

What to Ask - A parent's guide to finding a safe sports club for your child?



1. Is the club affiliated to any sports governing body and/or club accreditation scheme?

Clubs who are affiliated and have achieved a certain level of accreditation (e.g. ClubMark) have already had to evidence their commitment to creating a safe and inclusive environment for children and young people. Where clubs are affiliated to a national body parents and carers can also be reassured that any concerns they feel have not been addressed satisfactorily at the club can also be taken to the lead safeguarding officer for the national body for further advice.

2. Who can you contact at the club if you or your child have a concern?

All clubs should have an identified person who leads on safeguarding within the club. This person may be called a Safeguarding Officer, A Wellbeing Lead, A Child Protection Officer of similar and their role is to oversee the implementation of all safeguarding measures at the club and to listen and advise on any concerns that emerge. This person should be made known to all club members and their contact info widely accessible.

3. Does the club have an up to date safeguarding policy in place?

All clubs should have a child wellbeing and protection policy in place which contains clear procedures for dealing with poor practice complaints or concerns about risks of abuse. You should be given a copy when you sign your child up or advised how you can access the policy online. This policy should have been written or reviewed in the last 3 years.

4. Does the club have a code of conduct in place for coaches / volunteers / children / parents?

All clubs should have a written code of conduct showing what is required of coaches, volunteers and participants (including children

and their families). This document should evidence the clubs commitment to addressing poor coaching practice, bullying, shouting, racism, sexism or any other kind of oppressive behaviour. Any unacceptable behaviour should be challenged and dealt with in a professional manner by the club or their affiliated body.

5. Does the club follow safe recruitment procedures for all their coaches and volunteers such as PVG checks, references, induction processes?

All clubs should have taken all necessary measures to ensure their coaches and volunteers are the right people to be working with children and young people. These processes should include interviews, references and PVG checks – often known as police background checks – for eligible coaches/volunteers working with children. Coaches and volunteers should also undertake appropriate safeguarding training and refresh this regularly. ▶▶



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6. Does the club encourage parental involvement?

All clubs should welcome parents and carers who want to get involved and should see the value that this brings for the children and young people too. Clubs may look for parents to participate alongside their child, to spectate and cheer on their child from the side-lines or to take up a volunteer role within the club. Clubs who adopt a no parents observing policy are not operating within best practice and should be challenged as to the reasons for this.

7. Do the coaches all have an up to date coaching qualification and/or licence?

All clubs should only operate using coaches with appropriate recognised qualifications. These qualifications are evidence that the coach is suitably qualified and have the technical competence in the sport/activity to deliver it at that level. Some sports also licence their coaches. Such licencing schemes usually require coaches to

evidence that their coaching qualification, safeguarding and first aid training and other key areas are up to date so can be a good way of knowing that your coaching team are regularly updating their knowledge and practice.

8. Does the club operate within a safe environment?

Find out a little about how the club operate to ensure that they are operating in a safe way. Ask about things like ratios of adults to children and compare this to the recommended ratios for that sport. You can do this by referring to the governing body or organisation responsible for the sport. It is important to identify that the organisation ensures that no staff/volunteer members are left alone and isolated when in charge of the young people. Also check out their procedures around issuing medicines or first aid, do they have a procedure for recording accidents and injuries and does the environment look safe and free from obvious hazards or dangers.

9. Do the club ask for parental consent and emergency contact details?

As part of your child's registration, a safe club should ask you to complete a parental consent form? This should ask for emergency contact information, key medical information (any medication, allergies, etc.) and whether there are any other issues the club needs to know about in order to help your child get the most out of their participation.



10. What are the boundaries around club relationships and communication with children and young people?

All clubs should have clear guidelines about appropriate relationships and social activities between coaches, volunteers, participating young people and their families. They should also have clear guidance for all about how the club will/will not communicate with participants. It is not acceptable for coaches to directly contact young people via personal social media accounts or phone numbers and a safe club will use alternative methods to ensure everyone is protected. Find out who in the club you can speak to if you have concerns about boundaries not being observed.

You can find help, advice and resources at:
www.safeguardingsport.org.uk



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