



# **Fr. Casey's GAA**

## **Standard Operating Procedures**

### **Members Handbook**

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## 1. Introduction

Prior to the foundation of the Gaelic Athletic Association in 1884, athletics and Gaelic football in Abbeyfeale were played under the guidance of our patriot priest Fr. William Casey. Since then, Fr. Casey's GAA Club has been one of the most successful clubs in the history of Limerick Gaelic Games. Located in West Limerick, Fr. Casey's was one of the first clubs in Ireland to register under the rules of the GAA and since then the club has never failed to fully participate in the games, administration and activities of the GAA.

The most important activity in any club is the playing of its' games. Our club strives for excellence in the coaching provided to our players and in the quality of playing activity that each player receives. We aim to achieve this in the quality of our coaching and in the provision of games for our young players in a safe and enjoyable environment.

Our success as a club is largely defined by the number of young players playing our games and not by the number of underage trophies we secure in any given season. Therefore, the role of our mentors is invaluable and central to our success as a club.

This document envisages a common-sense approach to the planning and playing of our games which in turn will support the effective running of our club.

While this document has been carefully compiled, it may not legislate for every situation that may arise. Notwithstanding this, it is anticipated that the spirit of this document will be adopted by all members as our club strives collectively to achieve best practice. This will necessitate strong communication, collaboration and cooperation from all involved in the running of Fr. Casey's.

To reinforce our strength and continued progress as a club, it is essential that all members, mentors and officers of the club operate as 'One Club'.

## 2. Our Structures: Games Committees

Our club comprises of two sections, each organised into separate sub committees who have responsibility for the day-to-day administration and promotion of our games.

- Senior Men's GAA - coordinating all men's football activities from 18 years to adult.
- Bord na nÒg GAA - coordinating all football activities from under 5 to under 17.

Responsibilities include membership, fundraising, games promotion and maintaining / managing training & match related equipment. Both sections will, through active engagement with mentors, ensure that there is a balanced programme of games and training in place and that all players get an opportunity to play and participate. Both sections will ensure that all games related activity is managed in line with the Clubs SOP.

The co-ordination and governance of all games related activity within the club is managed by the club committee, comprised of a Chairperson (appointed by Executive), Secretaries and county board delegates. The committee is responsible for the following:

- Player considerations and in particular ensuring the appropriate management and welfare of players.
- Coordinating our overall Games Calendar, including pitch allocation for training and matches.
- Oversight for the selection of team mentors across all codes, in advance of ratification by the Clubs Executive.
- Oversight for games related governance, including Garda vetting for relevant personnel and player registration.

### **3. Mentor Ratification**

The Chairperson, Secretary and Vice-Chairperson of each Committee (Men's football and Bord na nÓg) will be responsible for appointing team managers and mentors for teams within each code.

All management teams will subsequently be ratified by the relevant committee. All mentors will be reviewed and ratified by individual committees on an annual basis.

### **4. Team Management Guidelines**

The following are a set of operating procedures for team mentors. This section provides information, guidelines and requirements to support the effective running of our teams. These are not intended to be an exhaustive list and any queries or additional information required should be directed to your relevant Chairperson or Secretary.

### **5. Membership**

- Team mentors are advised that it is imperative that all teams management and players are fully paid-up members of the Club. Players who are not fully paid-up members will NOT be covered under the club player injury scheme. Furthermore, the playing of an unregistered player is in contravention of GAA rules and will result in sanctions.
- Team mentors are responsible for ensuring that all panel members and mentors have paid their membership by the appropriate deadline –
  - Men's football, Juvenile sections: 31st March
- After this date, any non-members are not permitted to play or use the club training facilities.
- For convenience, the club has an online registration facility (Foireann) which can be accessed via the clubs' website.
- All queries in relation to membership should be directed to the Secretary or Chairperson.

### **6. Matches**

- Mentors of men's and Bord na Nog football teams should email the Club Secretary ([secretary.frcaseys.limerick@gaa.ie](mailto:secretary.frcaseys.limerick@gaa.ie)) of any challenge matches giving details of the age group, opponents, referee's name, time and venue. The secretary will then notify the County Board

Secretary. Three working days' notice is required for challenge matches within the county while 5 working days' notice is required for matches outside the county.

