

# Our Games – Our Code

## Dealing with Alleged Breaches of the Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport at Club level – Summary

Our Games – Our Code, the joint Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport (including the Code of Behaviour) outlines the minimum levels of behaviour that we require of those that are involved in underage games and activities. The Code applies equally to underage players, coaches, to parents and guardians, to our supporters, referees and Club officials. While the promotion of the Code at Club level may be seen as the responsibility of the Club Children's Officer ultimately it is everybody's responsibility to ensure that the Code is fully implemented.

Breaches of our Code will unfortunately occur from time to time. This may happen as a result of carelessness, poor practice, lack of understanding or there may in some instances be deliberate or indeed calculated breaches of the Code.

A detailed booklet titled **Our Games Our Code: Dealing with Alleged Breaches of the Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport** is available from The Gaelic Athletic Association, the Camogie Association, Ladies Gaelic Football Association, GAA Handball Ireland and the Rounders Council of Ireland or may be downloaded from their respective websites.

### DEALING WITH AN ALLEGED BREACH OF THE CODE

- Alleged breaches of the Code should be dealt with in a fair and impartial manner with the presumption of innocence maintained until otherwise proven. This section outlines in summary form details of the joint publication **Our Games Our Code: Dealing with Alleged Breaches of the Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport** as adopted by Central Council.

- Any action taken should at all times be seen to be proportionate to the alleged breach that may have taken place. If at any stage the person against whom the breach is alleged is under 18 years of age, no formal meetings should take place with that person without the presence or permission of a Parent or Guardian.
- Should a false allegation be made regarding a breach of the Code and should the matter be subsequently deemed to be of a malicious nature, the person making any such false allegation(s) may be subject to sanctions by the relevant Sport's Governing Body and/or by the statutory authorities. There is however a difference between a false allegation and an incorrect assumption or an allegation that may be unproven.
- Where a person may believe or observe that a breach of the Code has occurred, they should report this matter to the person in the relevant Club who may deal with such matters, i.e. the Club Children's Officer. While it is always preferable that allegations or concerns are received in writing, the Club is equally obliged to act upon any alleged breaches of the Code whether they are reported verbally, anonymously or in writing.

### PROPOSAL TO DEAL WITH ALLEGED BREACHES OF THE CODE OF BEST PRACTICE AT CLUB LEVEL

It is acknowledged that certain breaches of the Code that occur at Club level may more often than not be instances of poor practice and can appropriately be dealt with by the Club Children's Officer in an informal manner. This could necessitate meeting with the person(s) who may be responsible for the poor practice or the minor breach of the Code and resolving the issue amicably and by agreement.

If it is not possible to resolve an issue in an informal manner the Club Children's Officer or the person making an allegation, or the person against whom the allegation has been made, (if unhappy with the informal outcome), may refer the matter to the Club Executive Committee for consideration.

Actions that may be deemed to be in breach of the code at Club level may include breaches at training or at internal club events or activities.

### RECEIVING A COMPLAINT OR ALLEGED BREACH

The Club Executive may receive alleged breaches of the Code from members of the Club, members of other Clubs, from their Children's Officer or members of the public.

When the Club Executive receives an alleged breach of the Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport it may:

1. Refer the matter to the Club or County Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport Hearings Committee to be decided upon
2. Refer the alleged breach to the National Child Welfare and Protection Committee to adjudicate upon in accordance with agreed procedures
3. Deem the alleged breach to be of such a nature that it does not merit being forwarded to any other party for further action

4. Refer the matter to the Club Children's Officer to be dealt with informally
5. Deal with the matter in accordance with Association disciplinary rules

