

**Killester Donnycarney Football Club (“KDFC” or “the Club”)**  
**Junior Football Handbook – Rules and Guidelines**

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## 1. Introduction

KDFC is a community football club that caters for over 300 playing members with teams for men, women and children as well as 150 social members. While our senior teams compete at the very highest level of amateur football, the club aims to provide space and support to anyone who wants to play football in a safe and friendly environment, be it recreational, development or competitive.

The guidelines set out in this handbook describe how the Club operates and the rules that govern it.

## 2. Child welfare

The Club's Child Welfare Team will ensure that the Club complies with all legislation and FAI best practice on child welfare including:

- Keep up to date on any legislative changes in regards to child welfare;
- Keep up to date on any changes in FAI policy;
- Maintain accurate up to date records of all Club members in contact with children and their vetting and safeguarding status; and
- Maintain a current, accurate, Club wide risk assessment including any third party venues used regularly as training grounds. This shall be posted in Hadden Park and be available on our website.

### 2.1 Recruitment and Training

It is a legal requirement, under the National Vetting Act 2012 to 2016, that all individuals, volunteers or paid, working with Children and Vulnerable Persons have completed Garda vetting clearance before engaging with the Club. The Club's child welfare team will ensure that the Club is fully compliant with all legislation and adhering to FAI best practice.

Existing managers and coaches must have their Garda Vetting certificate and safeguarding certificates up to date. Should anyone need any assistance with this, or to find out when their renewal date is, they must contact the child welfare team at [kdfc.childwelfare@gmail.com](mailto:kdfc.childwelfare@gmail.com).

The following principles shall be adopted by KDFC in recruiting for positions that involve working with children and vulnerable persons;

- All appointments will be dependent on successful Garda Vetting and the completion of safeguarding training and club induction;
- All individuals nominated for a coach or volunteer role must meet with a member of the Football Committee face to face; and
- All nominations for new coaches or volunteers must be approved by the junior football committee.

### 2.2 Club Induction

- A review of the Club child safeguarding statement;

- A review of the Club handbook
- A review of the FAI's Code of Conduct and Good Practice for Coaches
- Completion of safeguarding training 1; and
- Completion of coach training as appropriate:
  - U-7 to U-8: PDP1
  - U-9 to U-12: PDP2
  - U-12 to U-18: PDP3

### 3. Club Membership

- Players must pay in full the Club's annual subscription on registration or, in consultation with the club's treasurer and administrator, agree a schedule of payment.
- Managers' may only play players who have paid or part-paid their subscription (see above) and who are fully and properly registered with the relevant league. A player who has not at least part-paid their subscription is not insured, and both manager and the Club could be held liable for any injury to said player.
- Any player who is more than 2 months in arrears is not able to train or play matches until their payment is up to date.
- If any player's family is unable to make payments due to financial constraints, the Club will help them. The player's family will need to make contact with the team manager. These discussions must be treated as being highly confidential.
- It is a strict club rule that the guidelines of the relevant league(s) are fully followed when moving players between teams (whether internally or where a player from another club is involved). Please consult with the Junior Football Committee in advance. Guidelines on approaching players from other clubs can be found here;  
[www.fai.ie/domestic/governance/scouting](http://www.fai.ie/domestic/governance/scouting)

### 4. Coaching

#### 4.1 Child centred approach

- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person.
- Treat each person equally regardless of age, gender, ability, ethnic origin, cultural background or religion.
- Be positive during coaching sessions, games and other activities so that underage players always leave with a sense of achievement and an increased level of self-esteem.
- Recognise the development needs and capacity of all underage players, regardless of their ability, by emphasising participation for all while avoiding excessive training and competition. Skills development and personal satisfaction should have priority over competition when working with underage players.
- Develop an understanding of relevant coaching methods and ensure that they have the appropriate level of coaching accreditation.
- Do not equate losing with failure and do not develop a preoccupation with medals and trophies. The level of improvement made by underage players is the best indicator of effective coaching

## 4.2 Lead by example

- Never use foul language or provocative language/gestures to a player, opponent or match official.
- Only enter the field of play with the referee's permission.
- Do not compromise a referee's integrity.
- Encourage players to respect and accept the judgement of match officials.
- Do not smoke or vape while working with underage players.
- Do not consume alcohol or non-prescribed drugs immediately prior to or while underage players are in your care.
- Encourage parents to become involved in your team and Club activities wherever possible.

