

# **SAFEGUARDING & PROTECTING YOUNG PEOPLE**

## **PURPOSE**

We believe that all young people have the right to be safe and enjoy their involvement in hockey. This policy applies to all players and anyone working within hockey (in a paid or voluntary capacity).

This policy sits alongside other policies, including (but not limited to), the Code of Ethics and Behaviour.

## **POLICY**

Phoenix Reading hockey club support and follow the child welfare policies identified by England Hockey.

As a club we understand the purpose of the policies relating to the safeguarding and protecting of young people within our club. We understand the legal requirements relating to the codes of conduct and follow the established procedures relating to DBS checks, responding to concerns and taking appropriate actions.

The club has a nominate welfare officer, as well as a deputy welfare officer, who have both undertaken the England Hockey's Time to Listen course. This provides training in identifying the role's responsibility, how to create a child centred environment and identify what to do in specific child welfare situations.

Phoenix Reading recognise that all members of the club have a role to play with regards to the safeguarding of junior members. This includes respecting the rights, worth and dignity of all regardless of age, race, religion, gender reassignment, or sexual orientation.

Phoenix Reading Hockey Club accepts that its main responsibility is to promote the welfare and safety of the young players who are members of the club. This is done in the belief that by placing their welfare at the centre of our concerns we are ensuring that all necessary steps are taken to protect them from harm.

The club adopts the Safeguarding young people procedures and good practice guidelines issued by the English Hockey Association. All of our coaches are expected to adhere to the procedures outlined in these documents.

It is also recognised that Safeguarding is a mutual commitment between coaches and parents/guardians. Notwithstanding the procedures laid out below, coaches will work with parents/guardians to develop a mutually beneficial relationship. As part of their training, all coaches are given Child Protection Awareness Training.

The club will appoint at least one “Child Welfare Officer” (CWO) who will have the responsibility for ensuring that the club's procedures below are carried out in the correct manner. In the event of any incident involving a CWO, the vice CWO and or Junior Section Head will act in his/her place. At the core of all our procedures is the overriding principle that no child(ren) will be put at any further risk. (Names of the CWO and Junior Section Head are detailed in section x).

## **GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

- Safety and welfare is paramount.
- The views and opinions of young people are sought, considered and integrated into the club.
- All young people have the right to be protected from harm, and the rights, dignity and worth of all young people is always respected.
- Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility, but it is the responsibility of the CWO and other experts as necessary, to determine whether any abuse has taken place.
- It is everyone’s responsibility to report any concerns.
- Statutory agencies have a role in safeguarding young people and information should be shared with them as and if appropriate.
- The Safeguarding Policy applies to young people specifically and also where young people are involved within the adult game.

## **PROCEDURES**

There are 2 parts to these procedures: 1) responding to concerns and 2) taking appropriate action.

### **RESPONDING TO CONCERNS**

If a young person or adult has concerns it is important that they are able to discuss / report them to someone at the club. There are a number of reasons a person might need to report a concern: -

- Bullying
- A disclosure (something a young person has said)
- Signs or suspicions of abuse
- Allegations made against a member of staff, a volunteer or a parent
- Observation of inappropriate behaviour

If a young person or adult chooses to discuss their concerns with you, always:

- Stay calm.
- Reassure the person reporting their concerns that they have done the right thing in telling you.
- Keep an open mind and listen carefully to what is being said.

- Find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others – do not promise to keep secrets.
- Ask questions for clarification only, and at all times avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer.
- Tell them what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared.
- Report the incident to the CWO.
- Record in writing what was said.

## **BULLYING**

Bullying in any form is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. It is anything to do with the intention of hurting or intimidating, frightening or upsetting another person. It can be verbal, written or physical and it results in distress to the victim. All incidents of concerns of bullying will be acted upon swiftly.

Coaches will follow the procedure below in the event of (alleged or suspicions of) bullying:

- Investigate allegations/suspensions fully.
- Inform the CWO.
- Separate the young people involved and ensure safety.
- Enlist additional adult support to gather the facts.
- Talk to those involved independently (this will usually be the CWO and an adult in a similar role) in a non-threatening environment.
- Ensure all the facts gathered are objective and accurately recorded.

