

COMMUNITY LINKS AND HUMAN EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

January, 2017

1. Introduction

Every child including (orphans/vulnerable children) living and interacting in the society is entitled to do so in an enjoyable and safe environment. **CLHEI** have a moral and legal obligation to ensure that, when given responsibility for children and other vulnerable groups would provide them with the highest possible standard of care.

CLHEI is committed to devising and implementing policies so that every staff/volunteer involved with children accepts their responsibilities to safeguard children from harm and abuse. This means to follow procedures to protect children and report any concerns about their welfare to appropriate authorities.

The aim of the policy is to promote good practice, providing children and young people with appropriate safety/protection whilst in the care of **CLHEI** and to allow staff and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

Definition of terms

Who is a Child/Young Person: A child/young person is defined as a person under the age of 18 who is under the care of an adult.

Orphans/Vulnerable Child: An orphan or vulnerable child (OVC) is a child under the age of 18 whose mother, father, both parents, and a primary caregiver has died, and who is in need of care or protection.

Child Protection: This refers to preventing and responding to violence, exploitation and abuse against children. It entails safeguarding children from any harm deliberate or otherwise and this policy states the responsibilities, measures and activities proposed to be taken. No violence against children is justifiable and all violence against children is preventable.

Child Abuse: Child abuse is defined as all forms of physical abuse, emotional ill treatment, sexual abuse and exploitation, neglect or

negligent treatment, commercial or other exploitation of a child and includes any actions that results in actual or potential harm to a child.

1.1 Policy Statement

CLHEI is committed to the following;

- the welfare of the child is paramount
- all children, whatever their age, culture, ability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity should be able to participate in (your sport) in a fun and safe environment
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from harm, discrimination and degrading treatment and to respect their rights, wishes and feelings
- all suspicions and allegations of poor practice or abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- The **CLHEI** employees/volunteers who work with children will be recruited with regard to their suitability for that responsibility, and will be provided with guidance and/or training in good practice and child protection procedures
- working in partnership with parents and children is essential for the protection of children.

1.2 Monitor and review the policy and procedures

The implementation of procedures should be regularly monitored and reviewed. The welfare officer should regularly report progress, challenges, difficulties, achievements gaps and areas where changes are required to the management committee.

The policy should be reviewed every 3 years or whenever there is a major change in the organisation or in relevant legislation.

2 Promoting Good Practice

2.1 Introduction

To provide children with the best possible experience and opportunities in everyone must operate within an accepted ethical framework.

It is not always easy to distinguish poor practice from abuse. It is therefore not the responsibility of employees/volunteer to make judgements about whether or not abuse is taking place. It is however their responsibility to identify poor practice and possible abuse and act if they have concerns about the welfare of the child.

This section will help you identify what is meant by good practice and poor practice.

2.2 Good Practice

All personnel should adhere to the following principles and action:

- always work in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets)
- make the experience of (your sport) fun and enjoyable: promote fairness, confront and deal with bullying
- treat all young people equally and with respect and dignity
- always put the welfare of the young person first, before winning
- maintain a safe and appropriate distance with players (e.g. it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them)
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact with young people. Where any form of manual/physical support is required it should be provided openly and with the consent of the young person. Physical contact can be appropriate so long as it is neither intrusive nor disturbing and the young person's consent has been given
- Involve parents/care givers wherever possible, e.g. where young people need to be supervised in changing rooms, encourage parents to

take responsibility for their own child. If groups have to be supervised in changing rooms always ensure parents, coaches etc work in pairs

- request written parental consent if club officials are required to transport young people in their cars
- gain written parental consent for any significant travel arrangements e.g. overnight stays
- ensure that if mixed teams are taken away, they should always be accompanied by a male and female member of staff
- ensure that at away events adults should not enter a young person's room or invite young people to their rooms
- be an excellent role model, this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people
- always give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of the young person and do not risk sacrificing welfare in a desire for club or personal achievements. This means avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will
- secure written parental consent for the club to act in loco parentis, to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid or other medical treatment if the need arises
- keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with details of any treatment given.

