



## Child Protection in Sport Unit

### What sports clubs can do

Here, we list positive actions that sports organisations and clubs can take to encourage parents to support their children in a manner that's of benefit to everyone.

However, you may face situations where you need to deal more directly with problematic spectator behaviour, even to the point of sanctions.

#### **Encourage positive parental participation**

Parents play a pivotal role in sport. There are a number of ways that clubs and coaches can encourage their involvement in a way that benefits their child, as well as the rest of the team or organisation. To get parents on board, you can:

- provide information about the club's ethos, rules and expectations
- let parents know who to contact for information, feedback and offers of support
- communicate clear expectations of parents (including online behaviour), which they are required to sign up to – for example, a parents' code of conduct
- inform parents about the expectations of coaches and participants
- develop relationships with parents to encourage their positive involvement and make use of their skills to support the club
- inform parents about processes to raise, discuss or report concerns or issues about which they're unhappy
- use a range of means to inform parents and young people about expected standards of behaviour, including induction information, meetings, and leaflets, **posters** and newsletters
- provide reminders to parents that they are role models for the children
- communicate the message that sport is fun



## Child Protection in Sport Unit

### Manage challenging parental behaviour

In order to address concerns that may arise, clubs should:

- promote the club's code of conduct for parents, so they know what behaviour is expected of them and the consequences of breaching this – and get this signed
- establish a well-publicised process to investigate and respond to concerns or complaints
- promote values such as respect and listening to each other throughout the club
- explain to parents why certain behaviour is unhelpful
- encourage parental encouragement as opposed to criticism
- model positive behaviour by coaches and officials within the club, such as encouraging fair play and applauding opponents
- increase the distance between spectators and the pitch or court
- provide information for children and parents about who they can talk to if they have concerns
- have a designated safeguarding person other than the coach or referee
- provide support for the officials through assistants – this is particularly important in the case of young officials
- take advantage of support from the sport's governing body

### Establish sanctions for parents

Sanctions should be identified and agreed by the management committee, and communicated to all parties. If poor behaviour persists, sanctions may include:

- monitoring behaviour by a club official, or welfare or safeguarding officer
- not allowing an individual to be court, pool or pitch-side during a match or matches
- barring an individual from attending at all – preferably by making alternative arrangements for their child to get to and from the club or venue

Every effort should be made to ensure that the behaviour of a parent does not result in their child being unable to participate, although in some extreme cases this may be the final resort.

### One coach said:

"My policy is that there's nothing wrong with shouting encouragement from the side-lines, but if there are any negative comments, that spectator is asked to leave."