
Safe coaching and instructing

This guide explains how to create a safer experience for children, young people or adults at risk when coaching and instructing. It's safer for you too.

Create safe and positive relationships

Treat children, young people or adults at risk with respect and expect the same from them towards you, other adults and each other. Allow them to speak up and listen to them so they are confident they'll be listened to and taken seriously.

At the start of the season or before an activity, organise a team or group meeting so everyone can ask questions, share what is important to them and the expected behaviours for everyone can be outlined. This is a great time to share any information about safeguarding.

Let them know they are safe to raise a concern or if they feel unsafe. Listen and act when they do. Share the process that your club or organisation has for them to follow.

Ensure there is an appropriate level of supervision for the age and number of children, young people or adults at risk, the activity you are delivering and the environment you are in.

Address inappropriate behaviour, such as bullying or rough play, immediately.

Have clear boundaries

Ensure there are clear and appropriate boundaries between you and children, young people or adults at risk you are coaching or instructing. This includes making sure:

- online and in-person communication is transparent and public
- you avoid being alone with them, or follow safe practices if you need to
- their personal information is stored securely
- you follow safe guidelines when taking or sharing photographs or videos
- you respect their privacy when using changing rooms and toilets.



Use safe training methods

Gain an understanding of different developmental ages and stages, such as gender, emotional maturity, and physical and intellectual abilities.

Where there is physical contact:

- make sure any physical contact takes place out in the open with other adults present
- explain to the child or young person what you are going to do and why
- ask their permission and get consent first – tell them they can refuse if they don't feel comfortable.

Prioritise safety and wellbeing of over results and performance.

Get trained in safeguarding and child protection

Learn skills in safeguarding and child protection to keep children, young people and adults at risk safer. It will keep you safe too. Ask your club or organisation about training and support.

- Understand and follow safe practices when coaching or instructing.
- Know how identify harm and abuse and how to confidently respond and report it if you see or suspect it happening.
- Know how to recognise a disclosure of harm or abuse and how to safely respond to it.
- Use the appropriate process to report suspected or actual cases of harm and abuse.

More information

Coaching and instructing for safe and positive experiences – sportintegrity.nz

Child protection – sportintegrity.nz

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