



FIFE ARCTIC FOXES IHC

Child Wellbeing and Protection Policy

Covering all players under 18,
with particular provisions for the Club's Under-12 and Under-14 age groups

Approved by the Arctic Foxes Committee:

Next scheduled review: 01/07/2027

Policy owner: Club Child Wellbeing and Protection Officers

This policy is written with reference to Scottish Ice Hockey's Guidance on the Protection of Children and Young People in Ice Hockey, the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007, and the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland. It is intended to sit alongside, not replace, that national and sport-specific guidance.

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1. Introduction and Policy Statement

Arctic Foxes Ice Hockey Club exists to give women and girls in Fife a genuine pathway into ice hockey, from first steps on the ice through to competitive league play. Delivering that mission responsibly means the welfare of every young player comes before results, performance, or the convenience of any adult involved in running the Club.

This policy sets out how the Club protects the children and young people in its care, what is expected of everyone who volunteers with or supports the Club, and what happens if a concern is ever raised. It applies to every regulated activity run under the Arctic Foxes name, including on-ice training, off-ice conditioning, fixtures, club events, and any travel undertaken as part of Club business.

The Club is committed to becoming, and remaining, a Qualifying Voluntary Organisation (QVO) through Volunteer Scotland Disclosure Services (VSDS), ensuring every volunteer in a regulated role is a member of the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme before they have any contact with junior players.

A note on scope

This document governs Club activity for players up to the age of 18. It gives particular attention to the Under-12 and Under-14 age groups, reflecting the greater level of supervision and support younger players typically need, but every provision applies equally across all junior age groups (U12, U14, U16, U19) unless stated otherwise.

2. Definitions

2.1 Child / young person

For the purposes of this policy, a child or young person is anyone under the age of 18. Where Scottish legislation defines a child differently for a specific purpose (for example, the Police Act 1997 definition used for disclosure purposes), that definition will be used instead.

2.2 Regulated role

A regulated role is any coaching, management, committee, or volunteer position that involves unsupervised contact with or responsibility for children as a normal part of the role. All coaches, team managers, committee members, and other volunteers who work directly with Club juniors are considered to hold a regulated role for the purposes of this policy and PVG legislation.

2.3 Key roles referred to in this policy

- Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer (CWPO) — the Club's named point of contact for any concern about a child's welfare, and the lead on PVG administration and safeguarding training.

- **Lead Signatory / Countersignatory** — the individual(s) authorised to submit PVG applications to VSDS on the Club's behalf; ordinarily, this should be one of the CWPOs.
- **Committee** — the Club's elected volunteer body responsible for overall governance, including ultimate responsibility for this policy.

3. Key Principles

- The welfare of every child is the paramount consideration in every decision the Club makes.
- Every child has an equal right to protection from harm, regardless of age, ability, background, or any other characteristic.
- Any concern, however small it may seem, will be taken seriously and responded to promptly.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility — not just that of the CWPOs — and every adult in the Club is expected to act if they see something that concerns them.
- The Club will work openly with parents, guardians, and players, and will cooperate fully with Scottish Ice Hockey (SIH), VSDS, and statutory agencies wherever child welfare is concerned.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 The Committee

The Committee holds overall responsibility for adopting, resourcing, and reviewing this policy. It ensures the Club maintains its QVO status, that sufficient signatories are in place to process PVG applications without delay, and that no individual takes up a regulated role before their PVG check is confirmed. All Committee members are tasked with upholding the safety and wellbeing of young people in the Club, regardless of their administrative role.

