

International & Domestic Travel Policy – Regional Player Development Centres (RPDCs) and National Academy (NA)

1. Introduction

Travelling to tennis events both internationally and domestically are part of being a tennis player. This will usually involve a player travelling with their parent/guardian or with their coaching team (in accordance with this policy). This policy applies to all RPDCs/NA and the players within their programmes, who travel domestically and internationally.

All trips and camps arranged by an RPDC or NA will be staffed by a Lead Coach and either an additional coach and/or strength and conditioning coaches or other RPDC/NA staff (e.g. programme manager). These staff members are responsible for the players for the duration of the trip and will act in “loco parentis”.

2. Trips & Camps

2.1 Safeguarding & Duty of Care

Further to the publication of the Duty of Care in Sport Review and the NSPCC’s Child Protection in Sport Unit updating their guidelines, the LTA has reviewed its policy for the staffing of all trips.

The NSPCC guidelines state:

“Whatever the recommended ratio of adults to participants is, **a minimum of two adults should be present**. This ensures at least basic cover in the event of something impacting on the availability of one of the adults during the activity (e.g. in the event of one participant requiring the attention of an adult during the activity following an accident).”

The guidelines also state that the gender of at least one of the supervising adults should match the gender of the children.

Since 1st October 2017, RPDCs and NA will adopt the following policy on all trips (including tournament visits and training camps), both in the UK and abroad, with players who are under 18 years of age.

- A minimum of two members of staff on all trips.
- At least one member of staff must be the same gender of that of the players on the trip.
- A minimum of one member of staff to every four players.

The lead member of staff will always be a coach and the second member of staff may travel in any of the following roles or capacities, with an emphasis on the pastoral welfare and supervision of the players:

- Head/Lead/Assistant RPDC coach
- strength and conditioning coach;
- senior coach/programme manager;
- Any other RPDC or NA staff members

All adults travelling on a trip/camp must have a valid LTA Enhanced DBS with child barred list and up to date Safeguarding training. At least one of those adults must also have an up to date First Aid Qualification.

If needed, parents of a RPDC player may act as one of the 2 adults travelling on a trip/camp. If an RPDC decides to use a parent in this capacity, the parent must have a valid LTA DBS and safeguarding training. They must have a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities to care for and supervise all children on the trip, not just their own.

The National Academy may not use parents on their trips/camps.

Members of staff/adults travelling on a trip/camp are not permitted to share a room with players under any circumstances. Not even if one of the adults supervising is the parent of one of the children travelling on the trip/camp.

When travelling in groups, players may be asked to share a room with other players of the same gender and similar age. Where this is not possible, it is acceptable for an 18-year-old player and a younger player of the same gender (both from the same squad) to share a room as long as the players and their parents have consented in writing. In this situation the age of the players should be as close as possible and limited to no more than a two-year age gap (with the older player not exceeding 18 years old)

A risk assessment must be completed as per the individual process each RPDC has in place. Adequate insurance and an emergency procedure should also be in place and understood by all coaches who lead a trip.

2.2 Parents and legal guardians/Individual coaches travelling

Should parents/legal guardians or individual coaches travel at their own cost to a tournament where an RPDC Trip is taking place, we ask that they inform the Lead Coach prior to the trip.

We recommend that all RPDCs have their own process in place should a parent/guardian wish to travel to the tournament that their child is attending as part of a RPDC Trip. This process should be clearly communicated to all parents/guardians and players.

3. Exceptional Circumstances

This policy must be adhered to unless there are exceptional circumstances meaning it is not possible to adhere to the policy.

The LTA considers an exceptional circumstance:

- to be circumstances that are out of the control of the player and/or coach; and
- that the player and/or coach could not reasonably have prevented or accommodated these; and
- they had or will have a significant and demonstratively negative effect on the player's welfare or development

Exceptional circumstances must be exactly that, an exception, and should therefore not become the norm.

In situations where there are exceptional circumstances, the player, their parent/legal guardian and coach must all be in agreement that the trip can continue. This should be recorded in writing and the full details must be recorded by the RPDC at the earliest opportunity, ensuring any mitigating steps that will or have been taken are included.

If the LTA reasonably considers that either the circumstances are not exceptional or insufficient mitigating steps were taken, this may result in disciplinary action being taken against the player and/or coach, and the funding for the centre the player is based at may also be reviewed.

The LTA recommends the following mitigating steps for the protection of players and coaches if all suitable options to find a second coach/adult or a coach/adult of the same gender have been exhausted and it is only possible for 1 coach to travel with the player:

- Players, their parent/legal guardian and coach should all be in agreement that a trip which does not comply with the RPDC Trips Policy can continue and this should be recorded in writing.
- Written records of the efforts gone to should be recorded and kept
- A risk assessment should be completed and suitable contingency / emergency plans agreed.
- The coach should also have written permission from the parent(s)/legal guardian that they are happy for their child to travel 1:1 with the coach.
- Players must have a separate room from their coach and/or other adults.
- Players should only ever share a room with other players of the same gender and similar age.
- Players over the age of 18 should not share rooms with players under 18.
- If the player is under the age of 18 a group text / WhatsApp must be created in order to communicate. This group should include a minimum of 3 people (player, coach and 1 additional adult who is ideally the parent or legal guardian, but may also be another adult e.g. programme manager, additional RPDC coach, S&C coach etc.)

4. Amendments

The LTA may amend this policy from time to time. Any amendments will be published on the LTA website.