



FIRST STEPS TO SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN **CLUBS**



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SAFER
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FIRST STEPS TO SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN CLUBS

There is little doubt the importance a sporting club plays in building stronger, healthier, happier and safer communities. As part of this responsibility, it is crucial that clubs publicly demonstrate their commitment to child safety. To help you create a child-safe environment, we have compiled these five first steps to safeguarding children.

STEP ONE GET THE FACTS

An Australian research study conducted by Save the Children in 2019 found that one child is physically, emotionally or sexually abused every 16 minutes.

That equates to 88 children every day and more than 32,000 children every year, usually by adults they have been taught to trust.

It's critical that we all play our part to ensure that Australian tennis is a sport where children can participate in child-safe and child-friendly environments.

STEP TWO CREATE A CHILD-SAFE CULTURE

Tennis Australia and our Member Associations are committed to providing child safe environments throughout our clubs, programs and tournaments. However, for this to be successful, the safety and wellbeing of children and young people from all forms of abuse is a shared responsibility for everyone including parents, families, clubs, officials, volunteers and coaches. Even though you may not be directly working with children, it's still important to be aware of child safety and call out anything that is unsafe or doesn't seem right. If you are concerned a child is being abused, or is at risk of abuse, you must contact the relevant authorities in your state or Tennis Australia's Integrity and Compliance Unit.

Concerns may include:

- ▶ Harm, abuse or exploitation of a child
- ▶ Potential risk of harm, abuse or exploitation of a child
- ▶ Breaches of the [Member Protection Policy](#) or [Safeguarding Children Code of Conduct](#).

STEP THREE APPOINT A MEMBER PROTECTION OFFICER

A Member Protection Information Officer (MPIO) plays an important role within your club and more widely within the sport of tennis including;

- ▶ Act as first point of contact for enquiries, concerns or complaints of harassment and abuse and any other inappropriate behaviour
- ▶ Listen, provide moral support and act as an impartial support person through the complaints process. Please note: MPIOs are impartial and do not mediate or investigate complaints.
- ▶ Provide information about TA's Member Protection Policy and the options available to resolve complaints
- ▶ Provide contact details for counselling or other referrals as appropriate or as requested.

If you are interested in appointing an MPIO, Play by the Rules offers a free online course that provides you with the information you need to be recognised as an MPIO. If you'd like further information or to find the MPIO free online course [click here](#).

It may be appropriate for a club and a coaching businesses to share an MPIO. Talk to your coach and club committee to see if this works for you.



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STEP FOUR TALK ABOUT CHILD SAFETY

As a tennis club, you play a crucial role in engaging parents and children and encouraging the expected behaviours that directly contribute to a child-safe culture. As part of this responsibility, it is important to promote your commitment to child safety – including information about who your appointed MPIO is. Tennis Australia recommends adopting a commitment statement which promotes your Club's child safety position to staff, volunteers, children, families and the community.

Tennis Australia's commitment to child-safety:

'Tennis Australia has a zero-tolerance approach to any form of child abuse and is committed to ensuring the sport of tennis is a safe and friendly environment for children and young people. It is imperative that children and young people who access our activities, programs, events or services feel safe and supported.'

You can also download a commitment to safeguarding children poster [here](#).



STEP FIVE SCREENING OF COACHES AND VOLUNTEERS

Screening of your volunteers is one tool clubs can use to reduce the risk of child abuse.

Tennis Australia recommends you consider the following processes before appointing a volunteer:

- ▶ Clearly articulate their roles and responsibilities.
- ▶ Understand why the person wants to work in your business, in particular with children.
- ▶ Undertake appropriate screening to avoid recruiting people who are not suitable (Working with Children Check).
- ▶ Carry out at least two reference checks, including their current or most recent supervisor.
- ▶ Have a probationary period to ensure your volunteer's values and behaviours are consistent with your expectations.
- ▶ Actively monitor and observe your new coaches and their interaction with children, regularly provide feedback and immediately raise matters of concern.

Finally, lead by example and model positive, supportive and appropriate child safe behaviours which will allow staff to learn from you. Support your team to understand child safety and how to create a safe and inclusive environment for children.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Head to Bounce or <https://www.tennis.com.au/childsaf>

If you have any questions regarding the content please contact integrity@tennis.com.au.