

ECB Guidance for Coaches Working with Children

Coaches have a vital role to play in safeguarding children in cricket. The coaches at a club will be the focus for children and their activities. The ECB Coaching Philosophy states that good coaching is about providing a fun and safe environment in which people, particularly children, can enjoy their first experience of cricket, gain some success and be motivated to want to go on playing. This philosophy ties into the ECB's own core values and in particular the "Enjoyment" value which the ECB has identified as central to the ethos of the "Safe Hands" Programme.

This section of "Safe Hands" provides guidance specifically for those involved in coaching cricket and covers the following areas:

- Promoting Good Practice
- Poor Practice
- Practical Coaching Guidance
- ECB Coaches Association Code of Conduct

The guidance is intended for all those involved in coaching whether they hold coaching qualifications or not.

Promoting Good Practice

Child abuse and harassment can take place in many situations, from the home and school to a sporting environment. As a cricket coach you will have regular contact with children; you should adopt the highest standards of practice and be responsible for identifying those in need of protection.

As a coach they will look up to you and if a child decides to talk to you about abuse, you need to know what to do. You also need to understand your duty of care towards young cricketers, current guidance on good practice, and act responsibly when

you are around children. This will protect the children you coach and reduce the potential for misunderstandings and inappropriate allegations being made. The following guidelines should help you know what to do if you are worried about a child, and demonstrate how you can create a positive culture in cricket.

Good practice means:

- ensuring that cricket is fun, enjoyable and fair play is promoted
- treating all children equally, with respect and dignity
- being an excellent role model – this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol whilst coaching
- always putting the welfare of children first, before winning or achieving goals by encouraging a constructive environment where healthy competition, skill development, fun and achievement are promoted in equal measures
- always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding being alone with a child, and encouraging open communication with no secrets)
- building balanced relationships based on trust which enable children to take part in the decision-making process
- in line with Home Office guidelines, if you are in a position of trust and authority, not having sexual relationships with 16-17 year olds in your care
- not tolerating acts of aggression

- recognising the needs and abilities of children, avoiding too much training or competition and not pushing them against their will
- giving positive and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- working to the ECB guidance on physical contact, where children are always consulted and their agreement gained before any contact
- keeping up-to-date with technical skills, qualifications and insurance in sport
- ensuring that if mixed sex teams are taken away, they are always accompanied by a male and female member of staff
- while on tour, you do not enter a child's room or invite them into your room – except in an emergency i.e. when very unwell
- finding out if any children you are coaching have medical conditions that could be aggravated whilst playing or training
- keeping a written record any time a child is injured in your care, along with the details of any treatment provided
- promoting good sportsmanship by encouraging children to be considerate of other athletes, officials and club volunteers and by being modest in victory and gracious in defeat
- helping the ECB to work toward eradicating harassment and abuse of children from cricket.

Poor practice means you must never:

- spend excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others
- take or drop off a child at an event
- take children to your home or transport them by car, where they will be alone with you
- engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games
- share a room with a child
- allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching or physical abuse
- take part in or tolerate behaviour that frightens, embarrasses or demoralises a cricketer or that affects their self esteem
- allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun
- make a child cry as a form of control
- allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or ignored
- do things of a personal nature for children or vulnerable adults that they can do for themselves
- shower with a child.

Any of these can leave you open to allegations.

Practical Coaching Guidance on Physical Contact

The following guidance is about safeguarding children whilst they learn to play cricket. It will also help to protect coaches from unnecessary or malicious allegations when working with children. Always conduct coaching sessions with at least one other adult present. The ECB understands that physical contact between a child and an adult may be required to instruct, encourage, protect or comfort.

However, it is important to remember that in cricket today there is a multi-cultural mix of children from different ethnic and religious backgrounds, children who may be on the Child Protection Register or have previously been or are currently being abused at home. Not all children are used to or are comfortable with any type of touching, be it friendly or otherwise. In many cultures girls in particular are uncomfortable about any kind of touching by a stranger.

