



Te Tēnehi o Aotearoa

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN & VULNERABLE PEOPLE

GUIDELINES FOR NZTEs

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1. RESPONSIBILITIES

Under the Tennis Participant Protection Policy (TPPP) Tennis NZ, its Regions and Associations and their member clubs (all of which are NZ Tennis Entities - NZTEs) have a responsibility to ensure that appropriate policies and procedures are established to safeguard all participants, and in particular children (those under 18) and vulnerable people from any threat of, or form of, abuse or harassment while taking part in any aspect of our sport.

The requirements of NZTEs specifically relating to safeguarding children and vulnerable people are:

Code of Conduct

NZTEs must adopt the **Tennis New Zealand General Code of Conduct** and make it enforceable (i.e., members read and agree to abide by the code)

Screening

NZTEs must Perform screening on all preferred and existing appointees who will work with or have regular unsupervised contact with children and/or vulnerable adults.

Screening should include:

- An interview and reference check carried out by the NZTE
- Completion of a 'police vetting request and consent form' submitted by the individual to Tennis NZ. *(From 2023, Tennis NZ will provide a National Police Vetting Service to assist with this)*

NZTEs must:

- Follow the procedure set out in the **Tennis NZ Police Vetting Policy** if a Police Vetting check reveals that a person has been found (or has plead) guilty of any criminal offence, whether or not a conviction is recorded.
- Follow the procedure set out in the Tennis NZ Police Vetting Policy if any preferred or existing appointee refuses to undertake screening.
- Obtain a **Participant Protection Declaration** from:
 - preferred and existing appointees who work with children or vulnerable adults, as coaches, team managers, tournament directors, officials and umpires (paid or volunteer)
 - preferred and existing appointees who are likely to have unsupervised contact with children or vulnerable adults

Full details of NZTE requirements relating to Recruitment and Screening can be found on pages 10-14 of the TPPP

Those responsible for governance and administration at an NZTE, and any adults involved with tennis activity involving children or vulnerable adults need to have an awareness of safeguarding guidelines and best practice. Good awareness of best practice also assists in reducing risk to tennis organisations, coaches, officials, volunteers, parents, players, and supporters.

2. WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE PEOPLE - BEST PRACTICE

The following best practice suggestions provide guidance to NZTEs and those working with children.

You can find best practice policy examples and templates on the [Sport NZ website](#).

Club/venue management

- Develop and implement a safeguarding policy and specific procedures that are consistent with the TPPP (each NZTE operates differently and will need to consider what procedures are needed for its circumstances)
- Embed your safeguarding policy, procedures, and messages into regular communications to all members and casual participants
- Nominate 1 male and 1 female as Safeguarding Officers for children or vulnerable adults to speak to if they feel the need to disclose an incident where they didn't feel safe
- Display [safeguarding posters](#) to ensure all participants are aware of how to report any behaviour they feel has/could put a child or vulnerable adult at risk

Planning and delivering activities

- Activities should be appropriate for the age and development of children or vulnerable adults that need adapted activities
- Create a safe and open environment that protects children and vulnerable adults from harm, and provides boundaries and support to staff and volunteers
- Do not send children or vulnerable adults off to train alone and out of sight or supervision
- Ensure that all physical contact with children or vulnerable adults is relevant and appropriate to the activity, with permission sought from the individual before making contact
- Ensure that any filming or photography of children is appropriate, with written permission to be obtained from a parent or guardian if the materials are to be shown publicly
- Do not allow parents, coaches, other children, or spectators to engage in any type of bullying behaviour (this includes cyber/text bullying)

Appropriate behaviours

- Use positive and age-appropriate language when talking to, or in the presence of children
- Do not engage in any intimate, overfamiliar, or sexual relationships with children or vulnerable adults
- Do not drink alcohol when you are responsible for children or vulnerable adults and do not offer alcohol to children under any circumstances
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- Do not engage in communication with a child or children, through social media, texting or email, other than for relevant coach/player feedback or administration, and ideally include a parent or guardian as a recipient of all communication
- Avoid private or unobserved situations, including being alone with a child/vulnerable adult in the changing rooms. Have another adult present or at least another player
- When entering changing rooms, ensure that you knock and announce yourself and try to have at least one other adult with you
- Always have another adult present when staying overnight anywhere with children/vulnerable adults; preferably a parent of one of the participants
- Avoid driving a child/vulnerable adult unaccompanied. If this is not practical, have them sit in the back seat
- Do not invite or encourage children/vulnerable adults to visit any private residence
- Do not bully or place unnecessary pressure on children or vulnerable adults

The relationship between adults who hold a position of trust and responsibility with children and vulnerable adults must always be professional and appropriate.

