



Safeguarding
in Sport



Children and
Young People
Safe Practices
**Do's &
Don'ts**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY



In the spirit of reconciliation we acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to their Elders past, present and future and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We recognise the outstanding contribution Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples make to sport in Australia and celebrate the power of sport to promote reconciliation and reduce inequality.

This work by © Commonwealth of Australia 2021 – Sport Integrity Australia is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non-Commercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Unported License with the exception of: the Commonwealth Coat of Arms and Sport Integrity Australia's logo.

To the extent that copyright subsists in third party quotes and diagrams it remains with the original owner and permission may be required to reuse the material. Content from this publication should be attributed as: Sport Integrity Australia, *Children and Young People Safe Practices Do's & Don'ts*, September 2023.

CONTACT US

Enquiries about the licence and any use of this document can be sent to:

Safeguarding
Sport Integrity Australia
PO Box 1744 FYSHWICK
ACT 2609 AUSTRALIA

Phone 1300 027 232
Email safeguarding@sporintegrity.gov.au

This publication is available at
www.sportintegrity.gov.au/resources

Contents

Introduction	5
Glossary	6
Professional Boundaries	8
Use of Language and Tone of Voice	10
Positive Guidance (Discipline)	12
Supervision	14
Use of Electronic or Online Communication	16
Photographs or Videos of Children and Young People	18
Physical Contact with Children and Young People	20
Overnight Stays and Travel Arrangements	22
Use of, Possession or Supply of Alcohol or Drugs to Children and Young People	24
Parent/Carer Involvement	26
Transporting Children or Young People	28
Drop Off and Pick Up of Children and Young People	30
Change Rooms Arrangements	32



Introduction

The Children and Young People Safe Practices have been developed to identify and prevent behaviour that may be harmful to children and young people participating in sport. The Children and Young People Safe Practices are defined within the National Integrity Framework's Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy.

The following 'Do's and Don'ts' have been developed as a supplementary guide to the Children and Young People Safe Practices, to provide practical and tangible actions that can and should be followed by anyone involved in the delivery of programs, services or activities to children and young people participating in sport.

Glossary

Approved Person means a family member such as mother, father, sister, brother, grandparent, aunt, uncle or cousin, a guardian, carer, or a person who has been approved by the parent/carer and has an established relationship with the Child/Young Person and/or their family.

Child/Young Person means a person who is under the age of 18 years.

A Person in a Position of Authority is a person who, regardless of age, can exercise power, control, or influence over a child or young person through their position or involvement in sport.

Relevant Organisation is any organisation bound by the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy, including: the National Sporting Organisation, State Sporting Organisations, leagues, associations, clubs and teams.

Relevant Person is anyone bound by the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy at all levels of sport, including: participants, employees, contractors, coaches, officials and support personnel.



Professional Boundaries

A Person in a Position of Authority must establish and maintain professional boundaries (both in-person and online) when working with children and young people who are involved in sport. Professional boundaries ensure that the nature of the relationship between a Person in a Position of Authority and a child or young person does not move from a professional one to a personal one and becomes harmful or exploitative of the child, young person and/or their family.

You must always act within the scope of your role (as specified in your position description or contract) when working with children and young people who are involved in your sport.

Do

Treat all children and young people equally, regardless of their gender, culture, race or disability.

Try to be identifiable (uniform/name badge) in your official role when delivering programs or activities.

Ensure interactions with children and young people are focused on learning and development and relevant to the sport.

Model professional physical and emotional boundaries.

Be respectful to the child and young person's needs or concerns and respond appropriately.

Engage with children and young people in a manner that would be seen by a reasonable observer as maintaining reasonable boundaries.



The following applies to a Person in a Position of Authority, unless they are also an Approved Person.

If you become aware of a situation in which a child or young person requires assistance that is beyond the scope of your role, you should seek advice from your sporting club who will advise on the most appropriate next steps.

Don't

Provide any form of support to a child or young person or their family unrelated to the scope of their role, where there is no existing social, personal, or family relationship (e.g. financial assistance, babysitting, provide accommodation).

