Policies & Procedures for Sports Coaches

Coaches should be made fully aware of the policies, procedures and guidelines that will underpin the terms of their employment or volunteering. This could be done through an induction to your organisation. Voluntary clubs looking for support in putting these in place are advised to undertake the Sport England Clubmark accreditation process, or their NGB equivalent. Policies will include:

Child Protection

Due to the contact with children and young people and the relationships that develop as a result, coaches may observe behaviour or other signs, or receive information about a young person which could cause concern. This may be related to experiences the young person has encountered within the sporting environment, but could equally be at home or at school. It is imperative, therefore, that organisations have a Child Protection policy and guidelines in place, and that the coach is aware of the mechanisms for raising concerns and for reporting any incidents that may arise or come to their attention.

Health & Safety

Health and safety regulations require provision of adequate and appropriate equipment, facilities and trained individuals to enable first aid to be given to employees at work. Whilst this may not directly relate to voluntary sports clubs, there is still a need to understand and communicate the club’s and individuals’ responsibilities in relation to club activities and events.

Equity

Sports equity is about fairness in sport, equality of access, recognising inequalities and taking steps to address them. It is about changing the culture and structure of sport to ensure it becomes equally accessible to everyone in society. Organisations should be able to demonstrate through its policies and actions that it is committed to ensuring that sports equity is central to how it operates.

Codes of Conduct

Organisations should have a Code of Conduct for coaches which outlines expected standards of practice. Some National Governing Bodies have developed their own which can be adopted; alternatively clubs may use the guidance provided in the Clubmark resource pack.

Sports coach UK have published a "Code of Practice for Sports Coaches" in order to establish, publicise and maintain standards of ethical behaviour in coaching practice.
Ratios

It is important to ensure that, in planning and running sports activities for children and young people, consideration is given to providing an appropriate supervision ratio of adults to participants

- Guidance on ratios will vary depending on the sport. Organisations should always check with the relevant NGB regarding their own recommendations.

- The Child Protection in Sport Unit recommends that the following ratios should be considered as minimum requirements for any activity;
  - Children under eight years old - one adult to eight participants (minimum two adults)
  - Children over eight years old - one adult to ten participants (minimum two adults)

- A minimum of two adults should always be present, regardless of the recommended ratio, as this ensures the basic cover in the event of an accident or incident. The two should not include parents or carers unless they are acting in a formal coaching capacity, and have therefore undergone all the processes as outlined in this document.

- Supervision levels should be determined following a risk assessment which includes; age and experience of participants; any additional support required; nature of the activity; and facilities and equipment available.