

CASTLE JUNIORS FOOTBALL CLUB



Volunteering Policy - Version 6

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Club relies very heavily on the work of volunteers and the support of parents/guardians in order to provide high-quality football, coaching and personal development in a safe and structured learning environment for our players. This support encompasses a wide range of activities including coaching but also such activities as administration, first aid, complaints, safeguarding, transportation and social media/ internet presence.
- 1.2 The Club recognises and values the huge amount of time and effort that our volunteers spend on club duties, much of which goes unnoticed, and is committed to supporting and developing volunteers to allow them to benefit as much as possible from their involvement with the Club. The Club recognises that our volunteers reflect the interests, needs and resources of the community we aim to serve, and bring a uniquely valuable perspective to our work. The Club is committed to creating a diverse and inclusive organisation within a diverse community, and therefore to ensuring equality of access to volunteering opportunities and equality of treatment for our volunteers.
- 1.3 The safety and well-being of our players is paramount in all that we do. It is therefore crucial that the Club recruits the right volunteers, matching them with the most appropriate roles and responsibilities, providing them with appropriate training and development, and monitoring their activities to allow continuous improvement. This is vital if we are to ensure maximum safety and enjoyment for both our players and our volunteers.
- 1.4 This policy has therefore been developed to assist the Club in meeting these aims. It sets out what a Club volunteer can expect from our Club; and the standards expected by the Club of the volunteer in return. It should be read in conjunction with other relevant Club policies and these are referenced throughout this policy where necessary.

2.0 Role Definition

- 2.1 The vast majority of our volunteers come from the ranks of parents/ guardians/ carers with players at the Club. Some people wish to become more actively involved in the Club in some capacity, whilst others find themselves drifting into such roles. In some cases, individuals are actively targeted by the Club as it is felt that their skills and abilities would be a good support for Club activities. However people find themselves becoming a club volunteer, it is vital that their status within the Club is clear and formally registered, including a role description outlining the purpose, tasks and main expectations of the role.
- 2.2 The Club has therefore put in place structures for the effective management of volunteers, including coordinating the assigning of volunteers to roles, ensuring that they are supported and monitored in their role, providing appropriate training and resources to support their work, and ensuring that a role description (including any necessary checks or qualifications) is in place and kept up to date for ongoing roles.
- 2.3 If existing Club officers/ volunteers identify the need for a specific skill or ability within the Club where a gap may currently exist (or to add to the club's capacity), this should be communicated to a Management Committee member. If an individual has already been identified for this potential role by the proposer, then that person's name, contact details and connection to the Club (if any) should be provided.
- 2.4 If a club officer or volunteer becomes aware of someone who wishes to become more involved in Club activities, they should provide the details to a Management Committee member.
- 2.5 In addition to the above, the player registration process will include an opportunity for parents/ guardians/ family members to show interest in different types of voluntary roles. The Club will keep a record of such offers of support. The Management Committee will also periodically review the volunteers working in the Club, to identify gaps or opportunities for further development, and to consider the need to target any under-represented groups.

3.0 Recruitment

- 3.1 By whatever route roles or volunteers become known, the Director of Football and Heads of Football (for coaching volunteers), and the Management Committee (for non-coaching volunteers) will consider options for filling the role/ placing the volunteer, with reference to the priorities set out in the Club's Development Plan.
- 3.2 This process will include consideration of the best way to find a suitable person to fill a vacant role, ensuring that the process is transparent and open, with no one excluded on the basis of their background. Options considered will include an open call for applicants for a specified role, or more informal recruitment from people who have shown interest.
- 3.3 An informal conversation will be part of this process, and will use the framework provided by the Access NI Application Form. This may be supplemented by more

formal conversations where appropriate. Confidentiality will be honoured in this process. Certain roles will also be subject to election at General Meetings. As part of the recruitment process, the Club may make enquiries about the volunteer and may seek references if considered appropriate.

- 3.4 The Club will follow the advice of the IFA in terms of any Access NI disclosures which give rise to concerns. This may lead to a volunteer not being able to continue volunteering for the Club; or may lead to a probationary period or other arrangement being put in place. In all such cases, the Club will recognise that such decisions may create sensitivities and will handle matters tactfully and with full regard for confidentiality.
- 3.5 The club recognises the very valuable role that our volunteers play in developing our club and our players. We are predominantly a volunteer-based club, but we recognise that there are occasions when we may need to pay individuals to undertake duties which we cannot reasonably expect volunteers to undertake. The circumstances in which we will be willing to consider paying volunteers are:
- For specific ongoing roles where the extent of the role alongside the skills needed have led Management Committee to offer payment;
 - Where there is specific external funding or a specific external income source for a particular piece of work;
 - Where we bring in someone with skills not readily available in our volunteer base.
- 3.6 Where we do offer payment for roles, the following will apply:
- We will start from a preference for all activities to be undertaken by unpaid volunteers;
 - Management Committee will consider the ability to do currently paid work on a voluntary basis prior to the start of each season, and when there is a change of circumstances such as the end of a grant or change in overall club financial circumstances, and document the specific reasons why any activity needs to be paid and the fee rates that will apply;
 - All club volunteers will have opportunity to make themselves available for the paid activity (which will be specified and have any mandatory/ desirable experience and qualifications clearly stated) and an open selection process will take place.
- 3.7 The Club complies fully with the Code of Practice issued by the Northern Ireland Office in connection with the use of information provided to registered persons, their nominees and other recipients of information by Access NI under Part V of the Police Act 1997, for the purposes of assessing applicant's suitability for employment purposes, voluntary positions, licensing and other relevant purposes. The Club undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly and not to discriminate unfairly or unlawfully against the subject of a Disclosure on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.
- 3.8 The Club ensures that no applicant or member of staff/ volunteer is subject to less favourable treatment on the grounds of gender, marital status, race, nationality,

