



# Merton Hockey Club

## Safeguarding Policy

Welfare Officer: Sarah Pope | Revised & adopted 26/11/24

Email: [welfare@mertonhockey.gov.uk](mailto:welfare@mertonhockey.gov.uk)

### **Useful Contacts**

England Hockey [safeguarding@englandhockey.co.uk](mailto:safeguarding@englandhockey.co.uk) 01628 897 500

## **Introduction**

Merton Hockey Club (MHC) adheres to the England Hockey's Safeguarding and Protecting Young People in Hockey Policy, with continual review of working practices to achieve best practice as set out in the policy.

## **Definitions (as defined in the England Hockey Policy)**

**Young People** – anyone who has not reached their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

**Vulnerable People** - Aged 18 years or over; who may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

**Hockey Family** - all individuals, clubs, associations and other organisation's involved in any capacity in the game of hockey, and whether or not being members of England Hockey. For the avoidance of doubt, this includes all players and anyone working within hockey (in a paid or voluntary capacity, and whether as an employee or on a self-employed or other work basis) including all coaches, umpires, referees and other officials.

**Position of Trust** – all adults who work with young people in hockey are in a position of trust which has been invested in them by parents/guardians, the sport and the young person.

## **Commitment**

The club works in accordance with the following statement:

Merton Hockey Club (MHC) believes that all young or vulnerable people have the right to be safe and enjoy their involvement in hockey. The club accepts its responsibility to promote the welfare of young and vulnerable people and help protect them from harm.

## **Obligation**

Everyone working with young or vulnerable people in a paid or voluntary capacity for, or on behalf of MHC have read and understood this policy. Where applicable undertake their role in facilitating the required procedures set out in this policy.

For the purposes of this policy, adults working with young or vulnerable people include all those who are in a position of trust and may extend to team members where young and or vulnerable people play in adult teams.

Everyone within MHC must also;

- Abide by England Hockey's Code of Ethics and Behaviour (Respect), which specifies conduct in relation to the safeguarding of young people within hockey. [Respect - Full Document - Interactive.pdf \(kc-usercontent.com\)](#)
- Follow England Hockey reporting procedures where there are concerns relating to the safety or welfare of young or vulnerable people Appendix 1. [file \(eghockey.co.uk\)](#)

### **MHC Aims and Commitments**

This policy recognises that the welfare and interests of young people are paramount in all circumstances. MHC aims to ensure that regardless of age, ability or disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, socio-economic background, all young people are treated fairly.

Through understanding this policy and delivering best practice MHC aims to create;

- a positive and enjoyable experience of participating in activities with MHC in a safe and child centered environment.
- To protect young people from abuse whilst participating in MHC activities.

MHC acknowledges that some children, including disabled children and young people or those from ethnic minority communities, can be particularly vulnerable to abuse and we accept the responsibility to take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure their welfare. We will seek to keep young or vulnerable people safe by:

- Valuing them, listening to and respecting them.
- Ensuring that any complaints are communicated to Club Welfare Officer or relevant MHC Committee Member.
- Provide a safe physical environment for children, young people, staff and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance.
- Treat all children and young people with respect.
- Provide an example of good conduct you would wish others to follow.
- Respect a young person's right to personal privacy.
- Encourage young people and adults to feel comfortable enough to point out attitudes or behaviour that they do not like and challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations or suspicions of abuse.
- Recognise that special caution is required when dealing with sensitive issues with children or young people.

## **Procedures**

Enhanced DBS and child barred list checks are carried out every 3 years for those working and volunteering for MHC who undertake regulated activity as set out by England Hockey (EH).

This will apply to all coaches and captains (except for adult-only teams) and any other individual wishing to work with young people at MHC.

*Regulated activity definition: (EH have identified the following parts that are deemed relevant to hockey):*

*'Teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children'*

*Happens frequently (once a week or more) Or happens intensively (on 4 or more days in a 30-day period or overnight)*

*Is the role supervised?*

DBS shouldn't be done in isolation MHC encourages those in a position of trust also undertake specific Safeguarding training every three years.

Any concerns or 'whistleblowing' should be reported to the Club Welfare Officer in the first instance, with contact details available on the club website ([welfare@mertonhockey.co.uk](mailto:welfare@mertonhockey.co.uk)), or to the England Hockey Safeguarding Lead.

## **MHC Safeguarding Guidance**

MHC acknowledges that good practice when dealing with children is essential. All people caring for young or vulnerable people are expected to adhere to the following guidelines when dealing with players:

### **Supervision**

Always be publicly open when working with children. Ensure that wherever possible there is more than one adult present during activities with children and young people.

