

## Managing Challenging Behaviours

Coaches/Coaching Assistants/Club Volunteers delivering activities to children may, from time to time require to deal with a child's challenging behaviour.

These guidelines aim to promote good practice which can help support children to manage their own behaviour. They suggest some strategies and sanctions which can be used and also identify unacceptable actions or interventions which must *never* be used by staff or volunteers.

These guidelines are based on the following principles:

- ) The welfare of the child is the paramount consideration.
- ) A risk assessment should be completed for all activities which take into consideration the needs of all children involved in the activity.
- ) Children must never be subject to any form of treatment that is harmful, abusive, humiliating or degrading and should always be able to maintain their respect and dignity.
- ) No adult should attempt to respond to challenging behaviour by using techniques for which they have not been trained.

### Planning Activities

Good coaching practice requires planning sessions around the group as a whole but also involves taking into consideration the needs of each individual athlete within that group. As part of a risk assessment, coaches should consider whether any members of the group have been challenging in the past or are likely to present any difficulties in relation to either, the tasks involved, the other participants or the environment.

Where Coaches/Coaching Assistants/Club Volunteers identify any potential risks, strategies to manage those risks should be agreed in advance of the session, event or activity. The risk assessment should also identify the appropriate number of adults required to safely manage and support the session including being able to adequately respond to any challenging behaviour and to safeguard other members of the group and the Coaches/Coaching Assistants/Club Volunteers involved.

All those delivering activities to children should receive training on these guidelines and should be supported to address issues of challenging behaviour through regular supervision.

### Agreeing Acceptable and Unacceptable Behaviours

Staff, volunteers, children and parents/carers should be involved in developing an agreed statement of what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. They should also agree upon the range of options which may be applied in response to unacceptable behaviour (e.g. dropped from the team for one game etc). This can be done at the start of the season, in advance of a trip away from home or as part of a welcome session at a residential camp.

Issues of behaviour and control should regularly be discussed with staff, volunteers, parents/carers and children in the context of rights and responsibilities. It is beneficial to ask children as a group to set out what behaviour they find acceptable and unacceptable within their group/team. It is also helpful to ask them what the consequences of breaking these rules should be. Experience shows that they will tend to come up with a sensible and working set of 'rules'. If and when such a list is compiled, every member of the

group can be asked to sign it, as can new members as they join. It can then be beneficial to have a copy of the 'rules' visible for reference during the activity.

## Managing Challenging Behaviour

In dealing with children who display risk-taking or challenging behaviours, staff and volunteers might consider the following options:

- ) Time out - from the activity, group or individual work.
- ) Making up - the act or process of making amends.
- ) Payback - the act of giving something back.
- ) Behavioural reinforcement - rewards for good behaviour, consequences for negative behaviour.
- ) Calming the situation - talking through with the child.
- ) Increased supervision by Coaches/Coaching Assistants/Club Volunteers
- ) Use of individual 'contracts' or agreements for their future or continued participation.
- ) Consequences e.g. missing an outing.

Adults and children shall never be permitted to use any of the following as a means of managing a Child's behaviour:

- ) Physical punishment or the threat of such.
- ) The withdrawal of communication with the child.
- ) Being deprived of food, water or access to changing facilities or toilets.
- ) Verbal intimidation, ridicule or humiliation.

Coaches/Coaching Assistants/Club Volunteers should review the needs of any child on whom consequences are frequently imposed. This review should involve the child and parents/carers to ensure an informed decision is made about the child's future or continued participation in the group or activity. Whilst it would always be against the wishes of everyone involved, ultimately, if a child continues to present a high level of risk or danger to him or herself, or others, he or she may have to be barred from activity in Tennis.

## Physical Interventions

The use of physical interventions should always be avoided unless it is absolutely necessary in order to prevent a child injuring themselves, injuring others or causing serious damage to property. All forms of physical intervention shall form part of a broader approach to the management of challenging behaviour.

Physical contact to prevent something happening should always be the result of conscious decision-making and not a reaction. Before physically intervening, the member of staff or volunteer should ask themselves, 'Is this the only option in order to manage the situation and ensure safety?'

The following must always be considered:

- ) Contact should be avoided with buttocks, genitals and breasts. Coaches/Coaching Assistants/Club Volunteers should never behave in a way which could be interpreted as sexual.
- ) Any form of physical intervention should achieve an outcome that is in the best interests of the child whose behaviour is of immediate concern.
- ) Coaches/Coaching Assistants/Club Volunteers should consider the circumstances, the risks associated with employing physical intervention compared with the risks of not employing physical intervention.
- ) The scale and nature of physical intervention must always be proportionate to the behaviour of the young person and the nature of harm/ damage they might cause.

- J All forms of physical intervention should employ only a reasonable amount of force - the minimum force needed to avert injury to a person or serious damage to property – applied for the shortest period of time.
- J Coaches/Coaching Assistants/Club Volunteers should never employ physical interventions which are deemed to present an unreasonable risk to children or staff/volunteers.
- J Coaches/Coaching Assistants/Club Volunteers shall never use physical intervention as a form of punishment.

Any physical intervention used should be recorded as soon as possible after the incident by the Coaches/Coaching Assistants or Club Volunteer involved and passed to the Club Welfare Officer as soon as possible.

A timely debrief for Coaches/Coaching Assistants/Club Volunteers, the child and parents/carers should always take place following an incident where physical intervention has been used. This should include ensuring that the physical and emotional well-being of those involved has been addressed and ongoing support offered where necessary. Coaches/Coaching Assistants/Club Volunteers, children and parents/carers should be given an opportunity to talk about what happened in a calm and safe environment.

There should also be a discussion with the child and parents/carers about the child's needs and continued safe participation in the group or activity.