

## **Guidelines on Physical Contact.**

Many sports require a degree of physical contact between sports staff and children or young people, e.g. supporting and shaping a gymnast is an essential part of coaching gymnastics in that it helps the gymnast to understand shapes, movement patterns and complex skills but also reduces the risk of injury due to a fall or error in performance.

Coaches and staff may need to use it in a few sports to instruct, encourage, protect or comfort and the governing body will advise. Any such support should not involve over handling.

Supporting techniques must not inhibit performance, and any physical contact should not be invasive of sensitive areas of the body.

Physical contact during sport should always be intended to meet the child's needs, NOT the adult's. The adult should only use physical contact if their aim is to:

- develop sports skills or techniques;
- treat an injury;
- prevent an injury;
- meet the requirements of the sport.

The adult should explain the reason for the physical contact to the child. Unless the situation is an emergency, the adult should ask the child for permission.

It is also good practice to explain and provide some written guidance for the particular sport to new participants and parents that some physical contact will be required but that only appropriate non-invasive techniques should be used.

If a child or parent has any concerns, they should be raised them with the safeguarding lead. In any circumstance where abuse is suspected reporting procedures should be followed. Children should be encouraged to voice concerns they have if any physical contact makes them feel uncomfortable or threatened.

The contact should not involve touching genital areas, buttocks or breasts or any other part of the body that might cause the child distress or embarrassment. Physical contact should not take place

in secret or out of sight of others but only in an open or public environment.

Infrequent non-intentional physical contact can arise out of error on the performer or coach's part. Such situations should not be ignored and should be acknowledged through an apology to the child and reported to the Club Welfare Officer or head coach and parents.

All injuries should be fully recorded by staff.

