



Safeguarding Policy

Please also see other information regarding Safeguarding available on the Croquet Association website.

1 Definitions

Children are defined as *persons of less than 18 years of age*. Adults are legally defined as vulnerable only if they are receiving health or personal care, but this club recognises that anyone can be subject to abuse and thus this policy should be read with adults as well as children in mind.

Regulated Activity in relation to children means, as far as croquet is concerned, teaching, training or instruction, care or supervision, or driving a vehicle being used only for transporting children, that is carried out by the same person once a week or more, or 4 or more days in 30, or overnight. A fuller definition and discussion of it is contained in the guidance on the CA website.

2 Policy Statement

- ! The child's welfare is paramount and this organisation is committed to provide a safe place for children.
- ! All children have the right to protection from abuse.
- ! All suspicions and allegations of inappropriate behaviour will be dealt with.
- ! The Club Member with responsibility for Safeguarding is the Club Secretary.

3 Recognising abuse

This section explains briefly what child abuse is, how to recognise it, and what to do.

3.1 What Is Child Abuse?

Child abuse is a term used to describe ways in which children are harmed, usually by adults, and includes physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, mental abuse, and bullying.

3.1.1 Physical abuse

Physical abuse occurs where adults or other children:

- ! Physically hurt or injure children
- ! Give children noxious substances (e.g. alcohol/drugs)

3.1.2 Neglect

Neglect includes situations in which adults:

- ! Consistently leave children unsupervised
- ! Fail to ensure children are safe or expose them to unnecessary risk of injury

3.1.3 Sexual abuse

Children are sexually abused when adults or children use them to meet their own sexual needs. Examples:

- ! Unlawful intercourse

- ! Inappropriate touching
- ! Taking pornographic photographs

3.1.4 Mental Abuse

When children are:

- ! Taunted or unnecessarily shouted at
- ! Subjected to undue criticism
- ! Put under unreasonable pressure to perform

3.1.5 Bullying

May be carried out by adults or by other children:

- ! Bullying is deliberately hurtful behaviour usually repeated over a period of time
- ! Any child can be a victim of bullying
- ! More usual victims are shy, sensitive, anxious and insecure

4 How to Recognise if a Child is Being Abused

It is not always easy to spot when children have been abused. However, typical symptoms would include:

- ! Unexplained or suspicious injuries
- ! Sexually explicit language or actions
- ! A sudden change in behaviour
- ! The child describes an abusive act
- ! The child has a general distrust and avoidance of adults
- ! An unreasonable reaction to normal physical contact

Although a child may be displaying some or all of these signs, it does not necessarily mean the child is being abused.

5 Scrutiny of Members

For a club or other body wishing to engage a member in Regulated Activity –
Please see full guidance in the Safeguarding paper on the CA website.

6 Prevention of Abuse

This section offers advice aimed at protecting children from abuse and members from false allegations.

The club will point out to parents of under-18s who take part in club activities that the club will take every possible care of children but they cannot be deemed to be in loco parentis in respect of children using club facilities. The exception to this will be if the young person is a member of a club team playing in an away match or tournament and the required permission form has been signed by the parent or guardian.

6.1 Good Practice Guide

Opportunities for abuse can be minimised, and members can be protected against allegations, by the use of good practice.

- ! Except for essential training purposes, or in exceptional cases to treat or prevent injury, minimise time spent alone with children
- ! Do not take children alone in a car
- ! Do not take children to your home
- ! Where these situations are unavoidable ensure they only occur with the authority of the child's parents or a responsible person within the club

6.2 You Should Never

- ! Allow children to use inappropriate language
- ! Make suggestive comments to a child
- ! Fail to act upon allegations made by a child
- ! Do things of a personal nature for children
- ! Engage in physical or sexually provocative games
- ! Engage in inappropriate touching

7 What to do if there are Allegations of Abuse

Where there is an allegation of abuse against a member, there may be three types of investigation:

- ! A criminal investigation (police)
- ! A safeguarding investigation (social services)
- ! A disciplinary or misconduct investigation (club/CA)

7.1 Action if a Child Complains He/She is Being Abused

7.1.1 Always

- ! Stay calm - ensure the child is safe and feels secure
- ! Tell the child you are taking the complaint seriously
- ! Be honest; explain you will have to tell somebody else, emphasising that this will be on a need to know basis
- ! Document what the child has said as soon as possible – handwritten accounts should be made. In the event that these are subsequently typed up ALWAYS keep the original handwritten copy with it.
- ! Report the matter:
 - to the police if you think the child is in immediate danger;
 - to the local authority child protection team; and
 - to the CA's National Safeguarding Officer, who will inform the CA's Hon. Secretary of any concerns.

7.1.2 Never

- ! Rush into actions
- ! Make promises you cannot keep
- ! Ask inappropriate questions
- ! Take sole responsibility

7.1.3 Why should I intervene?

- ! Taking the correct action about abuse is never easy

- ! You may be upset about what the child has said or you may worry about the consequences of your actions
- ! One thing is certain: you cannot ignore abuse
- ! The effects of abuse on children can be devastating

7.1.4 Recording information

- ! Record basic information (see point 7.1.1 **Always** above)
- ! Do not start an investigation
- ! Remember that unnecessary interviews with a child may prejudice a police enquiry
- ! Consider environment carefully if recording information
- ! Ensure another adult is present
- ! Avoid touching the child.

8 Written Parental/Guardian Consent

Where a child is to take part in an away match or event a written parental consent form should be obtained. Likewise, if photographs are to be taken for training purposes or publication the parent/guardian's permission must be obtained and no addresses, emails or telephone numbers must be publicised.

9 Croquet Association Safeguarding Officer

Please contact CA's national officer with responsibility for safeguarding with any queries.