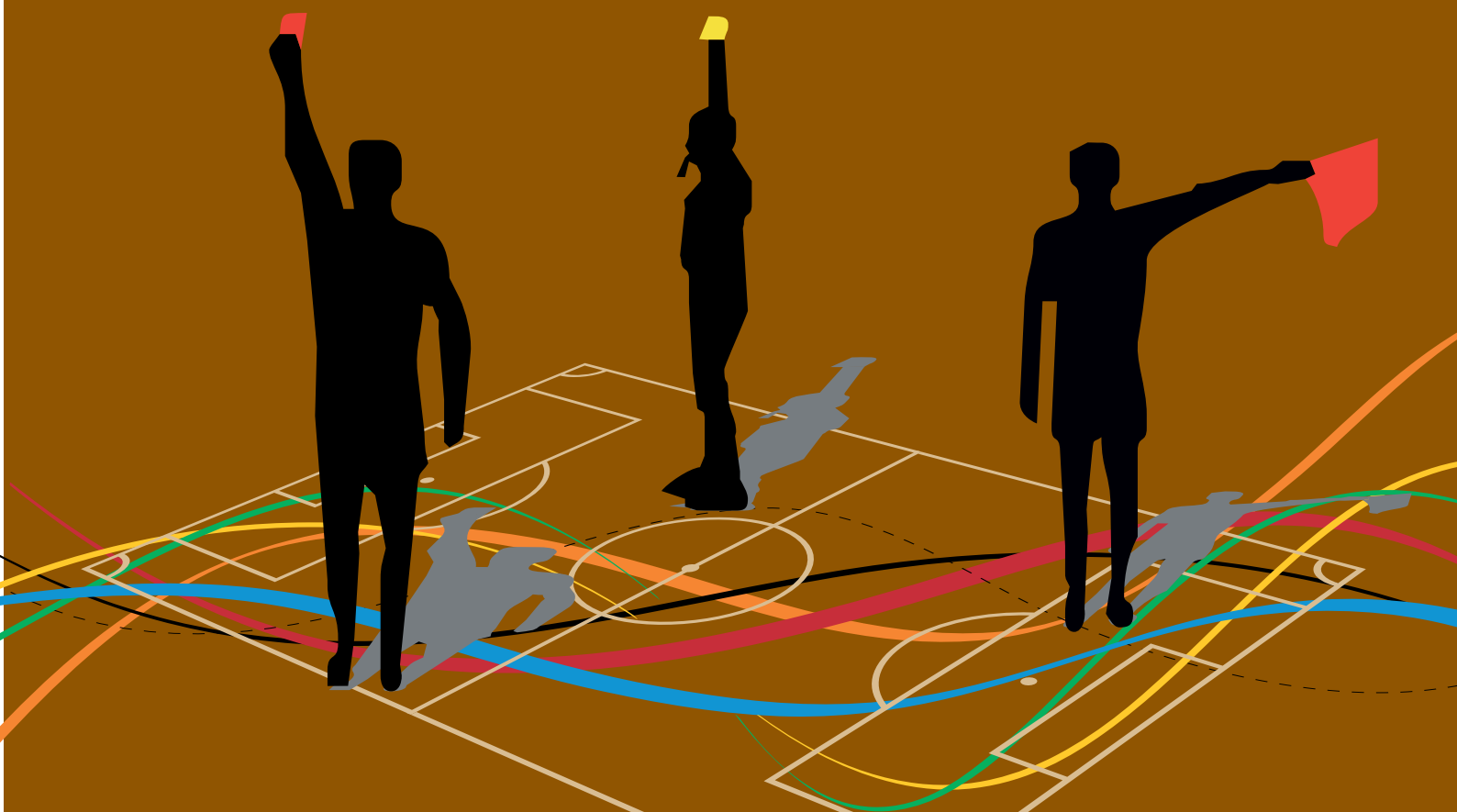




CODE OF CONDUCT AND GOOD PRACTICE



Acknowledgement

This code of conduct was first developed for the IPEC²⁶ pilot project in Sialkot, Pakistan. It was adapted primarily from materials of the Football Association of Ireland (FAI), to which we express our special thanks. It has been supplemented by references to the FIFA Code of Conduct. The code serves a vital role in reinforcing the protection of vulnerable children.



