



# Monkstown Hockey Club

## Code of Ethics

for

## Hockey for Young People

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# Glossary

## **MHC**

Monkstown Hockey Club

## **Hockey**

Hockey, when referred to as a collective authority, shall mean Hockey Ireland and all its constituent Branches, clubs, and associations.

## **ISC**

The Irish Sports Council.

## **Child**

A 'child' or young person is any person under the age of 18, who is not, or has not been married.

## **Children's Officer**

The individuals in the club who acts as a resource for children and who represents them at Committee level. They have a supervisory role in relation to young hockey participants and have the added responsibility for co-ordinating the implementation of the Code of Conduct.

## **Designated Person**

A person who is responsible for reporting allegations or suspicions of child abuse and welfare issues to the Statutory Authorities. This person will be a resource to anyone in the club who has a child protection/welfare concern.

## **Statutory Authorities**

The authorities who promote the protection and welfare of young people and who have the responsibility for the investigation and/or validation of suspected child abuse, i.e., Tusla and An Garda Síochána.

## **Sports Leaders**

All adults involved in children's sport. Leadership roles include club officers, youth administrator, coaches, managers, umpires, Children's Officer, Designated Persons, Covid Officer, and other volunteers with substantial access to children.

## **Parent**

Parent shall mean parent, guardian, or carer.

## **The Code**

The Code of Ethics for Hockey for Young People, this document, based on guidelines of the ISC.

# 1.0 Introduction

This document is based on Sport Ireland's Safeguarding Guidance for Children and Young People in Sport underpinned by the following legislation:

- National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017, and the requirements under The Children First Act 2015,
- Tusla's Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child,
- The Child Care Act 1991,
- The Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998
- The National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012-2016.

Monkstown Hockey Club commit to following and abiding by the recommendations in the above document accessible via the following link:

<https://www.sportireland.ie/sites/default/files/2020-01/safeguarding-guidance.pdf>

## 2.0 Core Principles and Values in Sport for Young People

Youth hockey is based on the following principles guiding the development of young people within Monkstown Hockey Club (MHC):

### **Needs of the child**

All children's sport experiences should be guided by what is best for children. This means adults should have a basic understanding of the emotional, physical, and personal needs of young people. The stages of development and ability should guide the types of activity provided within Hockey. The priority is the children's safety and enjoyment of hockey.

### **Integrity in relationships**

Adults interacting with young people in sport should do so with integrity and respect for the child. There is a danger sporting context can be used to exploit or undermine children. All adult actions in sport should be guided by what is best for the child and in the context of quality, open working relationships. Verbal, physical, emotional or sexual abuse of any kind is unacceptable within sport.

### **Quality atmosphere and ethos**

Sport for young people should be conducted in a safe, positive and encouraging atmosphere. A child-centred ethos will help to ensure competition and specialisation are kept in their appropriate place.

### **Equality**

All children should be treated in an equitable and fair manner regardless of age, ability, sex, religion, social and ethnic background, or political persuasion. Children with a disability should be involved in sports activities in an integrated way, thus allowing them to participate to their potential alongside other children.

### **Fair Play**

Fair play is the guiding principle in MHC's Code of Ethics. All children's sport should be conducted in an atmosphere of fair play. Ireland has contributed and is committed to the European Code of Sports Ethics, defining fair play as: "much more than playing within the rules". It incorporates the concepts of friendship, respect for others and always playing with the right spirit. Fair play is defined as a way of thinking, not just behaving. It incorporates issues concerned with the elimination of opportunities, excessive commercialisation, and corruption as set out in the European Sports Charter and Code of Ethics, Council of Europe (1993).

### **Competition**

Too often competitive demands are placed on children too early resulting in excessive levels of pressure on them and consequently with a high level of drop out from sport. A balanced approach to competition can make a significant contribution to the development of young people, while at the same time providing fun, enjoyment and satisfaction. Sports leaders should aim to put the welfare of the child first and competitive standards second. A child-centred approach will help to ensure competition and specialisation are kept in their appropriate place.

## 3.0 Monkstown Hockey Club Policy Statement

MHC is fully committed to safeguarding the wellbeing of its participants. Every individual in MHC should always, show respect and understanding for players' rights, safety and welfare and conduct themselves in a way reflecting the principles of the organisation and the guidelines contained within the *Code of Ethics*.

In working with young people, the club's first priority is the welfare of young people and we are committed to providing an environment allowing participants to perform to the best of their ability, free from abuse, neglect, bullying and intimidation. The club commits to:

- Recognise the rights of all underage players to participate free from harm in a safe and enjoyable environment.
- Appoint a Children's Officer to oversee the well-being of children and young people in the club.
- Appoint a Designated Liaison Person to liaise with the Statutory Authorities as required.
- Respond without delay to any threats to the welfare of underage players.

In working with young people MHC endeavours to apply best practice to ensure that young people are safe, have fun and can play hockey in the spirit of fair play.

**Monkstown Hockey Club Designated Person: Sam Farrar (086 245 7666)**

**Monkstown Hockey Club Children's Officer: Anita Duffy (087 989 0591)**

## 4.0 Code of Conduct for Players

Monkstown Hockey Club wishes to provide the best possible environment for all people involved in the sport. All players deserve to be given enjoyable, safe sporting opportunities, free of abuse of any kind. Players have rights, and responsibilities that must be accepted and respected. Furthermore, all players should be encouraged to realise they have responsibilities to treat other participants and sports leaders with fairness and respect.

