

Agincourt Church Hockey League – Child Abuse Policy

1. **Child Abuse Policy**

This policy advocates zero tolerance for any form of abuse. This includes abuse that happens to a child / youth / vulnerable adult by a volunteer or paid subcontractor (referees and instructors) (collectively referred to as “Adult Leaders”). There is also a need for Adult Leaders within the organization to be sensitive to incidents of abuse that may be happening in the home or social life of a child / youth / vulnerable adult.

2. **Understanding Child / Youth / Vulnerable Adult Abuse:**

Any person who has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child / youth is (or may be) in need of protection must report that suspicion to a protective agency or police authority. A volunteer / leader who hears an allegation of abuse should confide this to a designated authority within the organization. Accompanying this is the policy of the Agincourt Church Hockey League Inc. (the “ACHL”) protocol on reporting child abuse.

3. **What is Child / Youth Abuse?**

The term “child abuse” refers to the violence, mistreatment or neglect that a child or adolescent may experience while in the care of someone they either trust or depend on, such as a parent, sibling, other relative, caregiver or guardian. Abuse may take place anywhere and may occur, for example, within the child’s home or that of someone known to the child. In order to understand and recognize child abuse, the following definitions and indications of emotional, physical and sexual abuse or neglect are listed.

- **Physical abuse** may consist of just one incident or it may happen repeatedly. It involves a deliberately using force against a child in such a way that the child is either injured or is at risk of being injured. Physical abuse includes beating, hitting, shaking, pushing, choking, biting, burning, kicking or assaulting a child with a weapon. It also includes holding a child under water, or any other dangerous or harmful use of force or restraint.

- **Sexual abuse and exploitation** involves using a child for sexual purposes. Examples of child sexual abuse include fondling, inviting a child to touch or be touched sexually, intercourse, rape, incest, sodomy, exhibitionism, or involving a child in prostitution or pornography.

- **Neglect** is often chronic, and it usually involves repeated incidents. It involves failing to provide what a child needs for his or her physical, psychological or emotional development and wellbeing. For example, neglect includes failing to provide a dependent child with food, clothing, shelter, cleanliness, medical care or protection from harm.

- **Emotional abuse** involves harming a child’s sense of self-worth. It includes acts (or omissions) that result in, or place a child at risk of, serious behavioral, cognitive, emotional, or mental health problems. For example, emotional abuse may include aggressive verbal threats, social isolation, intimidation, exploitation, or routinely making unreasonable demands. It also includes terrorizing a child, or exposing them to family violence. An abuser may use a number of different tactics to gain access to a child, exert power and control over them, and prevent them from telling anyone about the abuse or seeking support. A child who is being abused is usually in a position of dependence on the person who is abusing them. Abuse is a misuse of power and a violation of trust. The abuse may happen once or it may occur in a repeated and escalating pattern over a period of months or years. The abuse may change form over time

Agincourt Church Hockey League – Child Abuse Policy

Policy for Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect in the ACHL

4. Preamble

It is important that an organization has policies and procedures in place to respond promptly and effectively to incidents of child abuse and neglect. This is a responsible approach to protecting individuals as well as the interests of the organization. This document provides guidelines for responding to child abuse and neglect for the ACHL.

This document underscores the importance of collaborative approach between the ACHL and the police to respond effectively to incidents of suspected child abuse and neglect and to ensure that children are protected.

The ACHL is committed to the prevention of child abuse and the enhancement of well-being and safety of the child / youth entrusted to its care. This commitment is made first and foremost as an ethical and legal responsibility, but is also recognized as a response to government and societal expectations for the well-being and safety of children / youth.

5. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to the Adult Leaders of the ACHL in fulfilling the commitment to assist in child abuse prevention and in providing reporting protocols if child abuse is suspected or known to have occurred.

The ACHL may add, modify, or remove portions of this Child Abuse and Neglect Policy when it is considered appropriate to do so, and may make changes such that will be effective upon giving notice of the revised policy. The most recent update of this Child Abuse Prevention Policy can be found on the ACHL website and is provided to all Adult Leaders.

6. Guiding Principles for Adult Leaders

The following guiding principles are provided to inform all parties serving children and families.

