



Safeguarding & Protecting Children / Young People in Sport

Play Sport, Stay Safe

A Guide for Sports Clubs / Organisations, Officials, Coaches and Leaders

Introduction

Children / young people (under 18 years) benefit greatly from taking part in sport and leisure activities. This gives them the opportunity to be healthy, active, have fun, learn new skills and to make new friends. It is everyone's responsibility to ensure that sports activities are safe and fun.

Everyone involved in sport has a responsibility to ensure that activities are enjoyable and that children / young people and vulnerable adults are safe and protected from harm.

It is essential that sport coaches, leaders and officials demonstrate best practice and have a good understanding and awareness of accepted behaviour, conduct and coaching delivery to ensure that the safety of participants is paramount.

Sports coaches, leaders and other club personnel may find themselves in a position where they observe inappropriate or uncharacteristic behaviour, see evidence of harm, or receive reports of harm to participants in their care. Concerns may arise about participants' experiences within the sports environment and outside of it, eg, at home or at school.

This guide has been produced to provide your sports club or organisation with information and guidance on how to adopt good sports practice and ensure that the safety of children / young people is paramount.

We would strongly recommend that your club works towards Club Mark or the recognised club accreditation scheme for your sport, eg, Swim 21 (Swimming), Charter Standard (FA). This will reinforce that your club operates in a safe, effective and child friendly way.

We recognise that many sports clubs are already taking positive steps to safeguard children / young people. We hope that this guide helps to support continued improvement and ensure that your club remains on track with its future development.

It is your club's responsibility to ensure that relevant policies and procedures are in place, they are communicated effectively, made available to, and understood by, club personnel, members and parents / carers and they are followed. Your club should remain open and transparent about your practices and welcome questions about the way it operates.

Does your club / organisation have the following policies / practices in place?

1. Child Protection Policy

This should outline the steps that your club has taken to keep children / young people safe and should include:

- When and how to record, report and respond to a concern, allegation or disclosure about poor practice or possible abuse, including bullying
- Who to contact should a child welfare incident arise, eg, your club's Child Protection / Welfare officer
- Guidelines on good coaching practice and protocols

Most Governing Bodies of Sport will have child protection policies and supporting templates that your club should reference and adopt, where applicable. Islington Safeguarding Children Board (ISCB) has produced a sample Child Protection Policy which you can access on our website, www.islingtonscb.org.uk

It is **NOT** your club's responsibility to decide, or to investigate if a child or young person is being abused, but to **REPORT** any concerns in line with your club's child protection policy and procedures.

Serious concern about the immediate safety of a child or young person should be reported to Islington's Children's Social Care Referral and Advice Team, 020 7527 7400 or to the Police by dialling 999.

Child Protection Policies should also include reference to:

Recruitment and Screening

Within your club environment, all those who come into contact with children / young people must be appropriately screened to establish their suitability:

Screening should include:

- Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) disclosure (please contact your relevant Governing Body or Sport Islington)
- Minimum of two relevant references
- Verification of Governing Body qualification(s)
- Practical observation of the coach / volunteer to determine if their approach and style of delivery is suitable for the needs of all young people.

ISCB has produced a sample Safer Recruitment Guidelines which you can access on our website, www.islingtonscb.org.uk

Operating Procedures

It is important that club personnel work in, and encourage, an open environment and that private or unobserved situations and secrets are avoided.

Your club's policy for coaches and other club personnel should be never to work alone, and for a minimum of two adults to be present at session involving children / young people .

Your club must follow the relevant Governing Body guidelines with respect and appropriateness of handling and support for participants. You must ensure that video is used only as legitimate coaching aid. Good communication with participants and parents / carers is key.

Changing Room Procedures

- You must ensure that a minimum of two adults of the same gender of the children are present when participants are being supervised in a changing room environment. Where possible, parents / carers should take responsibility for their children when changing
- Separate facilities should be available for boys and girls
- Parents / carers of children / young people with special needs are consulted with regard to changing requirements or agreed level of assistance that may be necessary
- Children / young people are not be pressurised into changing and / or showering in public
- Coaches / leaders must never change or shower at the same time using the same changing area as the children / young people in their care

Away Fixtures

- Your club will maintain a duty of care for participants involved in away fixtures
- Procedures are in place to guide supervision and staffing, insurance cover and responses to incidents, accidents and emergencies. These procedures are communicated clearly to club personnel and to parents /carers
- Your club obtains parental consent and ensures that the team manager or coach has access to emergency contact and medical details at all times
- All arrangements are well communicated to parents / carers including drop off and pick up times and equipment and refreshments required

Transportation

- A reputable transport company is used and insurance cover checked
- All vehicles have seat belts and should meet current safety regulations, eg, access to booster seats
- Required staffing ratios are adhered to with a minimum of two adults of the same gender of the children present at all times
- Parents / carers are provided with written details of drop off and pick up times and other arrangements
- Club personnel have a register for participants under their supervision together with emergency contact details and medical information
- Two adults should be present until all young people are collected by their parents / carers

