



Governance policy for Safeguarding Children and Young People

This policy outlines Scottish Hockey's commitment to safeguarding children and young people



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Table of Contents

<i>Governance policy for Safeguarding Children and Young People</i>	0
<i>Policy Statement</i>	3
<i>Roles and Responsibilities</i>	4
<i>The Safeguarding Officer</i>	6
Appointment Requirement.....	6
Role Overview.....	6
Training and Support	6
Roles and Responsibilities.....	6
<i>The Safeguarding Lead</i>	7
<i>Policy Review</i>	9
<i>Duty of Care</i>	10
<i>Indications of Abuse</i>	11
Definitions of Abuse	12
Physical Abuse	12
Sexual Abuse.....	12
Emotional Abuse.....	12
Neglect.....	12
Bullying	12
<i>Wellbeing and the GIRFEC Approach in Scottish Hockey</i>	14
<i>Understanding Wellbeing</i>	14
<i>How Scottish Hockey Responds</i>	16
<i>Contacts</i>	18
Safe Sport Team	18
External contacts for out of hours advice	18

Policy Statement

Scottish Hockey is fully committed to safeguarding the wellbeing and protection of all children and young people in its care. It recognises the responsibility to promote wellbeing and safe practice and to protect children from harm, abuse and exploitation. Everyone within Scottish Hockey will be made aware of the policies and procedures in place to protect children and young people in our care and to promote their wellbeing.

Within the [Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#) – a child is defined as anyone who has not reached the age of 18. For the purpose of this policy, “children”, “child” and “young person” refer to persons under the age of 18.

Scottish Hockey values a rights-based approach within our sport and our safeguarding policy takes into account the [National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021](#) and the principles of “[Getting it Right for Every Child](#)” (GIRFEC) and we recognise the general principles of the UN convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

Staff and volunteers will work together to embrace difference and diversity, and respect the rights of children and young people.

Principles

Our commitment to protecting children is based on the following principles:

- The wellbeing of children and young people is the primary concern
- All children and young people, whatever age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, socio-economic status, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from all forms of harm and abuse
- Child wellbeing and protection is everyone’s responsibility
- Children and young people have the right to express views on all matters which affect them
- Scottish Hockey will work in partnership together with children and young people and parents/carers to promote the wellbeing, health and development of children and young people participating in the sport

Roles and Responsibilities

Scottish Hockey is committed to safeguarding everyone involved in hockey activities and promoting the highest standards of care. To effectively implement this policy, all hockey providers must collaborate, each playing a crucial role in ensuring the safe recruitment of individuals into clubs registered with Scottish Hockey, whether they are volunteers or paid staff.

Scottish Hockey is partnered with Children First and its Case Management Support Service (CMSS) for the purpose of accessing expert guidance and resource when handling safeguarding Concerns.

Scottish Hockey will:

- Promote the health and wellbeing of children by providing opportunities for them to take part in sport safely
- Respect and promote the rights, wishes and feelings of children
- Promote and implement appropriate procedures to safeguard the wellbeing of children and protect them from abuse
- Recruit, train, support and supervise staff, members and volunteers to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect children and young people from abuse and to reduce risk
- Require staff, members and volunteers to adopt and abide by this Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and associated procedures
- Respond to any allegations of misconduct or abuse of children and young people in line with the Child Wellbeing and Protection Responding to Concerns Procedure as well as implementing, where appropriate, the relevant disciplinary and appeals procedures
- Regularly monitor and evaluate the implementation of this policy and these procedures
- Provide support and guidance to Safeguarding Officers, volunteers and people who are directly involved in child wellbeing and protection work

Scottish Hockey Affiliated Clubs, Districts, and associated bodies with any members of participants under the age of 18 will:

