



POLICY FORMULATED FOR THE SAFEGUARDING AND PROTECTION OF YOUNG PEOPLE

2014

1. INTRODUCTION

This policy establishes Stoolball England's position, role and responsibilities and clarifies what is expected of Affiliated Clubs, Schools, Leagues, County Bodies and individuals involved in Stoolball. It very clearly highlights the importance placed by Stoolball England on the protection of young people.

Stoolball England requires that all Clubs, Schools, Leagues and Affiliated County Bodies should acknowledge that the welfare of young people is paramount and that all necessary steps are taken to protect from harm, those young people who participate in Stoolball at all levels.

N.B. In accordance with The Children Act 2004, a young person or young people are defined as children under the age of 18.

It should be clearly understood by everyone associated with the game of Stoolball that young people, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity, have the right to protection from abuse. (For definitions of abuse, see Appendix 6).

All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately. All volunteers have a responsibility to report their concerns to the Welfare Officer appointed by Stoolball England.

2. POLICY

The aim of our Policy is to promote good practice by:

- providing young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst playing the game of Stoolball or in the care of volunteers coaching the game of Stoolball. Any activities involved with Stoolball, including travelling to and from matches, or other activities organised under a stoolball banner
- allowing all volunteers in Stoolball to make informed and confident responses to specific young people protection issues through education.

3. PROMOTING GOOD PRACTICE

Abuse of young people, particularly sexual abuse, can arouse strong emotions in those facing such a situation. It is important to understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with your judgement about the appropriate action to take.

Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and the sporting environment. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with young people in order to harm them. A coach, instructor, teacher, official or volunteer will have regular contact with young people and be an important link in identifying cases where they need protection. All suspected cases of poor practice or abuse should be reported following the guidelines in this document.

It also provides a positive opportunity for those in Stoolball to recognise and respond to concerns that are actually arising away from the sport (for details of reporting procedure see Appendix 4).

When a young person enters a Club having been subjected to abuse outside the sporting environment, Stoolball can play a crucial role in improving their self-esteem. In such instances, the Club must work with the Social Services and the Police to ensure that every young person receives the required support.

4. GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES

All volunteers in Stoolball should be encouraged to promote a young person's best interests and reduce the opportunity for allegations to arise. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate with the game.

5. GOOD PRACTICE MEANS:

- always working in an open environment avoiding private and unobserved situations and encouraging open communication
- treating all young people with respect and dignity and not favouring some young people more than others
- always putting the welfare of each young person first
- maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with young people (e.g. it is not appropriate for volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a young person or to share a room with them)
- building balanced relationships based on mutual trust and empowering young people to share in decision making
- making sport fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play
- ensuring that if any form of manual/physical support is required by a young person during a Stoolball coaching session, it should be provided openly with the young person's permission and in accordance with coaching guidelines.
- involving parents/carers wherever possible. Behind closed doors, always work in pairs.
- being a role model i.e. no smoking or drinking in the company of young people
- giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- recognising the developmental needs and capacity of young people, avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will
- securing parental consent in writing to act in loco parentis, if the need arises to administer emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment
- keeping an accident report book to record any injuries that occur, together with details of any treatment given
- consulting with parents first if club officials are required to transport young people in their cars

6. PRACTICES TO BE AVOIDED except in emergencies

If a case arises where these situations are unavoidable (e.g. a young person sustains an injury and needs to go to the hospital, or a parent fails to arrive to pick a young person up at the end of a session), it should be with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge in the Club or the child's parents. Ideally, officials should carry a list of the mobile phone/private phone numbers of their club members so that parents/carers can be contacted. When providing transport, always sit young people in the back seat.

It is also important to (a) avoid spending time alone with children away from others and (b) taking or dropping off a child to an event, unless prior parental consent has been obtained.

7. STOOLBALL ENGLAND UNSANCTIONED PRACTICES

You should never:

- engage in rough physical or sexually provocative games
- share a room with a young person
- allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- allow young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged

- make sexually suggestive comments to a young person, even in fun
- reduce a young person to tears as a form of control
- allow allegations made by a young person to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- do things of a personal nature for young people that they can do for themselves.
- invite or allow children to stay with you at your home without other adults being present

N.B. It may sometimes be necessary for volunteers to do things of a personal nature for young people, particularly if they are young or are disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent, preferably written, of parents and the young people involved. There is a need to be responsive to a person's reactions. If a young person is fully dependent on you, talk about what you are doing and give choices where possible.

