

Essentials for Coaching Children

Coaching Tips 3

Keeping children safe and officials respected

Providing a safe environment for kids

Coaches (in conjunction with the organisation they are engaged by) are responsible for providing a safe and positive experience for the children they coach.

Coaches must consider children's:

Physical safety

- environment – obstacles (sprinklers, benches, poles, walls, trees), potholes, slippery conditions, weather, faulty equipment, hydration
- rules – modified play for differing age groups, compulsory equipment such as mouth-guards and shin pads, inclement weather policies, drop-off and pick-up procedures
- medical issues – know any medical conditions of the children and the first aid required, check your first aid kit: know its location and its contents.

Emotional wellbeing

- friendship issues, isolated children, self-esteem issues, social situations, being inclusive and fair.

Legal requirements for keeping children safe

Everyone in a club or school, including coaches of children's sport, must be committed to:

- promoting kids' wellbeing and protecting them from harm
- behaving according to the club's/school's/sport's code of conduct
- always being on the lookout for potential risks to the safety of our kids
- knowing how to respond to and report behaviours that threaten or are harmful to children.

Coaches:

- must have criminal history assessment to coach
- are mandated to report suspicions of abuse or neglect.

Coaches **must** report suspicions of potential physical, sexual, or psychological abuse or neglect to the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) 131478.

In addition coaches may receive advice from the club Child Safe Officer (if available) and notify them, a club official, school principal or equivalent. Organisations will have a policy regarding this and coaches should be familiar with its procedures and act accordingly.

Child Safe Officer

Clubs are all encouraged to have a trained Child Safe Officer. This person has the responsibility of ensuring that the club's child safe policy (which may be incorporated in its member protection policy) is implemented. They can provide advice regarding the policy to anyone who has concerns about the safety and wellbeing of a child. The Office for Recreation and Sport regularly offers a three hour Child Safe Officer course regarding this important role.

The Office for Recreation and Sport website (Member Protection and Child Safety page) has information, resources and course information for sports, schools, clubs and coaches. The booklet 'Keeping Children Safe in Recreation and Sport' is available in hard copy or PDF on this site. The process a club/school/sport should follow in handling a report is also covered on this site.

www.ors.sa.gov.au

Respect for officials – Without officials there is no game!

The following are a few ways to encourage children to show respect for officials:

- Regularly remind players of the codes of behavior.
- Openly welcome and thank officials yourself.
- Insist children thank officials.
- Seek feedback from the umpire respectfully and only in the breaks and after competition.
- Ban the following:
 - answering back
 - whinging
 - scoffing
 - glaring
 - swearing.



Play by the Rules www.playbytherules.net.au

Play by the Rules provides education, information and resources for individuals and organisations to ensure that sport is safe and free from discrimination and harassment.

The Play by the Rules website:

- is for coaches, umpires, administrators, officials, players, participants, volunteers
- explores all participants rights and responsibilities
- provides information on how to prevent and deal with inappropriate behaviour in sport including discrimination, harassment, favouritism, bias and various forms of abuse
- has an on-line training and information resource for sport and recreation clubs and associations
- includes common scenarios/difficult decisions in video form
- offers a 'Club toolkit' with lots of good club/coaching resources including codes of behavior.