- Mentors should keep a record of match & training attendance. Players should notify their coach if unable to attend matches.
- All team mentors must have a have a Team Sheet which should be filled in with the full list of their panel in Irish. Players are numbered on this sheet on the day of the match and must play as allocated. Two signed copies must be given to the referee with the appropriate fee before the start of the game.
- A soft copy of this team sheet is also available from the Secretary. It is recommended that mentors complete this master template with the names of their panel prepopulated.
- Where the referee is not appointed by the County Board, mentors must select a referee from the official referee's listing.
- Referee's fees and entry fees for blitzes and tournaments can be reclaimed via the Club Expenses forms. All expenses must be submitted regularly during the year (at least quarterly and no later than October 31st.
- Full age players should be given priority over a player from a younger age group when selecting panels and teams. Commitment & dedication should also be used as a measure for selection. This should be the basis of our selection policy for ages up to and including 16 years of age. Any request to deviate from this must be ratified by the Committee.

## **7. Our Players**

Ultimately as a sporting organisation our focus and priority centres on the development of our players and teams and ultimately success in competitions. Therefore, Fr. Casey's will strive to provide a conducive environment to support these objectives. We realize that our players are central to the activity of our club and we will endeavour to encourage and support them as representatives of Fr. Casey's. Also, over the course of their careers, significant time and effort will be invested by the club to provide and maintain proper playing facilities.

All committee members and players should be privileged to be part of our club and therefore, we have a collective responsibility to support its' growth and development through a culture of involvement and reciprocity.

Player participation in our club needs to extend beyond representing the club in games or using the club's facilities for training.

As such our players should consider ways in which they can contribute to the development of our club and this culture of involvement.

- Participate in a roster of coaching our underage teams and academy.
- Once finished playing, commit to a team for a period of time.
- Recognize the work of those around who make it possible to play our games.
- Acknowledge those who support the teams.
- Respect our facilities.
- Attend our Clubhouse after games.
- Support other teams in the Club in all codes.
- Support any fund-raising activities during the year.

## **8. Games Finance**

The costs associated with financing a club are significant and need to be carefully managed by all. The cost of running teams include the maintenance of our buildings, pitches and dressing room facilities, insurance fees, team affiliation fees to the County Board, equipment, gear, Physiotherapy, referee fees and sundries. These costs are far in excess of players' membership fees and so fundraising and the control of expenditure are a necessary part of club activity.

### **Expenditure**

- At the beginning of the season, both sections are required to plan a budget of expenditure and provide same to the relevant Treasurer.
- The purchase of any equipment (training & match related) must be requested through and get approval from the Club Chairman or Club Secretary.
- All expenses must be approved and signed off by the Chairperson and/or Secretary **before** purchase
- The purchase of equipment or team gear will be managed centrally and distributed by the relevant Secretary.
- Under no circumstances should equipment be purchased outside of this process.
- All equipment purchased remains the property of the club.
- Mentors are required to manage allocated team equipment.
- Each section must undertake a stock-take of all equipment at the end of the season and ensure all relevant equipment is passed on to the incoming manager. .
- Claims for all expenses incurred should be submitted via a Club Expenses form and vouched where appropriate. These must be submitted by October 31<sup>st</sup>.
- Out-sourced match day Physio's for teams will be considered on a case-by-case basis. All teams are encouraged to have a trained first aid club member in attendance at matches.
- In exceptional circumstances all catering requests must be pre-approved by the relevant Chairperson. Volunteer Catering must be the first option.

- No use of Bar stock is permitted.

### **Fund Raising**

Fund raising is an essential part of the club activity to enable us to meet the running costs of our teams and infrastructure (pitches, etc.). All members are required to proactively participate in club fund raising activities. The following points should be noted;

- All fundraising events must be approved in advance by the Executive committee including target sponsors / donors.
- All monies raised on behalf of the Club (and/or team) must be lodged to the club accounts through the Treasurer.
- Any funds raised are not automatically ring fenced for an equivalent team expenditure. Any expenditure needs to be assessed as reasonable and on its own merits.

All sections, working with the Committee, are charged with heading up a minimum of one fundraiser per year. We would ask that all mentors participate in the promotion of said fundraiser and more generally engage with and support the Clubs fundraising efforts.

Over the course of the year on Fridays and Saturdays from 10am to 1pm (weather permitting), the club sell lotto tickets in the square as part of the fund-raising activities. Mentors are asked to encourage adult players to participate in this ticket selling which has the added benefit of building up engagement between club members and the general public.

## **9. Coaching Best Practice**

### **Mentoring Underage Players**

- Team mentors and members working with underage players (up to 17 years of age) must be Garda Vetted. Garda Vetting details can be obtained from the Children's Officer and/or Games Section Secretary. All applications are processed online.
- Team Mentors should never enter a dressing room alone. Always ensure you have another mentor or parent with you.
- Team mentors should treat all players equally regardless of age, gender, ethnic/cultural background, religion or ability.
- Concerns about a player's behaviour should be discussed with the Club Children's Officer.
- Remember as a Coach you oversee training sessions. Appoint assistants or ask parents to stay to avoid being alone at a session.
- The safety of players is paramount at all times.
- Make sure all players are included and suitably challenged during sessions.
- Keep note of any safety related incidences/accidents that occur during sessions and always report them in writing to the Club Secretary.

