

Congresbury Lawn Tennis Club
Safeguarding Children and Young People
Part B: Committee Members, Coaches, Volunteers and Employees

Note that this is in addition to the material for players and supporters (part A).

Policy Statement

Congresbury LTC is committed to the following principles:

- the welfare of the child is paramount
- all children, whatever their age, culture, ability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity should be able to participate in sport in a fun and safe environment
- all reasonable steps should be taken to protect children from harm, discrimination and degrading treatment and to respect their rights, wishes and feelings
- all suspicions and allegations of poor practice or abuse should be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- all Congresbury LTC employees, coaches and volunteers who work with children must follow these procedures and sign this document
- working in partnership with parents and children is essential for the protection of children

Promoting Good Practice

It is not always easy to distinguish poor practice from abuse. It is therefore NOT the responsibility of employees or participants in tennis to make judgements about whether or not abuse is taking place. It is however their responsibility to identify poor practice and possible abuse and act if they have concerns about the welfare of the child. This section will help you identify what is meant by good practice and poor practice.

All personnel should adhere to the following principles and action in the interests of good practice:

- always work in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets)
- make the experience of tennis fun and enjoyable: promote fairness, confront and deal with bullying
- treat all young people equally and with respect and dignity
- always put the welfare of the young person first, before winning
- maintain a safe and appropriate distance with players (e.g. it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them)
- avoid unnecessary physical contact with young people. Where any form of manual/physical support is required it should be provided openly and with the consent of the young person. Physical contact can be appropriate so long as it is neither intrusive nor disturbing and the young person's consent has been given
- involve parents/carers wherever possible, e.g. where young people need to be supervised in changing rooms, encourage parents to take responsibility for their own child. If groups have to be supervised in changing rooms always ensure parents, coaches etc. work in pairs
- request written parental consent if club members are transporting young people in their cars
- gain written parental consent for any significant travel arrangements for children e.g. overnight stays
- ensure that if mixed teams are taken away, they should always be accompanied by a male and female member of staff
- ensure that at away events adults should not enter a young person's room or invite young people to their rooms

- be an excellent role model, this includes not smoking or drinking excess alcohol in the company of young people
- always give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- recognise the developmental needs and capacity of the young person and do not risk sacrificing welfare in a desire for club or personal achievements. This means avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will
- for any overnight trips secure written parental consent for the club to act in loco parentis to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid or other medical treatment if the need arises and pass this to the club secretary
- give a written record of any injury that occurs, along with details of any treatment given, to the club secretary

The following are regarded as poor practice and should be avoided by all personnel:

- unnecessarily spending excessive amounts of time alone with young people away from others
- taking young people alone in a car on journeys, however short
- taking young people to your home where they will be alone with you
- sharing a room with a young person
- engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- allowing or engaging in inappropriate touching of any form
- allowing young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- making sexually suggestive comments to a young person, even in fun
- reducing a young person to tears as a form of control
- allowing allegations made by a young person to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- doing things of a personal nature that the young person can do for themselves

When a case arises where it is impractical/impossible to avoid certain situations e.g. transporting a young person in your car, the tasks should only be carried out with the written consent of the parent/carer.

If during your care you accidentally hurt a young person, the young person seems distressed in any manner, appears to be sexually aroused by your actions and/or if the young person misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done, report any such incidents as soon as possible to a member of the club management committee and give a written note of it to the club secretary. Parents should also be informed of the incident.

Defining Child Abuse

Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm; it commonly occurs within a relationship of trust or responsibility and is an abuse of power or a breach of trust. Abuse can happen to a young person regardless of their age, gender, race or ability. The abuser may be a family member, someone the young person encounters in residential care or in the community, including sports and leisure activities. Any individual may abuse or neglect a young person directly, or may be responsible for abuse because they fail to prevent another person harming the young person.

Abuse in all of its forms can affect a young person at any age. The effects can be so damaging that if not treated may follow the individual into adulthood.

Young people with disabilities may be at increased risk of abuse through various factors such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, isolation and a powerlessness to protect themselves or adequately communicate that abuse has occurred.

