

CHILD PROTECTION IN SPORT

A tool to help practitioners to get started



Introduction

This resource is designed to provide practical tools to support coaches and youth workers to deliver an effective, basic level of child protection within their organisation. It is aimed at people delivering sports programmes who have not yet established an approach to child protection, probably in a small or medium sized organisation, who are working directly with young people on the ground, and who share in the aim of promoting children's safety and welfare.

A long term approach plus immediate application

The tool is made up of two parts designed to work together:

- **The code of practice** provides a list of practical actions that will help an organisation to meaningfully initiate and develop a child protection approach. The actions can be established over time, and the depth to which each one is delivered can be developed gradually. What's important is that a plan is designed to move towards a comprehensive, locally-driven approach encompassing all the actions in the code.
- **The pledge** is an action that can be applied immediately within an organisation to establish the dialogue between staff and young people about child protection issues that will be necessary to implement the code of practice. The pledge outlines a simple set of rules to promote safe and positive behaviours in sport. They are relevant to *any* adult who works with children in a sporting capacity.

A specific child protection focus

The main focus of this tool is keeping children safe in terms of appropriate behaviour of coaches and other adults in positions of trust; it is dedicated to preventing neglect and incidents of physical, emotional and sexual abuse of a child. The tools do not substantially address broader child safety issues such as facilities or injuries.

Global principles that can be adapted for local contexts

The tool is based on international children's rights standards, and presents a set of universal principles so as to be applicable to practitioners across the world. Being universal, however, does mean that in some contexts or cultures it might lack local specificity. Therefore practitioners are encouraged to adapt it to respond to particular local dynamics. This might mean changing some of the language or adding extra clauses.

Based on expertise and experience

This resource has been designed by CEOP, an international leader in child protection, in partnership with Spirit of Soccer, Beyond Sport, and Street Football World to ensure it considers the needs and realities of practitioners. This is not an accreditation or assessment tool; the intention is for it to support practitioners to get started or move forward around child protection, and to commit to working towards a full and comprehensive approach.

Helping you to formalise what might be inherent

We very much recognise that the ethos of child protection that is recommended here is already being lived in the vast majority of sports organisations; the value of this tool is in formalising and systematising that ethos into a comprehensive approach and therefore ensuring that it is lived as an organisation grows and develops.

NB: This tool has been designed by CEOP, Beyond Sport, Streetfootballworld and Spirit of Soccer to provide open-source support to organisations who want to develop their approach to child protection. The use of this tool DOES NOT entitle an organisation to claim any partnership or relationship with or any endorsement or accreditation by CEOP. Also, it does not mean that an organisation's child protection policies are in any way formally endorsed or accredited by Beyond Sport, streetfootballworld, or Spirit of Soccer.



1. Produce a written policy on child protection.

This should be clearly written, accessible and promoted within the organization. It should be distributed and owned by senior members of the organization. It should be regularly reviewed and updated (at a minimum every year) and should contain clear definitions of child abuse.

2. Provide clear guidance on what to do if there are child protection concerns

There should be clear procedures about what to do if there are concerns about a child's safety or welfare, these should be known and understood by all those working within the organization and should take account of the issues that arise in different country contexts. There should be a clear lead person for child protection, and a process for recording incidents and for dealing with complaints.

3. Establish clear processes and ways of working within the organization to minimize the possibility of children being abused by those in positions of trust

This would include ways of recruiting and assessing suitability, vetting and barring, whistle blowing procedures and guidance on the appropriate use of ICT (Information and Communication Technology – i.e. computers, mobile phones and the internet).

4. Provide written guidelines on behaviour towards children

This include written guidance on appropriate behaviour towards children (especially of those providing residential care), and of children towards other children. This should outline that children must be listened to and respected and that there are ways of managing poor behaviour on the part of children that do not involve physical punishment or any kind of degrading treatment.

5. Provide guidance on how the child protection policy will be applied practically in local circumstances – in ways that are sensitive to different cultures but which do not condone practices harmful to children

This includes a mapping or assessment of the local legal, welfare and child protection context – and the process for reporting fits this context. There should be a clear definition of general and specific child protection need and the UNCRC (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child) used as a basis for child protection. There should be a clear dialogue and discussion about any difference between the child protection policy and the local practice so that this can be considered and resolved.

6. Ensure that organizations uphold the rights of *all* children to protection from abuse

This includes clarity in the policy that all children regardless of age, race, gender, age religion, disability etc. have equal rights to protection, and that the procedures recognize the particular risks faced by some groups of children in accessing help. This should make clear that any discrimination is unacceptable and there should be a clear complaints procedure.

7. Clearly communicate around the policy to protect children and keep them safe both within the organization and externally.

Information should be clearly displayed in an accessible format and language about this commitment and children, parents and carers should be aware of it. Everyone should know where to go to get help, and who within the agency is responsible for child protection. Contact details for local protective services should be available.

8. Provide learning and development opportunities for staff to develop and train in order to retain the necessary skills to keep children safe

There should be training on joining the organization on the child protection policy and procedures, and those staff with responsibility for safety should have regular opportunities for training and updating their skills and knowledge. Children should be provided with advice and support on how to keep themselves safe also.

CHILD PROTECTION IN SPORT

A pledge for adults, coaches and young people



Adults and coaches should make pledge (A) to adhere to certain standards and behaviours. They should also ask the children in their care to agree to corresponding standards of behaviour (B) and through this make them aware of what behaviour towards them is safe and acceptable.

(A) ADULTS / COACHES

As a sports coach/trainer, I pledge to do the following when I am involved in sporting activity with children and young people:

1. I will make sure my own behaviour is calm and respectful and I will be clear about the standards of behaviour I expect from children and young people.
2. If there is anger and disagreements between children and young people I will call a time out and try to resolve the issues calmly
3. I will not ignore a child or refuse to allow them access to basic necessities
4. I will not try to punish a child by mocking, teasing ,or laughing at them or trying to embarrass them in front of others
5. I will not behave sexually towards a child or touch them in a sexual way
6. I will not hit or strike a child as a punishment for bad behaviour
7. I will make sure that I know where to get help to treat sports injuries safely, to minimise further harm or infection
8. I will do everything I can to make sure that the physical environment where the children in my care are playing is as safe and appropriate as possible

(B) CHILDREN IN SPORT

As a member of this sports club, I agree to help to protect myself and other people in these ways:

1. I understand that I should be able to take part in sport safely
2. I will tell an adult I trust if anything worries me
3. I will respect myself and behave respectfully – politely, considerately and thoughtfully - towards other people
4. I will try to keep calm if there is a disagreement
5. I understand that other people should not be allowed to hit me. I will take care not to hurt other people
6. I understand that I should not be bullied. I will not bully other people
7. I understand that other people should not shout at me to upset or scare me. I will not shout at other people.
8. I understand that my sexual parts (breasts, bottom, or genitals) should not be touched by other people. I should not act in a sexual way towards myself or other children.
9. I understand that if any physical force is used by adults it should only be used to secure my safety or that of other children and young people
10. I will tell anything that concerns or worries me to an adult I trust.