



Oak Park Community Sports Association

Child Abuse Incident Reporting Policy & Procedure

This policy is relevant after an event has been detected. For pro-active measures to create a safe sporting environment for children and young people please report any form of child abuse occurring within the sporting association, and follow the Reporting Procedure as documented.

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Approved by:

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Date for Review: March 2021

Recognising different types of Child Abuse

Child abuse can have a significant effect on a child or young person's physical or emotional health, development and wellbeing. There are many indicators of child abuse and neglect. The presence of a single indicator, or even several indicators, does not prove that abuse or neglect has occurred. However, the repeated occurrence of an indicator, or the occurrence of several indicators together, should alert a coach, committee member or volunteer to the possibility of child abuse and neglect.

Types of child abuse include:

- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- emotional abuse
- sexual exploitation (including pornography and sex work)
- medical neglect
- family violence
- grooming
- neglect
- bullying

Child abuse does not have to involve physical contact or force (e.g. child sexual abuse can include talking to a child in a sexually explicit way). Child abuse can be committed by any member of the community, including someone within a child's family or someone within the sporting environment. The trauma associated with child abuse can significantly impact upon the wellbeing and development of a child or young person. This is why it is critical that we all respond immediately to any form of suspected abuse.



Responding to a Report

If a child or young person comes to confide in you regarding an incident, it is vital you handle the situation appropriately.

MAKE SURE:

- Remain calm. Hearing of serious incidents will likely invoke strong emotional reactions, getting angry or distressed will make this harder for the child or young person.
- Listen to the allegation or disclosure supportively, without dispute.
- Reassure i.e, it's not their fault, we're here to help, this is a safe space.
- Clarify the basic details, without seeking detailed information or asking suggestive or leading questions.
- Record basic information on the OPCSA Incident Report sheet. If keeping a more detailed record, ensure you use the child or young person's own words and that it is kept in a safe place that only the Child Safety Committee have access to.
- The Child Safety Officer must be notified immediately and will follow the procedure that is attached
- All incidents will be reported to the OPCSA President
- Explain to the child or young person (if present) that other people may need to be told, in order to stop what is happening.
- Provide reassurance that immediate action will be taken.
- Report the matter as per OPCSA Reporting procedure- see attached diagram

DO NOT:

- Push the child or young person for details- your job is to listen, not investigate.
- Ask leading questions or use phrases like "Then what happened?"
- Discuss what you have been told with others unless they are directly involved with helping the child or young person.
- Leave the child or young person alone in a distressed state.
- Promise confidentiality to the child or young person however every report **MUST** be managed with maximum levels of confidentiality and discretion

The person receiving the report must remember that the person about whom a report is made still holds certain rights in ensuring, including the rights to privacy, not be defamed, not be discriminated against and not be dismissed unfairly or without proper inquiry into the matter.

They must be allowed to share their side of the story. An allegation of child abuse, whether true or false, will have severe and lasting impact on a person and their standing in the eyes of others.

An unfounded allegation handled poorly can ruin the reputation and career of an innocent person. As such, handle the situation discreetly and fairly.