Types of Abuse:

- **Physical Abuse:** where adults physically hurt or injure a young person e.g. hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, biting, scalding, suffocating, or drowning. Giving young people alcohol or inappropriate drugs would also constitute child abuse. This category of abuse can also include when a parent/carer reports non-existent symptoms or illness or deliberately causes ill health in a young person they are looking after. In a sports situation, physical abuse may occur when the nature and intensity of training disregard the capacity of the child's immature and growing body.
- **Emotional Abuse:** the persistent emotional ill treatment of a young person is likely to cause severe and lasting adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve telling a young person they are useless, worthless, unloved, inadequate or valued in terms of only meeting the needs of another person. It may feature expectations of young people that are not appropriate to their age or development. It may cause a young person to be frightened or in danger by being constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted which may make the young person frightened or withdrawn. Emotional abuse in sport may occur when the young person is constantly criticised, given negative feedback or expected to perform at levels that are above their capability. Other forms of emotional abuse could take the form of name calling and bullying. Bullying may come from another young person or an adult. Bullying is defined as deliberate hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. There are four main types of bullying:-it may be physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, slapping), verbal (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, name calling, graffiti, threats, abusive text messages), emotional (e.g. tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating, ignoring, isolating from the group), or sexual (e.g. unwanted physical contact or abusive comments). In sport bullying may arise when a parent or coach pushes the young person too hard to succeed, or a rival athlete or official uses bullying behaviour.
- **Sexual Abuse** occurs when adults (male or female) use children to meet their own sexual needs. This could include full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse and fondling. Showing young people pornography or talking to them in a sexually explicit manner are also forms of sexual abuse. In sport, activities which might involve physical contact with young people could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed. Also the power of the coach over young athletes, if misused, may lead to abusive situations developing.
- **Neglect** occurs when an adult fails to meet the young person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, to an extent that is likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development. For example, failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect from physical harm or danger, or failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. Refusal to give love, affection and attention can also be a form of neglect. Neglect in sport could occur when a coach does not keep the young person safe, or exposes them to undue cold/heat or unnecessary risk of injury.

Indicators of Abuse

Even for those experienced in working with child abuse, it is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur or has already taken place. Most people are not experts in such recognition, but indications that a child is being abused may include one or more of the following:

- unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries
- an injury for which an explanation seems inconsistent
- the young person describes what appears to be an abusive act involving them
- another young person or adult expresses concern about the welfare of a young person
- unexplained changes in a young person's behaviour e.g. becoming very upset, quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper

- inappropriate sexual awareness
- engaging in sexually explicit behaviour
- distrust of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected
- difficulty in making friends
- being prevented from socialising with others
- displaying variations in eating patterns including overeating or loss of appetite
- losing weight for no apparent reason
- becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt

Signs of bullying include:

- behavioural changes such as reduced concentration and/or becoming withdrawn, clingy, depressed, tearful, emotionally up and down, reluctance to go to training or competitions
- an unexplained drop off in performance
- physical signs such as stomach aches, headaches, difficulty in sleeping, bed wetting, scratching and bruising, damaged clothes, bingeing e.g. on food, alcohol or cigarettes
- a shortage of money or frequent loss of possessions

It must be recognised that the above list is not exhaustive, but also that the presence of one or more of the indications is not proof that abuse is taking place. It is NOT the responsibility of those working in Congresbury LTC to decide that child abuse is occurring. It IS their responsibility to act on any concerns.

Use of Photographic/Filming Equipment at Sporting Events

There is evidence that some people have used sporting events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young people. All clubs should be vigilant for anyone taking photographs who does not have written permission from parents, and any concerns should be reported to the Club Safeguarding Officer.

Responding to Suspicions and Allegations

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in Congresbury LTC in a paid or unpaid capacity to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities so that they can then make inquiries and take necessary action to protect the young person. This applies **BOTH** to allegations/suspicions of abuse occurring within Congresbury LTC and to allegations/suspicions that abuse is taking place elsewhere.

We may become aware of possible abuse in various ways. We may see it happening, we may suspect it happening because of signs such as those listed above, it may be reported to us by someone else or directly by the young person affected. In the last of these cases, it is particularly important to respond appropriately. If a young person says or indicates that they are being abused, you should:

- stay calm so as not to frighten the young person
- reassure the child that they are not to blame and that it was right to tell
- listen to the child, showing that you are taking them seriously
- keep questions to a minimum so that there is a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said. The law is very strict and child abuse cases have been dismissed where it is felt that the child has been led or words and ideas have been suggested during questioning. Only ask questions to clarify
- inform the child that you have to inform other people about what they have told you. Tell the child this is to help stop the abuse continuing.
- safety of the child is paramount. If the child needs urgent medical attention call an ambulance, inform the doctors of the concern and ensure they are made aware that this is a child protection issue

- record all information and report the incident to the club committee.

In all cases if you are not sure what to do you can gain help from NSPCC 24 hour help line Tel No: 0800 800 500

Recording Information

To ensure that information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern. In recording you should confine yourself to the facts and distinguish what is your personal knowledge and what others have told you. Do not include your own opinions.

Information should include the following:

- child's name, age, date of birth, home address and telephone number
- whether or not the person making the report is expressing their concern or someone else's
- the nature of the allegation, including dates, times and any other relevant information
- a description of any visible bruising or injury, location, size etc. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes
- details of witnesses to the incidents
- the child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising/injuries occurred
- have the parents been contacted? If so what has been said?
- has anyone else been consulted? If so record details
- has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record detail

Reporting the Concern

All suspicions and allegations **MUST** be reported appropriately (even if they arise sometime after the event). It is recognised that strong emotions can be aroused particularly in cases where sexual abuse is suspected or where there is misplaced loyalty to a colleague. It is important to understand these feelings but not allow them to interfere with your judgement about any action to take.

1. Concerns or allegations must be reported as soon as possible to three people: the chairman, the club secretary, and the Club Safeguarding Officer if there is one otherwise another club official (except if the concerns or allegations are about any of these people in which case you **DO NOT** report to the person in question).
2. If all three notified officials are satisfied that the concerns are unfounded you need take no further action. However, a record MUST be kept, and a copy should be forwarded to the club secretary. The committee should check the insurance details to find out if the club's insurers should be contacted and advised of the incident or allegation.
3. If the concern is a general childcare issue (i.e. not thought to be abuse or club related but where the parents/carer or child may need support from relevant agencies), the Club Safeguarding Officer or club chairperson should seek advice from Social Services to decide if and how to take the matter up with the parents/carers.
4. If there are concerns that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm or is in immediate danger of harm (whether or not club related), then a referral to Social Services or the Police should be made at once by one of the notified officials. Clearly state that you are making a "Child Protection Referral". Identify yourself and the club you are representing. If the concern is that a child has been abused by a club employee volunteer or member then one of the notified officials shall refer the matter to Social Services with a view to the parents/carers of the child being contacted as soon as possible following advice from Social Services. The club chairperson or another member of the club management committee will deal with any media enquiries and implement any immediate disciplinary proceedings as appropriate.

5. Any concerns in relation to child protection issues should be logged and retained securely by the club secretary as must decisions of how to proceed, including rationale for those decisions and consultation with any other persons.

Where there is a complaint against an employee or volunteer, there may be three types of investigation.

- **Criminal** in which case the police are immediately involved
- **Child protection** in which case Social Services and (possibly) the police will be involved
- **Disciplinary or misconduct** in which case Congresbury LTC will be involved

Social Services have a legal responsibility under The Children Act 1989 to investigate all child protection referrals by talking to the child and family (where appropriate), gathering information from other people who know the child and making inquiries jointly with the police.

NB: If there is any doubt, you must report the incident: it may be just one of a series of other incidents which together cause major concern

Contacts

- Safeguarding officer: Darren Tracey
- Club chairman: Mr John-Lloyd Hagger, Toad House, Brockley Way, Claverham BS49 4PA 078999 64767
- Social Services (Customer Services –ask for Child Protection) 01904 554141 (emergency out of hours 0845 0349 417)
- Local Police: 0845 6060 247
- ChildLine: 0800 1111
- NSPCC 24 hour help line Tel No: 0800 800 500

Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only. This will generally include the following people:

- The tennis club committee; normally the safeguarding officer, secretary & chairman
- The parents/carers of the child
- The person making the allegation
- Social Services/police
- The alleged abuser (and parents/carers if the alleged abuser is a child); seek Social Services advice on who should approach the alleged abuser.

All information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws.

Internal inquiries and suspension of club members, employees or volunteers

- If a club member employee or volunteer is the subject of an allegation or concern the Club Safeguarding officer (or if unavailable then the club chairperson) will make an immediate decision about whether such individual should be temporarily suspended from membership/employment/office pending further police and Social Services inquiries
- Subsequently and irrespective of the findings of the Social Services or police inquiries the club management committee will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member, employee or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision, especially where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases the club management committee must reach a decision based upon the available

information which could suggest that, on the balance of probabilities, it is more likely than not that the allegation was true. The welfare of the child should remain of paramount importance throughout.

Recruiting and Selecting Personnel with Children

It is important that all reasonable steps are taken to prevent unsuitable people from working with children. This applies equally to paid staff and volunteers, both full and part time. To ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children the following steps should be taken when recruiting.

Before appointment, and in an annual check, the committee should check that all coaches, trainee coaches, employees and volunteers who have access to children have:

1. undergone a DBS check
2. provided evidence of identity (passport or driving licence with photo) – keep copies
3. provided 2 confidential references, including one regarding previous work with children. These references MUST be taken up and confirmed through telephone contact.
4. an up to date first aid qualification
5. signed to acknowledge their job requirements and responsibilities
6. signed this policy

In addition it is the responsibility of anyone coming into contact with children to analyse their own practice against what is deemed good practice, and to ensure their practice is likely to protect them from false allegations

Declaration

I, the undersigned, confirm that I have read and understand this Safeguarding Policy and will endeavour to take all necessary steps to ensure it is adhered to.

Signed:

Name:.....

Position within Congresbury LTC:.....

Date:.....