

PHYSICAL CONTACT WHEN WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE: POLICY & PROCEDURE

1. Application

This policy and procedure applies to all O'Brien Group team members, including employees, contractors, volunteers, and work experience staff. All team members are required to comply with and are responsible for knowing and understanding the policy and procedure.

This policy and procedure also applies to everyone involved in or connected to recreational and competitive ice activities (Ice Sports) at the O'Brien Icehouse, including, but not limited to, participants, parents, spectators, officials, coaches and judges throughout all O'Brien Icehouse events and activities. This policy will continue to apply retrospectively to a person or team member following the cessation of their association or employment with O'Brien Icehouse.

2. Purpose

This policy and procedure aims to define and describe O'Brien Group's commitment to Child Safety Standards (2015). O'Brien Icehouse is committed to ensuring that Children and Young People who participate in its activities have a safe and happy experience. O'Brien Icehouse supports and respects children, young people, staff, volunteers, and participants.

3. Policy Statement

There will be times when physical contact with children is necessary. Such contact should always be made appropriately. It is important to ensure that all associated child safety policies and procedures are clearly understood and followed to create a child-safe environment at O'Brien Icehouse. This includes acceptable physical contact situations and practices, as well as strategies and techniques to limit unnecessary or inappropriate physical contact.

3.1 Appropriate Physical Contact

The requirements of ice sports can vary significantly and contact which is appropriate in one sport may not be appropriate for another. It is widely recognised that in some situations appropriate physical contact is required to support an athlete or participant. These include:

- To provide guidance to develop a particular skill;
- To prevent an injury;
- To administer first aid or attend to an injured or unwell child;
- Assisting a child with a disability; or
- Comforting a child if they are in distress.

Communication of policies and codes of conduct are key tools to aid the development of a child-safe culture. O'Brien Group considers and identifies the types of situations in which physical contact may be necessary and appropriate in Ice Sports and communicated through as many means possible including:

- Club Meetings & Briefings;
- Newsletters;
- Official Policy Updates;
- Website;
- In Venue Promotion (i.e. signage); and
- Coach/Official Updates.

3.2 Visibility of Physical Contact

If physical contact is appropriate and required in a particular situation, wherever possible, that physical contact should occur:

- in view of the public;
- in an open space;
- in clear sight of other adults; and
- performed only by trained team members (i.e. coach).

For clarity, avoid all one-on-one situations or where one adult and one child are left alone together.

PHYSICAL CONTACT WHEN WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE: POLICY & PROCEDURE

3.4 Inappropriate Physical Contact

Inappropriate physical contact is any contact that is unwarranted or not required, and may include;

- Hugs, cuddles, tickling, initiating, or permitting kissing exchanges or other intimate contact.
- Assisting a Child or Young Person with uniform fit-out or changing of their clothes (unless you are a designated carer/helper of a Child or Young Person with a disability);
- Attending to injuries in isolated first-aid rooms without the presence of at least one other adult;
- Physical contact with private body parts; and
- Sitting a Child or Young Person on your knee.

4. Procedure Statement

4.1. Conducting Appropriate Physical Contact

- Always seek permission from the Child or Young Person to touch them before any contact occurs. For example, "Can I move your forearm to adjust your technique?"
- Be aware of and respect signs indicating the Child or Young Person is uncomfortable with physical contact. This may include limited eye contact or a step away from you.
- Use words to accompany physical contact, explaining what you are doing and why.
- Have a polite and respectful conversation with the parents/guardians and Child or Young Person (especially teenagers) to ensure you are aware of any sensitivities specific to:
 - Child or Young Person from diverse cultures; or
 - Child or Young Person with a disability or medical condition.
- If congratulating a Child or Young Person, use non-intrusive contacts such as a brief pat on the upper arm, upper back, high-five, or handshake.
- Provide skill-teaching support to acceptable body regions such as the shoulders or upper back, providing it is in context for the sport and necessary for the skill or technique being demonstrated.
- First aid services and massages should only be provided by qualified personnel and:
 - in the case of first aid, only when necessary to treat illness or injury or during a life-threatening situation; and
 - in the case of massage, only when the masseur is formally engaged by O'Brien Icehouse, affiliated club/association or a Child or Young Person's parent(s)/guardian(s) for that specific service to be provided.
- Physical restraint and intervention should only occur if there is a serious and imminent risk to an individual's safety. This may include reaching out to grab a Child or Young Person by the arm to move them away from a dangerous situation or holding a Child or Young Person so they don't fall to the floor and injure themselves.
- If it is necessary to comfort a Child or Young Person in distress, do so in the presence of at least one other adult and in view of others. If the participant belongs to a club or association (i.e. hockey or skate club), management at the club/association should be informed of situations in which Child or Young Person are or have been in distress and it should be documented in an appropriate, secure place. Where there is a concern for a Child or Young Person's welfare or wellbeing, always designate an appropriate person to notify the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the situation and ensure that the wellbeing of the distressed Child or Young Person is monitored to identify any patterns of behaviour that may be of concern.

4.2. Discipline

From time-to-time there may be a Child or Young Person taking part in a sporting activity who does not behave appropriately. All discipline must be managed in line with the Working with Children and Young People Procedure (WHS.PP.012.2). At no time is physical discipline tolerated i.e. striking, shoving, or pushing.

4.3. First Aid

All first aid must be delivered by a qualified first aider, ideally in the presence of the parent/guardian of the Children or Young Person.

4.4. Supporting Children with a Disability

Most children with a disability will have a plan or established method for managing toileting and other personal care needs. It is not likely that this assistance will be required from O'Brien Icehouse personnel or associated individuals, however, should the situation arise it is important to manage this with consideration to the child's dignity and safety for the Child or Young Person.

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PHYSICAL CONTACT WHEN WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE: POLICY & PROCEDURE

In the event that assistance is required, inform the parent/guardian or carer to assist. Be discreet and respectful of the Children or Young Person. Do not:

- Offer to assist with toileting or other personal care needs yourself, or,
- Over-assist and touch when providing assistance, particularly when assisting a child with a disability.

4.5. Non-Compliance

O'Brien Group team members including employees, contractors, volunteers, and work experience staff found to be in breach of this policy and procedure will be subject to disciplinary procedures outlined in Disciplinary Action and Warnings Policy and Procedure (HR.020).

Individuals associated with the O'Brien Icehouse, but not directly employed, including participants, parents, spectators, officials, coaches and judges found to be in breach of this policy and procedure may be subject to cancellation of membership, temporary suspensions, or permanent banning from the venue.

5. Definitions

Children and Young People

refer to individuals within specific age ranges during their developmental stages. While definitions may vary slightly depending on cultural, legal, or institutional contexts, broadly speaking:

1. **Children:** individuals from birth to around 12 years old.
2. **Young People:** individuals from around 13 to 18.

These definitions can vary across different fields such as education, psychology, sociology, and law, and may also depend on the specific purposes or contexts in which they are used.

Discipline

refers to the practice of correcting behaviour through the use of deterrents or punishment to train and reinforce appropriate or correct behaviour or rule following.

6. Legislation

Child Safety Standards 2015

7. Other References

WHS.PP.012 Child Safety Standards Policy and Procedure
WHS PP.012.2 Working with Children and Young People Procedure

8. Document Control

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