

Policy – Child Protection

Policy Statement

Croydon Chess Inc. (“Club”) is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all its Members, Volunteers and Visitors, particularly children.

The Child Protection Policy aims to reduce the risk of Abuse occurring and ensure that a caring and appropriate response is taken in the event any Abuse should occur.

Policy Scope

This policy applies to:

- Activities authorised by or under the control of the Club, whether undertaken at the Club’s premises or away from the Club’s premises
- Committee Members
- Leaders or Volunteers working with children

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Committee.

External Policies

Some Activities may involve our interaction with policies that have been adopted by other organisations, because of our affiliations or contractual relationships (e.g. Croydon Chess is affiliated with Chess Victoria, and thereby with the Australian Chess Federation).

This Child Protection Policy is not intended to replace or conflict with policies adopted by other organisations, but is rather designed to operate in conjunction with them.

Confidentiality

Those responsible for implementing this policy must keep confidential the name of the complainant, alleged victim, and all other details of the complaint, except where disclosure is necessary as part of a disciplinary or corrective process.

Committee members are obliged to ensure that all information remains confidential and is not disclosed to other club members, volunteers or other parties.

Training

Leaders and Volunteers will be issued with a copy of this policy and will be trained in:

- content and application of the policy; and
- reporting procedures and the associated legal requirements

Obligations

Community

The core beliefs and values of the Club require us to treat all people in our community with dignity, caring for those who are less powerful and in need of protection.

Legal

The Club, its Leaders and Volunteers are subject to Federal and State legislation and principles established through common law.

Ethical

Some actions may not be regarded as Abuse, but are still regarded as unacceptable behaviour for Club Leaders. These include:

- using coarse language;
- inappropriate conversation of a sexual nature;
- inappropriate conversation of an adult nature (e.g. discussing drugs, alcohol, etc)
- suggestive gestures or remarks;
- jokes of a sexual or racist nature;
- inappropriate touching (even if accidental); and
- inappropriate literature (e.g. PG, M, MA, R or X rated material)

The age of individuals is recognised as one of the determinants in deciding what is acceptable or unacceptable behaviour.

Leaders must ensure that high standards of personal and group conduct are maintained at all times.

Selection and Screening

Leaders and Volunteers involved with Children's Activities must supply the Club with evidence of a satisfactory Working With Children (WWC) check by showing your card.

They must also have their WWC details linked with the Club and details of the WWC check must be recorded in the Club's WWC register.

Where an applicant has previously committed any violent or sex-related offence they can not, under any circumstances, be considered for Child-related Activities.

Such offences do not necessarily preclude the applicant from helping with other Activities and the club can consider whether their contribution can be made in more appropriate areas.

Leaders and Volunteers are required to have an awareness of the content of this Policy and be prepared to work within its guidelines.

Leaders

Leaders involved in Children's Activities are subject to additional and more rigorous selection and screening criteria:

- Leaders must be members of the Club in good standing and have regularly attended the Club for at least 6 months
- Candidate Leaders will be interviewed by a Committee Member prior to being accepted as a Leader (see Appendix)

Volunteers

Volunteer involved in Children's Activities must be supervised by a Leader at all times and will be accountable to that Leader.

Leaders who accept the assistance of a Volunteer must be satisfied of the Volunteer's maturity and their suitability for Children's Activities.

Safe Environment

Leaders and Volunteers should be clearly identified by wearing a Club name tag.

Leaders and Volunteers must ensure that all children are signed in/out by their parent/guardian at the beginning/end of the Activity.

One Leader and at least one other Leader or Volunteer must always be present when supervising children. Incidents of Abuse are unlikely to take place in front of another person, so the presence of a witness can assist both in preventing Abuse and in clarifying questionable allegations.

Parents/Guardians who wish to stay with a Child to observe an Activity or to help their Child settle in to an Activity may do so, but they may only be involved with their own Child. Other people who are not parents/guardians are not permitted to sit in on Activities with the Children.

People who do not have a valid reason to be present at a Child-related Activity may be asked to leave. Police may be contacted if such persons refuse to comply with such a request.

Leaders and Volunteers must not accompany Children to the toilets. If toilet assistance is required, it must be provided by the Child's parent/guardian.

Leaders must not visit Children in their homes, unless the Child's parent/guardian is present or another Leader accompanies them.

When transporting Children, Leaders should never be alone with a Child in a car. Where this is not practical, Leaders will take Children directly to and from arranged venues and will not spontaneously detour or make additional arrangements.

Discipline of Children

It is not the responsibility of Leaders or Volunteers to discipline a Child, other than by providing clear and firm verbal directions in respect of behaviour. At no time should a Leader or Volunteer administer any form of physical, emotional or mental discipline.

If a Child will not abide by rules set by the Leader or Volunteer, or persistently refuses to follow a Leader or Volunteer's verbal directions, or is an obstruction to the care of other Children, or causes harm to other Children, the Child in question should be removed from the Activity and returned to the care of their parent/guardian.

In persistent cases, the Leader or Volunteer may lodge a complaint about the Child's behaviour (refer: Complaints Handling Policy and accompanying form).

Alcohol, Drugs and Smoking

Consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs on Club premises, or during an activity, is not permitted under any circumstances. If any person is under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, they should be immediately removed from any Activities. If the person affected is a Child, the parents/guardians should be contacted so the Child can be taken home immediately.

Smoking is not permitted on Club premises under any circumstances. If the person smoking is a Child, the parents/guardians should be contacted so the Child can be taken home immediately.

