

Norwich Dragons Hockey Club

Safeguarding and Protecting Young or Vulnerable People in Hockey

Guide for Captains



This guide is intended to make captains aware of the main issues they should consider when young or vulnerable people are playing or being coached in their teams. It is not a substitute for reading the policies in full – these are available on the club and England Hockey website.

The Safeguarding Young and Vulnerable People Policy adopted by the Club means that consent **must** be sought from parents, guardians or carers regarding a number of issues – particularly participation, transport, photography, changing and communications (see further details below on these).

The term ‘young person’ means those under 18 years old. Young People should be identified through the membership form, however prior to this, any potential young person should be alerted to the Club Welfare Officer (Natalie Beal) to ensure the correct environment is in place for them.

A ‘vulnerable person’ is someone that requires support to enable or promote independent living and safe and active participation in the Community. Generally a parent, guardian or carer would make a Club Official aware that the person is vulnerable, however if this hasn’t happened and you have concerns, have a discrete conversation with the Club Welfare Officer (Natalie Beal) to agree how to approach the situation.

General guidance

- Be publicly open when working with young and vulnerable people
- Avoid physical contact with young and vulnerable people
- Wherever possible there should be more than one adult present
- You should challenge, in an appropriate way, bad language and unacceptable behaviour
- If you suspect a young or vulnerable person is being abused, raise your concern with the NDHC Club Welfare Officer Natalie Beal immediately, do not investigate the matter yourself, Natalie or her deputy Angela Murgatroyd have had specialist training of how to deal with such situations
- Captains are responsible for a complete and usable First Aid Kit being at the pitch side for all matches
- Be aware of any medical conditions or medication taken by your team members
- Captains should undertake a DBS (formerly CRB) check, fill out a self-declaration form and are recommended to complete an on-line England Hockey Child Protection Course.¹

Permission and consent

¹ See Code of Conduct For Coaches, Club Officials and Volunteers for details.

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- You **must not** play a young or vulnerable person until you have received their parental/guardian/carer consent and consideration should be given for each game, as to whether or not it is appropriate to play that person.
- Make sure that you have access to their emergency contact details (available from Club Welfare Officer – Natalie Beal) at matches and training.
- Parental consent for Photography, Changing, Transport & Communication is sought via the Under 18 Membership Form, any exceptions will be notified.

Age restrictions

England Hockey has introduced a policy which has put a lower age limit on young people who can play adult hockey. **You must not play young people under the age of 13 in adult hockey, or under 15 if playing National League.**

Bullying and Abuse

Everyone has a responsibility to consider the welfare of young people and to take action where necessary.

Be alert to signs of bullying and abuse (the NDHC Safeguarding and Protecting Policy and England Hockey Safeguarding and Protecting Policy on the website has more information).

- It is NOT your responsibility to decide if a situation is poor practice, abuse or bullying, but it **IS** your responsibility to report your concerns to the Club Welfare Officer.
- You must act if you think there is someone being bullied. Contact the Club Welfare Officer (Natalie Beal nat_beal@hotmail.com - 07828804518) promptly and record your concerns. The Club has an England Hockey referral process which must then be followed.

Photography

The Club has a policy on taking photos of young people, which is not intended to prevent parents and other supporters taking legitimate photos, but to protect the welfare of young people.

- Challenge anyone who is taking photos at the side of the pitch who is not known.
- Don't identify young people in images (ie captions to pictures).

Changing

The Club adopts England Hockey's policy on Changing Rooms Guidance, this is intended to protect young people as well as adults working or playing with the young people.

- If young people are uncomfortable changing or showering in public, no pressure should be placed on them to do so. Encourage them to do this at home.

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- If adults and young people need to share a changing facility, the Club must have consent from parents that the young person can share changing with adults at the Club.
- If sharing is necessary, their parents/carers should be allowed to supervise them whilst they are changing without creating mixed gender issues for teams.

Transport

Young and vulnerable people often travel to away matches in cars of team members – parental/guardian/carer consent is covered for this on the membership form. Adult Club Members should avoid offering a lift to Under 18s, ideally parents/guardians/carers should approach a club member or captain to arrange a lift.

- Avoid wherever possible taking young or vulnerable people on car journeys alone (sometimes these situations are unavoidable and parental/guardian/carer permission should be sought).
- Make sure that young or vulnerable people are collected by their parents/guardian/carer after matches or training – if they are late arriving try to ensure that more than one adult waits with the person.
- Never take young or vulnerable people to your home.

Please note that Transport, Photography and Changing Room issues as addressed above are detailed on the under 18 membership form.

Communications

The England Hockey guidance on contacting young people is not to do so unless necessary. Contact with young or vulnerable people should be via the parent/guardian/carer registered on the membership form or with a copy to the parent.

England Hockey guidance suggests:

- Avoid contacting young people unnecessarily.
- Avoid emailing young people individually or copy the email to their parent.
- Avoid texting young or vulnerable people – text their parent/guardian/carer only.