Objectives of the code of conduct

Implementing partners will need to give careful consideration to potential challenges that may arise when involving a range of organizations, groups and individuals, including volunteers, in project activities. The implementing partner is directly responsible for the activities, attitudes and behaviour of these bodies and individuals. It is vital, therefore, that the relationship is based on mutual trust and respect. This consideration is all the more important given that this kind of football project seeks to help and support (former) working children, children at risk of child labour and other vulnerable children – children who may have suffered severe trauma and abuse at the hands of adults. The goal of a project using football as a major component of its activities is to support the **rehabilitation and education of the child beneficiaries** and thereby contribute to the healing process. This goal must not be compromised or undermined in any way by inappropriate behaviour by individuals. By the same token, children need to know their **rights and responsibilities** and understand the importance of mutual respect.

The code of conduct proposed here aims to assist in guiding the behaviour and attitudes of all stakeholders involved in a football project, including the beneficiaries. The content is drawn from similar codes of conduct used in football coaching programmes worldwide and seeks not only to establish rules and regulations to follow but also to help the different stakeholders understand what is expected of them and how to maximize the benefit of project activities. The code was initially developed on the basis of a recommendation from the first IPEC pilot project in Sialkot, Pakistan. Such was the positive impact of the code that the implementing partner in Sialkot decided to incorporate the guiding principles into all of its child-protection programmes.

The code presented here should be modified or adapted as deemed relevant and necessary by different implementing partners around the world. It is possible that some implementing partners will already have their own codes of conduct, and these should be compared to the IPEC code to ensure consistency and coherence. The code is not meant to be prescriptive and can be adapted to suit different environments and circumstances in different countries. If you find it too detailed, then cut it back accordingly.

Annex 1 provides a suggested declaration that implementing partners could ask each volunteer and player to sign once they have read and understood the code of conduct. There are different ways the code can be presented. For example, each individual could be supplied with a copy to keep; copies could be given to individuals to

²⁶ IPEC: the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) of the International Labour Organization (ILO), www.ilo.org/ipcc/lang--en/index.htm.

read and return once they have signed the declaration; or in cases where some or all of the volunteers and players are illiterate, a meeting could be organized for the code to be read out and explained to ensure that everyone understands and accepts the code and then makes an oral agreement to abide by it. This should be one of the first steps of any football project and will provide implementing partners with an assurance of the commitment of volunteers and beneficiaries, on which basis they can proceed with further activities.

Football for Hope

Football can play a significant role in communities large and small around the world. From a group of children playing together on a field or in a street to organized league matches and training, everyone can participate and benefit. They play, coach, train and have fun. In this way, football can contribute to community development, improving health and personal growth of people of all ages, particularly children and young people. It can also help build a culture of peace and tolerance by bringing people together on common ground, crossing all boundaries, including age, to promote mutual understanding and respect. As a result, FIFA²⁷ and the international social-profit organization “streetfootballworld”²⁸ have joined forces and created “Football for Hope”, a movement that aims to use the power of the game for social development.

Based on these fundamental principles, IPEC and FIFA have collaborated to develop

resource materials to help vulnerable children benefit from playing football, the most popular sport in the world. Both organizations are strong supporters of children’s rights and have worked together for a number of years to remove children from work, particularly hazardous work, and help them go to school and benefit from a decent education.

The football resource kit aims to ensure that former child labourers and at-risk or vulnerable children can access recreational and sporting activities as an integral part of their education, rehabilitation and development. It is important for these children to benefit from activities that will support their personal and social development as well as improve their general health, well-being, enjoyment and outlook on life.

FIFA Code of Ethics and Disciplinary Code

Implementing agencies, coaches and referees are encouraged to visit the FIFA web site – www.fifa.com – to learn more about two key FIFA documents relating to codes of conduct and ethics:

- FIFA Code of Ethics (www.fifa.com/aboutfifa/federation/administration/codeethics.html)
- FIFA Disciplinary Code (www.fifa.com/aboutfifa/federation/administration/disciplinarycode.html)

These documents will help those involved in the project to understand better the importance of good management and of ensuring the application of balanced and acceptable rules and regulations governing the behaviour of all stakeholders.

²⁷ FIFA: the International Federation of Football Associations, www.fifa.com.

²⁸ streetfootballworld is a social-profit organization that links relevant actors in the field of development through football. Established in 2002, the organization encourages global partnerships for development in order to contribute to positive social change. The streetfootballworld network comprises more than 80 local initiatives worldwide (as of November 2009). With the network’s support, streetfootballworld develops approaches to social challenges by working with governments, businesses and NGOs, and providing advice on development, investment and business strategy. For more information, visit www.streetfootballworld.org.

