

GolfWA Guidelines for Working with Children

Purpose

As a focal point in leadership of golf in Western Australia, GolfWA plays an important role in promoting and developing golf as a sport to be enjoyed by children, defined as anyone under the age of 18.

These guidelines are GolfWA's best practice view on the supervision or conduct of activities for children, to ensure that GolfWA representatives are protected from risk and the children are able to enjoy the activity in a well supervised and safe environment.

This document is required reading for any GolfWA representatives (defined as employees, board members, coaches, officials, volunteers) who provide services directed towards children or the conduct of activities involving children. It also applies to 'external providers' who may be engaged to provide services for, or on behalf of, the GolfWA that are directed towards children, or the conduct of activities involving children.

Maintain appropriate boundaries

GolfWA representatives or external providers in positions of authority need to maintain appropriate boundaries with children present at any GolfWA activity/event.

Physical boundaries

Seek to minimise physical contact, physical contact with players/participants should only be to:

- develop sport skills.
- prevent, respond to an injury.
- treat an injury if qualified.
- give sports massage if qualified.

and if physical contact is necessary, it should be within sight of others at all times.

Emotional and verbal boundaries

- use positive feedback on *performance*, not negative feedback about the *person*.
- be encouraging and avoid putdowns.
- use drills to develop skills or fitness, not as punishment

Social boundaries

- attend sport-related events such as sponsorship and fundraising events, celebrations and club meetings but do not socialise with athletes outside sporting functions.
- keep any mobile, email, internet or social media contact pertinent to GolfWA related activities.

Avoid being alone with a child

To protect both yourself and a child from risk:

- do not isolate yourself and a child, and avoid being alone with any particular child.
- if a child approaches you and wants to talk to you privately about a matter, do so in an open area and in the sight of other adults.
- before going into change rooms knock or announce that you are entering, or at least have one other adult present when in a change room with children.

Sexual boundaries

- do not have sexual relationships with athletes you are supervising or coaching.
- do not touch athletes in any ways likely to make them feel uncomfortable, respect their private space.

Maintaining control

Avoid losing your temper. Adopt positive language and behaviour rather than bad or aggressive language that could intimidate a child or set a poor example.

Ways to assist with maintaining control are:

- set up basic rules and acceptable conduct at the beginning of an activity.
- engage with the children through positive messages and answer questions politely.
- be fair and inclusive.
- have a 'time out' area for children who are not behaving with an agreed simple gesture such as a "T" sign with the hands, to let children know they need to go to the time out area for 2 minutes.
- Have a card system (yellow = timeout, red = sit out session) or some other agreed escalation for bad behaviour and avoid verbal agitation, i.e. shouting which can disrupt/distress the other children.

Parents

Parents need to be responsible for the collection of their children from activities and events. The following actions can help:

- Specify drop-off/collection points where children won't be alone, e.g. the Pro Shop, Registration Desk, Club Lounge on entry/registrations forms.
- Have an emergency contact register for activities/events and ensure access to a phone during the activity/event.
- Let children and parents/guardians know approximate finishing times and when they can expect their child to be ready for collection, e.g. post presentations. Remind them GolfWA is not responsible for transport if they are delayed.
- Children should not be left to wait alone for collection, advise them to wait in an area where others are present, ideally a specified collection point such as the Pro Shop or Club Lounge.
- Avoid the risk of being alone with a child by having a parent or guardian assist you with activities, ask that "parent volunteer" to wait until all children apart from their own have left.
- A GolfWA representative must remain until all children have departed/been collected, contact absent parents/guardians as necessary.

Transporting players, participants, officials

Ideally all players/participants should have their own transportation to and from GolfWA activities or events. You should only provide transportation when:

- the driver is properly licensed to carry passengers.
- other players/participants/parents/guardians are in the vehicle.
- the ride has been approved in writing by parents/guardians.
- the ride is directly to or from GolfWA activities or events.

Signed authorisation by the parents/guardians should be sought prior to any activity/event where transportation is required to, from or during that activity/event.

GolfWA representatives should advise someone when they are transporting children, including who is being transported, departure time and expected time of arrival.

Overnight and away trips

In Western Australia all trip personnel (including parent volunteers, excluding under 18 volunteers) must have a Working With Children clearance. There should always be appropriate levels of supervision. The general rule of thumb is a minimum of two staff with a ratio of 1:8, although this can vary between 1:4 and 1:12 and depends upon a number of other factors. Other considerations include:

- always have an emergency contact list of local emergency services and parents/guardians and access to a phone.
- if you are taking a mixed team group away there should be at least one woman accompanying the group.
- if you are taking an all girls group away there must be at least one woman accompanying the group.
- at least one adult on the trip should have a current first aid certificate.
- adults should not share rooms with children.
- ensure emergency procedures are in place to enable any supervising adult to respond to any alarm raised by a child (more than one adult should respond).

Qualified personnel should attend to injuries

Only personnel who are qualified in administering first aid or treating sports injuries should attempt to treat an injury. Personnel should avoid treating injuries out of sight of others. Other considerations include:

- the comfort level and dignity of the player/participant should always be the priority and personnel should try to take into account cultural sensitivities.
- only uncover the injured area, or drape something of the private parts of the player/participant.
- always report to parents/guardians any injuries incurred and any treatment provided, and document an incident via a GolfWA injury register. Basic information about the time and date of the injury, where it occurred, the nature of the injury, the treatment provided and by whom, and whether further medical attention was required/recommended, must be logged.
- if necessary, seek medical attention as soon as possible or recommend that parents seek medical attention.

GolfWA has a blood rules policy, if anyone suffers a bleeding wound that cannot be controlled, or blood contaminated clothing/equipment cannot be removed/cleansed in situ, then they must retire from the activity or event.

Support for participants with disabilities

It is important that participants with disabilities have the same opportunities to be involved in sport and recreation activities as able bodied participants. This may require, where reasonable, the modification of games, equipment and rules. Provision of specialist support, appropriate transport, or training for those assisting with matters such as lifting and toileting should be considered. Because participants with disabilities may be more vulnerable to abuse or neglect, clubs and organisations may need to take additional steps to ensure their safety. Advice can be obtained from the relevant disabled sporting association.

Photography guidelines

Images of children can be used inappropriately or illegally. GolfWA requires that representatives, individuals and associations, wherever possible, obtain permission from a child's parent/guardian before taking an image of a child that is not their own and ensure that the parent knows the way the image will be used.

GolfWA requires the privacy of others to be respected and disallow the use of camera phones, videos and cameras inside changing areas, showers and toilets.

If GolfWA uses an image of a child it will avoid naming or identifying the child or it will, wherever possible, avoid using both the first name and surname. We will not display personal information such as residential address, email address or telephone numbers without gaining consent from the parent/guardian. We will not display information about hobbies, likes/dislikes, school, etc as this information can be used as grooming tools by paedophiles or other persons. We must only use appropriate images of a child, relevant to our sport and ensure that the child is suitably clothed in a manner that promotes the sport, displays its successes, etc. Where possible seek permission to use these images. GolfWA requires our members, member associations and clubs to do likewise.

GolfWA representatives should be aware that some people visit sporting events to take inappropriate photographs or video footage of children. You need to be alert to this possibility and report any concerns immediately to a responsible person, e.g. a GolfWA Child Safety Officer or a club official.

Relevant References:

GolfWA Child Safety Policy
Western Australian Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004
Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Regulations 2005
GolfWA Member Protection Policy