Photography & Videoing

- Written consent for making and using photographs and video footage should be obtained from parents /carers in advance
- At an event, parents / carers should be encouraged to register if they wish to take photographs and / or video footage on the day, whether using a camera, video camera or mobile phone
- Your club should remain vigilant at events and challenge anyone taking photographs or video footage that has not registered or sought permission to do so

Email Communication /Messaging

- It is strongly recommended that emails and text messages are sent to parents / carers rather than to children / young people directly
- Emails or text messages must not be sent to children under 11 years
- In some cases, it may be considered acceptable to send emails or text messages to children of 11 years and over. Club personnel should copy all communication to parents / carers as well as someone holding a recognised position of responsibility within the club
- Details of telephone numbers and email addresses should be kept secure

2. Child Protection / Welfare Officers

All sports Clubs are required by their Governing Bodies of Sport to have a designated Child Protection / Welfare Officer. This person is responsible for the implementation of your club's child protection policy, and should have a role description and access to appropriate training and support. Specific training can be accessed through your Governing Body, Sport Coach UK or Sport Islington.

3. Codes of Conduct

Your club should have written codes of ethics and behaviour which outline expectations of good practice for anyone working with children / young people and vulnerable adults. An environment in which ridiculing bullying, shouting, racism and / or sexism are allowed to take place is not acceptable. Your club should also have codes of conduct for participants, parents, carers and spectators that describe what is expected from them. A process should be in place for responding to any breaches of the codes of conduct. Club personnel should be aware of when and how to report concerns about the behaviour of fellow coaches, leaders, officials or others. You can refer to individual Codes of Conduct relevant to your club / organisation or national Governing Body.

Coaches Code of Conduct

Coaches have the responsibility to set a good example for children / young people to follow and be a good role model in terms of appearance and behaviour.

It is critical that coaches are aware of and work within their professional boundaries.

Coaches should:

- Be good role models, setting an example for others to follow
- Observe professional boundaries at all times
- Always work in and encourage an open environment. Avoid private or unobserved situations and secrets
- Develop an appropriate working relationship with participants based on mutual trust and respect
- Empower children / young people and vulnerable adults to share their performance
- Ensure the activity is appropriate for the age, maturity, experience and ability of the participants
- Never ridicule or shout at a participant for making a mistake or loosing
- Encourage players and help them improve by using positive words and not negative criticism
- Teach players the importance of fair play and following the rules of the game / sport
- Ensure that coaches and players respect the opposition, officials, opposing coach and their supporters
- Divide time equally between all standards of players
- Make reasonable demands on a participant's time and realise that young people have other interests too
- Make sport fun. Promote enjoyment and achievement rather than a win at all costs attitude
- Always place the well- being and safety of the child / young person above their performance
- Always follow the guidelines set out by the relevant Governing Body of sport / professional body with regards to safety and welfare
- Hold relevant, up to date, nationally recognised qualifications
- Have adequate insurance to coach your sport(s)
- Be committed to developing your own skills and knowledge
- Keep written records of any incidents that occur, along with details of how they were dealt with
- Follow professional advice when determining if an injured player is ready to train
- Take responsibility for the young people in your care until they have safely left the activity

Coaches should never:

- Spend time alone with children / young people away from others

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form
- Allow children / young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Make derogatory or sexually suggestive comments to a child / young person even in fun
- Let allegations a child / young person makes go unrecorded, or not acted upon
- Do things of personal nature that children / young people can do for themselves
- Engage in personal relationships with pupils, participants or students
- Take children / young people alone in car journeys, however short
- Take children / young people to your home where they will be alone with you
- Have children / young people stay at home with you unsupervised
- Share a room with a child / young person

Delivering a High Quality Coaching Session

I. Is coaching taking place in a safe and open environment?

Risk Assessments

Coaches should undertake and document a risk assessment prior to the commencement of a programme of activity and before the start of each session to ensure that the coaching environment and equipment are safe. Coaches should comply with the appropriate health and safety requirements and guidance for each particular activity / sport, those of the employing or developing organisation, or the relevant Governing Body of the facility.

Coaching setting

It is important that coaches work in, and encourage, an open environment and avoid private or unobserved situations and secrets. Coaches should never work alone; another adult should be in attendance at every session.

All clubs / organisations must obtain Enhanced Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) disclosures for the adult coaches, leaders, officials and volunteers that they are using. These must be updated every 3 years. No one should work with children / young people or vulnerable adults until their CRB clearance has been received.

II. Are coaching methods safe and appropriate?

Coach participant ratio

The relevant Governing Body guidelines must be followed with respect to coach participants ratios, which will ensure that the necessary level of supervision is provide.

Suitability / Equitability of activities

Coaches must be aware of the principles of Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) so that activities are suitable for the age, maturity, experience and ability of the participants involved.

Coaches' time should be equally divided between all standards of players. They should ensure that all participants have the opportunity to realise their potential. Coaches should ensure that they understand any special needs / requirements that participants may have so that they are able to accordingly adapt activities.