2.3 Poor Practice

The following are regarded as poor practice and should be avoided by all personnel:

- unnecessarily spending excessive amounts of time alone with young people away from others
- taking young people alone in a car on journeys, however short
- taking young people to your home where they will be alone with you

- sharing a room with a young person
- engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form
- allowing young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- making sexually suggestive comments to a young person, even in fun
- reducing a young person to tears as a form of control
- allow allegations made by a young person to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- do things of a personal nature that the young person can do for themselves

When a case arises where it is impractical/impossible to avoid certain situation e.g. transporting a young person on your car, the tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of the parent/caregiver and the young person involved.

If during your care you accidentally hurt a young person, the young person seems distressed in any manner, appears to be sexually aroused by your actions and/or if the young person misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done, report any such incidents as soon as possible to another colleague and make a written note of it. Parents should also be informed of the incident.

3 Defining Child Abuse

3.1 Introduction

Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm, it commonly occurs within a relationship of trust or responsibility and is an abuse of power or a breach of trust. Abuse can happen to a young person regardless of their age, gender, race or ability.

There are four main types of abuse: **physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect.** The abuser may be a family member,

someone the young person encounters in residential care or in the community, including sports and leisure activities. Any individual may abuse or neglect a young person directly, or may be responsible for abuse because they fail to prevent another person harming the young person.

Abuse in all of its forms can affect a young person at any age. The effects can be so damaging that if not treated may follow the individual into adulthood

Young people with disabilities may be at increased risk of abuse through various factors such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, isolation and a powerlessness to protect themselves or adequately communicate that abuse had occurred.

3.2 Types of Abuse

- **Physical Abuse:** The intentional use of physical violence against a child including hitting with or without objects, denying food, forced labour, and homicide, that either results in or has a high likelihood to resulting in harm on the child's health, survival, development or dignity. In sports, physical abuse may occur when the nature and intensity of training disregard the capacity of the child's immature and growing body.
- **Emotional Abuse:** the persistent emotional ill treatment of a young person, likely to cause severe and lasting adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve telling a young person they are useless, worthless, unloved, inadequate or valued in terms of only meeting the needs of another person. It may feature expectations of young people that are not appropriate to their age or development. It may cause a young person to be frightened or in danger by being constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted which may make the young person frightened or withdrawn.

Ill treatment of children, whatever form it takes, will always feature a degree of emotional abuse. Emotional abuse in sports may occur when the young person is constantly criticised, given negative feedback,

expected to perform at levels above their capabilities. Other forms could be name calling and bullying.

- **Sexual Violence:** constitutes sexual abuse like rape, masturbation, oral sex, fondling and sexual exploitation including child prostitution, pornography and trafficking. This also includes harmful traditional practices such as abduction, early marriage, and female genital mutilation. It covers all forms of sexual threats, assault, and interference.
- **Neglect** occurs when an adult fails to meet the young person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, to an extent that is likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development. For example, failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect from physical harm or danger, or failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

Refusal to give love, affection and attention can also be a form of neglect.

Neglect in sport could occur when a coach does not keep the young person safe, or exposing them to undue cold/heat or unnecessary risk of injury.

- **Child labour-** Children prematurely living adult lives, working long hours for low wages under conditions that can damage their health, physical and mental development, sometimes separated from their families, frequently deprived of meaningful education and playing opportunities that would open for them a better future. (This does not include teenagers working a few hours earning pocket money, children helping on the family farms, nor youngsters doing household chores.
- **Bullying** may come from another young person or an adult. Bullying is defined as deliberate hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a

period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. There are three main types of bullying.

It may be physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, slapping), verbal (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, name calling, graffiti, threats, abusive text messages), emotional (e.g. tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating, ignoring, isolating from the group), or sexual (e.g. unwanted physical contact or abusive comments).

