**Chess Arbiters Association – Safeguarding Policy**

Chess can and does have a powerful and positive influence on people, especially young people. Not only can it provide opportunities for enjoyment and achievement, it can also develop qualities such as self esteem, structured thinking and leadership. These positive effects can only take place if chess places the safeguarding and protection of young people first and adopts good practice. Throughout this document the term ‘young people’ is used. The same safeguards should be applied, if necessary, to vulnerable adults.

Arbiting can involve varying levels of contact and responsibility for young people. An arbiter or organiser can develop strong positive relationships and will often be seen as a role model. Every individual has a responsibility to ensure the safety and welfare of participants.

Arbiters should adopt the highest standards as they have an important role in safeguarding and protecting young people and in providing a safe environment in which they can enjoy their chess experiences.

**Principles of the Policy**

* Chess should be fun and enjoyable, and fair play should be promoted.
* All young people within chess, regardless of age, ability, sex, race, religion or belief, ethnic origin, social status or sexual orientation, have the right to be protected from harm.
* The rights, dignity and worth of all individuals should always be respected
* Everyone who has a concern, MUST report it.
* It is the responsibility of child protection experts to determine whether or not abuse has taken place, but it is everyone’s responsibility in chess to report concerns.
* The roles and responsibilities of the statutory agencies in safeguarding young people must be recognised.
* Any policy or procedure is only as effective as the ability and skill of those who operate it.

The CAA acknowledges that good practice when dealing with people is essential. All people in a position of trust are expected to adhere to the following guidelines:

* always be publicly open when working with young people. Ensure that whenever possible there is more than one adult present during activities with young people, or at least that you are in sight or hearing of others
* treat all young people with respect
* provide an example of good conduct you wish others to follow
* respect a young person’s right to personal privacy
* encourage young people and adults to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes or behaviour that they do not like
* remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well intentioned
* challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations/suspicions of abuse
* give guidance and support to inexperienced volunteers

**Never**

* allow or engage in any inappropriate physical or verbal contact with young people
* allow young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged
* make sexually suggestive comments to a young person, even in fun
* allow allegations of a young person to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
* do things of a personal nature for young people that they can do for themselves
* invite or allow young people to stay with you at your home unsupervised
* allow bullying or bad behaviour by young people
* allow yourself to be drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour
* make suggestive or derogatory remarks or gestures in front of young people
* jump to conclusions about others without checking facts
* either exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues
* show favouritism to any individual
* believe ‘it could never happen to me’.

**Reporting**

As an arbiter you are not expected to be an expert in recognition; however all adults have a duty of care to be vigilant and respond appropriately to suspicions of poor practice, abuse or bullying. This does not mean that it is your responsibility to decide if a situation is poor practice, abuse or bullying, but it is your responsibility to report your concerns.

* in response to something a young person has said to you – a disclosure
* in response to signs or suspicions of abuse
* in response to allegations made against another official or a volunteer
* in response to allegations made about a parent or someone not working within chess
* in response to bullying
* in response to a breach of these guidelines
* observation of inappropriate behaviour
* in response to anything which makes them uncomfortable based on inappropriate behaviour of an adult or changes in behaviour of a young person

It is important to note that even if an incident occurs outside of the chess environment, it should still be reported if the adult or young person concerned is involved in chess. This is in accordance with standard practice in sport.

**What to do if concerns are raised with you**

* stay calm
* reassure the person reporting their concerns that they have done the right thing in telling you
* keep an open mind
* listen carefully to what is said and take them seriously (it adds to the distress if the information has to be repeated unnecessarily)
* find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others – do not promise to keep secrets
* ask questions for clarification only, and at all times avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer. To help you to do this, try to ask questions starting with what, how, where, when, who
* tell them what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared
* report the incident to the CAA Safeguarding Officer without delay\*
* record in writing what was said using the young person’s own words as soon as possible
* do not approach an alleged abuser or take sole responsibility.

It is not the arbiter’s nor organiser’s responsibility to decide if a child is being abused or poor practice has occurred. Any concerns or allegations will be managed by the Safeguarding Officer. It is your responsibility to report your concerns, not act on them.

\*If the Safeguarding Officer is not contactable, and a child is at immediate risk or in danger, you must seek advice immediately (do not delay) from your local authority Children’s Social Care Department (previously Social Services) or the Police. It is acceptable if this course of action is followed immediately even if there is no immediate risk. The Safeguarding Officer should be informed of any such contact made at the earliest opportunity.

The CAA Safeguarding Officer is: Lara Barnes