## 4.3 Conduct

- Develop an appropriate working relationship with children based on mutual trust and respect.
- Challenge bullying in any form whether physical or emotional. Bullying is not acceptable behaviour be it from a young person, coach, parent/guardian, spectator or match official.
- Do not shout at or lecture players or reprimand/ridicule them when they make a mistake.
- The use of any form of physical punishment is prohibited as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour, unless it is by way of restraint.
- Avoid incidents of horse play or role play or telling jokes etc. that could be misinterpreted.
- Do not collect cash or money via payment apps without permission from the committee.
- All games should be played with a display of good sportsmanship and fair play for all. It is a tradition with KDFC that win, lose or draw, we always offer a handshake to the opposition and the referee at the end of the match.

## 4.4 Physical contact

Some activities may require coaches to come into physical contact with underage players in the course of their duties.

However, coaches should;

- Avoid taking coaching sessions on their own.
- Only deliver one to one coaching, if deemed necessary, in a group setting.
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact with an underage player and never engage in inappropriate touching of a player
- Be aware that any necessary contact should be determined by the age and development of the player and should only take place with the permission and understanding of the of the player and in an open environment

## 4.5 Best Practice

- As a coach always be punctual and properly attired in official KDFC gear. This gear can be organised through the gear coordinator.
- Ensure that all of your players are suitably and safely attired to play
- Keep a record of attendance at training and at games by both players and coaches.
- Ensure that all dressing rooms and the general areas that are occupied by your players and other Club personnel, prior to, during or immediately following the completion of any match are kept clean and are not damaged in any way.
- Be accompanied by at least one other adult in underage team dressing rooms.

- Set realistic - stretching but achievable - performance goals for your players and team.
- Do not communicate individually by text/email with underage players.
- Do not engage in communications with underage players via social network sites.
- Encourage parents/guardians to play an active role in organising and assisting various activities for your teams and your Club.
- If it is necessary to transport a child/young person in your car, ensure that they are seated in a rear seat with seat belts securely fastened.
- With the exception of their own child a coach should not transport a child alone, except in emergency or exceptional circumstances

## 5. Teams and Team Management

### 5.1 Club Teams

The Club operates teams across all age groups from Our Academy (4-7); underage from U7 with girls and boys teams playing in the MGL, DDSL and the NDSL. The Club also has senior teams for men and women. It is a key objective of the Club to bring youth teams all the way through to senior level:

### 5.2 Team Assignment by Age

It is club policy that players must play for their age group according to the year that they were born. Any challenges posed by this policy must be raised with the Junior Football Committee.

### 5.3 Squad Sizes

KDFC strives to provide an opportunity to play for all children. In order to provide the best experience for the children, in accordance with the FAI Player Development guidelines, we recommend the following squad sizes, allowing for some flexibility:

Age Group	Squad Size	Team Size	Match Format	Match Duration	Referees
U6	10	4 v 4 (no GK)	Twin	4 x 10 mins	No
U7	10	4 v 4 (no GK)	Twin	4 x 10 mins	No
U8	12	5 v 5	Twin	4 x 12 mins	No
U9	12	5 v 5	Twin	4 x 12 mins	No
U10	16	7 v 7	Twin	2 x 25 mins	Yes
U11	16	7 v 7	Twin	2 x 25 mins	Yes
U12	16	9 v 9	Normal	2 x 30 mins	Yes
U13	16	11 v 11	Normal	2 x 30 mins	Yes
U14	16	11 v 11	Normal	2 x 35 mins	Yes
U15	16	11 v 11	Normal	2 x 35 mins	Yes
U16	16	11 v 11	Normal	2 x 40 mins	Yes

*Source: FAI Player Development Plan*

## 6. League Registration

Players must be registered in accordance with league rules. Please contact the Club's league secretary if you are unsure on any aspect of this.

