

Information for parents/guardians of young players (under 18)

Abingdon Hockey Club welcomes young players under the age of 18 and endeavours to ensure that the club is a safe and friendly place for young people to develop their hockey skills and enjoy playing. We would also like to encourage parents/guardians to support their child and the club.

Currently the club runs Avengers sessions specifically for young people, and also allows young people who are aged 12 or above to join in the adult training sessions and matches if appropriate.

Parents and guardians should be aware of the following information. Most of the information is equally applicable for young players attending junior sessions and those playing alongside adults.

Membership details

A parent/guardian must sign the membership or registration form of a young person to give consent for them to take part in club activities and to give consent to the club seeking emergency medical treatment for the young player if necessary. The parent must provide emergency contact details for use in a medical or other emergency.

The contact details (particularly email address and any mobile phone details) provided for a young player on the membership form should always include those of the parent/guardian(s). These will be used to communicate details of club activities and changes of arrangements which parents need to be aware of. The details of many club activities (including matches) can be seen on the club website: www.abingdonhockey.org.uk.

Clothing and kit

We train and play all matches on astro turf surfaces, and proper astro turf boots (available from sports shops) are recommended as ordinary trainers tend not to have enough grip and can lead

to a player slipping. Traditional boots with studs are not allowed on an astro turf surface as they would damage it. It is expected that a regular player will provide and use their own stick. Sticks can be purchased cheaply from most sports shops or over the internet. It is important to wear appropriate protective clothing to ensure that the risk of injury is minimised. Young players should wear shin guards with ankle protection and a mouthguard. Mouthguards fit better and offer better protection if they are fitted by a dentist, but they can be bought cheaply from sports shops and moulded into a reasonable shape. Some players use gloves to protect knuckles against grazes from the astro turf surface, and again these can be bought relatively cheaply from sports shops. It is ultimately the parent's/guardian's responsibility to ensure that young players wear the appropriate clothing and protection as this is not something which the club can take responsibility for providing or checking.

Training and coaching sessions

These sessions take place outside and usually continue even in bad weather. Any suitable clothing can be worn including a waterproof if appropriate, and warm clothing with several layers is recommended in cold weather.

Matches

Although kit of the correct club colours can sometimes be borrowed or similar, close alternatives obtained from sports stores for the first few matches, if a player is expecting to play regularly then they should purchase kit in home colours (these are available through the club). Players should come expecting to play outside regardless of the weather. Matches continue despite heavy rain or wind, so if the weather is poor it is a good idea to bring a complete set of dry clothes for changing into afterwards. On a cold day a player can wear extra layers underneath their club shirt to keep warm and should have warm clothes to put on before and after the match, and if they are substituted off the pitch at any time.

Changing facilities

Given the facilities available, it is not usually possible to provide separate changing facilities for young players which are separate from those used by adults. At Tilsley Park the changing rooms are shared between users of all of the pitches and the athletics track. If a young player feels uncomfortable changing alongside adult players, then they will need to come already changed.

Players attending training sessions or matches at Tilsley Park should come dressed ready to play or change supervised by their parent or guardian, as the club cannot offer supervision in the changing rooms.

Accidents and injuries

Unfortunately due to the nature of the game accidents and injuries can occur during play.

- In the case of a minor injury such as a graze or bruise, first aid such as a plaster or ice pack is generally applied at the scene, unless the player does not want this or the club has been informed by a young player's parent/guardian that this should not be done.
- For injuries that do not appear to require immediate medical attention but where the young player appears to be in pain or is upset, the club will attempt to contact their parent/guardian to arrange for them to be collected as soon as possible.
- If a serious accident or injury occurs where a young player appears to need immediate medical treatment, the young player's parent/guardian will be contacted immediately and, if necessary, the club will seek emergency medical treatment (e.g. an ambulance) for the young player. The club must be authorised to do this by the young player's parent/guardian signing the consent form.

Transport

The club does NOT provide any transport of young players to training, home or away matches or any other club event (e.g. teas after a match). Getting a young person to the match or other venue is entirely the responsibility of the parent/guardian. For venues away from the home pitch at Tilsley Park, adult players usually make informal arrangements to meet beforehand to share lifts but if a young player wishes to do this it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian of the young player to ensure that they know who is giving a lift to their child and to satisfy themselves that the arrangement is suitable. It should also be noted that the club does not cover the expenses of those players who do offer lifts to away matches so anyone who regularly gets a lift to away matches should be prepared to offer to pay a share of the petrol costs. Club members would very much appreciate it if the parents of young players could take their turn to offer lifts so that no-one has to drive to the majority of away matches.

For young players attending adult sessions only: At the end of an adult training session or match the club allows young people to leave on their own if they are expecting to make their own way home. If a young player is expecting to be picked up, the club will ensure that they are not left on their own after the other players have already gone, so long as the player stays with the main group of players (i.e. does not leave the venue on their own and is clearly visible). The club will not otherwise supervise collection of young players after the adult training sessions.

For young players attending Avengers sessions: It is assumed that young players attending the Avengers sessions will be collected by their parent/guardian or another nominated adult unless the club is informed otherwise. If the young person is to be collected by someone who is not their parent or guardian, please make sure that this information is made known to a club official at the point when the young person is dropped off.

If for some reason a parent/guardian is likely to be late to collect their child, they should attempt to ensure that their child/the club is aware of it and to make other arrangements if a late arrival of more than a few minutes is likely. If no other way of contacting club officials at the pitch is possible then in the last resort the Tilsley Park reception desk can be contacted to leave a message (please do not use except as a last resort).

Behaviour

Unaccompanied young people are expected to behave sensibly and to stay with the team group. They are expected to remain under the supervision of the coach or team captain at all times.

Photography

In many hockey environments, including the Tilsley Park pitches (since they are open to the public), it is impossible to control photography by external parties.

If photographs and/or video footage are taken during matches and training sessions by Abingdon Hockey club officials acting in any official capacity then such images shall only be used for publicity/training purposes and will not be distributed in any form which can allow any individual young person to be readily identified. For example, a photograph of a training session or match may be placed on the club website but will not list players' names.

Concerns

The contact details for the welfare officer can be found on the club website: www.abingdonhockey.org.uk. They can be contacted by email: welfare@abingdonhockey.org.uk