



Listening to Children Policy - Pathway

Essex Cricket is committed to ensuring cricket in the county is a welcoming, safe, inclusive and enjoyable sport for all. To support this commitment, we aim to create a culture of listening to and consulting with our stakeholders both young and old, on a range of issues.

We will create an environment where young people feel they can voice any concerns in addition to sharing their ideas, likes and dislikes to initiate improvements and enhance their overall enjoyment of the game.

The following points outline how Essex Cricket intends to create a culture of listening:

- Recognising that all children participating in cricket (regardless of age, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, ability, or disability) have a right to create experiences to develop to be the best they can be. Learning to do this is not linear and that challenge will see failure, however, they will be supported and protected from harm in a safe environment.

Implementation Strategies

- Issue a welcome letter to all county squad members ahead of every season starting so they know what is expected of them, who to contact if they have any concerns and are reassured that 'If something is worrying you, don't keep it to yourself.'
- Issue a minimum of one County-Age-Group player survey during any 12-month period seeking open and honest feedback (with an option to remain anonymous)
- Acknowledge that a new player might not know anyone else in the squad. So will incorporate player interactions between squad members throughout the programme. We will encourage leadership and communication opportunities for peer support such as player-led team talks, warm-ups and facilitation of game reviews.
- Reflect with all players before/during/after training and matches to celebrate successes and address any concerns.
- Ensure player participation in their own development during the season through the completion of the Player Development Plans at appropriate age groups.

QR Codes

- Develop a system of anonymous feedback for Pathway players, using QR codes to access a short survey about individual sessions. Have a QR Code poster for all pathway players to enable them to feedback at any point during the year as well as report if they feel unsafe or are worried or concerned about anything. It will also provide feedback to coaches on how players understand the coaching. Coaches will proactively encourage the use of these with their players on a regular basis.

To ensure the success and effectiveness of ‘Listening to Children ’ The feedback from QR codes above will be reviewed by the Player Pathway Manager, with the County Safeguarding Officer on a regular basis and they will be responsible for following up on the QR Code feedback. They will be responsible for monitoring and challenging the success/effectiveness of ‘Listening to Children ’ during his observations/coaching of coaching. We will introduce a box in reception to enable a system where players can leave a written note if they have any concerns rather than use the QR code system.

Creating a Supportive Environment

- Issue to player & parent surveys each year one at the end of the season and one at the end of the winter programme seeking open and honest feedback (with an option to remain anonymous). NB. The environment we create should be one that players and parents feel heard and comfortable to talk to any coach/manager at any time not just through the platform of a survey.

Parents

- Parents will need to understand that this feedback at stated times will mean they cannot expect regular contact from coaches and that they should not expect to be contacting coaches outside of these periods. If there are safeguarding issues then that should go directly to the County Safeguarding Officers, Details below.
- The environment created should be one that allows all players to feel comfortable to approach coaches at any time.
- Reflecting with all players before/during/after training/matches to celebrate successes and address any concerns.
- Parents will also be an integral part of our network for seeking feedback and embedding a culture of safeguarding.
- Facilitate a player/parent induction meeting with the County Safeguarding Officer at the start of each programme.
- Player/parent induction meeting with the Player Pathway Manger and other relevant staff and pre-season. Also present will be all coaching staff and a County Safeguarding Officer.

Management

Some roles within our organisation will have specific responsibility for fulfilling different parts of this policy. However, all staff and directors have a collective responsibility for creating an environment where listening is embedded and contributes towards safeguarding all participants.

- Issuing a welcome pack to new county squad members ahead of them starting so they know what is expected of them, who to contact if they have any concerns and are reassured that ‘If something is worrying you, don’t keep it to yourself.’ This will include from the County

Safeguarding Officer to new county squad members before they start so they know what's expected of them, who to contact if they have any concerns and are reassured that 'If something is worrying you, don't 'keep it to yourself.'

- Reflecting with all players before/during/after training/matches to celebrate successes and unsuccessful things and address any concerns. We will work to an environment that is measured on learning and not solely on success. Our coaches and managers will work to ensure that they recognise the needs of individuals. Some players will respond to continual feedback and others may need it at different stages and in smaller.
- Ensuring three-way participation (player, parent, coach) during the season through the completion of the Player Development Plans (PDP's) for those players. All other players and parents will have a meeting with their age group coaches at the conclusion of the winter training programme. This will ascertain primary skill role and their forecast role in the squad for the coming season thus managing parent's expectations.

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Welcome letter

Welcome to Essex Cricket! We are delighted to have you as part of the programme and hope you make the most of the opportunities available to you. Cricket is not only about developing your skills but also about having fun, making new friends, and creating memorable experiences.

This letter aims to provide you with key information to help you settle in and get the most out of your time with us. If you have any questions or need assistance, please do not hesitate to reach out to me or your coaches.