- The safety and well-being of children are the paramount considerations
- Children are entitled to be protected from abuse, neglect, harm or threat of harm
- A family is the preferred environment for the care and upbringing of children and the responsibility for the protection of children rests primarily with the parents

7. Protocol on Reporting Child Abuse

The following guidelines are to be referenced when dealing with a suspected case of child abuse:

- a) The current Appointed Official "AO" of the ACHL is Jason Hayes (kjhayes@me.com).
- b) Anyone who suspects or witnesses that a child has been sexually abused or exploited should immediately report this to the AO by email.
- c) Anyone who has reason to believe that a child has been or is likely to be physically harmed, sexually abused, exploited, or neglected by an Adult Leader, parent or guardian, or otherwise in need of protection is legally responsible under the Child, Youth and Family Services Act to report promptly to the police. "Reason to believe" simply means that, based on what was seen or information received, a person believes a child has been or is likely to be at risk. The reported need not be certain.
- d) The Police must be contacted immediately if a child is in any immediate danger.

Agincourt Church Hockey League – Child Abuse Policy

- e) Individuals will cooperate fully with any resulting investigation, including assisting with the interviews of children and Adult Leaders as necessary.
- f) The ACHL will protect personal information regarding the investigation, including the reporter's identity, against improper or unauthorized disclosure or use. The ACHL should not share information with outside agencies, with the exception of the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services and / or the Family Services Agency, about child abuse investigations, particularly if the police are involved.
- g) The AO will ensure that the organization's operating environment is safe during any investigation.
- h) The AO will contact the insurance carrier and inform them of any investigation.
- i) The ACHL will support children / youth who are victims of child abuse or neglect.

8. Procedures Where Allegations of Child Abuse are Made Against the Organizations Adult Leaders

It is the legal responsibility of the organization to provide a safe environment for children / youth. If the organization's Adult Leaders believe that a child is being abused or at risk, there is a legal duty to report the concern to the police if the child is in imminent danger.

- a. The AO has the primary responsibility for dealing with allegations of child abuse involving Adult Leaders or others on the property or supervising an activity outside of the organization.
 - i. Adult leader:

Where there are allegations of child abuse by an Adult Leader, the AO is responsible to investigate and report the matter to the police if there is reason to believe the child is in need of protection, is in imminent danger or that a criminal offence has been committed. The AO has the authority to suspend an Adult Volunteer whose presence threatens the safety and welfare of the members.
- b. Individuals who have reason to believe that another Adult Leader or other person on the property or supervising an activity outside of the organization has abused a child, must report the incident or information to the AO. It is the responsibility to the AO to investigate the allegations and determine what action is required.
- c. Parents of children alleged to have been abused in the organizations setting must be informed by the AO of the allegations and the outcome of the investigation, unless there are special circumstances, e.g., relating to a child protection or police investigation, or endangerment of the child.
- d. Where there are allegations of child abuse by an Adult Leader or other persons, the organization has the authority to issue a "No Trespass Order" prohibiting the Adult Leaders attendance at the organization. The order, provided orally or in writing, to the Adult Leader or other person, and copied to the police, must specify the date of issue, the reason for the order and the termination date of the order (Such orders may be re-issued on an annual basis if required).

Reporting to the police

- e. Not every incident that might constitute an offence if proven will warrant police involvement. The organization is expected to exercise judgement. Where there is reason to believe that the alleged child abuse by Adult Leaders or other persons may constitute a criminal offence warranting police involvement, the AO should consult with the police regarding the matter.

Agincourt Church Hockey League – Child Abuse Policy

POSSIBLE INDICATORS OF CHILD ABUSE AND/OR NEGLECT

- Unexplained bruises, different colored bruises, welts, cuts, burns, bite marks-especially on the face, lower back, thighs or upper arms
- Unexplained fractures, repeated injuries over time
- Constant complaints such as sore throats or stomach aches that have no medical explanation
- Lack of proper hygiene, constant hunger, clothing inappropriate for weather conditions
- Irritation, bruising, bleeding, pain or itching near genitals or anus
- Bruises on breasts, buttocks, or thighs
- Sudden onset of nightmares, bedwetting, and/or fear of the dark
- Cuts or sores on arms or legs
- Self-harming behaviours
- Fear of going home, attempts to run away
- Sudden change in attitude towards someone previously liked and trusted
- Expressing bizarre, sophisticated or unusual sexual knowledge not typical for age, language or play
- Becoming anxious and fearful after being outgoing and friendly
- Lacking friends or not participating in activities
- Irregular or non-attendance at school