3.3 Indicators of Abuse

1. Physical abuse.

physical indicators include:

- Unexplained bruises and welts on the face, lips, mouth, buttocks, thigh.
- Unexplained bruises reflecting the shape of the article used to inflict (belt, cord).
- Unexplained cigar burns, especially on soles, palms, back or buttocks.
- Unexplained fracture to the skull, arm, leg.
- Unexplained lacerations /abrasions to the mouth, lips, gums, eyes.

Behavioural indicators include:

- Afraid to go home
- Aggressive or withdrawn
- Behavioral extremes
- Wary of adult contacts
- Frightened by parents or guardians

2. Neglect

Physical indicators include:

- Consistent hunger, poor hygiene, inappropriate dress

- Consistent lack of supervision especially in dangerous activities or for long periods
- Unattended physical problems or medical needs
- Abandonment
- Losing weight without a just cause

Behavioural indicators include:

- Begging, stealing food
- Extended stays at school (early arrival and late departure)
- Constant fatigue or falling asleep in class.
- Alcohol or drug abuse.

3. Sexual Abuse

Physical indicators include:

- Difficulty in walking or sitting
- Torn, stained or bloody under-clothing
- Pain or itching in genital area
- Bruises or bleeding in external genitalia, vaginal or anal areas.

Behavioural indicators include:

- Unwilling to change for games / PE at school
- Withdrawn
- Bizarre, sophisticated or unusual sexual behaviour or knowledge
- Poor peer relationships
- Reports sexual assault by caretaker

4. Emotional abuse

Physical indicators include:

- Sleep disorders (Night mares/ restlessness)
- Wets the bed
- Hyperactive
- Eating disorders

- Exhibits developmental lags.

5. Behavioural indicators include:

- Over eager to please, lacks self confidence
- Exhibit inconsistent behaviour at home and at school
- Excessively anxious
- Depression
- Unwilling to discuss problems
- Withdrawn and aggressive
- Passive
- Attempts suicide
- Runs away from home
- Low self esteem
- Impatient
- Unable to communicate feelings, needs or desires
- Self-deprecating and has a negative self image

This section explains how to respond to allegations/suspicions.

3.4 Receiving Evidence of Possible Abuse

We may become aware of possible abuse in various ways. We may see it happening, we may suspect it happening because of signs such as those listed in section 3 of this document, it may be reported to us by someone else or directly by the young person affected.

In the last of these cases, it is particularly important to respond appropriately. If a young person says or indicates that they are being abused, you should:

- **stay calm** so as not to frighten the young person
- **reassure** the child that they are not to blame and that it was right to tell
- **listen** to the child, showing that you are taking them seriously
- **Keep questions to a minimum** so that there is a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said. The law is very strict and child

abuse cases have been dismissed where it is felt that the child has been led or words and ideas have been suggested during questioning. Only ask questions to clarify

- **Inform** the child that you have to inform other people about what they have told you. Tell the child this is to help stop the abuse continuing.
- **Safety of the child** is paramount. If the child needs urgent medical attention call an ambulance, inform the doctors of the concern and ensure they are made aware that this is a child protection issue
- **record** all information
- **report** the incident to the club/welfare officer

3.5 Reporting the Concern

All suspicions and allegations **MUST** be reported appropriately. It is recognised that strong emotions can be aroused particularly in cases where sexual abuse is suspected or where there is misplaced loyalty to a colleague. It is important to understand these feelings but not allow them to interfere with your judgement about any action to take.

CLHEI expects it's members and staff to discuss any concerns they may have about the welfare of a child immediately with the person in charge and subsequently to check that appropriate action has been taken.

4.6 Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only.

Declaration


On behalf of **CLHEI** we, the undersigned, will oversee the implementation of the Child Protection Policy and take all necessary steps to ensure it is adhered to.

Mr. Dennis Teghteh

BOARD CHAIRMAN



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

 19/5/2017

Date

19/5/2017

Date