



CHILD SAFE STANDARDS

GUIDELINES FOR PHYSICAL CONTACT WHEN WORKING WITH CHILDREN

Version Control

Document Name:	HVCT Child Safe Guidelines for physical contact when working with children
Prepared by:	HVCT Vice President & Treasurer
Endorsed by:	HVCT Committee
Date Endorsed:	11th January 2023
Version:	2022:01
Purpose of Document:	This guide was written to guide all persons working with Children or Young People at HVCT as to necessary, appropriate and inappropriate physical contact with children
Actions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All members of the HVCT community have access to this guide.• All members acknowledge they have read, understand.
Other relevant resources:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Child Safe Policy• Child Safe Code of Conduct• Image use• Reporting & Responding• eSafety• Recruitment & Screening• Guide for Parents & Guardians• Guide for Teens
Review Date:	11th January 2024



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GUIDELINES FOR PHYSICAL CONTACT
WHEN WORKING WITH CHILDREN

Change History

Amendment Date	Version No.	Page No(s) replaced	Description of change

Distribution: 27/01/2023



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Guidelines for physical contact when working with children

There will be times when physical contact with children is necessary. Such contact should always be made in an appropriate manner. It is important to ensure that HVCT policies and practices are clearly understood and followed to create a child safe environment at our organisation. This includes outlining acceptable physical contact situations and practices, as well as strategies and techniques to limit unnecessary or inappropriate physical contact.

What physical contact is appropriate?

Creating a child safe environment does not mean ceasing all physical contact with children. However, strategies should be put in place to ensure that all physical contact that occurs is appropriate, related to the sport and only occurs when necessary. The requirements of sports can vary significantly and contact which is appropriate in one sport may not be appropriate for another. However, it is widely recognised that in some situations appropriate physical contact is required to support an athlete or participant. These include:

- To provide guidance to develop a particular skill;
- To prevent an injury;
- To administer first aid or attending to an injured or unwell child;
- Assisting a child with a disability; or
- Comforting a child if they are in distress.

Communication of policies and codes of conduct are key tools to aid the development of a child safe culture. HVCT identifies the type(s) of situations in which physical contact may be necessary and appropriate in our sport. HVCT updates relevant policies, procedures, education materials and role descriptions



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accordingly and ensures that everyone is aware of their responsibilities in relation to physical contact with children. HVCT communicate this information through as many means possible including:

- Committee meetings;
- Social media channels;
- Newsletters;
- Website;
- Mobile based apps; and
- Coach updates.

When physical contact is appropriate and required – it should NOT be 1:1:

If physical contact is appropriate and required in a particular situation, wherever possible, that physical contact should occur

1. in view of the public;
2. in an open space; and
3. in clear sight of another coach or adult.

For clarity, avoid all situations where one adult and one child are left alone together.

How should appropriate and required physical contact be undertaken?

Coaches, assistants, and costume representatives should:

1. Always seek permission from the child to touch them prior to any contact occurring. For example, “Can I move your forearm to adjust your technique?”



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2. Be aware of and respect signs indicating the child is uncomfortable with physical contact. This may include limited eye contact or a step away from you.
3. Use words to accompany physical contact, explaining what you are doing and why.
4. Have a polite and respectful conversation with parents/guardians and children (especially teenagers) to ensure you are aware of any sensitivities specific to:
 - Children from diverse cultures; or
 - Children with a disability or medical condition.
5. If congratulating children, use non-intrusive contact such as a brief pat on the upper arm, upper back, high-five or hand shake.
6. Provide skill-teaching support to acceptable body regions such as the shoulders or upper back, providing it is in context for the sport and necessary for the skill or technique being demonstrated.
7. First aid services should only be provided by qualified personnel and:
 - a. in the case of first aid, only when necessary to treat illness or injury or during a life-threatening situation; and
 - b. in the case of massage, only when the masseur is formally engaged by your organisation or a child's parent(s)/guardian(s) for that specific service to be provided.
8. Physical restraint and intervention should only occur if there is a serious and imminent risk to an individual's safety. This may include reaching out to grab



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a child by the arm to move them away from a dangerous situation or holding a child so they don't fall to the floor and injure themselves.

9. If it is necessary to comfort a child in distress, do so in the presence of at least one other adult and in view of others. A more Senior Person at HVCT should be informed of situations in which children are or have been in distress and it should be logged with HVCT in an appropriate secure place. Where there is concern for a child's welfare or wellbeing, always designate an appropriate person to notify the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the situation and ensure that the wellbeing of the distressed child is monitored to identify any patterns of behaviour that may be of concern.