All adults must understand that this touching not only involves touching children when showing them cricket postures, but can also include responsive or pleasant actions, e.g. when asking the child to carry out a task, or celebrating a win. If any child is not comfortable with physical contact it should be made clear that they can make their feelings known privately to the adult. Any contact should be led by the child and not the adult.

Physically or visually impaired children may need to be touched in order to help them understand, acquire or visualise a cricket posture.

However, it must be remembered that the guidance detailed below still applies.

In addition, adults must be appropriately dressed and professional when operating in a cricket environment with children.

Please remember that children can stereotype people by their appearance.

Never touch a child inappropriately. As a responsible adult you should only use physical contact if its aim is to:

- develop sports skills or techniques
- treat an injury
- prevent an injury or accident from occurring
- meet the requirements of the sport

You should seek to explain the reason for the physical contact to the child i.e. reinforcing the teaching or coaching skill. Unless the situation is an emergency, the adult should ask the child for permission. **Physical contact should always be intended to meet the child's needs NOT the adult's.**

- If a child becomes injured during a coaching session and the injury requires the child to be carried to a place of treatment, always seek support from another adult before moving the child. Any first aid administered should be in the presence of another adult or in open view of others.
- If the child seems uncomfortable in any way with the physical contact, stop immediately.
- If the child you are working with is visually impaired, you should tell them who you are and ask their permission before you come into physical contact with them.
- Never attempt to adjust the grip of a child when in the normal batting stance position.
- Never find yourself in a situation where you are the only adult present around children, e.g. in changing rooms, showers, or on a minibus.

- Where physical contact is for motivational or celebratory reasons, agree with the children, teachers or other appropriate adults that to praise good performance a 'High Five' or similar action will be used.
- Never help children dress e.g. to put on pads, helmets, or clothing unless they request this and genuinely require assistance.
- Never help children to put on an abdominal protector
- Never take on one to one coaching with a child unless another adult or parent is present.
- If you need to communicate with a child for the purposes of coaching or passing on cricket information, use a parent's mobile telephone number. If you have agreed with the parents in advance to use the child's own mobile phone for communicating with them, under no circumstances make the number available for general circulation.

If any of the following incidents take place or are observed, you **MUST** report them to the Club Welfare Officer and make a written note of the event using the ECB Incident Reporting Form and inform parents where appropriate if:

- You accidentally hurt a child.
- A child seems distressed in any manner.
- A child acts in a sexually inappropriate manner.
- A child misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.
- Responding to disclosures, suspicions and allegations.

There may be a number of reasons where a coach finds it necessary to report a concern including:

- In response to something a child has said.
- In response to signs or suspicions of abuse.

- In response to allegations made against a member of staff or volunteer.
- In response to allegations made about a parent, carer or someone not working within cricket.
- In response to bullying.
- In response to a breach of code of conduct/poor practice.
- Observation of inappropriate behaviour.

Responding to a child who tells you about abuse.

You need to:

- Stay calm; do not show disgust or disbelief.
- Keep an open mind.
- Do not dismiss the concern, make assumptions or judgements.
- Listen carefully to what is said and take the child seriously. Let the child know that if what they tell you leads you to believe they are in danger, you will have to pass the information on to someone who can protect them.
- Ask questions for clarification only and at all times avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer.
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing by telling you.
- Tell them what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared.
- Record in writing what was said using the child's own words. Do this as soon as possible, using the ECB Incident Reporting Form.
- Avoid approaching any alleged abuser to discuss the concern.
- Report the incident to the Club Welfare Officer.

Recording the incident and confidentiality

Information passed to the ECB, Children's Social Care and/or the Police needs to be as helpful as possible, which is why it is important to make a detailed record at the time of the disclosure / concern. Use the ECB Incident Reporting Form wherever possible

Information needs to include the following:

- Details of the child e.g. age/date of birth, address, and gender.
- Details of the facts of the allegation or observations.
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries.

- The child's account, if it can be given, regarding what has happened and how.
- Witnesses to the incident(s).
- The name, address and date of birth of any alleged offender.
- Any times, dates or other relevant information.
- A clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.
- A signature, date and time on the report.

Be very careful not to promise that you will keep the information to yourself.