In the case of a volunteer, avoid taking on the responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained.

8. INCIDENTS THAT MUST BE REPORTED/RECORDED

If any of the following occur, you should report this immediately to the designated Welfare Officer and record the incident in an Incident Report Book. You should also ensure that the parents of the young person are informed:

- if you accidentally hurt a young person
- if the young person seems distressed in any way
- if a young person appears to be sexually aroused by your actions
- if a young person misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done

9. USE OF PHOTOGRAPHIC/FILMING EQUIPMENT AT SPORTING EVENTS

Stoolball England recognises the need to ensure the welfare and safety of all young people in Stoolball. As part of this commitment officials and coaches etc. will not themselves take photographs, videos or other images of young people without the prior written consent of the parent/guardian and the young player.

There is evidence that sporting events have been used as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of children in vulnerable positions. Parents should be notified that where clubs are unable to supervise individual children (with respect to them being photographed/videoed) during stoolball activities or competitions, particularly in locations which are open to members of the general public, it is the responsibility of the parent(s) concerned that their child is not videoed or photographed. However, all club officials, coaches and volunteers should be vigilant and any concerns should be reported to the Welfare Officer.

Videoing as a coaching aid: There is no intention to prevent Club coaches and teachers using video equipment as a legitimate coaching aid. However, performers and their parents/carers should be made aware that this is part of the coaching programme and such films should be stored safely.

10. RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF VOLUNTEERS

Stoolball England recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse young people in some way and require that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with young people.

Pre-selection checks must include the following:

- all volunteers should complete an application form and provide two confidential references
- consent should be given to carry out an enhanced DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check (previously Enhanced Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) check).

Stoolball England will accept a volunteer's existing valid enhanced CRB check, but will require a sight of the Certificate and note the CRB or DBS number for their records.

All volunteers should receive an informal induction, during which their qualifications, if any, should be substantiated, with appropriate documents; they should sign up to Stoolball England's Code of Conduct and Young People protection procedures should be explained and any training needs identified.

Training: Stoolball England requires:

- coaching and non-coaching volunteers to attend a recognised 3-hour good practice and child protection awareness training workshop or equivalent
- designated club members to attend a recognised first aid course
- attendance at update training sessions, where necessary.

11. RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OR SUSPICIONS

It is not the responsibility of any volunteer in Stoolball England to decide whether or not abuse of a young person has taken place, however, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns and contact your Club/ County Welfare Officer.

Stoolball England will assure all volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith, reports their concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a young person inside the game of Stoolball.

Where there is a complaint against a volunteer involved in Stoolball, there may be three types of investigation:

- a disciplinary or misconduct investigation (i.e. poor practice) – the Club/County/Stoolball England Welfare Officer will deal with this
- a young person protection investigation (i.e. suspected abuse/bullying) – report to the Stoolball England Welfare Officer and Social Services/Policy, if necessary
- a criminal investigation (i.e. serious allegation) – report to the Stoolball England Welfare Officer, Social Services and Police

The results of the police and young person protection investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation, but not necessarily.

(a) Concerns about poor practice:

- if, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice, the Club Welfare Officer will deal with this as a misconduct issue
- if the allegation is about poor practice by the Club Welfare Officer, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to the County or Stoolball England Welfare Officer who will decide how to deal with the allegation and whether or not to initiate disciplinary proceedings

(b) Concerns about suspected abuse:

- any suspicion that a young person has been abused by a volunteer should be reported to the Club Welfare Officer who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the young person in question and any other young person who may be at risk and report to the Stoolball England Welfare Officer
- the Stoolball England Welfare Officer will collate the evidence and refer the allegation to Social Services, involving the Police, if necessary. The parents of the young person will be contacted as soon as possible.
- if the Club Welfare Officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the Stoolball England Welfare Officer, who in turn will refer the allegation to Social Services.

(c) Concerns about suspected bullying (for definitions of bullying, see Appendix 7):

- take all signs of bullying very seriously
- encourage all young people to speak and share their concerns (it is believed that up to 12 young people per year commit suicide as a result of bullying, so if anyone talks about or threatens suicide, seek professional help immediately).

