

Child Protection Policy



Mount Merrion Athletics Club
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Code of Practice for Parents and Young Persons/Athletes

Mount Merrion Athletics Club (MMAC) (“the Club”)

Objective

The Mount Merrion Athletics Club objective is to promote athletics in Mount Merrion and the surrounding area. The Club aims to operate a safe, caring, friendly and fun loving environment and endeavours to provide the necessary coaching expertise required to enable young athletes of all abilities reach their full potential. Fair play and sportsmanship are an essential ethos of the club, actively encouraging team work and leadership.

MMAC Commitment

Mount Merrion Athletics Club is committed to ensuring that all young persons who join the club have a safe and positive experience. The Club is committed to developing and implementing its policies/procedures to ensure that everyone knows and accepts their responsibility in relation to a duty of care to young people.

Mount Merrion Athletics Clubs (MMAC) recognizes that it is not the responsibility of those individuals working within the club (coaching, officiating and volunteering within Mount Merrion Athletics club) to determine if abuse has taken place, but it is their responsibility to act upon and report any concerns.

If any person within the club has a doubt to this policy’s relevance to their role and duties then please contact the MMAC Child Welfare Officer (Maria J. McCarthy, phone: +353-86-8523039)

The Club and those involved with the club, including its members will abide by the following principles and statements:

- All young persons within the Club, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation, ability or disability, have the right to be protected.
- All young people participating in sport have a right to do so in a safe environment.
- All adults involved with the club will provide a safe, positive and fun, sporting experience for young persons.
- All volunteers, coaches and officials will understand and be supported in their role and responsibility with regard to the duty of care for young people.
- All suspicions and allegations will be taken seriously, managed and dealt with swiftly and appropriately.
- The club will assist coaches, volunteers and officials to remain up-to-date with the latest safeguarding and child protection issues.
- The club will appoint a Child Welfare Officer whose role is to be responsible for issues concerning child welfare at the club.

Code of Conduct of Young Persons/Athletes

Young Persons/Young athletes are entitled to:

- Be listened to.
- Be believed.
- Be safe and to feel safe.
- Participate in activities on an equal basis, appropriate to their ability and stage of development.
- Be treated with dignity, sensitivity and respect.
- Be happy, have fun and enjoy athletics.
- Experience competition at a level at which they feel comfortable and the desire to win as a positive and healthy outcome for striving for best performance.
- Comment and make suggestions in a constructive manner.
- Make a complaint in an appropriate way and have it dealt with through an effective complaints procedure.
- Be afforded appropriate confidentiality.
- Be represented at meetings within their club.
- Have a voice in the running of their club.
- Approach the Children's Officer/Designated Person with any questions or concerns they may have .

Young Persons/Young Athletes should undertake to:

- Play fairly, do their best and have fun.
- Shake hands before and after the event, whoever wins - and mean it.
- Respect officials and accept their decisions with grace, not a grudge.
- Respect fellow club members; give them full support both when they do well and when things go wrong.
- Respect opponents: they are not enemies, they are partners in a sporting event.
- Give opponents a hand if they are injured or have problems with equipment.
- Accept apologies from opponents when they are offered.
- Exercise self-control and tolerance for others, even if others do not.
- Be modest in victory and be gracious in defeat.
- Show appropriate loyalty to athletics and all its participants.
- Make high standards of fair play the example others want to follow.

Young Persons/Young Athletes should not:

- Cheat.
- Use violence.
- Shout at, or argue with, officials, club mates or opponents.
- Take banned substances to improve performance.
- Bully or use bullying tactics to isolate another child.
- Use unfair or bullying tactics to gain advantage.
- Harm club mates, opponents or their property.
- Tell lies about adults or other children.
- Spread rumours.
- Keep secrets about any person who may have caused them harm.

Code of Conduct for Parents and Guardians

Parents and Guardians should:

- Be a role model for your child, maintain the highest standards of conduct when interacting with children, other parents, coaches, officials and volunteers.
- Have respect for decision of coaches, leaders, volunteers.
- Know and/or make themselves aware of the roles of the people in the Club to include coaches, leaders, volunteers.
- Have read and are aware of the Club Policies, and made their child –Young persons /Athlete aware of same together with the AAI Code of ethics & Good Practice for Children in Athletics at http://www.athleticsireland.ie/content/wp-content/uploads/2010/12/code-of-ethics-for-children_soft.pdf
- Encourage their child to learn the rules of their chosen event and play within them.
- Discourage unfair play and arguing with officials/coaches.
- Help their child to recognise good performance, not just results.
- Never force their child to take part in sport.
- Set a good example by recognising fair play and applauding good performances of all.
- Never punish or belittle a child for losing or making mistakes.
- Publicly accept officials' judgements.
- Support their child's involvement and help them to enjoy their sport.
- Use correct and proper language at all times.
- Encourage and guide performers to accept responsibility for their own performance and behaviour.
- Ensure that you as a Parent are familiar with the start/finish time of your child's training session/competition, so to ensure that child/youth athletes are dropped off at the start of training and are picked up promptly at the end of training sessions.
- Ensure that the training session is still taking place in the event of bad weather.
- Ensure that all belongings are removed at the end of each training session.
- Provide written confirmation to the club if their child has permission to walk home during or at the end of their training session.
- Parents of younger children will be required to have an adult attend and supervise their child/youth member during training sessions.
- The Club is not a child minding service and therefore should not be treated as such by parents.

Code of Conduct for Coaches, Officials and Volunteers

All Coaches, Officials and Volunteers at the club should:

- Complete a volunteer application form and Garda Vetting Form.
- Complete AAI course on Code of Ethics and Conduct and Behaviour of AAI.
- Completed the AAI training course for coaches if coaching.
- Be positive during training sessions and competition and praise and encourage effort as well as results.
- Plan and prepare appropriately.
- Put welfare of young children first, strike a balance between this and winning/results.
- Encourage fair play and treat participants equally.
- Recognise developmental needs, ensuring activities are appropriate to the age, ability and experience of those taking part.
- Be qualified and up-to-date with knowledge and skill of sport and athletics for young people and be willing to undertake training courses and workshops relevant to AAI (Athletics Associations Ireland).
- Involve parents where possible and inform parents when problems arise.
- Keep record of attendance at training.
- Keep a brief record of injury(s) and action taken.
- Keep a brief record of problem/action/outcomes, if behavioural problems arise.
- Encourage athletes to value their performances and not just results.
- Encourage athletes to accept responsibility for their own performance and behaviour.
- Never use foul or inappropriate language.
- Be familiar with club policies and procedures.

Coaches, Officials and Volunteers should not:

- Spend excessive amounts of time with children away from others.
- Take sessions alone.
- Take children to their home.
- Take children on journeys alone in their car.
- Use any form of punishment or physical force on a child.
- Exert undue influence over a participant in order to obtain personal benefit or reward.
- Engage in rough physical games, sexually provocative games or allow inappropriate touch of any kind, and/or make sexually suggestive comments about or to a child.
- Take measurements or engage in certain types of fitness testing without the presence of another adult.
- Undertake any form of therapy (hypnosis etc) in training of children.

Further Information

There is more detailed information on the above policy in the Code of Ethics & Good Practice for Children in Athletics document, which can be found on the Athletics Ireland website under the Child Welfare and Club Development section. All members should be aware and have read this at http://www.athleticsireland.ie/content/wp-content/uploads/2010/12/code-of-ethics-for-children_soft.pdf