

# Chatham Table Tennis Club

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## Child Protection Policy

ETTA

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

Child abuse is a very emotive and difficult subject. All individuals involved in table tennis activities with children and young people have a responsibility to safeguard their welfare. The majority of children who participate in table tennis do so in a safe and positive atmosphere with the support and encouragement of all those involved with our sport. However, a few children do not have a positive experience and the ETTA like other sports and aspects of our society now recognises the need to guard against individuals who may abuse their position in table tennis.

Everyone working 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.

Coaches have regular contact with children and are important links in identifying situations that may suggest that abuse has or is occurring.

The ETTA and Chatham Table Tennis Club, accepts that as organisations dealing with children through coaching and competition, have both a moral and legal obligation to ensure the highest possible standard of care is provided.

**The aim of this policy is to ensure that all ETTA members, CTTC Coaches, Officials, volunteers and parents/guardians of junior members, are fully aware of their responsibilities with regard to child protection, by:**

- ✓ Safeguarding and promoting the interests and well being of children with whom they are working.
- ✓ Taking all reasonable and practical steps to protect children from harm, discrimination or degrading treatment.
- ✓ Respecting children's rights, wishes and feelings.

**ETTA policies which:**

- ✓ Offer safeguards to children, coaches, staff, officials and volunteers.
- ✓ Help to maintain high standards of professionalism and practice at all levels of the sport.

**Implementation procedures that demonstrate a commitment to:**

- ✓ High standards of recruitment.
- ✓ The provision of support, appropriate training (and updating) and adequate supervision of coaches, staff and members to enable them to work together with parents, coaches and other organisations to ensure that the welfare and needs of children remain paramount.

**Remember that:**

- ✓ The child's welfare is paramount.
- ✓ All children, whatever, their age, culture, disability, gender, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.
- ✓ All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

## 2 RECOGNITION OF ABUSE

### What is abuse?

Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm. It commonly occurs within a relationship of trust or responsibility and represents an abuse of power or a breach of trust. Abuse can happen to a child regardless of their age, gender, race or ability.

Coaches, volunteers and officials are not experts in recognising abuse. Therefore, any suspicions or concerns should be discussed with the person in charge. This may be the head coach, the club official, the head teacher or the sports centre manager.

**It is the responsibility of these people to obtain appropriate advice from the local social services department, the NSPCC or the police. If the person in charge is not available, or the concern is about the person in charge, then the person in receipt of the information should contact the social services direct.**

Indications that a child may be abused include the following:

- ✓ Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries.
- ✓ An injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent.
- ✓ The child describes what appears to be an abusive act.
- ✓ Someone expresses concern about the welfare of the child.
- ✓ Unexplained changes in behaviour (e.g. becoming quiet, withdraw or sudden outbursts of temper).
- ✓ Inappropriate sexual awareness.
- ✓ Engaging in sexually explicit behaviour
- ✓ Distrust of adults particularly those with whom a close relationship would be expected.
- ✓ Difficulty making friends.
- ✓ Is prevented from socialising with other children.
- ✓ Displays variations in eating patterns including overeating or loss of appetite.
- ✓ Weight loss for no apparent reason.
- ✓ Becomes increasingly dirty or unkempt.

This list is not exhaustive and the presence of one or more of these factors is not proof that abuse is taking place.

### Remember that:

- ✓ It is not the responsibility of coaches, staff or volunteers to decide that abuse is taking place, but it is their responsibility to act on any concerns.

## 3 THE MAIN FORMS OF ABUSE

There are four main forms of abuse:

- ✓ **Neglect**  
Where adults fail to meet a child's basic needs such as warm clothing or food, fail or refuse to give children love, affection and attention. Children may also be consistently left alone or unsupervised. Neglect in a sports situation could include a teacher or coach not ensuring that children are safe, exposing them to undue cold or to unnecessary risk of injury.

✓ **Physical Abuse**

Where adults physically hurt or injure children by hitting, shaking, squeezing, burning or biting, or by giving children alcohol, inappropriate drugs or poison. Attempted suffocation or drowning also comes within this category. In sports situations, physical abuse may occur when the nature and the intensity of training exceed the capacity of the child's immature and growing body.

✓ **Sexual Abuse**

Girls and boys are abused by adults – both males and females- who use children to meet their own sexual needs. This could include full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse and fondling. Showing children pornographic material (books, videos, pictures) is also a form of sexual abuse. Sports that involve physical contact with children could possibly create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed. The power of the coach over the very young performers, if misused, may also lead to abusive situations developing.