Football for children and young people

Football, like all sports, provides a healthy outlet for children and young people, supporting them in acquiring new skills, growing in confidence and fulfilling their individual potential. Through their participation in football activities, they can learn and develop life skills, have fun and enjoyment, make friends and have experiences that can enhance their personal growth throughout their lives.

Because of the importance of sport in the lives of children, particularly vulnerable children, it is vital that it takes place in a safe, enabling and protective environment. Coaches, referees, administrators, parents, community representatives, schools, teachers and young people all have an important role to play in promoting good practice in children's sport. They should set as their main priorities the safety, protection and enjoyment of those taking part.

It is vital that football is both safe and fun for the children concerned and that all activities are underpinned by a spirit of "fair play". The approach should therefore be player-centred. Focusing on their individual needs encourages children and young people to achieve and demonstrate enjoyment, equality and fair play. Through the application of these principles, all those involved in the project activities, including the children and young people, will come to realize that standards of behaviour and attitudes are as important as the game itself.

Therefore, everyone involved must agree on the fundamental principles of fair play and appropriate behaviour that will permeate the activities at all levels. These principles are set out below in a series of guidelines for the different participating groups and should be affirmed through discussions with these groups to ensure shared ownership and responsibility for their implementation.

Guide for project stakeholders

Sport for children and young people is about fun and participation, best effort and fair play in a safe environment. In promoting "football for fun", everyone involved in the project should:

- Encourage participation and fun.
- Promote the development of skills and participation as opposed to winning at all costs.
- Focus on and praise effort.
- Act as a good role model.
- Insist on "fair play".
- Be realistic in expressing expectations of children and young people.
- Be aware of children's and young people's feelings and acknowledge and respect these, particularly their vulnerability to the position of adults in society.
- Avoid any physical, mental and emotional abuse or exploitation of children and young people and challenge such abuse or exploitation when it is witnessed and/or reported.
- Protect children and young people at all costs.
- Teach players to respect different cultures and players of different abilities and disabilities.

Children and young people

Children and young people participating in the project activities are encouraged to:

- Do their best and put in their best efforts in training and playing.
- Develop and improve their skills.
- Make friends.
- Play by the rules and share a spirit of "fair play".
- Appreciate and accept everyone in the group, regardless of their ability, race, religion, gender, level of ability, or other factors.

Children and young people participating in the project activities are entitled to:

- Be safe.
- Be treated with dignity, sensitivity and respect.
- Participate in football activities on an equal basis, appropriate to their ability and stage of physical, mental and emotional development.
- Be happy, have fun and enjoy football.
- Report inappropriate behaviour in a safe and confidential way and have it dealt with through a proper, transparent and effective procedure.
- Be listened to and to be believed.
- Have a voice in the running of the football activities and participate meaningfully in the project.

Children and young people should be helped to understand that they also have responsibilities within the project, including treating their peers, other players, referees, coaches and all volunteers with the same degree of fairness and respect that they expect to receive from others. They should realize that with rights come responsibilities and that mutual respect should underpin their attitudes and behaviour. In this respect, children and young people participating in the project activities should strive to:

- Play fairly, do their best and have fun, whether in matches, training or at play.
- Set themselves high standards of “fair play” and encourage their peers to set themselves the same high standards.
- Respect opponents in football and treat them in the same manner and with the same level of dignity that they would expect in return.
- Shake hands²⁹ before and after a match, no matter who wins or loses.

- Give opponents and team mates a hand if they are injured in any way and check to see they are not in any major danger.
- When a player is injured in a game, whether on the same or an opposing team, **put the ball out of play so that they can get prompt and proper attention from the coaches.**
- Accept apologies from opponents and others when they are offered.
- Respect fellow team mates and support and encourage them when they do well and also when things do not go so well.
- Treat all players from all walks of life and different backgrounds with the same respect that they would expect to be shown.
- Be modest in victory, be gracious in defeat and be a “sport”.
- Approach the children’s officer³⁰ with any questions or concerns they might have. Coaches, referees, parents and all volunteers involved in the project should **encourage children and young people to speak out on issues of concern to them and should support them in doing so.**

Children and young people participating in the project activities should not:

- Cheat.
- Use abusive language or argue with referees, officials, coaches, volunteers, team mates or opponents.
- Use violence. They should use physical contact only when it is allowed within the rules of the game.
- Bully.
- Tell lies about adults or their peers.
- Spread rumours.
- Take substances of any kind that might improve performance or harm their physical, mental and emotional health, for example, alcohol, cigarettes or drugs.

