

Safeguarding Children Guidelines

Fitzroy Tennis Club

March 2022

Tennis Australia has developed two key policies relevant to Child Safety.

1) **Member Protection Policy** protects the health, safety and well-being of those who participate in the activities of tennis.

The overarching policy outlines that all affiliated clubs will not tolerate any form of abuse, neglect, harassment, unlawful discrimination, vilification, victimisation, indecency or violence against any adult or child by personnel.

As a club affiliated with Tennis Australia, FTC is bound by and must comply with the details of this policy. It applies to committee members, employees and coaches/assistant coaches, members and tennis players. Any other person, eg. Parents or spectators, are bound by the policy if they agree to be in writing (e.g via a competition registration form).

FTC must:

- Adopt the practices and codes of behaviour as set out by TA
- Implement Screening measures for people working with children
- Report any abuse or neglect they become aware of wherever it occurred.
- Deal with offending behaviours.

The policy was updated in February 2021 and can be found at:

https://www.tennis.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/1.-Member-Protection-Policy-CLEAN-FINAL-6-Oct-2021_.pdf

2) **Safeguarding Children Code of Conduct** focuses on specific obligations under the Member Protection Policy.

The code outlines a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse, including reporting the abuse to external authorities responsible for child protection where necessary. This is regardless of whether the abuse is perpetrated by personnel in the organisation or by others in the wider community, including members of a child's family, their extended network or strangers.

The code sets out standards in relation to misconduct, positive guidance, adherence to professional boundaries, use of language, supervision, use of electronic communications, giving gifts, photographs or videos, physical contact, change rooms, transport, and alcohol and drug use

Safeguarding Children Code of Conduct was updated in 2021 and is available at:

<https://www.tennis.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/2.-Safeguarding-Children-Code-of-Conduct-CLEAN-FINAL-6-Oct-2021.pdf>

Summary of the Safeguarding Children Code of Conduct

1. **Under no circumstances is any form of 'sexual behaviour' to occur between, with or in the presence of children.** This is regardless of consent and even if the person involved is above the legal age of consent. 'Sexual behaviour' is interpreted widely and includes (but is not limited to) contact behaviour, such as sexual intercourse, fondling and kissing, and non-contact behaviour, such as flirting, sexual innuendo or inappropriate text messaging.
2. **Positive guidance.** Use strategies that are fair, respectful and appropriate to the developmental stage of the children involved. Children should be provided with clear directions and given an opportunity to redirect their misbehaviour in a positive manner.
3. **Adhere to professional boundaries.** Do not engage in activities with children or provide support to a child/family if unrelated to tennis services, programs or events, nor seek contact with children outside these events.
4. **Uniform/ ID Cards.** Personnel should wear their uniform, or ID Cards while working at the club. This helps a child to accurately identify a person of authority who they can get assistance from in times of need.
5. **Appropriate language and tone of voice.** Provide clear direction, boost their confidence, encourage or affirm them. Avoid negative or discriminatory language.
6. **Supervision of children.** Ensure that participants in tennis services or programs positively engage, behave appropriately towards one another, and are in a safe environment and protected from external threats. Avoid one-on-one situations with children under their supervision where they are not in view of other personnel.
7. **Use of electronic Communication.** If emails or texts are sent to a child, their parent/guardian should be copied in. Make sure to restrict such communication to issues directly associated with delivering tennis services. No communication via social networking sites, game sites or Internet chat rooms.
8. **Giving gifts.** Is prohibited unless the value of the gift does not exceed \$25, the child's parent/guardian is aware of the gift and has consented to it being given.
9. **Photographs and video recordings.** Only where a child is participating in tennis services and if the child's parent/guardian has granted prior and specific approval, it is directly related to participation in tennis services and the child is appropriately dressed/posed. Images should be stored in a 'password protected folder' and are not to be exhibited on a website or social media platform without parental approval. Any caption or accompanying text should not identify a child if this is deemed potentially detrimental.

10. **Physical contact with children.** Must be appropriate in the context of delivering tennis services or programs. In particular, care must be taken to avoid contact that could be interpreted as having a sexual connotation or is intended to cause pain or distress to the child (e.g corporal punishment). An exception is medical personnel as and when required. If a child is the initiator of inappropriate physical or sexual contact, please contact the MPIO.
11. **Overnight Stays and Sleeping Arrangements.** Overnight stays must have written authorisation of the parents/ guardians AND prior authorisation of the Club Committee.
12. **Change rooms.** Personnel are required to supervise children in change rooms while balancing this with a child's right to privacy. This needs to be based on the age, developmental stage and needs of the child. Avoid one-on-one situations with a child in a change room. Personnel are not permitted to dress or undress in the change room area where children are present (other than their own).
13. **Alcohol or drug use, possession or supply.** Personnel must not be under the influence while on duty.
14. **Transporting children.** Only in circumstances related to the delivery of tennis services, and with prior written authorisation from the child's parent/guardian.

What to Do if there is a complaint or breach

1) Listen

Do not investigate or question

Make a note of the key information you are told

There is strong evidence to suggest that the reactions of adults to a disclosure of abuse makes a major difference to the short and long-term effects of abuse on children. The following is some guidance regarding disclosure:

Do

- Believe the child
- Be calm, supportive and reassuring
- Reassure the child that the abuse is not their fault
- Concentrate on the child's feelings rather than on questions and answers
- Explain what you are going to do now that you have been told. If a child is in immediate danger, contact 000.

Don't

- Make promises you can't keep
- Promise secrecy
- Push the child to give details of the abuse

2) Report / Seek advice

Contact FTC President, Tennis Victoria MPIO or the Whistle Blower service as soon as possible

If a person considers that either the policy or guidelines have been breached, then they may seek advice from or report to:

FTC President – fitzroytcpresident@gmail.com

Or

FTC Secretary – fitzroytcsecretary@gmail.com

Or

Tennis Victoria Member Protection Information Officer - Tim McGrath

02 8420 8414 or tmcgrath@tennis.com.au

Or

Tennis Australia Whistle Blower Service– Stopleveline

<http://stopleveline.com.au/whistleblowing-program> or via hotline 1800 11 72 33.