

C&A: SAFE PRACTICES: RECRUITMENT

For the purpose of this resource, the term Young Athletes refers to children and young people under the age of 18 who are involved in our sport.

Recruiting to child-related roles

A child – related role in basketball is any role with direct or indirect contact with young athletes, including:

- Junior Coordinator
- Association official or referee
- Junior referee coach or coordinator
- Coach
- Manager
- Other team officials
- Stadium staff
- Supervising adults on overnight trips
- Committee members

For the purpose of this resource, a child is defined as any person who is under the age of 18.

If you are not sure if the role you are recruiting to is a child– related role, you can use the following checklist.

Question – Does the position/activity (paid/unpaid or volunteer):	Yes	No
Involve supervising a child?		
Involve being alone with a child or engaging with a child in a way that is not observed or monitored?		
Involve activities with a child away from the organisation's usual location?		
Involve direct one-on-one or group contact with a child via phone, letter, email, online or social media?		
Involve supervising child - child online contact?		
Have access (online or paper based) to a child's personal and/or confidential information?		
Involve the need for physical contact/touching a child?		
Involve any of the following: transporting a child; over-night supervision; and/or out-of-town activities?		
Have a perceived or actual level of authority (including from a child's perspective)?		
Involve any other type of contact with child?		

Think about the attributes or personality type best suited to the role.
Ask the young athletes what kind of person that they think would best fit the role.

Tips for recruiting safe people for basketball

1. SHARE THE LOAD

Recruitment of volunteers in sporting clubs is usually conducted by volunteers which means everyone is restricted by time and availability.

This is not an excuse for not doing it properly.

You need to share the load. Don't let the responsibility sit with one person. When you share the load, it helps you manage the expectations and tasks, but it also brings in other eyes and ears, different areas of expertise and alternate views which increases the OBJECTIVITY and TRANSPARENCY required in fair and safe recruitment.

A panel of two or three people is recommended.
This could include a committee member and a parent.

2. ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

Interviews are likely to be informal, and that is ok, it is still important to ask key safety related questions,

and to gauge the responses to determine if the applicant can demonstrate **appropriate behaviour** and

motivation for working with young athletes in basketball.

Questions that should be asked

- Would you please tell us about your beliefs and values in relation to working with children?
- Would you please tell us about your awareness and understanding of child safeguarding and child protection?
- Would you please tell us about your professional experience, competencies, and qualifications in relation to working with children?
- What boundaries are important when working with children?
- Have you ever had any disciplinary action taken against you in relation to you working with children?

Additional Questions (for positions that work predominately with a child) that MAY be asked

- What do you find most rewarding about working with children?
- What do you find most challenging about working with children?
- How would you handle a child that is behaving in a manner that is disruptive in a group setting?
- How do you think your peers, supervisors and referees would describe the way you work with children?
- How would you deal with a child who is acting aggressively?
- Have you ever lost your temper whilst working with children? What was the trigger for this? What was the outcome?
- How would you respond to a child who disclosed they were being subjected to abuse?
- A parent of a child attending your service wants someone from the organisation to care for their child out of hours. What would be your response to this request?
- What would you do if you thought another staff member or volunteer had harmed or was harming a child?
- What would you do if you thought a child was being abused at home?
- Can you tell us about a child you have found challenging to work with? What strategies do you use to handle challenging behaviour?
- How would you handle a child that appears sad and refuses to participate in activities?

3. LISTEN TO YOUR GUT

Take notice of your own thoughts and feelings when interacting with the applicant. Ask for more information if the applicant does not provide sufficient information in their responses.

Red Flags include, but are not limited to:

- unexplained lengthy gaps in employment history
- strange or inappropriate questions / statements about children
- expresses an interest in spending time alone with a child or in working with children of a particular age or gender
- excessive interest in photography of children
- being evasive or inconsistent in responding to questions
- Being dismissive of boundaries
- Having no connection to the club at all.

What if I don't like what I am seeing or hearing?
Trust your gut – and lean on others for support.

4. DO THE BACKGROUND CHECKS

Police or MOJ check

Any adult in a paid or volunteer role in your club or association must have a Police or MOJ check prior to commencing their role.

It is an important part of creating a safe and friendly culture.

REMEMBER:
POLICE OR MOJ ARE ONE SMALL COMPONENT OF
ONE OF MANY AREAS OF SAFEGUARDING.
THEY HAVE A ROLE TO PLAY BUT THAT ROLE IS
SMALL AND MUST NOT BE RELIED ON AS THE ONLY
STRATEGY FOR SAFEGUARDING YOUNG ATHLETES.

5. ASK AROUND

Any adult in a paid or volunteer role in your club or association must have a reference check completed for them prior to commencing their role.

These can be either formal or informal and should aim to include a minimum of 2 referees.

Referees must have known them for over a year, not be related to them, be able to talk about their character and reputation and be able to comfortably say if they feel they would be suitable to work with children and young people.

Questions that should be asked

- Are you related to the applicant?
- (Please note, if the person answers yes, you cannot proceed with this referee check and another referee needs to be obtained from the applicant).
- In what capacity have you known the applicant and for what length of time?
- (Please note, if less than 12 months another referee should be obtained from the applicant)
- How would you describe the personal character of the applicant?
- How does the person respond to supervision/oversight?
- In your time working with the applicant, was there anything that led you to believe that this applicant is not suitable to work with or be in contact with a child?
- To your knowledge, has this person ever been involved with the abuse or neglect of a child?

If nothing else – always ask

“Would you have any concerns about this applicant working with or being in contact with a child?”

Questions that should be asked

You should consider the validity of the referees by reflecting on the following questions:

- What is the relationship between the referee and the applicant?
- Has the referee known the applicant in a professional capacity and if so when and for how long?
- Is the referee able to provide relevant information about the applicant's work history and performance?
- Has the referee observed the applicant demonstrating the skills and knowledge required for the position?

Take notice of your own thoughts and feelings when interacting with the referee. Ask for more information if you feel you need it.

Red Flags include, but are not limited to:

- A reluctant referee
- A referee who does not know (or appear to know) the applicant well
- Information that the referee will not provide
- Information that differs from the applicant's account
- Evasive or convoluted responses
- Referees that would not re-hire the applicant
- Referees that cannot be contacted
- Referees that were not informed they would be used

6. BE PICKY, AND NOT AFRAID TO SAY NO

If something doesn't feel right, things aren't lining up or you don't have the required checks for someone,

Say no. You can also say 'not yet'.

Go with your gut or seek advice or support from someone else at the club or association, or Basketball New Zealand.

But beggars can't be choosers - Wrong!

It is acknowledged that recruiting and retaining volunteers is incredibly difficult, particularly in small, regional communities, but at the end of the day, it is your responsibility to choose safe and appropriate people, and if you skip processes, turn a

blind eye to red flags or intentionally ignore your gut for convenience, you and your club or association can ultimately be held responsible for the behaviour of that person or the conduct down the track.

Remember: If a young athlete is harmed, do you want to be able to say you did what you could to make sure they were safe?

You can't control their actions once they have been recruited but you can control yours from the beginning.

Just follow the steps, do the checks and seek support if you need it.