



# Roehampton Club Child Protection Guidance (Members of Staff and volunteers)

## 1. Key Information

- 1.1 Roehampton Club Ltd is referred to in this document as the Club.
- 1.2 A reference to a child in this document is a reference to anyone under the age of 18.
- 1.3 A reference to staff includes all employees and volunteers at the Club.
- 1.4 The Club's Child Protection Officer is a senior member of staff and is identified on the Club's website.

## 2. Policy aims

- 2.1 This Guidance is intended to promote the objectives and principles set out in the Club's Child Protection Policy Statement which may be found in the juniors section of the Members Club's website.
- 2.2 This guidance applies to all staff at the Club.

## 3. Promoting good practice

- 3.1 Child abuse, particularly sexual abuse, can arouse strong emotions. It is important that any concern or issue which arises is dealt with calmly and objectively.
- 3.2 Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and the sporting environment. Some individuals will actively seek employment or contact with young people in order to harm them. An employee or member of the Club is likely to have regular contact with children. Staff have a crucial role to play in supporting the Club's efforts to safeguard children.

## 4. Good practice guidelines

- 4.1 All staff are required to demonstrate exemplary behaviour both in the interests of children and in order to protect themselves from unjustified allegations.
- 4.2 The following are common sense examples:
  - 4.2.1 Always work in an open environment avoiding, where possible, private or unobserved situations, interactions or communications with unaccompanied children.
  - 4.2.2 Treat all children equally with respect and dignity.
  - 4.2.3 Put the welfare of the child first.
  - 4.2.4 Adults should respect children's privacy and right to be safe from abuse and harm and not to do anything harmful or age inappropriate with or in front of them.
  - 4.2.5 Always make sport fun and enjoyable, emphasising the importance of fair play.
  - 4.2.6 Always ensure that you have the appropriate technical skills, valid qualifications and insurance cover.

- 4.2.7 Where manual/physical contact is required, it should be provided openly and with the consent of the child. Physical contact can be appropriate so long as it is neither intrusive nor disturbing and the young person's consent has been given.
  - 4.2.8 Endeavour to involve parents/carers wherever possible (for example, encouraging them to take responsibility for their children in the changing rooms). If groups have to be supervised in changing rooms always ensure parents, coaches etc work in pairs.
  - 4.2.9 Where teams are to be taken on overnight trips, staff should avoid spending time in children's rooms and should not invite or have children in their rooms.
  - 4.2.10 Be an excellent role model, this includes not smoking, taking drugs or drinking alcohol in the company of young people.
  - 4.2.11 Recognise the developmental needs and capacity of the child and do not risk sacrificing welfare in desire for club or personal achievements. This means avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them in training against their will.
  - 4.2.12 Be positive, approachable and offer praise to promote the objectives of the Club at all times.
  - 4.2.13 Respect and listen to the opinions of children.
- 4.3 The following must be avoided:
- 4.3.1 Spending time alone in private with any child (other than your own) at the Club.
  - 4.3.2 Staff, coaches and volunteers taking young people alone in a car on journeys, however short.
  - 4.3.3 Engaging in, allowing or encouraging rough physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
  - 4.3.4 Engaging in any form of inappropriate touching.
  - 4.3.5 Striking any child.
  - 4.3.6 Acting immodestly or engaging in any behaviours with sexual connotations in the presence of any child.
  - 4.3.7 Engaging in exhibitionist behaviours involving nudity in the presence of children.
  - 4.3.8 Subjecting any child to physical intimidation.
  - 4.3.9 Use of inappropriate language in the presence of children, or allowing children's use of inappropriate language to go unchallenged.
  - 4.3.10 Making sexually suggestive comments to or about a child or children.
  - 4.3.11 Humiliating, shouting at a child or reducing him or her to tears.
  - 4.3.12 Allowing allegations relevant to this guidance made by a child to go unrecorded or not acted upon.
  - 4.3.13 Doing things of a personal nature that the young person can do for themselves.
- 4.4 When a case arises where it is impractical/impossible to avoid a certain situation e.g. transporting a young person alone in your car, the tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of the parent/carer and the young person involved.