4.2 Child Wellbeing and Protection Officers

The Club maintains two Child Wellbeing and Protection Officers (CWPOs), giving members more than one route to raise a concern and ensuring cover is always available. The CWPOs are jointly responsible for:

- Acting as the first point of contact for any player, parent, coach, or volunteer with a concern about a child's wellbeing;
- Coordinating the Club's PVG administration, including submitting applications through VSDS, tracking outstanding checks, and maintaining a confidential record of who holds a current PVG;
- Organising relevant induction and training for coaches, committee members, and volunteers where it bears on the wellbeing and safety of junior players and maintaining records of completion;

- Leading the Club's response to any disclosure, complaint, or concern, in line with Section 9 of this policy;
- Keeping this policy under review and reporting to the committee on safeguarding matters; and
- Liaising with SIH's national Child Protection Officer and, where necessary, statutory agencies.

4.3 Coaches, Team Managers and Other Volunteers

For the purposes of SIH and VSDS, all Committee members undertake regulated work. Additionally, volunteers outside the Committee may assist with Club activities (i.e., transporting players to fixtures, assisting with fundraising events, etc.). Everyone volunteering in a regulated role is expected to hold a current PVG check, complete Club safeguarding induction and any SIH-organised training, follow the relevant Code of Conduct in Section 6, and raise any concern about a child's welfare with a CWPO without delay.

4.4 Parents and Guardians

Parents and guardians are the Club's partners in keeping players safe. They are asked to know who their child's coach and CWPO are, to raise questions or concerns openly, and to support their child in following the Player Code of Conduct.

5. Safe Recruitment and PVG Scheme Membership

5.1 QVO status through Volunteer Scotland Disclosure Services

Arctic Foxes Ice Hockey Club is enrolled — or is in the process of enrolling — as a Qualifying Voluntary Organisation through VSDS. This allows the Club to access free PVG checks for its volunteers and allows for a Lead Signatory and countersignatories to process applications on the Club's behalf. Applications for PVG may therefore be submitted and maintained directly through the Club rather than through SIH.

5.2 Who needs a PVG check

Every coach, team manager, and any other volunteer who will have contact with players under 18 as a normal part of their role must be a member of the PVG Scheme before they take up that role. This applies without exception, including to short-term or occasional volunteers who will be in a supervisory position over children. SIH also specify that all committee members must enrol in the PVG scheme, regardless of whether their role involves direct interaction with children or young people.

For persons already holding a PVG clearance

If an adult volunteering with the club in any capacity already holds a PVG, the CWPO should apply for a PVG Scheme Record Update on behalf of the applicant rather than submit a new, full application. A record update links their existing membership in the PVG scheme to the Arctic Foxes and confirms no new vetting information has emerged.

5.3 The recruitment and vetting process

1. A prospective coach, Committee member, or volunteer expresses interest in a regulated role and is given a copy of this policy and the relevant Code of Conduct.
2. The CWPOs verify the applicant's identity documents and submit a PVG application through the Club's VSDS Signatory.
3. The applicant may not begin any unsupervised regulated activity with players until their PVG check has been confirmed. It is a legal requirement for the Club to receive their own copy of the PVG scheme disclosure before regulated work begins.
4. Once confirmed, the CWPOs record the PVG reference and renewal date on the Club's confidential volunteer register.

5.4 Where a PVG check returns relevant information

If a PVG disclosure returns information — whether a conviction, other relevant information, or a barring list match — the CWPOs will handle this with strict confidentiality and follow this process:

1. The disclosure is shared only with the CWPOs and, where necessary, the Club Chair and Team Managers — never with the wider Committee or club membership.
2. Where the disclosure indicates the individual is on the children's barred list, the Club must not, and will not, allow that person into any regulated role. This is a legal requirement, not a Club judgement call.
3. Where the disclosure contains other information that is not a barring match, the CWPOs will assess it against the nature of the role being sought, seeking advice from VSDS or SIH's Child Protection Officer as needed, before the Committee Chair and CWPOs jointly decide whether the role can proceed, proceed with restrictions, or cannot proceed.
4. The individual concerned will be informed of the outcome and, where relevant, their right to appeal the decision, in line with Disclosure Scotland's own process.
5. All records relating to disclosure outcomes are stored securely, accessible only to the CWPOs, and retained only as long as necessary in line with the Club's data protection obligations.

