

What is the learning environment?

The Learning environment refers to the place, time, context and culture in which the learning takes place.

It is determined by a wide range of factors such as the spatial conditions, the timing and pace of the learning process, the attitudes, expectations and behaviors of the people involved, the materials available etc.

The learning environment should be...

supportive

challenging

engaging

safe

inclusive



What is a safe space?

A safe space is an environment in which I can feel psychically and emotionally secure

In a safe space I do not have to be afraid of physical dangers, like sexual abuse or preventable athletic injuries

In a safe space I don't feel threatened and the atmosphere is not just competitive



In a safe space I can trust the other people

A safe space is also accepted by my family and friends. They don't worry about me when I'm there.

A safe space is a place where I feel comfortable and free to open up and express myself. It's a place where I feel that I can share my concerns and ask sensitive questions

Think about, how you would define a safe space for YOU!

Why is safety an issue?

Sport is widely known as an activity that is fun, brings people together and offers a wide range of educational and health-promoting opportunities.

However, sport also involves physical exertion, demands skill and ability, and is often practiced with a competitive character.

Therefore, despite its great educational potential, sport is also an area of activity where children, young people and vulnerable adults can be harassed, abused, neglected or exploited.

This is especially the case when sport is used as a tool for education or social work in settings where social problems already exist which can make participants more vulnerable in general.

We therefore consider it important to sensitise all those involved in sport not only to the many positive aspects of sport and play but also to the dangers that may occur.



What kind of hazard should you keep an eye on?

Risks in sport can be physical, mental or social. Sources can be objects and persons but also values and attitudes. Hazards may be obvious or hidden, deliberately accepted or caused by lack of awareness or negligence.



Examples: Think of rabbit holes on the sports field where you can twist your ankle; children who are always picked last when teams are selected; tough boys bullying a weaker one; youngsters being inappropriately watched by spectators in their tight sports gear or girls from traditional families getting into trouble at home for playing football.

As a sports educator you don't have to be anxious or afraid, but you should be aware of the dangers and be alert. Together with your target group, you should always make sure that your activities take place in a safe learning environment for all.



What can you do to create a safe learning environment?

This is just a short introductory learning unit, so we can not discuss this important topic at length. However, we suggest the following 4 steps to start with:

SAFEGUARDING	ROUTINE CHECK	CODE OF CONDUCT	EMERGENCY PLAN
<p>Make sure, that you understand the concept of „safeguarding in sport“!</p> <p>A list of useful resources and tookits is provided in the yellow box below.</p>	<p>Routinely check the setting in which you offer your activities for dangerous conditions, broken equipment, etc. - Just as airplane pilots work through their checklist and inspect the plane before every take-off.</p>	<p>Develop a code of conduct, together with your target groups in which the group defines their mutual expectations of how to behave, communicate and interact which each other in order no one gets harmed.</p>	<p>Have your emergency plan ready. Make sure you know in advance where the first aid kit is in your facility, what phone numbers to call in an emergency, who to contact if you witness a case of sexual harassment, etc.</p>

IOC Safeguarding Toolkit: <https://www.olympic.org/athlete365/what-we-do/integrity/safe-sport/>

FIFA Guardians Toolkit: <https://www.fifa.com/what-we-do/fifa-guardians/#web-07>

NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Resources: <https://thecpsu.org.uk/resource-library/>

Ann Craft Trust Resources: <https://www.anncrafttrust.org/resources/>

What is a code of conduct?



What is it? A set of rules that is designed to guide our behavior during day-to-day interaction within a social group or organization (e.g. a team, a sports club, youth center or a school)

Why should you have it? It helps us to clarify our mutual expectations, to distinguish between accepted and unaccepted behavior, to protect those that are vulnerable from being hurt and those that are powerful from hurting others. It can support us in getting the best possible experience out of our engagement as a player, coach or youth leader.

How should it look like? There is no fixed format, but it should be clear, simple, understandable and meaningful for all that are concerned by it.

Who should develop it? It can be developed by the organization (the school, the club, the youth center) or by the individuals that are concerned. Also, if it is the organization that develops the code, all groups should be involved in its development (e.g., students and teachers develop a code for their school together)

What else is important? Everyone concerned by a code of conduct must be aware of it and actually commit to it. If a code of conduct exists, it must be binding for all and also the consequences of not obeying to it must be clear.