#### 4.5 *Use of photographic/filming equipment at sporting events*

- 4.5.1 Only film or take photos of children with the express consent of their parents or the child and be clear what the photos/videos will be used for. Only publish/onwardly transmit with the permission of their parents or the child.
- 4.5.2 There is general evidence (not related directly to the Club) that some people have used sporting events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of children. Any concerns should be reported to the Child Protection Officer or the Chief Executive.
- 4.5.3 There is no intention to prevent Club coaches and teachers using video equipment as a legitimate coaching aid. However, participants and their parents will be made aware that this is part of the coaching programme and such films will be stored safely.

### **5. Bullying**

- 5.1 Bullying is defined as deliberate hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves.
- 5.2 Bullying can be physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, slapping), verbal (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, name calling, graffiti, threats, abusive text messages), emotional (e.g. tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating, ignoring, isolating from the group) or sexual (e.g. unwanted physical contact or abusive comments).
- 5.3 All members of staff are expected to take all signs of bullying very seriously. Staff response will be dependent on the circumstances, however serious matters or concerns should be reported to the Child Protection Officer.
- 5.4 Members of staff should:
  - 5.4.1 Encourage all children to speak and share any concerns.
  - 5.4.2 Take seriously all allegations about bullying and take action to ensure that the victim is safe.
  - 5.4.3 Keep a record of any conversations about bullying.
  - 5.4.4 Challenge any behaviour that is indicative of bullying.
  - 5.4.5 Inform their line manager and the child's parents of any action taken.
- 5.5 When dealing with a child suspected of bullying, members of staff should:
  - 5.5.1 Talk with the child, explain the situation, and help the child to understand the consequences of their behaviour.
  - 5.5.2 Inform the child's parents.
  - 5.5.3 Encourage and support the child to change their behaviour.

### **6. Information relating to the recruitment and training of staff**

#### 6.1 *Recruitment*

- 6.1.1 The Club recognises the necessity of ensuring that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from having contact and working with children.

6.1.2 For staff pre-selection checks will include the following:

- (a) All employees must complete an application form. The application form will elicit information about an applicant's past and a self-disclosure about any criminal record.
- (b) Consent should be obtained from an applicant to seek information from the Criminal Records Bureau.
- (c) Two confidential references, including one regarding previous work with children. These references will be taken up and confirmed through telephone contact.
- (d) Evidence of identity should be provided (eg passport or driving licence with photo).

## 6.2 *Interview and induction*

All employees will be required to undergo an interview carried out to acceptable protocol and recommendations. All employees should receive formal or informal induction, during which:

- 6.2.1 A check should be made that the application form has been completed in full (including sections on criminal records and self-disclosures).
- 6.2.2 Their qualifications should be substantiated.
- 6.2.3 The job requirements and responsibilities should be clarified.
- 6.2.4 Child protection procedures are explained and training needs are identified.

## 6.3 *Training*

In addition to pre-selection checks, the safeguarding process includes training after recruitment to help employees to:

- 6.3.1 Analyse their own practice against established good practice, and to ensure their practice is likely to protect them from unjustified allegations.
- 6.3.2 Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice or possible abuse or harm.
- 6.3.3 Respond to concerns expressed by a child.
- 6.3.4 Work safely and effectively with children.

## 7. **Incidents that must be reported/recorded**

7.1 If any of the following occur you should report this as soon as is practicable to the Child Protection Officer or other senior member of staff who will record the incident and normally inform the child's parents, or arrange for the child's parents to be informed the incident (unless doing so may place the child at increased risk of abuse or harm) and decide how to proceed in accordance with this policy:

- 7.1.1 If you accidentally hurt a child.
- 7.1.2 If he/she seems distressed.
- 7.1.3 If you witness any incident which raises any concern that anyone has acted inappropriately in relation to the Club's Child Protection Policy.

