

Basketball and Child Protection – Physical Contact (Touching)



Board of Directors NSW Basketball Association

REVISED: 27 Jan. 06

The Basketball NSW Board is committed to ensuring, the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children is maintained at all times. Our aim is to promote a safe environment for all our children and to ensure that all participants in our sport are provided with the best possible experience.

All staff (paid, voluntary, permanent or casual) of Basketball NSW or its affiliate Associations are required to complete the "Consent Form" (Working with Children Check) Attachment 3 and the "Prohibited Employment Declaration"(Working with Children Check) Attachment 4. Failure to fill out these two forms will mean the applicant cannot work in a child related area.

This goes some way to introducing all those involved in the delivery of any form of instruction to an awareness of the requirements of the Child Protection legislation that now exists in this state.

Basketball NSW through its issuing of policy documents and its ongoing education program is trying to increase the importance and awareness of the need to keep children safe during their involvement in our sport.

As part of this ongoing education process it is necessary to develop the concept of the need for guidelines on 'physical contact' whilst being instructed in the different skills involved in basketball. The responsibilities of the different parties are:

The Association

The association is required register as an organisation that provides services to children and to have in place policies and procedures that implement the new Child Protection legislation. Additionally they need to appoint and advertise who their Child Protection Officer/s is/are.

The Coach

A coach needs to discuss openly with his players where and under what circumstances he/she will have physical contact. It is advisable to demonstrate with the parent/s present and invite comment, this is the start of the ongoing communications process. The coach needs to treat his players as consistently as possible, even though player personalities vary so widely.

The Player

Needs to be open with the coach and tell him/her that particular types of physical contact are just not acceptable. The degree of physical contact allowed can be an individual thing but it is difficult to complain if a certain type of contact has been allowed to continue for a period of time. A claim of not being able to discuss it with the coach is fast becoming not accepted as there are now processes in place to avoid player timidity and the age old "if I do nothing it will go away" situation. It never does, so be prepared to talk to someone who you know will look after your interests. Communication is the way to avoid a lot of unpleasantness and maybe placing the coach in an invidious position.

For the parent.

What physical contact can I expect to see during a training session/game?

In most circumstances nothing besides that already discussed and accepted by the players. There will be circumstances that will arise that might initiate spontaneous contact outside of what has been discussed. This is the area of most concern. If this area of physical contact is either not warranted or the player finds awkward then the player needs to tell coach that he/she is not comfortable with that type of contact.

The instruction of basketball requires physical contact between the coach and the player. It is important that the extent of this contact be explained up front. Communication between the various parties concerned becomes very important.

If you or your child feels concerned about the contact occurring, ask for further information from the coach.

If the child feels awkward or intimidated and cannot approach the coach themselves then the communication process has to be in place that allows the parent to discuss the issues concerning the child with the coach.

If for any reason the parent has difficulty discussing/talking to the coach and there is an apparent block to this channel of communication then the Association should have a nominated Child Protection Officer who is advertised as the contact person to allow ongoing concerns to be discussed.

By enrolling your children and allowing them to participate in basketball activities such as camps, trials, training sessions and games where athletes are being coached you are accepting that there will be physical contact between the coach and your child/children. This contact must be within the limits agreed to by the parties involved.

BNSW and its affiliate associations are working to create an environment that encourages children and others to raise any issues of concern.

If there is a need to complain.

In the first instance the Association's Child Protection Officer needs to be contacted and the basis of the complaint explained. It might be that they can fix the situation locally. If this is not the case that person will be able to refer the parent/child to the local office of the Department of Sport and Recreation.

The BNSW Office can offer some assistance if either the Associations or the parent/child require the situation to be handled outside of the local association..

Do you need further information?

Contact your local basketball association.

Contact Basketball NSW on 97462969, fax 97461457 or e-mail kim_murphy@nswbasketball.net.au

Contact the Department of Sport and Recreation's Child Protection Infoline on 1300 366 407

Contact your local Department of Sport and Recreation's Regional Office on 13 13 02 and ask for their nominated Child Protection Officer.