✓ **Emotional Abuse**

Persistent lack of love and affection, where a child may be constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted, which may make the child very nervous or withdraw. Emotional abuse may also occur when there is constant over protection (which prevents the child from socialising), or there is neglect, physical or sexual abuse. Emotional abuse in sport may occur if children are subjected to constant criticism, bullying or unrealistic pressure to perform to high expectations consistently.

#### **4 THE EFFECTS OF ABUSE**

Abuse in all its forms can affect a child at any age. The effects can be so damaging that, if untreated, may follow an individual into adulthood. For example, an adult who has been abused as a child may find it difficult or impossible to maintain a stable trusting relationship, become involved with drugs or prostitution, attempt suicide or even abuse a child in the future.

There have been a number of studies which suggest that children with disabilities are at increased risk of abuse through various factors such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, isolation and a powerlessness to protect themselves, or adequately communicate that abuse has occurred. Children from ethnic minorities, who may also be experiencing racial discrimination, may be double powerless.

#### **5 RESPONDING TO THE CHILD**

If a child says or indicates that they are being abused, or information is obtained which gives concern that a child is being abused, the person receiving the information should listen carefully and:

✓ **React calmly so as not to frighten the child.**

- Tell the child they are not to blame and that it was right to tell.
- Don't ask direct questions – who, what, where, when.
- Do encourage them to talk – do you want to talk to me about this?
- Take what the child says seriously, recognising the difficulties inherent in interpreting what a child who has a speech disability and /or differences in languages says.
- Keep questions to an absolute minimum to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said.
- Keep calm and even if you find what they are saying difficult or painful keep listening.
- Reassure the child but do not make promises of confidentiality, which may not be feasible in the light of subsequent developments.
- Make a full record of what has been said, heard and/or seen as soon as possible.

- If you have serious concerns about the immediate safety of that child contact the police or social services, record who you spoke to and tell your club official what you have done.
- Do not contact or confront the individual who is alleged to be responsible.
- Find someone you trust to talk to about or support you but remember not to name or identify those involved in the allegations.

## **6 RESPONDING TO SUSPICIONS OR ALLEGATIONS**

It is not the responsibility of anyone working under the auspices of the ETTA, in a paid or voluntary capacity, to take responsibility or decide whether child abuse is taking place. However, there is a responsibility to protect children in order that appropriate agencies can then make enquiries and take any necessary action to protect the child.

The social services department has a statutory duty under the Children Act 1989 to ensure the welfare of the child. When a child protection referral is made its staff have a legal responsibility to investigate. This may involve talking to the child and family and gathering information from other people who know the child. Enquiries may be carried out jointly with the police.

### **What to do if there are concerns:**

There is always a commitment to work in partnership with parents or carers where there are concerns about their children, therefore, in most situations it would be important to talk to parents or carers to help clarify any initial concerns. For example, if a child seems withdrawn, they may have experienced bereavement in the family.

However, there are circumstances in which a child might be placed at even greater risk if such concerns were shared (e.g. where a parent or carer may be responsible for the abuse or not able to respond to the situation appropriately). In these situations, or where concern still exists, any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported to the person in charge as soon as possible and be recorded.

It is the responsibility of the person in charge to inform the social services department without delay. If the person in charge is not available, the person discovering or being informed of the abuse should immediately contact the social services or the police. In these circumstances you do not have to give your name, but it is helpful if you do. The social services department, together with the person in charge, where appropriate, will decide how and when parents and carers will be informed.

## **IF YOU ARE NOT SURE WHAT TO DO**

**ADVICE CAN BE OBTAINED BY TELEPHONING THE NSPCC (24 HOUR) FREEPHONE HELPLINE ON 0800 800500 OR THE CHILD PROTECTION IN SPORT UNIT ON 0116 234 7278**

### **Records and Information**

Information passed to the social services department or the police must be as helpful as possible, hence the necessity for making a detailed record as follows:

- ✓ The nature of the allegation
- ✓ A description of any visible bruising or other injuries

- ✓ The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred
- ✓ Any times, dates or other relevant information
- ✓ A clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay

Reporting the matter to the social services or the police should not be delayed by attempts to obtain more information. Whenever possible referrals telephoned to the social services should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours. A record should also be made of the name and designation of the social services member of staff or police officer to whom the concerns were passed, together with the time and date of the call in case any follow up is needed.

## **7 ALLEGATIONS AGAINST COACHES AND/OR VOLUNTEERS**

This includes anyone working with children in a paid or voluntary capacity (e.g. club volunteers or helpers, officials, team captains or managers, assistants in addition to qualified coaches).