- Managers and coaches must ensure that you are familiar with the rules of the league in which your team is playing. These are available from the relevant league websites.
- As different leagues have different preferred times for playing their games, managers should note that the league in which they play may change from year to year.
- Remember that players may, over time, develop a preference for playing on a given weekend day and changing days may result in a team losing players. The Club will attempt to facilitate any team that has a preference for either Saturday or Sunday.
- All requests for fixture changes/cancellations must be given to your League Secretary in advance of the date of the fixture you wish cancelled.
- All players must be registered on FAI Connect.

## 7. Training Sessions

- Have sessions timed - every minute counts;
- Have the pitch set up upon players arrival;
- Have designated roles in the session amongst coaching staff;
- Have the session planned before arrival;

- Reflect on every session;

## 8. Match preparation

### 8.1 General Match Preparation (for Managers and Coaches)

- Match recording: Should a manager or coach wish to video a game, seek permission from the opposition management team in advance.
- Ensure that the pitch is marked, posts and nets up and secured properly and corner flags in place. Marking will normally be completed during the week, but the manager is responsible for ensuring that this is complete and acceptable.
- Allow 40 minutes before the match to set up.
- Meet the opposition players and officials and show them to their dressing room if required.
- Allow plenty of time - at least a half an hour before kick-off - to get the team ready.
- Proper warm-ups and stretches should be undertaken before kick-off (mandatory for U11 teams and above).
- Players must be kitted out in the official club gear (jersey, shorts and socks). All KDFC branded gear must only be purchased from the O'Neills club shop or through the gear manager.
- Make sure that each player is wearing shin guards and proper studs.
- Make sure that you have arranged for an alternative set of jerseys in case of clash of colour for home matches.
- Make sure you do the warm downs with your players after the game (mandatory for 11-a-side games only).
- For hygiene reasons please ensure that all players bring their own drinks on match days.
- The club follows FAI [guidelines](http://www.fai.ie/domestic/player-developmentplan/PDP-formats) (located here: [www.fai.ie/domestic/player-developmentplan/PDP-formats](http://www.fai.ie/domestic/player-developmentplan/PDP-formats)) when determining minimum playing times.
- If you are the last fixture on your allocated pitch you must ensure that all equipment is returned to the club house after your game.
- If you are the last team that day, or you are unsure if you are the last team, it is your responsibility to ensure that the clubhouse is locked before you leave. If you have any trouble doing this, please contact a club official for assistance.

### 8.2 General Match Preparation for Away Games

- Follow FAI guidelines on the transport of children – details can be found here; [www.fai.ie/domestic/safeguarding/fai-child-welfare-policy](http://www.fai.ie/domestic/safeguarding/fai-child-welfare-policy)
- Ensure by the Friday before a match that you have the relevant details of your match from the league secretary e.g. Time, location, pitch surface etc. and that you communicate the necessary details to your players/ players parents where applicable.
- Allow plenty of time to get to the venue. Plan on arriving with at least 30 minutes to spare.
- Do your warm ups and stretches professionally and with a full club-approved kit.
- After the game: Tidy up and dispose of all waste (water bottles, coffee cups etc.).
- We should show other venues respect and leave a good impression of KDFC wherever we travel.



### 8.3 First Aid

- It is desirable that the manager or coaches has a basic knowledge of first aid. If you do not have first aid training, please alert the committee who will arrange training.
- Make sure your team's first aid kit is in order. Contact the Club equipment manager to obtain supplies.
- Never administer medicine to a player.
- Make sure you are informed of any medical condition any of your players may have.
- Ensure that you have emergency contact details for all players and that you are aware of any serious allergies or conditions that a player may have.

### 8.4 Injuries

- If any serious injury occurs during training or matches, managers/coaches must deal with the situation as an urgent matter and call the emergency services as required.
- Subsequently, they are required, as a matter of urgency to fill in a club injury report form available from the child welfare team and submit it to the child welfare team, for review by the junior football committee.
- The Club carries standard football club insurance to help protect against the cost of injury while participating in official club activities. For details refer to the treasurer.
- The Club's insurance company will require confirmation of the player's registration from the relevant league - another important reason to adhere to registration rules.

