

Complaints, Allegations and Incidents in the Club setting

Any club member with a concern may bring it to the Club Welfare Officer, or if the concern is against the Club Welfare Officer, to another officer of the committee (the Designated Officer).

If possible, the Designated Officer will talk to the parties involved, and attempt to reach a resolution. If it is agreed that any of the parties is in the wrong, apologies should be made, along with any other appropriate restitution, such as return of possessions.

If it is not possible to resolve the matter, or the alleged incident is deemed serious enough, the Club may launch an investigation. The purpose of an investigation is to establish the facts, and determine what further action needs to be taken.

Any investigation should ensure that:

- All involved parties have an equal opportunity to give their account.
- Any witnesses to the incident are sought and asked to give their account.
- All evidence is recorded.

If the investigation determines that one or more parties is at fault, appropriate sanctions may be applied. These may include verbal or written warnings, some form of reparation to the victim, exclusion from a specific activity, and in the last resort, exclusion from the Club.

The welfare of the child is paramount. If there is reason to believe that a child has been physically or sexually abused or is at serious risk of such abuse by anyone involved with the Club, the Designated Officer must be informed without delay, and any necessary steps should be taken to ensure the immediate safety of the child, including obtaining medical treatment if required. The Designated Officer will follow the procedure for Responding to Concerns of Abuse below.

Any adult interacting with children in the Club setting must report to a club officer as soon as possible if any of the following occurs:

- If they accidentally hurt a child.
- If a child appears distressed in any way by their actions
- If a child appears sexually aroused by their actions
- If a child misunderstands or misinterprets something they have done.

The club officer should record the incident, and ensure that the child's parents are informed

Responding to Concerns of Abuse

Abuse of children and vulnerable adults can take place in any setting, including the home, school, and sporting environment. Adults in regular contact with children and vulnerable adults through the Club may become aware of the possibility that a child is suffering abuse within or outside the Club, or may be taken into confidence by a victim of abuse. If this occurs, they have a duty to act on their concerns as follows:

- Contact the Club Welfare Officer or the NISA Safeguarding Officer to discuss the suspicions. If neither is available, contact Social Services or the police for advice, and inform the Club Welfare Officer or the NISA Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible afterwards.
- Record all information in writing.
- The Club Welfare Officer or the NISA Safeguarding Officer will decide following discussion whether the allegation warrants referral to Social Services or the police.
- If, following discussion, it is believed that a referral is necessary, this will be made by the Club Welfare Officer or the NISA Safeguarding Officer.
- Social Services will advise about contacting parents and/or the alleged perpetrator. It is not the role of the Club to make this decision: it will only act on the advice given.
- If the matter is not referred, the Club Welfare Officer or the NISA Safeguarding Officer will advise on any further steps.

Bullying

Bullying, usually (although not always) of one child by another, presents one of the commonest threats to the welfare of children and vulnerable adults. Oxford Ice Skating Club (OXIST) recognises this, and is committed to promoting an atmosphere that is safe and welcoming to all. Bullying of any form is never acceptable, whether the offender is a child or an adult, and will not be tolerated or excused. The victim is not responsible for being the target of bullying.

The Club defines bullying as deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for the victim to defend themselves. This can include cyber-bullying. Examples of bullying behaviour are as follows:

- **Emotional:** being deliberately unkind; shunning or excluding someone; ridiculing, tormenting or humiliating them.
- **Physical:** pushing, scratching, spitting, kicking, hitting, biting, taking or damaging belongings, tripping up, punching or using any other sort of violence against another person. On the ice, this could also include deliberate obstruction of another skater.
- **Verbal:** name-calling; put-downs; using words to attack, threaten or insult; teasing; sarcasm; spreading rumours; harassment on social media.

Committee Members and volunteers will make every effort to create a tolerant and caring environment in the Club, where bullying behaviour is not acceptable. Members should discuss issues of bullying openly, including why such behaviour will not be tolerated and what the consequences of that behaviour will be.

