

## **Gloucester City Hockey Club (GCHC)**

### **Club Child Protection Guidelines For Good Practice**

(5 pages Issue 1 dated 23/01/06)

#### **Introduction**

All persons with responsibility for dealing with children in any hockey context on behalf of GCHC need to familiarise themselves with this document.

It is widely accepted that we all have a role to play in protecting children from abuse but it is extremely important that all people who work with children are aware that there are issues of good practice in which it is everyone's interest to follow.

Advice given here is meant to supplement other child protection literature. Information about other documents can be obtained from the GCHC Club Welfare Officer (CWO), The National Child Welfare officer at England Hockey or the NSPCC.

GCHC recommends that everyone connected with hockey adopts the following principles:

- The child's welfare comes first
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse must be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

Children are defined as being under 18 years of age. Reference to coach/leader should be understood to mean coaches, umpires, organisers and all other persons working in hockey, professional or volunteer.

#### **1.0 Good Practice Guidelines**

- Promoting Good Practice can help you reduce situations occurring in which could be seen or misconstrued as inappropriate or abusive. This helps to protect everyone in the organisation.
- To create the best conditions possible for young people to develop skills in a safe and friendly environment.
- To provide the highest possible quality coaching.
- To ensure that the qualifications and experience of coaching are verified.
- The organisation takes responsibility for ensuring there are sufficient adults available who have relevant training and qualifications in relation to coaching, child protection and first aid.
- That young people are listened to, given a sense of belonging and enjoyment whilst under the supervision of GCHC.

- Information Including Codes of Practice and Guidelines are made available to all parents/carers.
- To ensure the safety and well being of young people and those responsible for their care within the organisation should not unless exceptional circumstances:
  - a Spend any period of time alone with a child away from others
  - b Take children alone on a car journey however short.
  - c Take children to their or your home
  - d Leave children/young persons unsupervised
- Abusive or discriminatory language is unacceptable by any person involved with the organisation i.e. children/young people or adults (including parents).
- It is more important that each coach/helper knows their responsibilities as outlined in these guidelines and relevant documentation from the Sports Governing Body, England Hockey.
- Sessions are planned in advance and take place in designated public/open areas where all relevant health and safety checks have been undertaken.
- In the event of an injury or accident a qualified First Aider should be immediately available.
- Always seek the parent/carers consent if he/she is very young or disabled and needs help to go to the toilet.
- If the children/young people are involved in any transport arrangements as part of the organisation's activities consent of the parent/carer must be obtained via the membership application form.
- The club will liaise appropriately with the parents, carers, officials and coaches to ensure that best practice is followed in maintaining the child/young persons welfare.
- Coaches/Leaders must have emergency contact information for all children in their charge.

## **2.0 Recruitment of Staff and Training**

- Good Practice in recruitment procedures is a method of effective protection for children/young people. It is also an effective way to protect staff and volunteers from false accusations, although these are rare.
- At least two references should be taken up – where possible, one associated with former work with children/young people and one with previous sport involvement. These references should be in writing and followed up orally.
- State that you reserve the right to seek police and social service checks as necessary.
- All coaches will be screened and have or be working towards qualifications e.g Coaching awards, first aid and Good Practice & Child Protection.

- All other volunteers which includes helpers, leaders, and those who manage and maintain children's personal details will also be screened.
- The appointed/elected Club Welfare Officer (CWO) will be Independently screened by the club via England Hockey. This person will have an increased awareness of Child Protection issues and he/she is the first point of call for any issues concerning children.

### **3.0 The Responsible Coach**

#### **Coaches should never:**

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- Share a room with a child or enter a room without someone else present.
- Allow or engage in any inappropriate touching.
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun.
- Allow allegations of a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Do things of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves.
- Invite or allow children to stay with you at your home unsupervised.
- Allow bullying or bad behaviour by children.

GCHC has documented Codes of Conduct for Coaches, Parents/Carers, Officials/Volunteers, and Senior Players.

### **4.0 Activities**

#### **4.1 Coaches should always ensure that**

- The facilities and surrounding area is safe and of adequate size to accommodate the number of children/young people in attendance.
- Children/young people are not put in any physical danger through inappropriate grouping.
- Children/young people do not play more than what is suitable for their age and ability.
- All children/young people are sufficiently protected from the weather.
- Parents are fully aware of the start and finish times of the session/match.
- A qualified first aider is in attendance
- There is a minimum of one coach or volunteer for every twelve children
- They are in possession of emergency contact and any relevant medical details for all the children in their charge

#### **4.2 Coaches should not**

- Hold meetings with children/young people while they are changing.
- Be alone with any children/young people while they are changing or showering.

- Offer to take any children/young people home or allow others to without specific permission from parents/carers.

## **5.0 Steps to be taken in relation to Child Protection**

There are many complex issues that may arise in relation to child abuse. The Children Act 1989 defines four categories of abuse:

- Physical
- Neglect
- Emotional
- Sexual abuse

Abuse may be the action or inaction by, for example, a coach, a volunteer or paid helper, family member or other young person. It can also be a combination of any or all of the above categories. **However, it should be recognised that the presence of one or more of these indicators is not proof that abuse is actually taking place.**

The CWO should not take any responsibility for investigating the matter in any way. Their primary role is to know where to go for advice and support and to have an awareness of the procedures, which must be followed in certain situations.

## **6.0 Disclosure of Abuse by a Child/Young Person**

### **6.1 DO**

- Listen to them – give them time to talk.
- Reassure them.
- Make notes as soon as possible after talking to the child, what they said exactly, where they told you, anyone else present, what you were doing at the time.
- Refer immediately to the CWO.
- Ensure maximum confidentiality.

### **6.2 DON'T**

- Promise the child/young person you will keep it a secret
- Ask leading questions or make assumptions – **Ok to ask**, “can you give the name of the person you are talking about?” **Not** “Was it? / Do you mean...?”
- Talk to anyone but the CWO

## **7.0 Role of CWO**

- Ensure the above guidelines are adhered to.
- Record own conversation with person/child to whom the disclosures were made.
- Contact the relevant Social Services Office and pass on full details including any factual information you have on the child/young person i.e. name, age, address and any known family details.
- Provide contact telephone number for Social Services to get back to you if necessary.
- Ensure Social Services confirm who will liaise with the parent/carer.
- Inform the Child Welfare Officer at England Hockey of the actions you have taken.
- Increase awareness of child protection issues via appropriate training.

## **8.0 If Child/Young Person Alleges Abuse by Member of Organisation**

It is important that anyone working with children/young people understand that child abuse does not just occur in 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.

- Follow Disclosure of Abuse Guidelines
- **DO NOT** discuss with alleged perpetrator
- Ensure maximum confidentiality.
- If the allegation is against the CWO contact the local Social Services officer immediately.
- Do not speak to parents before seeking advice from Social Services.
- In the event of a parent/carer or other young person reporting abuse by a member of the organisation follow the above procedures.
- Should any other concern relating to Child Protection arise then seek advice, support and guidance in **all** situations from the relevant Social Services teams.
- It is **not** your role to investigate or make personal judgments about situations.
- The awareness of adults within the organisation (including parents) of these procedures ensures they understand that all situations are treated in the same way and no discrimination takes place.

## **References**

- i) Protecting Children – a guide for sportspeople – sports coach UK, The National Coaching Foundation.
- ii) The National Child Welfare Officer, England Hockey
- iii) The Children Act 1989
- iv) The NSPCC