



*Transition Year Placement – Junior Coach & Participant Buddy

Title: GAA All Stars: A GAA For All Initiative

* While this is described as a TY placement, it is not confined to that and we welcome Junior Coaches aged 16 and over from all school years.

Introduction

St Kevin's Rathcoffey Caragh GAA Clubs are pleased to collaborate on an equal partnership on the establishment of 'St Kevin's Rathcoffey Caragh GAA All Stars; a GAA for All Initiative. This initiative is aimed at children and teenagers with the aim of increasing sporting and social opportunities for children with additional needs.

The participant profile consists of children and teenagers with Autism, Down Syndrome and Global Developmental Delay. The activities are designed across a number of stations where the participants engage in drills, skills and short games with the aim of developing gross and fine motor skills, social skills, and critical skills to support independence.

The group meets at St Kevin's Astro pitch from 6pm – 7pm on Friday evenings. The pilot commenced on September 24th and ran initially for 8 weeks until November 12th. The group will reconvene on March 4th 2022 and will run until the Summer. **From March 4th**, the initiative will incorporate two streams. Firstly, an initiative for children aged 5-12 years focusing on the development of their gross, fine, and motor skills. Secondly, an activity for teenagers and junior coaches playing 6-side football together which will further develop ball skills and techniques while predominantly providing a social activity for the participants and their peers.

Placement Overview:

The GAA for ALL All Stars Future Coach & Participant Buddy placement provides the Transition Year student with the opportunity to develop basic coaching skills while integrating with children and teenagers with additional needs to support their physical and social development.

As part of the placement, the students undertook a programme of development and accreditation in advance, while learning the practical aspects of coaching basic skills to children and teenagers in a live environment across the duration of the programme. During the placement, students were mentored by senior coaches and supported the participants to take part in physical and social activities with their peers, along with developing gross and fine motor skills through ball skills and drills. In doing so the Transition Year students enhanced their own development in the area of leadership, teamwork, emotional intelligence, and communication.

Students were introduced through theory and practical activities to:

An awareness of people with disabilities participating in sport and physical activity

The code of ethics and good practice in young people's sport

The safety and organisation principles in coaching young people

The technical skills and principles involved in coaching young people

The planning and review process for effective coaching

Breakdown of the Placement Related Development:

All interested Transition Year candidates were interviewed and 6 suitable individuals were selected.

All candidates of age were Garda Vetted and completed Child Safeguarding Course with the GAA & Kildare Sports Partnership.

In addition, all candidates completed the disability awareness training with Cara

Centre. <https://caracentre.ie/training/disability-awareness-in-sport-workshop-2/>

TY candidates who choose to continue their placement into Spring 2022 will complete the Disability Inclusion Training workshop at the earliest

opportunity. <https://caracentre.ie/training/disability-inclusion-training/>

All coaches will complete a Lamh Training Programme in February to optimise communication with the participants.

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=787671108613144>

The Future Coach & Participant Buddy placement was endorsed by the Irish Institute of Training & Development www.iitd.ie All future coaches received a Certificate of Completion from IITD upon completion of their contribution.

This Transition Year Placement formed part of a pilot of the GAA All Stars Initiative in Co Kildare. The success of the programme resulted in it being adopted as the standard for the initiative the county. Kildare GAA has identified it as a key deliverable for its Youth Development Programme in 2022.

Training Approach

The Transition Year participant is integrated into the coaching team.

The Games Promotion Officer for the area works as the **lead coach**, designs session plans and attends in person to lead the sessions on alternate weeks.

The GPO works alongside some **experienced, senior coaches** who lead the sessions on alternate weeks. In addition, there is a **team of assistants** with experience of working with people with additional needs; SNA's, Nurses, Guards, Teachers, etc.

Finally, and essentially, a rigorous selection process identifies **suitable young people** from a number of schools in the county who play a key role in engaging with the participants and supporting the activity. These young people are being developed as future coaches, However, their contribution to the social development of the participants through their interaction and integration into the activities is one of the key success factors of the initiative.

These future coaches are mentored and supported by the lead coaches and undertake a training programme in advance of their commencement on the programme.

Training Facilities

Safeguarding and Disability Awareness Training took place in a live, tutor led environment online.

The training sessions with the GAA All Stars team takes place in the FIFA accredited Astro pitch at St Kevin's GAA Club, Staplestown. This is a safe, well lit facility and the candidates are fully supervised by qualified senior coaches throughout.

Placement Outcomes for Transition Year Students

- Connected and engaged the students with their peers with additional needs to support inclusion and integration, and an appreciation for diversity in their community
- Provided students with the opportunity to participate in a series of safe and effective coaching sessions for young people in a mentored context
- Supported the students development in the area of leadership, teamwork, emotional intelligence, and communication
- Provided the students with a number of formal accreditations in Safeguarding, Disability Awareness and Inclusion in Sport, and Professional Body endorsement of their contribution which can be included in their CV
- Provided the students with a number of formal accreditations which will enable them to work with young people in other sporting contexts