SPORT INTEGRITY AUSTRALIA

Safeguarding in Sport

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

SAFE PRACTICES

DOS & DONT'S

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.

Artwork by Chern'ee Sutton

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Introduction

The **Children and Young People Safe Practices Dos and Don'ts** have been developed to support sports to prevent behaviours (called Prohibited Conduct) that may be harmful to children and young people participating in sport.

The following 'Dos and Don'ts' provide practical and tangible actions that 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.

Relevant Organisation means any organisation bound by the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy, including the National Sporting Organisation, Member Organisation, or any other organisation that has agreed to be bound by the National Integrity Framework and/or the relevant policies.

Relevant Person means anyone of any age who is bound by the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy, including individual members, participants, employees, contractors, volunteers, or any other person that has agreed to be bound by the National Integrity Framework and/or the relevant policies.

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

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 your role, where there is no existing social, personal, or family relationship (for example, 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 vilifying and/or discriminatory, for example racist, sexist, homophobic or transphobic.

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)

Children and young people must be made aware of acceptable limits of behaviour in sport to ensure their health, safety and wellbeing. Always provide clear directions and give them 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 critical to keeping children and young people safe. A Person in a Position of Authority must be alert to risks, hazards and any potential for accidents or injury. This applies to training and competitions – 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 person 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 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.

The exceptions are if they are: also an Approved Person for that child or young person; a medical practitioner or health professional.

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
- free from any sexual language or references; and
- not promoting unauthorised social activity or contact.

Inform the parent/carer or the sporting organisation if a child or young person communicates with you outside your role. Also, remind children that adults are not allowed to directly communicate in this personal way.

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

Don't

Befriend, follow or engage with a 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 to record in change rooms, change areas or similar spaces. This includes voice recordings and any images on mobile phones, still cameras and video cameras.

Photographs or videos

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.

Remove images/videos if or when consent is withdrawn from the child/ young person or their parents/carers.

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.

Undertake appropriate screening measures, including reference checks and Working With Children Checks, when appointing a photographer/ videographer and ensure they are supervised at all times.

Store images (digital or hard copy) in a way that prevents unauthorised access by others. 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

Physical contact with children and young people must be necessary, appropriate to the delivery of your sport's programs or services, and based on their needs – for example, 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 and against their wishes.

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

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

Discourage inappropriate expectations of hugs or cuddles. Do this gently and without embarrassment or offence (for example, offer a high-five as encouragement).

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

Use non-intrusive touch, only with consent (for example, shaking hands or a pat on the upper arm or back).

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.

Don’t

Under any circumstances, have contact with a child or young person that involves touching any intimate part of their 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 and using appropriate safeguarding measures.

Do not start, allow, or ask for unnecessary physical contact with a child or young person (for example asking them to touch any private part of your body, massages, kissing, tickling, wrestling).

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

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

Overnight stays and travel arrangements

Overnight stays involving children and young people should only occur with your organisation's approval and consent of parents or carers. 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 from a parent or carer and, where appropriate and possible, the child/young person prior to the overnight stay.

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 (for example, no exposure to adult 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 carer for them, or the adult and young person are peers in a similar age range (for example, teammates who are 17 and 18 years of age).

Select accommodation appropriate for children/young people where they won't be be exposed to nudity or pornographic material (for example, through movies or television) or have access to alcohol while staying there.

Always allow children and young people to contact their parents/carers, or Approved Person. Allow parents/carers to contact their child.

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

Appoint people with supervision duties who are skilled, capable and informed of their responsibilities.

Plan appropriate accommodation. If children or young people share a room, they should be the same gender, similar age range 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-adult leadership model when doing room checks, attending team meetings and/or other activities. This is when two authorised adults are present and observable by others, and environments can be interrupted as needed.

Have approriate medication plans including prior written consent and dosage instructions from parents/carers.

Don't

Leave children and young people unsupervised.

Leave children or young people under the supervision or protection of unauthorised persons such as accommodation staff or peers, even if the peer is an adult.

Share a 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 always be two authorised adults present.

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/drugs

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 and vapes) to any child or young person.

Supply or administer medicines, except when it is reasonably believed the medicine is necessary for lifesaving treatment, 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/carer is involved in any significant decision, including the signing of any documentation in relation to their child's participation in your sport (for example, overnight stays, photos/videos, sanctions, reports).

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

Make parents/carers aware of the standard of behaviour required when watching their child 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.

Note: There may be exceptions to these points, such as where a Court Order restricts parent/carer involvement or a child or young person is legally capable of making their own decisions.

Transportation

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

A Person in a Position of Authority must not transport children or young people without prior written approval from their parent/carer. Exceptions are if it is an emergency or they are an Approved Person.

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 substances and have an unrestricted driver's 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

Open and transparent communication about drop off and pick up details is important for the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

Sporting organisations must have an accessible register of parent/carer emergency contact numbers and an operational phone. 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 sporting event until all children and young people have been collected by their parent/carer.

Change rooms

Children and young people can be vulnerable in change rooms because they may be in various stages of undress and these can be isolated areas. Peer-on-peer issues, such as bullying, can also occur if a change room is not appropriately supervised.

Do

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

Provide safe and private change room facilities where possible.

Ensure there is always appropriate supervision where the change room/toilet facility is accessible by adults or in 'public' change rooms, while also ensuring the child and young person's right to privacy e.g. an authorised adult stands outside the change room to prevent the general public accessing it while in use.

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

If required to be in the change room with a child or young person, have at least one other authorised adult with you.

Implement a buddy system in the absence of adult supervision to accompany a child or young person to the bathroom.

Get changed in an individual closed cubicle.

Check on the whereabouts of a child or young person if they do not return from a change room in a reasonable amount of time.

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 those with disabilities).

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

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