

## 4. SAFE ENVIRONMENTS

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance and direction to **Australian Hockey Organisations** on how to create safe environments for children and young people, on field, off field and online.

### 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:

8. Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.

### Definitions

List of [definitions](#).

### Responsibilities

#### Policy

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 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.
- 4.3 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.
- 4.4 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.

## Safety on the field

### Policy

- 4.5 It is the responsibility of all People in Hockey involved in junior hockey to ensure they are familiar with these Safe Hockey policies and procedures and the [HA Junior Hockey Policy](#).

### Heat Stress

- 4.6 Children sweat less and get less evaporative cooling than adults. In warm and hot weather they have greater difficulty getting rid of heat; they look flushed, and feel hotter and more stressed than adults.
- 4.7 Children seem to be effective at 'listening to their bodies' and regulating their physical activity. For this reason, children should always be allowed to exercise at their preferred intensity. They should never be urged to exercise harder or compelled to play strenuous sport in warm weather.
- 4.8 If children appear distressed or complain of feeling unwell, they should stop exercising. In warm weather wet sponging will make children feel more comfortable. Drinking water should be provided for children playing sport.

### Extreme Weather

- 4.9 AHOs have a responsibility to take a positive leadership role in educating and increasing the awareness of its participants towards the dangers of physical activity in the heat and during extreme weather conditions. With this in mind, the [Hockey Australia Extreme Weather Guidelines](#) have been developed which reinforce the guidelines produced by Sports Medicine Australia. It should be noted that these are purely guidelines.
- 4.10 The guidelines should be considered for all participants involved in hockey, including players, officials, umpires, coaches, parents, volunteers, staff and spectators.

### Procedure

- 4.11 Whenever UV levels reach three and above, sun (UV) protection is needed. During this time, use a combination of five sun protection measures:
- slip on sun-protective clothing – that covers as much skin as possible
  - slop on SPF30+ sunscreen and lip balm – make sure it is broad spectrum and water-resistant. Apply sunscreen 20 minutes before going outdoors and every two hours afterwards.
  - slap on a hat – that protects your face, head, neck and ears
  - seek shade
  - slide on some sunglasses – make sure they meet the Australian standard.
- 4.12 Even if you cannot utilise some of these points when playing, ensure that you follow them in off-field activities.
- 4.13 You can easily find the daily UV alert by checking the newspaper or looking on the SunSmart: [www.sunsmart.com.au](http://www.sunsmart.com.au) or Bureau of Meteorology [www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au) websites.

For further information relating to UV exposure and heat illness visit [smartplay.com.au](http://smartplay.com.au).

## Concussion

4.14 Concussion has increasingly become a significant public health issue, particularly relevant to sport. It is the responsibility of People in Hockey to protect the welfare of children and young people at all times. Accurate diagnosis and management of concussion is needed to ensure that a concussed player is appropriately treated.

4.14 Key Points on Concussion:

- concussion can occur in traditional contact sports and other sports where head contact can occur such as hockey
- 90% of concussions occur in competitive matches
- women are twice as likely to suffer concussion as men
- most concussions are not reported
- concussion may go undetected due to the subtlety and widespread occurrence of the typical signs and symptoms of concussion
- concussion symptoms can manifest immediately or hours and even days later
- not all athletes develop the same symptoms or signs of concussion.

## Procedure

4.20 Signs to watch for:

- Problems could arise over the first 24-48 hours. A player should not be left alone and must be seen by doctor or go to a hospital at once if they:
  - have a headache that gets worse (and doesn't resolve with Paracetamol)
  - are very drowsy or can't be awakened
  - can't recognize people or places
  - have repeated vomiting
  - behave unusually or seem confused; are very irritable
  - have seizures (arms and legs jerk uncontrollably)
  - have weak or numb arms or legs
  - are unsteady on their feet; have slurred speech.

4.21 For more information on concussion see the [SCAT3 Child – Sport Concussion Assessment Tool](#)

### TAKE HOME MESSAGE

A player does not have to lose consciousness to have a concussion. All players with suspected concussion should be removed from play or training and see a medical doctor as soon as possible.

