

Information for sports leaders / volunteers



Introduction

Coaches and volunteers involved in young people's sport have a great opportunity to be a positive role model and help build an individual's confidence. This summary explains what you should do to keep young people **safe** and make sure they have **fun**. It also helps you think about what responsibilities you have.

Sports Leaders

Are there to make sure young people learn skills, enjoy the activity and keep safe. It means you should respect young people and consider their safety by:

- being reliable
- being fair and letting them have their say
- making them feel safe
- letting them take part
- encouraging them
- being a good role model
- not showing favouritism
- never condoning bullying or abusive language
- if any form of manual/physical support is required, it is provided openly and according to agreed guidelines
- work in an open environment
- adhere to NGB supervision guidelines
- holding a register of those who attend each session
- agreeing to safe recruitment procedures (including vetting)
- making sure that they do not feel uncomfortable.

Sports leaders must make sure that:

- the activity is FUN
- they have the right qualification for their role
- the equipment used is safe
- you know what you are doing
- you work to a code of conduct
- you treat young people as individuals.

You should not:

- engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- 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
- over-train your athletes
- invite or allow children to stay with you at your home.



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Young People's responsibility

Just like sports leader's young people have responsibilities to make the activity **fun** and **safe**. This means respecting the sports leaders who are there to help young people by:

- sticking to the rules of the activity
- not making insulting comments or swearing at the sports leader or other helpers and other members of the club.
- being prepared and on time for sessions/training
- doing their best at all times
- giving their friends a second chance if they make a mistake
- welcoming new members
- saying NO to bullying.

Parents and supporters

They should be there to support you in running the club. As supporters they should:

- help out when asked
- be enthusiastic and cheer the young people on but not embarrass them
- never argue with the coach or referee in public
- drop their young person off and collect them on time
- listen to any concerns you may have
- make sure the young people have the correct kit/equipment.

Responding to a Disclosure of Abuse

Always

- record what has been said as soon as possible
- remain sensitive and calm
- reassure the young person that they
 - are safe
 - were right to tell
 - are not to blame
 - are being taken seriously
- let the young person talk - don't interview!
- listen and hear, give the person time to say what they want
- ensure a positive experience
- explain that you must tell, but will maintain confidentiality
- tell the young person what will happen next
- involve appropriate individuals immediately
- stay calm
- reassure them that they have done the right thing in telling and that it will be dealt with appropriately.

Never

- question unless for clarification
- make promises you cannot keep
- rush into actions that may be inappropriate
- make/pass a judgment on alleged abuser
- take sole responsibility, consult the designated person so you can begin to protect the child and gain support for yourself.

If you are concerned about possible abuse seek advice from statutory agencies or contact the NSPCC Helpline on 0808 800 5000



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Transport

There is an extra responsibility on adults and leaders when they transport young people to events.

Adults in clubs should:

- ensure there is adequate insurance on their car and that they follow the rules of the road
- ensure they do not carry more than the permitted number of passengers
- avoid being alone with one passenger, put young passengers in the back seat, have central drop off locations or seek parental permission when transporting on a regular basis.
- parent's should check with young people about the transport plans, listen to what the young people are saying, be sure they are happy with the transport arrangements.
- keep parent's informed who will be transporting their child, why and how long the journey will take.
- alternate driver and which child is dropped off last
- ensure the driver should have a point of contact/mobile phone
- ensure the drivers is vetted
- ensure seatbelts are worn at all times and booster seats are used when required
- make sure there is supervision in the rear of minibuses and coaches

Control & Discipline

The use of sanctions is an important element in the maintenance of discipline. The age and developmental stage of the child should be taken into consideration when using sanctions. Sanctions should be fair and consistent and in the case of persistent offence, should be progressively applied. They should never be used to retaliate or to make a Sports Leader feel better.

The following steps are suggested and should always be used in conjunction with the code of conduct for young people:

- rules should be stated clearly and agreed
- a warning should be given if a rule is broken
- a sanction (for example, use of time out) should be applied if a rule is broken for a second time. The use of green, yellow and red cards are encouraged, irrespective of the sport
- if a rule is broken for the third time the child should be spoken to, and if necessary, the parents/guardians may be involved
- sanction's should not be applied if a Sports Leader is not comfortable with them. If an appropriate action cannot be devised right away, the child should be told that the matter will be dealt with later, at a specified time and as soon as possible
- a child should not be sanctioned for making errors when s/he is playing
- physical activity (e.g. running laps or doing push-ups) should not be used as a sanction. To do so only causes a child to resent physical activity, something that s/he should learn to enjoy throughout his/her life
- sanctions should be used sparingly. Constant sanctioning and criticism can cause a child to turn away from sport
- once sanctions have been imposed, it is important to make the young person feel s/he is a valued member of the group again
- where relevant some sanctions may need to be recorded and parents informed.



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Physical Contact

Physical contact during sport should always be intended to meet the child's needs, NOT the adult's. The adult will probably use appropriate contact when the aim is to assist in development of the skill or activity or for safety reasons, e.g. to prevent or treat an injury. This should be in an open environment with the permission and understanding of the participant.

In general:

- Contact should be determined by the age and developmental stage of the participant - don't do something that a child can do for themselves
- Never engage in inappropriate touching such as touching of groin, genital areas, buttocks, breasts or any other part of the body that might cause a child distress or embarrassment

There are a number of principles that should be followed when the activity involves physical contact:

- The adult should only use physical contact if their aim is to:
 - Develop sports skills or techniques
 - To treat an injury
 - To prevent an injury or accident from occurring
 - To meet the requirements of the sport
- The adult should seek to explain the nature and reason for the physical contact to the child reinforcing the teaching or coaching skill. Unless the situation is an emergency, the adult should ask the child for permission.
- Any form of physical punishment of children is unlawful, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour unless it is by way of physical intervention to prevent a young person from:
 - Harming themselves
 - Harming other
 - Damaging property.

It is particularly important that adults understand this to ensure the safety of their youth members and to protect their own position as well as the overall reputation of the organisation in which they are involved.

Photography & Videoing

There have been concerns about the risks posed directly and indirectly to children and young people through the use of photographs on sports websites and other publications. Photographs can be used as a means of identifying children when they are accompanied with personal information but it is important to remember that the desire to take photos is perfectly normal and many young people are keen to promote their success, but **there are a few key points to remember to reduce any risk:**

- If the child is named, avoid using their photograph.
- If a photograph is used, avoid naming the child.
- Remember to seek permission to take photographs of children, from the parents and young person
- Appoint designated photographer
- Parental photos are fine it is about having an understanding of the risks and being vigilant, do not allow strangers to take photos of children
- Consider what is appropriate dress
- Manage the use of 3G mobile phones

For more information please contact the NSPCC on: 028 90351135 or pstephenson@nspcc.org.uk
Web site www.thecpsu.org.uk

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