5.5 Renewal and leavers

The CWPOs track renewal dates for all Club PVG members and initiate re-checks as required. Where a volunteer leaves the Club, the CWPOs will deregister their interest in that person's PVG record with VSDS.

6. Codes of Conduct

Everyone connected with the Club — players, coaches, committee members, other volunteers, parents, and spectators — is expected to know and follow the code of conduct that applies to them. Coaches and committee members are asked to sign a copy of the relevant code as part of their induction.

6.1 Code of Conduct — Players

- Treat your teammates, opponents, coaches, and officials with respect—on the ice, in the changing room, and online
- Listen to your coach and follow their instructions during training and games
- Play fair: no cheating, no dangerous or reckless play, and follow the rules of the game
- Look after Club and rink equipment, and your own kit
- Turn up on time, and let your coach know if you can't make a session
- Support your teammates and celebrate effort and improvement, not just results
- Treat every teammate fairly and kindly, whatever their age, background, or ability

6.2 Code of Conduct — Coaches, Committee Members, and Other Adult Volunteers

- Hold a current PVG check and complete required safeguarding training
- Hold the appropriate SIH coaching qualification and coach-to-player ratios for the age group being coached.
- Model positive, respectful behaviour toward players, other volunteers, and parents
- Put the welfare of players ahead of results at every session and every game.
- Use age-appropriate, positive coaching methods; avoid any form of physical, verbal, or emotional intimidation.
- Listen to and respect the views of players, including when they raise a concern
- Never be alone with a single child; sessions and travel should always involve at least two adults, or take place where other adults are reasonably able to observe.
- Maintain professional boundaries with young players, including in written and electronic communication — communicate through official Club channels, and copy in a parent or another coach on messages to a junior player wherever practicable.
- Follow the Club's Child Wellbeing and Safeguarding Policy and report any concern about a player's welfare, or about another adult's conduct, to a CWPO promptly.
- Never take a young player anywhere alone in a vehicle without another adult present or explicit parental agreement in place beforehand.

6.4 Code of Conduct — Parents, Guardians and Spectators

- Support your child positively and encourage good sportsmanship, win or lose.
- Respect the authority of coaches, officials, and match officials during training and games.
- Raise any concern about your child's experience at the Club with the coach or a CWPO rather than confronting another player, parent, or volunteer directly.
- Collect your child promptly at the end of sessions and fixtures, and let the coach know in advance if someone other than yourself will be collecting them.
- Do not photograph or film players other than your own child without the agreement of the other players' parents (see Section 12).

7. Recognising and Responding to Wellbeing Concerns

Abuse and neglect of children can take physical, emotional, and sexual forms, and can also arise through bullying or discriminatory behaviour. It is not always obvious, and a change in a child's behaviour, mood, or performance can have many innocent explanations — but it can also be a sign that something is wrong.

Rather than reproduce a detailed checklist here, the Club requires every coach, team manager, and committee member to complete safeguarding induction (arranged by the CWPOs, drawing on SIH, Sport Scotland, and Children First resources) that covers the different forms abuse and neglect can take and how to recognise possible warning signs. If you are ever unsure whether something you have noticed is a cause for concern, the right response is always the same: raise it with a CWPO. You do not need to be certain, and you do not need to investigate it yourself.

7.1 Abuse of position of trust

Coaches and other adults in the Club hold a position of trust and influence over young players. Any romantic or sexual relationship between an adult in a position of trust and a young person in their care is unacceptable while that relationship of trust exists, regardless of the young person's age or the age of sexual consent. Any coach or volunteer who becomes aware of a risk of this kind developing must raise it with a CWPO immediately.

