

OLD HALESONIANS HOCKEY CLUB

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Child Welfare Policy and Procedures

Old Halesonians Hockey Club (OHHC) recognises its moral and legal obligation to ensure that, the officials, coaches, managers and other volunteers who have a responsibility for young people within the club provide them with the highest possible standard of care.

Through the implementation of a policy for the welfare of young people and the support of its members. OHHC will endeavour to maintain the professionalism and safeguard of good practice which are associated with the game of hockey.

The policy outlines the following key areas:

- It recognises the responsibility of all those involved in the club to safeguard and promote the interests and well being of the young people with whom they are working.
- It provides a framework on the recruitment, selection, suitability and deployment of individuals working with young people.
- It emphasises the value of working closely in partnership with coaches, parent/carers, professionals and volunteers to protect children and young players from harm and discrimination.
- It acknowledges that abuse does take place in sport. Raising awareness and understanding of the main forms of abuse, establishing communication and reporting procedures if abuse is suspected will further safeguard the young players, coaches and all others working within the club.

Introduction

- Anyone under the age of 18 within OHHC will be considered as a young person for the purposes of this document.
- The welfare of all young people is paramount.
- All young people, whatever their age, gender, creed, culture, ability, language, religious belief, racial origin, and/or sexual identity should be able to enjoy the game in a fun, environment safe from abuse of any kind.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- For the purpose of this Policy, the word "Members" means Official, Coach, Manager, Umpire, Committee Member and any other Adult in whatever role including Spectators.
- For the purpose of this Policy, the word "Parent/Carers" includes "Person with Legal Responsibility".
- All individuals within OHHC who work with young people will be made aware of good practice in order to try to ensure that they are not placed in situations where unmerited allegations are made.
- OHHC will work with Parent/Carers to try to ensure that all youngsters with OHHC enjoy the game in a safe environment.
- OHHC recognises the statutory responsibilities of Social Services Departments and the Police to ensure the welfare of young people and is committed to complying with Local Area Child Protection Committee Procedures.

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RECOGNISING ABUSE OR POOR PRACTICE

In order to provide young people within OHHC with the best possible experiences and opportunities in hockey, it is imperative that all involved operate within an accepted ethical framework and demonstrate exemplary behaviour. This not only ensures that OHHC makes a positive contribution to the development of young people and safeguards their welfare, but also protects all OHHC members from false allegations of abuse or poor practice.

It is not always easy to differentiate poor practice from abuse, albeit intentional or unintentional. It is not, therefore, the responsibility of adults within the club to determine whether or not abuse is taking place. It is however their responsibility to try to identify poor practice and possible abuse whenever and wherever it may occur and to act if they have a concern about the welfare of a young person/s.

The four main types of abuse are:

Emotional abuse

In a hockey situation, emotional abuse may occur when,

- A player is provided with repeated negative feedback.
- A young player's efforts to progress are repeatedly ignored.
- When performance levels above those which the young player is capable of are repeatedly demanded, and/or the winning ethic is over emphasized.

Abuse by neglect

In a hockey situation neglect may occur when:

- Young players are left alone without proper supervision.
- A young player is exposed to unnecessary heat or cold without fluids or protection.
- A young player is exposed to an unacceptable risk of injury.

Physical abuse

In a hockey situation physical abuse may occur when:

- Members expose young players to exercise / training which disregard the capacity of the player's immature and growing body.
- Members expose young players to overplaying, over training or fatigue.
- Members expose young players to alcohol, or give them the opportunity to drink alcohol below the legal age.
- Members expose young players to performance enhancing drugs and recommend that they take them.

Sexual abuse

The close proximity of Members to young people provides opportunities for potential abusers to exploit their position of trust to sexually abuse

Bullying

Bullying is not always easy to define and will not always be an adult abusing a young person. It may be that the bully is a young person. There are three main types of bullying:

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- Physical e.g. hitting, kicking, theft.
- Verbal e.g. racist or homophobic remarks.
- Emotional e.g. persistent negative feedback.

All of these will include:

- Deliberate hostility and aggression towards another individual.
- An individual who is weaker and less powerful than the bully or bullies.
- An outcome which is always painful and distressing for the individual.

The competitive nature of hockey makes it a potential environment for the bully. This may manifest itself in some of the following ways:

- A Parent/Carer who pushes too hard.
- A coach who adopts a win at all costs philosophy.
- A player who intimidates others.
- In official who is over officious.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The role of the Club

- To appoint a Child Welfare Officer who will act as the first point of contact for concerns about the welfare of young people.
- To accept that all officers and committee members have a responsibility in this area and be prepared to respond to any indication of poor practice or abuse and to put in place structures and systems to ensure that this is followed in practice.
- To endeavour to ensure all relevant officials who have regular supervisory contact with children or a management responsibility for those working with young people undertake a Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau disclosure.
- To endeavour to ensure that relevant training is available for all those working with young people by providing access to appropriate 'Safeguarding and Protecting Children' Courses and appropriate EH Coaching courses.
- Requires club members to adopt and abide by the Club's Codes of Conduct, Procedures and Policies.

Coaches and Managers Responsibility;

- Be familiar with and adhere to the OHHC Child Protection Policy and Good Practice Guidelines.
- Undertake any relevant training identified by the club
- Undertake a Criminal Record Bureau disclosure
- Keep written records of player medical information, attendance, parent/carers contact details

Parent/Carers should;

- Ensure that OHHC has relevant details relating to their child.
- Share any concerns initially with the OHHC Child Welfare Officer.
- Be involved in and supportive of OHHC activities and members.
- Assist in the supervision of the young player where able and when appropriate.

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TAKING APPROPRIATE ACTION

This relates to anyone working with young people within OHHC – described as “Members”.
The Club will take all allegations seriously and appropriate action will be pursued.

POOR PRACTICE:

Constitutes any behaviour which contravenes the Code of Conduct and OHHC Good Practice Procedure in the hockey setting.

OHHC will follow its Child Protection incident reporting procedure if a young person discloses concern about someone’s behaviour towards them within the club or an adult expresses concerns about the welfare of a young person/s. Please refer to the procedure for more information.

Non action is not an option. “The welfare of a young person is paramount”. Delay in acting can increase the risk to a child.

Signed (Club Chairman): Date:

Print Name:

Signed (Club Secretary): Date:

Print Name: