

In the OECS, children enjoy taking part in sport every week!

We know that as parents you appreciate how important such participation is for a child's emotional and physical development. We want to ensure that when they play sports at any level, all children have the best possible experience.

WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

There are four types of child abuse. They are:

Physical abuse is non-accidental physical injury that is inflicted by a parent, caregiver, or even another child.

Neglect When parents or other caregivers are continually unavailable for their children it constitutes neglect. In sports, neglect can occur when coaches or other officials disregard the physical or emotional needs of your child.

Sexual abuse includes such as fondling a child's genitals, penetration, indecent exposure, incest, rape, and exploitation through the production of or showing of pornographic materials.

Emotional abuse (also called psychological abuse) hinders a child's emotional development or sense of self-worth. Emotional abuse may include constant criticism, threats, or rejection, as well as a coach holding back their support or guidance of a child.

EVERY PARENTS' RESPONSIBILITY

- Teach your child what to do if he/she is being badly treated by someone who is supposed to be coaching or looking after them.
- Know that if your child complains of being badly treated, it may be difficult for him/her to open up immediately.
- Remember to tell him/her it is not their fault.
- Ask how your child's sporting club safeguards and promotes the welfare of children. This can include a register of participants that is checked at the beginning and end of each session; first aid provision; the number of children looked after per coach/trainer; arrangements for transporting them to and from events; and the procedure for signing children in and out.
- Take an active role in your child's sporting activities! A good sports club should always encourage parents to be part of their child's sporting activities, and this includes watching training sessions.
- Suggest that the club start an anti-bullying policy that can be promoted through its activities.

THE SPORTING CLUB'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Sporting clubs have specific responsibilities when it comes to the safety of your child once you place your boy or girl in their care.

Ensure that coaches, staff and volunteers are safe to work with children. The club must do as much as possible to find out about the backgrounds of the persons working with your child.

Clubs should check the background of people they employ. Clubs should be able to provide you with confirmation that staff and volunteers are suitable and have undergone the right background checks.

A good club will have a child protection policy in place. Clubs should be open to questions about the club's activities and the safety of the environment.