²⁹ Shaking hands with opponents, team mates, coaches and match officials is a mark of respect and fair-play in sport in many countries around the world, but not all. It might not be culturally appropriate in some countries or regions. In such cases, children should be encouraged to use whatever action is culturally appropriate in showing a mark of respect towards others.

³⁰ Refer to the box on children’s officers on page 5.

- Keep quiet about any person who may have caused them harm physically, mentally or emotionally, and be prepared to report such behaviour.

Parents and guardians

Parents and guardians play a central role in ensuring and promoting children's happiness, fulfilment and success in all aspects of their lives, including football, sport and recreational activities in general. In this respect, the expectations and behaviour of parents and guardians have a significant impact on their children's attitudes and behaviour while participating in the project activities. Therefore, the project should offer guidance and support to parents and guardians to enable them to play a meaningful role in the activities and to protect their children's health and interests.

Parents and guardians need to be aware of why children want to play football or any sport. Generally, children want to learn new skills, make new friends, be part of a community group, play and have fun, be outside running around, win and help their team and friends be successful, and experience new challenges, excitement and action. However, while winning is important, it must be remembered that winning at all costs or setting winning as the main aim of participating in the sport does not meet the needs of young players. Winning or losing are not necessarily good indicators of effective coaching or the ability of the child. Good indicators are the level of improvement of players and particularly their level of participation, fulfilment, enjoyment and happiness.

Support and encouragement from parents and guardians will contribute to children having:

- A sense of personal achievement.
- An enjoyment of football.
- Improved physical and mental fitness and agility.
- Higher self-esteem and greater self-confidence.
- A greater level of skill and athleticism.
- Improved social skills.
- An understanding of mutual respect and "fair play".

It is important that parents and guardians find out what their children's expectations are from participating in the football activities. They should talk to them to understand their reasons for wanting to play football and encourage and help them in any way they can. They should help them to set realistic targets to achieve their personal goals and keep in mind that this may involve controlling their own personal aspirations (i.e. those of the parents and guardians) and avoiding the desire to force their own dreams or unfulfilled ambitions on their children. The most effective way to tackle unfulfilled ambitions is to volunteer to support the project in any way possible, for example by becoming a coach, a referee, an administrator, a children's officer, a helper or an avid supporter at all football games. In this respect, it is important for parents and guardians to:

- Encourage but not force children to be active.
- Know when he or she is ready to play and help her or him.
- Encourage healthy lifestyle habits and teach children about the dangers of alcohol, smoking or drugs or other substance abuse.
- Attend training and games whenever possible.
- Promote and teach "fair play".
- Teach children to treat their peers, referees, other players, coaches, officials, volunteers and spectators with respect.
- Help children to set realistic personal goals.
- Help children with decision-making.
- Encourage children to speak out when necessary about things that are wrong and

to promote their meaningful participation in decisions and activities that affect them.

- Reinforce the importance of education and in setting realistic goals in life and working hard to achieve these.
- Reinforce the importance of the family and community in providing stability, happiness and fulfilment in life and the need to play a meaningful part in the family and community for the good of all.

Parents and guardians should not:

- Ignore or dismiss complaints or concerns expressed by a child which relate to his/her involvement in the project activities.
- Ridicule or shout at a child in training or a game, for losing or making a mistake.
- Abuse or exploit children in any way whatsoever, physically, mentally or emotionally.
- Prevent children from going to school or any other form of educational or training institution to enhance their education and improve their chances of decent work in the future.
- Treat the project and its activities as a free child-minding service.
- Take the safety of children for granted.
- Put undue pressure on a child to please or perform well.

Most importantly, parents and guardians should lead by example and become appropriate role models for children.

As regards relations with football coaches, it is important that parents and guardians establish contact with the individual(s) responsible for coaching their child and should:

- Give coaches help when asked and show appreciation for a job well done.
- Support the decisions of coaches and referees. These individuals are doing the best they can, usually on a volunteer basis, and need support from all concerned. Refrain from contacting coaches and other volunteers outside of training and games unless it is absolutely

necessary. Respect that they have a private life.