- Have a suitable Club Safeguarding Children and Young People/Wellbeing and Protection Policy in place, either by adopting this Scottish Hockey policy or a suitable alternative
- Adhere to the Scottish Hockey guidelines and procedures
- Appoint a Safeguarding Officer
- Evidence of appropriate training in Child Wellbeing and Protection in Sport
- Evidence of proper training of Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer
- Notify Scottish Hockey of all changes in the Safeguarding Officer appointment
- Ensure that all volunteers and people at the club who work with children are members of the PVG Scheme with necessary Scheme Record Updates
- Accept that all office bearers and committee members have a responsibility for safeguarding, wellbeing and child protection and be prepared to respond to any indication of abuse or poor practice
- Safely appoint/recruit club volunteers/staff in accordance with the Safe Recruitment policy
- Have all volunteers, coaches, players and parents/carers agree to and sign a suitable code of conduct
- Be prepared to challenge and alter poor practice
- Implement any recommendations of Scottish Hockey relating to this area
- Promote an environment where all legitimate concerns can be raised without fear of victimisation or reprisal
- Require all those working with children to complete the minimum level of training

The Safeguarding Officer

Appointment Requirement

All member clubs with a youth section must appoint a Safeguarding Officer (SO). The SO serves as the primary point of contact within the club for all matters related to safeguarding, including support, concerns, advice, and training.

Role Overview

The SO plays a vital role in promoting a safe and inclusive environment for children and young people. They should:

- Be known, visible, and accessible to children, parents, volunteers, and staff
- Lead on safeguarding best practices within the club.
- Be friendly, approachable, and able to communicate effectively with both children and adults.
- Demonstrate empathy, integrity, and discretion in handling sensitive issues.
- Understand the importance of confidentiality and impartiality.
- Be confident in managing concerns, challenging inappropriate behaviour, and seeking support when necessary.

Training and Support

Scottish Hockey will:

- Provide annual safeguarding training for all appointed SOs.
- Offer ongoing support and guidance to assist SOs in fulfilling their responsibilities.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Club Safeguarding Officer is expected to:

- Promptly report all child wellbeing and protection concerns to Scottish Hockey's Safeguarding Team, regardless of whether the concern arises within or outside the hockey environment.
- Read, understand, and adhere to the Safeguarding Policy and all relevant safeguarding policies and procedures.

- Promote and champion safeguarding and child protection within the club.
- Ensure the club has an up-to-date Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy available on its website were applicable
- Oversee safe recruitment practices for all volunteers, coaches, and individuals working with children.
- Ensure all individuals in regulated work have appropriate PVG (Protecting Vulnerable Groups) Membership, maintain accurate records, and keep them up to date.
- Report safeguarding matters to the Club Committee or equivalent governing body.
- Maintain confidential records of any reported cases and actions taken.
- Cooperate fully with Scottish Hockey's Safe Sport Team and implement any recommended actions.
- Signpost club members to relevant safeguarding training and resources.

The Safeguarding Lead

The Scottish Hockey Safeguarding Lead is the primary point of contact for all child wellbeing and protection concerns for the governing body. As part of their role, they lead the Safe Sport practices, including Safe Recruitment, the PVG Scheme, Safeguarding, and offer guidance in areas where safety plays an element in the activity. They will also:

- Lead on the effective implementation of child wellbeing and protection policies and procedures in Hockey.
- Encourage best practice by promoting and championing the safeguarding policy and procedures with people and volunteers at Scottish Hockey through to members.
- Respond appropriately to disclosures and concerns which relate to the wellbeing and/or protection of a child.
- Coordinate the monitoring and review of the safeguarding policy and procedures to ensure they remain current and fit for purpose.
- Regularly report on child wellbeing and protection progress to the appropriate board lead.
- Raise awareness of the Safeguarding Lead role to children, parent/carers and adults involved in Scottish Hockey.

- Raise awareness in the organisation of Codes of Conduct for those working with children and young people, for parent/carers, and for children and young people.
- Challenge behaviour and practice which is in breach of the Codes of Conduct.
- Keep abreast of developments in the field of child wellbeing and protection by networking and attending learning events, working with partner agencies, and subscribing to relevant publications, e.g. the newsletter of Children First team.
- Organise/signpost appropriate training opportunities for adults working/volunteering with children at Scottish Hockey.
- Maintain confidential records of cases of abuse or wellbeing concerns and action taken.
- Liaise with statutory agencies and ensure they have been given all appropriate information.
- Support affiliated clubs and their SOs by providing advice on child wellbeing matters, sharing good practice and promoting relevant policies.