Recommended Supervision Ratios;

England Hockey recommends the following supervision ratios:

- *Children under 8 years old: 1 adult: 8 children (with a minimum of 2 adults)*
- *Children over 8 years old: 1 adult: 12 children (with a minimum of 2 adults)*

## **Physical Contact**

Manual support is rarely required in the sport of hockey. If an adult feels that it is necessary, the reasons should be clearly explained to the child. Be aware that any physical contact with a child or young person may be misinterpreted.

## **Changing rooms**

- Where possible parents should be responsible for their own child in the changing rooms.
- The following are examples of good practice when using changing rooms:
- Players aged 10 and under must always be supervised in changing rooms by two adults of the same gender as the players, who hold appropriate checks.
- When young people are playing in senior teams with adults, it may be the case that they will use changing rooms at the same time. In this event, young people should have access to separate showers/ changing space within that room for privacy. Young people and their parents must be informed of the club's policy on changing arrangements.
- If you are using a changing room for debriefs following a game, make sure that all parties have been informed and are suitably dressed.
- If you have young leaders (under 18) involved in running sessions for other young people, it is not appropriate for them change together as they are in a position of trust. Alternative arrangements should be provided to them for changing (i.e. before / after other young people or change at home).

## **Communication and Social Networks**

MHC club will follow all recommendation from EH for any person under 18 years of age. No-one should contact a player via text, phone or email without prior written consent of parents and even then parents are to be copied into all communications.

Communication with young people as recommended by England Hockey

When communicating with young people it is recommended that you: –

- Contact players only when necessary – if players need to be contacted urgently i.e. a change in training arrangement use 'spond' or set up a players to player 'grapevine' communication plan.
- Copy parents into written communication (i.e. letters or emails).
- Speak with a player and their parents if there is a need to communicate information in relation to playing, training or competition.

- Always follow the club's policy on communication detailed below, including social media with young people and their parents/guardians.

You should avoid: –

- Contacting a young person unnecessarily – contacting young people by phone, text or email should NEVER be undertaken without parental consent.
- Emailing young people directly as individuals (can be done as part of a disclosed list, once permission gained to do so).
- Using text as a medium of contact with a young person individually.
- Emailing one young person without copying in parents, other players or club members.
- Allowing any young person to be part of your personal social networking sites. This includes, but not limited to Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn.

All communications should be in the first instance face to face and if this is not possible by telephone conversation. When face to face conversations occur there should also be a second party present to witness the conversation.

When a telephone call is required the representative from MHC should first talk to the parent/guardian to explain the nature of the call and then to ask if they wish to advise their son/ daughter of the conversation and agree a suitable time for the call.

All non-verbal communications should be sent to the player and copied to parents once written consent has been obtained from the parent/guardian to communicate directly with junior. If no consent has been obtained all communications for any person U18 years of age should go direct to the parents.

Any teams using 'WhatsApp' should obtain written consent from parents to add any U18 to the group, with the additional offer for them to also be added to the group. The group admin will monitor the content of the chat to ensure its of an appropriate nature. There will be NO conversation/ chats regarding player selection or performance.

Be mindful that not all players will have access to WhatsApp and social media so please make sure that communication is inclusive to all players.

### **Club Social Media platforms**

All social media accounts should have a minimum of 2 admins both over 18 years old and associated directly with MHC. Social Media platforms will only be used in a positive way to promote and celebrate the successes of MHC.

Social network – Social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat etc. are widely used by young people. It is essential that individuals such as coaches who are in a position of trust over an U18 are not linked with young people on social media. Individuals in a position of trust are advised to set their privacy settings so that young people cannot access their information.

## **Photography**

Upon joining MHC junior players and their parents/guardian's will be required to indicate permission for the publication of the young persons photo or imagery to be published.

Prior to the publication of any young persons image the following should be checked

- The permission has been completed and permission granted.
- Personal details of the young person are not connected to the image i.e. a young persons full name, age or location.

## **Club photographers/videographers**

Club/event photographers do not fulfil the requirements of regulated activity in relation to DBS checks

When photographers/videographers are used to capture images of young people, good practice between the club and photographers/videographer will be agreed to ensure that all parties are protected.

When young people are being photographed/ filmed MHC ensure photographers/ videographers are able to identify those without consent.

## **Transport**

MHC acknowledges that many coaches and people in a position of trust are also parents of players and car pooling is an efficient and environmentally friendly way to attend games and training.

