



Hong Kong Junior Basketball League Child Safeguarding Policy

1. Child safeguarding in Hong Kong Junior Basketball League (HKJBL)

Matches in the HKJBL are played at various school venues across Hong Kong on Saturdays with about 500 participants across the U10 – U14 boys and girls age levels.

As a league we have a duty of care to safeguard children and provide an environment where safeguarding children is standard practice. We are concerned with the welfare and development of children so that they are free from any form of abuse, or neglect. We are committed to the wellbeing of children so that they may grow into responsible and fulfilled adults.

Everybody in our league, including committee, administration, and coaches are responsible for ensuring that children are protected, and appropriate procedures and policies are in place and fully implemented.

At the HKJBL we:

- Have a policy and procedures in place to safeguard children.
- Train all coaches in safeguarding, and promote a code of conduct so everyone understands what behaviors are encouraged, acceptable or unacceptable
- Designate a Child Safeguarding person-in-charge for each school year

This policy applies to all coaches involved in the HKJBL including volunteers working. "Children" means anybody below 18 years of age.

2. Definition of abuse

There are four main types of abuse:

- physical
- sexual
- emotional
- neglect

A person may abuse or neglect children directly or indirectly, or may be responsible for abuse by failing to prevent another person harming that child.

Physical abuse

This may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, pushing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or any act causing physical harm to a child.

Examples of physical abuse in sport include:

- extreme physical punishments; forcing a child or young person into training and competition - that exceeds the capacity of his or her maturity and growing body or limitations of a disability;
- assaulting a person;
- or where the child or young person is given drugs to enhance performance or in the case of a child, delay puberty.



Sexual abuse

Forcing or encouraging children to take part in any sexual activity. This may involve inappropriate touching, penetrative or non-penetrative sexual acts. It may include non-contact activities, e.g. involving children: seeing sexual images, watching sexual activities, creating sexual images, or encouraging children to behave sexually. Grooming is also considered a form of sexual abuse.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent maltreatment of children such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on their development.

It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only if they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed. It may also include overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing them from participating in normal social interaction.

Emotional abuse may involve children seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of others, such as serious bullying, exploitation or corruption, as this could cause children to feel frightened or in danger.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of children, though it may also occur alone.

Examples of emotional abuse in sport include:

- Subjecting children to constant criticism, name-calling, and sarcasm or bullying.
- It could also include regular exclusion from an activity, non-selection for a team, failing to rotate squad positions,
- Or subtler actions such as staring at or ignoring a child or young person.
- Putting players under consistent pressure to perform to unrealistically high standards is also a form of emotional abuse.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet children's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of their health or development.

Examples:

- A parent failing to provide adequate food, drink, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment).
- Failing to protect children from physical and emotional harm or danger.
- A parent failing to ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers).
- Failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, children's basic emotional needs.

Examples of neglect in sport could include:

- Not ensuring children or young people are safe.
- Exposing children to undue cold or heat or unsuitable weather conditions.



- Exposing them to unnecessary risk of injury.
- Leaving a child who was not collected at the end of a class.
- Failing to provide drinks breaks, or safe shelter in a thunderstorm.

Bullying

Bullying is often considered to be a fifth type of abuse but when it does occur it usually has elements of one or more of the four categories identified. The bully can be a parent who pushes too hard, a coach or manager with a “win at all costs” attitude, or another intimidating child. It should also be recognised that bullying can take place in the virtual world of social networking sites, emails or text messages.

Bullying should not be ignored, and the victim should be supported through what can be a traumatic experience. Bullying will not just go away. Bullies can be very cunning and develop strategies to avoid it being seen by anyone but the victim.

Bullying takes many forms but ultimately it is the perception of the victim that determines whether or not they are being bullied rather than the intention of the bully. There are opportunities to bully at class or activity. The way that incidents are dealt with can make the difference between life being tolerable or becoming a misery for the victim.

3. Code of conduct

The HKJBL expects anyone interacting with children on its behalf to abide by its behaviour and child discipline good practice guidelines. This policy requires all coaches and volunteers to treat children with respect and dignity. When coaches representing the HKJBL are in contact with children, they should:

- Treat children with respect and recognise them as independent individuals.
- Try to understand and respect the child’s cultural background.
- Not do anything that will damage a child’s or parent’s trust.
- Take all reasonable care to protect children from any abuse while she/he is in your care.
- Report any suspicion to the Child Safeguarding officer if you suspect a child may be hurt by the abusive actions or attitudes of another person.