Transport a child or young person unless specifically approved.

Engage in social activities outside the scope of your role, such as watching a child or young person participate in another sporting activity, playing virtual video games together or attending their birthday party.

Use your personal phone, camera or video camera to take images or video footage of children or young people.

Develop any special relationships with children or young people that could be seen as 'favouritism'.

Wear your uniform or name badge when not undertaking an official role.

Give out personal gifts or special favours to a child or young person other than the provision of official awards.

Confide in, or share overly personal information with a child or young person (for example, sharing financial or relationship problems).

Ask or infer that a child or young person keep secrets, such as asking them not to tell their parent/carer when you have communicated with them.

Treat the child or young person as an 'adult' under guise of maturity

Create an emotional dependency between yourself and the child or young person (for example, isolating the child or young person from their teammates, staff, parents/carers by 'pitting the child or young person against their teammates').

Use of Language and Tone of Voice

Language and tone of voice used in the presence of children and young people should provide clear direction, boost their confidence, encourage and affirm them and not be harmful.

Do

Use clear, direct, age-appropriate language.

Use words, tone of voice, facial expressions and body posture to communicate calmness and respect.

Focus on a child or young person's positive behaviour to build self-confidence, as well as competence.

Use language that is encouraging and supportive and that promotes a fun and inclusive environment.

Address a situation when negative language or tone is being used by a child or young person, parent/carer or other person and reinforce that it is not appropriate.

Don't

Use language that is discriminatory, racist or sexist when communicating with children and young people.

Shame a child or young person, or make derogatory, negative or belittling comments (for example, calling a child or young person a loser or telling them they are too fat).

Use language or gestures that are sexual, threatening, frightening, humiliating or intimidating to a child or young person.

Allow children and young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged.

Single out a child or young person or denigrate them in front of peers or other members.



Positive Guidance (Discipline)

To ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of all children and young people participating in sport, children and young people must be made aware of the acceptable limits of their behaviour. Children and young people should always be provided with clear directions and given an opportunity to redirect their behaviour in a positive way.

Do

Set clear guidelines for expected behaviour.

Use strategies that are fair, respectful, and appropriate to the developmental stage of the children and young people involved.

Address poor behaviour in a calm and firm manner.

Help children and young people to behave within the limits set.

Create a 'safe space' for children and young people to have a say and speak up if they feel unsafe or unsure.

Encourage children and young people to talk about their feelings and the possible reasons for their emotions.

Don't

Use training practices that are inappropriate for the stage of psychological and physical development of the child or young person.

Under any circumstances, take disciplinary action involving physical punishment or any form of treatment that could reasonably be considered as degrading, cruel, frightening or humiliating.

Isolate a child or young person from the group as a form of punishment.

Force a child or young person to do something against their will.



Supervision

Supervision is a key aspect of ensuring that children and young people's safety is protected. Adults must be alert to and aware of risks and hazards and the potential for accidents and injury throughout training and competition, and not just in their immediate area.

Do

Ensure supervision is constant, active, and diligent, prioritising the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Where possible, ensure you are able to observe each child or young person.

Know the location of each child or young person if direct supervision is not possible, and ensure you can respond to individual needs and immediately intervene if necessary.

Ensure there are appropriate supervision ratios based on the sport, age and gender of the children and young people and the size of the group.

Keep trainings/competitions/events open to observation by parents/carers – this creates an environment of transparency and safety.

Ensure any treatment by a medical practitioner or health professional is performed under the supervision of an approved person or relevant person.

Avoid one-to-one unsupervised contact with a child or young person, except in an emergency. If this occurs, immediately report it to your sporting club management within 24 hours of the incident occurring.

Don't

Leave children or young people unsupervised during official sport trainings/ competitions/events.

Engage in unnecessary conversations with another adult that may distract from effective supervision of the group.

Text, talk or browse on a mobile phone when supervising children and young people.

Exclude parents/carers from attending training sessions.