## Safety off the field

### Mental Health Safety

#### Policy

- 4.23 The mental health and wellbeing of children and young people in Hockey is an important part of ensuring a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment. Therefore, all People in Hockey will respond effectively to any child or young person who presents with mental health concerns by providing immediate support and making contact with family or an appropriate support person as soon as possible.
- 4.24 If a child is considered to be at immediate risk, for example suicidal, People in Hockey should dial '000'; consent from parents/carers or the child to contact emergency services is not required in such circumstances.
- 4.25 It is possible that mental health concerns are signs of possible abuse or neglect. If a Person in Hockey is concerned child or young person may be at risk of abuse or neglect, they will follow the [Safe Responses Policy & Procedure](#).
- 4.26 If a child or young person is consistently presenting with mental health concerns, their behaviour and wellbeing may be a risk that requires consideration when undertaking risk assessments, formal and informal, as outlined in the Responding to Risks policy and procedure in the Safe Responses Procedure.

#### Procedure

- 4.27 If a Person in Hockey has concerns about a child or young person:
- ask them if they are OK
  - stay calm, and be supportive
  - reassure them that mental health issues are quite common, and that help is available:
    - school counsellors
    - [Headspace](#)
    - [Kids Helpline](#)
    - [Beyond Blue](#)
    - contact a parent or guardian
- 4.28 If a child or young person tells you that they want to hurt themselves or wants to die, seek urgent professional help:
- phone **000**
  - call Lifeline on **131 114** for 24-hour phone counselling
  - go straight to a hospital emergency department

### Supervision of Children & Young People

#### Policy

- 4.29 Appropriate supervision contributes significantly to the safety of children and young people. All People in Hockey are therefore required to maintain adequate supervision and line of sight of all children and young people in their care, where reasonable and practical.

#### Procedure

- 4.30 All People in Hockey with supervision of children and young people will seek additional support from another Person in Hockey should they be unable to maintain supervision for a period of time.
- 4.31 All Hockey activities will operate in an environment that enables supervision. Where supervision is compromised due to the physical environment (eg events spread out over a large facility), People in Hockey will take extra precautions and considerations to provide as adequate supervision as possible.
- 4.32 The supervision of all children and young people participating in any Hockey activity, including routine or personal discussions with People in Hockey, will, to the extent possible, take place in full-view of other People in Hockey or suitable adults.

## Drop Off and Pick Up of Children and Young People

### Policy

4.33 Appointed People in Hockey are responsible for looking after children and young people during Hockey activities including the drop off and pick up period.

### Procedure

- 4.34 People in Hockey responsible for the care of children and young people are required to:
- publicise the time and location of activities and when parents and guardians can expect to drop off and collect their children
  - arrive before scheduled activities or events
  - not conclude the activities until the pre-arranged finish time
  - communicate with parents and guardians when there is to be a change in finishing time – e.g. due to other bookings or weather
  - wait until the last child or young person is collected before they leave the activities
  - keep a register of parent and guardian emergency contact numbers (at least two per child) and always have access to a phone
  - not take children and young people home of their own accord without prior arrangement
  - not allow a child or young person to go home with another parent or adult without permission.
- 4.35 People in Hockey will embed a process for transferring the duty of care of a child under 12 years from parents and guardians to coaches or managers either via a signing in/out requirement, roll marking or another way in which coaches and managers can clearly see who has arrived or left.
- 4.36 When a parent or guardian is more than 15 mins late to collect a child or young person, People in Hockey responsible must:
- make contact with the parent or guardian
  - ask the second to last child or young person and their parent to wait also, so as to avoid being left alone with the child or young person
  - contact a supervisor if the child or young person is not collected within a reasonable time
  - contact Police if there is no other option
  - follow up with the parent or guardian after the fact to ensure they are clear on the pick up requirements and a suitable contingency plan is identified.

## Transporting Children & Young People

### Policy

4.37 The transport of a child or young person by a Person in Hockey may, on occasion, be appropriate, however an **AHO Executive** and a parent or guardian's consent is required to transport a child or young person in their private vehicle. Consideration must be given to the circumstances and insurance implications.