Player Code of Conduct

As part of the programme, you will be asked to review and sign the county's Player Code of Conduct. This ensures everyone understands and agrees to the expectations that help create a positive and respectful environment for all.

Essex Cricket Guide

You will also receive a guide detailing how the Essex Cricket Programmes operate. This guide is designed to help you navigate the programme and make the most of the opportunities it offers.

Our Commitment to Your Safety and Well-being

At Essex Cricket, your safety and enjoyment are our top priorities. All adults working with children are fully vetted and approved by the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB).

While we hope you will have a positive and enjoyable experience, we understand that questions, concerns, or difficulties can sometimes arise. If something is worrying you, please remember:

Don't keep it to yourself.

We are here to listen and support you.

We look forward to seeing you grow as a player and enjoy everything Essex Cricket has to offer.

QR code feedback on Coaching

Each section will have its own QR code mounted on a poster available after training and fixtures. Below is a range of questions that could be used. Individual sections decide on the questions. The final one will always be, 'Is there anything that concerns you within cricket or outside that is worrying you.'

1. What do you enjoy most about the coaching sessions?
2. Are there any drills or exercises you find particularly helpful? Why?
3. Is there anything you'd like the coach to explain or teach differently?
4. How do you feel about the way feedback is given during practice?
5. Are there any parts of the coaching sessions that you find boring or not useful?

Skill Development

6. Which cricket skill (batting, bowling, fielding, or wicketkeeping) do you feel most confident in right now?
7. What part of your game do you think needs the most improvement?
8. Are there any specific techniques or skills you want to learn or practice more?
9. How do you approach improving a skill you're struggling with?
10. Do you feel like you're given enough opportunities to practice under match-like conditions?

Personal Goals and Aspirations

11. What are your short-term goals in cricket, such as for this season?
12. Do you have any long-term cricket goals, like playing for a particular team or reaching a certain level?
13. Who is your favorite cricketer, and what do you admire about their game?
14. How do you stay motivated during tough matches or practices?
15. If you could change one thing about your cricket game, what would it be?

Team Dynamics and Match Play

16. How do you feel about your role within the team?
17. Are there any areas where you think the team could work better together?
18. Do you feel comfortable communicating

Below the policy written as a checklist for coaches and managers.

Listening Policy - Coaches / Managers Checklist

Essex Cricket is committed to ensuring cricket is a welcoming, safe, inclusive, and enjoyable sport for all. To support this commitment, we aim to foster a culture of listening and consulting with stakeholders—both young and old—on various issues.

We strive to create an environment where young people feel empowered to voice their concerns and share ideas, likes, and dislikes. By doing so, we aim to inspire the next generation to believe and say, *“Cricket is a game for me.”*

Key Objectives

We recognise that:

- All children participating in cricket, regardless of age, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, ability, or disability, have the right to experiences that help them develop to their full potential.
- Learning is not linear; challenges and failures are part of growth.
- Players must be supported and safeguarded in a secure environment.

Implementation Strategy

Communication and Feedback

- Issue a welcome letter to all county squad members before each season, outlining expectations, contact points for concerns, and a reassurance message:
“If something is worrying you, don’t keep it to yourself.”
- Conduct at least one County-Age-Group player survey annually to gather open and honest feedback, with an option for anonymity.
- Facilitate peer support through leadership opportunities like player-led team talks, warm-ups, and match reviews.
- Reflect with players before, during, and after training/matches to celebrate successes and address concerns.
- Promote player participation in their development by completing Player Development Plans (PDPs) for relevant age groups.

Anonymous Feedback via QR Codes

- Introduce QR codes for anonymous player feedback, accessible during sessions and throughout the year.
- Use feedback to:
 - Highlight coaching improvements.

- Identify player concerns or feelings of being unsafe.
- Regularly encourage players to use QR codes for feedback.
- Ensure QR code feedback is reviewed by the Player Pathway Manager and County Safeguarding Officer on an ongoing basis.

Creating a Supportive Environment

- Issue player and parent surveys twice a year:
 - End of the season.
 - End of the winter program.
- Foster a culture where players and parents feel comfortable approaching coaches at any time, beyond formal surveys.
- Facilitate a pre-season player/parent induction meeting, attended by:
 - Player Pathway Manager.
 - County Safeguarding Officer.
 - Coaching staff.

Parent Communication

- Clarify that feedback is collected during designated periods.
- Parents should refrain from contacting coaches outside these times, except for safeguarding concerns, which must go directly to the County Safeguarding Officer.
- Include parents in feedback initiatives to embed a culture of safeguarding.

Management Responsibility

- All staff and directors share collective responsibility for embedding listening practices to safeguard participants.
- Distribute welcome packs to new squad members with essential information about expectations, support contacts, and reassurances.
- Coaches will:
 - Reflect with players regularly, focusing on learning rather than solely on success.
 - Recognize individual needs and tailor feedback frequency and methods accordingly.

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