7.2 Bullying

Bullying — repeated, deliberate behaviour intended to hurt, exclude, or intimidate another person, whether in person or online — is treated as a wellbeing and conduct matter under this policy. Any player, parent, or volunteer who experiences or witnesses bullying is encouraged to raise it with a coach or CWPO, who will address it under Section 9.

8. If a Child Discloses a Concern to You

Any adult in the Club may be the person a child chooses to speak to. If this happens:

1. Stay calm and listen carefully. Do not show shock, disbelief, or anger.
2. Do not promise to keep what you are told secret — explain gently that you need to tell someone who can help.
3. Do not ask leading questions or press for more detail than the child offers freely.
4. Reassure the child that they were right to tell you and that this is not their fault.
5. Record what was said as soon as possible afterwards, in the child's own words where you can, noting the date, time, and who was present — but do not delay reporting it in order to write a full account first.
6. Report to a CWPO immediately, or if a CWPO is not reachable and a child is in immediate danger, contact Police Scotland on 999.

9. Complaints and Reporting Procedure

This procedure applies to any concern about a child's wellbeing, any complaint about the conduct of a coach, volunteer, player, or parent, and any suspected breach of this policy.

9.1 How to raise a concern

Concerns can be raised verbally or in writing with either CWPO, or with any coach or committee member, who will pass it to a CWPO without delay. A concern form is provided in Appendix A to help structure what is reported, but using it is never a condition of being heard — a verbal report is always acted on.

9.2 What happens next

1. The CWPO records the concern and makes an initial assessment of whether there is any immediate risk to a child.
2. Where there is immediate risk, or where the concern involves possible criminal behaviour, the CWPO contacts Police Scotland and/or the local authority's child protection services without delay and informs the Club Managers and Club Chair.
3. Where the concern relates to general conduct rather than child protection, it is considered under the Club's standard disciplinary process, which may involve a hearing with the person the complaint concerns.
4. Throughout any investigations, the identity of the child and the person the concern relates to is kept confidential, shared only with those who need to know in order to respond appropriately.
5. The person raising the concern, and where appropriate the family involved, is kept informed of the outcome so far as confidentiality allows.
6. Any person subject to a disciplinary outcome has the right to appeal to the Committee.
7. Where the matter also concerns SIH or another club, the CWPO liaises with SIH's Child Protection Officer.

If you are ever in doubt

You do not need proof, and you do not need to be right, to raise a concern. Raising something that turns out to be a misunderstanding causes far less harm than staying silent about something real. If a child is in immediate danger, contact Police Scotland on 999 first and inform a CWPO as soon as possible afterwards.

10. Whistleblowing

Any coach, volunteer, committee member, or parent who has a concern about the conduct of another adult in the Club — including a CWPO or a member of the Committee — can raise it in confidence with any CWPO or, if the concern involves a CWPO, directly with the Club

Chair. No one will be penalised for raising a genuine concern in good faith, even if it later proves unfounded.

11. Physical Safety On and Off the Ice

11.1 Supervision and ratios

The Club follows SIH's minimum coach qualification and coach-to-player ratio requirements for every age group and ensures a minimum of two adults are present and supervising at every training session and fixture involving junior players.

11.2 Changing facilities

Players under 18 use gender segregated changing facilities separate from adult players, supervised by designated, same-sex Club officials. Where practical, coaches do not enter changing areas alone; where a coach must enter (for example, to address the team before a game), this is done with another adult present or with the door open. Wherever possible, access to changing rooms should also be gender segregated.

11.3 First aid

At least one adult holding a current first aid qualification is present at every training session and fixture. All injuries are recorded, and any injury requiring more than minor treatment is reported to the player's parent or guardian the same day.

11.4 Transport and travel

Wherever the Club is responsible for transport to fixtures or events, this is arranged with more than one adult present in any vehicle carrying junior players, and with parental consent obtained in advance. Where transport is undertaken by parents/guardians themselves, this falls outside the Club's direct responsibility, but parents are encouraged to share lift arrangements with the team's CWPO or coach where players are being transported by someone other than their own parent.