Coaches representing the HKJBL must avoid behaving in ways that could:

- Be understood or interpreted as poor practice.
- Put a child at risk of abuse.
- Be potentially abusive.

In order to protect children and staff, the following code of conduct is given to protect children from abuse and protect staff from false accusation.

Coaches and volunteers should:

- Avoid behaviour which could be misunderstood or interpreted as abuse.
- Provide effective supervision and proper pre-planning of coaching using safe methods.
- Be visible to other adults when interacting with children, eg. in an open area, or keep the door open.
- Avoid being the only adult to take care of a group of children.



- Not allow dangerous play or bullying.
- Be aware that children have the right to decide how much physical contact they have with others, except in exceptional circumstances, e.g. when they need medical attention, or to prevent significant harm.
- Administer minor First Aid in the presence of others. Refer more serious incidents to the designated first aider.
- Touch should be age-appropriate and generally initiated by the child, not the adult.
- Create and maintain an open culture where any issue or concern can be discussed. Staff and volunteers must never:
 - Act in ways that may abuse a child or may place a child at risk of abuse. See above descriptions of the 4 types of abuse.
 - Physically abuse children or use physical punishment to coach / discipline children, including hitting, slapping, spanking and no verbal abuse such as shouting, swearing or use of demeaning language.
 - Touch children in inappropriate ways. A general guideline is not to touch children in areas normally covered by shorts / t-shirt, but also includes tickling in an inappropriate way.
 - Use sanctions that humiliate or harm a child
 - Engage in physical activity that is sexually provocative inappropriate, offensive or exploitative, or could be construed as assault or abuse.
 - Develop sexual relationships with children, or relationships that could be deemed in any way exploitative or abusive.
 - Expose children to inappropriate materials, e.g. any pornographic videos, images or literature.
 - Use language, make suggestions or offer advice, which is inappropriate, flirtatious, offensive or abusive.
 - Develop a physical or emotionally dependent relationship to develop between with children in your care; this is often referred to as "grooming".
 - Involve children in inappropriately activities, such as gambling, smoking, vaping, drug taking, etc
 - Do things for children of a personal nature that the children can do for themselves.
 - Excuse, or participate in, behaviour of children, which is illegal, unsafe or abusive.
 - Act in ways intended to shame or humiliate.
 - Discriminate against, show different treatment to, or favour particular children while excluding others.

4. Recruitment and screening of HKJBL Members Staff

When the HKJBL allows a new club to join, the HKJBL should take reasonable steps to satisfy itself that the clubs have suitable checks in place allowing their staff to work closely with children. The following guidelines must be followed:

- Any individual to be employed or engaged in a relevant role should be provided with this policy, and are required to confirm that they have read and understand everything.



- They then have to make a declaration in the form attached to this policy – HKJBL Child Safety Declaration Form - confirming their suitability to work with children before starting.

If an incomplete Declaration Form is provided, the HKJBL may require the applicant to attend an interview with the Child Safeguarding person-in-charge to explain why they were unable to complete the declaration. The Child Safeguarding person-in-charge and the committee shall have the final say on whether the applicant is suitable for the applied role.

Where a club is employing an individual, it should additionally require them to complete a Sexual Conviction Record Check with the Hong Police (for Hong Kong resident), prior to the commencement, and as a condition, of being involved in the HKJBL. A “criminal conviction” check can also be conducted through a 3rd party company as it covers sexual convictions. This is more appropriate for volunteers as they are not employed by clubs or the HKJBL so they cannot apply for the normal Sexual Conviction Record Check.

5. Responses to allegations and incidents of child abuse

It is the responsibility of all club coaches and volunteers to identify and report signs of harm or abuse against children to the Child Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible. Including any concerns about the behaviour of an adult in relation to children, even if you are told by somebody else.

