

SOUTH YORKSHIRE VISUALLY IMPAIRED TENNIS CLUB (SYVITC) (Unincorporated)

Code of Conduct

The Club is committed to providing good quality tennis in a safe environment. This Code of Conduct sets the standards and expectations of players, volunteers, sighted guides, and Committee members involved with the Club. It sets out conduct and guidance for the unique requirements of a club designed for visually impaired players.

The Code has been developed to encourage standards of good practice and to protect the welfare and wellbeing of all those involved in the game. The Code of Conduct will assist individuals in their roles, whilst Committee members should hold their position primarily for their knowledge, skill set and experience and their ability to actively contribute to the running of SYVITC.

This policy should be read alongside and referenced against the Club's Safeguarding policy, Inclusion and diversity policy, Anti-bullying policy, Online safety and communication policy and the Photography and filming policy. These policies can be found here: <https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/south-yorkshire-visually-impaired-tennis-club/Policies>

Being a SYVITC member, volunteer or sighted guide carries responsibilities to behave in certain ways which are described within this policy. Breaches in this Code of Conduct are taken seriously and may result in membership being reviewed.

This Code of Conduct is reviewed every three years (or earlier if there is a change in national legislation or a change in the Club's constitutional position).

Chairperson, Adrian Pierce:

Date: 01-05-24

Welfare Officer, David Wallace

Date: 01-05-24

1 SUPPORTING VISUALLY IMPAIRED PLAYERS

Sight is classified in more than one measure. The main measures are 'Visual acuity' and 'Visual field'. Visual acuity is a person's ability to see fine detail. Visual field is the boundaries of what a person can see in one instant i.e. the entire area which can be seen without moving the eyes.

Sight loss is broken down into two main categories; severely sight impaired and sight impaired:

- Severely sight impaired

This category is also known as blind. Under government legislation, a person who is severely sight impaired would be unable to perform a job for which eyesight is an essential element for the task.

- They will not be able to see a demonstration.
- They may become quickly disorientated during an activity.

- Sight impaired

This category is also known as partially sighted. Partially sighted people will have some useful vision that they can use to navigate the world.

- They may not be able to see a demonstration.
- They may not be able to recognise you from a distance.

2 COMMUNICATING WITH VISUALLY IMPAIRED PLAYERS

It is important to understand the needs of a visually impaired person. Do not be afraid to ask questions to obtain as much information as you can that will aid in coaching and delivery.

- Always ask a VI person how much they can see.

- Find out if the VI person has had any sight previously. This may affect their understanding of the sport or task.
- Try to establish if there is a preferred situation or environment that promotes better vision, for example a VI person may have better vision in their left eye, so by making a small change to where you stand to demonstrate a skill or task may make a huge difference.
- Can the VI person access the venue independently? Do they need support in the changing area?
- Remember to always to introduce yourself by name to a VI participant.

3 GUIDING VISUALLY IMPAIRED PLAYERS

A VI participant may require a sighted guide to assist them to and from the tennis session.

A VI participant may also require a sighted guide during the sports or activity session to either assist when changing drills or tasks, or for the complete sports activity.

Below are some key points to consider when guiding a visually impaired person.

- Identify yourself and ask the VI person if they would like some assistance; don't just presume that they do or don't.
- Offer your elbow or shoulder to the VI person for them to take hold of. Ask them which side they prefer to be guided on.
- Ensure you are always one step in front of the person that you are guiding, don't walk too fast or too slowly, ask if they are happy with the pace.
- Communicate at all times e.g. steps (up or down), handrails. Describe what is around them and explain any changes in ground surface.
- When guiding a VI person to a seat, place their hand on the back of the chair/bench. Do not back them into the seat.
- When walking through doorways ensure that the VI person steps behind you and ensure that they do not get struck by the door or catch their fingers, etc.
- Explain any loud noises.
- Keep your guiding arm still and relaxed. Don't start waving it about or pointing at things.

- Remember to give the person you are guiding adequate space around obstacles.

For more information regarding playing visually impaired sport please visit the British Blind Sport Website (<https://britishblindsport.org.uk/>).

Within the site, there is educational resources for further reading:

'A Guide To Visually Impaired Friendly Sport' and

'Tennis Resource' (<https://britishblindsport.org.uk/educationandresearch/education/>)

4 GUIDE DOG ETIQUETTE

As tempting as it may be, it is important not to touch, interact, feed, or otherwise distract a guide dog. This includes guide dogs lying or sitting quietly whilst their owner is on court or whilst with their owner in a social setting. It's the guide dog's responsibility to be vigilant of their surroundings. Distracting a guide dog can confuse the dog or convince the dog it is play time and may render the dog and their handler in a dangerous situation.