### 8.5 Pitch and Goalpost Safety

On match days it is the responsibility of each manager and coach to make sure the pitch is clean and clear of any dangerous objects.

All managers and coaches must check the safety of goalposts, i.e. check they are positioned and stabilised correctly. All goalposts must be correctly pegged into the ground. Managers and coaches of small-sided games, i.e. 7-a-side and 9-a-side, must put out and stabilise correctly the small goalposts. The managers and coaches of the first small-sided game on match days must put out and stabilise correctly the goalposts. These goalposts must then be put back into the clubhouse by the manager and coach of the last small-sided game. Nets must also be checked before and after every match.

For further safety tips on goalposts, please go to the following link:

[http://www.fai.ie/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=100035&Itemid=290](http://www.fai.ie/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=100035&Itemid=290)

### 8.6 Communicating results

- Match results must be sent to the League Secretary by Whatsapp as soon as possible once the match is over.
- Any requests for items to be added to the club website or social media (match reports, player recognitions, approved social events etc.) should be sent to [killesterdonnycarneyfc@gmail.com](mailto:killesterdonnycarneyfc@gmail.com) .

## 9. Training and match gear

- Club colours are red and maroon.
- All teams must wear approved/official training and match kits.
- Managers should contact the gear coordinator with regards to procurement of training and match gear.
- KDFC training gear to be worn at all sessions by players and coaches
- All players to wear official KDFC shorts & socks at all games.

## 10. Equipment

- All equipment such as footballs, bibs, cones, jerseys etc. will be supplied by the Club at the start of the season and is the responsibility of managers and coaches thereafter.
- Any unused equipment must be returned to the equipment coordinator.
- Footballs are weighted based on age group as follows;
  - Up to U8 - 290g;
  - U9 – U11 - 320g;
  - U12 – U14 - 370g; and
  - U15 and older – 450g.
- In order to ensure that the club's equipment is maintained, managers must not give out club jerseys to players for the year. They must be returned to the manager after every match and returned to the Club at the end of each season.

## 11. Behaviour

- All Club members and players shall adhere to the rules and guidelines contained in this handbook. Any deviation from those rules shall result in serious reprimand, up to and including withdrawal of membership.
- Managers are responsible for ensuring that managers, coaches, players and parents do not behave in a manner likely to bring KDFC into disrepute.
- All KDFC Club members/players are expected to behave with absolute respect towards referees. Any abuse of referees, parents, players or officials of any other club will not be tolerated.
- All managers and parents/guardians must treat each other with the utmost respect.

### 11.2 Parent/Guardian/Supporter Policies

Parents/guardians play an important role in promoting children's happiness and success in football and sport in general. Parental/guardian expectations and behaviour have a significant bearing on children's attitude and behaviour while participating in football.

Parents/guardians should:

- Give the coach assistance with pitch preparation in advance and following matches when asked and show appreciation for a job well done.

- Support the coach and referee decisions.
- Refrain from contacting the coach unless it is necessary.
- Inform the coach about any illness, injury, holidays, etc. as soon as possible to avoid matches being called off due to lack of players.
- Make every 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 instil a "win at all costs" attitude in children.
- Be positive or be quiet, negative comments are counter-productive.
- Be respectful of opposition players, coaches and supporters.
- Do not smoke or vape at training or matches.

Parents / Guardians should never:

- Provide coaching assistance to a manager/coach unless they are fully vetted and trained and have been in front of the Club's committee for approval.
- Never be in a dressing room with players unaccompanied or otherwise.
- Insult players or club personnel.
- Argue with, or shout abuse at officials and they should actively discourage children or young players from doing likewise.
- 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 behaviour.

### 11.3. Youth Player Policies

Youth Players should:

- Be on time and communicate to their coaches as early as possible if they cannot attend or will be late.
- Be properly equipped (shin guards, water, correct footwear, etc.)
- Be respectful to teammates, coaches, Club officials, referees and opposition. While wearing the KDFC kit/logo must not behave in a way that reflects badly on the Club.
- Acknowledge/Greet their coach upon joining or leaving training or matches.