ethnic or national origins, age, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, physical or mental disability political opinion or offending background, or is disadvantaged by any condition which cannot be shown to be relevant to performance.

- 3.9 The Club promotes equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential, and welcomes applications from a wide range of individuals, including those with criminal records. The selection of employees/ volunteers will be based on those who meet the necessary standard of skills, qualifications and experience. Where an Access NI Disclosure is deemed necessary for a position, all applicants will be made aware at the initial recruitment stage that the position will be subject to a Disclosure and that the Club will request the individual being offered the position to undergo an appropriate Access NI Disclosure check.
- 3.10 In line with the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Northern Ireland) Order 1978, the Club will only consider convictions which are defined as "unspent" within the terms of that Order, unless the nature of the position is such that we are entitled to ask questions about an individual's entire criminal record. Having a criminal record will not necessarily debar an individual from working with the Club. This will depend on the nature of the position sought, together with the circumstances and background of the offence(s) or other information contained on a disclosure certificate or provided directly to us by the appropriate statutory authorities.
- 3.11 The Club undertakes to ensure an open, measured and recorded discussion on the subject of any offences or other matters that might be considered relevant for the position concerned. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of the conditional offer of employment or voluntary position.
- 3.12 The Club will ensure that all those who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of Disclosure information. We also ensure that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to employment of ex-offenders. We undertake to make every subject of an Access NI Disclosure aware of the existence of the Code of Practice. The Club has in place an SLA with the Irish FA for them to support and advise us on these matters.

4.0 Induction and settling in

- 4.1 By whatever route a person finds themselves as a new volunteer within the Club, the same induction process will apply and will serve to orientate the volunteer to the Club, seeking to minimise any issues that may arise. This will often be an informal process but should cover the following key areas and should be provided within six weeks of the volunteer starting their duties.

About the Club

Details of the Club's history & aims

Club structure, ethos and management (along with identification of Club Management Committee members and other key officials)

Club policies

The importance of volunteers to the Club and how to provide feedback to the Club

Facilities & Volunteer Base

Facilities for volunteers e.g. communication, social media, health and safety guidelines, etc.

Volunteer Role

Outline of volunteer role, tasks involved, confirm agreed commitment including where relevant day / time, etc.

Details of other staff / volunteers working with directly

Boundaries of role / expected conduct / confidentiality

The process to follow if difficult situations arise

Insurance cover

Health and Safety

Child/Adult Safeguarding

The Support System

Key contacts and their details

Outline length of settling in period and explain initial settling in period / mentoring

Other support available e.g. supervision/support meetings

Resources, equipment

Training

How expenses are paid

- 4.2 An Induction Form shall be completed by the person delivering the induction and signed by both the person delivering the induction and the new volunteer, confirming that they have received this information. This form will then be filed in Club records.
- 4.3 The volunteer will also complete the Volunteer Agreement Form and return it to the Club. The form will include space to declare any other interests which could be relevant to the volunteer's work with the Club, such as involvement with other clubs, or with club suppliers/ sponsors. All Club volunteers, coaches and officials will formally declare any potential conflict of interest as soon as they become aware of it, and agree how to handle it. Not declaring any conflict of interest will be treated by the Club as a serious matter and handled through the Club's Complaints and Discipline Policy.
- 4.4 All declared interests will be held on a Register maintained by the Management Committee, which will be referenced as necessary, with anyone with a relevant interest excluded from any connected Club decision-making processes. If the Management Committee determines that any interest presents significant difficulties in the efficient and effective operation of the Club, they will discuss it with the club member involved and agree a way forward.
- 4.5 A summary of Club policies will be provided to volunteers at the induction session; volunteers will confirm on the Volunteer Agreement Form that they have received this and will abide by the policies. Volunteers will be asked to sign a new Volunteer Agreement Form every three years.

5.0 Mentoring / Training / Development

- 5.1 Most of our volunteers do not receive any financial payment for their work; for most it is reward enough to be actively involved in the social and sporting development of players, watching them improve and become more confident. The Club is however committed to ensuring that we have the highest levels of ability and professionalism in the support that we provide to our players and, to this end, the Club has always placed great emphasis on the development of our volunteers through appropriate training. It is an area that the Club has always invested heavily in, and one that will continue to attract Club funding and financial support in line with the overarching club Development Plan.
- 5.2 All coaching volunteers will, in the first instance, be mentored by an existing coach (normally from the Year Group in which the volunteer is working) for a settling in period under the oversight of the relevant Head of Football. Informal feedback from the mentor will be provided to Director and Heads of Football on a regular basis as to how the volunteer is progressing and any issues arising that need attention. The length of the settling in period will be agreed in light of the role and the volunteer's previous experience.
- 5.3 The mentoring arrangement for non-coaching volunteers will be agreed on a case by case basis, given the wide range of roles; but in all cases feedback from volunteers to allow the Club to improve will be actively encouraged.
- 5.4 Our volunteers can expect relevant training both internally from Club officials/ colleagues and also delivered by external professionals where appropriate in areas such as Safeguarding and First Aid. In addition, if the volunteer has shown a level of commitment and proficiency in their work and wishes to develop their skills in a more structured and formal way, consideration will be given to supporting them towards a recognised qualification (which normally starts at the National Coaching Certificate for coaching volunteers) in line with the needs of the Club as outlined in the Club Development Plan. Such training will be determined by the relevant Head of Football for coaching volunteers and the Management Committee for non-coaching volunteers.
- 5.5 Training and awareness days are held on an ad-hoc basis and cover relevant areas such as sports nutrition, fitness, bullying and risk assessments. Volunteers will be given the chance to avail of these opportunities as and when they arise, further aiding them in their development as a volunteer at the Club.

6.0 Administration

- 6.1 No Club volunteers will work unsupervised with players until Access NI procedures have been completed; they will always initially undertake their new role under the close supervision of an existing Club volunteer as appropriate.
- 6.2 Any volunteers under the age of 18 will be supervised by an adult in any club activities. All club squads must be supervised by at least one (two recommended) registered coaches/ volunteers who are at least 18 years old. This extends across all club activity. These coaches/volunteers must not be acting in any other capacity

during the time in which they have responsibility for the players.

- 6.3 Any volunteer doing unsupervised work with children and vulnerable adults shall, under the direction of the Club's Safeguarding Officer, complete the necessary Access NI procedures within six weeks of beginning working as a volunteer. They shall also complete an IFA Safeguarding Course (or appropriate equivalent) within three months of starting work in such a role.
- 6.4 Following completion of the induction process and Access NI processes, the Club will provide appropriate club clothing to the volunteer. Such consideration will take into account the nature of their role, their work to date, their level of commitment and the likelihood of them remaining with the club for the foreseeable future. Once Club clothing has been provided, it must be worn by the volunteer whenever representing the Club. It must be returned when a volunteer leaves the Club.
- 6.5 The Club will retain records on all club volunteers. These will include
- Contact details and other relevant personal information (eg. medical information)
 - Role(s)
 - Date of starting
 - Induction form
 - Signing off of any initial settling in period
 - Volunteer Agreement Form(s)
 - Any complaints or grievances

The confidentiality of such information will be respected, whether it is held in analogue or digital form, and it will only be shared with Club Officials and other authorities as required to enable effective management of the Club.

7.0 Code of Conduct

- 7.1 All Club volunteers, coaches and officials are required to abide by the Club's Code of Conduct for Volunteers. A copy of this document will be provided to all Club volunteers as part of their induction and they are required to confirm in the Volunteer Agreement Form they have received, read and understood the document. It outlines the minimum standard that the Club will accept from all people working within the Club; its intention is to safeguard everyone's interests.

8.0 Complaints / Discipline

- 8.1 All persons employed by the Club, whether in a voluntary capacity or otherwise, are subject to the Club's Complaints and Discipline Policy which outlines how such matters are dealt with at the Club on receipt of a complaint or following a reported incident.
- 8.2 In addition, all Club officials, coaches and coaching volunteers are expected to adhere to the rules of the IFA, NIBFA and their respective Leagues where appropriate during their time with the Club.

9.0 Leaving the Club

- 9.1 If a volunteer wishes to leave the Club, it is important that the Club establishes as much information as possible around this decision in order that any shortcomings can be identified on either side and that the Club can seek to implement measures for future volunteers to prevent recurrences of potential problem issues and maximise volunteer retention at the Club.
- 9.2 Volunteers wishing to leave are therefore asked in the first instance to speak with the relevant Management Committee member, in order that the circumstances surrounding the decision are adequately explored and a greater understanding can be developed as to the reasons why.

Signed:

Trevor Reid

Iain Greenway

**TREVOR REID
CHAIRPERSON**

**IAIN GREENWAY
TREASURER**

Date: 4 April 2022

Version	Date	Changes
1	January 2016	
2	February 2017	Minor changes to maintain consistency with other policies and include conflicts of interest
3	January 2018	Minor changes to maintain consistency with other policies
4	June 2019	Changes to reflect constitution changes around committees
5	August 2021	Updated in a number of places to reflect current practice
6	April 2022	Addition of material on the recruitment of ex-offenders, on a Register of interests, and on payments. Amendments to align with updated IFA material. Addition of paragraph 6.2 regarding volunteers under the age of 18.