

WALKDEN AND DISTRICT TENNIS LEAGUE

Child Protection Policy and Procedures

Code of Conduct for all those working with Children or Young People in the League

Those working with Children or Young People (persons under the age of 18) in the Tennis League should:

1. be professional and maintain the highest standards of personal behaviour at all times.
2. be aware of situations which can be misconstrued or manipulated by others. For example, if the Coach or Official is alone with a child or young person at a venue, in changing rooms or similar place, they are open to the possibility of allegations about their behaviour.
3. be vigilant and aware how actions can be misinterpreted. For example adolescents can have strong emotional feelings towards Coaches. Whilst these should not be dismissed and the youngsters hurt as a result, neither should they be encouraged in any way.
4. not appear to favour or show interest in one child or young person more than another.
5. be very aware that physical handling of a player, perhaps to help develop a game skill such as the backhand swing, can be misconstrued by an observer or even by another player.
6. never swear or respond to sexual innuendo.
7. design and use training programmes which are wholly appropriate to the individual player.
8. ensure that as far as possible, they are not alone when working with young players on an individual basis. If this is unavoidable then the parents should be made aware of the situation for the sake of the Coach or Official. This also means that children or young people should not be alone in cars or homes with a Coach/Official on a regular basis. The presence of others is an insurance against false accusations.
9. conduct all dealings with children and young people in a public environment in full view of others in order that all behaviour can be observed.
10. report any concerns within the area of Child Protection (physical, emotional, sexual or neglect) in confidence and without delay to the League Child Protection Officer or a responsible person who can give advice and recommend any necessary action.
11. not at any time discuss an allegation or suspicion with another person, other than the police, before either the above person or the above responsible person has been contacted.
12. when reporting an allegation or suspicion record information including relevant details. (This includes the nature of the allegation, background information of the parties involved, the period of time to which the allegation relates and the degree to which the information is known to be fact rather than opinion or hearsay.
13. At no time make comment to the media. The League should be made aware of any media interest in relation to child protection.

N.B. In the event of an allegation of improper behaviour being made, the personal conduct and professional behaviour of the adult will be very important evidence. For child abuse to take place, particularly sexual abuse, the child or young person and the adult(s) will generally be alone and away from public view. Thus the best defence is to avoid all situations in which behaviour cannot be observed.