

# COACHES / TEAM CAPTAINS / VOLUNTEERS

## GUIDE TO CHILD PROTECTION IN

### HOCKEY

Hockey provides a great opportunity for young people. Playing Hockey provides opportunities for enjoyment and achievement and it also helps develop valuable qualities such as self-esteem, leadership and teamwork in all those involved. These positive effects are more likely to occur if the people leading the activity place the welfare of all young people first and adopt practices that support, protect and empower them. Coaches, Team Captains and Volunteers can have great influence on young people and therefore their conduct is important in the organisation of activity.

Scottish Hockey, Districts and Clubs are working hard to ensure that hockey is a safe sport for young people to participate in. To do this hockey needs everyone to be involved. These guidelines will help you as Coaches, Team Captains and Volunteers to be aware of the good practice that you should try to exhibit in your involvement in hockey and specifically with young people.

#### 1 CODE OF CONDUCT

The behaviour of Coaches, Team Captains and Volunteers is very important in providing the right environment for children. Through this behaviour appropriate roles models exist and standards of behaviour are set for the young people involved. [Insert Club Name] Hockey Club has adopted a code of conduct to be expected from coaches, conduct to be avoided and conduct that should never occur. Most of these are common sense, but Coaches, Team Captains and Volunteer need to be aware of what is expected.

##### 1.1 CONDUCT TO BE EXPECTED

- make sport fun, enjoyable and promote fair play
- treat all children equally, with respect and dignity
- involve parents wherever possible
- build balanced relationships based on mutual trust that empower children to share in the decision-making process

- always work in an open environment. Avoid private or unobserved situations
- put the welfare of each child first before winning or achieving performance goals
- be an excellent role model including not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of children
- give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- All forms of physical contact should respect and be sensitive to the needs and wishes of the child
- provide support openly, with the child's understanding and consent
- educational instruction should be delivered verbally and by demonstration
- where necessary, 'hands on' physical contact should be proportionate to the task and accompanied with an explanation to the child
- recognise the developmental needs and capacity of children and avoid excessive training or competition and either pushing them against their will or putting undue pressure on them.

## 1.2 CONDUCT TO BE AVOIDED

In the context of your role within Hockey the following practice should be avoided:

- having 'favourites' – this could lead to resentment and jealousy by other children and could be misinterpreted by others
- spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others
- entering children's bedrooms on trips away from home, unless in an emergency situation or in the interest of health and safety. If it is necessary to enter rooms, alert the occupants by knocking and announcing your intention to enter. The door should remain open, if appropriate
- where possible, doing things of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves. Where it is necessary to help children with personal tasks e.g. toileting or undressing, these tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of the child and where possible, the parents. Respect and be sensitive to the needs and wishes of the child. Do not take on the responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained e.g. manual assistance for a child with a physical disability.

### 1.3 CONDUCT NEVER TO BE SANCTIONED

In the context of your role within Hockey, the following practices should never be sanctioned:

- engaging in sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- engaging in rough or physical contact except as permitted within the rules of the game or competition
- forming intimate emotional or physical relationships with children
- allowing or engaging in touching a child in a sexually suggestive manner
- allowing children to swear or use sexualised language unchallenged
- making sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun
- reducing a child to tears as a form of control
- allowing allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- inviting or allowing children to stay with you at your home. If this is required e.g. in an emergency situation, ensure you have parental permission, where possible, and advise colleagues of the circumstances as soon as possible
- sharing a room with a child for sleeping accommodation. It should never be planned to share a room with a child. If sharing is required in exceptional circumstances, seek permission from the child and parent in advance. Where possible ensure that at least two adults, preferably male and female, are in the room.

## 2 WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE

Coaches, Officials and Volunteers have a duty of care to children and therefore need an understanding of what is Child Abuse. There are a number of types of abuse to be aware of.

- Physical Injury (Hit, Kicked, Punched, etc)
- Physical neglect (Not being properly fed, clothed or poor hygiene)
- Sexual Abuse (Inappropriate sexual behaviour or language, indecent assault, sexual intercourse)
- Emotional Abuse (Constantly criticised, ignored, humiliated, exposed to family violence)

Children and young people rarely tell if they are being abused, however there may be signs which make you concerned and may be an indication of a child being abused or neglected.

The child or young person may

- Have unexplained bruising or bruising in an unusual place
- Appear afraid, quiet or withdrawn
- Appear afraid to go to a certain place
- Be left unattended or unsupervised
- Have too much responsibility for their age
- Be acting out in a sexually inappropriate manner
- Be misusing drugs or alcohol

The adult may be

- Acting in a violent or sexual manner towards the child
- Misusing drink or drugs whilst caring for a child
- Verbally abusive towards a child

If you notice any of these signs and / or are worried, please take action to protect the child.

## **2.1 WHAT TO DO IF A DISCLOSURE IS MADE TO YOU**

A disclosure is when a young person opens up about something personal that has happened to them. It usually involves the development of trust between the young person and the person they disclose to.

As a Coach, Team Captain or Volunteer, you are in a position to develop positive relationships involving trust and respect with young people. This means that children might wish to disclose something to you. As a person they trust and respect it is important how you behave if this occurs and also what you do with the information.

## **2.2 HOW TO LISTEN TO A DISCLOSURE**

- React calmly so as not to frighten the child/vulnerable adult.
- Listen to the child/vulnerable adult.
- Do not show disbelief.
- Tell the child/vulnerable adult that he/she is not to blame and that he/she was right to tell.
- Take what the child/vulnerable adult says seriously, recognising the difficulties inherent in interpreting what a child/vulnerable adult says, especially if they have a speech disability and/or differences in language.
- Do not pre-suppose that the experience was bad or painful - it may have been neutral or even pleasurable.
- Always avoid projecting your own reactions onto the child or vulnerable adult.
- If you need to clarify, keep questions to the absolute minimum to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said.
- If you need to clarify or the statement is ambiguous, use open-ended, non-leading questions.
- Do not introduce personal information from either your own experiences or those of other children or vulnerable adults.
- Reassure the child or vulnerable adult.

### **2.3 WHAT TO DO AFTER A DISCLOSURE HAS BEEN MADE TO YOU**

- Listen to the child as detailed above.
- Acknowledge the information received.
- Pass the information to both the manager of the event or activity and the Child and Vulnerable Adult Officer and if appropriate the parents/guardians/carers of the child or vulnerable adult
- Make a full written record of the disclosure on the day you receive the disclosure.
- Sign and date the record then pass it to the Child and Vulnerable Adult Officer.
- Pass your concerns to the Social Work Department or the Police in the area where the abuse is alleged to have occurred immediately (these are available 24 hours a day). Act on any advice given. At the earliest opportunity tell the Child and Vulnerable Adult Officer about the action taken.

## **3 WHAT SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE TO YOU**

Child Protection is an issue Hockey is taking seriously and as such all Clubs should have a Child Protection Officer. This should be your first point of contact in all cases where you feel you need support. Where they are not available support can be gained from Police, Social Work or ParentLine Scotland (0808 800 2222) In all cases, approaching these organisations is not suggesting that abuse has take place but gaining support from the experts in the field.

The information contained in this leaflet has been extracted from [Insert Club Name] Hockey Clubs Child Protection Policy. A full copy of this is available from the Child Protection Officer if required.