**Factsheet** 

 **Ball Games**

**Are ball games anti-social?**

As soon as the weather warms up, children like to play ball games outside. This causes a high volume of complaints to the Council claiming they are a nuisance.

Children playing ball games in the street is not illegal and only anti-social in a minority of cases.

**How do I know if ball games are anti social?**

We always encourage parents to take their children to the park so they can play safely, away from traffic and not upset local residents.

Young children under the age of 10 can be expected to play close to their home if it is safe to do so and using only a soft ball that is unlikely to cause damage to any property.

Children over the age of 10 would be expected to play in a park as they tend to be louder and use balls that are harder and may cause damage.

**When should I complain about ball games being a nuisance?**

We were all young once. Ball games are fun and encourage children to socialise and be physically active. Balls will inevitably go into gardens but parents should advise their children to ask for their ball back rather than just run on to gardens, and neighbours need to be tolerant and accept this is ordinarily a seasonal activity.

Ball games become anti-social if they cause criminal damage to vehicles or property, if the ball is continuously kicked against garage doors or walls or if the players are older and use intimidating behaviour or abusive language.

**Tips for keeping the peace**

* Respect other residents’ right to a peaceful and safe environment
* Send the older children to the park
* Use a soft ball in the street to prevent damage and ALWAYS ask before entering people’s gardens if the ball has gone astray
* Keep the noise down and don’t use foul language
* Parents should supervise young children playing in the community and ensure they are respectful
* Compromise with your neighbours

**Tips for Residents**

* Playing ball games is not anti-social
* Respect people’s right to play in their own neighbourhood
* Remember parents will want young children close by
* Be tolerant and expect some noise from children
* It is better for young people to divert their energy into positive activities than to hang around getting into trouble
* Open spaces are there for everybody to use
* Have a quiet word with the parents and agree together on times to play

**What can Tamworth Borough Council do?**

We no longer use ‘No Ball Games’ signs – they are not legally enforceable.

Concerns around children potentially causing anti-social behaviour should be addressed to their parents calmly in the first instance.

General ball games where the intention is just to have fun are for the residents to take responsibility for.

We can help you with this in the following ways:

* We can help you to reach a compromise, e.g. what times to play.
* Good Neighbour Agreements are useful for neighbours who may be in dispute over ball games

We can refer residents to our independent mediation service

For further information, please contact the Neighbourhood Impact Team on 01827 709709

Email: neighbourhoodimpactteam@tamworth.gov.uk, or