Here are a few more helpful tips on positively interacting with blind and visually impaired people who travel with guide dogs;

- Always ask before petting or interacting with the guide dogs. Simply ask the handler if you can pet their dog. Some handlers will allow for a quick interaction if they have the time.
- If you have your own pet dog and see a guide dog, do not allow your dog to wander over for a "meet and greet" with the guide dog. This can be very distracting to the dog.
- Always speak to the blind person directly, not to their sighted companion or to their guide dog.
- Never grab the guide dog's lead, collar, or harness. The guide dog is trained to take commands from their handler.
- Do not try to coax a guide dog forward or direct them in any way. This is the responsibility of the handler.

Further information can be found on <https://www.guidedogs.org.uk/news/avoid-guide-dog-distractions-dont-dive-on-the-dog/> or searching the web.

5 ON COURT ETIQUETTE

All members please:

- Be courteous and considerate to other Club members.
- Be aware that the Club uses the facilities of other organisations, so be courteous and considerate to other users at all times.
- Wear non-marking tennis shoes & wear suitable sports clothing when playing.
- Please take your litter (e.g. ball tubes, drink bottles etc) with you or use the bins where provided.

When playing VI tennis;

- The game is played either on a badminton court or on specially marked out tennis courts.
- You can use any audible ball on the market, however, currently the Tennis Foundation have sanctioned competitions to use the Japanese yellow audible ball.
- Competition rules require that if you are a B1 player, your racket size must be maximum 23-inches. If you are categorised as a B2 to B5 player, there is no current limitations in place. However, if you find you are to play internationally, for the B2 and B3 game, a maximum racket size of 25-inch is used and for the B4 and B5 game a maximum 27-inch racket is used.
- The server shouts "Ready?", waits for the response "Yes" and then "Play!" before serving. Sighted volunteers may also address the VI by name.
- The ball may bounce up to three times for some sight categories.
- Volleying is permitted, except that a fully sighted players must not volley the ball to blind or partially sighted opponents and partially sighted players may not volley the ball to blind opponents.

6 GENERAL

All SYVITC coaches, members, volunteers and sighted guides agree to:

- Be a positive role model. Act with integrity at all times.
- Prioritise the well-being VI Players at all times.

- Treat all at risk fairly and with respect.
- Help to create a safe and inclusive environment both on and off court.
- Not allow any rough or dangerous behaviour, bullying or the use of bad or inappropriate language.
- If you have a safeguarding concern, please use the LTA secure online form to provide the details (anonymously if you wish) or email our confidential safeguarding address syvitc.safe@outlook.com. You can also speak to our Welfare Officers (David Wallace or Marie Pierce). More details on Safeguarding are below.
- Not use any sanctions that humiliate an adult at risk.
- Value and celebrate diversity and make all reasonable efforts to meet individual needs.
- Keep clear boundaries between professional and personal life, including on social media.
- Have the relevant consent before taking or using photos and videos - see our Privacy policy and Photography and filming policy for more information.
- Refrain from making physical contact unless it is necessary as part of an emergency or congratulatory (e.g. guiding, handshake / high five).
- Ensure roles and responsibilities are clearly outlined and everyone has the required information and training.
- Avoid being alone with adults at risk without prior agreement unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- Refrain from transporting adults at risk alone, unless this is required as part of a club activity (e.g. venue to home or vice versa trips or tournament matches).
- Not abuse, neglect, harm or discriminate against anyone; or act in a way that may be interpreted as such.
- Be acutely aware of the power that coaches and coaching assistants develop over players in the coaching relationship and avoid any intimacy (sexual or otherwise) with players.
- Guide dog owners must not let their dogs play or run on or around the tennis courts at any time.
- Guide dogs must always be tethered when their owners are on court.

- To remove the risk of water spillages, avoid feeding or watering guide dogs on court or courtside.

7 SAFEGUARDING

Alongside the LTA, here at SYVITC, we will strive to ensure that all children, young people and adults at risk are safeguarded from abuse and have an enjoyable tennis experience. Everyone who is involved in tennis has a shared responsibility to support this by promoting the welfare of all children, young people and adults at risk. For further information please contact the Club's Welfare Officers (David Wallace or Marie Pierce), or by following the link to [SafePlay \(https://www.safetoplaytennis.co.uk/\)](https://www.safetoplaytennis.co.uk/)

8 REPORTING A SAFEGUARDING CONCERN

If you have a safeguarding concern, please use the LTA [secure online](#) form to provide the details (anonymously if you wish) or email our confidential safeguarding address syvitic.safe@outlook.com.

If you'd like to speak to someone outside of office hours, you can call the NSPCC on 0808 800 5000. Older people can also call the free, confidential Hourglass helpline on 0808 808 8141 for advice.

If someone is in immediate danger, call the police (999).