Bullying, violence, abusive language will not be tolerated towards or from teammates, opponents, coaches, managers, parents or supporters and can result in suspension or expulsion from the Club.

Where a player has broken with the code of behaviour expected from them it will be first raised with them by their coach. If this behaviour continues or it may affect other players, the player in question may be suspended from training or matches with immediate effect. Where this is necessary the player's parents/guardians will be contacted.

The junior football committee has the discretion to levy a player with any charge in respect of fines imposed on the Club by any league as a result of any breach of league or Club rules by that player.

All fines imposed as a result of foul and abusive language must be paid by the player concerned. All fines imposed on the Club by any league as a result of any breach of league or Club rules by managers, coaches or parents must be paid by the individual concerned. Players, managers, coaches and parents/guardians will remain suspended by the club until fines are paid.

Where bullying, violence or abusive language towards or from teammates, opponents, coaches, managers, parents/guardians or supporters result in suspension or expulsion from the club, fees shall not be refunded.

## 12. Complaints and Disciplinary Policy

### 12.1 Complaints

Complaints can be raised with the Club's committee. Any concerns about child safety should be brought to the immediate attention of the Club's child welfare team immediately at [kdfc.childwelfare@gmail.com](mailto:kdfc.childwelfare@gmail.com)

### 12.2 Disciplinary

Complaints brought to the attention of the committee can result in a manager/ coach/ parent/ guardian/ supporter/ player being brought before the Club's disciplinary committee and potential suspension or ban from the Club.

## 13. End of Season Assessment

### 13.1 Team Assessment

- At the end of the season (and in some cases at mid-season) players, managers and teams will be assessed.
- Managers should encourage players on the team to nominate their player for the year at the end of season.
- Whilst the ethos of the Club is to provide football for all, please note that the Club policy is that the highest-ranking team at each level should have the best players available and this will be continually assessed.
- At the start of each season, and in some cases during the mid-season break, all players at each age group will be assessed, as outlined above, and teams formed on this basis.
- The Football Committee may be asked to nominate several players from your panel to go forward to represent the league, county etc. Selection for these representative teams will be coordinated by the girls' or boys' representative through the Football Committee.

- Before managers/coaches agree a league placement with the committee representative, they should know the strengths of their team so that they play in the most appropriate league for the team's ability.

Managers wishing to go forward for Premier/Major teams would be expected to have reached, at a minimum, the following officially recognised coaching levels.

- U-7 to U-8: PDP1
- U-9 to U-12: PDP2
- U-12 to U-18: PDP3

## 13.2 Player Assessment Process

The purpose of this section is to lay down a framework within which we can manage the movement of players between teams in each age group. Whilst at all times the Club's aim is to offer football at a suitable level to all its players, it is recognised that this process can cause confusion and disappointment if not handled correctly and sensitively. The procedures below will ensure that all our players are treated correctly and consistently by the Club with the welfare of the child being at the forefront of all decisions.

An overriding goal of these procedures is to provide sensitive and timely communication to parents/guardians and children and to put the welfare of the child and their best interests at the core of all decisions.

- It is the Club's policy that players play at the highest level possible.
- Managers should actively encourage their players to try out and move to the highest team possible.
- Managers cannot hold onto players if the Club feels they need to move up a level.
- Where a player does not want to move up a level, the Club will not force them to do so.
- Any movement of players should be handled in an organised and coordinated manner with support from the girls'/boys' teams representative from the committee. A meeting should be scheduled for each age group in each window where movement is to happen. Decisions should not be left to the last minute. Clarity should be given to all affected children/parents/guardians in a timely manner, so they have the flexibility and time to consider their options.

## 14. Pitch Allocation

### 14.1 Matches

The Club will apply the following principles to determine pitch allocation priority for home matches. If you need to make arrangements, prior discussion with the league secretary would assist in making your case.

For Junior Teams:

- The home location of 11-a-side matches is Priorswood Park;

- The home location of other matches is Maypark;
- The referee's position vis-à-vis their number of matches to be refereed, and on which pitch may affect the allocation of pitch times;
- Cup matches normally have priority; and
- Where teams of the same age have a pitch allocation conflict for league games, the Club's League Secretary will make the final pitch allocation decision.

