

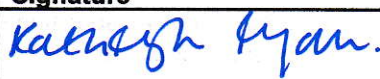




Blackrock Bowling and Tennis Club
Tennis Club – Junior Section
Safeguarding Policy – January 2025

Contents

1. Purpose of Policy
2. Values and Culture
3. Safeguarding Officers and Designated Liaison Person
4. Supervision Policy
5. Travel and Away Trip Policy
6. Registration, Drop Outs and Club Transfers
7. Garda Vetting Policy
8. Safeguarding Training
9. Social Media and Mobile Phones
10. Physical Contact
11. How to raise a Safeguarding concern
12. Communications

Appendix 1 - Related documents and Policies

Document History

Version	Date	Authors	Signature
1.0	01 January 2025	Kathryn Ryan Safeguarding Officer	
		Emmett Higgins Safeguarding Officer Mens Captain	
Approver	Signature	Approver	Signature
Nigel Healy Chair BBTC		Sally Finlay Ladies Captain	
Michael Harty Secretary Tennis Section			

1. Purpose of Policy

The policy sets out the Blackrock Bowling and Tennis Club, Tennis Section ('the Club') policies and procedures related to Child Safeguarding.

It is prepared in accordance with the guidance of Tennis Ireland (the governing body for tennis in Ireland) on Child Safeguarding.

As a provider of service to young people, the Club has obligations to:

1. To keep children safe from harm while they are using the service and promote the paramount principle that the welfare of the child is core
2. To carry out a risk assessment to identify whether a child or young person could be harmed while using the service (*see current Risk Assessment*)
3. To develop a Child Safeguarding Statement which must include both the written risk assessment and the procedures that are in place to appoint a relevant person to be the first point of contact in respect of the organisation/clubs Child Safeguarding (*see current Child Safeguarding Statement*).

This policy should be read in conjunction other related policies as specified in Appendix 1.

2. Values and Culture

A central goal for all involved in children's tennis in the Club is to provide a safe, positive and nurturing environment where children can develop and enhance their physical and social skills.

We promote a child centred ethos supports identifying and eliminating practices that impact negatively on safe and enjoyable participation in children's tennis.

We put in place structures which enable members (parents and children) to address issues and concerns promptly, confidentially and in line with available guidance.

3. Safeguarding Officers and Designated Liaison Person

The Club has two **Safeguarding Officers** to represent the interests of children members and conduct other duties as specified under applicable guidance e.g. carrying out risk assessments, updating relevant documents and communicating with parents and young people.

Safeguarding Officers are appointed by the Junior Committee of the Club and are typically parents of members who have demonstrated a commitment to the Club through volunteering or other activities and are known to children and parents of the Club. They may also hold a role in the Senior Tennis Committee or other committees of BBTC.

One of the Children's Officers sits on the Club's Committee to report on Safeguarding.

BBTC Children's Officers have the support of the Club Committee in the performance of their role. officers. The Club Committee are also responsible for the recruitment of replacement Children's Officers in the event of either one of the Officers resigning from his or her post.

The Safeguarding Officers are the first point of contact for staff members, members, parents, children or volunteers to speak with in relation to any safeguarding matter connected with the Club.

The current Safeguarding Officers are:

Kathryn Matthews – 086 858 3276

Emmet Higgins - 086 839 7742

email childsafety@blackrockbtc.com

See also Section 11; How to raise a Safeguarding concern

The Club has appointed a **Designated Liaison Person (DLP)**. The DLP is available (along with the Safeguarding Officers) as a resource for any staff member, member, parent, young person or volunteer who has safeguarding concerns. The DLP will liaise with outside agencies e.g. Tusla.

The DLP is appointed by the Board of the BBTC. He/she is a person who has demonstrated a commitment to the Club, has a good understanding of Safeguarding issues and processes and is suitable and available to engage with Statutory Agencies and parties who may be involved in a Safeguarding matter.

The DLP is responsible for ensuring that the reporting procedures within the Club are followed, so that safeguarding issues are referred promptly to Tusla, if appropriate.