### Players are entitled to:

- Be safe and to feel safe.
- Be listened to.
- Be believed.
- Have fun and enjoy hockey.
- Have a voice in relation to their activities within the club.
- Be treated with dignity, sensitivity and respect.
- Participate on an equitable and fair manner, irrespective of ability, disability, gender, religion, social class, etc.
- Experience competition at a level at which they feel comfortable.
- Make complaints and have them dealt with.
- Get help against bullies.
- Say No.
- Protect their own bodies.
- Confidentiality.

### Players should always:

- Treat Sports Leaders with respect (including administrators, coaches, umpires, managers, children's officers, club officials, etc.)
- Look out for themselves and the welfare of others.
- Play fairly, do their best.
- Be organised and on time, tell someone if you are leaving a venue or competition.
- Respect team members, even when things go wrong.
- Respect opponents, be gracious in defeat.
- Abide by the rules set down by team managers when travelling to away events, representing the club, school, province or country, etc.
- Behave in a manner that avoids bringing hockey or the club into disrepute.
- Young players and their parents should talk to the Children's Officer within the club if they have any concerns.

### Players should never:

- Cheat
- Use violence or physical contact not allowed within the rules.
- Shout or argue with officials, teammates or opponents.
- Harm team members, opponents or their property.
- Bully or use bullying tactics to isolate another player or gain advantage.
- Take banned substances, alcohol, smoke or engage in sexual behaviour.
- Keep secrets, especially if they have caused or could cause harm.
- Tell lies about adults / young people.
- Spread rumours.
- Discriminate against other players based on gender, disability, social class, religion.



## 5.0 Parents Code of Conduct

Monkstown Hockey Club believes parents play a key role in the promotion of an ethical approach to sport and young people's enjoyment in sport. Parents/guardians therefore need to be aware, informed and involved in promoting the safest possible environment for children to enjoy their participation in sport. Sports Leaders need the support of parents/guardians in conveying the Safe, Fun and Fair Play message. Parents should help and support the implementation of best practice policies in MHC by following the guidance below.

- Be a role model for your child and maintain the highest standards of conduct when interacting with young people, other parents, officials, and organisers.
- Always recognise the value and importance of the officials and volunteers who provide sporting and recreational opportunities for your child. Do not publicly question their judgment or honesty. Respect Children's Officers, Designated Persons, coaches, umpires, youth organisers, managers and other players.
- Encourage your child to play by the rules. Teach your child honest endeavour is as important as winning and do all you can to encourage good sportsmanship.
- Set a good example by applauding good play on both sides. Encourage mutual respect for teammates and opponents.
- Give encouragement and applaud only positive accomplishments whether from your child, his/her teammates, their opponents or the officials.
- Take an interest in your child's sport and support the child's participation in their chosen activity.
- Parents should support all efforts to remove abusive behaviour and bullying behaviour in all its forms.
- Never demonstrate threatening or abusive behaviour or use foul language.
- Understand and ensure your child/children abide by the Code of Conduct.
- Have an awareness of and respect for Leaders and other adults and their roles within the Club.
- If you wish to raise an issue with a Leader, the issue should be addressed with the Leader in an appropriate manner and not in front of children and young people.
- Respect and abide by the decisions made by the Committee and other Leaders, these decisions are made in the best interests of the children in the Club.
- Understand the complaints process and follow the proper procedure if you feel unjustly treated, knowing complaints will be dealt with effectively and confidentially.
- Know your child's training and/or competitive programme, and accept it is your responsibility for delivering and collecting your child/children. Parents/carers should ensure they do not leave their child/children waiting unsupervised at any time.
- Ensure the environment is safe and enjoyable for your child/children.
- Allow your child to focus their efforts and success in terms of their goals rather than winning being the main objective.
- Promote participation for children that is fun, safe and in the spirit of fair play.
- Ensure appropriate leaders are informed regarding any absenteeism, medical conditions or other relevant matters concerning your child.
- Provide the Club with appropriate information in relation to your child to ensure their safe inclusion in the club and with emergency contact information and to be reasonably available in case of an emergency.
- Abide by the procedures and policies in this document especially regarding the use of smart phones, any type of camera and videoing equipment.
- Be aware and abide by the safeguarding policy, the rules and constitution of the club.

## 6.0 Guidelines for Sports Leaders

Monkstown Hockey Club recognises the key role leaders (coaches, youth administrators, captains, selectors, and team managers, etc.) play in the lives of young people in sport. Leaders in Hockey should strive to create a positive environment for the children in their care. They have an overall responsibility to take the necessary steps to ensure positive and healthy experiences are provided. All Leaders should have as their priority the children's safety and enjoyment of hockey and should adhere to the safeguarding guidelines and regulations set out in the club's Code of Ethics.

### Leaders should:

- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every child and must treat everyone equally, regardless of gender, disability, ethnic origin, religion, etc.

### Leaders working with young people in Hockey should:

- Be suitable and have the necessary qualifications. Leaders will be expected to go through appropriate recruitment and selection procedures, applying to all persons with substantial access to young people, (known as regulated positions in NI), whether paid or unpaid. References will be needed and will be followed up.
- Comply with a 'sign-up' procedure, whereby the appointed/reappointed leaders agree to abide by the *Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children in Sport* and to the policies and Code of the Conduct of Hockey.
- Know and understand the child protection policies and procedures in Hockey.
- Act as a role model and promote the positive aspects of hockey and maintain the highest standards of personal conduct.
- Develop an appropriate relationship with young people, based on mutual trust and respect. Remember Sports Leaders behaviour towards players, other officials, and opponents will influence the players in your care.
- Report any concerns to the Designated Person in Hockey.