### Procedure

- 4.38 Children and young people are only to be transported when:
- The vehicle has adequate insurance
  - The driver is fully licensed
  - The circumstances are directly related to the delivery of a Hockey activity
  - If possible, another adult in Hockey is present
  - Prior authorisation from management and from the child or young person's parent or guardian has been sought
- 4.39 Any child or young person who is being transported should, where possible, sit in the back of the vehicle. Parents or guardians of the child or young person, and a supervisor should also be advised of expected departure and arrival times. This is not required for transport taking place on interstate trips over 2 or more days.

## Overnight Trips

### Policy

- 4.40 Any event that includes the overnight stay of any child or young person must be officially approved by **AHO Executive**.
- 4.41 No child or young person can attend an overnight stay without the prior written consent of a parent or guardian, and without the prior provision of all relevant medical information.
- 4.42 Any Person in Hockey must utilise the [Safe Hockey Overnight Travel Guide](#) which provides step by step instructions for coaches, managers and other supervising adults to ensure they are conducted safely and appropriately with the safety of children and young people the top priority.

### Procedure

- 4.43 Standards of behaviour outlined in the [Safe Behaviours Policy & Procedure](#) and the Safe Hockey Overnight Travel Guide must be observed by all People in Hockey during an overnight stay, and in addition:
- There must be at least two authorised adults present at all times during any overnight stay. If this is not possible, written consent from the parents or guardians of each child and young person must be obtained prior to the event taking place.
  - If there are both young women and young men on an overnight stay, then there must be both male and female authorised adults present at all times during the event.
  - No child or young person on an overnight stay can be left under the supervision of another child or young person, or an unauthorised adult.
  - No child or young person on an overnight stay can be exposed to any form of inappropriate material, including pornography or other age inappropriate themes or concepts.
  - All children and young people on an overnight stay must be provided with complete privacy when in a bathroom or washroom, and when dressing or undressing. This includes privacy from other children and young people.
  - All children and young people on an overnight stay must be provided with appropriate sleeping arrangements. Appropriate sleeping arrangements includes arrangements that do not expose any child to any risk of harm, or other inappropriate behaviour by any adult or other child or young person.
  - All children and young people on an overnight stay must be informed before and throughout the event that they have the absolute right to contact a parent or guardian at any time during the event, and for any reason.

## Change Room Arrangements

### Policy

- 4.44 All children and young people have a right to complete privacy when using any change room facilities.
- 4.45 This right must, however, be balanced by the obligation People in Hockey have in protecting children and young people from harm, for example, while children and young people are using public change room facilities.

### Procedure

- 4.46 If supervision is required to reduce potential risks to children and young people using change room facilities, People in Hockey must:
- provide that supervision in the company of another appropriate adult
  - provide that supervision in the least intrusive way possible, and in a way that maximises the child or young person's privacy and dignity
  - be vigilant to, and remove, the presence of any video or still image recording devices
  - not dress or undress in the presence of any child or young person using the facilities.

## Safety online

### Policy

- 4.47 AHO responsibilities to protect children and young people extends to the online environment when social media is used as a platform for promotion, communication and sharing of information.
- 4.48 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.
- 4.49 The following section outlines appropriate and inappropriate behaviours that apply when communicating both in person and online, through a social media platform.

*Safe Online Environments* include:

- Limiting contact to hockey related content such as sharing information relating to events
- Allowing young people to navigate their online world without judgement, prejudice or unsolicited comments from People in Hockey
- Never sharing personal photos or posts from a young person that is not related to hockey, or if related to hockey, without their consent and a justified reason to share. If you are unsure, don't share.
- Always including at least one other adult in group communication
- Always seeking permission to share or upload video or photos of a child or young person, from them and their families, and removing any photos or video as requested, regardless if permission was sought.
- Reporting or addressing any online abuse or harassment that you may observe when it involves young people in hockey through their parents and /the club
- Checking in on a young person's wellbeing if you have any reason to suspect that are experiencing abuse or harassment online.

*Unsafe Online Environments* include:

- 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.
  - Liking, sharing or commenting on photos not relevant to hockey, personal or unsolicited.
  - Communication that takes place outside of the hours reasonable to the program, service, activity or event.
- 4.50 Further guidance regarding Hockey's position on social media use can be found in the [HA Code of Conduct Schedule 5. Social Media](#)