- Mentors should keep a record of training attendance. Players should notify their coach if unable to attend training.
- Regular attendance at training sessions should be taken into consideration when selecting teams.
- Players not showing commitment to his/her own age group, should not be selected to play for an older group.

#### **All mentors**

- All team mentors must acknowledge that they have read and understand the Club's code of Practice. Signed acknowledgement to be returned to Games Section Secretary.
- To comply with the Code of Ethics and Best Practice, a coach should never work alone with a team.
- Coaches should develop a good understanding of the GAA Coaching Manuals and ensure that they have the appropriate coaching certifications.
- As a minimum all coaches should have attained Foundation level and continue to progress to Level 1.
- It is mandatory for all players to use a mouth guard in all Gaelic football matches and training sessions.

#### **10. Communicating with Players**

- Team Mentors should seek contact detail from parents of underage children (up to 17 years of age). No direct contact allowed without written parental consent.
- Be aware of the Club Policy on texting underage players. Only use the relevant and designated group text. For underage players on adult team's, parents contact detail must be included in all communications.
- Clearly communicate training schedules and Match fixtures to parents & payers with sufficient notice.

#### **11. Playing Gear**

- The Clubs' Executive has established an official range of Club wear including a standard jersey.
- Club wear is available from the following designated outlet – O'Neill's online shop <https://www.oneills.com/shop-by-team/gaa/ireland/fr-caseys-gaa.html>
- The ordering and purchase of team gear must be pre-approved and managed centrally as outlined in Section 8 of this document (Games Finance).
- Reproduction of the Club crest on unofficial gear is not permitted.
- It is important that all teams are appropriately togged out in the proper club gear. At all times the image of the club as portrayed by members must be positive.
- All team managements are requested to ensure that all players from u12's up wear club shorts, club socks and official team jerseys for all official matches.



- In the event that a team sponsor wishes to purchase gear for a team, this should be discussed in advance with the Chairperson and / or Secretary and approved in advance.
- All jerseys to be handed back to management after use.

## **12. Games Promotion / Match Reports**

- Communication is an important part of the promotion of our games and it is vital to engage with our members and the broader community.
- All communication related to Club activity should seek to support our brand and image as a sporting organisation as well as informing members and non-members about our activities and achievements.
- The Club uses several official channels to promote its activities including social media (Facebook, twitter) email, our website, notice boards and the local newspapers.
- Where appropriate, the Club will also use signage at appropriate points in the town to advertise upcoming events and games.
- Each Games Group has an appointed PRO who coordinates closely with the Club PRO. Mentors are requested to work with their respective Games PROs to promote upcoming games as well as filing match reports for broader publication as appropriate.
- Team mentors should appoint an individual (mentor or parent) to record and submit match reports to the Games or Club PRO.
- Under no circumstances should members use communication channels that bring the Club or other Club members into disrepute.
- The misuse of social media can have significant implications for the reputation of the Club and / or its members.
- Any breach of the Clubs Policy on Communications by a Club member may necessitate further action up to and including sanctions under the Clubs Disciplinary Procedures.

## **13. Fr. Casey's GAA Policy on Injury Claims**

The Club uses the GAA Medical Injury Claim Scheme run by DWF for all male playing members. It is important that each member clearly understands ALL TERMS & CONDITIONS as outlined in the GAA Injury booklet: <https://www.gaa.ie/api/pdfs/image/upload/dxtqhmdqi1vsv0jfrmh.pdf>

### **What are the Main Guidelines for Players?**

- Report any suspected injury to your team manager immediately.
- Ensure permission is sought for private treatment
- A copy of all forms, receipts, letters, etc submitted should be kept as well as any correspondences received.

- Where a preliminary claim has been submitted, a report and update on the claim must be submitted within one year from the date of the preliminary notice to validate the claim.
- All claims for which preliminary notices have been received must be lodged and validated within two years of the original preliminary notice except in exceptional circumstances
- Injury claims will be monitored on a claim-by-claim basis and a player who plays while receiving treatment may have their claim disallowed.

### **What are the Key Guidelines for Officials / Managers?**

- Report any injury to the referee/match official immediately (within 24hrs).
- Ensure all injuries are reported to the Club Secretary by email ([secretary.frcaseys.limerick@gaa.ie](mailto:secretary.frcaseys.limerick@gaa.ie)).