What is inappropriate physical contact with children?:

- Hugs, cuddles, tickling, initiating or permitting kissing exchanges or other intimate contact.
- Assisting children with uniform fit-out or changing of their clothes (unless you are a designated carer/helper of a child or young person or a person with a disability);
- Attending to injuries in isolated first-aid rooms without the presence of at least one other adult;
- Physical contact with private body parts; and
- Sitting a child on your knee.

Practical Strategies for creating a child safe culture

The following practical strategies may be used to assist your organisation in developing a child safe environment.



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Transport

The child safe standards do not seek to prevent shared transport, but to ensure that sporting organisations put practical strategies in place to provide a safe environment for children.

Transport strategies adopted by HVCT include:

- children and young adults are picked up from inside the hall.
- Information regarding collection of children – when, where and what to do if they are delayed - is displayed in HVCT Members Handbook and will be regularly communicated in our monthly newsletter and .
- A signed transport permission form to be organised at the start of the year and reviewed mid-year.

Try to avoid:

- Transporting a child unaccompanied; or
- Transporting a single child with adults who are related or in a relationship.

Social Events

Sporting organisations have social events for all sorts of reasons and as such, should develop appropriate strategies to ensure the environment at social events is child safe. Through the nature of sport many long lasting friendships are made. Both situations often lead to people attending birthday parties and celebrations outside of the environment of the sporting organisation. The child safe standards seek to ensure that reasonable and practical steps are put in place to maintain a child safe environment at all times.



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HVCT strategies for social events include:

- attendance and behaviour at our social events (i.e. trivia nights, awards functions, etc.) be of the highest standard.
- our Code of Conduct communicated via the HVCT Members Handbook expects behavioural expectations for communication or physical contact with people under the age of 18 do not change from club sporting activities to social events.
- request that adults (i.e. any adult performing activities relating to HVCT) only participate in club organised events (where practical) and refrain from socialising with the child participants in any capacity outside of events sanctioned by the sporting organisation.
- Where possible and reasonable, discourage personnel (i.e. staff, coaches, officials) from attending the home of children and their families for non-club related social gatherings. ?????
- Try to avoid:
 - Being alone with a child outside club sport environments; or
 - Children attending the private homes of any personnel from the sporting organisation.

Overnight or away trips

Overnight and away trips frequently happen within sport. For example, this may be necessary to attend a training camp, and competition. It is important we have rules for such situations and clearly outline expectations and acceptable behaviour.



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HVCT attempts to ensure that:

- Appropriate levels of supervision are adhered to at ALL times (i.e. ratio of children per adult).
- The gender mix of supervising adults is appropriate for the children participating.
- If staying overnight, practical options are explored so that adults and children do not sleep in the same room overnight (i.e. camps).
- At least one of the supervising adults attending a camp or competition has a current first aid qualification.

Discipline:

From time-to-time there may be a child taking part in a sporting activity who does not behave. Setting clear rules and expectations for everyone's behaviour will assist with the management of this, but not completely prevent it from happening.

Strategies your organisation may use include:

- Engage children in the development of codes of conduct or session expectations.
- Utilise a time-out area for children who are not behaving, in view of others (i.e. designated area on the sidelines).
- Adopt positive methods for managing challenging behaviour such as directing other children to move away from the situation and/or talking one on one to the child concerned.



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Do not:

- Physically restrain a child for poor behaviour i.e. by grabbing them by the arm; or
- Respond to poor behaviour from a child with poor or aggressive language.

First Aid:

HVCT has first-aid policies and strategies in place which are reviewed regularly. Injuries, while not pleasant and sometimes severe, can occur when children participate in sport.

HVCT first-aid plan documents:

- Who will be responsible for the provision of first-aid and where it will be undertaken in the normal course of events
- Who will be responsible for the provision of first-aid and where it will be undertaken when the club event is 'away.'
- Ensuring that the first-aid kit includes a blanket, sheet or similar to provide draping if required.
- Only exposing the injured part of a child's body (i.e. only remove a shoe and sock for an ankle injury) and using draping if needed.

Supporting Children with a Disability

Most children with a disability will have a 'plan' for managing toileting and other personal care needs. It is not likely that this assistance will be required from HVCT personnel however, should the situation arise it is important to manage this with



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consideration to the child's dignity and safety for the child and organisation personnel. An individual plan should be discussed with the parents of the child and documented.

Try to avoid:

Offering to assist with toileting or other personal care needs when there is a carer or parent present or where the assistance is not necessary. Over assisting and touching when providing assistance, particularly when assisting a child with a disability.