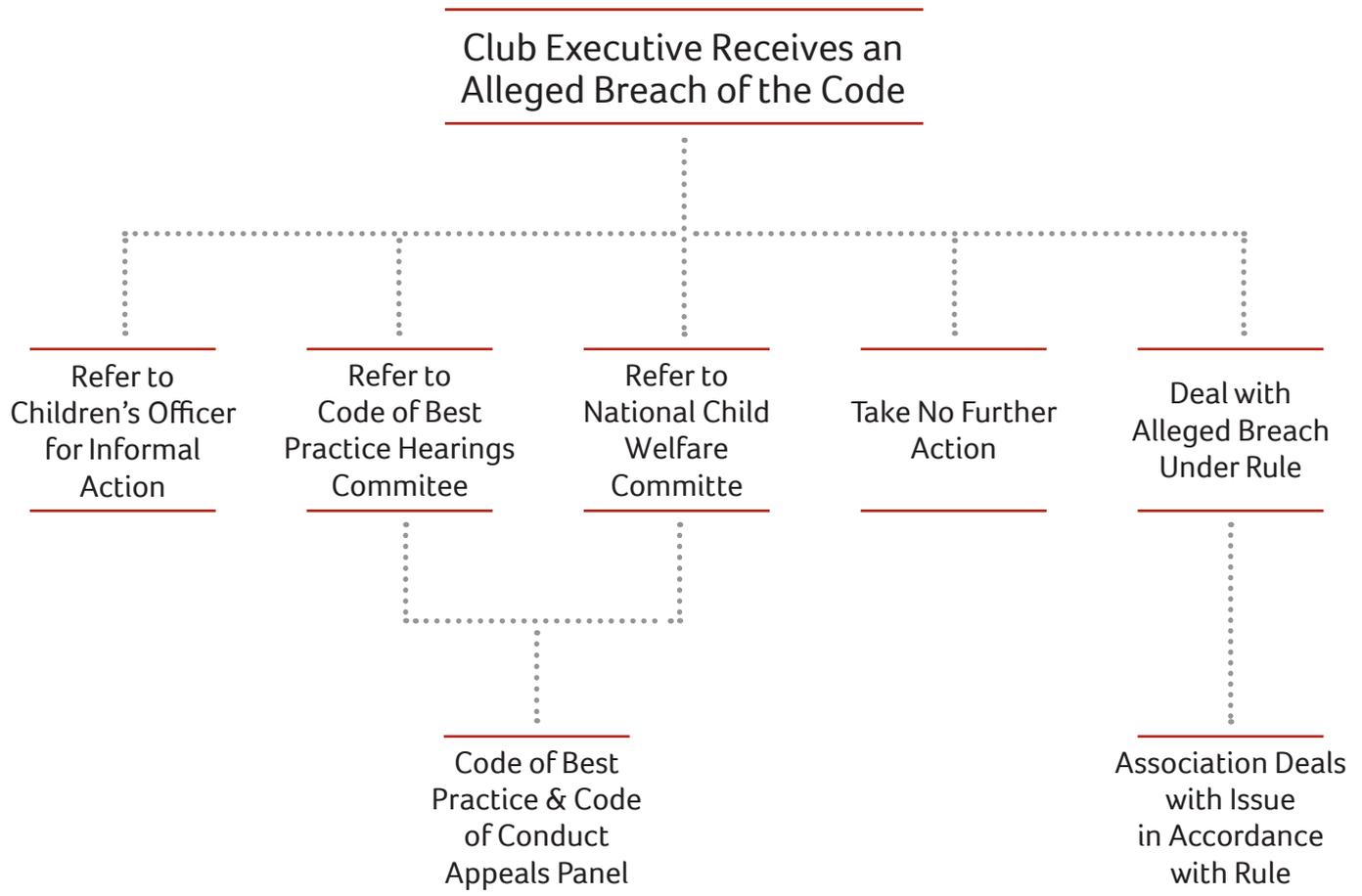
### CODE OF BEST PRACTICE IN YOUTH SPORT HEARINGS COMMITTEE

The Club Executive shall appoint a 3 person Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport Hearings Committee to hear allegations of breaches of the Code at Club level.

- In appointing the Committee, consideration shall be given to the extent of integration in each club.
- The Club Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport Hearings Committee shall appoint, from within its membership a Chairperson and Secretary. The Committee shall be facilitated in its work by the Club Children's Officer.
- Where a conflict of interest is perceived to exist for any member of the Committee, when considering an allegation, they shall temporarily withdraw from such deliberations but shall resume their membership of the Committee once the matter has been decided upon in their absence. The Club Executive Committee may appoint a temporary member to the Club Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport Hearings Committee to substitute for the temporary withdrawal of that member.
- The Club Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport Hearings Committee shall have the authority to determine if an allegation is deemed to be in breach of the Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport and shall determine what action or sanction may be passed against the individual or individuals as a result of the breach of the Code.

