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## Foxrock-Cabinteely GAA - Academy

The Foxrock Cabinteely GAA Club is proud to present its **Academy Programme** which, for the first time, provides an integrated framework to facilitate children wishing to learn the game of Gaelic football. Importantly, the new programme aims to raise standards by helping players develop their skills, and gain confidence in their ability. This in turn will lead to a heightened sense of achievement and a better overall enjoyment of playing the game.

This Academy programme has been devised against a background of fun and fair play, and each girl will belong to an age-specific group defined by a colour coaching system. In order to ensure that children are comfortable within their groups, skill levels are taken into account when making up the individual groups. The word 'Nursery is now dropped, and re-named the **Junior** and **Senior** Academies .

- Junior Academy - Girls born 2011 – **Blue**
- Junior Academy - Girls born 2010 – **Yellow**
- Junior Academy - Girls born 2009 – **Orange**
- Junior Academy - Girls born 2008 – **Red**
- Senior Academy - Girls born 2007 – **Green** (also participate in Under 8 Go Games)

Children will also be given the opportunity to put into practice what they have learned through small-sided *Go games* which are based on the idea that everyone gets a go!

The Foxrock-Cabinteely GAA Academy is committed to providing excellent standards of training, and we strive to provide a happy, secure and caring environment in which to learn the skills of Gaelic football. Children's abilities will be observed and monitored, and the programme adapted regularly to maximise the benefits derived from the training sessions.



## History and Background

This Academy (from 4-8yrs) is the starting point for children to learn the basic skills of Gaelic Football. The session is conducted in a fun and friendly atmosphere, and aims to fulfil *two* purposes:

- Complement the work performed by our Club coaches in the neighbouring schools
- Identify and train children (aged 4-8 yrs) who are keen to start playing Gaelic football

Our Academy group has evolved significantly over the last few years as a result of interest generated by both parents and children alike. We now have a more focussed structure where we can chart progression from 'beginner' through to becoming a member of a team, playing in blitzes or league matches.

There is also a spin-off benefit to the schools - they indirectly profit from our efforts at the club, developing a trained group of children for school teams taking part in the annual Cumann na mBunscoil competitions every September. The Foxrock-Cabinteely GAA Club feeder schools have in fact done extremely well in the past in this event winning or coming runners-up in the top divisions.

Our former Nursery group started in 2003; the Club Academy was set up during 2008 as an extension of our Club Nursery to specialise in developing the skills of the 7/8 year old girls, and to fast-track early talent from the Nursery. It is a solid preparation for their first taste of league football which now commences in Dublin at the under 8 level.



## **Academy Training Programme**

Foxrock Cabinteely GAA Academy is moving away from the “play time” sessions we believe in the past have restricted the child’s imagination and skills progression. At the Academy we believe that young children need time to learn the essential skills of the game by engaging in fun-filled drills and activities. A strong emphasis is placed on skill acquisition, and the sessions are organised in an age-appropriate manner with a view to optimising learning and enhancing friendships, without the confines of rigid structures. By doing this, each child is able to progress their own skills at a pace that is suitable to each child’s needs.

The Academy session in the early stages consists primarily of playing fun-related Gaelic games and doing exercises under the guidance of a trained Mentor, with the assistance of volunteers selected and recruited from our juvenile teams. The core skills of Football (kicking, passing, catching, hop and solo, and blocking) along with a fitness regime are crucial to each session. Other more advanced skills together with the elements of team play are coached as the girls progress through the older age groups.

Every girl should have acquired the relevant foot-balling skills commensurate with her age level when she leaves the Academy; for example, in her final year she should have a firm grasp of team skills e.g. passing, blocking, building moves to score goals and points etc. When the girls are ready (and individual coaching is undertaken to ensure all necessary skills have been acquired) we engage in friendly blitzes with local clubs. These take the form of 7 or 8-a-side matches where our mentors act as referees. The ‘matches’ are very informal and lots of fun, with referees coaching during each game to improve the girls’ skill level.

