

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

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1. Policy Statement
2. What is Child Abuse?
3. Indicators of Abuse
4. What do you do if you suspect that a child is being abused?
5. What happens next?
6. Contacts for Specialist Advice
7. Support for the victim, accused and reporter
8. Informing parents
9. Records and confidentiality
10. Good Practice
11. Guidance on Physical Contact
12. Guidelines on Use of Photographic & Video Equipment
13. Adults involved in Norfolk Junior Squash

Policy Statement

Norfolk Junior Squash / England Squash are committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for children and young people to participate in squash and mini-squash, and recognises its responsibility to safeguard their welfare by protecting them from sexual, physical or emotional harm and from neglect or bullying.

Child Protection procedures apply to everyone, whether in a paid or voluntary capacity, this includes coaches, volunteers and officials in clubs and counties, markers and referees, helpers on club and county trips and medical staff.

What is Child Abuse?

There are five main types of abuse:

Physical Abuse – abuse causing physical harm, it can occur if a child or young person is forced to train beyond his or her capabilities.

Sexual Abuse – forcing or enticing someone to take part in sexual activities, whether or not he or she is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children or young people in looking at pornographic material, watching sexual activities, or encouraging them to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Emotional Abuse – a child is repeatedly made to feel that they are inadequate, worthless or unloved, or valued only insofar as they meet someone else's needs. It is present in the unrealistic expectations of parents, carers and coaches over what a child can achieve. Racially and sexually abusive remarks constitute emotional abuse.

Neglect – failing to meet a child's basic needs such as food, warmth, adequate clothing, medical attention etc. It could also mean failing to ensure they are safe or exposing them to harm.

Bullying – The competitive nature of sport makes it an ideal environment for the bully. Bullying can take many forms and is usually repeated over a period of time.

The bully can be:

A parent who pushes too hard.

A coach who adopts a win-at-all costs philosophy.

A player who intimidates inappropriately.

An official who places unfair pressure on a person.

Bullying can include:

Physical: e.g. hitting, kicking and theft.

Verbal: e.g. name-calling, constant teasing, sarcasm, racist or homophobic taunts, threats, graffiti and gestures.

Emotional: e.g. tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating and ignoring.

Sexual: e.g. unwanted physical contact or abusive comments.

Indicators of Abuse

Indications that a child may be being abused include the following:

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries.
- An injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent.
- The child describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him/her.
- Someone else (a child or adult) expresses concern about the welfare of another child.
- Unexplained changes in behaviour (e.g. becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper).
- Inappropriate sexual awareness.
- Engaging in sexually explicit behaviour.
- Distrust of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected.
- Has difficulty in making friends.
- Is prevented from socialising with other children.
- Displays variations in eating patterns including overeating or loss of appetite.
- Loses weight for no apparent reason.
- Becomes increasingly dirty or unkempt.

Indicators that bullying may be occurring are:

- Behavioural changes such as reduced concentration / becoming withdrawn, clingy, depressed, tearful, emotionally up and down, reluctance to go training or to the squash club.
- A drop off in performance / standard of play.
- Physical signs such as stomach aches, headaches, difficulty in sleeping, bed-wetting, scratching and bruising, damaged clothes and bingeing for example on food, cigarettes or alcohol.
- A shortage of money or frequent loss of possessions.
- Physically disabled children or children with learning difficulties are particularly vulnerable to abuse and may have added difficulties in communicating what is happening to them.

This list is not exhaustive and the presence of one or more of the indicators is not proof that abuse is actually taking place, any one of these symptoms could be related to other family issues such as family upset, parental separation, divorce or bereavement.

What do you do if you suspect that a child is being abused?

Recent enquiries indicate that abuse that occurs within a public setting is rarely a one-off event. It is crucial that those involved in sport are aware of this possibility. If you or others have concerns about the welfare of a child or young person or if he/she says or indicates that abuse is occurring **YOU MUST ACT IMMEDIATELY!** Do not assume that somebody else will.

Use Appendix A for flow chart and Appendix B 'Incident Report' form as a guide.

