

# **PHILADELPHIA YOUTH SPORTS COLLABORATIVE**

## **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

July 2019

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The Philadelphia Youth Sports Collaborative (the “Collaborative”) values young people as being a vital part of the organization’s mission and desires to see them develop into successful young adults in a healthy and safe environment. This child protection policy was developed as a best practice guide for our member organizations to adopt and adapt to the needs of their programming.

## What is child protection?

*Child protection is the response to the different ways in which a young person’s physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual health are damaged by the actions of another person.*

## Purpose

The Collaborative works with nearly 40 non-profit providers with the primary goal of ensuring equitable access to sport-based youth development programming for the children of Philadelphia.

As part of our safeguarding policy the Collaborative’s member organizations will:

- promote and prioritize the safety and wellbeing of children and young people;
- ensure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities with respect to safeguarding and is provided with appropriate learning opportunities to recognize, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to children and young people;
- ensure appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents/concerns of abuse and support provided to the individual/s who raise or disclose the concern;
- ensure that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored;
- prevent the employment/deployment of unsuitable individuals; and
- ensure robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in operation.

## Monitoring

The policy will be reviewed a year after development and then every three years, or in the following circumstances:

- changes in legislation and/or government guidance
- as required by CPLS
- as a result of any other significant change or event.

## Supervision Policy

All children must be supervised at all times.

Each child should be formally registered for the program session. The information includes an information/consent form which their parent/guardian must complete. These forms have vital information about health and emergency contacts and should be kept securely and brought to each session.

An attendance should be kept for each session.

### **Child Protection Representative**

Each member organization will appoint a child protection representative. If any worker has any child safety concerns, they should discuss them with the child protection representative. The child protection representative will take on the following responsibilities:

- Ensuring that the policy is being put into practice;
- Being the first point of contact for child protection issues;
- Keeping a record of any concerns expressed about child protection issues;
- Bringing any child protection concerns to the notice of the child protection representative and contacting ChildLine at 1-800-932-0313 as mandated by the CPSL if appropriate;
- Ensuring that paid staff and volunteers are given appropriate supervision;
- Ensuring that everyone involved with the organization is aware of the identity of the Child Protection Representative.

### **Child Safety**

1. Ensure that all workers and volunteers know
  - Where the first aid kit is
  - Who is responsible for First Aid and how to keep record of accidents or injuries
  - What to do in the event of a fire or other emergency
  - Physical punishment is never an option. All children are to be treated with courtesy and respect.
  
2. Releasing a child
  - When a child is released, an authorized person must sign the child out on a sign out sheet. No child will be released to anyone that is not on the registration form without the guardian's written permission.
  - Children may sign themselves out with written parent permission on file.
  - Under normal circumstances, workers should only give a lift home to a young person from group activities if the parents of the young person have specifically asked for them to do so. (If workers are asked to give a young person or child a lift home, they are not obliged to do so, it is left to their discretion).

## **Staff**

Workers and volunteers are by far the most valuable resource for working with young people. When recruiting and selecting paid workers and volunteers consider the following steps:

- Completion of an application form;
- Checking of the applicants' identity (passport, driving license, etc);
- Checking references prior to the person starting work;
- Ensuring criminal record checks have been carried out through relevant local agencies approved by the Criminal Records Bureau;
- Current certification in C.P.R. and First Aid;
- Mandated Reporter training
- National sex offender registry clearance
- Annual health assessment completed showing that the staff member has no communicable diseases
- All prospective staff must complete a mandatory volunteer observation period prior to hire;
- A probationary period of 3 months for new paid workers and volunteers;
- On-going supervision of paid workers and volunteers;
- Ensuring good practice is followed in working with children and young people by providing appropriate training and guidance;

## **Training**

It is a great benefit if member organizations undertake regular trainings offered via the Collaborative for this type of work. The Collaborative will keep members informed of relevant workshops/trainings.

### **What you should do if a child in your care reports abuse:**

- Listen to the child/young person.
- Look at them directly and do not promise to keep any secrets before you know what they are going to say, but always let the child/young person know if, and why, you are going to tell anyone.
- Take whatever is said to you seriously and help the child/young person to trust his/her own feelings.
- It is not the role of the worker to investigate any allegations (this would contaminate evidence if a situation went to court). Any disclosure by a child/young person must be reported to the named child protection officer.
- Within 48 hours, a written report regarding the suspected child abuse shall be submitted by the designated child protection representative.

### **Things to say or do if a child in your care reports abuse:**

- 'What you are telling me is very important'
- This is not your fault'
- 'I am sorry that this has happened/is happening'
- 'You were right to tell someone'
- What you are telling me should not be happening to you and I will find out the best way to help you'

- Make notes soon after the event. Try to write down exactly what the young person or child said. Avoid assumptions or conjecture.

**What you should *not* do if a child in your care reports abuse:**

- Project workers/volunteers should not begin investigating the matter themselves.
- Do not discuss the matter with anyone except the designated child protection officer.
- Do not form your own opinions and decide to do nothing.

**Things *not* to say or do if a child in your care reports abuse:**

- Do not ask leading questions – Why? How? What?
- Do not say ‘Are you sure?’
- Do not show your own emotions e.g. shock/disbelief
- Do not make false promises

**Confidentiality**

The Philadelphia Youth Sports Collaborative Organization considers information about program recipients of a personal nature confidential. If a staff member is unsure if the information, they are handling is confidential, they are expected to consult their supervisor. When discussing or transmitting confidential information, employees should follow these guidelines:

- Do not reveal any confidential information except under the direction and with the approval of your supervisor;
- Make sure that confidential information is properly marked and secured before transmittal;
- Ensure that the recipient of the confidential information has a legitimate need to know the information;
- Avoid displaying confidential data where it can be easily observed;
- Immediately inform their supervisor of the loss of any confidential data;
- Limit reproduction and distribution of such information;
- Secure confidential documents in locked cabinets or containers when not in use; and,
- Make sure that they properly dispose of all confidential information.

This policy was adopted by **(organization name)** on .....

Signature.....