

## THE INCLUSION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN ADULT HOCKEY MATCHES

### *A sample statement for Adult Hockey Leagues to adopt*

All clubs providing activities for children and young people have a responsibility to safeguard their welfare. The majority of children who participate in hockey do so in a safe and positive atmosphere with the support and encouragement of those involved with the sport. However a number of children do not have a positive experience and the \*\*\*\*\* League recognises the need to guard against individuals who may abuse their position. For the purpose of this document 'Young Players' refers to those under 18 years old.

Many clubs have members Under 18 years of age and many clubs field these players in their league teams. The \*\*\*\*\* League committee recognises that the opportunity for young players to participate in league competition is an important part of their personal development. There are a number of steps that a club can take in order to promote the welfare of the young people participating in adult league teams.

Within this document you will find advice and information about developing good practice in relation to child protection, specifically with regard to the inclusion of young players in \*\*\*\*\* League fixtures.

You should refer to the EH Child Welfare Pack for further guidance - available electronically on [www.hockeyonline.co.uk](http://www.hockeyonline.co.uk).

## GUIDANCE FOR CLUBS

### CLUB RESPONSIBILITIES

*A Club is responsible for ensuring that its members;*

- Respect the dignity and spirit of all players: children and young adults.
- Treat all players fairly and equitably.
- Establish supportive, positive environments for the purpose of healthy competition.
- Not take part in or tolerate behaviour that frightens, embarrasses, demoralises or negatively affects a young players self esteem.
- Not tolerate acts of aggression.
- Work towards eliminating harassment and abuse from the playing environment.
- Be prepared to intervene if a child or young person is being abused or neglected.
- Encourage engagement in "fair play" both during and outside of all playing activities. "Fair play" is defined as showing considerate regard for players, personnel, parents, spectators and officials; abiding by the rules of hockey; abiding by the officials decisions.
- Adhere to the policies of England Hockey & the NSPCC with regard to Child Protection, Equity & Coaching Conduct.

### GOOD PRACTICE

*Duty of Care*

Any team containing young players should have a designated adult with the following responsibilities (ideally this person should be a qualified, insured coach and first aider)

- Act as the direct contact for parents/guardians of the young players
- Keep medical and emergency contact details for the young players
- Ensure the safe collection and return of the young players as agreed with the parent/guardian

*Playing*

- The interests of the young player is paramount.
  - *E.g. Including a young player purely to make up a full team is not appropriate.*
- Young players should not play in an environment that is unsuitable for their age or ability.
  - *I.e. The safety of the young player, the risk of involvement.*
- Young players should have adequate breaks for the length and intensity of the match.
- Adults take care when participating in games with young people.
- Young players are adequately protected from the effects of the weather.

- *E.g. A young player should not be left alone on the sideline without guidance*
- All children wear the appropriate kit (including goalkeepers) for the activity in which they are involved. It is recommended that all field players wear mouth, hand and shin guards.

### *Changing*

- *Adult players should not change or shower at the same time using the same facility as young players.*
- *If children are uncomfortable changing or showering in public no pressure should be placed on them to do so. Encourage them to do this at home.*

### *Injuries and illness*

- Details of any injury or illness should be recorded and kept. Where children are involved injuries must be reported to the parents at the first opportunity.