



BLACKROCK BOWLING & TENNIS CLUB CLG

Child Safeguarding Policy

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DEFINITIONS

BBTC – the club - Blackrock Bowling & Tennis Club CLG

JTC – Junior Tennis Committee

STC – Senior Tennis Committee

BC – Bowling Committee

The Board – the executive committee of the ‘Club’

DLP – Designated Liaison Person

1. Purpose of the Policy

The policy sets out the Blackrock Bowling and Tennis Club CLG (BBTC) policies and procedures related to Child Safeguarding.

It is prepared in accordance with the guidance of Tennis Ireland (the governing body for tennis in Ireland) on Child Safeguarding.

As a provider of service to young people, BBTC has obligations to:

1. To keep children safe from harm while they are using the service and promote the paramount principle that the welfare of the child is core
2. To carry out a risk assessment to identify whether a child or young person could be harmed while using the service (*see current Risk Assessment*)
3. To develop a Child Safeguarding Statement which must include both the written risk assessment and the procedures that are in place to appoint a relevant person to be the first point of contact in respect of the organisation/clubs Child Safeguarding (*see current Child Safeguarding Statement*).

This policy should be read in conjunction other related policies as specified in Appendix 1.

2. Values and Culture

A central goal for all involved in children’s sport in BBTC is to provide a safe, positive and nurturing environment where children can develop and enhance their physical and social skills.

We promote a child centred ethos supports identifying and eliminating practices that impact negatively on safe and enjoyable participation in children’s sport.

We put in place structures which enable members (parents and children) to address issues and concerns promptly, confidentially and in line with available guidance.

3. Safeguarding Officers and Designated Liaison Person

BBTC has three **Safeguarding Officers** to represent the interests of children members and conduct other duties as specified under applicable guidance e.g. carrying out risk assessments, updating relevant documents and communicating with parents and young people.

Two Safeguarding Officers are appointed by the Senior Tennis Committee (STC) and one by the Bowling Committee (BC) of BBTC and they are also responsible for the recruitment of replacement Children's Officers in the event of any of the Officers resigning from his or her post. Safeguarding Officers are typically parents of members who have demonstrated a commitment to BBTC through volunteering or other activities and are known to children and parents of the club. They may also hold a role in the JTC, STC, BC or other committees of the club.

One of the Children's Officers sits on the Senior Tennis Committee to report on Safeguarding.

BBTC Children's Officers have the support of the club committees in the performance of their role.

The Safeguarding Officers are the first point of contact for staff members, members, parents, children or volunteers to speak with in relation to any safeguarding matter connected with BBTC.

The current Safeguarding Officers are:

Kathryn Matthews – 086 858 3276 (Tennis)

Emmet Higgins - 086 839 7742 (Tennis)

John Nolan – 086 336 4921 (Bowling)

email contact@blackrockbtc.com

See also Section 11; How to raise a Safeguarding concern

BBTC has appointed a **Designated Liaison Person (DLP)**. The DLP is available (along with the Safeguarding Officers) as a resource for any staff member, member, parent, young person or volunteer who has safeguarding concerns. The DLP will liaise with outside agencies e.g. Tusla.

The DLP is appointed by the Board of the BBTC. He/she is a person who has demonstrated a commitment to BBTC, has a good understanding of Safeguarding issues and processes and is suitable and available to engage with Statutory Agencies and parties who may be involved in a Safeguarding matter.

The DLP is responsible for ensuring that the reporting procedures within BBTC are followed, so that safeguarding issues are referred promptly to Tusla, if appropriate.

The current Designated Liaison Person is:

Robert Heron – 087 2597944

4. Supervision Policy

Club activities

BBTC's policy is to have more than one adult present for Club activities. This will help to ensure the safety of the children as well as protect adults. BBTC facilitates the supervision of club activities such as group coaching, matches (home and away) and club social events. i.e. events organised by the Junior Tennis Committee (JTC), the BC, Junior Section Managers, BBTC or as part of the club's coaching programme.

Parents must arrange for the supervision of independently arranged private coaching and recreational activities arranged directly between children or parents.