This must include

- Name of injured player
  - Email and mobile of injured player
  - When injury happened
  - Referees Report
- Establish a register of claims for your own records

### **14. Guidelines for Facilities**

The following guidelines will apply to the use of the pitches and facilities in Fr. Casey's:

#### **Facility Care**

- Any team using pitches for games must put up nets and flags and take them down after the game.
- Goalmouth guard must be replaced.
- Juvenile goals must be secured (important for Health and Safety purposes).
- After matches, all bottles/gear/rubbish to be removed from the side lines of both home and opposition teams and the area surrounding pitches to ensure the grounds are kept neat and tidy.
- Nets / Flags to be tidied away and accounted for in their correct allocated location.
- The last team on the pitch each evening must switch off the floodlights.
- Committee will decide if the pitches are playable. If the pitches are unplayable, committee will contact the affected Team Mentors.
- Committee will co-ordinate schedule for cutting & lining of pitches. Each Games Code will be required to assist.
- Abuse or misuse of the playing surface will result in long periods of downtime of the pitches.
- No training should take place on the pitches without the express permission of the committee. Pre-match warm up Drills/Fitness Exercises that may cause damage should not be carried out on the pitches and confined to the sand-pit.

### **Pitch Allocation**

- Official County Board fixtures take precedent over Challenge Matches.
- All match fixtures will be advertised on social media. Requests for additional match fixtures to be made via committee.
- Any fixture clashes should be referred to committee.
- Team Managers looking for a change of fixture must respect existing fixture schedule.
- The following priority for pitch allocation is used when County Board fixtures are allocated the same date/time slot.
  - Adult
  - Juvenile
- Clarifications on existing fixtures or changes to existing fixtures should be addressed to committee.
- Except for the above, the use of pitches for matches not involving Fr. Casey's shall require the consent of the Club Executive Committee.

### **Dressing Rooms**

- Dressing rooms should be locked while players are on the pitch.
- Team Mentors will be responsible for locking up and turning off lights in the dressing rooms and toilets.
- All dressing rooms/showers and general areas that are occupied by teams, prior to, during and after training and matches must be kept clean and not damaged in any way. Each team is responsible for cleaning all used dressing rooms after matches.
- The use of cameras, smart phones or any other recording device or medium is strictly forbidden in the dressing rooms and surrounding areas.

### **Equipment Stores**

- The Equipment stores should be always kept tidy.
- All equipment should be returned to their relevant store after training/match is complete.
- The store is to be kept always locked.

### **15. Club Officers – Main Responsibilities**

- The Chairperson is the principal officer of a GAA Club. As well as chairing Club Executive Committee and other Club meetings, the Chairperson has prime responsibility for ensuring that the Club is a well organised, well managed and an active unit.
- The Club Secretary is the chief administrator in the Club with responsibilities including communication, the management of club correspondence, record keeping and Club planning.
- The Club Registrar is responsible for ensuring that the Club is up to date and compliant in the registration of players and members.

- The main function of the Club PRO is to communicate with members and the general public on behalf of the Club, presenting a positive image of the Club to the local community and beyond. The Club PRO will work with the Games groups PROS to develop a Communication Plan to ensure the ongoing promotion of Club activity.
- The Club Treasurer has responsibility for the safe keeping of the funds of the Club. He/she is responsible for recording all income and expenditure and for reporting on the financial position of the Club to the Club Executive Committee on an on-going basis.
- The Vice-Chairperson, Assistant-Secretary and Vice-Treasurer assist the main officers in carrying out their roles in the Club. The Vice-Chairperson will preside as chairperson of Club meetings in the event of the chairperson being unable to attend.
- The main role of the Irish Language & Culture Officer is to encourage the use of the Irish language and to promote cultural activities in the Club, while also developing strong links with our community.
- The IT Officer is responsible for the Clubs IT Infrastructure including website, IT security and databases.
- The Insurance Officer is responsible for managing the paperwork requirements for any player insurance claims following an injury.
- The Facilities & Safety Officer is responsible for overseeing the maintenance and enhancement of our facilities.
- The main function of the Bar & Clubhouse Officer is to ensure the effective running of the Bar & Clubhouse.
- The Children's Officer shall have as his/her primary aim the establishment of a child and youth centred ethos within the Club and will be viewed by many as the link between the children/young people or their parents and the Club.
- The School Liaison Officer works closely with local schools to support & coordinate communication with the Club and facilitate the promotion of our games.
- The Club Designated Person is responsible for dealing with any concerns relating to the possible abuse of children.