

Code of Conduct

A Code of Practice for teachers/coaches, match officials, parents, pupils and spectators to refer to when engaged within sport events associated with the Independent Schools Association (ISA).

Staff: Teachers, Coaches, gap student and other adult helpers.

All staff should:

1. Treat pupils and other adults with respect.
2. Group players according to age, height, skill and physical maturity where appropriate and in accordance with the relevant National Governing Body.
3. Try to arrange an appropriate balance between practice and fixtures – giving opportunity to all children who wish to participate without over playing the most able.
4. Remember that children play for fun and enjoyment and winning is only part of this.
5. Be reasonable in their demands on children's time, energy and enthusiasm - they need other interests as well.
6. Ensure that equipment and facilities are appropriate to the age and ability of the players and meet safety standards.
7. Teach players that the rules of the game are for their own safety and should be respected at all times.
8. Ensure that players respect the ability of their opponents and the judgement of match officials.
9. Use appropriate language and behaviour when working with young children and commit fully to the spirit of this code of practice.
10. Make a personal commitment to keep themselves informed on sound coaching principles and the principles of children's growth and development.
11. Be fully conversant with school safeguarding procedures and be CRB checked as required.
12. It is expected that schools enter regional swimming, cross-country and athletic competitions on the understanding that all participating pupils are eligible for selection for the National finals and are expected to attend barring illness, injury or an exceptional and unexpected circumstance.
13. GAP students, employed by the school, are not allowed to participate in sports events individually or as part of a school team.
14. Respect all other schools in attendance and under no circumstances use ISA events as a means of recruiting pupils or staff.
15. Bring any safeguarding or child protection concerns to the attention of a member of ISA staff.
16. Only select pupils who are on the main school's admissions register, on the date of the event.

Match Officials

All match officials should:-

1. Treat pupils and other adults with respect.
2. Be a positive role model and lead by example
3. Emphasise the spirit and the ethos of the game.
4. Do their utmost to ensure that the players enjoy the experience of playing for their school.
5. Recognise that the safety of players is paramount.
6. Keep up to date with refereeing/umpiring qualifications and practices in their sport as well as any changes in playing regulations.
7. Explain their decisions clearly and concisely remembering at all times to be fair and unbiased.
8. Refuse to tolerate or condone foul play of any kind.
9. Take time to speak to players and coaches after the game.

Parents/carers

All parents/carers should:

1. Treat pupils and other adults with respect.
2. Emphasise enjoyment and fun. Praise and reinforce effort and improvement.
3. Remember that children learn best by example. Be friendly to the opposition parents and applaud good play by members of all teams not just your own.
4. Teach your child that effort and teamwork are as important as victory so that the result of each game is accepted without undue disappointment.
5. Remember that children develop at different rates and react differently to the same pressures.
6. Encourage your child always to play by the rules. Refrain from questioning publicly the official's judgement and honesty of their decisions.
7. Support all efforts to remove verbal and physical abuse from children's sport.
8. Recognise the value and importance of coaches. Allow them to decide what is best. They give their time, energy and experience to provide guidance for your child.
9. Be aware of the physical demands that sport places on your child. Participation in both school and club matches may be too much for some individuals. Priority should be given to playing for the school as stated in the terms and conditions of many schools.
10. Recognise that an enquiry about a pupil's selection or otherwise, for a regional or National team must be made to the pupil's school, not the member of staff acting as Event Organiser or Regional team Manager.
11. Bear in mind that children are involved in organised sport primarily for their enjoyment and not yours. Refrain from forcing an unwilling child to participate in sport.
12. Turn defeat into victory by helping your child work towards skill improvement and a positive sporting attitude. Refrain from shouting at your child for making a mistake or losing a competition.

Pupils

All pupils should:-

1. Treat adults and other pupils with respect.
2. Play for their own fun and personal enjoyment.
3. Be a good sport
4. Respect their opponents and the match officials - treat everyone as they themselves would wish to be treated.
5. Learn the rules and adhere to them.
6. Accept decisions; let their captain or coach ask any necessary questions.
7. Remember that the aim of the game is to have fun, improve skills and teamwork.
8. Work equally hard for the team as for themselves - their team's performance will benefit alongside their own.
9. Co-operate with their coach, team-mates and opponents – without them there would be no game.
10. Appreciate and respect the adults who make these opportunities possible.

Spectators

Spectators should:

1. Treat all pupils and all adults with respect.
2. Encourage players always to play to the rules.
3. Respect the decisions made by officials.
4. Relax and enjoy the game whether your team wins or not.
5. Use appropriate language and behaviour towards all players, coaches and officials at all times.
6. Applaud good play by both sides and show respect for your team's opponents.
7. Remember that children play organised sport for their own fun – not to satisfy anyone else's ambitions
8. Remember that young people learn by example so make sure that yours is the right one!
9. Never ridicule or scold a child for making a mistake during a competitive match of any kind.
10. Condemn the use of violence in all forms.

Ratified by ISA Executive Council November 2025