Adult / Child Ratios:

1. Will depend on the nature of the activity, the age of the participants and any special needs of the group. A general guide used by the BBTC is 1:8 for 12 years of age and under, 1:10 for 13 years of age and over.
2. For trips away the club applies a ratio 1:6
3. There should be at least one adult of each gender with mixed parties.

Adults should avoid being left alone with children, if a leader needs to talk separately to a participant this should be done in an open environment, in view of others.

Parents are asked to ensure prompt collection / departure of children from coaching sessions.

Changing Rooms

Having regard to the age profile of BBTC members and the nature of club activities for younger children, the policy of the Club is not to require adult changing room supervision.

Children under the age of 12 should attend the club "court or rink ready".

All children should be able to use bathroom facilities independently.

BBTC policy is that children are not generally permitted to use shower facilities in either the pavilions or the clubhouse. Parents are requested to contact the Safeguarding Officer in advance if use of shower facilities is required due to child's schedule.

If shower facilities are required to be available to children during a club tournament, a supervision plan will be put in place to facilitate this.

CCTV

The use of CCTV is a positive step from a safeguarding perspective.

BBTC has CCTV in operation in various locations across the premises.

From a safeguarding perspective, footage from CCTV may be used by the club for investigating and managing incidents or misbehaviour.

Management of personal data collected from the CCTV system is set out in the BBTC CCTV Policy

5. Travel and Away Trip Policy

Overnight Trips and Hosting of Players

BBTC tennis section does not generally conduct overnight trips. If an overnight trip does take place, the club follows the applicable Tennis Ireland (TI) policy ref www.tennisireland.ie Safeguarding Guidance for Children Appendix 11

BBTC bowling section follows the Irish Lawn Bowls (ILB) Travel Policy.
Ref www.irishlawnbowls.ie -> Members -> Documents

BBTC does not generally facilitate the hosting of young players by members of the club or having club members hosted in other locations. If hosting does take place, BBTC follows applicable TI and ILB policies.

Away Matches

BBTC's policy is that the level of supervision for away matches will be no more than 6 children per adult. Where practicable the club will have at least one adult of each gender with mixed groups.

BBTC requires adults who regularly travel to away matches to complete the Club garda vetting process and Safeguarding 1 training (*see below*).

One of the supervising adults for an away match will be appointed as Team Manager. He/she will have overall responsibility for the conduct of all members of the team (including adult supervisors).

Written permission of parents/guardians allowing their child/children to take part is obtained for all away matches, by way of the relevant BBTC WhatsApp channel.

Parents/guardians are required to notify and discuss with any supervising adult of any medical/special needs of the child (including permission to treat the child). Parents/guardians will be aware of the need not to place a supervising adult in a medical situation which they are not appropriately skilled to manage.

Children and parents will be reminded of their obligation to abide by the BBTC Code of Conduct.

General Requirements

Young players should always be under reasonable supervision and should never leave the venue or go unsupervised.

In the event of an occurrence/accident then an Incident Report should be completed by the Group Leader/Team Manager and sent to the secretary of the relevant section committee.

Transporting Young People

The Club could not operate without the goodwill of volunteers and parents ensuring that children are transported to events and returned home in a private car.

Occasionally, it is unavoidable for a coach, volunteer or parent to transport a young person by themselves. However, this should be avoided if at all possible and should only take place with the prior agreement of the young person's parent / guardian.

All travel arrangements relating to children should be agreed by the driver with the parent / guardian.

Drivers must have valid driving licence and insurance and must consider the need for booster seats.

Missing Children

BBTC follows the Tennis Ireland Missing Person Policy

ref www.tennisireland.ie Safeguarding Guidance for Children Appendix 12

6. Registration, Dropouts and Club Transfers

Loss of BBTC members is monitored.

Any unusual or unexpected dropout or club transfer of children will be reviewed by the Safeguarding Officers and the chair of the JTC.

If any concerns regarding a child or children's welfare are identified this will be addressed in accordance with the club's Reporting policy.

7. Social Media and Mobile Phones

Social Media

BBTC does not have a social media presence. All club communications to members are via approved club communications channels:

- WhatsApp communities and Chats (not available to children)
- BBTC Website (static, maintained by Club staff)
- Emails from blackrockbtc domain (not available to children)

External communications regarding club activities are channelled through the committees' secretaries.