Policy Review

We will regularly review this policy and associated procedures:

- In accordance with changes in legislation and guidance on the protection of children and young people
- Following any issues or concerns raised about the wellbeing and protection of children and young people within Scottish Hockey
- Adopting learning from the review of concerns or cases about the wellbeing and protection of children and young people
- In collaboration with our partners at Children First and **sport**scotland
- In all other circumstances, at least every three years

Duty of Care

Scottish Hockey is dedicated to creating a safe and supportive environment for everyone involved in the sport, with a particular emphasis on safeguarding children and protecting all participants from harm.

Everyone involved in hockey shares a responsibility to safeguard and protect children, ensuring they can enjoy the sport in a safe and supportive environment. Coaches, volunteers, and activity providers must operate within a clear code of ethics and fully understand their duty of care—the obligation to take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety and wellbeing of those in their charge.

A widely accepted definition of duty of care is:

“The duty which rests upon an individual or organisation to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure the safety of any person involved in any activity for which that individual or organisation is responsible.”

In sports such as hockey, safeguarding is closely linked to risk assessment and the proactive management of potential risks at all levels of participation. While everyone has a general duty to look out for others, those in leadership roles—such as coaches, umpires, officials, and administrators—carry an enhanced duty of care. This includes responsibility during training sessions, matches, travel, and any organised events or camps.

This document outlines key safeguarding principles and provides guidance to help individuals understand their responsibilities, assess risks, and support those who may be vulnerable. By working together, we can uphold the highest standards of care and ensure hockey remains a safe and enjoyable experience for all.

Indications of Abuse

There are physical and behavioural signs that might raise your concern about the welfare or safety of a child. They are only indicators – not confirmation.

Some examples are:

- Where the child says that they are being abused, or another person says they believe (or actually know) that abuse is occurring
- Has an injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent
- Behavior changes, either over time or quite suddenly, becoming aggressive, withdrawn or unhappy
- Appears not to trust adults, e.g. a parent or coach with whom they would be expected to have, or once have, a close relationship
- Shows inappropriate sexual awareness for their age and sometime behaves in a sexually explicitly way
- Becomes increasingly neglected-looking in appearance, or loses/puts on weight for no apparent reason

Children can be particularly vulnerable to abuse and may have added difficulties in communicating what is happening to them.

Definitions of Abuse

It's generally acknowledged that there are now five main types of abuse – Physical, Sexual, Emotional, Neglect, and Bullying.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse involves causing physical harm or injury to a child, such as hitting, shaking, squeezing, burning, or biting. In a sporting context, this may also include training that is inappropriate in intensity or nature for the child's age or ability, or the use or promotion of performance-enhancing drugs. Bullying that results in physical harm may also fall under this category.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse occurs when a child or young person is used to meet another person's sexual needs. This can range from inappropriate sexual comments or behaviour to physical sexual contact, and includes exposure to or involvement with pornographic material.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse happens when a child is persistently denied love, support, or encouragement, or is subjected to constant criticism, ridicule, or discrimination (e.g. racial or sexual remarks). It can also occur when a child is overprotected or placed under unrealistic expectations by a parent or coach, leading to undue pressure and emotional harm.

Neglect

Neglect is the failure to meet a child's basic needs, including food, warmth, clothing, medical care, and supervision. In a sporting environment, this may also involve failing to ensure a child's safety or exposing them to unnecessary risk or harm.

Bullying

Bullying can be perpetrated by adults or peers. In sport, this might include:

- A parent or carer who places excessive pressure on a child to succeed.
- A coach who adopts a win-at-all-costs approach.
- Older or more experienced participants who intimidate or exclude younger players, or prevent them from accessing equipment or opportunities.

- Bullying can be verbal, physical, emotional, or online (cyberbullying), and it can have serious and lasting effects on a child's wellbeing.

For more detailed guidance, please refer to Scottish Hockey's Anti-Bullying Policy.

Wellbeing and the GIRFEC Approach in Scottish Hockey

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 aims to improve the wellbeing of all children and young people in Scotland. It supports the national approach known as Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC), which places the child's wellbeing at the centre of all services and support.

