



BLACKHEATH & OLD ELTHAMIANS
HOCKEY CLUB

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY STATEMENT

Blackheath & Old Elthamians Hockey Club accepts the England Hockey Policy and definitions for Child Protection, as follows:

England Hockey believes:

- That safety and welfare of children should always be of paramount importance, whatever circumstances.
- A child, regardless of age, ability, gender, racial origin, religious belief and sexual orientation has a right to be protected from abuse.
- The rights, dignity and worth of a child should always be respected.
- That everyone with a role in working with children has a moral and legal responsibility to safeguard and promote a child's welfare particularly when it comes to protecting children from abuse.
- That special care is needed in dealing with children whose age, inexperience or ability makes them particularly vulnerable to abuse.

England Hockey:

- Has therefore adopted this Child Protection Policy to ensure that the welfare and safety of children in England Hockey's care or custody is always the primary consideration.
- Is committed to providing an environment where children can learn about, participate in and enjoy hockey free from harassment or abuse.
- Is committed to the delivery of a National Child Welfare Implementation plan that will enable the whole hockey environment to;
- Accept moral and legal responsibility to implement procedures, to provide a duty of care for young people, safeguard their well-being and protect them from abuse.
- Respond to any allegations appropriately and implement the appropriate disciplinary and appeals procedures.
- Respect and promote the rights, wishes and feelings of young people and disabled adults.
- Recruit, train and supervise employees and volunteers to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect young people from abuse, and themselves against false allegations.
- Require staff and volunteers to adopt and abide by the England Hockey Conduct, Equity, Health & Safety, Child Protection & Discipline Policies.

Who this policy applies to:

The Children Act 1989 states that anyone who is involved in the care of children should "do what is reasonable in the circumstances for the purpose of safeguarding or promoting the child's welfare". The England Hockey Child Protection Policy applies to any person or organisation involved in the care of children in hockey. A 'Child' is defined as any person under the age of 18 years AND anyone over 18 years who may be vulnerable by nature of any impairment or disability.



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ENGLAND HOCKEY - CHILD WELFARE DEFINITIONS

The difference between Poor Practice & Abuse

Poor Practice

Poor practice includes any behaviour that contravenes England Hockey Policy on Ethics, Conduct and Discipline as constituted around the following:

- Rights – for example of the player, the parent, the coach, the official etc.
- Responsibilities – for example responsibility for the welfare of the players, the sport, the profession of coaching/umpiring, their own development.
- Respect – for example of other players, officials and their decisions, coaches, the rules.

Abuse

Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. Children can be abused by adults or other children. It is generally accepted that there are four main forms of abuse. The following definitions are taken from Sportscheck (NSPCC, July 2002)

• Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or a carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child they are looking after. This situation is commonly described as factitious illness, Fabricated or induced illness in children or 'Munchausen Syndrome by proxy' after the person who first Identified the situation. A person might do this because they enjoy or need the attention they get through having a sick child.

Physical abuse, as well as being a result of a deliberate act, can also be caused through omission or the failure to act to protect.

• Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve making a child feel or believe that they are worthless or uninvolved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may also involve causing children to frequently feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of a child. Some levels of emotional abuse are involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

• Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of, or consents to, what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative acts such as rape, buggery or oral sex or non-penetrative acts such as fondling.



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Sexual abuse may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexual inappropriate ways. Boys and Girls can be sexually abused by males and/or females, by adults and by other young people. This includes People from all different walks of life.

- **Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic and/or physiological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or a carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, leaving a young child home alone or the failure to ensure that a child gets the appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

It is accepted that in all forms of abuse there are elements of emotional abuse, and that some children are subjected to more than one form of abuse at any one time. These four definitions do not minimise other forms of maltreatment.

Recent inter-agency guidance draws attention to other sources of stress for children and families, such as social exclusion, domestic violence, the mental illness of a parent or a carer, or drug or alcohol misuse. All of these areas may have a negative impact on a child's health and development and may be noticed by an organisation caring for a child. If it is felt that any one of these areas adversely affects a child's wellbeing, the same procedure should be followed.