### As a role model Sports Leaders:

- Will be required to display high standards of language, manner, punctuality, preparation and presentation.
- Ensure players respect the rules of the game. Insist on fair play and ensure players are aware Sports Leaders will not tolerate cheating or bullying behaviour.
- Encourage the development of respect for opponents, officials, selectors and other leaders and avoid criticism of fellow trainers and coaches. Do not criticise other leaders.
- Must actively discourage the use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco as being incompatible with a healthy approach to sporting activity.
- Must avoid the use of alcohol and banned substances, before coaching and training, during events, while supervising trips with young players.

## **Protection for leaders and young people**

- Leaders are responsible for setting and monitoring the boundaries between a working relationship and friendship with players. It is advisable for leaders not to involve young players in their personal lives. It is important to realise certain situations or friendly actions could be misinterpreted by the participant or by outsiders.
- Avoid working alone and ensure there is adequate supervision for all activities.
- Where possible work in an open environment and ensure physical contact is appropriate and has the permission or understanding of the young person
- Care must be taken not to expose a child intentionally or unintentionally to embarrassment or disparagement by use of sarcastic or flippant remarks about the child or his/her family.
- Physical punishment or physical force must never be used. Never punish a mistake by verbal means, physical means, or exclusion.

## **Promote a positive environment**

- Be generous with praise and never ridicule or shout at players for making mistakes or for losing a game. All young players are entitled to respect.
- Be careful to avoid the “star system”. Each child deserves equal time and attention.
- Remember young players play for fun and enjoyment and skill development and personal satisfaction have priority over highly structured competition. Never make winning the only objective.
- Set realistic goals and appropriate challenges for the participants and do not push young players. Create a safe and enjoyable environment.
- When approached to take on or taking on a new player, ensure the relationship with the previous club/coach has been ended in a professional manner.
- When young players are invited into adult groups/squads, it is advisable to get agreement from a parent/guardian. Boundaries of behaviour in adult groups are normally different from the boundaries applying to junior groups/squads.
- Leaders who become aware of a conflict between their obligation to their players and their obligation to the club/organisation must make explicit the nature of the conflict and the loyalties and responsibilities involved, to all parties concerned.
- Leaders should communicate and co-operate with medical and ancillary practitioners in the diagnosis, treatment and management of their players’ medical or related problems. Avoid giving advice of a personal or medical nature if not qualified to provide medical advice. Any information of a personal or medical nature must be kept strictly confidential unless the welfare of the child requires the passing on of this information. Any referral to medical and ancillary practitioners requires parental consent.
- The nature of the relationship between leader and a participant can sometimes mean a leader will hear confidential information about a player or player’s family. This information must be regarded as confidential and must not be divulged to a third party without the express permission of the young person/family, except where abuse or neglect is suspected.

## 7.0 Sports Leaders Code of Conduct

Sports Leaders should familiarise themselves with the club Code of Ethics and always comply with the regulations. They must follow the procedures if they suspect or receive complaints of abuse of any nature. Leaders should read the information below and agree to abide by these terms.

To act as a role model and promote their own safety and the safety of young people, Sport Leaders should create a safe and enjoyable environment for children by:

- Planning and preparing appropriately and be positive during sessions.
- Making sure all levels of participation should be enjoyable and fun.
- Prioritising skill development and personal satisfaction over highly structured competition.
- Setting age appropriate and realistic goals.
- Avoiding favouritism – each child will need attention according to their sporting needs.
- Praising and encouraging effort as well as results.
- Showing respect for all involved.

Recognise and ensure the welfare of children by:

- Keeping attendance records.
- Not exposing a child to criticism, hostility or sarcasm.
- Never swearing at, ridiculing, shouting unnecessarily or arguing with a child.
- Working in an open environment.
- Ensuring there is adequate supervision.
- Involving and updating parents, especially if a problem has arisen.
- Respecting a child's sensitivity.
- Never using physical punishment or force.
- Not using verbal or physical punishments or exclusion for mistakes.

## 8.0 Confidentiality

Confidentiality should be maintained in respect of all issues and people involved in cases of abuse, welfare, or bad practice. It is important the rights of both the child and the person about whom the complaint has been made are protected.

The following points should be kept in mind:

- A guarantee of confidentiality or undertakings regarding secrecy cannot be given, as the welfare of the child will supersede all other considerations
- All information should be treated in a careful and sensitive manner and should be discussed only with those who need to know
- Information should be conveyed to the parents / guardians of the child in a sensitive way
- Giving information to others on a 'need to know' basis for the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality
- All persons involved in a child protection process (the child, his/her parents/guardians, the alleged offender, his/her family, Leaders) should be afforded appropriate respect, fairness, support and confidentiality at all stages of the procedure.
- Information should be stored in a secure place, with limited access only to designated people.
- The requirements of the Data Protection laws should be adhered to.
- Breach of confidentiality is a serious manner.

## 9.0 Discipline

Discipline in sport should always be positive in focus, providing the structure and rules allowing participants to learn to set their own goals and strive for them. It should encourage young people to become more responsible for themselves and therefore develop independence.

Children should be helped to become responsible about the decisions and choices they make within sport, particularly when they are likely to make a difference between playing fairly and unfairly. There should be no place for fighting, over-aggressive or dangerous behaviour in sport.

### The use of Sanctions

The use of sanctions is an important element in the maintenance of discipline. The age and developmental stage of the child should be taken into consideration when using sanctions. Sanctions should be fair and consistent and in the case of persistent offence, should be progressively applied. Sanctions should never be used to retaliate or to make a Sports Leader feel better.