- investigate all allegations and take action to ensure the victim is safe. Speak with the victim and the bully (ies) separately.
- reassure the victim that you can be trusted and will help them, although you cannot promise to tell no one else
- keep records of what is said (what happened, by whom, when)
- if the bullying is taking place within the Stoolball environment, report any concerns to the Club Welfare Officer

Action towards the bully (ies):

- talk to the bully (ies) and try to get them to understand the consequences of their behaviour. Try to make them apologise to the victim.
- Inform the bully (ies) parents
- if anything has been stolen from the victim, insist on its return
- impose sanctions as necessary
- encourage and support the bully (ies) to change their behaviour style
- keep a written record of action taken
- where bullying is persistent or severe in nature, despite attempts to deal with it, report it to your Club Welfare Officer, who will complete an Incident Report Form (see Appendix 9)

Information for Social Services or Police about suspected abuse or bullying:

To ensure that this information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern, which should include the following:

- the young person's name, age and date of birth
- the young person's home address and telephone number
- whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else
- the nature of the allegation (e.g. abuse or bullying). Include dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information
- distinguish between what is fact, opinion and hearsay
- description of any visible bruising or other injuries.
- also note any indirect signs of abuse, such as behavioural changes
- name, address and telephone number of witnesses to the incidents
- the young person's account of what has happened and how any bruising etc. occurred
- have the parents been contacted and what was said?
- record details of anyone else who has been consulted
- if the young person was not the individual who reported the incident, has the young person been spoken to?
If so, what was said?
- has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record details
- where possible, referral to the Police or Social Services should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours and the name of the contact who took the referral should be recorded.

Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a "need to know" basis only, i.e. the Club or County Welfare Officer; the parents of the young person who is alleged to have been abused; the person making the allegation; Social Services/Police and the Stoolball England Welfare Officer.

N.B. Always seek Social Services' advice on whether to approach the alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a young person).

Any information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

12. INTERNAL ENQUIRIES AND SUSPENSION

The welfare of the young person should remain of paramount importance throughout any internal enquiries.

- the Stoolball England's Welfare Officer will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further inquiries
- irrespective of the further findings, the Stoolball England Disciplinary Committee will assess all individual cases to decide whether a volunteer should be reinstated or not and how this can be sensitively handled.

13. SUPPORT TO DEAL WITH THE AFTERMATH OF ABUSE

Consideration should be given to the kind of support that young people, parents and Stoolball volunteers may need. Use of help lines, support groups and open meetings will maintain an open culture and help the healing process. A Counselling Directory is available from The British Association for Counselling, 1 Regent Place, Rugby, CV21 2PJ. Tel: 01788 550899.

If you are worried about sharing concerns about abuse with a senior colleague, you can contact Social Services or the Police direct, or the NSPCC Child Protection helpline on 0800 800 5000 or Childline on 0800 1111.

14. GUIDANCE AND LEGISLATION

The practices and procedures within this policy and documentation are based on the principles contained in the UK and International legislation and government guidance and have been designed to complement Local Safeguarding Children Boards' procedures and take the following into consideration

- 14.1. The Children Act 1989 and 2004
- 14.2. The Protection of Children Act 1999
- 14.3. The Police Act
- 14.4. Criminal Justices and Court Services Act 2000
- 14.5. The Data Protection Act 1994 and 1998
- 14.6. "Caring for the Young and Vulnerable" – Home Office guidance for preventing the Abuse of Trust 1999
- 14.7. "What to do if you are worried a child is being abused" – DOH 2003
- 14.8. Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010
- 14.9. The UN Convention of the Rights of the Child
- 14.10. Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.

15. DECLARATION

On behalf of Stoolball England, we the undersigned, will oversee the implementation of this Child Protection Policy and take all necessary steps to ensure it is followed.

Signed:	Signed:

(NB. One of the signatories will be the Stoolball England Welfare Officer)	
Name: Mr. J. E. Price	Name: Mr. R. Emsley

Position within the Stoolball England Child Welfare Officer	Position within the Stoolball England Vice-Chairman

Date: 1.1.2014	Date: 1.1.2014

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