CHILD WELFARE PROCEDURES

Who these procedures apply to:

The Children Act 1989 states that anyone who is involved in the care of children should "do what is reasonable in the circumstances for the purpose of safeguarding or promoting the child's welfare". The England Hockey Child Protection Procedures apply to any person or organisation involved in the care of children in hockey. A 'Child' is defined as any person under the age of 18 years AND anyone over 18 years who may be vulnerable by nature of any impairment or disability.



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Recognising Child Abuse

Recognising child abuse is not easy, and it is not your responsibility to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place or a child is at significant risk. You do, however, have a responsibility to act if you have a concern

The following information is not designed to turn you into an expert, but it will help you to be more alert to the signs of possible abuse.

1. Physical abuse

Most children will collect cuts and bruises in their daily life. These are likely to be in places where there are bony parts of the body, like elbows, knees and shins.

Some children, however, will have bruising which can almost only have been caused non-accidentally.

An important indicator of physical abuse is where bruises or injuries are unexplained or the explanation does not fit the injury, or when it appears on parts of the body where accidental injuries are unlikely, e.g. on the cheeks or on the thighs. A delay in seeking medical treatment, when it is obviously necessary is also a cause for concern. Bruising may be more or less noticeable on children with different skin tones or from different racial groups and specialist advice may need to be taken.

The Physical signs of abuse may include:

- Unexplained Bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body
- Bruises which reflect hand marks or fingertips (from slapping or pinching)
- Cigarette Burns
- Bite Marks
- Broken Bones
- Scalds

Changes in behaviour which could also indicate physical abuse:

- Fear of parents being approached for an explanation
- Aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts
- Flinching when approached or touched
- Reluctance to get changed, for example wearing long sleeves in hot weather
- Depression
- Withdrawn Behaviour
- Running away from home

Examples of physical abuse in sport could include when the nature and intensity of training and competition exceeds the capacity of the child's immature and growing body; where drugs are used to enhance performance or delay puberty.



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2. Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse can be difficult to measure, and often children who appear to be well cared for may be emotionally abused by being taunted, put down or belittled. They may receive little or no love, affection or attention from their parents or carers. Emotional abuse can also take the form of children not being allowed to play/mix with other children.

The physical signs of emotional abuse may include:

- A failure to thrive or grow, particularly if the child puts on weight in other circumstances, e.g. in hospital or away from the parents' care
- Sudden speech disorders
- Developmental delay, either in terms of physical or emotional progress

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate emotional abuse include:

- Neurotic behaviour, e.g. hair twisting, rocking
- Being unable to play
- Fear of making mistakes
- Self harm
- Fear of parent being approached regarding their behaviour

Examples of emotional abuse in sport could include constant criticism, name-calling, and sarcasm, bullying or unrealistic pressure to perform to high expectations consistently.

3. Sexual Abuse

Adults who use children to meet their own sexual needs abuse both boys and girls of all ages, including infants and toddlers. Usually, in cases of sexual abuse it is the child's behaviour, which may cause you to become concerned, although physical signs can also be present. In all cases, children who talk about sexual abuse do so because they want it to stop. It is important therefore, that they are listened to and taken seriously.

The physical signs of sexual abuse may include:

- Pain or itching in the genital/anal areas
- Bruising or bleeding near genital/anal areas
- Sexually transmitted disease
- Vaginal discharge or infection
- Stomach pains
- Discomfort when walking or sitting down
- Pregnancy

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate sexual abuse include:

- Sudden or unexpected changes in behaviour, e.g. becoming aggressive or withdrawn
- Fear with being left with a specific person or group of people
- Having Nightmares
- Running away from home
- Sexual knowledge which is beyond their age or developmental level



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- Sexual drawings or language
- Bedwetting
- Eating problems such as overeating or anorexia
- Self harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts
- Saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone about
- Substance or drug abuse
- Suddenly having unexplained sources of money
- Not allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence)
- Acting in a sexually explicit way towards adults

In sport, coaching techniques that involve physical contact with children could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed. The power of the coach over young performers, if misused, may also lead to abusive situations developing.