Child abuse can and does occur outside the family setting, although it is a sensitive and difficult issue, it has occurred within table tennis. Recent statistics indicate that abuse, which takes place within a public setting, is rarely a one off event. It is crucial that those involved in table tennis are aware of the possibility and that allegations are taken seriously and appropriate action taken.

The person in charge may be informed of situations where they are unsure whether the allegations constitute abuse or not and is, therefore, unclear about what action to take. There may be circumstances where allegations relate to poor practice rather than abuse. If there is any doubt those responsible should always consult senior colleagues and seek advice from the social services or NSPCC. It may be the particular allegation is just one of a series which together could cause concern.

It is acknowledged that feelings generated by the discovery that a coach or volunteer is, or may be, abusing a child will raise concern amongst other coaches or volunteers, particularly the difficulties inherent in reporting such matters. It is important, however, that any concerns for the welfare of any child arising from the abuse of harassment by a coach or volunteer should be reported immediately.

**The ETTA and CTTC will assure all coaches, volunteers, helpers, staff or officials that it will fully support and protect anyone who, in good faith, reports their concerns that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child.**

When there is a complaint there may be three types of investigation:

- ✓ A criminal investigation
- ✓ A child protection investigation
- ✓ A disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

The results of the police and social services investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation.

**What to do if there are concerns:**

- ✓ If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice, the person in charge will deal with it as a misconduct issue – obtaining advice, if required, from the ETTA.

- ✓ If the allegation is about poor practice by the person in charge or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be referred to the ETTA Vice-Chairman (Teaching and Training) or the senior officer who will decide how to deal with the allegation and whether or not to initiate disciplinary proceedings.
- ✓ Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a coach or volunteer should be reported to the person in charge who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child and/or any other child who may be at risk.
- ✓ The person in charge will refer the allegation to the social services department who may involve the police.
- ✓ The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services department.
- ✓ The person in charge should also notify the ETTA Vice Chairman (Teaching and Training) or the senior officer who will decide who will deal with any media enquiries.
- ✓ Every effort will be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned.
- ✓ If the person in charge is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the ETTA Vice Chairman (Teaching and Training) or the senior officer, who will then be responsible for taking the action outlined above.
- ✓ The ETTA will make an immediate decision regarding any individual accused of abuse regarding their temporary suspension pending further police and social services enquiries.
- ✓ Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police enquiries, the ETTA will assess all individual cases under the appropriate misconduct/disciplinary procedure to decide whether an individual can be reinstated and how this can be handled sensitively. This may be a difficult decision particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any decision by the police. In such cases the ETTA will reach a decision based upon the available information, which could suggest that on the balance of probability it is more likely than not the allegation is true. The welfare of the child should always remain paramount.
- ✓ Consideration should be given regarding available support to the child, the parents/carers/guardians, coaches, members and volunteers.

### **Allegations of previous abuse**

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (e.g. by an adult who was abused as a child by a coach or volunteer who is still working with children). Where such an allegation is made the procedures given under 'Responding to Suspicions and Allegations' should be followed. This is important as other children in table tennis, or outside the sport, may be at risk from this person.

Anyone who has a previous criminal record conviction for offences relating to abuse is automatically excluded from working with children and is not welcome in table tennis.

## **8 PROMOTING GOOD PRACTICE**

All children have a right to be safe and to be treated with dignity and respect. False allegations of abuse are rare, however, the ETTA is committed to safeguarding children, coaches, volunteers, staff, officials and the sport. The ETTA's policy of good practice includes monitoring the following areas:

### **Coach/volunteer recruitment**

Anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and it is important that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from working with children. It is essential that the same procedure be used consistently whether the person is paid or unpaid, voluntarily, part time or full time. When undertaking pre-selection checks the following should be included:

- ✓ All volunteers working for a club with juniors should complete a personal disclosure form (see Appendix C). **Registered coaches of CTTC have completed this form and hold disclosure certificates**
- ✓ This form is designed to elicit any criminal information about an applicant's past career, which could deem them unsuitable for coaching. Failure to disclose information will result in exclusion from the club.
- ✓ Consent should be obtained from the applicant for permission to make police and social service checks as necessary.
- ✓ There should be a check with the Department of Health Consultancy index (which maintains information about individuals who are deemed unsuitable to work with children) made via the ETTC.

Clubs should have effective measures in place to ensure confidentiality of information received in relation to applicants.

