

Coaches Working with Children

Coaches have a vital role to play in safeguarding children in cricket and, at a club, will often become the focus for children and their activities. Working or volunteering in cricket is about providing a fun and safe environment in which everyone, particularly children, can enjoy their experience of cricket and be motivated to carry on playing.

All coaches working with children must complete ECB Safer Recruitment checks. This will include a current ECB Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. Further information on Safer Recruitment can be found [here](#).

Anyone coaching children must have relevant qualifications and insurance. Information on coaching qualifications offered by the ECB can be found [here](#).

The [ECB Coaches Code of Conduct](#) should be read in conjunction with this guidance.

Promoting Good Practice

As a cricket coach, you will have regular contact with children. You should ensure you understand your duty of care towards those you are coaching, maintain up-to-date knowledge of best practice, and act as a role model for the children you coach.

A good coach:

- ✔ Puts the welfare of children first, before winning or achieving goals, by encouraging a constructive environment where healthy competition, skill development, fun, learning from mistakes, and responding appropriately to defeat and achievement are promoted equally
- ✔ Sets and consistently reinforces clear expectations of behaviour during training and matches. This includes responding promptly to incidents of inappropriate behaviour, bullying, and aggression
- ✔ Treats all children equally with respect and dignity
- ✔ Promotes the spirit of cricket
- ✔ Welcomes all children and their parents/carers to the club
- ✔ Ensures cricket is welcoming, fun, enjoyable, and that fair play is promoted
- ✔ Is aware that they are in a position of trust and is mindful of this in all interactions
- ✔ Takes a child-centred approach, planning sessions around the needs and abilities of all children who will be attending and adapts the session accordingly
- ✔ Routinely asks children for feedback on their sessions and adapts activities to meet their expressed views
- ✔ Encourages children to be considerate of other participants, officials, and club volunteers, and models good behaviour themselves
- ✔ Gives positive and constructive feedback

- ✔ Is transparent in selection decisions and does not show favouritism towards particular children, ensuring selection is in line with the club's selection policy
- ✔ Is an excellent role model. This includes not smoking or drinking alcohol when working with children, and being mindful of their behaviour around the club at all times, including at social events
- ✘ Does not participate in, encourage, or ignore any team or dressing room behaviour or culture which seeks to frighten, embarrass, or demoralise anyone involved in cricket.
- ✘ Does not overtrain a child or push them against their will.

Positive Coaching Relationships

The ECB expects everyone who coaches children to be responsible and accountable in how they behave towards them. All adult-child relationships should maintain clear boundaries, be positive and focused on enjoyment and improving the child's skills.

Those coaching anyone under the age of 18 are legally defined as being in a "Position of Trust". It is a criminal offence for anyone in a Position of Trust to engage in sexual activity with a child in their care. This applies to children who are above the legal age of sexual consent. The ECB will support statutory agencies in their investigations into coaches alleged to have engaged in sexual conduct with children they are coaching.

Good Practice in Maintaining Professional Coaching Relationships

The following guidance aims to keep you, and the children you are working with, safe.

The ECB is aware unplanned events can happen which mean that sometimes coaches are not able to adhere to this guidance. In such a situation, the coach should be familiar with the requirement to self-report any such incidents to the Club Safeguarding Officer or County Safeguarding Officer at the earliest opportunity. This reduces the risk that the behaviour will be misconstrued and may allow early resolution of a practical issue that creates a wider safeguarding concern.

Coaches should:

- ✔ Always work in an open environment and ensure another adult supervisor is always present. Remember **'The Rule of Two'** and avoid being alone with a child
- ✔ Ensure you are aware of, and always adhere to, the ECB guidance on Social Media, which can be found [here](#)
- ✔ Limit celebrations to a fist bump or a high five
- ✔ Be appropriately dressed at all times when in a cricket environment with children and encourage children to also be appropriately dressed
- ✔ When planning trips and tours, the gender of support staff must be considered to best reflect the children attending.
- ✘ Do not spend excessive amounts of time with any child away from others
- ✘ Not transport children to or from an event, match or training
- ✘ Not take children to your home or transport them by car when they will be alone with you. If, for example, your children are friends with a child you are also working with, this should be discussed with the Club Safeguarding Officer to ensure this does not place you or them in a situation that could be misconstrued.

- ❌ Not engage in rough, physical, or sexually provocative communication, discussion, or games
- ❌ Not make sexually suggestive comments or use inappropriate language around children
- ❌ Not enter a child's bedroom or invite them to your bedroom when on trips away. In the exceptional circumstance of a child taking so ill that they are physically unable to leave their bedroom, ensure you are accompanied by another adult and report this immediately to the trip safeguarding lead
- ❌ Do not share changing facilities or showers with children
- ❌ Do not share a room with a child under any circumstances. This includes situations in which parents may have given their consent for this arrangement.

Physical Contact with Children

The following guidance is about safeguarding children as they develop their skills playing cricket. Remember **'The Rule of Two'**. Always conduct coaching sessions with at least one other adult present.

Coaches should be aware that, for a wide variety of reasons, children may not wish to be touched at all by an adult. The training and playing environment should enable children to feel confident expressing this, and this should always be respected.

Developing skills and techniques

- ✅ Coaches should always seek explicit consent from a child (and, where appropriate, their parent/carer) before touch is used to demonstrate technique. If the child looks or seems uncomfortable, then the adult should stop immediately and find an alternative means of demonstration
- ✅ If a child is consenting to a coach touching them to demonstrate a physical technique, the coach should ensure that another adult is always present while this takes place
- ✅ A coach should never attempt to adjust the grip of a child from behind in the normal batting stance position
- ✅ Supporting children to put on and adjust their own protective equipment is an important part of their transition to hardball cricket. Consideration should be given to different methods of encouraging children to become independent in doing this, either through games and drills, or guidance for parents/carers to enable them to support practise at home. While the child's safety is the most important consideration, coaches should only adjust external kit when unavoidable for safety purposes, and a parent/carer is not available to do this. This should always be in public and in the presence of other adults. Coaches should never adjust any padding that is beneath clothing, including breast, abdominal, and thigh protection
- ✅ Children with physical or sensory disabilities may need to be assisted by appropriate techniques. The use of touch in these circumstances should be agreed in advance with the player and their parents/carers and the relevant Safeguarding Officer for the club or organisation. This should always be in line with the guidance outlined above.

Administering first aid

The welfare of the child is paramount and, where immediate care is required, coaches should respond accordingly. If a child is injured during a training session or match, the coach should always seek the support of another adult to take the child to an appropriate safe place for treatment. The child's parent/carer should be alerted and asked, if they are present, to accompany the child. Any first aid should be administered in the presence of another adult, or within the view of others (bearing in mind the child's need for privacy and dignity).



Preventing injury and accident

If there is an immediate risk of physical injury to a child, a coach may take appropriate action to prevent a child from hurting themselves or others. They should always check immediately that the child is OK and inform their parent/carer, at the earliest opportunity. The coach should advise the Club Safeguarding Officer that this has occurred and should undertake a review of the incident to ensure all necessary actions to prevent recurrence are taken.

Reporting Concerns

All coaches should have an awareness of what to do if they are concerned about a child, or the behaviour of another adult, including other coaches. All coaches must be up to date with their relevant safeguarding training and follow the ECB's guidance on [Responding to, Recording, and Reporting Concerns](#).

