

## 3. SAFE BEHAVIOURS

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance and direction to all **Australian Hockey Organisations** regarding safe behaviours when engaging and interacting with children and young people in hockey.

### SCOPE

These policies and procedures specifically apply to People in Hockey across all Australian Hockey Organisations (AHOs):

- Hockey Australia (HA)
- State and Territory Member Associations (MAs)
- Regional Associations
- Affiliated Clubs

### NATIONAL PRINCIPLES

The following policy and procedures relate to National Principles:

1. Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.
2. Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
3. Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
4. Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.
7. Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.

### Definitions

List of [definitions](#).

### Responsibilities

#### Policy

- 3.1 Any incident, action or behaviour that does not comply with these policies and procedures may be considered a breach of policy and/or a breach of the law.
- 3.2 It is the responsibility of all People in Hockey to report any breaches and a breach may result in disciplinary action which, depending on the severity, may range from a written warning to termination of employment.
- 3.3 Additionally, all AHOs are required to report breaches of the law, therefore it may also result in action being taken by an external agency such as the Police.
- 3.4 It is the responsibility of all People in Hockey to familiarise themselves with the policies and procedures outlined in this document. If any Person in Hockey does not fully understand what is required of them it is their responsibility to seek further clarification, support and/or training by contacting a supervisor.

## Code of Conduct

### Policy

- 3.5 The [HA Code of Conduct](#) applies to all People in Hockey (see table) and aims to ensure that everyone involved in hockey is aware of the standards of behaviour expected of them and the mechanism for dealing with any conduct that is alleged to breach the Code of Conduct.
- 3.6 The [Safe Hockey Safe Kids Code](#) is a subset of the HA Code of Conduct that applies specifically to interacting and engaging with children and young people in hockey.

## SAFE HOCKEY SAFE KIDS CODE

**I will do what I can to provide a safe, fun and welcoming environment for all children and young people in hockey, free from physical, sexual and emotional abuse or neglect.**

**I will do this by:**

1. Listening and responding to children and young people, and take what they say seriously
2. Communicating safely and effectively with children and young people, in person and online
3. Having firm boundaries when interacting with children and young people
4. Only engaging in safe and appropriate physical contact with children and young people, putting their safety and wellbeing first
5. Never engaging in any behaviour of a sexual nature, physically, verbally non-verbally, or through online communication
6. Role modelling positive behaviours that prioritise the health and safety of a child or young person in hockey
7. Contributing to a safe and inclusive environment for children and young people from ALL backgrounds and treating everyone fairly
8. Taking any concerns about the safety of a child or young person seriously, and responding in line with policies, procedures, guidelines and the law.

### Policy

- 3.7 The Safe Hockey Code Safe Kids Code outlines the behaviours that all People in Hockey are expected to uphold when interacting with children and young people, in any capacity.
- 3.8 The Safe Hockey Safe Kids Code will be actively promoted to all [Level 1, 2 and 3 People in Hockey](#) in a range of accessible formats at their initial appointment and throughout their time in hockey.
- 3.9 AHOs will take the necessary actions to ensure any Level 1, 2 or 3 person in their organization has received and signed the Safe Hockey Safe Kids Code.
- 3.10 All Level 1,2 and 3 People in Hockey are accountable to the Safe Hockey Safe Kids Code as it is a requirement under the HA Code of Conduct. Any breach of the Safe Hockey Safe Kids Code pertains to a breach of the HA Code of Conduct and will be taken seriously, investigated internally in line with the [HA Complaints & Disputes Policy](#) and may result in disciplinary action or termination of contract.

### Procedure

- 3.11 AHOs will:
  - promote the Safe Hockey Safe Kids Code by making it available online to the general public
  - provide the Safe Hockey Safe Kids Code with all recruitment information packages to inform any potential applicants of the expectations of AHOs and their commitment to the safety of children and young people
  - keep all signed copies of the Acknowledgement of the Safe Hockey Safe Kids Code on personnel files, hard copy or electronic.
- 3.12 Any breach of the Safe Hockey Safe Kids Code must be reported to the MA via an Incident Report.
- 3.13 Any breach of the Safe Hockey Safe Kids Code that requires Police or Child Protection notification must be reported immediately as per the [Safe Responses Policy & Procedure](#).
- 3.14 Any breach of the Safe Hockey Safe Kids Code or the HA Code of Conduct that is reported will be handled by the MA in line with the [HA Complaints and Disputes Policy](#).

## Listening and responding to children & young people

### Policy

- 3.15 AHOs are committed to listening to children and young people and encouraging them to express their views and suggestions, especially on matters that directly affect them.

### Procedures

- 3.16 AHOs will be supported through the Safe Hockey Framework and supporting resources to create built-in mechanisms to actively encourage all children and young people participating in hockey activities and their families to provide feedback on how to make those activities safer, more enjoyable and more inclusive.

## Communicating safely and effectively with children and young people

### Policy

- 3.17 Any communication with a child or young person must be appropriate to Hockey activities, and with consideration given to the individual needs of the child or young person.
- 3.18 People in Hockey are expected to apply the communication strategies in a way that does not cause harm or distress, in line with the [What You Say Matters Guidelines](#) and additional communication resources provided in the Safe Hockey Framework.

## Social Media and Online Communication

3.19 Using social media to communicate with children and young people has both benefits and risks. It is best practice to use a secure app or program to facilitate communication between coaches and managers and their team, where possible.

The following section outlines appropriate and inappropriate behaviours that apply when communicating both in person and online, through a social media platform.

3.20 All People in Hockey must be aware that as there is no definitive way to determine the true age or identity of the person making contact through social media, there is a risk they may be conversing with a child or young person whom they thought is an adult.

Therefore, all People in Hockey with public social media accounts related to their role in Hockey must take the following steps if they receive private messages of a sexual nature sent to their public profiles:

- ignore - do not respond
- block - using the platform's blocking function
- report - to a supervisor or **AHO Executive**.

3.21 Further guidance regarding Hockey's position on social media use can be found in the [HA Code of Conduct Schedule 5. Social Media](#)

## Procedures

3.22 *Appropriate Communication* includes:

- Using language that is:
  - patient and calm
  - empowering and encouraging
  - simple and clear
  - highlights strengths.
- Limiting communication to hockey activities such as sharing information relating to events
- Always include at least one other adult in group communication
- Communicate directly with the parent or guardian or include a parent or guardian when communicating with an individual child or young person

3.23 *Inappropriate Communication* includes:

- Derogatory language, including in reference to body image
- Discriminatory, racist or sexist comments
- Language that is belittling, negative, threatening or intimidating
- Any language or comment that is sexual in nature.
- Requesting to meet in person for reasons not related to hockey
- Asking the child or young person to keep secrets including in relation to communication
- Communication take place outside of the hours reasonable to the program, service, activity or event

## Appropriate Language and Body Image

3.24 People in Hockey will take informed precautions when engaging in discussions relating to body weight, shape, size or health with or about a child or young person.

For additional support and expert guidance in relation to body positive language, see this useful resource developed by [Gymnastics Australia](#).

### Communicating with families

3.25 Engagement of families is important in assisting to keep a child or young person connected in sport. Regular and clear communication with families is important.

When communicating with families in relation to hockey, the same appropriate communication behaviours must be adhered to, as specified in 3.22.

### Having firm boundaries when interacting with children and young people

#### Policy

3.26 All People in Hockey are guided by the Safe Hockey Safe Kids Code, designed to provide guidance around behaviours and expectations when engaging with children and young people.

3.27 All People in Hockey will apply boundaries to any relationship with a child or young person and not act outside of the confines of their role.

#### Procedure

3.28 All People in Hockey will discuss their boundaries with the children and young people they are responsible for in the early stages of their role, and regularly thereafter, or as required.

*Appropriate Boundaries* include:

- Having clear rules about contact and communication eg not contacting a young person directly, late at night, or about something not related to hockey.
- Ensuring no child is singled out or favoured.
- Not accepting or giving gifts to children and young people or their families without notifying a supervisor and seeking consent from parents or guardians
- Declaring any conflict of interest including pre-existing relationships with a child or young person to the AHO.
- Not offering support to a child or young person, or their family, outside of Hockey activities, such as babysitting or financial support.

3.29 Any Person in Hockey that becomes aware of a situation in which a child or young person requires assistance that is beyond the confines of that person's role, or beyond the scope of usual services, they should at the earliest opportunity:

- contact the child or young person's parent or guardian to discuss.
- seek advice from their nominated supervisor or person in authority.
- document the issue accurately.

### Only engaging in safe and appropriate physical contact with children & young people

#### Policy

3.30 Any physical contact with a child or young person must be appropriate to Hockey activities, and with consideration of the individual needs of the child or young person.

3.31 Under no circumstances are People in Hockey to take disciplinary action involving physical punishment or any form of treatment listed above.

The child or young person needs to be provided with clear directions and given an opportunity to redirect any mis-behaviour in a positive manner.

## Procedures

3.32 *Appropriate Physical Contact* includes contact that is:

- related to injury prevention
- to demonstrate an action or movement
- in full view of others including other adults
- understood by the child or young person

3.33 *Inappropriate Physical Contact* includes contact that is:

- intended to cause harm (such as physical punishment)
- overly physical (tickling, sparring or wrestling)
- outside of the confines of the role
- an inappropriate use of force for circumstances
- conducted in a private or hidden space