The following steps are suggested and should always be used in conjunction with the Code of Conduct for young people:

- Rules should be stated clearly and agreed.
- A warning should be given if a rule is broken.
- A sanction (for example, use of time out) should be applied if a rule is broken for a second time. The use of green, yellow, and red cards are encouraged, irrespective of the sport.
- If a rule is broken for the third time the child should be spoken to, and if necessary, the parents/guardians may be involved.
- Sanctions should not be applied if a Sports Leader is not comfortable with them. If an appropriate action cannot be devised right away, the child should be told that the matter will be dealt with later, at a specified time and as soon as possible.
- A child should not be sanctioned for making errors when s/he is playing.
- Physical activity (e.g., running laps or doing push-ups) should not be used as a sanction. To do so only causes a child to resent physical activity, something that s/he should learn to enjoy throughout his/her life.
- Sanctions should be used sparingly. Constant sanctioning and criticism can cause a child to turn away from sport.
- Once sanctions have been imposed, it is important to make the young person feel s/he is a valued member of the group again.
- Where relevant, some sanctions may need to be recorded and parents informed.

## 10.0 Complaints and Appeals Procedure

In respect of allegations or suspicions of abuse the DLP must be informed, and the standard reporting procedure should be followed. The complaints and appeals procedure allow all participants and the parents of young participants who are dissatisfied to register their complaint in a formal way and put an open process of investigation into action. Complaints and appeals in relation to young people, their sports leaders and their parents involved in any of the events under the direct control of MHC should be dealt in a timely manner as follows:

- Complaints should be dealt with as much as possible verbally at source locally.
- Complaints may be lodged by all participants and the parents of young participants involved in the event under the control of MHC.
- Complaints should be received in writing by the youth administrator or Children's Officer and should be responded to within 5 working days.
- The complaint should outline all relevant details about other parties involved.
- If the complaint involves a possible criminal offence, the Children's Officer and the Designated Person should discuss the matter and inform the statutory authorities as appropriate.
- The complaints committee (Youth Administrator, Children's Officer, Designated Liaison Person) should hear the case of all parties involved and decide if a rule or regulation or the Code of Ethics has been infringed.
- The complaints committee should, in writing, inform those involved of the sanctions to be imposed and the reason for the sanctions. Written notification should be given to parents if the complaint is against a young person.
- Written confidential records on all complaints should be kept safely and confidentially on file.
- If any party does not agree with the complaints committee, they can appeal the decision in writing within 10-day period.
- The appeals committee is convened, whose chairperson should be taken from the executive committee and those who have not been involved on the original complaints committee.
- The appeals committee should confirm or set aside or change any sanction imposed by the complaints committee.

## 11.0 Recruitment & Selection Policy for Sports Leaders/ Volunteers

Monkstown Hockey Club will take all reasonable steps to ensure adults working with young people are suitable and appropriately qualified. Recruitment and selection procedures will apply to all persons with substantial access to young people, whether paid or unpaid.

MHC will use the following as a suitable procedure:

- The responsibilities of the role and the level of experience/qualifications required should be drawn up and clearly stated.
- Before taking on the role, the leader should be made aware of the Code of Conduct as it relates to young people and any related guidelines within this document. Before being appointed to a position bringing leaders in contact with young people, the leader should be made aware of the Code of Conduct as it relates to young people and any related guidelines within this document. This involves newly recruited volunteers, paid personnel and all volunteers assigned by the club for that season.
- New leaders should fill in an information and self-declaration form, giving names of two referees who will be contacted verbally and using the self-declaration questions.
- All new volunteers should undergo an induction; this can be done in an informal manner. Following the induction, a probationary period is advisable.
- New and existing Leaders will sign the appropriate Code of Conduct, including the self-declaration form.
- Adequate supervision and support should always be provided; a leader should not have to work alone.
- Courses and workshops will be provided
- Garda vetting procedures will be implemented as appropriate.

## 12.0 Anti-Bullying Policy

Bullying is defined by the Department of Education and Skills guidelines as unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) repeated over time. It can include:

- Physical pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching etc...
- Name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing and emotional torment through ridicule, humiliation or the continual ignoring of individuals.
- Posting of derogatory or abusive comments, videos, or images on social network sites (Cyber bullying). Bullying can include online as well as offline behaviour.
- Racial taunts, graffiti, gestures, sectarianism, sexual comments, suggestions, or behaviour.
- Unwanted physical contact.

### **MHC will:**

- Recognise its duty of care and responsibility to safeguard all participants from harm.
- Promote and implement this anti-bullying policy in addition to our safeguarding policy and procedures.
- Seek to ensure bullying behaviour is not accepted or condoned.
- Take action to investigate and respond to any alleged incidents of bullying.
- Encourage and facilitate children and young people to play an active part in developing and adopting a code of conduct to address bullying.
- Ensure coaches are given access to information and guidance on bullying.

### **Each participant, coach, volunteer or official will:**

- Respect every child's need for, and rights to, a play environment where safety, security, praise, recognition and opportunity for taking responsibility are available.
- Respect the feelings and views of others.
- Recognise everyone is important and our differences make each of us special and should be valued.
- Show appreciation of others by acknowledging individual qualities, contributions and progress.
- Be committed to the early identification of bullying, and prompt and collective action to deal with incidents of bullying.
- Ensure safety by having rules and practices carefully explained and displayed for all to see.
- Report incidents of bullying to the club children's officer.

### **Support to the child:**

- Children should know who will listen to and support them.
- Potential barriers to talking (including those associated with a child's disability or impairment) need to be identified and addressed at the outset to enable children to approach adults for help.
- Anyone who reports an incident of bullying will be listened to carefully and be supported.
- Any reported incident of bullying will be investigated objectively and will involve listening carefully to all those involved.
- Children being bullied will be supported and assistance given to uphold their right to play and live in a safe environment, allowing their healthy development.
- Those who bully will be supported and encouraged to stop bullying.
- Sanctions for those bullying others involving long periods of isolation or diminishing and making individuals look or feel foolish in front of others, will be avoided.

### **Support to the parents/guardians:**

- Any incident of bullying will be discussed with the child's parent(s)/carers.
- Parents will be consulted on action to be taken (for both victim and bully) and agreements made as to what action should be taken.



## 13.0 Guidelines on General Issues

### Travelling with children

There is extra responsibility taken on by Leaders when they travel with children to events. When travelling with young people Leaders should:

- Ensure there is adequate insurance cover
- Not carry more than the permitted number of passengers
- Ensure use of safety belts
- Avoid being alone with one participant, seat passenger/s in the back seat, drop off at central locations or seek parental permission to transport an individual participant on a regular basis and clearly state times of pick-up and drop off.

### Supervision

- Make sure there is an adequate adult: child ratio. This will depend on the nature of the activity, the age of the participants and any special needs of the group. As a guide, a ratio of 1:10 for under 12 years of age and 1:12 for participants over 12 years of age. (This ratio is a guide and will change depending on the circumstances, e.g., players with special needs or away trips.)
- There should be a minimum of 2 adults per group at any one time.
- Where there are mixed groups there should be leaders of both genders
- Avoid being alone with one participant, if leaders need to talk separately to young players, do so in an open environment, in view of others.
- Leaders should not have to enter the changing rooms unless children are very young or need special assistance, where supervision should be in pairs of appropriate gender.
- Clearly state time for start and end of training sessions or competitions, leaders should remain in pairs until all participants have been collected.
- Keep attendance records and record of any incidents / injuries that arise.
- Facilitate parents who wish to stay and supervise sessions (for safety and supervision, not necessarily for their 'technical' expertise). If parents agreeing to take on this role, they should sign up to the Code of Conduct and agree to the checking services available in the respective jurisdictions.

### Away trips / Overnight stays

- Separate permission forms should be signed by parents and participants, containing emergency contact number.
- Young participants should sign a behaviour agreement.
- Appoint a group leader who will make a report on returning home.
- A meeting with parents and participants is useful to communicate travel times, competition details, other activities, gear requirements, medical requirements, special dietary needs and any other necessary details.
- Rooming arrangements are as follows: adults should not share rooms with children, children share rooms with those of same age and gender and adults should knock before entering rooms.
- All group socialisations should take place in communal areas.
- Alcoholic drink, smoking or other illegal substances are forbidden to players.
- There must be at least one adult of each gender with a mixed party, there should be a good adult – child ratio and proper access to medical personnel.
- Lights out times should be enforced.
- Young players should be always under reasonable supervision and should never leave the venue or go unsupervised without prior permission.

## Hosting

Hockey recognises hosting is an integral part of sport and if handled appropriately can add to a child's enjoyment and experience of sport. However, safety of our young players must be the primary concern.

### Young people:

- Should sign a behaviour agreement.
- Should not be asked to share a bed or room with an adult.
- Should be happy with the arrangements.
- Should show respect to the host families.
- Should not stay on their own with a host family, there will always be at least two young people staying with the same family.

### MHC will:

- Ensure the hosting families are known to the host association/organisation.
- Make all travel and accommodation arrangements are known to parents and players.
- Gather information on destination and venue.
- Inform parents in so far as possible with whom their child is staying.

### Host Families should:

- Agree to abide by Hockey Ireland's Code of Conduct.
- Consent to appropriate checks and references.
- Attend host family meetings before competitions or events.
- Provide a safe and supportive environment for young people.
- Always be given the contact number of the adult responsible for the travelling group and should know they are free to contact this person if they encounter any difficulty.
- Be given contact numbers for parents plus an additional contact number which may be used in an emergency, details of medical conditions, medication requirements or allergies.

It should be made clear to players, to parents of players being hosted and to the host families, the use of substances such as alcohol is not allowed for underage players.

## Hosting organisation

The hosting organisation must comply with the regulations set down by its National Governing Body

### Before travelling young players and their parents should:

- Be advised of the accommodation arrangements.
- Be advised of the name of the traveling adult to whom concerns can be reported.
- Be made aware of the importance of reporting concerns.
- Be asked to make their children aware of concerning behaviours.
- Supply all relevant information, their contact numbers, plus additional emergency contact number, medical condition, medication requirements, or allergies and this information should be passed on to the host family.
- Be advised that if players behave inappropriately, arrangements will be made for the player's early return home. The player's parents must meet any extra expense. Parents should be advised that if players behave inappropriately, arrangements will be made for the player's early return home. The player's parents must meet any extra expense.

## Safety Statement

MHC has produced a safety statement, including specific and potential risks attached to hockey. There are also procedures in place for safeguarding against such risks. In addition, the club commits to:

- Ensure activities are suitable for age and stage of development of participants.
- Keep a record of any specific medical conditions of the participants.
- Keep a record of emergency contact numbers for parents / guardians.
- Ensure any necessary protective gear is used. It is strongly recommended gumshields and shin guards are worn by young people. Parents are advised about the necessity of protective gear.
- Ensure First Aid kit is close at hand.
- Know the contact numbers of emergency services.
- Ensure easy access to medical personnel if needed and have an emergency plan in place.
- Keep records if an incident occurs. A brief record of injury and action is taken. Contact the participant's parents and keep them informed of all details.
- Ensure Officials (youth organisers and umpires, etc.) manages the conduct of the game.
- Keep to the sportsmanship guidelines of hockey, keeping in mind the rules are in place for safety.
- Ensure Leaders hold appropriate qualifications.
- Ensure there is adequate insurance cover for all activities.
- Ensure when required parents / guardians are present at finishing time of sessions or events.

