

APPENDIX 9

BULLYING POLICY

Parks Tennis Ireland has a Code of Conduct for Young People which includes a section stating:-
Never use unfair or bullying tactics to gain advantage on or off the court
Never use bullying tactics to isolate another player

Parks Tennis Ireland is aware of the potential for bullying behavior to take place within the organisation. This Appendix sets out policy on bullying, the supports to be put in place to support the victims of bullying and the procedures to be followed if incidents occur.

Bullying or Behavioral Issues

1. When a complaint concerning this matter is received and Parks Tennis Ireland considers it should be investigated, the Programme Director brings it to the attention of the Leader coach at the venue in question. This Leader coach initially deals with the situation through:

- discovering from the coach in charge of the group whether this behaviour is a once-off situation or is ongoing
- speaking to the group and reminding them that there is a code of conduct which promotes the rights and dignity of each participant
- reminding the group that everyone has the right to enjoy themselves and nobody has the right to impinge on this

2. If a solution to the problem is not arrived at by this means, the following approach may be adopted.

The Children's Officer may speak with the parents of both children with a view to reaching an amicable solution. The following may be suggested:

- both (sets of) parents in question speak to their children regarding the matter
- separation of the children in question within the class structure
- placing the children in separate classes

3.(a) There is also a written Parks Tennis Ireland *Code of Behaviour*, which may be invoked if the above measures fail to resolve the situation.

(b) As a final course of action, Parks Tennis Ireland may have no option but to refer to the Tennis Ireland template for Disciplinary and Complaints Procedures.

The undertaking to abide by and support the Organisation's Child Protection Policy given by the parent/legal guardian of participating children when registering them for a coaching programme, is deemed to be an agreement on the part of the child to abide by this Code of Conduct.

What is Bullying?

Bullying is defined by the Department of Education and Skills guidelines as unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.

- All forms of bullying will be addressed.
- Everybody in the organisation has a responsibility to work together to stop bullying.
- Bullying can include online as well as offline behaviour.
- Bullying can include:
 - Physical pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching etc...
 - Name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing and emotional torment through ridicule, humiliation or the continual ignoring of individuals.
 - Posting of derogatory or abusive comments, videos or images on social network sites.
 - Racial taunts, graffiti, gestures, sectarianism, sexual comments, suggestions or behaviour.
 - Unwanted physical contact.
 - Children with a disability, from ethnic minorities, young people who are gay or lesbian, or those with learning difficulties are more vulnerable to this form of abuse and are more likely to be targeted.

Parks Tennis Ireland will:

- Recognise its duty of care and responsibility to safeguard all participants from harm.
- Promote and implement this anti-bullying policy in addition to our safeguarding policy and procedures.
- Seek to ensure that bullying behaviour is not accepted or condoned.
- Require all members of the organisation to be given information about, and sign up to, this policy.
- Take action to investigate and respond to any alleged incidents of bullying.
- Encourage and facilitate children and young people to play an active part in developing and adopting a code of conduct to address bullying.
- Ensure that coaches are given access to information, guidance and/or training on bullying.

Each participant, coach, volunteer or official will:

- Respect every child’s need for, and rights to, a play environment where safety, security, praise, recognition and opportunity for taking responsibility are available.
- Respect the feelings and views of others.
- Recognise that everyone is important and that our differences make each of us special and should be valued.
- Show appreciation of others by acknowledging individual qualities, contributions and progress.
- Be committed to the early identification of bullying, and prompt and collective action to deal with it.
- Ensure safety by having rules and practices carefully explained and displayed for all to see.
- Report incidents of bullying they see to the club children’s officer – by doing nothing you are condoning bullying.

Support to the child:

- Children should know who will listen to and support them.
- Systems should be established to open the door to children wishing to talk about bullying or any other issue that affects them.
- Potential barriers to talking (including those associated with a child’s disability or impairment) need to be identified and addressed at the outset to enable children to approach adults for help.
- Children should have access to Helpline numbers.
- Anyone who reports an incident of bullying will be listened to carefully and be supported.
- Any reported incident of bullying will be investigated objectively and will involve listening carefully to all those involved.
- Children being bullied will be supported and assistance given to uphold their right to play and live in a safe environment which allows their healthy development.
- Those who bully will be supported and encouraged to stop bullying.
- Sanctions for those bullying others that involves long periods of isolation, or which diminish and make individuals look or feel foolish in front of others, will be avoided.

Support to the parents/guardians:

- Parents/guardians should be advised on the organisation’s bullying policy and practice.
- Any incident of bullying will be discussed with the child’s parent(s)/carers.
- Parents will be consulted on action to be taken (for both victim and bully) and agreements made as to what action should be taken.
- Information and advice on coping with bullying will be made available.
- Support should be offered to the parent(s) including information on other agencies or support lines.

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