4. Neglect

Neglect can be a difficult form of abuse to recognise, yet have some of the most lasting and damaging effects on children.

The physical signs of neglect may include:

- Constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from other children
- Constantly dirty or 'smelly'
- Loss of weight, or being constantly underweight
- Inappropriate dress for the conditions

Changes in behaviour which may also indicate neglect may include:

- Complaining of being tired all the time
- Not requesting medical assistance and/or failing to attend appointments
- Having few friends
- Mentioning their being left alone or unsupervised

The above list is not meant to be definitive but as a guide to assist you. It is important to remember that many children and young people will exhibit some of these indicators at some time, and the presence of one or more should not be taken as proof that abuse is occurring. There may well be other reasons for changes in behaviour, such as death or the birth of a new baby in their family, relationship problems with their parents/carers, etc. Neglect in sport could include a teacher or coach not ensuring that children are safe, exposing them to undue cold or heat or to unnecessary risk of injury.



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Responding to Poor Practice and Abuse

Responding to a child:

If a child says or indicates that he or she is being abused, or information is obtained that gives concern that a child is being abused, the person receiving this information should:

- Take what the child says seriously
- React calmly so as not to frighten the child.
- Tell the child that he / she is not to blame and were right to tell
- Reassure the child but do not make promises of confidentiality, which might not be feasible in the light of subsequent developments.
- Keep questions to the absolute minimum to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said.
- Make a full record of what has been said, heard and/or seen as soon as possible.
- Ask the child if immediate protection is needed.

Responding to suspicions or allegations:

- If anyone has concerns that abuse may have taken place, these should be directed to the Club Welfare Officer, who shall report it to the EH Child Welfare Officer who will report to Social Services, the Police or the NSPCC and provide further guidance.
- A full record of what has been said, heard and / or seen including dates and times should be completed and forwarded to the Club Welfare Officer.

In urgent cases when the Club Welfare Officer is not available then the EH Child Welfare Officer and/or local Social Services or the Police should be contacted.

- Social Services will always be happy to discuss, even hypothetically, any concerns a person may have about child protection matters and advise on whether it is necessary to make an official referral.

Allegation against a person working within hockey (volunteer and professional)

- It is important that anyone dealing with children should be aware that not all child abuse occurs within the extended family setting.
- It is essential that all responsible adults must be vigilant and aware that any inappropriate actions may lead to putting themselves at risk.
- All responsible adults should be aware that any allegations made against them will be taken seriously and will be investigated according to the steps outlined in the EH Child Welfare Pack.
- An individual against whom allegations / suspicions have been raised will be treated fairly and with respect, and is presumed to be innocent until held to be otherwise.
- All allegations, suspicion, comment or complaint will be treated in the utmost confidence – this applies equally to the child, the person making the allegation or the person against whom the allegation is made.



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- Should any club / county or regional association be informed that an allegation of abuse has been made against an adult within their organisation the EH Child Welfare Officer must be notified immediately.
- Should any person find themselves accused of any form of abuse they should contact the EH Child Welfare Officer for advice.

CHILD PROTECTION IMPLEMENTATION

The England Hockey Child Protection implementation plan highlights the action that needs to be taken, by whom, how and when in order to implement the England Hockey Child Welfare Plan.

The purpose for the implementation plan is to:

- Disseminate the messages of the England Hockey Child Welfare Pack so that they reach and influence all organisations and individuals within the hockey environment.
- Operate sound recruitment procedures for paid and voluntary staff in hockey.
- Identify and enable the appropriate child protection training for staff and volunteers.
- Remain updated with legislation related to child welfare.
- Monitor and update the implementation plan annually.
- Measure the impact of the Pack on an annual basis.