The person receiving the information about recent or past abuse should:

- React calmly so as not to frighten the child
- Tell the child he/she is not to blame and that he/she was right to tell someone
- Take what the child says seriously, recognising the difficulties inherent in interpreting what is said by a child who has a speech disability and/or differences in language

- Keep questions to the absolute minimum to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said
- Reassure the child but do not make promises of confidentiality, which might not be feasible in the light of subsequent developments
- Make a full record of what has been said, heard and/or seen as soon as possible.

The person receiving the disclosure should not:

- Panic
- Allow their shock or distaste to show
- Probe for more information than is offered
- Speculate or make assumptions
- Make negative comments about the alleged abuser
- Approach the alleged abuser
- Make promises or agree to keep secrets.

All disclosures or suspicions of abuse should be reported to the designated person, this may be the Child Welfare Officer in a club or County Association or directly to the England Squash Child Protection Officer - Nick Rider 07734 557584 nick.rider@englandsquash.com or via England Squash during office hours on 0161 231 4499.

What happens next?

The designated person will refer the allegation to the social services department (out-of-hours social services are available) who may involve the police, or go directly to the police.

Social Services Child Protection can be contacted 24 hrs a day via their Customer Care Line 0844 800 8014, or the Police Child Protection Team can be contacted via 0845 456 4567.

The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services department.

The England Squash Child Protection Officer should deal with any media enquiries.

It is essential to ensure the safety of the young person (if present) – if the young person needs immediate medical treatment, call a doctor or an ambulance, inform doctors of concerns/suspicions of abuse to ensure that they are aware that it is a Child Protection Issue.

A full record of what has been said, heard and/or seen should be completed as soon as possible and in as much detail as possible as it may be used in any subsequent legal action– see Appendix B 'Incident Report' form.

The report should contain the following information:

The young person's name, address and date of birth, race, disability, ethnicity

The nature of the allegation

The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred

A description of any visible bruising or other injuries

Any observations that have been made by you or to you

Any times, locations, dates or other relevant information

A clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay

Your knowledge of and relationship to the young person

Information and details of the abuser, where possible.

Referrals to the Social Services should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours. Keep a record of the name and designations of the Social Services member of staff or Police Officer to whom concerns were passed and record the time and date of call in case any follow-up is needed. A copy of the report should be sent to the England Squash Child Protection Officer.

From the point a concern is raised, if the accused is an employee of England Squash / Norfolk Junior Squash or an affiliated club, he/she will be notified and temporarily suspended. See Appendix C 'Suspension procedures'. If child abuse and/or a criminal action have taken place, Social Services and/or Police will deal with the issue until its end.

Contacts for Specialist Advice

England Squash Child Protection Officer Nick Rider 07734 557584 Nick.rider@englandsquash.com
Local Social Services Department Child Protection Officer / duty social worker contact via 0844 800 8014

NSPCC 24-hour free phone Helpline on 0808 800 500

Police child protection team contact via 0845 4564567

Support for the victim, accused and reporter

England Squash will offer support to anyone who (in good faith) reports concerns of abuse. It undertakes to ensure that the victim (and parents), are provided with appropriate professional support (this will usually be provided by the social service child protection team). It will also ensure through the appropriate allegation, disciplinary and appeals procedures that the accused is offered appropriate support.

Informing parents

In most situations it would be important to talk to parents or carers to help clarify any initial concerns (e.g. if a child seems withdrawn, there may be a reasonable explanation such as family upset of parental separation, divorce or bereavement).

However, there are circumstances in which a young person might be placed at even greater risk if concerns are shared (e.g. where a parent or carer may be responsible for the abuse or not able to respond to the situation appropriately). In these situations or where concerns still exist, any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported to the designated person in charge of child protection as soon as possible and recorded. Information regarding suspicions, allegations or incidents of abuse will usually be passed to parents by statutory organisations such as the Social Services or the police.

Records and confidentiality

Confidentiality should be maintained at all times.

Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only. This includes the following people:

- The designated person in charge
- The parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused (unless they are accused)
- The person making the allegation
- Social services/police
- Designated officers within the governing body of sport e.g. Legal Adviser, Lead Child Protection Officer
- The alleged abuser - seek social services advice on who should approach alleged abuser.
- Parents of the abuser, if the alleged abuser is a child (seek social services advice)

Information will be stored in a secure cabinet at England Squash in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure), with access available only to the England Squash Child Protection Officer.