The 7/8 yr olds from our Senior Academy ‘graduate’ in December and a small informal ceremony is held with parents in attendance. Certificates and medals are awarded to the girls. This day signifies the culmination of usually three years attending Saturday morning sessions at Foxrock Cabinteely GAA Academy in Kilbogget Park, and their imminent move up to Go Games football!

In the lead up to the league football the girls will from October to March play under floodlights or indoors each Tuesday or Wednesday evening. When the nights get brighter training reverts to the Kilbogget park pitch on the same evening schedule.

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## Junior Academy - Fun and Enjoyment - Age 5 - Yellow (minimum age 4½)

A strong emphasis on fun, but featuring Gaelic-related games and drills.

A size 2 ball is used for most of the drills as it is easier to handle.

Handling:

- Throwing
- Catching
- Passing
- Bouncing
- Picking ball off the ground
- Placing ball on the ground

Kicking – off the ground and from the foot

Sharing – all the girls are encouraged to participate in each drill





## Junior Academy - Fun and Basic Skills - **Age 6 - Orange**

*First Touch* football (size 3+) used

Drills relating to skills:

- Handling - efficiency developed
- Kicking - continue to develop this vital skill (both feet)
- Hop + Solo is introduced

Skills Testing





## Junior Academy - Basic Skills and Understanding - **Age 7- Red**

Further development of Skills

- Handling Skills
- Kicking
- Hop + Solo

Explanation of the Game

- Principles of Go Games/match play and its positions in small mini-games

Introduction to fitness drills in agility and speed





## Senior Academy - Go Games – **Age 8 - Green**

Skills Testing – evaluation of each girl's abilities

Discipline and team structure explained

Principles re-emphasised

- Possession
- Going Forward progression
- Support
- Continuity
- Marking
- Blocking

Agility and speed worked on: fitness and skills testing

Self- confidence installed and creative thinking encouraged

{Mentors will evaluate strengths and weaknesses, and set priorities}



*Our victorious Senior Academy playing against Cuala*





## Training Programme And Times

Foxrock Cabinteely GAA Academy year starts in February, usually around the mid-term break, and ends in early December for the Christmas holidays. There is a break at Easter and during the summer when we run our Gaelic camp programmes.

Age is determined for Academy and games purposes as at 31 December (i.e. a girl who is 7 years old on 31 Dec 2014 will play under 8s football in 2015). The leagues season commences early-mid March, and finishes in October/November after the championships have run their course. Junior Academy girls do not take part in leagues.

The Academy training sessions are held from **9.45am to 11.15am** every Saturday at the Foxrock-Cabinteely GAA Club pitch in Kilbogget Park.

The session is structured: -

- Arrive at **9.45am** to register in the clubhouse, and pay the weekly €2 training fee.
- Please make sure your child registers BEFORE coming out onto the field so we have a complete record of all participants at the Academy.
- Children should bring football boots or trainers on dry days, tracksuit, hat and gloves on the colder days, and wear a gum shield at all times.
- Junior Gum shields are on sale at registration each Saturday for €2.
- At registration each child will be bibbed in the colour relevant to their age/group
- At 10am children assemble at the flag defined by a colour of the bib for introduction to Mentor coaching staff for their group.
- Session starts with Mentors bringing children for warm-up exercises.
- A selection of '*skills and drills*' are worked on
- Mentors will make sure each drill is covered; one main skill to be concentrated on for that session.

There is a short supervised drink break mid way through each session - each child should bring a bottle of water with their name labelled on it or their preferred soft drink

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also labelled (non-fizzy). There is also a supply of tea, coffee and biscuits in the clubhouse for parents who want to stay and watch or get involved with helping out. The clubhouse is also equipped with a first-aid kit, and each mentor group comprises a qualified first-aider.

- Game Time – the older age groups will be introduced to mini-matches according to skill level (they will participate in small 5/6-a-side matches and be encouraged to practise the skills they are learning. Mini-matches also allow the gradual introduction of tackling, the concept of marking a player, and throughout the session the importance of teamwork is emphasised)
- Warm down
- Session finishes, and mentors will answer any questions or queries from parents
- Collect child (children) from outside clubhouse. Please make sure your child is collected on time; mentors never leave the premises until all children have been collected.





## Academy Mentors

The Academy promotes a positive and friendly atmosphere for its sessions and is committed to providing an environment which will allow the girls to learn and perform to the best of their ability.

Mentors have a central role to play in the development of the player. They are carefully recruited and selected from parent volunteers and our juvenile teams, and they accept responsibility for ensuring the wellbeing of the girls in their care.

They have the knowledge and understanding of the Gaelic-specific skills necessary to play the game efficiently. All activities in the Academy are conducted in an atmosphere of fair play, and its principles continually emphasised. The importance of participation, best effort and enjoyment is stressed and endorsed rather than winning.

Performance monitoring of all new mentors and volunteers is carried out by the Academy Coaching Team. National (Garda) vetting process is now in operation, and mentors have usually completed the FUNdamental training course and/or the GAA Foundation Course. Most possess basic First Aid skills.

A copy of the Club ***Codes, Policies and Procedures*** is made available to every new mentor and volunteer. The Academy has recently put in place its own Female Liaison Officer who will have access to the Executive Committee, and will be introduced to the parents in an appropriate forum. The Executive have on their committee, an appointed Children's Officer, who is the link between the young players and the adults in the Club.

Volunteers complete an application form prior to formally commencing their role in the Club. All mentors must be members of our club, and they must be registered in order to be covered by insurance. In signing the application form the volunteer/mentor agrees to abide by the Club's ***Codes, Policies and Procedures***.



## Parents and Guardians

Foxrock-Cabinteely GAA encourages parents and guardians to play an active role in the club, and to be aware of the Club's Code of Behaviour.

We encourage parents to get involved with the coaching as much as possible, not just on the Saturday but outside the session, even if this means just kicking the ball with your own child in the local park. Please ask one of the senior mentors for assistance in coaching the skills.

Parents/Guardians should promote the procedures of good practice by:

- Showing appreciation to volunteers, mentors and Club Officers.
- Attending training and games, on a regular basis and on time.
- Becoming members of Foxrock-Cabinteely GAA Club, where feasible, and take an interest in the running of the Academy.
- Assist in the organizing of Academy activities and events as requested.





## **New Volunteers /Helpers**

As numbers do mushroom when the Academy programme starts in February we rely significantly on support from the parent group to assist in carrying out the duties looking after an underage squad. Help is always needed and welcome to further develop the Academy, and we encourage any parent with 90 minutes to spare in their busy week to come and talk to us. We are a fast-growing club and would like to see more new faces! No football knowledge is necessary, and to let you see what is involved a mentor's "job description" is included below. So come down to training and see what goes on. Remember it's great fun to watch your children and their friends playing and enjoying themselves!

The club's Registration year is in line with that of the Ladies Gaelic Association, June to May. If not already a member, please fill in a *Registration Form* and return it with the €50 annual subscription in an envelope to one of the mentors at the Saturday training sessions. This fee covers membership of our club, affiliation to the Gaelic Football Association and Insurance costs. It is *separate* from the weekly 2 euro training fee.

Children must be registered for insurance purposes, a procedure rigidly enforced by the GAA and endorsed by our own club.

## **Registration Form**

A copy of the form can be found in the clubhouse or can be downloaded from our website, [www.foxcabgaa.ie/registration](http://www.foxcabgaa.ie/registration). If you have two or more children involved in the Academy or playing in league teams, it is highly recommended to take out the Family Membership at €250 euro per annum, which represents excellent value for money



## **Job Description for an Academy Mentor**

### **Role of Academy**

With your fellow mentors and helpers, to create and prepare a fun-filled and informative coaching session of Gaelic football and mini-games

### **Responsibilities**

To look after and take care of small groups of girls (4-8yr olds) for about one hour on training day:

- this starts from when they arrive at the grounds or are dropped off, until they are collected at the end of training
- supervision is also an integral part of the session and will be necessary when they are taking a break, going to the toilet, tending an "injury", awaiting the arrival of their parent/guardian

To be familiar with the Club's Code of Ethics and how it impacts on your role in the Academy

To communicate with the parents when necessary on matters relating to the club

### **Duties**

To teach (or assist mentors) 4-8yr olds in your group

To demonstrate the basic skills involved in the game

- catching
- kicking
- solos (this skill may take several weeks to acquire)
- passing
- tackling
- marking/shadowing
- teamwork

To explain the main rules of the game and implement gradually each week

To lay out and run practice drills using ladders, hurdles, cones, and your own imagination !