Is it clear when participants are the coach's responsibility as opposed to the responsibility of their parents /carers?

It is recommended that you use an activity register so that you formally assume the Duty of Care when a participant signs in and joins a session. The Duty of Care is relinquished when the participant signs out and leaves the session. Coaches should make sure that all parents / carers are aware of the requirements for delivering and collecting participants from the outset.

In the event of participants being collected late from a session, coaches should:

- Not leave the participant unattended
- Ensure that another adult is also present
- Contact the parent / carer to confirm collection arrangement
- Not agree to transport the participant home
- Discuss the issue with the parent / carer upon arrival

Are coaches able to contact parents / carers in an emergency? Are coaches aware of any medical conditions or special needs of the participants in their care?

Clubs / organisations should ask all parents / carers to complete a registration form when a child / young person or vulnerable adult joins the organisation or a coaching programme. This is to ensure that they hold emergency contact details (preferably two contacts) as well as any information about any medical conditions or special requirements a participant may have. Coaches must have access to this information at each session.

Are coaches aware of the action they should take in the event of an accident or incident?

Coaches should be qualified in first aid or make sure that there is a qualified First Aider on site whilst they are coaching, leading or officiating. It is essential that coaches have access to an appropriately stocked first aid box at all activities, are aware of and follow the accident and incident reporting procedures that relate to the activity.

4. Qualification and Training

All club personnel should have the appropriate skills, experience and qualifications to carry out their roles effectively. Role descriptions should be in place to ensure that responsibilities are clearly outlined and understood. Your club should be committed to developing its personnel and enhancing their current skills.

Coaches must hold a recognised coaching qualification from the relevant Governing Body, which is appropriate for their level of responsibility, eg, Assistant Coach, Head Coach as well as the activity and level of ability being coached. An Assistant Coach must hold an up to date Level 1 Governing Body of Sport qualification and should coach under the supervision of an experienced, more highly qualified coach (Level 2 and above).

Coaches should attend training that will help them ensure that activities are suitable for and appropriate to the age and ability of the participants involved.

Club personnel must attend recognised safeguarding training to ensure that they have the skills and knowledge to recognise and deal appropriately with safeguarding concerns so that a child / young person / vulnerable adult is protected and not placed at increased risk of harm. An HSE approved first aid course must also be attended. These courses, as well as Funding for Your Club, specific sports coaching qualifications are delivered by the relevant Governing Body of Sport, Sports Coach UK, Access to Sport or Sport Islington. Clubs should promote access to these training opportunities.

It is important that club personnel are committed to Continuous, Professional Development (CPD) to further enhance skills and knowledge. By identifying training and development needs club personnel will be able to follow a structured programme to address them.

5. Equity Statement and Policy

Your club and its members should respect the rights, dignity and worth of all children / young people and ensure that all participants have the opportunity to realise their potential. Your club should have an equity statement and policy that reflect the club's commitment to equality and inclusion.

6. Health and Safety Policy

This should include procedures relating to Risk Assessments, First Aid Cover, Accidents / Incidents Reporting and Participant Registration.

The following need to be addressed:

- Are activities taking place in a safe environment using safe equipment?
- Have potential hazards been identified and removed?
- Are activities appropriate for the age, maturity, experience and ability?
- Is your club operating to the recommended player to coach ratio?

- Does your club have valid Public Liability insurance, which provides adequate cover for the activities it delivers?
- Do your coaches have insurance cover, which is appropriate for the activities being delivered?
- Does your club use course registers, which participants sign on joining and leaving a session?
- Are up to date emergency contact details and medical details held? Are these available if needed?
- Is there qualified First Aider on site? Is there an appropriately stocked first aid kit?
- Are club personnel aware of the procedures for responding to incidents and accidents?

7. Insurance Cover

It is coaches' personal responsibility to hold up to date Professional Indemnity and / or Public Liability insurance providing appropriate cover for the different types of coaching situations and activities they are involved in.

Coaches should contact the relevant Governing Body of Sport or Sport Islington to gain advice on this subject, or Sports Coach UK who offer insurance for qualified coaches.

When coaching on behalf of a sports club or other agency, it is important to check that this organisation holds valid Public Liability insurance which provides adequate cover for the activities it delivers.

Clubs and organisations should have a transport policy in place, which is in accordance with current legislation and reflects good practice.

Contact Details:

For help with policies and club development contact Dan Jarvis, **Sport Islington**, 020 7527 1868, sportislington@islington.gov.uk or access the Sport Islington website, www.sportislington.co.uk

Contact your relevant **National Governing Body's** regional development officer.

Islington Safeguarding Children Board, www.islingtonscb.org.uk

Islington's Children's Social Care Referral and Advice Team, 020 7527 7400, during office hours, or 020 7226 0992 evenings / weekends
Email: csc referrals@islington.gov.uk

Thank you to Southwark Council for the use of their leaflet.