### **Policy and procedure**

To help prevent abuse of children the club or organisation should have a policy, which ensures that children are protected and kept safe from harm. Everyone involved in the care of children should know what to do if there are concerns about abuse and what procedures to follow (or who to ask for advice). This information (which should include the telephone number and/or address of an independent help line outside of table tennis) could be on a notice board or as a simple handout that is available to all newcomers to the club.

### **Training**

It should be clearly recognised that checks are only part of the process to protect children. The checks must be operated in conjunction with appropriate training so that everyone is aware and sensitive to potentially abusive situations. As an absolute minimum requirement all should have read the Sportscoach UK 'Working with Children' booklet. Registered coaches will have access to the ETTC Code of Ethics statement and should be implementing it.

The regional coaching chairman organises regular coach update days where the child abuse issue can be discussed and clarified to ensure continued awareness of the subject.

All club members involved in working with children should also attend the relevant Running Sport courses on Child protection.

### **Supervision**

Those coaches/volunteers in charge of sessions where children are involved should be sensitive to and act upon any concerns of abuse at an early stage. They should lead by example and they should also offer appropriate support to those who report concerns.

### **Complaints**

Coaches/volunteers/members should be aware of the complaints procedure that operates within the club/venue in which they are coaching/playing, and ensure that parents and children have the relevant information to allow easy access to this procedure. They should also be fully aware of how to proceed further with any complaints or concerns.

## **9 DO'S AND DON'TS**

It is possible to reduce situations of possible abuse and to protect coaches and volunteers by promoting good practice. The following are examples of care that all coaches and volunteers should take when working in table tennis:

- ✓ Always be publicly open when working with children. Avoid all situations where a coach/volunteer/members and individual child are unobserved.
- ✓ If any form of physical contact is absolutely necessary, it should be used openly. Care is required – where possible always **ask the child 'if they mind'**. Some parents are becoming increasingly sensitive about this and their views should always be carefully considered. **If possible avoid all physical contact.**
- ✓ Where possible parents should take the responsibility for their children in the changing room. If groups have to be supervised in the changing rooms, always try and work in pairs. Encourage an open environment (i.e. no secrets).
- ✓ Where there are mixed teams away from home they should, ideally, be accompanied by both a male and female coach.
- ✓ Do not spend excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others.
- ✓ Do not take children alone on car journeys however short.
- ✓ Do not take children to your home where they will be alone with you.

## **NEVER**

- ✓ Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games including horseplay.
- ✓ Share a room with a child.
- ✓ Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
- ✓ Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- ✓ Make sexually suggestive comments to a child even in fun.
- ✓ Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded, or not acted upon.
- ✓ Do things of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves.
- ✓ Invite or allow children to stay with you at your home unsupervised.

It may sometimes be necessary for coaches or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children, especially if they are young or have disabilities. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of the parents and the children involved. There is a need to be responsive to a child's reactions – if a child is fully dependant on you, explain what you are doing and give choices where possible. This is particularly necessary if you are involved in dressing or undressing, or where there is physical contact whilst lifting or assisting a child to carry out particular activities.

If you accidentally hurt a child and they appear distressed in any way, appears to be sexually aroused by your actions or misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done, report any such incident as soon as possible to another club member and make a brief written note. Parents should be informed of the incident.

## 10 APPENDICES

Appendix A:	Myths and facts about abuse
Appendix B:	Sample forms
Appendix C:	Useful information
Appendix D:	Protecting children from abuse leaflet

### APPENDIX A – MYTHS AND FACTS ABOUT ABUSE

Very often when a child or youth is sexually abused, concerned friends, family members and professionals tell those people affected by the abuse many things. It is not unusual for people to become confused about what to believe or not to believe. The following is a list of some of the more common myths and facts about child sexual abuse.

MYTH	FACT
Children make up stories or lie about sexual abuse	While children do make up stories they seldom lie about sexual abuse – children who have not been abused do not usually have explicit knowledge of intimate sexual behaviour.
Abuse is most often committed by strangers	Most abuse is committed by someone the victim knows and trusts
Offenders often look sleazy, cruel or unusual	Offenders come from all walks of life and look like ordinary people. They can be fathers, mothers, grandfathers, grandmothers, babysitters, coaches, teachers etc.
The child is at fault for allowing the sexual abuse to happen	Adults are responsible for their own behaviour – a child is never responsible for behaviour displayed by an adult.
Children are sexually abused because their parents/carers neglected to care for, or supervise them properly	Offenders use a range of tactics to gain access to their victims and alone are responsible for what they do many are experts in manipulating both the victim and their parents/carers.

