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## Guidelines For Coaches And Officials

The following guidelines are to assist coaches, officials and others working with children.

### Physical contact

Generally physical contact with players/participants should be:

- to develop sport skills
- to give sports massage
- to treat an injury
- to prevent or respond to an injury
- to meet the specific requirements of the sport.

All physical contact by personnel should fulfil the following criteria:

- physical contact should be appropriate for the development of a sport skills
- permission from the player/participant should be sought
- player/participants be congratulated or comforted in public not in an isolated setting.

### Supervision for children:

The number of staff needed will depend on the age and number of children involved, and whether there are disability considerations.

### Being alone with a child

Do not isolate yourself and a child and avoid being alone with any particular child. If a child approaches you and wants to talk to you privately about a matter, do so in an open area and in the sight of other adults (eg. Other coaches, officials or parents/guardians). Ideally advise another coach or official and ask them to stay within sight while you have the discussion and to come to your assistance if the child becomes emotional and/or you indicate support is required in dealing with the child. Avoid unaccompanied and unobserved activities with children.

### Adopt positive language and behaviour:

Adopt positive language when talking with children and in the presence of children. This includes avoiding bad or aggressive language that could intimidate a child or set a poor example.

### Change Rooms

Before going into change rooms knock or announce that you will be coming in and try to have at least one adult with you in a change room with children. Do not isolate yourself and a child from others in the change room.

## Maintain control –avoid losing your temper

Try not to lose your temper with a child (verbally or physically). If you find that you regularly lose your temper with children you should seek support on behaviour management strategies, anger management or consider whether you have the patience to work with children.

Some ideas to assist with maintaining control include:

- Set up some basic rules at the beginning of the season such as be nice, follow instructions, have a go, no put downs. Make sure children are aware of these rules.
- Give positive messages
- Have a time out area for children and young people that are not behaving. This should be simple such as an agreed T sign with the hands that children know means to go to time out for two minutes.
- Adopt a card system to express concerns with a child's behaviour rather than becoming verbally agitated. For example a yellow card is a warning, two yellow cards means time out for two minutes and a red card could mean the child misses out of next week's game.

## Collection by parents/guardians

Your club needs to let parents/guardians know about its policy on the collection of children. A list of actions that could help include:

- Letting children, parents/guardians know the times of practices and games, when they can expect to collect their children and that it is not your responsibility to transport children home if parents are delayed.
- Have a club policy that the second to last child and their parent/guardian will wait with the coach/official and the child. This will also enable the coach/official to concentrate on making contact with the parent/guardian.
- If you have a club room where there will be other people, have a club policy that latecomers are to collect their children from the club room. Wait with the child if possible, and make contact with the parent/guardian if necessary.
- If there are other people at the ground or facility, wait for the parent/guardian closer to those people. In the meantime try to make contact with the parent/guardian.
- Avoid the risk of being alone with a child by having a parent/guardian or support person assist you with the training. Require that person to wait until all children have left.
- Have a club policy that there is a register of parent/guardian emergency contact numbers and make sure coaches/officials have access to a phone.

## Transport of players/participants

Ideally all players/participants should have their own transportation to and from sporting events. You should only provide transportation when:

- the driver is properly licensed
- other players/ participants/parents/guardians are in the vehicle
- the ride has been approved by parents/guardians
- the ride is directly to/from sports or recreational activities.
- you should also call someone and tell them what you are doing, the exact time you are leaving –so that you are accountable for your time.

## Overnight trips

Always have more than one adult with children on an overnight trip/ camp and do not separate yourself and children from other adult/s. There should always be more than one adult with a group of children, even if the number of children is small. Mixed gender is preferable. Options to consider on an overnight trip/camp include obtaining separate sleeping accommodation from the children (adults in separate rooms). There must be emergency procedures in place to enable supervising adults to be able to respond to any alarm raised by a child. If an alarm is raised by a child, more than one adult should respond.

## Injuries and illness

Your club needs to have guidelines for handling injuries that occur during sporting activities. Only personnel who are qualified in administering first aid or treating sports injuries should attempt to treat an injury. Personnel should avoid treating injuries out of sight of others. Other considerations include:

- The comfort level and dignity of the player/participant should always be the priority.
- Only uncover the injured area, or drape private parts of the player/participants body.
- Always report injuries and any treatment provided to parents and document an incident.
- If necessary seek medical attention as soon as possible.

Your club should also have in place policies regarding “blood rules” and ensure coaches and officials know to remove any child that is bleeding from a game and to stop the flow of blood before being allowed to again join in the activity.

## Participants with disabilities

It is important that participants with disabilities have the same opportunities to be involved in sport and recreation activities. This may require, where reasonable, the provision of specialist support, appropriate transport and training for those assisting with matters such as lifting and toileting. At all times participants should be treated with dignity and respect. Because participants with disabilities may be more vulnerable to abuse or neglect clubs and organisation may need to take additional steps to ensure their safety.

## Photographing children

All clubs need to be aware that there are some people who visit sporting events to take inappropriate photographs or video footage of children. You need to be alert to this possibility and report any concerns to a responsible person in your club.

Your club needs to have clear guidelines on the use of images as there is evidence that information posted on an Internet site or published in a magazine or newspaper can be used to target children, to locate them, and then to groom them. Also images can be used and adapted for inappropriate use.

These guidelines have been adapted from information from the:

Child Protection In Sport Unit UK [www.thecpsu.org.uk](http://www.thecpsu.org.uk)

Australian Sports Commission [www.ausport.gov.au/ethics/](http://www.ausport.gov.au/ethics/)

New South Wales Department for Tourism Sport and Recreation [www.dsr.nsw.gov.au/children](http://www.dsr.nsw.gov.au/children)