## **8. Receiving evidence of Possible Abuse/Harm**

8.1 Where a concern is reported directly by a child to a member of staff it is important that staff respond appropriately:

8.1.1 Stay calm so as not to frighten the child.

8.1.2 Listen carefully to the child to show that you are willing and able to listen and taking them and their concerns seriously.

8.1.3 Keep questions to a minimum inviting the child to communicate further if she/he wishes. Avoid any specific or direct questions.

8.1.4 Do not promise to keep the child's confidence. Inform the child that you will have to inform other professionals i.e the police and/or children's social care about what they have told you so that they can take action to keep the child safe.

8.1.5 Record all of the information in line with section 8.2 below and report to the Child Protection Officer as soon as possible.

8.2 When recording information as much detail as possible should be included. You should confine yourself to the facts and distinguish what is your personal knowledge and what others have told you. The report should include:

8.2.1 The child's name, age and date of birth of the child.

8.2.2 The child's home address and telephone number.

8.2.3 Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else.

8.2.4 The nature of the allegation. Include dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information. Use as many of your own and the child's words as you can recall.

8.2.5 A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes.

8.2.6 Details of witnesses to the incidents.

8.2.7 The child's account, if it has been given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.

## **9. Dealing with allegations or suspicions – General**

9.1 It is not the responsibility of the Club or any employee or officer of the Club to decide whether or not child abuse or harm has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns. This may include, for example, reports to the police or robust measures to manage any possible risk of harm to children.

9.2 The Club will seek to communicate with a child in a sympathetic and appropriate way in close consultation with the child's parents.

9.3 The Club assures all employees that it will fully support and protect anyone who in good faith reports his/her concern that an employee, member or visitor has abused or harmed a child. The Club will view any victimisation or threatened victimisation (whether direct or indirect) of any person raising any concern or providing relevant information as a very serious matter.

- 9.4 The Club will expect any member of staff who is the subject of any complaint or allegation to provide full and constructive cooperation to the Club in seeking to resolve any issues arising. Every member of staff is expected to support the Club's child protection objectives.
- 9.5 The procedures set out in section 9.8 and 11 below may be varied if, in the Chief Executive's opinion, the particular circumstances require it. The Club's approach will be based upon the Chief Executive's view of the risks in all of the circumstances.
- 9.6 The Club will not be precluded from taking appropriate child protection measures solely on the basis that a member of staff has not been convicted of any criminal offence nor been the subject of a finding of serious misconduct.
- 9.7 The Club will seek to keep information concerning the allegations and the identity of any children or members of staff involved confidential to the extent that they can reasonably do so. The Club may, however, provide information to the Police and/or Local Authority Children's Social Care Services.
- 9.8 In the event that at any concerns or allegations relate to the Chief Executive, reports should be referred to the Human Resources Manager (or in his/her absence, the Chairman). In such circumstances the Human Resources Manager in consultation with the Chairman shall discharge the responsibilities of the Chief Executive under section 10 below.

## **10. Dealing with child abuse/harm allegations or suspicions – Initial Process**

- 10.1 Any concern relating to a member of staff in the context of child protection should be reported immediately to the Club's Duty Manager or the Chief Executive.
- 10.2 The Duty Manager will take any action urgently required and refer the concern to the Chief Executive at the earliest opportunity.
- 10.3 If the concerns are not serious and there is no concern relating to abuse or harm, the Chief Executive will seek to resolve issues and this may include a discussion and/or advice to any of the individuals concerned. In these circumstances the following provisions of this section 10 may not apply. Furthermore, if following consideration of the concern it is deemed to relate to poor practice and if there is found to be no material risk of harm or abuse to the children, it will be dealt with as a standard disciplinary matter.
- 10.4 If the concerns are that a child is being or may be being harmed or abused the Chief Executive will notify the Chairman (and the board if necessary) with a view to urgent safeguarding action. This may include the relevant member of staff's immediate suspension. The interests of any child will be considered to be of paramount importance throughout.
- 10.5 Where appropriate, the Chief Executive may, in consultation with the Chairman, inform the Police and/or Local Authority Children's Social Care Services, and will consult with them as to what to do. It is likely to be appropriate where there is a suspicion that a criminal offence may have been committed or there is a possible risk of abuse or harm to children that a report to the Police and/or Local Authority Children's Social Care Services will be required.
- 10.6 If a report to the Police and/or Local Authority Children's Social Care Services is made, the Club will refrain from any action which might hinder any related investigation(s).

