

Golden Hill Sonics Safeguarding Children Policy

Child Protection Policy Golden Hill Sonics Last updated Sept 2014

Introduction

Golden Hill Sonics Football Club aims to ensure that the necessary steps are taken to protect the children who participate in football at the club, and that football takes place in an environment that is safe and enjoyable. The key principles that underpin this policy are:

- The child's welfare is paramount
- All children have a right to be protected from abuse regardless of their age, gender, disability, culture, language, racial origin, religious belief or sexual identity
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

Contacts and Complaints Procedure

The Sonics CWO (Child Welfare Officer) is Frances Wood. Frances can be contacted by

- phone on 07767811173
- email on Cwo@goldenhillsonics.co.uk

The Sonics Chairman is Phil Abraham. Phil can be contacted by

- phone on 07967229854
- email on Chair@goldenhillsonics.co.uk

The Sonics Secretary is Lucy Lyon. Lucy can be contacted by

- phone on 07779381842
- email on Secretary@goldenhillsonics.co.uk

If you have a complaint that is **football** related, you should do the following:

- talk to one of your year group coaches and try to resolve the matter
- if this is not possible or if this does not work, contact **Phil**

If you have a **child welfare** issue, you should do the following:

- talk to one of your year group coaches and try to resolve the matter
- if this is not possible or if this does not work, contact **Frances** who will try to help

If for any reason you still have a problem, contact **Lucy**

In matters relating to child protection, inaction is NOT an option. You must act. Do not assume that somebody else will.

Definition of Abuse

Child abuse is a term used to describe ways in which children or young people are harmed, usually by adults but increasingly by peers. Often these are people they know or trust. It refers to the damage done to a child's or young person's physical, mental or emotional health. Children or young people can be abused within or outside their family, at school and within the football environment. Abusive situations arise when adults or peers misuse their power over children or young people.

The 5 main forms of abuse are:

- Physical Abuse – examples of this are
 - Hitting, shaking, squeezing, biting or burning.
 - Giving children or young people alcohol, cigarettes, inappropriate drugs or poison.
 - Using excessive and inappropriate training methods.
- Neglect – this includes situations in which
 - A child's or young person's basic physical needs (e.g. for food, warm clothing) are not met.
 - Children or young people are consistently left alone and unsupervised.
 - There is a failure to ensure children or young people are safe and not exposed to undue extremes of weather or risk of injury e.g. through unsafe equipment.
- Sexual Abuse - where adults/peers use children or young people to meet their own sexual needs through

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- Fondling through to full sexual or anal intercourse.
- Showing them pornographic books, photographs or videos or taking photographs/videos for pornographic purposes.
- Emotional Abuse – examples of this are
- Persistent lack of love, affection or attention shown to a child or young person.
- Overprotecting and preventing them from socialising.
- Frequently shouting at, or taunting .children or young people
- Bullying - this is not always easy to define and can take many forms and is usually repeated over a period of time.

There are 3 main types of bullying

- Physical - hitting, kicking or theft
- Verbal - racist or homophobic remarks, threats and name calling
- Emotional - isolating an individual from activities

Identifying Abused Children

Children are reluctant to tell someone when they are being abused, so it essential that we are aware of the possible signals that a child's welfare or safety is being threatened. These signs include

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries.
- Any injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent.
- A child or adult expressing concern about the welfare of another child or young person.
- Unexplained changes in behaviour e.g. becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper.
- Sexual awareness that is inappropriate for the child's age.
- Being mistrustful of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected.
- Having difficulties in making friends.
- Loss of weight for no apparent reason.
- Becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt.

However, there is rarely a clear sign and we may have to piece together various snippets of information and rely on our instinct that something is not quite right.

Taking Action

It is **NOT** our job to decide or not whether a child is being abused. However, it **IS** our responsibility to share our concerns. The law points out that we all have a duty of care towards children, and it also emphasises that everyone shares this responsibility for protecting children in the community.

