



## APPENDIX 12.5

### 1. RECOMMENDED GUIDELINES: COACHES AND OFFICIALS

Toowoomba Hockey Association Inc. (THA) coaches and officials need to be aware that not all children will understand an action or request in the same manner. One child may see an action as usual or acceptable behaviour while another may find it unacceptable. A child's interpretation of an action may also be influenced by cultural and religious differences, gender and prior experiences. It is important therefore to be aware of your communication style.

The following principles or actions may help coaches provide a safe environment.

- a) Ensure your actions are at all times unambiguously professional. Give a verbal explanation in front of all players (and preferably parents as well) of how, where, when and why you may need to touch players.
- b) Remember that the welfare of the child or children is always of paramount importance.
- c) Know the policies, complaint processes and guidelines under the Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy and how they apply to you.
- d) Understand and commit to the hockey coaches code of behaviour (*appendix 12.9*) and officials code of behaviour (*appendix 12.10*).
- e) Understand how the child protection legislation in your state may affect you.
- f) Ensure that any physical conduct with children is appropriate to the development of skills required for hockey. Generally physical contact with players should be to develop skills, to give sports massage, to treat an injury or to prevent or respond to an injury.
- g) Be careful about which part of your body is and how much of it is in contact with a child's body.
- h) Avoid unaccompanied and unobserved activities with children. Try not to separate yourself and a child from the line of sight of other people. If you need to have a private talk with a child about their ability or behaviour, do this in an open place near others. Invite another coach or support person to join the conversation or talk to more than one child at a time.
- i) Have sufficient coaches/assistants for effective supervision based on the age and number of children involved.
- j) Use positive and age-appropriate language when talking to and in the presence of children. Avoid bad or aggressive language that could intimidate a child or set a bad example.
- k) Before entering change rooms knock or announce that you will be coming in and try to have at least one other adult with you. Do not isolate yourself and a child from others in the change room.
- l) Follow the THA guidelines that if a parent is late picking up their child that the second to last child and their parent or guardian will wait with you and the child. This will also enable you to concentrate on making contact with the parent.
- m) Avoid the risk of being left alone with a child by having a parent, guardian or support person assist you with the training. Require that person to wait with you until all children have left.
- n) Do not engage in or let others engage in any of the following:
  - Abusive initiation or team bonding activities;
  - Forcing children into 'macho type' activities;
  - Rough, physical hurtful or sexually provocative games;
  - Regular scapegoating, ridiculing, rejecting, isolating or taking the 'mickey' out of a child.
- o) Maintain control – avoid losing your temper (verbally or physically). If you find you regularly lose your temper with children you should seek support or consider whether you have the patience to work with children. Some ideas to assist with maintaining control include: -
  - Set up basic rules at the beginning of the season, such as follow instructions, have a go, no putdowns. Make sure children are aware of these rules;
  - Give positive messages;



- Have a time out area for children that are not behaving;
- Adopt a card system to express concerns with a child's behaviour rather than becoming verbally agitated e.g. a yellow card is a warning, two yellow cards means time out for two (2) minutes, a red card could mean the child misses out on next weeks game.

## 2. RECOMMENDED GUIDELINES: PARENTS

Parents often turn to sport as a safe place for children to build character, develop skills, learn valuable lessons and to have fun. While involvement in sport remains a positive experience for most participants, parents are now aware that children can face the risk of being harassed and abused in sport. Parents can also play a key role in creating a safe environment for children in sport.

The following actions will help parents contribute to providing a safe environment.

- a) Get involved and get to know your child's coach. Maintain open and frank communication. If things occur that disturb you, talk to the coach about them.
- b) Speak out when you hear language or attitudes that contribute to a negative or unsafe environment.
- c) You may wish to pursue your issues with THA executives.
- d) Be careful not to put coaches on pedestals. Tell your children its okay to say 'no' if the coach is doing something that makes them feel 'creepy'.
- e) Make an effort to attend training and games whenever you can.
- f) Be wary of private, closed training sessions. If they occur on a regular basis ask the coach for an explanation.
- g) Be wary of any increases of the amount of time the coach spends with your children beyond the training session.
- h) If you volunteer in sport and ask to take part in screening, accept this as a positive step to keep children safe.
- i) Make sure you are not part of the problem. Don't sling verbal abuse at referees, coaches or others.
- j) Know and abide by the THA Parents/Guardian Code of Behaviour (*Appendix 12.7*), and encourage others to do the same.
- k) Encourage your child to play by the rules.
- l) Never ridicule your child for making a mistake.

## 3. RECOMMENDED GUIDELINES: DROP OFF AND PICK UP OF PARTICIPANTS BY PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Children may be dropped off before an activity and picked up afterwards by their parents or guardians. In other instances, children may make their own way to and from an activity. On their way to and from children may be exposed to potential risk. The following considerations provide a guideline.

- a) Agree with parents a set procedure for drop off and pick up arrangements, including whether a child makes their own way to and from an activity, or will be dropped off and picked up. Let children and their parents/guardians know the times of training and games and when they can expect to collect their children. Advise them that it is not your responsibility to transport children home if parents are delayed.
- b) Ensure there is a buffer period where a coach or official arrives a certain period of time before an activity starts and stays a certain period of time after it ends.
- c) Wait with the child if possible (in the presence of others), and make contact with the parent/guardian if necessary.
- d) Avoid the risk of being alone with a child by having a parent/guardian or support person assist you with the training. Require that person to wait until all children have left.



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## **4. RECOMMENDED GUIDELINES: TRANSPORT OF PLAYERS AND PARTICIPANTS**

All players/participants will be responsible for their own transportation to and from representative training. The THA will be responsible for transporting representative players/participants to and from southern cross/coulter shield and state championships and will ensure that:

- a) The driver is properly licensed.
- b) The ride is directly to/from sports or recreation facilities.

## **5. RECOMMENDED GUIDELINES: OVERNIGHT TRIPS**

- a) Always have more than one adult with children on an overnight trip.
- b) There should always be more than one adult with a group of children, even if the number of children is small.
- c) Do not separate yourself and children from other adults.
- d) Obtain separate sleeping accommodation from the children (adults in separate rooms). However, ensure that adults are within hearing distance of the children to be able to respond to any alarm raised by a child.
- e) If an alarm is raised by a child more than one adult should respond.

### **References:**

Play By The Rules website (<http://www.playbytherules.net.au>).