GIRFEC is designed to ensure that children, young people, and their families receive the right help, at the right time, from the right people. It promotes a shared understanding of wellbeing and encourages collaboration across all sectors, including sport.

In the context of Scottish Hockey, this means creating environments where children and young people feel safe, supported, and empowered to thrive—both on and off the pitch.

Understanding Wellbeing

Wellbeing is broader than child protection alone. It encompasses all aspects of a child's life and development. To support a shared understanding, wellbeing is described using eight indicators, commonly referred to by the acronym SHANARRI:

- Safe – Protected from abuse, neglect, or harm at home, in sport, and in the community.
- Healthy – Supported to attain the highest standards of physical and mental health, with access to appropriate healthcare and guidance on making healthy choices.
- Achieving – Encouraged and supported in learning and personal development, building confidence and self-esteem.
- Nurtured – Cared for in a safe and supportive environment, whether at home, in care, or within the club setting.
- Active – Given opportunities to participate in play, recreation, and sport to support healthy growth and development.
- Respected – Listened to, involved in decisions that affect them, and treated with dignity.
- Responsible – Encouraged to take responsibility for their actions and contribute positively to their club and community.

- Included – Supported to overcome barriers and be part of the club and wider community, regardless of background or ability.

For more information, visit the Scottish Government's GIRFEC guidance

How Scottish Hockey Responds

The wellbeing and protection of children is at the centre of any concerns raised. Scottish Hockey will always take any concerns seriously and our first priority will be to a victim and any witnesses.

Concerns should be referred to a member of the Scottish Hockey Safe Sport Team in the first instance.

All safeguarding concerns must be reported as soon as possible, irrespective of whether they occur within the hockey environment.

A concern will be dealt with as follows:

- (i) Scottish Hockey Safeguarding Lead will mostly act in an advisory capacity by providing any club who raises a concern with advice and support to allow the club to deal directly with the safeguarding issue.
- (ii) However, if the Scottish Hockey's Safeguarding Lead deem (at its sole discretion) a concern to be significantly serious or of a high risk to an individual, club, or Scottish Hockey, then the Safeguarding Lead will refer the concern through its internal Safe Sport Team ("SST").

If a referral has been made to the SST, the SST will consider the concern raised. The concern will then follow Scottish Hockey's Concern and Appeals Policy, and guidance documents; Guide to Undertake Wellbeing and Protection Investigations, and Investigations and Disciplinary Processes for Wellbeing and Protection in Sport.

Once the appropriate procedure has been followed, the SST will issue an outcome as detailed in the Concerns and Appeals Policy which must be followed by the club in dealing with the concern. Scottish Hockey will then oversee and monitor the implementation of those actions.

- (iii) If a concern is received directly to Scottish Hockey regarding a club, coach, member of staff, volunteer, player, or member of its community, either of the two above process' may be followed depending on the nature and severity of the concern.

Failure to report a safeguarding concern by an individual, or failure to implement the actions of the SST, is a breach of this Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Code of Conduct and may be regarded as an incident of Misconduct.

In some cases, the SST may involve Competitions or other areas of the business, should it deem necessary to conduct a fair and considered procedure.

A more detailed guide on how Scottish Hockey manages concerns can be found in the Procedure for Responding to Wellbeing and Protection Concerns.

Contacts

Email: Safeguarding@scottish-hockey.org.uk

Phone: +44 (0)7561 853471

Safe Sport Team

Keith Thomas John Macleod

Safeguarding Lead

Engagement Manager

Michael McDougall

Competitions and Events Manager

Colleen Reid

Training and Education Manager

Lewis Sinclair

Operations Administrator

Jane Harvey

Board Safe Sport Lead

External contacts for out of hours advice

Children First	0800 28 22 33	www.childrenfirst.org.uk/get-support/
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Childline	0800 11 11	www.childline.org.uk/get-support/
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NSPCC	0808 800 50000	www.nspcc.org.uk/
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Police Scotland	101	
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Social Work and Social Care Services		www.mygov.scot/social-services
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