If any Child is required to take prescription medication whilst on Club premises, the parents/guardians must provide a letter informing the Club of the details.

Reporting

All incidents of abuse (or suspected abuse) should be approached from a mandatory reporting perspective or mindset. If there are *reasonable grounds* to suspect a Child has been or is suffering Abuse, the following parties must be advised as soon as possible:

Club Committee	Richard Goldsmith – 0407 348 172 or Stephen Frost – 0466 413 468
Local Police	Croydon Police – 9724 0100
Insurance Broker	John Bernard and Associates Pty Ltd PO Box 278 Oakleigh VIC 3166 Telephone – 9568 4822
Child Welfare	Department of Human Services Child Protection and Care Community Care Division 20 / 55 Collins Street Melbourne VIC 3000 Telephone – 9616 7777 After Hours – 13 12 78

Reasonable grounds can be assumed when:

- a Child discloses that he/she has suffered Abuse; or
- someone close to a Child (e.g. sibling, relative, friend) discloses Abuse on behalf of that Child

Police must also be notified if a Child discloses an incident of Abuse that has occurred somewhere other than the Club (e.g. at home or school).

If a disclosure of Abuse is made, the person receiving the disclosure will maintain confidentiality and an attitude of care towards the one making the disclosure. This includes:

- treating the allegation seriously and not attempting to deny the allegation or minimise its impact on the Child;
- not pushing the Child to disclose further details of the alleged Abuse or attempting to investigate the allegation yourself;
- assuring the Child that:
 - they have been heard and understood;
 - their disclosure is being taken seriously;
 - what has happened is not their fault; and
 - they have done the right thing in disclosing the incident
- promptly reporting the abuse to the appropriate parties (see list above);
- not making contact yourself with the alleged perpetrator;
- being aware that police may require clothing worn by the Child to be handed over for forensic examination, so don't clean up any "mess" or allow anyone else to handle the Child's clothing until police arrive; and
- maintaining absolute confidentiality (excepting the reporting list above)

Any disclosures by a Child, along details of any reports made, must be documented promptly and the documents will be held in a secure location for later review by the Committee.

The person accused of Abuse is to be immediately removed from all Children's Activities pending the outcome of any investigations.

The Club reserves the right to carry out internal disciplinary procedures (see below) in accordance with the constitution and policies of the Club.

Remedies and Disciplinary Action

The Committee of Croydon Chess has responsibility and capacity to determine and implement internal remedies and/or disciplinary action in cases where the courts determine that Abuse has occurred, or in cases where the Committee believes it is warranted after carefully reviewing the circumstances of the report (even if there is no legal action, or if the legal action fails to secure a conviction).

Such remedies may include actions such as:

- changing club policies and procedures
- issuing of a formal warning
- requirement to undergo counselling
- requirement to issue a formal apology
- imposition of a 'behaviour contract'
- suspension or termination of volunteer services
- suspension or termination of club membership

or other similar forms of action.

Internal Appeals

If any party involved in the complaint chooses to appeal the Committee's decision, a written appeal may be submitted for consideration by a panel comprising Committee members not previously involved in handling the case, and/or external reviewers.

The appeal panel may endorse the initial findings, remedies or disciplinary action, or it may recommend another course of action.

External Appeals

If any party involved in the complaint is dissatisfied with the outcome of the process or an appeal panel finding, they may take the complaint to Chess Victoria and request further action:

Kerry Lyall
Secretary
Chess Victoria
PO Box 747
North Melbourne VIC 3051

Croydon Chess is not necessarily bound by the results of such an external appeal, however the findings of such an appeal will be given careful consideration and due weight by the Committee.

APPENDIX – Sample Interview Questions

WORKING WITH CHILDREN – INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Questions asked in this interview may make you feel uncomfortable but they are a necessary part of our child safety policy and must be answered. The answers you provide will be kept confidential where possible but may be divulged to other Leaders within the Club.

1. Why have you applied for this position and why do you feel you are suitable for the role?
2. Please describe any positive experiences you have had with children or young people
3. Please describe any negative experiences you have had with children or young people
4. Have you ever been in a situation where you have disciplined a child or young person?
 - If you have, how did you handle this situation?
5. Have you ever been investigated for violent or sexually related offences?
 - If you have, what were the circumstances?
6. Is there any other information relating to your suitability which we should be aware of?

Definitions

Abuse

Can consist of one or more of (but is not restricted to) the following:

- **Physical Abuse** – any non-accidental physical injury
- **Sexual Abuse** – any sexual act or threat to perform such act upon another person. It occurs when a person uses their power and authority to take advantage of another's trust to involve them in sexual activity. It does not necessarily involve genital contact but is any act which erodes the sexual boundary between two persons. It may appear consensual but the validity of consent is negated by the power differential
- **Emotional or Mental Abuse** – the chronically negative attitude or behaviour of one person which is directed at another person, or the creation of an emotional or mental environment which is detrimental to a person's development
- **Neglect** – any serious act (or omission to act) which jeopardises or impairs a child's development

Activity

Any organised/scheduled activity that is authorised by the Club.

Child

Any person under the age of 18.

Club

The club means Croydon Chess Inc.

Committee

The office bearers of the Club.

Leader

Any person over the age of 18 who is responsible for the control and safety of Club members placed in their care whilst running an Activity on behalf of the Club. A leader could include, but is not limited to people such as:

- Committee Member
- Coach
- Tournament Organiser
- Director of Play

Volunteer

A volunteer is a person working with or for Croydon Chess whose acts and practices in performing their duties are those endorsed by club.