The following transport guidelines should be followed;

- Drivers must ensure the safety of passengers and ensure that their vehicle is roadworthy and that they have a valid licence and insurance cover.
- Drivers must only use vehicles with seat belts and ensure that their passengers are wearing these when in transit.
- Drivers should not be alone with a young person in the car at any time. If this situation arises, drivers need to ensure that the young person is in the back of the car and if possible

- Young people should always sit in the back of the car.
- Parents/guardians/carers must give written permission if their child/children are being transported in another adult car.
- Clear information on the expected time of departure and arrivals needs to be communicated to relevant people, i.e. parents/guardians/carers

### **Planning Competitions & Events, (Inc. Tours & Overnight Accommodation)**

When planning events, activities, competitions or tours that involve young people, parents/guardians will be provided with plans for the event/trip and a detailed welfare plan will be produced with consideration to the following;

- Travel/transport
- Contact details for all adults on trip
- Addresses of hotels/playing sites
- Medical info
- Parents contact details
- Code of conduct
- Alcohol guidance
- If there is a mix of genders, then appropriate changing/showering/sleeping facilities need to be arranged
- Reporting procedures
- Ratios
- Photography
- Missing player policy
- Roles and responsibilities of staff/volunteers
- Ensure appropriate checks for staff/ volunteers
- Communication
- Insurance
- If travelling abroad – passport/visas, insurance, foreign currency, medical considerations (e.g. vaccinations), mobile phones for contact •
- Risk assessment for trip

(This list is not exhaustive)

### **Responding to Concerns**

Concerns may be raised in response to the following:

- Something a young person has said to you - a disclosure
- Signs or suspicions of abuse
- Allegations made against a member of staff or a volunteer



- Allegations made about a parent / legal guardian, carer or someone not working within the sport
- Bullying
- A breach of England Hockey's Code of Ethics and Behaviour (Respect)
- Observation of inappropriate behaviour
- Anything which makes them uncomfortable based on inappropriate behaviour of an adult or changes in behaviour of a young person
- Inappropriate behaviour of a young person towards another young person
- Behaviour being contrary to England Hockey's Safeguarding and Protecting Young People in Hockey Policy and Procedures.
- Receiving a call from a statutory agency i.e. Police, Children's Services
- Reading or hearing something of concern about a member of the Hockey Family in the media

*This list is not exhaustive.*

*It is important to note that even if an incident or allegation occurs outside the hockey environment, it should still be reported to England Hockey if the adult or young person concerned is involved in hockey. This is in accordance with standard practice in sport.*

### **Always**

- Stay calm
- Reassure the person reporting their concerns that they have done the right thing in telling you
- Keep an open mind
- Listen carefully to what is said and take the person reporting it seriously
- 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 open questions for clarification only, avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer (i.e. yes or no questions).
- To help you to do this, try to ask questions starting with tell me about, explain to me, describe.
- Tell them what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared
- Report the incident to your Welfare Officer or England Hockey Ethics and Welfare Manager/ Team
- Record in writing what was said using the young person's own words as soon as possible, using the England Hockey Safeguarding Referral Form

[Review and sign document\(s\) | Docusign](#) Appendix 2 (template of online form).

## **Never**

- Panic.
- Make promises you cannot keep, including promises to keep secrets.
- Make a young person repeat the information unnecessarily.
- Question the detail of what the young person has shared.
- Delay in reporting to your Welfare Officer or England Hockey Ethics and Welfare Manager.
- Make assumptions.
- Approach the alleged abuser.
- Take sole responsibility.

## **Important reminders:**

- Your organisation's Welfare Officer should be your first point of contact.
- Minimise the number of people that you tell.

## **Review and Updating of Policy**

This policy will be reviewed and updated annually by the MHC Welfare Officer. It will be submitted to the MHC Committee following this date for approval at the next available Committee Meeting.

The Policy will also be reviewed on an ad-hoc basis following changes to statutory requirements and/or relevant serious case reviews.

## **Additional information**

Good Practice for coaches [SafeGuarding Good Practice 21.pdf](#)

England Hockey Safeguarding Policy [SafeGuarding Policy 2021.pdf](#)

Anti Bullying Alliance [Anti-Bullying Alliance](#)

Childline [Childline | Childline](#) 0800 1111

NSPCC [NSPCC | The UK children's charity | NSPCC](#) 0808 800 5000

Child Protection in Sport Unit [NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit | CPSU](#)

Home Office - Prevent training <https://www.support-people-susceptible-to-radicalisation.service.gov.uk/portal#awareness-course>