



FACT SHEET 21

GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES

Good Practice

All personnel are encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect children in their care and themselves from false allegations. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate within your tennis club.

Good practice means:

- always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging an open environment, e.g. no secrets)
- treating all children/ young people equally, and with respect and dignity
- always putting the welfare of each child / young person first, before winning or achieving goals
- maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with children/ young people (e.g. it is not appropriate to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room, tent, shower/ bath or changing facilities with them)
- building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children to share in decision-making
- making sport fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play
- proper supervision of children within the club and with a satisfactory ratio of coaches: children. A **maximum** ratio of 1 coach to 8 children is recommended by Tennis Ireland
- use of proper, recommended equipment including
 - Sport specific guidelines
 - identification markers/ cones, clearly visible
 - playing/coaching surfaces, free from debris
- use of equipment only when supervised by a coach/ sports leader
- a clearly defined area of play/ in bounds, fenced and safe from vehicular traffic
- a first aider and first aid kit on hand in event of an accident, with accident incident book to be marked up at every relatively serious accident. **NB** All accidents will be reported to parents at collection
- ensuring that if physical support is needed, talk aloud to the child/ young person explaining what you are doing and why. Any necessary contact should be in response to the needs of the child and it should be in an open environment with the understanding and permission of the young person where possible. The leaders should never do something for the child that they can do themselves. Children/ young people should always be consulted before they are touched and their agreement gained. Parental/ carer views about manual support should always be carefully considered
- keeping up to date with the technical skills, qualifications and insurance (group or individual) in tennis

- involving parents/ carers wherever possible (e.g. for the responsibility of their children in the changing rooms). If groups have to be supervised in the changing rooms, always ensure parents/ coaches/ officials work in pairs
- ensuring that if mixed teams are taken away, they should always be accompanied by male and female leaders. Be aware of the potential for same gender abuse by male adults of boys and female adults of girls
- ensuring that at tournaments or residential events, adults do not enter children's rooms, invite or permit children into their rooms or become involved in unobserved or unsupervised 1:1 situations with children and young people
- being an excellent role model – this includes not smoking, drinking alcohol, using foul language or taking drugs in the company of young people
- giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback, encouraging achievements rather than negative criticism
- recognising the developmental needs and capacity of children/ young people, including those with a disability – avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will
- securing parental consent in writing to *act in loco parentis*, if the need arises to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid and / or other medical treatment
- keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given
- requesting written parental consent if club officials are required to transport young people in their cars and best practice is not to do so without the presence of a second adult
- keep a written record of any inappropriate body contact with a child
- immediately report any accusations made against you or your colleagues
- avoid spending any time alone with children/ young people away from others
- never take children / young people to your home
- acquiring completed application forms, interviews and pre-employment checks on all coaches / sports leaders whether paid or voluntary
- maintaining records on individuals in line with advice from the data protection agency i.e. only holds records on individuals that they have a justifiable reason for holding.

Practices never to be sanctioned

The following should **never** be sanctioned. You should never:

- engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- share a room/ tent/ changing room/ bath or shower with a child/ young person
- allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- allow children/ young people to use foul, sexualised or discriminatory language unchallenged
- make sexually suggestive comments to a child/ young person, even in fun
- reduce a child/ young person to tears as a form of *control*
- allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- undertake personal care for children/ young people. Ensure that a parent or carer is responsible for personal care
- invite or allow children to stay with you at your home.

For further information and copies of the codes of conduct please see **Fact Sheets 4, 5 and 6**.