



GolfRSA Safeguarding Policy

Supplement 4: Safe Golf & Coaches

[Version: January 2024]

1. The following policies and procedures are aimed at creating a safe environment for participants in the sport of golf to take part in the sport free from harassment and abuse.

Duty of Care

2. All clubs and organisations providing a golf activity have a responsibility for the safety and welfare of golfers, coaches, volunteers, officials, visitors and others. This responsibility applies to all GolfRSA members and affiliated clubs, regardless of their size or structure. There is a legal responsibility to ensure that participants are protected from harm whilst taking part in golf. This is legally termed as the 'duty of care' and is of paramount importance when dealing with children or adults with a mental disability.
3. In order to fulfil their 'duty of care' GolfRSA, members and affiliated clubs providing golf activity must:
 - Take steps to keep participants safe from harassment or abuse and ensure the welfare of all participants;
 - Ensure the development of golfers is pursued through appropriate physical and psychological preparation and progressive skill development;
 - Put in place suitable first aid support and emergency procedures; &
 - Exercise reasonable care at all times.
4. GolfRSA members and affiliated clubs providing a golf activity must ensure that safeguarding policies and procedures are in place and implemented as part of their duty of care. All GolfRSA members and affiliated clubs must abide by the GolfRSA Safeguarding Policy.
5. When working with children and vulnerable adults, a person who carries out a supervisory role takes on certain responsibilities while the child or vulnerable adults are in their care. This may include:
 - Holding a responsibility for the wellbeing of golfers during training;
 - Being responsible for the safe dispersal of children or vulnerable adults after training;
 - Providing first aid;

- Providing/consenting to emergency medical treatment;
- Undertaking a supervisory role or being a chaperone; or
- Acting as a team manager.

Guidance for Golf Coaches

Good Practice

6. GolfRSA coaches should always maintain high standards of practice as golfers of all ages look to them for guidance and hold them as role models. GolfRSA coaches have a duty of care for the golfers they are coaching; and should always follow good practice guidance to ensure that the golfers they coach are safeguarded and the coaches are protecting themselves from any allegations.
7. It is the policy of GolfRSA that all coaches registered with the officially recognised coaching and development programmes of GolfRSA, including the structures of the South African Golf Development Board (“SAGDB”), the Professional Golfers Association of South Africa (“PGA of SA”), the Women’s Professional Golf Association (“WPGA”), the South Africa Disabled Golf Association (“SADGA”) must in accordance with this Policy meet the following criteria:
 - be cleared against the Sexual Offences Register or have signed an affidavit;
 - be cleared against the Child Protection Register or have signed an affidavit;
 - have had a criminal check done;
 - signed acceptance of GolfRSA’s Code of Conduct & Ethics Code;
 - signed GolfRSA’s Declaration of Good Standing;
 - completed their GolfRSA approved safeguarding training.

It is highly recommended that any person seeking golf coaching only use coaches registered with the PGA of SA, WPGA, SAGDB and SADGA.

8. Good practices include:
 - Endorsing golf as a fun and enjoyable sport and promoting fair play;
 - Treating all golfers with respect and dignity and giving similar attention and time to all golfers regardless of their background or level of ability;
 - Keeping coaching qualifications up to date and operating within the level of their coaching qualification;
 - Acting as a role model for golfers, for example not smoking or drinking around the athletes and being mindful of your behaviour at club training sessions, events or social gatherings;
 - Not condoning rule violations or the use of prohibited substances;
 - Ensuring that training sessions are appropriate for the age and stage of development, both physical and emotional, and experience of the golfers they are coaching;

- Ensuring training and competition schedules are based on the needs and interests of the golfer, not those of parents, coaches, clubs, sponsors, or Unions;
- Ensuring that the golfers wellbeing is paramount and recognising that performance comes after this;
- Enabling young people to assist in making decisions which relate to them;
- Maintain a safe and appropriate relationship with golfers; it is not appropriate to have an intimate relationship with a child or young person;
- Not tolerating any form of bullying or aggression in the sport;
- Understanding the golfers, you coach and not pushing them too hard and against their will and ability level.
- Providing feedback to golfers in a constructive and positive manner.

Poor Practice

9. Coaches who demonstrate poor practice open themselves up to a greater risk of allegations being made against them.
10. The following are some examples of poor practice that should be avoided by golf coaches and other staff and volunteers:
 - Never be alone with a child or vulnerable adult including taking them to and from training or an event or taking them to your home or in your car, where you will be alone with them or sharing a room with them.
 - Never allow any form of inappropriate behaviour or language.
 - Never be involved in or allow behaviour which causes golfers emotional distress.
 - Never spend excessive amounts of time alone with one child or vulnerable adult away from the others.
 - Never engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games.
 - Never share a room with a child or a vulnerable adult. Adults should never share a room with children, young or vulnerable adults. It is unacceptable that a number of children and adults share a common sleeping area.
 - Never allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
 - Never allow golfer (children or adult) to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
 - Never make sexually suggestive comments to a golfer (child or adult).
 - Never reduce a golfer (child or adult) to tears as a form of control.
 - Never allow allegations made by a child or adult to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
 - Never do things of a personal nature for children or vulnerable adults that they can do for themselves.

- Never invite or allow children or vulnerable adults to stay with you at your home.
- If cases arise where situations are unavoidable, they should only occur with the full knowledge and consent of the person in charge, and in the case of a child with parental consent.
- If any of the following incidents should occur, you should report them immediately to the club, Union or GolfRSA Safeguarding Officer(s), or another colleague, make a written note of the event and inform parents of the incident:
 - If you accidentally hurt a golfer;
 - If a child or vulnerable adult seems distressed in any manner, whilst in your care;
 - If a child or vulnerable adult appears to be sexually aroused by your actions; or
 - If a child or vulnerable adult misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

Supporting a Golfer

11. Supporting and shaping the golfer is part of coaching golf in that it helps the golfer to understand shapes and complex skills.
12. The key points on safe spotting and manual support are:
 - The coach must only engage with manual and physical support with explicit consent from the athlete. i.e., “Can I help you with....?”
 - The coach must ensure that support is only used when necessary and “over-handling” is avoided;
 - Physical contact should not be invasive of sensitive areas of the body, i.e., genital areas, buttocks or breasts.
13. Infrequent non-intentional physical contact can arise out of error on the golfer’s or coach’s part. Such situations should not be ignored and need to be acknowledged through an apology to the golfer and reported to the Club Safeguarding Officer or head coach and parents. A written report should be made of any significant incident which is to be reported to GolfRSA.
14. It is also good practice to explain and provide some written guidance, perhaps as part of an induction pack, to new members and parents that some physical contact will be required but that only appropriate, non-invasive techniques should be used. If a golfer or parent has any concerns, they should be raised with the Club Safeguarding Officer.

Flexibility/Stretching Exercises

15. There are a range of techniques and types of exercise for extending flexibility that involve the application of force. These techniques can also lead to the person applying the force

coming into close proximity with the golfer and having prolonged contact with areas of the golfer's body.

16. Coaches must follow the following guidelines:
 - Avoid exercises that place the coaches and golfers' body in "close proximity" and might be seen as unnecessary by the less-informed parent or observer;
 - Be sensitive to how the exercise might be perceived by the parents and children;

Relationships with Golfers and Position of Trust

17. GolfRSA coaches must ensure that their relationship with any golfer under 18 years of age is professional and appropriate. It must be recognised that the relationship between coaches and golfers is important for developing athletes' potential and self-esteem, and also in establishing trusting relationships with a responsible adult, which has been identified multiple times as being critical in children divulging disclosures.
18. Coaches can easily influence the athletes in their care and the resulting power of a professional relationship cannot be overstated. It is the responsibility of the coach to ensure that they do not abuse their position of trust.
19. Sexual relationships with children under 16 years of age are illegal and as such will lead to disciplinary action as well as being referred to the SAPS/Social Services for investigation.
20. A sexual relationship between a person with authority over a young person and a child aged 16 or 17 years is not considered appropriate by GolfRSA. While it may not constitute a criminal offence, coaches and others in positions of authority and trust in relation to golfers aged 16 and 17 years must not engage in sexual relationships with them while that unequal power relationship exists.

Rule of Two

21. GolfRSA recommends that in order to safeguard children and adults, that at least two responsible unrelated adults are always present during golf training avoiding situations where a responsible person is alone with a child or vulnerable adult. At least one of the two responsible adults should be the same gender as the golfer(s).
22. There may be occasions especially where the golfer is training at a high-performance level where one-to-one coaching may be appropriate. GolfRSA coaches should only conduct such sessions when there is another responsible adult present, in view of all activities or in the case of a child where a parent is present.

Adults In Positions of Trust in Dual Roles

23. Some GolfRSA members hold relevant professional accreditations that would enable them to fulfil a range of support roles within the sport. Common examples include members who are also trained as physiotherapists, nutritionists and masseurs.

24. GolfRSA members who wish to make use of their professional qualifications within the sport must first ensure the person being treated is completely clear about the capacity in which they are acting. The adult in the position of trust is ultimately responsible for maintaining appropriate professional boundaries and ensuring that there is a clear separation between their coaching/golf member role and any other activities they undertake.
25. GolfRSA strongly recommends that anyone providing an additional support service within the sport does not treat children without parental supervision.

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