Use of Electronic or Online Communication

A Person in a Position of Authority, unless they are also an Approved Person of a child or young person, Medical Practitioner or Health Professional, MUST NOT communicate directly (one to one) with a child or young person, either electronically or online (including phone calls) without the inclusion of a representative from the club or team and/or the child or young person's parent or carer.

Do

When communicating with children and young people, a Person in a Position of Authority must ensure content is:

- directly associated with delivering the sport, for example advising that a scheduled event is cancelled.
- concise with personal or social content limited only to convey the message in a polite and friendly manner.
- devoid of any sexualized language; and
- not promoting unauthorized social activity or contact.

Inform the parent/carer or the sporting organisation if a child or young person communicates with you outside your role, and kindly advise the child or young person that the behaviour is inappropriate.

Follow any additional social media guidelines or policies your organisation may have in place.

Don't

Befriend, follow or engage with the child or young person on social media.

Communicate privately with a child or young person via phone, email or social media.

Request or infer a child or young person keep online communication a secret from their parents/ carers or others.

Use electronic communication to promote unauthorised 'social' activity or to arrange unauthorised contact.

Use inappropriate language or language that is profane or sexual in nature.

Use any device's (including a mobile phone's) recording capabilities, including voice recording, still cameras and video cameras in locker rooms, changing areas, or similar spaces.



Photographs or Videos of Children and Young People

An Approved Person may photograph or film their child or young person when participating in sport.

To ensure the protection of children and young people's images and identity, it is essential that appropriate safeguards are implemented.

Do

Obtain permission from the child or young person's parent/carer before taking any photos or videos. Approval could include electronic messaging formats such as email or SMS.

Where appropriate, and possible, obtain consent from the child or young person.

Ensure the context in which you are taking photos or videos of children or young people is directly related to their participation in your sport and will only be used for official purposes.

Ensure the child or young person is appropriately dressed and posed.

Appoint a photographer/videographer who holds a current WWCC and ensure they are supervised at all times.

Store images (digital or hard copy) in a way that prevents unauthorised access by others and destroy or delete the images as soon as they are no longer required. .

Speak up if you see someone acting suspiciously.

Don't

Take photos or videos of children or young people for personal use.

Take or store images of children or young people involved in your organisation on personal devices.

Distribute images or videos (including as an attachment to an email) to anyone outside the organisation without parent/carer knowledge and approval.

Publish images or footage of a child or young person or identify the child or young person pictured, whether online or in print, without written consent from the child or young person's parent or carer.

Send photos or videos of a child or young person, directly to a child or young person, or to another person.



Physical Contact with Children and Young People

Any physical contact with children and young people must be necessary and appropriate to the delivery of your sport's programs or services and based on the needs of the child or young person, such as assisting with the use of equipment, technique assistance or correction, treatment by a health practitioner or administering first aid.

Do

Seek a child or young person's permission to touch or interact when demonstrating an activity.

Check that physical contact is acceptable to a particular child or young person. Even non-intrusive touch may be inappropriate if a child or young person indicates they do not wish to be touched.

Respect and respond to signs that a child or young person is uncomfortable with touch.

Use verbal directions rather than touch (for example, ask a child or young person to move in a particular way, rather than physically place the child or young person in the required position).

Discourage children and young people from inappropriate expectations of hugs or cuddles. This should be done gently and without embarrassment or offence to the child or young person. For example, offer a high five as encouragement.

Kindly and appropriately tell a child or young person who is inappropriately or excessively touching another child or young person to stop and raise the concern with a relevant person within your organisation.

Use non-intrusive gestures to comfort a child or young person who is experiencing grief and loss or distress, such as a hand on the upper arm or upper back.

Use non-intrusive touch (for example, congratulating a child or young person by shaking hands or a pat on the upper arm or back). Try to accompany such touch with positive encouraging words.

Report any physical contact initiated by a child or young person that is sexualised and/or inappropriate (for example, acts of physical aggression) as soon as possible to your organisation. This ensures the situation can be managed in the interests of the safety of the child or young person and any other participants.

Don't

Under any circumstances, have contact with a child or young person that involves touching any intimate part of a child or young person's body (for example, genitals, bottom or breast area) – other than as part of delivering necessary medical or allied health services to those specific areas of the body.

Initiate, allow or request inappropriate or unnecessary physical contact with a child or young person (for example, massage, kisses, tickling and wrestling games) or facilitate situations that unnecessarily result in close physical contact with a child or young person.

Have unnecessary contact with a child or young person (for example, assisting with toileting when a child or young person does not require assistance).

Force a child or young person to do something against their wishes, unless it is necessary to prevent injury to the child or young person or to others.



Overnight Stays and Travel Arrangements

Overnight stays involving children and young people should only occur with your organisation's approval, and consent of each child or young person's parent or carer. Practices and behaviour during an overnight stay must be consistent with the practices and behaviour expected during the delivery of your sport at all other times.

Do

Obtain written consent prior to the overnight stay. Written approval could include electronic messaging formats such as email or SMS.

Ensure children and young people are provided with privacy when bathing, toileting and dressing.

Observe appropriate dress standards when children and young people are present – such as no exposure to nudity.

Ensure the safety of children and young people is not compromised by inappropriate sleeping arrangements:

- An adult must not sleep alone in the same room as children or young people, unless they are the parent or have parental responsibility for those children and/or young people.
- Children and young people must not share a bed with an adult or another child or young person.

Always allow children and young people to contact their parents/carers, or another adult, if they feel unsafe, uncomfortable, distressed, or for any other reason, during the stay.

Enable parents/carers to contact their child or young person if required.

Make sure there are appropriate levels of supervision. General rule is a minimum of 2 adults with a ratio of 1:8.

Plan appropriate accommodation. If children or young people share a room, they should be the same age and gender and must not share beds.

Plan for emergencies. If you need to administer first aid, do so only if you are qualified and in the presence of others or in an emergency.

Ensure that if mixed-gender teams travel, they are always accompanied by a male and female chaperone.

Keep parents and carers informed and let them know:

- the aim of the trip
- destinations and venues
- competition/event details
- supervision levels
- accommodation details, including rooming configuration
- contact details
- roles and responsibilities of accompanying adults
- estimated time of arrival and departure.

Keep children and young people informed and let them know:

- what's expected of them
- roles and responsibilities of adults accompanying them
- their rights
- who to talk to if they have any concerns.

Avoid being with a child or young person in an isolated or unobserved situation.

Establish a two-deep leadership model when doing room checks, attending team meetings and/or other activities. Two-deep leadership is when 2 authorised adults should be present and observable by others, and interruptible environments should be maintained.

Don't

Expose children or young people to images depicting adult (sexual) content, for example through movies, television, the internet or magazines.

Leave children or young people under the supervision or protection of unauthorised persons such as accommodation staff or peers.

Share a room/apartment and/or bed with a child or young person.

Be alone in a room with a child or young person. If an adult presence is required, there should always be more than one child or young person in the room with the adult.

Remove a child or young person's clothing, even in an emergency, unless you have their permission and at least one other person is with you.

Enter a child or young person's room or invite them into your room when travelling.

Do things of a personal nature for children or young people that they can do for themselves.

Use of, Possession or Supply of Alcohol or Drugs to Children and Young People

Don't

Use, possess or be under the influence of an illicit drug in the presence of a child or young person.

Use or be under the influence of alcohol while supervising a child or young person.

Be impaired by any other legal drug such as prescription or over-the-counter drugs while in the presence of a child or young person.

Supply alcohol or drugs (including tobacco) to any child or young person.

Supply or administer medicines, except when permitted by law or with the consent of the parent/carer of the child or young person and under a valid prescription for that child or young person and at the prescribed dosage.



Parent/Carer Involvement

Do

Ensure that a parent/carers is involved in any significant decision, including the signing of any documentation in relation to their child or young person's participation in your sport (for example, overnight stays, photos/videos, sanctions, reports).

Allow parents/carers to watch their child or young person during training, competitions and events.

