
GUIDELINES FOR INTERACTING WITH CHILDREN

These guidelines are for coaches and other personnel to protect them from risk and to keep children safe. It is recommended that sporting organisations develop guidelines tailored to the needs and context of their sport.

Maintain appropriate boundaries

Coaches and other personnel in positions of authority should maintain clear:

Physical boundaries

- Use drills to develop fitness, not as a punishment
- Only use physical contact that is appropriate for the development of a particular skill and has the permission of the athlete
- Work within sight of others at all times

Emotional boundaries

- Use positive feedback on performance, not negative feedback about the person
- Be encouraging and avoid put-downs

Social boundaries

- Attend sport related events such as sponsorship and fundraising events, celebrations and annual meetings but do not socialise with athletes outside sporting functions
- Do not socialise with athletes via social media

Sexual boundaries

- Do not have sexual relationships with athletes you are coaching
- Do not touch athletes in ways likely to make them feel uncomfortable

Minimise physical contact

Generally, physical contact with players or participants should be to:

- Develop sport skills
- Give sports massage
- Treat an injury
- Prevent or respond to an injury
- Meet the specific requirements of the sport

All physical contact by personnel should fulfil the following criteria:

- Physical contact should be appropriate for the development of a sport skill/s
- Permission from the player or participant should always be sought
- Players or participants should be congratulated or comforted in public not in an isolated setting

Avoid being alone with a child

To protect yourself and the child from risk:

- Do not isolate yourself and a child and avoid being alone with any particular child
- If a child approaches you and wants to talk to you privately about a matter, do so in an open area and in sight of other adults (e.g. other coaches, officials or parents/guardians)
- Before going into change rooms knock or announce that you will be coming in. Try to have at least one adult with you in a change room with children