## **11. Dealing with child abuse/harm allegations or suspicions – Further Process**

- 11.1 Once the Police and Children's Social Care have completed their investigation and confirmed that the following actions regarding the member of staff involved would not impede such investigation (and subject to any Children's Social Care Plan) the Chief Executive will:

11.1.1 investigate the allegations or suspicions and collate relevant information; and

- 11.1.2 give the relevant member of staff an early opportunity to provide an open oral explanation and account of events at the time of any alleged incident(s). The Club will expect the member of staff to be truthful and co-operative in seeking to resolve any issues.
- 11.2 The Chief Executive will then make a decision on what steps, if any, should be taken; including the potential reinstatement of that member of staff and how this can be sensitively handled.
- 11.3 When considering the matter:
  - 11.3.1 the Chief Executive will adopt a risk based approach and consider the best interests of the Club as a whole, taking into account all of the circumstances including but not limited to a paramount concern for the interests of any child concerned and junior members generally, the member of staff's representations and response generally, the outcome of any police or other investigation and fairness to all those involved; and
  - 11.3.2 the Chief Executive will consider the circumstances generally and whether any allegations remain credible or whether concerns have been resolved; and
  - 11.3.3 the Chief Executive will decide what measures, if any, are appropriate.
- 11.4 The Chief Executive shall not attempt to determine whether the member of staff is, or is not, guilty of any criminal offence or other misconduct.
- 11.5 The parents of any child concerned will also be informed with an outcome of the process including, where appropriate, a written summary of the reasons.

**12. Support to deal with the aftermath of abuse/harm**

- 12.1 Consideration should be given to the kind of support that children, parents and members of staff may need. Use of helplines, support groups and open meetings will maintain an open culture and help the healing process.

*The British Association for Counselling Directory* is available from The British Association for Counselling, 1 Regent Place, Rugby CV21 2PJ, Tel: 01788 550899, Fax: 01788 562189.

*Childline* – Tel: 0800 1111

*Victim Support* – Tel: 0845 30 30 900

- 12.2 Consideration should be given to what kind of support may be appropriate for the alleged perpetrator.

**13. Allegations of previous abuse/harm**

- 13.1 Allegations of abuse may be made long after the relevant event.
- 13.2 Where such an allegation is made, the Club should follow the procedures as detailed above (including reporting the matter to the Police and/or Local Authority Children's Social Care Services if appropriate). This is because other children may be at risk of harm from this person.

**14. Concerns outside the immediate sporting environment**

- 14.1 If a member of staff has any concerns regarding a child's welfare outside of the Club they should immediately report their concerns to the Child Protection Officer who should:
  - 14.1.1 Contact children's social care services or the police as soon as possible.

14.1.2 Act with the children's social care services or police to decide how/when to inform the parents.

14.1.3 The Child Protection Officer should also report the concern to the Chief Executive.

14.2 Staff are expected to keep the details of any such concern confidential to the extent it can reasonably do so, however the information may be shared with the Local Authority Children's Social Care Services and/or the police.

## **15. Status of the Policy, Guidance and Procedures**

The Club may from time to time change and update these documents. They represent the Club's approach to the matters with which they deal but are not intended to create any legally enforceable obligation upon the Club or any member of staff. Insofar as they are inconsistent with the Club's Rules or Memorandum and Articles, then the Rules or Memorandum and Articles prevail.

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