### APPEALS

Where a sanction has been imposed against an individual or a unit following a breach of the Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport, whether at Club, County, Provincial or National level, the individual or unit shall have the right to appeal this decision to the Code of Best Practice & Code of Conduct Appeals Panel.



# Dealing with Alleged Breaches of the Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport at County level

As has been previously acknowledged minor breaches of the Code that occur at County level may often be categorised as instances of poor practice and can quite appropriately be dealt with in these instances at County level by the County Children's Officer in an informal manner and by agreement. This could necessitate meeting with the person who may be responsible for the poor practice or the minor breach of the Code and resolving the issue amicably and by agreement.

If it is not possible to resolve an issue in an informal manner the County Children's Officer or the person making a complaint, or indeed the person against whom the complaint has been made (if unhappy with the informal outcome), may refer the matter to the Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport (County) Determining Committee, for consideration.

Actions that may be deemed to be in breach of the Code at County level may include breaches at club games or activities at development squad activities or other county events.

This section outlines in summary form details of the joint publication Our Games Our Code: Dealing with Alleged Breaches of the Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport as adopted by Central Council.

## **CODE OF BEST PRACTICE IN YOUTH SPORT (COUNTY) DETERMINING COMMITTEE**

All Counties shall appoint a 3 person Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport Determining Committee to determine if a complaint or alleged breach of the Code shall be dealt with in accordance with the Code or relevant Association disciplinary rules.

Each Committee shall consist of three persons, thus including a nominee proposed by the relevant County Committee of the LGFA, the Camogie Association and the GAA.

Where a conflict of interest is perceived to exist for any member of the Committee, when considering a complaint, they shall temporarily withdraw from such deliberations but shall return to the Committee once the matter has been decided upon in their absence.

- The Committee shall appoint, from within its membership a Chairperson and Secretary. The Committee shall be facilitated in its work by the relevant County Children’s Officer.
- The Committee may receive allegations of alleged breaches of the Code from members or units of the GAA, LGFA or the Camogie Association, from Children’s Officers or members of the public

#### **When the Determining Committee receives an alleged breach of the Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport they may:**

- 1 Refer the matter to the County or Club Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport Hearings Committee to be decided upon
- 2 Refer it to the relevant Association unit (LGFA, Camogie and GAA) to be heard under their disciplinary rules
- 3 Deem the alleged breach to be of such a nature that the complaint does not merit it being forwarded to any other party for further action
- 4 Refer the matter to the County Children’s Officer to be dealt with informally
- 5 Refer the alleged breach to the National Child Welfare and Protection Committee to adjudicate upon in accordance with agreed procedures