11.5 Away trips and overnight stays

The Club does not currently run overnight trips for junior players. Should this change as the Club develops, a dedicated travel and accommodation risk assessment, consistent with SIH guidance, will be completed and shared with parents before any such trip is confirmed.

12. Photography, Digital Images and Social Media

- Written parental consent is obtained before any image of a junior player is used in Club publicity, social media, or the SIH website.
- Players are never named alongside a photograph in a way that could allow a stranger to identify and contact them directly (for example, avoiding full name and home town together).

- Parents and spectators are asked not to publish images of players other than their own child without that family's agreement.
- Any coach or volunteer using a personal device to take photographs at a Club activity does so only for a clear Club purpose, and images are transferred to Club storage and deleted from the personal device promptly.

13. Mental Wellbeing and Emotional Safety

Physical safety is only part of the picture. Coaches are expected to create an environment where players feel able to make mistakes, ask for help, and raise concerns without fear of ridicule or exclusion. This includes:

- Using encouraging, age-appropriate feedback rather than harsh criticism, and never singling a player out for humiliation in front of the team.
- Being alert to signs that a player may be struggling — for example, withdrawal from teammates, a marked change in mood or effort, or reluctance to attend sessions they previously enjoyed — and raising this sensitively with the player, and where appropriate their parent/guardian, rather than ignoring it.
- Treating any disclosure of a mental health difficulty with the same seriousness and confidentiality as any other wellbeing concern and signposting the player and family to appropriate support (such as their GP or school) rather than attempting to advise on it directly.
- Ensuring competitive pressure — around selection, ice time, or results — never comes at the expense of a player's confidence or enjoyment of the sport, particularly at U12 and U14 level.

14. Confidentiality, Records and Data Protection

Any information relating to a child protection concern, complaint, or PVG disclosure is treated as strictly confidential and stored securely, accessible only to the CWPOs and, where necessary, the Club Chair. Records are kept only as long as necessary and in line with the Club's data protection obligations and any requirements set by SIH or Disclosure Scotland. Medical information provided by parents at registration is stored securely and made available to coaches and first aiders only on a need-to-know basis in the event of an injury.

15. Training Requirements

- All coaches, team managers, and committee members complete a Club safeguarding induction covering this policy before taking up a regulated role.
- All coaches and CWPOs attend SIH-organised Safeguarding and Protecting Children training, refreshed at the interval SIH specifies (or, if unavailable, training organised by equivalent local authority or sportscotland).

- The CWPOs maintain a record of who has completed training and follow up on any lapsed requirements.

16. Policy Review

This policy is reviewed at least annually by the CWPOs and the Committee, and sooner if there is a relevant change in Scottish or SIH child protection guidance, a change in relevant legislation, or following any significant incident that suggests the policy should be strengthened.

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Appendix A — Concern / Incident Report Form

This form can be used to help structure a report, but no one should ever delay raising a concern verbally in order to complete it first.

- Name of person completing the form:
- Date and time of the incident or disclosure:
- Name(s) of child/children involved:
- Location:
- What was seen, heard, or disclosed (factual account, in the words used where possible):
- Names of any witnesses:
- Action taken so far:
- Reported to (CWPO name) and when:
- Signature:

Appendix B — Key Contacts

Contact	Details
Club Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer (1)	[Name / phone / email]
Club Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer (2)	[Name / phone / email]
Club Lead Signatory (VSDS)	[Name / phone / email]
Scottish Ice Hockey Child Protection Officer	cpo@siha-uk.co.uk
Volunteer Scotland Disclosure Services	disclosures@volunteerscotland.org.uk / 01786 849777
Police Scotland (non-emergency)	101
Police Scotland (emergency)	999
Social work out-of-hours (Fife)	03451 550099
NSPCC Helpline	0808 800 5000
Childline (for young people)	0800 1111