Adults who have roles in BBTC (see table in Safeguarding) should not have contact with children on social media platforms and should decline "friend" requests from children who are members of the club.

Children or young people may 'follow' Club leaders on social media so leaders should make sure any content they post is appropriate.

Mobile Phones

It is the policy of the Club that all communications relating to Club activities are made to parents/guardians. There are no communications on Club activities from an adult to the child.

The Club recognises that children will have access to and use their mobile phones at the Club. Children should not use their mobile phone in a manner which could breach the Club Code of Conduct. Particular attention is drawn to the Code of Conduct provisions on privacy and bullying.

Parents should ensure that children follow good phone etiquette at the Club, limiting phone use at the Club where possible. The Club emphasises the social and "face-to face" nature of our environment which supports children's mental and social wellbeing.

8. Physical Contact

When is physical contact appropriate in sport?

Contact should be determined by the age and developmental stage of the participant - Don't do something that a child can do for themselves. Physical contact between adults and children in sport should take place only when necessary to:

- Develop skills or techniques.
- Treat an injury.
- Prevent an injury or accident from occurring.
- Meet the requirements of the sport.
- Comfort a distressed child or to celebrate their success.

Unless the situation is an emergency, the adult should ask the child for permission, for example to aid the demonstration a specific technique.

Physical contact should always take place in an open or public environment and not take place in secret or out of sight of others.

Well intentioned gestures such as putting a hand on the shoulder or arm, can, if repeated regularly, lead to the possibility of questions being raised by observers. As a general principle, adults in positions of responsibility should not make gratuitous or unnecessary physical contact with children and young people. Resistance from a child should be respected.

In the case of a young person with a disability specific support or assistance may be required.

BBTC follows the principles set out by Tennis Ireland regarding physical contact. This document sets out some key guidelines, however, additional more detailed guidance is available in the Tennis Ireland material.

The club requests that in cases of disability or injury, the parents liaise with a BBTC Safeguarding Officer to assess how the child can be supported, having regard to health and safety, the facilities available at the club and overall safeguarding requirements.

9. How to raise a Safeguarding concern

This policy relates to Safeguarding concerns. Issues or complaints unrelated to safeguarding matters are managed through the BBTC Complaints Policy process

All children should know that that they can speak safely to the Safeguarding Officers and the DLP on any matter relating to their safety or well-being at the club.

Any person who has a Safeguarding concern relating to BBTC can raise this in the following ways:

- Contact the Safeguarding Officers:
 - Kathryn Matthews – 086 858 3276 (Tennis)
 - Emmet Higgins - 086 839 7742 (Tennis)
 - John Nolan – 086 336 4921 (Bowling)
- Contact the DLP Robert Heron – 087 2597944
- Email BBTC: contact@blackrockbtc.com

- Contact Tusla 01- 921 3400
- Contact An Garda Síochána Blackrock – 01 666 5200

Concerns may also be raised JTC managers or any member of the BBTC Board, who will bring the matter to the attention of the Safeguarding Officers.

Once the concern is reported to the Safeguarding Officers or the DLP, the DLP in consultation with the person who raised the concern, will decide if reasonable grounds for concern exist.

If reasonable grounds for concern exist, the DLP will report to a Tusla duty social worker.

If the DLP decides not to report a concern to Tusla, the following steps will be taken:

- The reasons for not reporting should be recorded.
- Any actions taken because of the concern should be recorded.
- The parent, employee or coach/volunteer who raised the concern should be given a clear written explanation of the reasons why the concern is not being reported to Tusla.
- The parent, employee or coach/volunteer should be advised that if they remain concerned about the situation, they are free to make a report to Tusla or An Garda Síochána.

10. Garda Vetting Policy

The following people / roles are required to complete (and renew every 3 years) the BBTC Garda vetting process

- DLP
- Safeguarding Officers
- All Coaches (Senior, Club, Assistant)
- Assistants to the Coaches
- Junior Tennis Chair and Junior Tennis Committee
- Tennis Team Managers (if not on the Junior Committee)
- Tennis Hitting Partners who operate within the Club with children

On occasion, a parent or volunteer who is actively involved in the club e.g. supervising / driving may be requested by the Safeguarding Officer to complete the Garda Vetting process.

