

Creating and maintaining a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment at your club

Good practice and safe arrangements flourish in an environment where there is clear and open communication and where children, parents and everyone involved in the game feels free to ask questions, make suggestions and raise concerns.

This environment is created by the club adopting a welcoming and approachable attitude for all comers.

Welcome meeting

It is good practice to have welcome/open meetings at suitable points in the calendar, where parents/carers can be provided with relevant information and get to know key people in the club – Chair, Coaches, Welfare Officer, Volunteer Coordinator etc.

Some parents/carers will want to meet a member of the club in private – for example, to share confidential information or information about a child's particular needs. This should be offered as part of the welcome meeting, and the club's publicity should make it clear that this option is available.

Communications

Not everyone who comes to the club will understand the laws and rules of the game, let alone the 'unwritten rules' of a cricket club. The club should agree a strategy for communicating with potential, new and current members, as well as the community at large. The club should tell parents/carers how they plan to communicate with them – by email, phone, text, newsletters, social media etc. Plain language is preferable, and thought should be given to overcoming barriers where possible (for example in the use of large print, other languages, or audio messages.)

Written information

As a minimum, children and their parents/carers should be provided with written information by the club, informing them of training session times, what equipment (if any) is required, whether the parent/carer is required to stay etc. The information must include the name and contact details of the Club Welfare Officer and make reference to 'Safe Hands'.

Text and email communication

If arrangements for sessions/matches etc. are made or confirmed by text or email, this should be explained to parents as part of the communication strategy. An alternative to text and email must be offered as not everyone has access to the internet or mobile phones.

It is strongly advised that texts (especially) and emails are sent directly to parents and not to children and young people themselves. Arrangements should be made with the children and young people's parents/carers – this helps to keep communications transparent and to maintain clear boundaries between coaches/club officials and children and young people. (see 'Guidance on the use of Social media, texts and emails')

Seeking feedback

When children are in an environment where their views are sought and acted upon, they will not only enjoy the game more, they will feel and be safer. It is good practice to seek children's feedback regularly. This can be done at the end of coaching sessions, asking for a show of hands on what they have enjoyed / not enjoyed the most, or asking them in pairs to decide on something they

Putting things in place

want to say about a session, a match, a trip. Single sheet written evaluations give valuable feedback to coaches and others, and help clubs review what they are providing to best meet children and young players' needs. The important point is to build in the seeking of feedback and children's views, so they come to feel confident to speak up if anything is concerning them. Results may be slow in coming, but the more children and young people are encouraged to give their views, the more confident they will become in doing so. This will have long-term benefits for the well-being and growth of the club.

Obviously, the same approach with parents and carers has similar benefits.

This approach helps to build an open environment where good practice flourishes.