## Physical Contact

Hockey on occasion requires a 'hands on approach', especially in a teaching or coaching situation, e.g., it may be necessary to assist a young person with, for instance, gripping the hockey stick; however, the following measures should be taken into consideration:

- Avoid unnecessary physical contact. When necessary, explain why and ask for permission from the young person.
- Any necessary contact should be in response to the needs of the child.
- It should be in an open environment with the permission and understanding of the participant.
- It should be determined by the age and developmental stage of the participant. Do not do something a child can do for themselves.
- Never engage in inappropriate touching

## Late Collection

It is important MHC has some clear and easy guideline if a parent is late to collect a child, such as, contact the parent using the emergency contact number. If there is no answer ask the child if there is another family member to contact. Wait with the young person at the club or venue, preferably with other staff or volunteers. Remind parents of the policy in relation to good practice and supervision.

## Missing Child Procedure

If a child goes missing during an event / training MHC will apply the following procedure:

- Ensure all other children continue to be supervised appropriately while a search for the child concerned is carried out.
- Organise the remaining available responsible adults to conduct a search of the surrounding area allocating everyone to a specific area.
- Request all those searching report back within a short time frame, dependent on the size of the area being searched.
- If the child cannot be found after a comprehensive search of the immediate surroundings, contact the child's parents to advise them of the concern and reassure them that everything is being done to locate the child.
- Make a note of the circumstances wherein the child has gone missing and where he/she was last seen and prepare a detailed physical description of the child, to include their hair and eye colour, approximate height and build and clothing he/she was wearing, as this will be required by the police.
- Report the concern to the Gardai Síochána if the search is unsuccessful, no later than 20 minutes after the initial missing person report, if the search is ongoing.
- Follow police guidance if further action is recommended and maintain close contact with the police.
- Report the incident to the designated safeguarding officer.
- Ensure to inform the child's parents, searchers, and police, if at any stage the child is located.

## 14.0 Use of Photographic and Mobile Equipment

MHC has adopted a policy in relation to the use of images of young people on their websites and in other publications as part of its commitment to providing a safe environment to young people. The Filming and Photography guidance is not about preventing parents/guardians and supporters from taking pictures, rather to ensure only those who have a right to take photographs do so. This guidance is designed to promote safeguards for any photographic or filming/video activity to minimise the risk of inappropriate taking and use of images.

### General Guidelines for use of photography

- Parental permission will be sought to use the hockey participant's image/s to ensure they are aware of the way the image/s are used to represent the sport.
- Only those authorised by the club to take photos may do so. Any third-party photographers must first register with an authorised club person (Youth Administrator, Children's Officer, Head Coach).
- The club shall ensure images are not taken in such environments considered inappropriate irrespective of any permission sought. Taking images using any type of equipment is banned in an area where people are changing or would normally expect their privacy to be recognised.
- Only appropriate images of children should be used, for example:
  - Posed images such as during medal ceremonies, presentations or team shots where young people must be wearing t-shirt and shorts/tracksuits.
  - Action shots of young people where the focus is on the participation in the sport, not the athlete.
- Images of children should not be taken where the pose / dress is inappropriate.
- If a photograph is used, the young person's full name will not be used and players under the age of 18 years old will not be tagged in the photo.
- Create recognised procedures for reporting the use of inappropriate images to reduce the risks to young hockey participants. If concerns arise adhere to the child protection procedures, ensuring either the senior officer, Children's Officer/Designated Person or, if necessary, the social services and/or police are informed.

## **Use of images on social media**

Where images of young people are used on social media the person responsible for posting an image must be aware of the potential for an image to be used inappropriately. The following safeguards must be in place to protect young people:

- Personal details of a young person should not be included, including their name.
- Captions should be in keeping with the sport represented.
- The posting and any purpose should not breach the codes of conduct.
- The type of image should not breach guidance in this policy.

If there is any concern about the nature of any image taken this should be reported to the responsible person (Youth Administrator, Children's Officer, Head Coach) who will take appropriate action.

## **Social Media**

In all contacts and communications with the members, leaders must be seen to be open and transparent. This is the case whether communications are by traditional means or by electronic means. Leaders must not communicate with children or young people via leader's personal social networking profiles, email accounts, or chat rooms.

When using social media:

- The page/profile must be password-protected.
- The use of personal addresses and telephone numbers must not be used.
- Content of any postings should be consistent with the ethos of MHC.
- Leaders should not 'friend' or 'follow' children or young people on social media. (Children or young people may 'follow' leaders on social media; thus, leaders should make sure any content they post is appropriate.)
- Messages left to or from children or young people on social network sites should be written on an open page and not in a private message.
- Leaders should not liaise directly with young people on a one-to-one basis.
- Parents/carers will be asked to give their approval for leaders to communicate with children/young people via social networking sites, or by any other means of internet communications (e.g., WhatsApp) as necessary.

## **Mobile phones**

Mobile phones provide children with security and enable parents to keep in touch and make sure their children are safe. Responsible and secure use of mobile phones by adults and young people needs to be encouraged in Hockey. Those who work with children and young people need to be aware of the opportunities for abuse through the misuse of mobile phones and text messaging. While good use of such media can be beneficial, leaders must be vigilant and alert to the possibilities of misuse and consequent harm resulting to young people. Leaders must also take care to protect the children in their care and themselves.

**As a young person remember:**

- In the event of receiving an offensive photo, email, or message; do not reply. Save the photo, make a note of times and dates, and tell a parent or the Children's Officer/Responsible Person within MHC.
- Be careful about who you give your phone number to and don't respond to unfamiliar numbers.
- Don't use the phone in certain locations; inappropriate use of your camera phone may cause upset or offence to another person, e.g., in changing rooms.
- Treat your phone as you would any other valuable item you guard against theft.

### As a Leader remember:

- Leaders involved in sport should only have children's and young people's mobile numbers if the nature of their involvement requires them to phone or text the child.
- Communication with young people should generally be done via parents. In circumstances where young people are communicated with directly, such as when they join senior teams or when on trips, group texts only should be used for communication among players and teams and parents must be informed of this policy in advance.
- It is not appropriate to have constant communication for individual players.
- Texts can also be used to encourage children or young people, if appropriate, e.g., 'Hope exam goes ok.'
- Do not use the phone in certain locations; inappropriate use of camera phone may cause upset or offence to another person, e.g., in changing rooms

## 15.0 Child Welfare and Protection Procedures

Adults have a crucial leadership role to play in sport; thus, adults-child relationships in sport should be:

- Open, positive, and encouraging.
- Meeting the need of the child, rather than the adult.
- Respectful of the creativity and autonomy of children.
- Carried out in an environment where children are protected and where their rights are promoted.
- Respectful of the needs and developmental stage of the child.
- Aimed at the promotion of enjoyment and individual progress.
- Governed by a code of ethics and good practice in sport, agreed and adhered to by all members of MHC.
- Mindful of the fact some children may be more vulnerable than others.
- Mindful of appropriate boundaries.
- Mindful of the importance of equality of relationships with children

MHC accepts organisations including young people among its members are vulnerable to the occurrence of child abuse and neglect. Child welfare and the protection of young people is *everybody's business*, irrespective of roles within the organisation.

### Definitions of the categories of child abuse

Legally there are four categories of child abuse according to Tusla in accordance with the Children's First Act (2015)

- **Neglect:** Neglect occurs when a child does not receive adequate care or supervision to the extent the child is harmed physically or developmentally. It is generally defined in terms of an omission of care, where a child's health, development or welfare is impaired by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, medical care, intellectual stimulation or supervision and safety.
- **Physical abuse:** Physical abuse is when someone deliberately hurts a child physically or puts them at risk of being physically hurt. It may occur as a single incident or as a pattern of incidents.
- **Psychological abuse:** Emotional abuse is the systematic emotional or psychological ill-treatment of a child as part of the overall relationship between a caregiver and a child.
- **Sexual abuse:** Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or arousal, or for that of others. Sexual abuse includes incidents where a child is being involved in sexual acts (masturbation, fondling, oral or penetrative sex) or exposing the child to sexual activity directly or through pornography.

MHC additionally recognise other categories of abuse children may be suspected to. MHC has zero tolerance towards abuse of any nature, towards any child; thus, procedures will be enacted to protect children from abuse. The following categories of abuse are also relevant under this policy:

- **Discriminatory abuse:** Discriminating against a child based on gender, culture, disability, social class, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or other difference.
- **Cyber abuse:** Deliberate and repeated harm inflicted using computers, mobile phones, and/or other electronic devices; may be also construed as cyber harassment, cyberbullying, trolling, flaming, and e-abuse.

## 16.0 Responding to a Child Disclosing Abuse/Neglect

If there are grounds for concern about the safety or welfare of a young person you should react to the concern and report it without delay to the club's Designated Liaison Person. When responding to a child who is disclosing abuse to you remember:

- Stay calm.
- Remember you have been approached because you are trusted.
- Be aware disclosures can be very difficult for the child/young person.
- The child or young person may initially be testing your reactions and may only fully open-up over a period of time.
- Listen to what the child/young person has to say. Give them the time and opportunity to tell as much as they are able and wish to.
- Do not pressurise the child/young person. Allow him or her to disclose at their own pace and in their own language.
- Conceal any signs of disgust, anger, or disbelief.
- Accept what the child or young person has to say; false disclosures are very rare.
- It is important to differentiate between the person who carried out the abuse and the act of abuse itself.
- Reassure the child/young person they have taken the right action in talking to you.
- Do not promise to keep what they have told you secret.
- Parents and young people have the right to know if information is being shared unless you have reasonable grounds to believe doing so would put the child at risk.

## 17.0 Reporting Suspected or Disclosed Child Abuse/Neglect

Any concern regarding the welfare of a child must be reported to the Designated Liaison Person. If you are unable to contact the DLP, you should report to the Children's Officer or Youth administrator who will advise how to contact them. The DLP will discuss the facts with the person who has raised the concern and decide whether there are reasonable grounds for concern. If they deem there are reasonable grounds for concern it is the duty of the DLP to report the matter to Tusla. If the DLP decides not to report the concern to Tusla they will keep a record of the facts, including the reason they decided not to report. These records will be kept in a secure manner. Refer to Appendix 1.

## 18.0 Allegations made Against Sports Leaders

If an allegation is made against Sports Leaders working within Monkstown Hockey Club everyone involved will be dealt with appropriately and in line with the club's code of ethics and safeguarding principles. The safety of the child making the allegation and any others who may be at risk of harm will be reassured and the investigation will take precedence. If a sports leader is the subject of concern they will be treated with fairness and respect.

If the Designated Person has reasonable grounds for concern, the matter will be reported to the Tusla, following the standard reporting procedure.

The Designated Person may informally consult with Tusla to seek confirmation if they believe there is reason for concern.

- When the concern is connected to the actions of a sports leader in the club the person should be asked to stand aside pending the outcome of any investigation by the Statutory Authorities.
- The Sports Leader will be privately informed an allegation has been made against him/her and the nature of the allegation.
- The leader will be afforded an opportunity to respond. His/her response will be noted and passed on to the Statutory Authorities.
- When a person is asked to step aside it should be made clear it is only a precautionary measure and does not presume guilt.
- The Leader is entitled to natural justice.

Disciplinary action on the Leader should be considered but this should not interfere with the investigation of the Statutory Authorities. The follow up on an allegation of abuse against a sports leader should be in consultation with the Statutory Authorities.

