

Child Protection Explained

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The English Table Tennis Association (ETTA), as a provider of services and activities for children and young people aged under 18 years, takes its duty of care as the National Governing Body of Table Tennis in England seriously. Further the Association believes that it should have a [child protection policy](#) which is a statement of intent that demonstrates a commitment to safeguard children and young people in our sport from harm. The policy makes it clear to all staff, officials, players, volunteers, parents, carers and members what is required in relation to the protection of children and young people in table tennis, and hopes that its implementation will help create a safe and positive environment for children and young people to enjoy our sport.

All children have a right to have fun and be safe in the activities they choose, and parents/carers should be able to have confidence that the clubs to which they entrust their children will look after them. Everyone working or involved in table tennis, be it in a paid or voluntary capacity, has a role to play in safeguarding the welfare of children and preventing their abuse.

Please find here the full [ETTA's Child Protection Policy and Guidelines](#). For a breakdown of the policy, [go here](#)

PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS/CARERS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

It is important to recognise the responsibility of parents and carers for the protection of the children with whom our sport comes into contact.

Generally, the most effective way of ensuring that children are safeguarded is by working in partnership with their parents and carers.

This might include:

- Encouraging the involvement of parents as much as possible through, for example, membership on management committees, competitions or in day-to-day activities.
- Knowing, for all the children, who the parents, carers or others with parental responsibility are, and having a record of their contact numbers.
- Ensuring that parents can identify staff working for the organisation.
- Getting parental consent for all activities.
- Ensuring that communications between the organisation and parents take account of language or communication differences.
- Making sure that all parents and carers have an awareness of your child protection policy and reporting procedures.
- Devising a complaints procedure for parents and carers and making sure that everyone knows about it.
- Involving parents, as well as children, in developing policies relating to anti-bullying, racism, sectarianism, sexism and so on.
- Conducting periodic user surveys or simple market research questionnaires, directed at parents and children.

Do not make assumptions about the child's 'family' based on your own beliefs or experiences. Get to know the child's experience and arrangements for care or parenting.

PARTNERSHIP WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

It is just as important to establish open and honest discussion with the young people themselves, about all kinds of issues that will affect them whilst they are attending your club. This will convey the message that they are important and that you care about how they feel about the club or organisation. You may already have a young persons' committee that meets regularly to discuss how the group or activity is running and any concerns that the children or young people may have. You may already involve them in important decisions that affect their security and enjoyment.

One of the sad facts about child abuse is the way that it silences children and young people and stops them telling even known and trusted adults about what is happening to them. There are many reasons for this, mostly because adults are in a much more powerful position than children, and can use threats or fear to stop children speaking out. This means that if you truly want your organisation to promote a safe culture and environment then you have to be explicit about giving children permission to speak out. You can convey this in a number of ways but don't forget that for some children who are very young or who are disabled, you may need to make extra effort to ensure that they can understand the same messages.

These are some steps you could take:

- Encourage the involvement of children in the activities by setting up management committees that include them.
- Openly discuss your child protection work and the safeguarding steps you are taking by involving the young people in the development of materials.
- Really listen and take account of what they say or communicate – make sure it is non-tokenistic.
- Make sure you take account of children whose communication methods are different or for whom English is not their first language.
- Display posters, or have information leaflets about the club or organisation, in relevant languages, and that talk openly about the need for young people to feel safe and secure.
- Make sure that each child knows a named person to whom they may go should they have concerns about anything.
- Make sure that your publicity materials make it clear that certain behaviour is totally unacceptable, such as racism or bullying – and where children should go for help.
- Make sure that sanctions are known and understood by everyone.
- Conduct short questionnaires or reviews from time to time to check how things are for them.

CHECKLIST FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

This is an outline for a checklist that could be used in your organisation.

It provides suggestions and you may like to add your own. Good practice would suggest that it is devised in collaboration with the children and young people who use the organisation to include particular issues relevant to them and to the work of the organisation.

You have the right to be treated with respect and to be safeguarded from harm.

In this organisation:

		Yes	No
1.	Are you involved in making the rules on behaviour?		
2.	Do the rules apply to everyone, including staff?		
3.	Is everyone expected to show respect for themselves and others?		
4.	Do adults give a good example of non-violent behaviour?		
5.	Do you know who to speak to if you are bullied, threatened or called names?		
6.	If you have any other concerns do you know who to go to?		
7.	Are the premises a pleasant place and well looked after?		

Source: Sportscheck CPSU 2002 – A Step by Step Guide for Sports Organisations to Safeguard Children

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