The Safeguarding Officers administrate the Garda Vetting process in BBTC. Those who participate in the above roles are expected to co-operate with BBTC requests to complete Garda Vetting.

Tennis members are garda vetted through Tennis Ireland. More information and the application forms can be found on their website www.tennisireland.ie under Safeguarding / Garda vetting.

Bowling members are garda vetted through Irish Lawn Bowls who will send the application form to the applicant upon request from the Safeguarding officer. More information on

www.irishlawnbowls.ie/ilb-child-protection/

Documents evidencing compliance with the Garda vetting process are retained by the Club.

There is a small fee for Garda vetting process, which will be re-imbursed by the Club.

11. Safeguarding Training

The table below sets out the applicable training requirements for roles within the Club.

Role / Training	Safeguarding 1 / refresher	Safeguarding 2	Safeguarding 3
DLP	Required		Required
Safeguarding Officer	Required	Required	
Coaches	Required		
Assistants to coaches			
Junior Tennis Chair and Junior Committee	Required		
Club Team Managers (if not on the Junior Committee)	Required		
Hitting Partners who operate within the Club with children	Required		
STC Chair, BC Chair, Board President	Required		

- On occasion, a parent or volunteer who is actively involved in the Club e.g. supervising / driving may be requested by the Safeguarding Officer to complete Safeguarding 1 Training.
- Safeguarding training is provided, online, by local sports partnerships organisations on a regular basis. Please contact the Safeguarding Officers if support is needed to access these.
- There is a small fee for attending safeguarding trainings, which will be reimbursed by the Club.
- Documents evidencing completion of training should be provided to the Safeguarding Officer and will be retained by the Club.
- Additional, free, online training and information is available on the Tusla website.

12. Recordkeeping

This policy relates only to records created for the purpose of documenting or managing a Safeguarding concern, allegations and disclosures relating to the Club.

The Club may consult with Statutory Agencies or external advisors to ensure the correct creation and management of records subject under this policy.

This policy should be read in conjunction the BBTC Data Privacy Policy.

This policy does not relate to records created for the purpose of compliance with applicable Safeguarding and / or Tennis Ireland and / or Irish Lawn Bowls guidance e.g. garda vetting documentation, risk assessment.

The Club has prepared a template form for the recording of any Safeguarding concerns, allegations and disclosures. This template form is used by the Safeguarding Officer and the DLP.

- a) Records shall be factual and include details of contacts, consultations and any actions taken.
- b) The Club shall comply with the general requirements that all agencies dealing with children must cooperate in the sharing of records with the statutory authorities where a child protection or welfare issue arises.
- c) Records on child protection concerns, allegations and disclosures are kept securely and safely by the club. The DLP, in conjunction with BBTC President, may determine that original records shall be retained by an external advisor, such as a solicitor, to ensure confidentiality.
- d) Records shall only be used for the purpose for which they are intended.
- e) Records shall be shared on a need-to-know basis in the best interests of the child/young person.
- f) Records may be accessed only by the Designated Liaison Person and any person whom he deems requires access to that record.
- g) The period of retention of records created by the Club shall be as specified by the Statutory Agency in each case.
- h) Records created under this policy shall be updated as required and reviewed regularly by the Designated Liaison Person (DLP).

13. Communications

The Club has a policy of ensuring awareness of Safeguarding resources and requirements to members. The Table below sets out the communications measures.

Artefact/ Medium	Website	Pavilion Notice Board	WhatsApp	Email
Safeguarding Officer Information	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
DLP Information	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Safeguarding Policy	Yes	Yes	Link provided	Yes
Risk Assessment and Safety Statement	Yes	Yes	Link Provided	Yes
Code of Conduct	Yes	Yes	Link Provided	Yes

Document History

BBTC Child Safeguarding Policy		Version 1	25 th Jan 2025
		Version 2	11 th Aug 2025
		Review Date:	August 2026
Approved by:	Blackrock Bowling & Tennis Club CLG Board	Date: 11 th August 2025	

Appendix 1 – List of relevant Club documents and policies

1. BBTC Code of Conduct
2. Risk Assessment & Child Safeguarding Statement
3. BBTC CCTV Policy
4. BBTC Data Privacy Policy
5. Coach recruitment and & Education Policy