Make parents/carers aware of the standard of behaviour required when watching their child or young person during trainings, competitions and events. Parents/carers displaying inappropriate conduct may be asked to leave, but may not be denied access for an undetermined amount of time.



Transporting Children or Young People

Children or young people must only be transported in circumstances that are directly related to the delivery of your sports programs, events or service.

Other than in an emergency, a Person in a Position of Authority, unless they are an Approved Person, must not transport children or young people without prior written approval from their parent or carer.

Do

Always seek written approval from the child or young person's parent/carer before travel.

Ensure approval involves providing information about the proposed journey, including the:

- form of transport to be used
- reason for the journey
- route to be followed, including any stops or side trips
- details of anyone who will be present during the journey.

Make sure the child or young person sits in the back seat, appropriately secured.

Drive responsibly, ensure you are not impaired by alcohol or any other mind-altering substances and have an unrestricted drivers' license.

Ensure, to the extent possible, you are not alone in the car with a child or young person.

Don't

Transport children or young people in your sport if not necessary.

Allow other unauthorised adults to travel with you (for example, stopping to pick up a friend on the way to the game you are taking your players to).

Make any unnecessary or unplanned stops during the journey.

Allow a child or young person to sit in the front seat.

Take children or young people to your home.



Drop Off and Pick Up of Children and Young People

Open and transparent communication in relation to the drop off and pick up of children and young people is a proactive approach to ensuring their ongoing safety and wellbeing.

Sporting organisations must have an accessible register of parent/carer emergency contact numbers and an operational phone. In addition, if a parent or carer is late, the sporting organisation must make reasonable attempts to contact them.

Do

Ensure children and young people and their parents or carers know the time and location of training and matches, including start and finish times.

Arrive before scheduled practice or game times to ensure that children and young people are not left unsupervised.

Have a list of parent/carer emergency contact numbers and a phone that is working.

Ensure you are aware of alternative pick up arrangements for children and young people and that the parent/carer has provided consent.

Ensure that if a parent/carer is late, you make reasonable attempts to contact them.

Don't

Leave the training or match until all children and young people have been collected by their parent/carer.



Change Rooms Arrangements

Children and young people are particularly vulnerable in changing rooms due in part to various stages of dress/undress and because they are isolated areas. There is also a risk of peer on peer child or young person problems, such as bullying if the changing room is left unsupervised.

Do

Encourage children and young people to come dressed ready for trainings or games if there are no private/safe change room facilities.

Provide safe and private change room facilities where possible.

Ensure that there is always appropriate supervision where the change room/toilet facility is accessible by adults or in 'public' change rooms, whilst also ensuring the child and young person's right to privacy.

Knock or announce yourself and wait for approval before entering change rooms.

Have at least one other authorised adult with you in a change room with children and young people.

Implement a buddy system in the absence of adult supervision to accompany a child or young person to the bathroom (for example, children or young people can nominate 2 or more 'buddies' of a similar age and gender who can go with them).

Get changed in an individual closed cubicle.

Make every effort to recognise when a child or young person goes to the change room during practice and competition and, if they do not return in a timely fashion, check on their whereabouts.

Don't

Undress, get changed or shower at the same time as supervising groups of children or young people.

Be alone and unsupervised with a child or young person in a change room area.

Isolate yourself with a child or young person from others in the change room (for example, take them into a cubicle with you).

Enter a change room of the opposite gender.

Use any camera or other recording device in a change room.

Use bathroom facilities at the same time as a child or young person.

Unnecessarily allow parents/carers into change rooms unless a child or young person requires physical help getting changed (for example, younger children or children/young people with disabilities).

Place pressure on a child or young person to change and/or shower in public if they feel uncomfortable to do so.









**Safeguarding
in Sport**

CONTACT INFORMATION

To enquire, provide feedback or reproduce the contents of the document please contact:

Sport Integrity Australia Safeguarding

PO Box 1744

Fyshwick ACT 2609

E: safeguarding@sportintegrity.gov.au

Safe Sport Hotline: 1800 161 361

Enquiries: 1300 027 232

WWW.SPORTINTEGRITY.GOV.AU