- Keep coaches fully informed about illnesses, injuries, holidays, and so on, which might affect children's presence at training or games.
- Make a concerted effort to attend training and games.
- Communicate any concerns in a timely fashion to coaches and allow them to respond accordingly.
- Be prepared to enter into constructive and positive dialogue with coaches, referees and other volunteers. Follow the motto "Be positive or be quiet" and keep in mind that negative comments are counter-productive.
- Make sure children have whatever equipment, clothing or refreshments they might need for training or games.
- Encourage an understanding and spirit of "fair play" at home and do not instil a "win at all costs" attitude in children.
- Be prepared to be asked to leave the area by officials or volunteers if their behaviour is contrary to the definition of "fair play".
- Parents and guardians should never:
 - Insult or be rude to players, coaches, referees and other volunteers.
 - Argue with or shout abuse at officials and actively discourage children from doing the same.
 - Suggest or encourage cheating or aggressive and foul play.
 - Express inappropriate or undue criticism of a player or a child, causing the individual unnecessary levels of stress, distress, fear or sadness.
 - Behave with physical or verbal aggression towards another person.
 - Engage in any type of behaviour that could be seen as harassment.

Coaches, referees, administrators and supporting volunteers

In this section, coaches, referees, administrators and supporting volunteers are referred to collectively as "officials

and supporting volunteers”. Officials and supporting volunteers need to adopt a player-centred approach in their work. They need to be aware of why children want to play football. First and foremost, they should aim to provide a safe, friendly and enjoyable environment in which children and young people can play football and have fun and which places them at the centre of all activities.

In promoting good practice and creating a child- or player-centred approach, officials and supporting volunteers should:

- Act as good role models.
- Encourage children and young people and be positive and constructive during training sessions and games so that players leave with a sense of well-being and achievement.
- Set challenging and realistic but achievable goals for children and young people. Be ambitious for them but within the realistic limits of their capacities and therefore not be overambitious.
- Reduce competitive expectations and reward players for effort.
- Plan and prepare each training session appropriately, with due care to safety, and ensure proper levels of supervision.
- Be patient, caring and prepared to help those with disabilities or limited abilities to ensure that everyone is included.
- Be positive and focus on what players do correctly rather than on what they might do wrong. Build confidence by being positive and constructive.
- Ensure that all training activities and games are inclusive of all the players and allow all of them to participate in a meaningful and enjoyable manner. Help children and young people to overcome the realization that they might not have the ability of others.
- Remember that mistakes are part of the learning process.
- Avoid “elimination games” – the players most in need of improvement and practice are usually the first to be eliminated and this can undermine their confidence and trust.
- Put the welfare, safety and enjoyment of the players first and foremost and strike an appropriate balance between this goal and winning or achieving results.
- Enforce the principles of “fair play”, treating each player equally, with dignity and respect, and ensure that all children and young people play within the rules.
- Be aware of the developmental stages, needs, expectations and aspirations of all of the players and respect these in training sessions.
- Recognize the value of friendships between children.
- Provide learning experiences: teach.
- Give credit where it is due and help where it is needed.
- Show approval whenever possible and listen to the players.
- Avoid excessive training and an overemphasis on competitive games and matches.
- Involve parents, guardians and other volunteers in all activities as much as possible.
- Be up-to-date on coaching qualifications, knowledge and skills to ensure the best standards possible of training and games.
- Be prepared to patiently explain rules and regulations to children and young people when officiating games.

In keeping children and young people at the forefront of planning and practice, officials and supporting volunteers can be confident that the players will enjoy their football experiences and that their activities will be safe and respect the principle that the welfare of the children and young people is paramount.

Officials and supporting volunteers are given a position of trust by parents, guardians, players and partners involved in the project and should embody the highest standards of behaviour and attitudes whilst in the company of children and

young people. They must acknowledge and respect this trust and ensure that they never betray others in executing their responsibilities. As part of their code of ethics and best practices, officials and supporting volunteers should ensure that they are properly instructed in first aid and emergency measures to ensure they can provide immediate care to any player who is injured or falls ill under their supervision. They must put a proper system of communication in place in such cases to ensure that safety is always a top priority.

Officials and supporting volunteers should never:

- Exert undue influence over a player in order to obtain personal benefit or reward.
- Express themselves or perform any physical action that might infringe upon the fundamental rights of a child or young person or upset or confuse them.
- Engage in rough physical or sexually provocative games, or allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any kind and/or make sexually suggestive comments about or to a child or young person.
- Use any form of corporal punishment or physical force on a child or young person.
- Do anything that might compromise the integrity of the project and the fundamental principles of children's rights.

Football coaches work in a "hands-on" environment which may include physical contact, for example, demonstrating a particular technique. In this respect, it is important that coaches realize that these actions might be misinterpreted, not only by the player but by others motivated by jealousy, dislike or mistrust and could lead to allegations of sexual misconduct or impropriety. Therefore, it is vital that all officials and supporting volunteers in the programme are aware of these risks and avoid to the extent possible any situations conducive to risk. This means, where possible officials and supporting volunteers should avoid:

- Spending excessive amounts of time with children and young people away from other officials, volunteers and players.
- Taking one-on-one sessions with players – always have a minimum of two players under supervision at any one time.
- Taking children or young people to their homes unless absolutely necessary, for example to ensure their safe return.
- Taking children or young people in their care alone on journeys.

The main principle is to avoid a situation where speculation and rumour might arise and allegations might be made which could be difficult to refute, for example through a lack of credible witnesses.

Health and safety

Officials and supporting volunteers have a very important responsibility to look after **the health and safety of the players under their care** as much as possible and within the limits of their control. Therefore, officials and supporting volunteers should seek to create a safe and enjoyable environment in which to play and train.

- Regular safety checks should be carried out in relation to playing grounds, training facilities and equipment, for example filling in holes in the ground, removing stones, glass or refuse, and ensuring that goalposts are safe and properly maintained.
- Appropriate safety rules should be adopted and implemented.
- Parents and guardians should be informed of the starting and finishing times of training sessions and matches.
- Players should never be left alone on or near **playing grounds after training or matches**, and officials and supporting volunteers should ensure their safe return home.
- A first-aid kit should be available at all training sessions and matches and a note

should be kept of all injuries, including the action taken to deal with the injury. Injured players should not be allowed to continue to train or play. Appropriate follow-up medical interventions should be ensured where relevant, necessary and possible.

- Parents and guardians should be notified of injuries and illnesses which their children incur while participating in any project activity, particularly where follow-up interventions are required.
- All officials and supporting volunteers should be instructed in first aid and regularly update these skills

Responsibility to report

Any person in any capacity involved in the project who has signed up to this code of conduct and who has concerns about a child's welfare and safety or who suspects that a child is being abused or is at risk of abuse has a responsibility to report these concerns to the implementing partner, IPEC or to the appropriate community or district authorities.

Persons unsure about whether or not certain behaviours are abusive and therefore should be reported are advised that they can seek guidance and support from the implementing partner and/or IPEC. In cases of emergency where a child appears to be at immediate and/or serious risk, the

individual should contact the police. Under no circumstances should a child be left in a dangerous, or potentially dangerous, situation pending intervention by third parties. If a third party intervention would take too long, the individual should make sure the child is removed from the situation and protected to the greatest extent possible.

All implementing partners, communities, teams, clubs and associations involved in the project should have clear procedures for responding to reports and/or concerns relating to the safety and welfare of children and young people participating in the activities. These procedures should be disseminated among all officials and supporting volunteers who, along with children, young people, parents and guardians, should be aware of how and to whom they report concerns within the project.

Information or advice

For further information or advice, please contact:

Contact for the implementing agency:
(to be completed by hand)

Contact for the national/regional IPEC office:
(to be completed by hand)



Annex 1: Code of Conduct Declaration Form

(To be completed by volunteers, parents, guardians and players in an IPEC Football Project)

Please complete the appropriate spaces in block capital letters

I [full name]:

.....

resident of:

.....

hereby declare that I volunteer to participate in the IPEC Football Project in the following capacity:

In so doing, I hereby declare that I have received, read and understood the Project’s Code of Conduct for Volunteers, Parents, Guardians and Players and that I fully accept the terms and conditions of the Code and will respect these in every aspect of my involvement in the Project. I will strive to promote and abide by the spirit of “football for fun” and will in particular:

- Encourage participation and fun.
- Act as a good role model.
- Respect the principles of “fair play”.
- Respect different cultures and accept different abilities and disabilities.
- Treat others with the same respect and dignity that I would expect to receive in return.

Signed by: [volunteer/player]

.....

Counter-signed by: [project official]

.....

Place:

.....

Date:

.....