



WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

Purpose of this policy

The purpose of this Whistleblowing Policy is to enable any individual involved with Richmond Hockey Club to raise concerns in good faith about unacceptable practice, misconduct, poor practice or wrongdoing. This includes concerns that may place others, particularly children and young people, at risk or bring the club or the sport into disrepute. Richmond Hockey Club is committed to creating an open, safe and accountable environment in which concerns can be raised without fear of harassment, victimisation or disadvantage, and recognises that safeguarding and integrity are responsibilities shared by everyone involved in the club.

Who this policy applies to

This Whistleblowing Policy applies to all individuals involved with Richmond Hockey Club, including players, parents and carers, coaches, volunteers, officials, employees and committee members. Anyone covered by this policy has the right and responsibility to raise concerns in good faith where they believe unacceptable practice

How to raise a concern

Any whistleblowing concern should be raised as soon as possible and should not be investigated or dealt with by the individual raising the concern. Concerns must be reported to the Club Safeguarding and Welfare Officer, who will manage the matter in accordance with the club's Safeguarding and Protecting Young People Policy. Where appropriate, concerns will be referred to England Hockey in line with England Hockey Safeguarding and Reporting Procedures. If an individual feels unable to raise a concern within the club, they may report the matter directly to England Hockey or, where there is immediate risk, to the appropriate statutory authorities.

The Club is committed to developing a culture where it is safe and acceptable for all those involved in hockey to raise concerns about unacceptable practice and misconduct. You may be the first to recognise that something is wrong but you may not feel able to express your concerns out of a belief that this would be disloyal to colleagues or you may fear harassment, victimisation or disadvantage.

These feelings, however natural, must never result in a child continuing to be unnecessarily at risk. Remember that it is often the most vulnerable children who are targeted. These children need someone like you to safeguard their welfare. Those



involved in the sport must acknowledge their individual responsibilities to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior management and/or relevant agencies. Although this can be difficult it is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

Whistle Blowing has a responsibility for raising concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour:

- to prevent the problem worsening or widening
- to protect or reduce risk to others'
- to prevent becoming implicated yourself

What you must not do

When raising a whistleblowing concern, you must not attempt to deal with the matter yourself. In particular, you must not inform the individual about whom the concern has been raised, discuss the matter with other members, participants or employees, begin your own investigation, alter or remove any evidence, or delay reporting the concern. All whistleblowing matters must be managed through the appropriate safeguarding and reporting procedures to ensure fairness, confidentiality and the safety of all involved.

You should not attempt to deal with any allegation or suspicion yourself, rather inform your Club Welfare Officer or Child Protection Team. Specifically, do not:

- Inform the person about whom the concern was raised
- Inform any other members, participants or employees
- Commence your own investigation
- Annotate or remove evidence
- Delay in reporting the suspicion

What happens next and protection for whistleblowers All whistleblowing concerns will be taken seriously, handled sensitively and treated in confidence. Where possible, the individual raising the concern will be informed that the matter has been received and may be kept updated on the general progress of the enquiry, where appropriate. Richmond Hockey Club and the Club Safeguarding and Welfare Officer will



take reasonable steps to protect individuals who raise concerns in good faith from harassment, victimisation or disadvantage. No action will be taken against an individual who raises a concern honestly, even if it later proves to be unfounded. However, malicious or deliberately false allegations may be considered a disciplinary matter and dealt with in accordance with the Club's Disciplinary Policy.

- You should be given information on the nature and progress of any enquiries
- All concerns will be treated in confidence.
- During the process of investigating the matter, every effort will be made to keep the identity of those raising the concern unknown, except to the minimum number of individuals practicable
- Your Club Welfare Officer and the Club have a responsibility to protect you from harassment or victimisation
- No action will be taken against you if the concern proves to be unfounded and was raised in good faith
- Malicious allegations may be considered a disciplinary offence.

This policy was approved by the Richmond Hockey Club Committee and will be reviewed regularly, or sooner if required, to ensure it remains in line with England Hockey guidance and safeguarding best practice.

Dated April 2026 by Richmond Hockey Club Committee