The current Designated Liaison Person is:

Robert Herron – 087 2597944

4. Supervision Policy

Club activities

The Club's policy is to have more than one adult present for Club activities. This will help to ensure the safety of the children as well as protect adults. The Club facilitates the supervision of Club activities such as group coaching, matches (home and away) and Club social events. i.e. events organised by the Junior Committee, Underage Managers, BBTC or as part of the Club coaching programme.

Parents must arrange for the supervision of independently arranged private coaching and recreational activities arranged directly between children or parents.

Adult / Child Ratios:

1. Will depend on the nature of the activity, the age of the participants and any special needs of the group. A general guide used by the Club is 1:8 for 12 years of age and under, 1:10 for 13 years of age and over.
2. For trips away the Club applies a ratio 1:6
3. There should be at least one adult of each gender with mixed parties.

Adults should avoid being left alone with children, if a leader needs to talk separately to a participant this should be done in an open environment, in view of others.

Parents are asked to ensure prompt collection / departure of children from coaching sessions.

Parents may be requested to be present at Club activities to support Safeguarding compliance.

Changing Rooms

Having regard to the age profile of the Club members and the nature of Club activities for younger children, the policy of the Club is not to require adult changing room supervision.

Children under the age of 12 should attend the Club "court ready".

All children should be able to use bathroom facilities independently.

The Club policy is that children are not generally permitted to use shower facilities in either the Pavilion or the Club House. Parents are requested to contact the Safeguarding Officer in advance if use of shower facilities is required due to child's schedule.

If shower facilities are required to be available to children during a Club tournament, a supervision plan will be put in place to facilitate this.

CCTV

The use of CCTV is a positive step from a safeguarding perspective.

The Club has CCTV in operation in various locations across the premises.

From a safeguarding perspective, footage from CCTV may be used by the Club for investigating and managing incidents or misbehaviour.

Management of personal data collected from the CCTV system is set out in the Club Data Privacy policy.

5. Travel and Away Trip Policy

Overnight Trips and Hosting of Players

The Club does not generally conduct overnight trips. If an overnight trip does take place, the Club follows the applicable Tennis Ireland policy.

The Club does not generally facilitate the hosting of young players by members of the Club or having Club members hosted in other locations. If hosting does take place, the Club follows the applicable Tennis Ireland policy

Away Matches

The Club's policy is that the level of supervision for away matches will be no more than 6 children per adult. Where practicable the Club will have at least one adult of each gender with mixed groups.

The Club requires adults who regularly travel to away matches to complete the Club garda vetting process and Safeguarding 1 training (*see below*).

One of the supervising adults for an away match will be appointed as Team Manager. He/she will have overall responsibility for the conduct of all members of the team (including adult supervisors).

Written permission of parents/guardians allowing their child/children to take part is obtained for all away matches, by way of the relevant BBTC WhatsApp channel.

Parents/guardians are required to notify and discuss with any supervising adult of any medical/special needs of the child (including permission to treat the child). Parents/guardians will be aware of the need not to place a supervising adult in a medical situation which they are not appropriately skilled to manage.

Children will be reminded of their obligation to abide by the Club's relevant Code of Conduct.

General Requirements

Young players should always be under reasonable supervision and should never leave the venue or go unsupervised.

In the event of an occurrence Accident and/or Incident Reports should be completed by the Group Leader/Team Manager.

Transporting Young People

The Club could not operate without the goodwill of volunteers and parents ensuring that children are transported to events and returned home in a private car.

Occasionally, it is unavoidable for a coach, volunteer or parent to transport a young person by themselves. However, this should be avoided if at all possible and should only take place with the prior agreement of the young person's parent / guardian.

All travel arrangements relating to children should be agreed by the driver with the parent / guardian.

Drivers must have valid driving licence and insurance and must consider the need for booster seats.

6. Registration, Drop Outs and Club Transfers

Loss of Club members and adult transfers relating to the Senior Club is monitored.

Any unusual or unexpected dropout or club transfer of children will be reviewed by the Safeguarding Officer and the Junior Chair.

If any concerns regarding a child or children's welfare are identified this will be addressed in accordance with the Club's Reporting policy.

7. Social Media and Mobile Phones

Social Media

The Club does not have a social media presence. All Club communications to members are via approved Club communications channels:

- WhatsApp communities and Chats (not available to children)
- BBTC Website (static, maintained by Club staff)
- Emails from blackrockbtc domain (not available to children)

External communications regarding Club activities are channelled through the Club chair.

Adults who have roles in the Club (see table in Safeguarding) should not have contact with children on social media platforms and should decline "friend" requests from children at the Club.

Children or young people may 'follow' Club leaders on social media so leaders should make sure any content they post is appropriate.

Mobile Phones

It is the policy of the Club that all communications relating to Club activities are made to parents/guardians. There are no communications on Club activities from an adult to the child.

The Club recognises that children will have access to and use their mobile phones at the Club. Children should not use their mobile phone in a manner which could breach the Club Code of Conduct. Particular attention is drawn to the Code of Conduct provisions on privacy and bullying.

Parents should ensure that children follow good phone etiquette at the Club, limiting phone use at the Club where possible. The Club emphasises the social and "face-to face" nature of our environment which supports children's mental and social wellbeing.

See also Photography and Use of Imagery Policy

8. Physical Contact

The Club follows the principles set out by Tennis Ireland regarding physical contact. This document sets out some key guidelines, however, additional more detailed guidance is available in the Tennis Ireland material.

Extracts from Tennis Ireland guideline

When is physical contact appropriate in Tennis?

Contact should be determined by the age and developmental stage of the participant - Don't do something that a child can do for themselves. Physical contact between adults and children in sport should take place only when necessary to:

- *Develop tennis skills or techniques.*
- *Treat an injury.*
- *Prevent an injury or accident from occurring.*
- *Meet the requirements of the sport.*
- *Comfort a distressed child or to celebrate their success.*

Unless the situation is an emergency, the adult should ask the child for permission, for example to aid the demonstration a specific tennis technique.

Physical contact should always take place in an open or public environment and not take place in secret or out of sight of others.

Well intentioned gestures such as putting a hand on the shoulder or arm, can, if repeated regularly, lead to the possibility of questions being raised by observers. As a general principle adults in positions of responsibility should not make gratuitous or unnecessary physical contact with children and young people. Resistance from a child should be respected.

What about children who need specific assistance due to disability or injury?

In the case of a young person with a disability specific support or assistance may be required.

(end of extracts)

The Club requests that in cases of disability or injury, the parents liaise with the Safeguarding Officer to assess how the child can be supported, having regard to health and safety, the facilities available at the Club and overall Safeguarding requirements.

9. How to raise a Safeguarding concern

This policy relates to Safeguarding concerns. Issues or complaints unrelated to safeguarding matters are managed through the Complaints process

All children should know that that they can speak safely to the Safeguarding Officers and the DLP on any matter relating to their safety or well-being at the Club.

Any person who has a Safeguarding concern relating to the Club can raise this in the following ways:

- Contact the Safeguarding Officers -Kathryn Matthews 086 8583 276 or Emmett Higgins 086 839 7742
- Contact the DLP Robert Herron – 087 2597944
- Email either-
~~info@blackrockbtc.com~~
● **info@blackrockbtc.com**
- Contact Tusla 01- 921 3400
- Contact An Garda Síochána Blackrock – 01 666 5200

Concerns may also be raised to underage managers or any member of the Club Board, who will bring the matter to the attention of the Safeguarding Officer.

Once the concern is reported to the Safeguarding Officers or the DLP, the DLP in consultation with the person who raised the concern, will decide if reasonable grounds for concern exist.

If reasonable grounds for concern exist, the DLP will report to a Tusla duty social worker.

If the DLP decides not to report a concern to Tusla, the following steps will be taken:

- The reasons for not reporting should be recorded.
- Any actions taken because of the concern should be recorded.
- The employee or coach/volunteer who raised the concern should be given a clear written explanation of the reasons why the concern is not being reported to Tusla.
- The employee or coach/volunteer should be advised that if they remain concerned about the situation, they are free to make a report to Tusla or An Garda Síochána.

Although the Club's accountability relates to Club activities, assistance will be provided for the reporting of safeguarding issues which occur outside of the Club.