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To organize mini-matches among the children using cones and markers and small goals (bibs available)

To help identify potential “fast-track” players for a development squad

### **Others**

Your ideal ‘CV’ should show that you:

- should be able to commit about 90 minutes each week to work with the children in the Academy
- are interested in sport although no previous experience of Gaelic games is necessary
- are keen and enthusiastic to help your group learn the necessary skills in order for them to progress to the next stages
- are a fun and outgoing person.....if you establish a good rapport with the kids, they will interact well with you, and will in turn want to learn from you !

The club will assist you throughout your induction, starting by watching what other mentors are doing, then eventually taking charge of a small group yourself.

Dress appropriately – tracksuit and boots/trainers – so that you are able to carry out the various drills etc. If you have a whistle by all means bring it.

The club now asks all Mentors to take part in the FUNdamentals one day course developed by the Ladies Gaelic Association. They are run from time to time and the Club will pay for you to participate ....it won't be long before you are seasoned professional !

As your daughter moves up the age groups you may eventually want to get involved as one of the team mentors? Children who have passed through our Academy group and can demonstrate they have acquired the basic skills will be eligible for team selection





## The Academy Team

**Derek McArdle** (086 817 5236)

### *Qualifications*

Certified Trainer – Ladies Gaelic

- FUNdamental's Course
- Men's GAA Foundation Course

**Paul Tonge** (087 251 7742)

### *Qualifications*

Certified Trainer – Ladies Gaelic

- FUNdamental's Course
- Certificate Level 1 Course

**Naomi Murphy** (087 232 0360)



*Derek McArdle, Naomi Murphy and Paul Tonge.*



*Veronica our Female Liaison Officer*





**Our hard-working team of coaches!**



Our brilliant coaches – Back row, Saoirse, Roisin, Aoife, Erin, Emma  
Front row, Roisin, Jane, Emily, Faye, Sophie, Grace (absent: Rachel and Niamh)



Our hard working Registration Ladies – Jane, Elaine and Orla. (Absent: Ciara)

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## Club Event Time Table

January:

- County Board league structure proposals (Jan/Feb)
- Medal Presentation

February:

- Academy re-starts after Christmas break

March:

- New League season begins
- Club Member Registration begins



*Our Club was invited to take part in the Paddy's Day Parade in Bray*

April:

- Easter Camp
- Dublin Under14 Féile

May:

- Foxrock-Cabinteely GAA Club Family Fun Day
- Sponsored Walk in Kilbogget Park
- Mentor-Adult team Charity match (Cornerstone Cup)
- Barbecue/Face painting / Fun and Games

June:

- Academy Summer Break
- Inter-Schools Blitz at Kilbogget



July and August:

- Summer Camps commence (2 weeks)

September:

- Academy re-starts.
- Cumann na mBunscoil schools tournament begin
- All Ireland Adult 7s
- Club bag packing fundraiser

October:

- Floodlight / Indoor training commences
- Ladies All Ireland Final
- Foxrock-Cabinteely GAA Club Quiz Night

November:

- Club AGM
- Foxrock-Cabinteely GAA Club Awards/Dinner

December:

- Senior Academy Graduation
- Academy closes for Christmas... Santa Party!
- Club Bag packing fundraiser



## Conclusion

At the end of each year we are always delighted with the level of skill acquisition of the Academy girls. We firmly believe that the implementation of our programme will ensure that the long term future of our on-field activities is on a sound footing. In addition, we are confident that with the support and encouragement of both parents and mentors alike we can provide a character-building and fun environment for your children.



*Pictures clockwise from top*

- *Pink Day (Breast Cancer Awareness)*
- *A great turnout for our Halloween morning*
- *Easter- Time for a break from football...story telling!*
- *Easter ghosts!*

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