

PHYSICAL CONTACT & FIRST AID

There are a range of situations where coaches may come into physical contact with their participants e.g. during the course of technical coaching, a child who is upset reaching out for comfort, congratulating an athlete who has done well etc.

All forms of physical contact should respect and be sensitive to the needs and wishes of the child and should take place in a culture of dignity and respect for all. Children should be encouraged to express their views on physical contact.

The general guidance to follow is:

- In the first instance, coaching techniques are best delivered by demonstration (either by the coach, an athlete or video which can display the technique being taught).
- Educational instruction should be clearly explained with a description of how it is proposed to handle or have contact with the child before doing so. This should be accompanied by checking if the child is comfortable. Manual support should be provided openly and must always be proportionate to the circumstances.
- Coaches should not initiate unnecessary physical contact with their participants.
- Physical contact should be in a reasonable, appropriate manner in an open environment.
- Be mindful that to comfort a young person who is upset, it is not always necessary or appropriate to place an arm around them. Sitting down and listening to them, crouching down to their eye level and maybe holding their hand, can show concern for their situation.
- Sometimes children will initiate a hug or other forms of excited/happy contact with coaches and other adults. This is a normal form of human expression. It is important that adults respond to this in an appropriate manner, where they engage with the child in a positive way while not prolonging the contact or initiating it. Respond and then re-direct them into a more suitable coach/athlete form of positive expression such as a high 5 or dropping to one knee to speak to them at eye level.

- It is not the role of staff, coaches and volunteers to act as carers. If it is necessary to help a child with personal tasks e.g. toileting or changing, the child and parents should be encouraged to express a preference regarding the support and should be encouraged to speak out about methods of support with which they are uncomfortable. Staff/volunteers should work with parents and children to develop practiced routines for personal care so that parents and children know what to expect.
- Do not take on the responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained e.g. manual assistance for a child with a physical disability.

FIRST AID & THE TREATMENT OF INJURIES

All staff/volunteers must ensure:

- Where practicable all parents of children have provided relevant permission and information before their child participates in sessions.
- There is an accessible and well-resourced first aid kit at the venue.
- They are aware of any pre-existing medical conditions, medicines being taken by participants or existing injuries and treatment required.
- Only those with a current, recognised first aid qualification treat injuries. In more serious cases assistance should be obtained from a medically qualified professional as soon as possible.
- A significant incident form is completed if a child sustains a significant injury along with the details of any treatment given. Common sense should be applied when determining which injuries are significant.
- Where possible, access to medical advice and/or assistance is available.
- A child's parents are informed of any injury and action taken as soon as possible.
- The circumstances in which any accidents occur are reviewed to avoid future repetitions.