3. RESPONDING TO SUSPECTED PHYSICAL OR SEXUAL ABUSE

Physical or sexual abuse is at the most serious end of the harm spectrum and will require an immediate response. If any individual is made aware of possible sexual or physical harm to a child or vulnerable adult, either directly or indirectly, they should immediately inform the relevant NZTE Safeguarding Officer or a Protection Information Officer.

In responding to a suspected case of physical or sexual abuse, a Safeguarding Officer or Protection Information Officer must follow these key steps:

Step 1: Receive the allegation

- If a child or vulnerable adult raises an allegation of abuse or neglect that relates to them or to another child/vulnerable adult, it is important that you listen, stay calm and be supportive.

DO	DON'T
Make sure you are clear about what the child/vulnerable adult has told you	Do not challenge or undermine the child/vulnerable adult
Reassure the child/vulnerable adult that what has occurred is not their fault	Do not seek detailed information, ask leading questions or offer an opinion
Explain that other people may need to be told in order to stop what is happening	Do not discuss the details with any person other than those detailed in these procedures
Promptly and accurately record the discussion in writing	Do not contact the alleged offender

Step 2: Report the allegation

- Immediately report any allegation of abuse or neglect, or any situation involving a child/vulnerable adult at risk of harm, to the police and/or the relevant child protection agency. You may need to make a report to both.
- If there is any doubt about whether the allegation should be reported to the police and/or the relevant child protection agency, contact them and allow the police and/or the relevant child protection agency to determine if the allegation should be reported.
- If the allegation involves a person to whom the Tennis Participant Protection Policy applies, then also report the allegation to a Protection Information Officer (if not already involved in the process) so that they can manage the situation.

Step 3: Protect the child/vulnerable adult and manage the situation

- A Protection Information Officer will assess the immediate risks to the child/vulnerable adult and engage with appropriate individuals responsible for governance and administration of relevant NZTEs to enable interim steps to ensure the child/vulnerable adult's safety and the safety of any other children/vulnerable adults.

This may include the NZTE redeploying the alleged respondent to a position where there is no unsupervised contact with children/vulnerable adults, supervising the alleged respondent or removing/suspending them until any investigations have been concluded.

Legal advice should be sought before any interim steps are made if the person is in paid employment with an NZTE.

- The Protection Information Officer will consider what services may be most appropriate to support the child/vulnerable adult and their parent/s or guardian/s.
- The Protection Information Officer will consider what support services may be appropriate for the alleged respondent.
- The Protection Information Officer will support relevant NZTEs to put in place measures to protect the child/vulnerable adult and the alleged respondent from possible victimisation and gossip.

Step 4: Take internal action

- Different investigations could be undertaken to examine allegations that are made against a person to whom this policy applies, including:
 - a criminal investigation (conducted by the police)
 - a child protection investigation (conducted by the relevant child protection agency)
 - a disciplinary or misconduct enquiry/investigation (conducted by Tennis New Zealand or an NZTE).
- Regardless of the findings of the police and/or child protection agency investigations, the NZTE will need to assess the allegations to decide whether the alleged respondent should return to their position, be dismissed, be banned, or face any other disciplinary action.
- A Protection Information Officer of the NZTE will consider all information relevant to the matter - including any findings made by the police, the child protection authority, and/or court - and then recommend actions and the rationale for those actions, which the NZTE will then progress to a natural resolution.

- If disciplinary action or any formal resolution is recommended, the NZTE will follow the procedures set out in the Tennis Participant Protection Policy.
- The NZTE will provide the relevant government agency with a report of any disciplinary action taken, where this is required.

4. COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

All people working for an NZTE in a paid or unpaid capacity have a duty to report any concerns relating to the safety of a child or vulnerable adult to the appropriate authorities.

It is important to note that it is unlikely a child or vulnerable adult will be able to make a complaint themselves so the procedure will most often be followed by either a parent, support person or a nominated Safeguarding Officer.

Any person may make a complaint about a person to whom the Tennis Participant Protection Policy (TPPP) applies if they consider that a person has, or may have, breached any part of the policy.

Any complaint relating to children or vulnerable adults can be made in any format, but once received, will be refined using the **Concern or Incident Report Form**, so it is encouraged that this form is used for the initial complaint where possible.

The complaint is to be forwarded to a Protection Information Officer. This could be someone designated to safeguarding within the club, regional organisation, or at Tennis NZ. You should contact your tennis Association, Region, or Tennis NZ to find out where to direct a complaint.

Complaints will be progressed by the Protection Information Officer in accordance with the TPPP, and the Protection Information Officer will engage with relevant NZTEs as appropriate.

Full details of the Complaints, Hearings and Appeals process can be found in Part IV of the TPPP (pages 22-31)