## APPENDIX B – SAMPLE FORMS

### Sample Personal Disclosure Form

<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b> <b>PERSONAL DISCLOSURE FROM ALL VOLUNTEERS WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE</b>	
Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence or been the subject of a Caution or of a Bound Over Order?	
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, please state below the nature and date(s) of the offence(s):	
<input type="text"/>	
SIGNED <input type="text"/>	DATE <input type="text"/>
NAME <input type="text"/>	
Any surname previously known by	<input type="text"/>
Address <input type="text"/>	
Post Code <input type="text"/>	Date of Birth <input type="text"/>
Place of birth	<input type="text"/>
You are advised that under the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1874 (Exceptions) Order 1975 as amended by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions)(Amendment) Order 1986 you should declare all convictions including 'spent' convictions.	

**SAMPLE CRIMINAL RECORDS CHECK FORM**  
**SPECIMEN FORM FOR REQUESTING A CRIMINAL RECORDS CHECK**  
**TWO COPIES OF THIS FORM SHOULD BE SENT IN CONFIDENCE**

Form CRC(V)1

To: National Equity Officer,  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Queensbury House,  
Havelock Road, Hastings,  
E.Sussex. TN34 1HF

Name and Address of Employer

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Tel. No \_\_\_\_\_  
Ref. No \_\_\_\_\_  
Date. \_\_\_\_\_

For referral to:  
CRIMINAL RECORDS OFFICE

PPRD3 Ref:

It is requested that a check for any record of convictions, cautions or bind-over orders be carried out in respect of the undernoted who have a substantial access to children in the capacity of;

COMPLETE IN BLOCK CAPITALS	
Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms (delete as appropriate)	Date of Birth _____
Surname _____	Place of Birth _____
Forenames _____	Other Previous Surname _____
Maiden name _____	
Address _____	Prev. Address _____
_____	Within last 5 years _____
_____	_____
Any other identifying particulars:	
Convictions/cautions declared Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	

I am satisfied that the particulars given above are accurate and that the above named person has given written permission for the check to be made and is aware that any spent convictions will be disclosed.

I further declare that any information given will be treated in strict confidence and used only in accordance with the Departments instructions.

SIGNED \_\_\_\_\_ NAME IN CAPITALS \_\_\_\_\_  
(on behalf of organisation)

TO BE COMPLETED BY POLICE AND WHOLE FORM RETURNED TO PPRD3 BRANCH

[ ] no trace on the details supplied [ ] This subject may be identical with the person whose record of convictions is attached.

SIGNED \_\_\_\_\_ RANK \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

PPRD3 RESPONSE

[ ] no observations [ ] details of convictions attached

## APPENDIX C – USEFUL INFORMATION

### **Department of Health Consultancy Service**

Room 133, Department of Health, Wellington House,  
133-135 Waterloo Road, London DE1 8UG.

### **Sportscoach UK**

114 Cardigan Road, Headingley, Leeds LS6 3BJ.  
Tel: 0113 2744802

### **The NSPCC,**

National Centre, 42 Curtain Road, London EC2A 3NH.  
Tel: 020 7825 2775 or e-mail: [infounit@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:infounit@nspcc.org.uk)

### **Home Office (disclosure of criminal records)**

Home Office, F2 Division, Room 531, 50 Queen Anne's Gate,  
London SW1H 9AT.

### **Education Department (for checking against List 99)**

STPP, Department for Education and Employment, Mowden Hall,  
Staindrop Road, Darlington, Co. Durham DL3 8BG.

### **English Table Tennis Association,**

National Equity Officer, Queensbury House, Havelock Road,  
Hastings, E.Sussex. TN34 1HF.  
Tel: 01424 722525 or e-mail: [admin@ettahq.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:admin@ettahq.freeserve.co.uk)

Children in Sport Protection Unit,  
3 Gilmour Close,  
Beaumont leys,  
Leicester LE4 1EZ  
Tel: 0116 234 7278 or e-mail: [cpsu@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:cpsu@nspcc.org.uk)

## **BOOKS AND ARTICLES**

Crouch M (1995) – *Protecting Children – a guide for Sportspeople*  
Boocock S (2002) – *Journal of Sexual Aggression*  
Sportscoach UK – *Code of Ethics and Conduct for Sports Coaches*

## **WEB RESOURCES**

[www.sportprotects.org.uk](http://www.sportprotects.org.uk)

[www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

## APPENDIX D QUICK GUIDE