#### **PROVINCIAL / NATIONAL LEVEL**

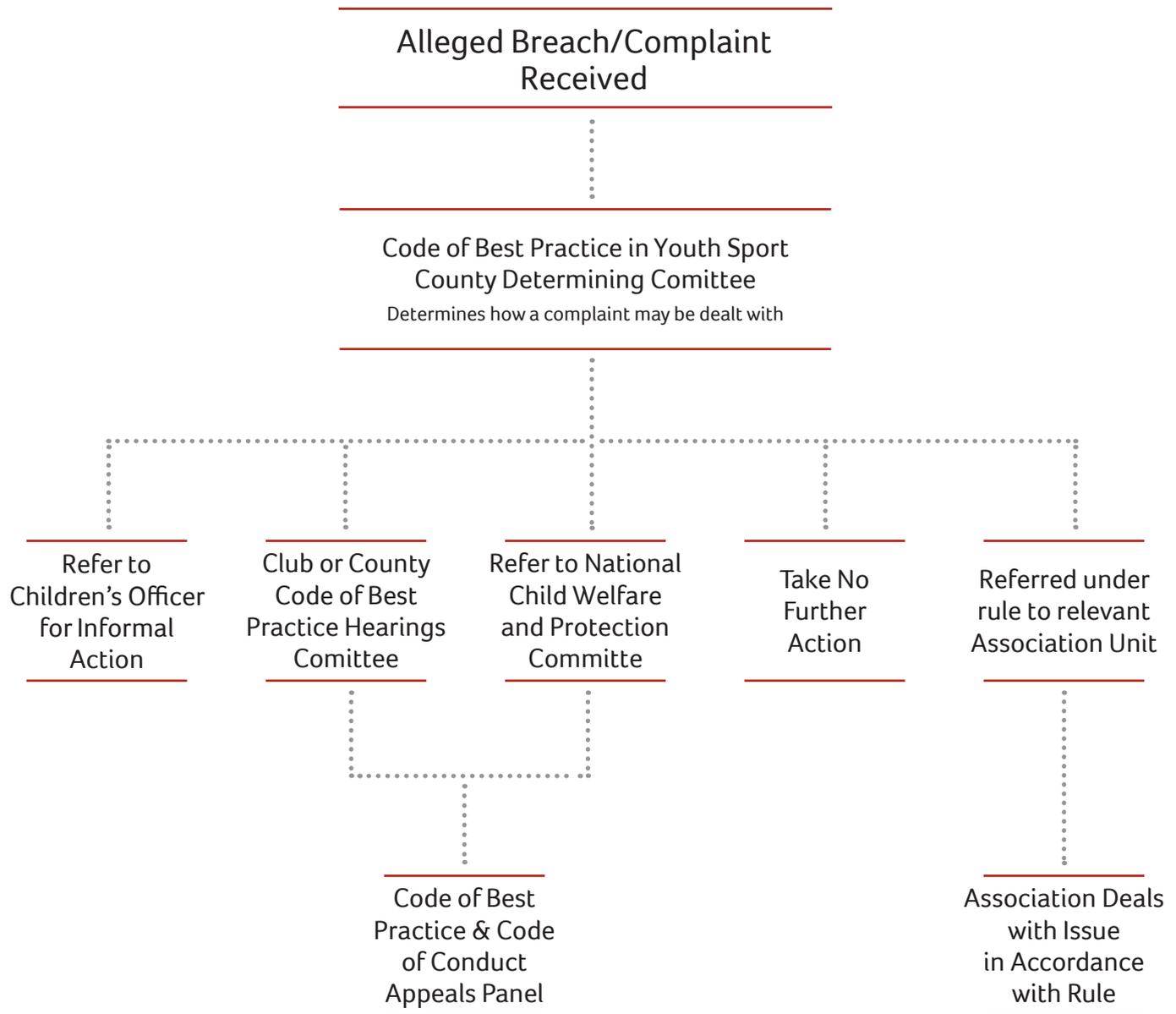
Breaches of the Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport, alleged to have occurred at Provincial or National games, events or activities held under the auspices of any of the Associations who have adopted the Code shall be forwarded to the National Child Welfare and Protection Committee to be adjudicated upon, in the first instance, at that forum and in accordance with agreed procedures.

#### **NATIONAL CHILD WELFARE AND PROTECTION COMMITTEE**

The National Child Welfare and Protection Committee may receive allegations of alleged breaches of the Code from members or units of the GAA, LGFA or the Camogie Association, from Children’s Officers or members of the public and subsequently adjudicate upon such allegations or if deemed appropriate refer any such allegations to another Unit or Committee in accordance with agreed procedures.

#### **APPEALS**

Following a hearing of the alleged breach of the Code and where a sanction has been imposed against an individual or a unit, whether at Club, County, Provincial or National level, the individual or unit shall have the right to appeal this decision to the Code of Best Practice & Code of Conduct Appeals Panel.





# Our Games – Our Code

## Dealing with Alleged Breaches of the Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport

A detailed booklet titled *Our Games Our Code: Dealing with Alleged Breaches of the Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport* is available from the GAA, the Camogie Association, Ladies Gaelic Football Association, GAA Handball Ireland and the Rounders Council of Ireland or may be downloaded from their respective websites.

This booklet contains a step by step guidance on how to deal with alleged breaches of the Code including Terms of Reference for relevant Club and County Committees, the role of County Committees, Club Executives and of Children's Officers in assisting the process as adopted by each Central Council.