



Confidentiality - Who Needs To Know What?

Tennis Ireland has a clear statement about confidentiality and how this is to be respected. This statement covers much broader issues than child protection. We insist that families and children in contact with our organisation are sure, for example, that personal and sensitive details which they have confided about their lives or their family situations will not be talked about or passed onto others without their consent.

However, the legal principle that the welfare of the child is paramount means that consideration of confidentiality should not be allowed to override the right of children to be protected from harm. Everyone in our organisation, including children, must be aware that they can never promise to keep secrets. However, information of a confidential nature will only be communicated on a 'need to know' basis. Your statement of confidentiality should make this clear.

In any situation where there is an allegation of suspicion or abuse, it is important that the rights of both the victim and the alleged perpetrator are protected by ensuring that only those who need to know are given the relevant information.

This will mean, at the very least, informing:

- the person responsible for child protection in our organisation;
- where relevant, a statutory child protection agency;
- the parent of the child;
- the alleged perpetrator.

You should inform the parents unless doing so would endanger the child. Informing the parent of the child about whom you are concerned will need to be handled in a sensitive way and may be undertaken in consultation with a statutory agency.

Any individual under suspicion whether or not s/he is a staff member or volunteer within your group has a right to be notified of the cause of the concern unless to do so would place a child at risk. This matter will need careful consideration and should only be undertaken in consultation with a statutory agency or Tennis Ireland Children's Officer.

Depending on the outcome of our initial inquiries, staff and other agencies who have contact with either the child concerned or the alleged perpetrator may need to be given brief details of the incident and subsequent action. The statutory agency will advise you right about who needs to be told, when they should be told, and the kind of information which is appropriate to be communicated.

All information of a personal nature will be stored in a safe and secure setting. Those who will be given access to this information will be;

- Club children's officer
- Club secretary for mailing addresses, fees etc.
- Club coaches for information relating to a child's ability to participate in an activity/ residential.