

GROVE HILL OTLEY TENNIS CLUB

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

We want tennis to be an inclusive, fun, affordable sport for people of all ages and abilities. We want everyone involved in tennis to have a positive experience of the sport, free from abuse or other forms of inappropriate behaviour. It is our responsibility to protect and support those playing our sport, and in particular children, young people and adults at risk.

The Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy recognises that procedures need to be put in place to protect children and young people so that they are safe from harm and have an enjoyable tennis experience. Providing young people with a good experience can help to attract and retain them in tennis, supporting our work to grow and widen access to our sport.

It is a fundamental human right to be safe from harm and abuse, and the club believes it is important to raise awareness of individuals who may be at risk. Abuse of any child or young person towards or by any tennis people will not be tolerated.

This Policy relates to all people working within a tennis environment, including both coaches and others.

All will:

- recognise and celebrate the individuality of every child that plays tennis;
- be aware that some children with disabilities or impairments may be additionally vulnerable to abuse, neglect and bullying;
- take a positive approach to safeguarding children and young people;
- will not tolerate the abuse of any child or young person by any tennis people or other person;
- provide support and advice to tennis venues, delivering tennis for children and young people; and
- expect that all members of the tennis community will recognise that it is their responsibility

to protect and ensure the well-being of all children and young people associated to tennis.

What are the responsibilities of people working or volunteering in tennis?

The club states that as a person in a position of trust working or volunteering with children within tennis you are not required to make assessments of whether a child is at immediate risk of harm or likely to suffer harm. This is something for statutory agencies such as Police and Social Care to assess.

However, any adult is required to report any concerns you may have about child and to report anything witnessed. Remember, if you fail to respond and report a concern, a child may continue to suffer harm.

What are the different types of abuse?

There are four categories of abuse that may happen to a child or young person and very rarely does one type of abuse happen in isolation; with emotional abuse usually occurring with each type of abuse. Abuse can also occur through social media (below).

1. Emotional / Psychological;
2. Physical;
3. Sexual; and
4. Neglect.

Some children and young people may have additional vulnerabilities due to being:

- elite athletes;
- elite disabled athletes;
- deaf or disabled.

Disabled Children may be considered to have additional vulnerabilities due to:

- communication impairments or difficulties;
- physical impairments or disability;
- a physical dependency on others for care;
- experience of previous abuse;
- being isolated; and
- not getting the required help.

It is important to remember that we would not accept this behaviour outside tennis, therefore any poor practice and abuse must be challenged and stopped when observed or reported within tennis.

What are the signs and indicators of abuse?

It is often a change in a child or young person's behaviour that indicates potential abuse rather than seeing any physical signs or being told, as children and young people may not be able to clearly explain what has happened. Other signs of abuse may include:

- Unexplained or concerning injuries (cuts / bruises / stomach upsets);
- Inconsistent explanation for injury;
- Unexplained change in behaviour;

- Inappropriate sexual awareness or language;
- Change in physical appearance (weight loss / weight gain / untidy);
- Change in behaviour (withdrawn / extroverted / tearful); and
- Change in performance.

What are my responsibilities? When should I report a concern that a child may be at risk?

As it is everyone's responsibility to protect children and young people from harm, all you are required to do is make sure that you listen to what the child or young person tells you and to report what you have been told or seen to the Welfare Officer or Safeguarding Team. When reporting any information, it is important to do so with sensitivity for the people involved and the person who may have raised the concern.

What should I do if a child raises a concern?

When a child or young person tells you about a concern remember the 'Six R's':

1. Remain calm and aware of your body language and facial expressions. Try not to act shocked or worried about what you are being told as this may stop them talking.
2. Respond by listening to what is said and try not to ask questions, rather encourage them by saying 'and then what happened' (remember the most important thing you can do is listen).
3. Reassure the child or young person that what they have told you is important and you need to tell someone else to help keep them safe.
4. Remind them that you cannot always maintain confidentiality in order to keep them safe.
5. Record exact words and phrases on the Well-Being Form - be careful not to add your opinion or thoughts.
6. Report the concern to the Safeguarding Team on 020 8487 7179 or 07971 141 024.

When you have a concern, or a child or young person raises a concern, the club's policy is that you

should use record:

- Details of the child or young person;
- Any concerns you have;

- Any concerns you have been told (using the child's words and facts only);
- Actions that have been taken at a club level; and
- Advice from the Safeguarding team;

Supervising Children

What age can children be left unsupervised?

It is recommended by the NSPCC that all children under 13 must be supervised by their parent or another adult, as they may not be mature enough to deal with certain situations or an emergency. Whilst this is the age considered appropriate for leaving someone alone at home (i.e. within a domestic environment), the same principle of maturity should be considered when a parent allows their child to attend a tennis venue unsupervised. For this reason, the onus is placed on each parent to determine what age their child is mature enough to be left unsupervised. Each parent should be confident that their child can respond to emergencies that may arise at a tennis venue when unsupervised.

When supervising children, for example on a trip, what is the recommended ratio for adults to children? When planning to care for more than one child, either as a day trip or overnight, we recommend the following ratios for adult to child:

1:8 for children 10 and under; and 1:10 for children aged 11 and over.

When organising to take children away either as a day trip or overnight, consideration should always be given to the individual care needs of the group of children and young people. This includes whether the children have any additional vulnerabilities and care needs, along with whether you have been away with that group or number of children before. It is always worth considering how you would respond in an emergency whilst ensuring the safety and well-being of all children in the group.

When children attend group coaching, what is the expected ratio of adults to children?

When planning to coach more than one child, either as a day trip or overnight, we recommend the following ratios for adult to child:

- 1:6 for children under 8; and
- 1:12 for children aged 8 and over.

If you are coaching performance players then the ratios may be less than those indicated, however consideration should always be given to the individual care needs of the group of children and young people.

Code of conduct for working with children and young people

This code of conduct relates to best practice for all adults who work with children and young people. It is designed to promote the professional standards expected in tennis.

Everyone working with children and young people in tennis agrees to:

1. Remain professional at all times;

2. Use appropriate language at all times and challenges anyone who swears or uses unacceptable language in front of or toward children and young people;
3. Encourage children and young people to participate in tennis using 'Fair Play' values and encourage respect for one another;
4. Work and communicate openly and in an open environment, to avoid situations that could be misinterpreted in both tennis settings and with social media;
5. Keep a separate personal and business profile / account for all social media;
6. Be aware of the power and trust held as a person in a position of trust, treating this position and power with the highest of responsibility.
7. Ensure provision of a safe and inclusive environment for all children, their age, gender, sexuality, gender reassignment, disability or ability, religion, or ethnicity;
8. Maintain professional relationships with children at all times and know that any form of sexual relationship with someone under 18 is against the law and breach of their position of trust;
9. Act as excellent role model at all times; which includes refraining from smoking or taking drugs or illicit substances when coaching or around tennis environments;
10. Use positive reinforcement for discipline and report to the Safeguarding Team anyone who is seen to intimidate, threaten or act in a way that is physically or verbally abusive and agree to challenge a child or other person who acts in this way;
11. Work in an open and accountable manner;
12. Challenge poor practice of others; and
13. Seek the advice of colleagues and refer to policies if unsure at anytime about practice or
behaviour observed.

Reference LTA British Tennis (Safeguarding children and Young People Policy)

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