## **ABUSE**

It is not easy to determine where abuse has occurred. All adults have a duty of care to be vigilant and respond appropriately to suspicions of poor practice or abuse.

In the event of alleged or suspicions of abuse or neglect the following procedures should be followed: -

- Listen to what is being said carefully
- If a child approaches you, listen to what the child has to say with patience, without comment or leading questions, without making any promises. Try to assess whether immediate protection is required.
- At the earliest opportunity, make notes of what has been raised, including what has been said or heard, details of dates and times (where possible). The Safeguarding Referral Form can be used to record this information.
- Inform the CWO immediately. He / she will be responsible for deciding the appropriate course of action.

It should be noted that every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality is maintained when an allegation or disclosure is being investigated. Information will only be shared with individuals who need to know and who can help manage the concern.

## **TAKING APPROPRIATE ACTION**

It is *not* your responsibility to decide if a situation is poor practice, abuse or bullying, but it *is* your responsibility to report it. Bring the matter to the attention of the CWO who will decide on the appropriate course of action. This may be handled at club level, or it may be escalated further depending on the seriousness of the issue.

In the event of bullying, action may involve:-

- Apology from bully
- Informing parents
- Return of any “borrowed” items
- Support for coach and/or victim
- Encouraging change in bully’s behaviour
- Considering sanctions against perpetrators
- Informing other coaches about incident and action taken
- Keeping a record of actions taken
- Arranging a follow up meeting with family members reviewing progress
- Monitoring the behaviour of all parties involved

Depending on the situation, the CWO may decide to speak generally to the whole team regarding respect and support of each other and highlight the benefits in doing so.

In the event of alleged or disclosed abuse or neglect, the CWO may:-

- Inform Reading Social Services on 0118 937 3641 (office hours only)
- Contact 01344 786 543 (Emergency Duty Team – out of hours only)
- Inform Thames Valley Police, Castle Street, Reading, Berkshire RG1 7TH on 101 (the non-emergency number)
- Contact the police on 999 in an emergency situation
- Seek advice from the England Hockey Association

If the matter involves the child’s parents, they will not be informed. The CWO will raise the matter with Reading Social Services, who will discuss the situation with parents.

If the matter involves a coach, he /she will not be put in a situation whereby they come into contact with any children until the issue has been investigated and resolved (this is for the safety of the coach as well as the welfare of the child).

## **ADDITIONAL POINTS OF GOOD PRACTICE WHEN DEALING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE**

Everyone in a position of responsibility for young people should adhere to the following good practice guidelines:-

### **COMMUNICATION**

- Contact players only when necessary.
- Copy parents into written communication (such as e-mails).
- Speak with both the player and the parent if there is need in relation to playing, training or competition.
- Avoid phone calls or texting directly to the individual.

### **SOCIAL NETWORKING**

- Use social networking but set up your club as a 'page' not a personal profile.
- Consider the age of the people involved (the minimum age for most sites is 13).
- Involve parents with parental responsibility in communication with young people.
- Be clear what the site is and isn't to be used for.
- Protect yourself, your privacy and all confidential information.
- Do not accept friend or follower requests on your personal account if you are in a position of trust.
- Do not use photos of players without gaining written consent from the player and parents in advance.
- Do not use inappropriate language.

### **TRAVELLING AWAY**

Anyone travelling with a young person (including but not limited to Coaches and Managers) must:

- Provide parents and players with precise details of the trip.
- Have parents' written permission for the child's involvement and an agreed communication process, which will be either via the Consent Form, or by e-mail or text. Ensure that there is sufficient transport in advance and there is an appropriate ratio of adults to young people.
- Always have mixed gender adults if the children are mixed gender

- Always be the first at the meeting point and be the last to leave.

It should be noted that it is the responsibility of the parent to transport their child / children to and from the club or venue – not the coach.

Adults should avoid travelling alone with young people wherever possible. But if it is unavoidable, permission must be expressly given by the parent prior to travel. Young people must also travel as a passenger in the rear (not the front) of the vehicle, ensuring they wear a seatbelt.