

Safeguarding Policy (2023)

Introduction

The Bahamas Lawn Tennis Association (BLTA) is committed to the safeguarding of everyone especially all children participating in tennis tournaments, events, projects, and programs that it delivers or sanctions and rejects all forms of harassment, abuse, violence, and exploitation.

Definitions

Child – everyone under the age of 18 years.

Adult – everyone 18 years of age or older.

Safeguarding – the actions taken to ensure all children and adults are safe from harm when involved in a BLTA event or activity.

Covered Person – anyone bound by this policy.

Abuse – the acts of commission or omission that led to a child experiencing harm.

Harm - the negative impact or consequences arising from abuse or poor practice.

Violence - “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury and abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse”. (Article 19 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child).

Policy Scope

This policy is applicable to all staff, volunteers, directors, committee members, coaches, and Island Associations. Advice, guidance, and support are available from the BLTA Safeguarding Team.

Safeguarding Training

All covered persons will complete the ITF safeguarding course at the ITF Academy’s website and will complete the BLTA Safeguarding Training.

Review

We are committed to reviewing our Safeguarding Policy a year after implementation and then every three years. The policy will also be reviewed in the following circumstances:

1. Changes in legislation and or government guidance.
2. As required by the ITF Safeguarding Policy.
3. As a result of any significant changes or events or incidents.

Categories Of Abuse & Poor Practice

Sexual Abuse

Forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including harassment or coercion, whether the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and inappropriate touching outside of clothing. Sexual abuse may also include continued physical contact that makes a child uncomfortable, whether expressed or not by that child and non-contact activities, such as forcing or enticing children to watch pornography or be involved in the distribution, sharing, or making indecent images (often referred to as 'sexting') or engaging in online self-abuse via live stream or webcam.

Grooming

A process of building a relationship to gain the trust of a child and to make them think that sex with the perpetrator is normal or that they have no choice. It is often very carefully planned, and it can take place over a period of time. Part of the grooming process will be the use of physical contact initiated and justified by the perpetrator as being normal. It may be part of a coaching activity, playful contact outside normal training e.g., tickling and wrestling or expressions of affection.

Bullying

Bullying behaviour can occur based on any character distinction that can be perceived as different. This could be age, body shape, gender identity, race, religion, or sporting ability. The bullying behaviour might include name-calling, offensive hand gestures, physical assault or exclusion from team activities or social media groups. Emotional Abuse

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may also include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or making fun of what they say or how they communicate.

Physical Abuse

Physically hurting or injuring a child by hitting, kicking, shaking, throwing, burning, biting, scalding, suffocating, drowning, poisoning, misuse of medicines or otherwise causing them harm. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of or deliberately induces, illness in a child. In a sporting context, physical harm or injury may also be caused by physical contact meant to discipline, punish, or achieve compliance from a Child or excessive, inappropriate, or dangerous training methods or insisting a player or athlete participates whilst injured, thus causing the injury to worsen. Other signs of physical abuse may include unexplained injuries or injuries on parts of the body that are nonaccidental or could only have been caused by another person.

Neglect

The persistent failure to meet a child/ adult at risk's basic physical and/ or psychological needs is likely to result in the serious impairment of their health or development.

Safe And Inclusive Tennis Standards

These standards aim to set a minimum level of practice to promote and support safeguarding and equality in tennis.

Standard 1.

1. We have Safeguarding and Equality Policies and a Code of Conduct that applies to all staff, volunteers, coaches, and events.
2. Everyone has read, understood, and follows the Safeguarding Policy, Standards, Code of Conduct and Reporting Procedure
3. Our Safeguarding policy and procedures are monitored and updated to keep them relevant to everyone in the programs and events we run.

Standard 2.

1. We empower children and adults to create safe and inclusive tennis environments, both on and off the court.
2. Information, resources, and guidance on how to stay safe, promote equality, diversity and inclusion and report concerns are easy to access, understand and implement.
3. There is a Safeguarding Team or named person responsible for safeguarding and equality, their name and contact details are available on the BLTA website.
4. Children and adults are actively encouraged to report any concerns they have about themselves or others; those who report concerns are protected and supported.

