



OXFORD HAWKS POLICY FOR U18's PLAYING IN ADULT TEAMS

1. Introduction.

1.1 England Hockey (EH) believes that all players should be provided with opportunities to improve their hockey. Young individuals playing club hockey are often introduced to senior teams and development sides, allowing them to gain experience playing with and against older players. This step up can be pivotal to their hockey playing career however decisions can be made hastily without proper consideration for the young person involved.

1.2 Young players are anyone under the age of 18 years old.

2. Regulations

2.1 'As agreed by the England Hockey Board in March 2011, the policy will remain as it is, with U13s restricted from participating in adult hockey leagues until they reach their 13th birthday, until further notice.' (Juniors playing in adult leagues, 2016)

3. Considering young players

3.1 The young person should be honoured to be asked to play in Adult teams and show respect for all coaches, captains and players and comply with all the policies relevant to them. The Club has a duty of care towards the young player and should always consult with them before including them in adult teams. Further advice can be sought on the EH website but areas to consider are:-

- *Over training* - don't forget club hockey probably isn't the only hockey they do.
- *Willingness to play and playing positions* – Playing a range of positions is good for a young person's development, however captains and coaches should be aware that too frequent changes could be disruptive. When selection takes place, captains and coaches should avoid any situations where a young player plays a run of several away games.
- *Parent pressure* - it's essential that the club communicate regularly with player and parents to ensure they are working to the same goals.
- *Availability*- the young player/parent should keep captains informed of availability dates and let them know when unable to attend training.

4. Best Practice Guidance

Changing rooms- Young players are not banned from using the changing rooms but the following should be followed by young and adult players;

4.1 If young people are uncomfortable changing or showering in public, no pressure should be placed on them to do so. If they wish to change in private they can use the disabled facilities, provided priority is given to disabled users.

4.2 If adults and young people need to share a changing facility, the captain must have consent from the parents that their child/children can share a changing room with adults in the club.

4.3 Do not spend excessive amounts of time alone with a young player away from others and in particular in the changing rooms. Do not be the only adult showering or changing with young players.

4.4 If having match briefings/debriefings in the changing room ensure this is separate from changing. The coach/captain can deliver their briefing asking players to wait for the conclusion before changing, once the briefing has finished players who don't want to share changing rooms can be advised to leave.

5. Communicating with and transporting young players –

5.1 Communication to young players must be through their parents' emails. Once they feel ready to organise their own hockey playing, they can be sent team emails direct but parents must always be copied in to emails sent to anyone under 18 years in age. However, should a young player not want to use their own email address, they should not be pressured to give it.

5.2 To comply with **GDPR** legislation in respect of personal data, (including email addresses), all emails should be blind copied (**BCC not CC**).

5.3 Parents must be invited to one to one meetings with coaches. If they cannot attend then another adult player must be present.

5.4 Avoid contacting young players directly by phone.

- **Social networking**- see EH guidance but as a rule do not accept young players as friends on social networking sites such as Facebook/Snapchat etc. And never use photos of young players on social networking sites without parental permission.
- **WhatsApp**- There is specific guidance on the EH website concerning this but basically this states when using WhatsApp as a team tool, remember not everyone has access and could be missing out on important info. WhatsApp has a policy of users being over the age of 16. Do not include anyone under the age of 16. Team talk WhatsApp groups should be limited to just team information. Matters such as adult players' social nights out should be set up in a separate chat to avoid including junior players in inappropriate chat.
- **Transportation**- it is the parents' responsibility to get the young player to and from the club. With away games captains must ensure arrangements are made for the young player to be returned to the club or a mutually agreed meeting point with the parents. They should not be left at a drop off point without a parent there to meet them. As an adult do not be the only person travelling with a young player, and do not take them into your home if you are the only person present.

FAQs

Who is responsible for the young player? Normally the captain or another nominated person.

Does the captain require a DBS? Yes.

Who is responsible for holding emergency medical and contact information? Either the captain or nominated person.

Who does the young player/parent speak to if unhappy about a welfare issue? Firstly the captain or coach, or then Club Welfare Officer- Rebecca Madden-Waite 07549955803.

Policy document authorised by the Oxford Hawks Committee dated 6th June 2018.