

Surbiton Hockey Club Colts

CHILD PROTECTION STATEMENT

Surbiton Hockey Club adopts the Safeguarding and protecting Young People in Hockey Policy proposed by England Hockey and which states:

- That the safety and welfare of children should always be of paramount importance, whatever the circumstance.
- 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 physical state makes them particularly vulnerable to abuse.

This 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 the age of 18 who may be vulnerable by nature of impairment or disability. 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".

CHILD WELFARE DEFINITIONS

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.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, 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 (Munchausen syndrome by proxy).

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 unloved, inadequate or valued only so far as they meet the needs of another person.

Emotional abuse 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.

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.

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 sexually inappropriate ways.

Boys and girls can be sexually abused by males and females alike and by adults and other young people.

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 or 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 interagency 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 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.

RECOGNISING SIGNS OF ABUSE

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

The following information might help you to be more alert to the signs of possible abuse.

Physical abuse

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

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 if they are explained the explanation does not fit the injury

Or where the injury appears on parts of the body other than those mentioned above.

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 of different skin tones or from different racial groups and specialist advice may be needed.

**REMEMBER WHATEVER THE CIRCUMSTANCE,
IF YOU HAVE A CONCERN, TALK TO SOMEONE.**

Physical signs of abuse may include:

- Unexplained bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body
- Bruises which reflect hand marks or fingertips
- 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
- Wearing inappropriate clothing for the weather conditions
- Depression
- Withdrawn behaviour
- Running away from home

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

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, 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 or 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 parent's care.
- Sudden speech disorders
- Developmental delay either physically or emotionally.

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 parents being approached regarding 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.

Sexual Abuse

Usually in cases of sexual abuse it is the child's behaviour which may cause you to become concerned although physical signs may be present. In all cases children who talk about sexual abuse do so because they want it to stop. It is therefore **VERY IMPORTANT TO LISTEN TO THEM AND TAKE THEM SERIOUSLY.**

Physical signs of sexual abuse may include:

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

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate sexual abuse may include:

- Sudden or unexpected changes in behaviour e.g. becoming aggressive or withdrawn
- Fear of being left with a specific person or group
- Having nightmares
- Running away from home
- Sexual knowledge which is beyond their age or developmental level
- Sexual drawings or language
- Bedwetting
- Eating problems such as bulimia or anorexia
- Self harm
- Saying they have secrets which they cannot tell anyone
- Substance or drug abuse
- Suddenly having unexplained sources of money
- 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 could go unnoticed. The power of the coach over young performers, if misused, may also lead to abusive situations.

Neglect.

The physical signs of neglect may include:

- Constant hunger
- Constantly dirty or smelly
- Loss of weight or being constantly underweight
- Inappropriate dress for the weather conditions

Changes in behaviour which might indicate neglect may include:

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

Neglect in sport could include a teacher or coach failing to ensure that children are safe, exposing them to undue cold or heat or to unnecessary risk or injury.