The committee will assign a separate disciplinary panel consisting of 3 impartial members. The complaint must be written. It is important that the complainant drafts the complaint. The designated panel who are handling the complaint, will then seek to establish the facts, the context and then the next course of action in dealing with the matter under the club rules and code of conduct. Under no circumstance should any details of this grievance be broadcast by text or email to any of the club members.

If there are no concrete examples given, it must be deemed that there is no complaint to be answered by the person complained of as they have no recourse to repudiating an accusation that doesn't give any specifics. If the panel find that the allegations are found to be proven the panel decides on a relevant course of action including suspension and expulsion from the club.



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Much of this document has been adapted from the Irish Sports Council's Code of Ethics and Good Practice and the FAI Ireland Code of Ethics & Best Practice. Related material is available on their websites [www.irishsportsCouncil.ie](http://www.irishsportsCouncil.ie) and [www.fai.ie](http://www.fai.ie)