## Never engaging in any behaviour of a sexual nature

### Policy

- 3.34 All People in Hockey must not under any circumstances, engage in **behaviour of a sexual nature** or **grooming** towards, with or in the presence of a child or young person. This includes contact and non-contact sexual behaviour as per the definition provided.
- 3.35 If a Person in Hockey does not understand which behaviours are considered to be of a sexual nature, they must seek further clarification from their supervisor or an **AHO Executive**.
- 3.36 It is acknowledged that a power imbalance exists between an adult in a **position of authority** (for example: coach, manager, supervisor, clinician) and a child or young person under the age of 18 years.
- 3.37 Under no circumstances is any Person in Hockey who is in a **position of authority** to engage in **behaviour of a sexual nature** with a child or young person even if they are above the **age of consent**. This includes contact and non-contact sexual behaviour as per the definition provided.
- 3.38 If a Person in Hockey does not understand which positions are considered to be 'a position of authority' they must seek further clarification from the definitions or a supervisor or **AHO Executive**.
- 3.39 Further guidance regarding Hockey's position on intimate relationships including those that are between adults and consensual, can be found in the [HA Code of Conduct Schedule 4. Intimate Relationships](#)

### Procedure

3.40 *Inappropriate contact behaviours* of a sexual nature include, but are not limited to:

- sexual intercourse
- sexual penetration
- kissing
- touching of the genital, buttocks or breast areas or
- inappropriate and unnecessary physical touching of any kind.

3.41 *Inappropriate non-contact behaviours* of a sexual nature include but are not limited to;

- flirting
- sexual innuendo
- inappropriate and unnecessary communication
- nudity
- exposure to pornography or
- requests to observe sexual acts

- 3.42 All AHO position descriptions will articulate if and when a role is required or likely to interact with children and young people and the nature of the interaction (for example, medical practitioners or allied health specialists, coaches or clinic facilitators).
- 3.43 All People in Hockey will receive access to the Safe Hockey Framework providing training and education resources regarding:
- types and indicators of child abuse including: sexual abuse and grooming; physical abuse; emotional abuse; and neglect
  - appropriate interaction with children and young people
  - their roles in ensuring the safety of children and young people
- 3.44 All People in Hockey will report concerns relating to any physical or non-physical interactions with children and young people as a breach of the Safe Hockey Safe Kids Code and as a suspicion of abuse as per the [Safe Responses Policy & Procedure](#).

### Role modelling positive behaviours

#### Policy

- 3.45 While supervising or interacting with children or young people, People in Hockey must not:
- use, possess or be under the influence of an illegal drug
  - use or be under the influence of alcohol
  - be incapacitated by any other legal drug such as prescription or over-the-counter drugs
  - supply alcohol or drugs (including tobacco) to children or young people
  - smoke cigarettes or use e-cigarettes during Hockey activities.

#### Procedure

- 3.46 While undertaking their role within hockey, as an employee, volunteer, player or parent helper, any Person in Hockey will assume a child or young person is watching, or listening and behave in a way that models respectful, responsible and lawful behaviours.

### Contributing to a safe and inclusive environment

#### Policy

- 3.47 AHOs will work to identify and remove any barriers to participation for children and young people and actively and continually review all aspects of all Hockey activities to ensure that they are safe and welcoming, and emotionally and physically appropriate, for children and young people.  
This is reflected in the [HA Member Protection Policy](#) and the [HA Code of Conduct](#).
- 3.48 AHOs will not discriminate against any child or young person based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, mental or physical ability, health status, educational background or socioeconomic status or other attributes, as reflected in the HA Member Protection Policy and the HA Code of Conduct.

#### Procedure

- 3.49 All People in Hockey must utilize the [Safe Hockey Community Guidelines](#), the [HA Guidelines for the Inclusion of Transgender and Gender Diverse People in Community Hockey](#) and other resources provided to ensure that they are familiar with the best ways to promote safe and inclusive experiences for children and young people, especially those identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, Culturally or Linguistically Diverse, Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer or Asexual (LGBTIQ+) or are living with disability.

### Take any concerns about the safety of a child or young person seriously

#### Policy

- 3.50 Promoting and protecting the emotional, physical, and sexual safety and well-being of children and young people is central to all aspects of the culture and operations of all AHOs.
- 3.51 All People in Hockey who have concerns about the safety of a child or young person are required to behave sensitively and calmly especially when responding to a child or young person directly, or their family.
- 3.52 All People in Hockey will report any concerns regarding the abuse or neglect of a child or young person i) internally, ii) to the appropriate child protection services, and iii) to the police, in line with the relevant procedures.

#### Procedure

- 3.53 *Appropriate behaviours* when responding to concerns about the safety of a child or young person include:
- remaining calm
  - providing a confidential space
  - reassuring the child or young person
  - allowing the child or young person to speak safely and freely
  - validating their concerns
- 3.54 *Inappropriate behaviours* when responding to concerns about the safety of a child or young person include:
- dismissing the concerns of a child or young person
  - telling them or implying that they are exaggerating, you don't believe them or they are lying
  - blaming them or suggesting they invited the behaviour
  - sharing their concerns with others in the group or other people who are not relevant
  - not responding promptly and following the procedures as outlined in the [Safe Responses Policy & Procedure](#)