

Child Protection - Fitting it all together

There are a range of policies and procedures which will help to establish good practice in an organisation. These principles and procedures should ensure a safe environment for children and young people to develop skills, enjoy sport and physical recreation opportunities, and, most importantly, have fun.

Below is a quick guide to a successful Child Protection policy for your organisation:

Recruitment & Selection	Training & Support	<i>Communication</i>
<p>Be open to candidates from a variety of backgrounds Ensure there is a job description for each required task and establish clear parameters and expectations.</p>	<p>Induction Start as you mean to progress – provide essential training on child protection, health and safety, club practice and procedures. Establish clear roles and define boundaries.</p>	<p>Child protection policy Adopt it and publicise it in appropriate forms to all stakeholders (funding bodies, would-be volunteers, parents, children, coaches and staff).</p>
<p>Equal treatment Ask all applicants to undergo set procedures - interview, take-up references, check qualifications, sign up to Code of Conduct.</p>	<p>On-going support Everyone needs a bit of support - a chance to chat about how things are going, any problems, a chance to identify a training need, give some positive feedback, value a contribution.</p>	<p>Its good to talk Give coaches and volunteers training on how to cope if a young person talks to them about concerns or abuse. It is an indication of trust and usually a cry for help, not a complication to be avoided or ignored.</p>
<p>Complete Enhanced Criminal Record Check forms Explain the process, examine policy on involving ex-offenders, offer opportunities to share information on a confidential basis, explain what offences are not likely to have any effect on a decision and those which will. Gather any relevant information. <i>(ECRC will not be available until 2001).</i></p>	<p>Yet more training This can be refresher training, more advanced training for a change in responsibilities or the chance to pick up some new skills. Reinforce child protection, healthy and safety and ethics as essential core elements of all work with children and young people.</p>	<p>Its good to listen Have a policy on disclosure by a child, parent or peer and follow it. Get friendly with the local professional in the Social Work Department or Police so that when you do phone in a crisis, you'll know what to expect. The task of investigation always rests with professional agencies.</p>
<p>Trial period Make this two way - the organisation has the chance to check out an applicant, maybe identify areas for further training and a new person can check out the organisation and suggest ideas for improvement.</p>	<p>Be open Offer the chance for staff/volunteers to suggest change or share concerns. If possible, offer them (together with parents and children) confidentiality, by appointing an 'independent person' as a 'listening ear'.</p>	<p>Involve parents as partners If there is a problem at the club/organisation, parents may be the first to know. Let them know who to share concerns with and show you want to hear.</p>