10. Garda Vetting Policy

The following people / roles are required to complete (and renew) the Club Garda vetting process

- Coaches
- Assistants to Coaches
- Safeguarding Officer
- Junior Chair and Junior Committee
- Club Team Managers (if not on the Junior Committee)
- Hitting Partners who operate within the Club with children
- DLP

On occasion, a parent or volunteer who is actively involved in the Club e.g. supervising / driving may be requested by the Safeguarding Officer to complete Garda Vetting process.

Please contact the Safeguarding Officer for completion of the Garda vetting forms (available from Tennis Ireland website). Those who participate in the above roles are expected to co-operate with Club requests to complete Garda Vetting, as administrated by the Safeguarding Officer.

Tennis Ireland operates the relevant Garda vetting process and full details are available on the Tennis Ireland website.

Documents evidencing compliance with the Garda vetting process are retained by the Club.

There is a small fee for Garda vetting process, which will be re-imbursed by the Club.

11. Safeguarding Training

The table below sets out the applicable training requirements for roles within the Club.

Role / Training	Safeguarding 1 / refresher	Safeguarding 2	Safeguarding 3
Coaches	Required		
Assistants to Coaches	Required		
Safeguarding Officer	Required	Required	
Junior Chair and Junior Committee	Required		

Club Team Managers (if not on the Junior Committee)	Required		
Transition Year Students	Required		
Hitting Partners who operate within the Club with children	Required		
DLP	Required		Required

On occasion, a parent or volunteer who is actively involved in the Club e.g. supervising / driving may be requested by the Safeguarding Officer to complete Safeguarding 1 Training.

Safeguarding training is provided, on line, by local sports partnerships organisations on a regular basis. Please contact the Safeguarding Officers if support is needed to access these.

There is a small fee for attending safeguarding trainings, which will be reimbursed by the Club.

Documents evidencing completion of training should be provided to the Safeguarding Officer and will be retained by the Club.

Additional, free, online training and information is available on the Tusla website.

12. Recordkeeping

This policy relates only to records created for the purpose of documenting or managing a Safeguarding concern, allegations and disclosures relating to the Club.

The Club may consult with Statutory Agencies or external advisors to ensure the correct creation and management of records subject under this policy.

This policy does not relate to records created for the purpose of compliance with applicable Safeguarding and / or Tennis Ireland guidance e.g. garda vetting documentation, risk assessment.

The Club has prepared a template form for the recording of any Safeguarding concerns, allegations and disclosures. This template form is used by the Safeguarding Officer and the DLP.

1. Records shall be factual and include details of contacts, consultations and any actions taken.
2. The Club shall comply with the general requirements that all agencies dealing with children must cooperate in the sharing of records with the statutory authorities where a child protection or welfare issue arises.
3. Records on child protection concerns, allegations and disclosures are kept securely and safely by the Club. The DLP, in conjunction with BBTC President, may determine that original records shall be retained by an external advisor, such as a solicitor, to ensure confidentiality.
4. Records shall only be used for the purpose for which they are intended.
5. Records shall be shared on a need-to-know basis in the best interests of the child/young person.
6. Records may be accessed only by the Designated Liaison Person and any person whom he deems requires access to that record.
7. The period of retention of records created by the Club shall be as specified by the Statutory Agency in each case.
8. Records created under this policy shall be updated as required and reviewed regularly by the Designated Liaison Person (DLP).

13. Communications

The Club has a policy of ensuring awareness of Safeguarding resources and requirements to members. The Table below sets out the communications measures.

Artefact/ Medium	Website	Pavilion Notice Board	WhatsApp	Email
Safeguarding Officer Information	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
DLP Information	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Safeguarding Policy	Yes	Yes	Link provided	Yes
Risk Assessment and Safety Statement	Yes	Yes	Link Provided	Yes
Code of Conduct	Yes	Yes	Link Provided	Yes

Appendix 1 – List of relevant Club documents and policies

1. **Safeguarding Risk Assessment and Safety Statement**
2. **Code of Conduct for Junior Members**
3. **Missing Child Policy**
4. **Photography and Use of Images Policy**
5. **Coach Recruitment and Education Policy**