## 14.2 Training

All teams generally train a minimum of two nights per week during the season (Feb 1 – Nov 30). During the winter when the evenings are shorter (roughly from four weeks before season starts to the end of March and from the start of October to the end of November) teams need floodlit all-weather surfaces or indoor facilities.

The Club's training coordinator is responsible for the allocation of pitches for training, including winter training venues.

- Slots times are allocated by age group; younger age groups get preference.
- Where a manager/coach is training multiple teams, where possible and practical, effort will be made to accommodate training/matches together/back to back at the same location.

Any questions or request for training slots should be directed to the training coordinator at [KDFC.trainingcoordinator@gmail.com](mailto:KDFC.trainingcoordinator@gmail.com)

## 14.3 Pitch Availability

If pitches are deemed unplayable then competitive games, friendly matches and all training activities are prohibited. The decision of our league secretary and training coordinator is final with regard to match and training requests and this is fully mandated and supported by the Club's committees.

Any verbal or other abuse of our league secretary or training coordinator with regard to allocation or otherwise of facilities will be brought to the attention of the committee and raised as a serious matter with the relevant manager.

Any general issues with regard to the provision of match or training facilities should be raised formally through the relevant representatives and will be considered, if unresolved, at the Club's subsequent Committee meeting.

## 15. Facilities Maintenance

All managers are requested to protect facilities that we use by knowing and enforcing the rules below:

- Please ensure that the FAI Code of Ethics is correctly applied while in the changing area.
- If used, make sure that the dressing room is swept out after their team is finished with it,

including training sessions.

- Make sure that players are appropriately supervised while in the changing rooms.
- Make sure that boots are cleaned or removed before entering changing rooms.
- Players are not allowed to loiter around the clubhouse unsupervised at any time.
- If you are the last manager/coach to leave, please ensure that the pitches are fully vacated, the pitch is cleared of all training equipment and litter, the dressing room lights are turned off, the doors and gates are locked.

## 16. Finance

- Team finances are managed by the treasurer and queries should be directed to the treasurer.
- Fees are collected through Clubforce (annual or monthly installments); any family who is unable to pay the fees due to financial constraints can speak to the manager of the team.
- Additional payments by parents: any requests for additional payments by parents (e.g. for tournaments, competitions, trips) must be approved by the treasurer of the junior football committee
- Use of cash and payment apps (Revolut; Paypal) must have prior approval from the junior football committee treasurer.

### 16.1 Fundraising

Due to the continued effort of the Club's committee to attract sponsors to the Club, it is vital that we have the cooperation of each and every manager and coach within the Club in these efforts. Details of all fundraising activities must have prior approval of the Club committee. We must ensure that fundraising is done strategically to avoid approaching the same sponsor for different projects/initiatives.

### 16.2 Sponsorship

It is important that we maintain a good relationship with our sponsors. The Club sponsorship officer will help teams to acknowledge sponsorship through thank you letters, social media, etc. and will help to maintain ongoing sponsorship.

If you have received new or renewed sponsorship, please inform the Sponsorship Officer: [KDFC.sponsorship@gmail.com](mailto:KDFC.sponsorship@gmail.com)

## 17. Team Trips

- Any managers or coaches who wish to take their team away on a trip must request approval from the junior football committee.
- The Club secretary can provide information on available insurance policies for overseas trips.
- A risk assessment must be completed with the child welfare team before proceeding.
- Details of all fundraising for team trips must have prior approval of the Club.
- Any gear for trips must be arranged through the Club's gear coordinator.

## 18. Communication Policy

Team Whatsapp groups are for the express purpose of communicating match and training details. If you have queries or complaints, please contact the to set a time to discuss the matter. The child welfare team must be added as an administrator to all KDFC team Whatsapp groups.

KDFC uses players' images and names on the website and team social media pages for promotional purposes. Where a player or their parent/guardian wish to have any images removed, the images will be removed within seven days of them notifying a football committee member. We ask that all our members operate a similar policy.

## 19. Key Club Contacts

Up to date contacts are available at the club website:

**<https://killesterdonnycarneyfc.com/club-officers/>**