If a child or young person informs you directly that he/she is concerned about someone's behaviour towards them, or you become aware through your own observations or through a third party of possible abuse occurring within a football setting, you should take the following actions

- React calmly so as not to frighten them. Tell them they are not to blame and they were right to tell. Take what they tell you seriously.
 - Ensure their safety. If the child or young person needs immediate medical treatment, take the child to hospital or call an ambulance. Inform doctors of the concerns and ensure that they are aware that this it is a child protection issue.
 - Avoid leading the child or young person and keep any questions to the absolute minimum necessary to ensure a clear understanding of what has been said.
 - Reassure the child or young person, but do not make promises of confidentiality or outcome, which might not be feasible in the light of subsequent developments.
 - Make a full record of what has been said, heard and/or seen as soon as possible.
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- Parents and guardians should only be contacted only after advice from social services.
 - Report your concerns to the club child protection officer who will take matters further as necessary. If the child protection officer is not available, inform them when available.

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Best Practice for Club Coaches

In order to provide a safe and enjoyable environment for football, the club coaches should adopt the following standards of behaviour

- Coaches must respect the rights, dignity and worth of each equally within the context of the sport.
- Coaches must place the well being and safety of each player above all other considerations, including the development of performance.
- Coaches must adhere to all guidelines laid down by the rules of The Football Association.
- Coaches must develop an appropriate working relationship with each player based on mutual trust and respect.
- Coaches must not exert undue influence to obtain personal benefit or reward.
- Coaches must encourage and guide the children to accept responsibility for their own behaviour and performance.
- Coaches must ensure that the activities they direct or advocate are appropriate for the age, maturity, experience and ability of players.
- Coaches should, at the outset, clarify with the player (and, where appropriate, their parents/guardian) exactly what is expected of them and also what they are entitled to expect from their coach.
- Coaches must co-operate fully with other specialists (e.g. other coaches, managers, officials, doctors) in the best interests of the player.
- Coaches must always promote the positive aspects of the sport (e.g. fair play) and never condone violations of the Laws of the Game, behaviour contrary to the spirit of the Laws of the Game or relevant rules and regulations of the use of prohibited substances or techniques.
- Coaches must consistently display high standards of behaviour and appearance.

Best Practice for Medical Treatment of Children

Anyone in the club involved in medically treating children should be aware of the following recommended standards of behaviour

- It is recommended that no child or young person should be treated in any way in a situation where the child or young person is on his/her own in a treatment room with the door closed.
- It is strongly recommended that all treatment procedures should be 'open', i.e. the door remains open and parents/guardians are invited to observe treatment procedures. Where strict medical confidentiality is to be observed then the parents or guardian of the child or young person should be invited to attend.
- It is recommended that if treating an area of the body, which is potentially embarrassing to a child or young person (i.e. the groin) a suitable consenting adult acting as a chaperone, should be present.
- It is important to maintain medical confidentiality and patient dignity at all times.
- Prior to medical treatment being carried out on a child or young person, parental/guardian consent in written form must be sought where appropriate.
- It is recommended that all treatment procedures are explained fully to the child or young person and verbal consent is given before they are carried out.

General Guidelines in the Care of Children and Young People

It is possible to reduce situations in which abuse can occur and help protect club volunteers by promoting good practice.

- Always be public and open when working with children or young people. Avoid situations where a coach and an individual child or young person are completely unobserved.
- Always treat players in an open environment or, if treatment is required within a closed area, ensure parents/guardians are aware of this.
- Where appropriate, parents/guardian should take on the responsibility for their children or young person in the changing rooms. If groups have to be supervised in the changing rooms, always ensure coaches/managers work in pairs.
- Where there are mixed teams away from home, they should always be accompanied by a male and female coach/manager.
- When working with children or young players of the opposite sex, coaches/managers must agree with parent/guardian when, or if, it is appropriate to enter the changing area. It may be prudent to set a time, for example 10 minutes before a game, when the coach/manager could enter the room accompanied by parents/guardian, at least one of which must be of the

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opposite sex. Everyone in the club should also be aware that as a general rule **it does not make sense to**

- Spend excessive amounts of time alone with a child/young person.
 - Take children or young people alone on car journeys, however short.
 - Take children or young people to your home where they will be alone with you
- If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable, they should only occur with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge in the organisation and/or the child's/young person's parent or guardian.

Summary

The ideals of Child Protection in football are to enable every child to participate in 'The Beautiful Game' in a safe environment. Adults should be 'role models' for children. If we all remember this each week, then the game will be far more enjoyable for everyone

Footnote

Further information on Child Protection and how it affects football can be found at

- <http://www.thefa.com/TheFA/GOALChildProtection/>
- <http://www.gloucestershirefa.com/Governance/ChildProtection/>



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