

GUIDANCE NOTE

SUPERVISION OF YOUNG CHILDREN ACCOMPANYING PARTICIPANTS AT FENCING ACTIVITIES

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CONTENTS

1. Purpose of Document	1
2. Scope	2
3. Principles	2
4. Responsibilities.....	3
4.1 Parents and Guardians.....	3
4.2 Organisers	3
4.3 Coaches, Officials and Volunteers	3
5. Unaccompanied Children	4
6. Non-Compliance.....	4
7. Review.....	4

1. PURPOSE OF DOCUMENT

The purpose of this Guidance Note is to ensure the **safety and wellbeing of young children under the age of 12** accompanying people attending fencing activities (eg competitions, training). These are children who are not themselves participating in the sport, but potentially accompanying those that do.

Fencing activities can present specific risks. These risks arise from a number of factors including: the movement of people around the venue potentially with equipment, crowded competition and training halls, fencers warming up/sparring/competing, weapon check areas and changing facilities. Appropriate supervision of young

GUIDANCE NOTE: SUPERVISION OF YOUNG CHILDREN (NON FENCERS)

children is essential to minimise these risks and provide a safe environment for all participants and spectators.

This Guidance Note does not replace existing safeguarding arrangements for fencers under the age of 18.

While coaches and others may supervise young children when they are delivering fencing activities to them, responsibility for the overall welfare of children outside of supervised delivery of fencing remains with parents or guardians unless alternative arrangements have been formally agreed in advance.

2. SCOPE

This Guidance Note applies to any place where **fencing activity** takes place. This includes competitions, training (clubs and camps) or any other places where fencing occurs.

This Guidance Note applies to **accompanying children under the age of 12** who

- are not themselves participating in the fencing activity
- are likely to be siblings and family members accompanying **Participants**
- are likely to be spectating

Participants are fencers, volunteers, referees, coaches, competition organiser, team managers, welfare officers and anyone involved in delivering the activity or participating in the activity.

For the purpose of this guidance note **Participants** excludes people attending purely to spectate.

3. PRINCIPLES

In general all children under the age of 12 who are attending fencing activities must be accompanied by a responsible adult or guardian at all times.

Children under the age of 12 must not be left unsupervised before, during, or after activities.

Parents and guardians of a child under the age of 12 who are themselves Participants in an activity (eg as a fencer, coach, referee) are responsible for ensuring that alternative appropriate supervision is in place for their child whilst they (the parent/guardian) are active in role.

Where parents/guardians are attending an activity purely as a spectator they are expected to supervise any accompanying child under the age of 12 in accordance with Section 4.1.

Organisers, referees, armourers, medics, officials, volunteers, coaches, team managers and BF staff have responsibilities for the safe delivery of activities but are ***not responsible for supervising children who are attending as spectators or accompanying family members***

GUIDANCE NOTE: SUPERVISION OF YOUNG CHILDREN (NON FENCERS)

(whether those family members are Participants or spectators).

Fencers cannot supervise U12s whilst they are training (includes warming up, taking lessons, sparring) or competing.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

Parents and guardians are responsible for:

- Supervising, or ensuring that there is a nominated person (agreed in advance) to supervise any children under the age of 12 that are accompanying them at all times.
- Ensuring accompanying children do not enter fencing areas (eg Field of Play) unless specifically invited to do so.
- Preventing accompanying children from interfering with fencing equipment, competition or training activities
- Following instructions from officials and venue staff
- Placing no expectation on any other person participating in the activity to provide supervision.
- Contacting the Welfare Officer where an unforeseen issue relating to child supervision arises.

4.2 ORGANISERS

Organisers of fencing activities are responsible for:

- Communicating this policy before and during the activity
- Providing a safe environment for fencers and spectators
- Ensuring safeguarding and welfare procedures are in place
- Responding appropriately when unattended children are identified

Organisers of fencing activities are not responsible for provision of childcare unless specifically arranged as part of the activity.

4.3 COACHES, OFFICIALS AND VOLUNTEERS

Coaches, referees, and volunteers should:

- Report any concerns about an unattended child to the Organiser or Welfare Officer
- Avoid assuming responsibility for supervising children outside their official duties unless necessary to protect the child's immediate safety

5. UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN

If an unaccompanied young child is found, the BF Lost/Found person procedure will be followed. In summary:

1. The Welfare Officer, or suitable alternative person, will ensure the child remains in a safe location and the child should ideally be accompanied by two appropriate people.
2. Reasonable efforts will be made to locate the child's parent or guardian using venue announcements or registration information where appropriate.
3. If a responsible adult cannot be located within 20mins, the Welfare Officer will notify the police and follow their guidance

6. NON-COMPLIANCE

Where a child under the age of 12 is unsupervised or interferes with the fencing activities or presents a risk to themselves or others, organisers may require a parent or guardian to immediately resume appropriate supervision of the child. Persistent failure to appropriately supervise a child may result in the parent/guardian being asked to leave the venue with the child to maintain the safety of all attendees.

7. REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed regularly and updated to reflect current safeguarding guidance, event requirements, and best practice within the sport of fencing.

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