Nevertheless, bullying behaviour is likely to occur on occasion and the Club recognises this fact. In the event of such incidents, the following principles will govern the Club's response:

- All incidents of bullying must be addressed thoroughly and sensitively.
- Children will be encouraged to report any incident of bullying that they witness or experience. They should be reassured that what they say will be taken seriously and handled carefully.
- Adult members have a duty to inform the Club Welfare Officer if they witness an incident of bullying involving any member of the Club.
- If a member tells someone that they are being bullied, they should be given the time to explain what has happened and reassured that they were right to tell.
- The victim will be helped and supported by the club, and their welfare monitored. Any necessary steps will be taken to ensure their safety
- The bully will be encouraged to discuss their behaviour and think through the consequences of their actions. Where appropriate, they will be encouraged to talk through the incident with the victim.
- Where bullying behaviour is more serious, or continues after the bully has been spoken to, further sanctions may be required. If it is felt necessary for the protection of other members, the bully may be suspended from the club. Note that any club member who is suspended has the right of appeal.
- A committee member will inform the parents/carers of all the children involved in a bullying incident at the earliest possible opportunity. If appropriate, they will facilitate a meeting between the relevant parents/carers. Incidents must be handled with care and sensitivity at all times.
- All incidents of bullying will be reported to the Club Welfare Officer and will be recorded.

Photography and Video

Oxford Ice Rink's policy on photography and video will be applied to all club sessions.

This policy requires anyone wishing to take photographs or videos at the rink to complete a form explaining the purpose of the photography and their relationship to the subject(s). Provided that the explanation is satisfactory, a permit will be issued.

If a member is suspicious about someone using a camera, they should either challenge them to show that they have a rink permit, or ask a committee member to do so.

Individuals should only be photographed or videoed with their consent, and if the subject is a child, with the consent of a parent or carer.

Photography and videoing should only take place in public areas of the rink, and not in the toilets or changing rooms.

Coaches who use video as a teaching aid should do so within the guidelines laid down by the NISA Safeguarding and Protecting Young People policy and the Coaches' Code of Conduct.

Late Collection

It is not the responsibility of the Club to take children home if their parents are not available to collect them at the end of a session.

If parents do not arrive to collect their child, the Club will do the following:

- Attempt to contact the parents using all provided contact numbers
- Wait with the child at the ice rink, with other volunteers or parents if possible
- Remind the parents of the policy on late collection

The Club's volunteers should not:

- Take the child home, or to any other location
- Send the child home with someone else without parental permission
- Leave the child alone

Travel to Events away from the Rink

Oxford Ice Skating Club (OXIST) does not organise group travel to events such as competitions and shows, and does not organise any events for its members which require group travel or overnight stays away from home.

When club members decide to take part in skating events away from Oxford, it is their own or their parents'/carers' responsibility to organise travel and accommodation.

Good Practice

Young people thrive when they have good role models in a positive culture. In order set the best possible example, as well as to minimise the risk to themselves of a malicious or mistaken accusation, all adults involved with the Club should endeavour to conduct themselves in an exemplary fashion at all times.

Good practice includes all of the following:

- Treating everybody with equal respect and dignity, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, religion, social background, sexual orientation or disability.
- Encouraging openness, communication and mutual trust
- Putting the welfare of the individual first.
- Promoting good sportsmanship and graceful acceptance of success and failure.
- Respecting and promoting Oxford Ice Rink's patch guidelines and Club etiquette
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Not swearing or using foul, abusive or discriminatory language.
- Not smoking or drinking alcohol in front of young people.
- Avoiding private or unobserved situations. Where the fitting of children's dresses is concerned the parent must be present or have given consent.

In the context of ice dance, it is accepted that couples skating together are a fundamental part of the sport, and that adults and children will sometimes skate with each other. However, the following principles should be observed to ensure that young people are not placed in an awkward or embarrassing position:

- All skaters have an absolute right to decline to dance with someone else, and do not have to give a reason.
- If a young person shows reluctance or nervousness about skating in a couple, they should not be pressed.
- When skating in dance hold with a young person, adults must take especial care not to use excessive strength or touch their partner inappropriately.

Practices which can never be sanctioned:

The following poor practices are never acceptable.

- Use of excessive, physical or humiliating punishments.
- Failure to act when possible abuse or bullying is witnessed
- Engaging in rough physical or sexually provocative games.
- Spending excessive amounts of time alone with young people away from others
- Allowing or engaging in any form of inappropriate touching.
- Allowing children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Making sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun.
- Reducing a child to tears as a form of control.
- Allowing allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded, or not acted upon.

- Doing things of a personal nature for a child that they can do for themselves

Useful Contacts

The NSPCC Helpline	0808 800 5000	
Childline	0800 1111	
Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)	0844 453 0162	
Child Protection in Sport Unit	0116 366 5590	Email – cpsu@nspcc.org.uk
Sports Coach UK	0113 274 4802	
Oxfordshire County Council Social Services	0845 050 7666	Out of hours – 0800 833 408
Thames Valley Police – non emergency	101	
Thames Valley Police – emergency	999	
Institute of Sport & Remedial Massage	0208 450 5851	
NISA	0115 988 8060	
NISA Safeguarding	Email – safeguarding@iceskating.org.uk	