Standard 3.

1. We protect people's confidential information about safeguarding and equality.
2. Confidential information relating to safeguarding and equality is:
 - a. Stored securely.
 - b. Accessed and processed securely.
 - c. Shared securely and appropriately.

Standard 4.

1. We address safeguarding and discrimination concerns immediately, prioritising the well-being of children and adults at risk.
2. All concerns, including online concerns (cyber-bullying, sexting, grooming and all other forms of online abuse) are recognised, reported, and responded to.
3. All safeguarding and discrimination concerns/allegations made regarding the BLTA member of staff, volunteer, coach, or visitor are reported to our Safeguarding Team and may be reported to external authorities.

Responsibility For Safeguarding

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: not responding to a safeguarding concern is not an option.

Where there is a safeguarding concern/disclosure:

1. The individual who is told about, hears, or is made aware of the concern/disclosure is responsible for following the Safeguarding Reporting Procedure. Unless someone is in immediate danger, they should inform the BLTA's Safeguarding Team.
2. The BLTA Safeguarding Team is responsible for assessing all safeguarding concerns/disclosures that are reported to them. Depending on the concern/disclosure, a referral may be made to:
 - a. The police in an emergency (919)
 - b. Local Authority Children's Services
 - c. Local Authority Adult Services
 - d. The ITF Safeguarding Team for advice and guidance.

Safeguarding Code of Conduct

1. Always prioritise the well-being of all children and adults.
2. Be a positive role model. Act with integrity, even when no one is looking.
3. Help to create a safe and inclusive environment both on and off the court and promote the values of fair play.
4. Value and celebrate diversity and make all reasonable efforts to meet individual needs.
5. Keep clear boundaries between your professional and personal life, including on social media.
6. Check you have the relevant consent from parents/carers, children, and adults before taking or using photos or videos.
7. Ensure your roles and responsibilities, and those of everyone you are responsible for, are clearly outlined and everyone has the information, training, and support to carry them out.
8. Where possible, do not be alone with a child or adult at risk.
9. Do not abuse, neglect, harm or discriminate against anyone; or act in a way that may be interpreted as such.
10. Doing nothing is NOT an option: report all concerns and disclosures as soon as possible, following the Concern Reporting Procedure. If someone is in immediate danger, call the police (919)

Safeguarding Reporting Procedure

1. Reassure the child/adult that she/he is right to report the behaviour.
2. Listen carefully and calmly to him/her.

3. Keep questions to a minimum – and never ask leading questions.
4. Do not promise secrecy. Inform him/her that you must report your conversation to the BLTA Safeguarding Team (and the police in an emergency) because it is in his/her best interest.
5. REPORT IT! If **someone is in immediate danger call the police (919)**, otherwise, talk to the BLTA Safeguarding Team as soon as possible. Once reported, the Safeguarding Team will work with you to ensure the safety and well-being of the child/adult at risk.
6. Do not permit personal doubt to prevent you from reporting the concern/disclosure.
7. Make an immediate objective written record of the conversation by sending an email to **safeguarding@blta.net**. Make certain you distinguish between what the person has said and the inferences you may have made. Your report should be sent to the BLTA Safeguarding Team within 48 hours of the incident, who will store it safely.

Confidentiality:

All concerns and allegations will be treated confidentially, and information stored securely. Information will be handled and disseminated on a need-to-know basis by the Welfare Officer taking advice from the necessary agencies as to who should be informed. Those reporting concerns must use the Safeguarding Concern and Incident Reporting Form maintaining the confidentiality of the report made.

Safeguarding Contacts

BLTA Safeguarding Department: safeguarding@blta.net

ITF Safeguarding Department: safeguarding@itftennis.com

Royal Bahamas Police Force: **919**

Bahamas Crisis Centre: bahamascrisiscentre@gmail.com