If it is deemed not to be a concern reportable to the Statutory Authorities, rather, an incident of poor practice, the complaints procedure as outlined in Complaints and Appeals Procedure should be followed. It is important to consider the outcome of the investigation and any implications it might have. Refer to Appendix 2.

The fact an alleged abuser has not been prosecuted or been found guilty does not automatically mean they are appropriate to work with young people in the future.

### Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints can be difficult to deal with; however, should not be ignored. In all cases the safety and welfare of the child/children is paramount. Any such complaints relating to inappropriate behaviour should be brought to the attention of the Designated Person. The information should be checked out and handled in a confidential manner.

### Rumours

Any rumours relating to inappropriate behaviour should be brought to the attention of the Children's Officer or the Designated Person and investigated without delay.



## 19.0 Child Welfare Personnel

### Designated Person

Designated persons are responsible for dealing with any concerns about the protection of children. The Designated Person is responsible for reporting allegations or suspicions of child abuse to Tusla and/or An Garda Síochána.

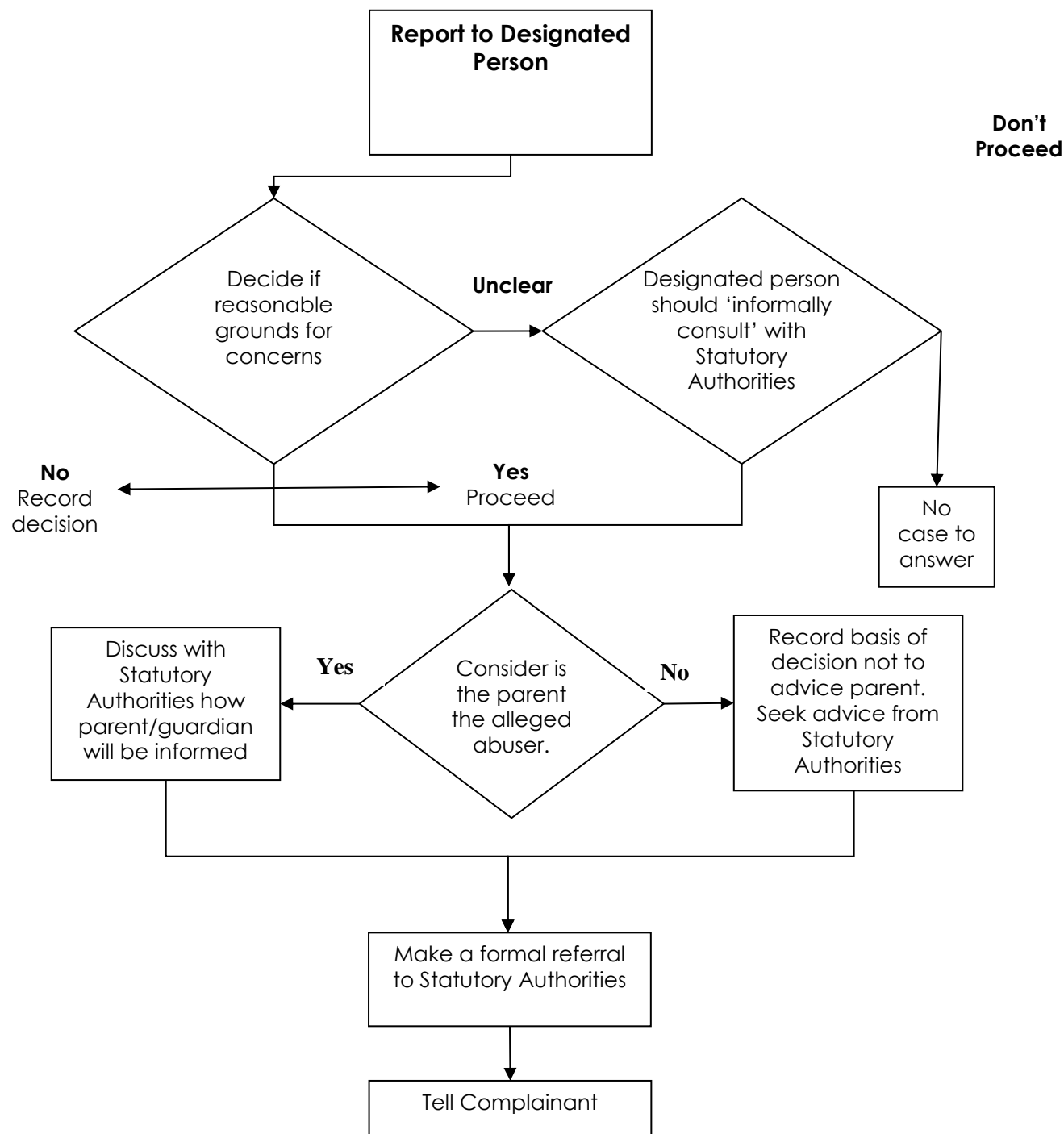
### Children's Officer

The appointment of Club Children's Officers is an essential element in the creation of a quality atmosphere for young people in any club. Children's Officers should review current policies in relation to young people, check that all activities are safe and fun, and inform adults of how to deal with any concerns that may arise in relation to the protection of young people.

## 20.0 Conclusion

Monkstown Hockey Club is committed to ensuring the safety and welfare of children and young adults who are members of the club. This booklet describes the Code of ethics in MHC for Safeguarding young people from abuse. This booklet supports Governing Bodies to meet child safeguarding and child protection responsibilities which are cognisant of, and in line with, requirements under Irish legislation and policy and in line with best practice.

# Appendix 1: Procedure for dealing with a concern about possible abuse



## Appendix 2: Procedure for dealing with a concern about behaviour of a coach / volunteer