The Child Safeguarding Policy must be taken seriously. If you believe that the child is in immediate danger, you should call the police. In the absence of the Child Safeguarding person-in-charge, report to the person-in-charge at that class. The Child Safeguarding person-in-charge should be informed at the earliest possible opportunity.

Once the person-in-charge is notified, they will follow the Safeguarding Incident Reporting Instructions (Form attached). Investigations will be conducted as soon as possible to ensure that those guilty of causing harm are dealt with quickly, and those falsely or mistakenly accused are able to move on with their reputation intact.

If a child raises any suspicions or concerns, talk to them in an area that can be viewed by others. If a child asks to talk in confidence do not promise confidentiality. You have a duty to report any situations of possible abuse. Explain that you may have to get other people to help if they are being harmed. Stay calm and listen to the child attentively, maintaining eye contact. Allow the child to talk, but do not press for information. Reassure the child that they are not to blame for anything that has happened, and they were right to tell.

The Child Safeguarding person-in-charge will consider the appropriate action to be taken. This may involve investigation into the allegation themselves, or if the matter is potentially more serious, it may be referred to the appropriate authorities, such as the Hong Kong Police or Social Welfare Department.

The HKJBL will cooperate with all government authorities in the investigation of an alleged incident of abuse.

6. Disciplinary procedures for misconduct



The HKJBL has jurisdiction to deal with any allegation of abuse of children or any breach of this policy. Any allegation of abuse of children that is not referred to a government authority will be dealt with by the HKJBL in accordance with this policy and its related procedures.

During any investigation process under this policy, a temporary suspension from involvement in the HKJBL may be issued by the HKJBL Disciplinary Committee.

If an allegation of child abuse is confirmed, the involved person will be removed from the HKJBL. If the allegation concerns a breach of the code of conduct, but does not involve abuse, the involved person may face discipline. The Disciplinary Committee will decide on the consequence, for instance, receipt of official warning, suspension from involvement in coaching or receive education on the policy.

7. Education and training about child protection policy

Before having any contact with children, all staff should be educated on what behaviour is acceptable and what is not. Children also need to be informed about the code of conduct and made aware of their right to be safe from abuse. The contact details of the Child Safeguarding person-in-charge should be readily available to all members, and those who report suspicions and concerns should be confident that these will be treated seriously and confidentially.

Actions below should be taken to ensure all stakeholders are aware of the policy:

- The Child Safeguarding Policy should be shown to all clubs.
- Information in an easily understood format should be provided to students and parents on the code of conduct with details of who to contact with a child safeguarding concern.
- Children should be made aware of their rights to be safe from abuse.
- Child safeguarding person-in-charge should present at the annual general meeting to update all stakeholders on policy implementation and updates.

8. Communications guideline

People who are bound by this policy, including those taking photographs or media for the company use, must abide by the following media guidelines when taking, sharing or using photographs or media in relation to the HKJBL.

Photography

- The use of cameras, phones, videos, or other recording devices inside toilet or changing areas is strictly prohibited at all times.
- All photos and media of children should be respectful, appropriate, relevant to the nature of the company, and not in any way disparaging or humiliating.
- Children must be appropriately dressed when being photographed. It is never acceptable to capture any images in toilets, or at any time when children are dressing. Images should be neither sexual, of an exploitative nature nor open to misinterpretation or misuse.
- As a guide, it is inappropriate to take photographs of children who are not your own, without express parental consent.



- Should a child wish to not have their photo taken or published, their wishes should be respected if possible.

Social media and the internet

- Do not contact children directly via social media, SMS, WhatsApp, etc. If necessary, contact parents. Otherwise you are at risk of allegations of grooming. Groups can be set up for the older players but they must have a coach, the head of venue / manager and a senior member of staff on the group.
- Never send children inappropriate, or sexually provocative, messages or images.
- Parents are encouraged to review their account privacy settings on social media prior to posting pictures of children, including their own.
- Personal information in photograph which can lead to a child being identified should never be published or uploaded in any way.
- The use of social media and the internet in relation to the schools should always be respectful and appropriate and should not in any way disparage or humiliate children. We understand that parents want to take pictures and videos of their children playing. However please be sensitive to the feelings of other parents! Please do not take pictures / videos if our staff or another parent asks you to stop.

Child Safeguarding Committee:

Child Safeguarding Officer: