

# Safeguarding in British Fencing for Coaches

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## 1. Purpose of Document

Everyone in British Fencing has a duty of care to safeguard children involved in our activities from harm whether that is at clubs, events competition, trips, activity sessions or anywhere else that fencing takes place. We believe that:

- the welfare of any child is paramount
- anyone, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin religious beliefs and/or sexual identity has the right to protection from abuse
- all suspicions and allegations of abuse and poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately

This leaflet explains how we expect you to behave as a coach towards children and young people and supplements the Codes of Conduct for members and coaches

## 2. Coaches behavior

Everyone should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to promote children's welfare. With this in mind, we expect everyone involved in fencing to follow the following common sense guidelines when working with children:

- Always work in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets)
- Treat everyone equally, and with respect and dignity
- Always put their welfare first. This is way more important than winning or achieving goals
- Maintain a safe and appropriate distance (e.g. it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them)
- Build balanced relationships based on mutual trust that empowers them to share in the decision-making process
- Make fencing fun, enjoyable and promote fair play
- Ensure that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly. Fencers, and if appropriate parents/carers should be consulted and their agreement gained
- Keep up to date with technical skills, qualifications and insurance in sport
- Involve parents/carers wherever possible. For example, encouraging them to take responsibility for their children in the changing rooms. If groups have to be supervised in the changing rooms, we will always ensure supervisors work in pairs
- Ensure that if mixed teams are taken away, they should always be accompanied by a male and female member of staff. We recognise, however, that same gender abuse can also occur
- Ensure that at tournaments or residential events, adults should not enter anyone's rooms unaccompanied or invite children into their rooms
- Be an excellent role model - this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol while "on duty"
- Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism

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- Recognise the developmental needs and capacity of our fencers - avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will
- Secure parental/carers consent in writing to act *in loco parentis*
- Keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given
- Request written parental consent if officials are required to transport young people in their cars

Coaches should avoid spending time alone with a child or taking them to an event or activity or dropping them off afterwards. We know that there are times when these are unavoidable. If this happens, then it will be done with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge in the club or the child's parents. For example, a child sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital, or a parent fails to arrive to pick a child up at the end of a session:

Coaches will not allow or condone the following to happen. No one should:

- engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- share a room with a child
- allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun
- reduce a child to tears as a form of control
- fail to act upon and record any allegations made by a child
- do things of a personal nature for children or disabled adults, that they can do for themselves
- invite or allow children to stay with you at your home unsupervised.

We know that sometimes it may be necessary for staff or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for someone, particularly if they are young or are disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents/carers and the fencer involved. These tasks may include situations where they are helping to dress or undress a fencer, where there is physical contact, lifting or assisting a child to carry out particular activities.

Coaches carrying out these tasks to:

- be responsive to a person's reactions
- talk with them about what is happening and give choices where possible
- avoid taking on the responsibility for tasks for which they are not appropriately trained

If any of the following occur, this should be reported immediately to the Club's Welfare Officer and the incident recorded. Parents of the child should be informed if:

- a fencer is accidentally hurt by a coach, volunteer or official
- if he/she seems distressed in any manner
- if a player appears to be sexually aroused by your actions
- if a player misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

If you suspect abuse, poor practice or have concerns then you must inform the club's Welfare Officer or contact British Fencing's Equality and Safeguarding Manager