Good Practice

All personnel in squash should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect children, and should therefore adhere to the following principles:

- Where possible, always work in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations) and encourage an open environment (e.g. no secrets).
- Treat all young people/disabled adults equally, and with respect and dignity.
- Always put the welfare of each young person first, before winning or achieving goals.
- Maintain a safe and appropriate distance with performers (e.g. it is not appropriate to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them).
- Build a balanced relationship based on mutual trust which empowers children to share in the decision-making process.

- Make squash fun, enjoyable and promote fair play.
- Ensure that if any form of manual/physical support for young people/carers is required, it is provided openly and with explanation – remember young people should always be consulted and their agreement gained.
- Keep up to date with the technical skills, qualifications and insurance in squash.
- Involve parents/carers wherever possible (e.g. for the responsibility of their children in the changing rooms). If groups have to be supervised in the changing rooms, always try to ensure parents/teachers/coaches/officials work in pairs.
- Ensure that if mixed teams are taken away, a male and female coach/member of staff should always accompany them (NB. However, same gender abuse can also occur.).
- Ensure that at tournaments or other matches/training, adults should not enter children's rooms or invite children into their rooms.
- Ensure any person working for or volunteering in their club and/or County does not transport young people in their car or vehicle except in an emergency for which written parental consent is needed.
- Be an excellent role model – this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people.
- Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of treatment given.
- Recognise the developmental needs and capacity of young people and disabled adults – avoid excessive training or competition and do not push them against their will.
- Secure parental consent in writing to acting in loco parentis prior to the young person taking part in any squash activity. A Parent Consent Form should be completed and signed agreeing to parental consent regarding issues around administration of emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment, transport, physical contact and photography (Appendix D).

Guidance on Physical Contact

The aims of guidelines relating to physical contact are to provide adults and young people with appropriate types of and contexts for touching.

Physical contact between adults and young people should only be used when the aim is to:

- Develop sports skills or techniques
- Treat an injury
- Prevent an injury
- Safety reasons

Physical contact should:

- Not involve touching genital areas
- Meet the need of the young person and not the need of the adult
- Be fully explained to the young person and take place with their consent
- Take place from the front (i.e. facing the child) or from the side – NEVER from behind
- Not take place in secret or out of sight of others.

Guidelines on Use of Photographic & Video Equipment

There is evidence that some people have used sporting events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young people.

Photographs can be used as a means of identifying children and young people when they are accompanied with personal information, this information can make a child vulnerable to an individual who may wish to start to "groom" that child for abuse.

The content of the photo can be used or adapted for inappropriate use.

Norfolk Junior Squash will assess the potential risks outlined above when publishing images of players and will take steps to minimize these.

All players entering tournaments will be asked if they have any objections to their photograph, name and squash club being published in local newspapers, Norfolk Junior Squash Website or Newsletter. Photographs that are published will have been taken only by an officially sanctioned photographer. Only players wearing appropriate attire will be photographed.

Adults involved in Norfolk Junior Squash

Norfolk Junior Squash will ensure that all reasonable steps will be taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with young people, whether paid or unpaid and that these personnel are aware of the England Squash Child Protection Guidance.

It will ensure that County Training will be supervised by coaches with appropriate qualifications and experience in suitable venues with appropriate insurance cover. Proof of qualifications will usually be required.

A record of name, address and National Insurance Number will be kept of all adults paid by Norfolk Junior Squash.

A self-disclosure questionnaire will be completed by volunteers who will be in direct contact with children/young people including parents who are transporting unaccompanied children to/from matches. The purpose of this questionnaire is to establish whether they have ever had action taken against them in relation to child abuse, sexual offences or violence (Appendix G). Ideally the names of at least 2 people (other than relatives) who could be approached for a reference (Appendix F) should be sought.

CRB checks undertaken by England Squash will be required for coaches, team managers, and Junior Committee members.

For copies of appendices and forms use the links below which take you to the Child Protection section of the England Squash website at: