PROTECT OUR CHILDREN

INTERVENTION GUIDE FOR ASSOCIATIONS AND ADMINISTRATORS
Hockey Québec would like to thank the original members of the Coaching Committee who initiated the production of the original version of this document. The elaboration of an operational guide pertaining to sexual abuse represents a delicate task, despite the fact that this subject is not as taboo as it used to be.

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Aware of the importance of its mandate and dedicated to realizing its goals, Hockey Québec vows to adopt and apply the following mission:

"As leader, ensure the proper framework for ice hockey while prioritizing the development, promotion, implementation and monitoring of programs and fostering the development of the individual."

Note: The masculine gender is used as a neutral gender for the sole purpose of lightening the text.
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The cases of family violence and sexual abuses of which children are victims are becoming public knowledge. We know that the Youth Protection falls under Provincial Government instances. Hence, the Provincial Government legislated by creating the Youth Protection Act (LRQ, Chap P-34.1). While we know about the Youth Protection Directorate (Y.P.D.), we are generally little aware of the contents of the Law.

It is therefore important that people working with and around children be informed of the rights and duties with Quebec Youth. It is sometimes difficult to recognize and identify the various types of violence committed on children.

Hockey Québec is publishing this brochure to sensitize all of its members and suggest means of intervention to deter or unmask an aggressor who may have infiltrated the Quebec Minor Hockey environment.

We all know that in 1991, Hockey Québec included in its Administrative Regulations Article 2.1.9 in order to sanction interveners accused of deviance or found guilty under the Criminal Code.

In 2003, Hockey Québec implemented a “Policy in the matter of noticing and preventing abuse and in the matter of harassment.” In addition, during the 2006/2007 season, Hockey Québec adopted a regulation that compelled members to divulge the existence of a criminal record (Administrative Regulations Manual, Article 10.3). The primary objective of such regulation is to protect the members.

In this guide, you will find four distinct chapters, the first involving information, the second offering a procedure to be followed, a third proposing preventive measures and the fourth suggesting a method of action when a case of abuse is uncovered.
The starting point for Youth Protection and Young Offenders comes from the Human Rights Charter. (LRQ, c. C-12).

1.1 EVERY PERSON IS ENTITLED TO PROTECTION
"Any human is entitled to life as well as his personal safety, integrity and liberty. He also possessed a legal personality." (Article 1, Human Rights Charter).

1.2 A CHILD HAS A PARTICULAR RIGHT TO PROTECTION
"Any child has the right to protection, security and attention that his parents or persons acting as such can give him." (Article 39).

Every human being whose life is in peril has a right to secour (Article 2).

Therefore, as an organisation, we must offer our members maximum protection; we must know what is in the Law.

1.3 DEFINITIONS INCLUDED IN THE YOUTH PROTECTION ACT
a) "Commission":
The Human and Youth Rights Commission as constituted by the Human Rights Chapters. (Art. 1a) L.p.j.).

b) "Director":
A Director of Youth Protection is designated for each establishment that runs a Child and Youth Protection Centre. (Art. 1c) L.p.j.).

c) "Child":
A person aged less than eighteen years old. (Article 1 c., Y.P.A.)

d) "Child Protection Centre"
The services provided by an institution operating child protection center.
1.4 OBLIGATION TO DIVULGE
Any person, even if bound by professional secrecy, who has reasonable reasons to believe that the security and development of a child is compromised as intended in Paragraphs d) and e) of Article 38 (victim of sexual abuse or is submitted to wrongful physical treatment resulting from excesses, negligence or psychological abuse) is obligated to divulge the situation without delay to the Director (Article 39 L.p.j.).

1.5 IMMUNITY
A person cannot be prosecuted for actions committed in good faith, this in accordance with Articles 39 or 42 (Article 43 L.p.j.).

1.6 DIVULGING THE IDENTITY
No one can divulge or be forced to divulge the identity of a person who acted in accordance with Article 39 or 42 without the express consent of said person (Article 44 L.p.j.).

1.7 DEFINITION OF THE TERM “VIOLENCE”
No definition can be given to all types of violence to which children may be victim. On the other hand, any form of violence towards children offer a common characteristic: in all cases, there is abuse of power, of authority or psychological abuse.

Violence occurs when a parent or any other adult benefits from the power he holds on another person when the latter is physically or psychologically weaker than him. The following definitions are used in the context of Youth Protection:

a) Ill treatments:
The expression refers to any accidental or non-accidental injury caused to a child.

b) Sexual Aggression:
A sexual aggression is the imposition by an older child or an adult upon a child to engage in an activity intended to sexually stimulate or satisfy him. Two types of sexual aggression are recognized: with or without contact.
2. PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED

When a child is victim of ill treatment, he may show body signs or behaviours that are different from his normal deportment.

In certain cases, the children clearly describe the abuses they have suffered while, in other cases, we need to be very attentive to the signals they send.

There can be physical indications such as:

- contusions, scratches, inflammation;
- lesions, bleeding;
- injury to the genitals;
- infections transmitted sexually or through the blood;
- pregnancy;
- etc.

Indicators through behaviour:

- sudden and age-disproportionate interest in sexual reality;
- food disorder (frequent vomiting);
- sleep disorder (nightmares, fear of going to sleep);
- bed wetting;
- refusal to be examined by a physician;
- reluctance to speak;
- sudden change in deportment;
- fear of returning home;
- personality problems;
- running away;
- premature sexual deportment;
- sexual harassment of younger children;
- blackmail;
- suicidal attempts;
- retrograde deportment (ex.: return to sucking his thumb);
- fear of locations and people;
- school problems;
- etc.
Any such modification, especially if many such manifestations occur in the basic same timeframe, can become an indication of sexual abuse.

Following the identification of physical or psychological symptoms, the various means of intervention for the coach or parent are as follows:

2.1 LISTEN AND BELIEVE

When a child confides, the adult must first appease the child’s anxiety and fears.

Here are some ways to reach such objective:

- Find a location where the child will feel at ease to discuss. (Alone, but in sight of another adult.)
- Use all occasions to reassure the child.
- Use a clear language that corresponds to the child’s level of development.

Possible answers:

- “I believe you.”
- “It is not your fault that you are a victim.”
- “I am sorry for what has happened to you.”
- “I will help you.”

2.2 NOTIFICATION

After listening to the child, explain to him what will occur:

1) Make him understand that the volunteer or parent is obligated to divulge the situation to competent authorities.

2) Make him understand that what he is going through is serious and you cannot keep it a secret. Mention to him that by talking, he will get help and will not have to suffer repercussions from his assailant.

3) Make him understand that other children may live through the same situation.

2.3 CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidences made by a child victim of ill treatment or sexual abuse are delicate by nature and the volunteer or parent must keep them secret. This person cannot in any way repeat to anyone (colleagues, friends, parents) what has been confided to him. The child’s version can only be revealed to qualified personnel (sexologists, social workers, Youth Protection and Young Offenders agents and agencies, psychologists).
2.4 KEEP YOUR CALM

Confidences stated by a victim can sometimes shock the person to whom they have been made. Whatever the child says, the volunteer or parent must attempt to keep his cool and show comprehension.
2.5 ATTITUDES TO AVOID

1 • Do not bear judgement
When they learn that a child is a victim of violence, a number of persons immediately bear judgement on the perpetrator on the victim. The volunteer or parent should not blame anyone. Should he pass a judgement, he implicitly indicates that he did not really listened, nor believed the child.

2 • Do not make promises
With the intention of comforting the child, the volunteer or parent may be tempted to make promises such as "It will not happen again" or "They will get what they deserve". We must not promise to settle the situation. A promise that is not completed will only lead to further pain on the victim.

3 • Do not offer "counselling"
Leave that part to competent and authorized professionals (sexologists, psychologists, social workers, etc.) to counsel the child.

4 • Do not investigate
You do not have to prove that the child is telling the truth, professionals are trained for that type of work. Should you do so, you could place the child in further danger. (Ex.: avoid asking suggestive questions.)

Examples of leading questions:

Does the person you have touched the genitals?
Do you have touched the person?
Are you struck?

Examples of non-leading questions:

Can you tell me what happened?
When did that happen?
3. PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Each association can implement preventive measures or specific regulations to deter violent or sexual actions.

3.1 MAKE-UP A PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

- Implement a policy.
- Help in preparing the regulation.
- Help in managing the crisis.

3.2 THE PLAYERS’ DRESSING ROOM

Supervision of the players’ dressing room must be constant, without being continuous, meaning that an adult does not need present at all times (such as when the players are showering). On the other hand, the person(s) responsible should be able to hear what is going on in the room at all times and enter to intervene if necessary.

3.3 GODFATHER OR GODMOTHER FOR THE TEAM

The association could attempt to find a godfather for the team (police officer, resource persons, etc.). This person will attempt to develop complicity with the children by gaining their confidence. Eventually, the children would be able to treat him as a confident and find moral comfort.

3.4 WRITTEN AUTHORIZATIONS FROM PARENTS

Obtain written authorizations from parents in the following circumstances:

- For the coach who ferries the children before and after games and practices.
- For coaches inviting children to a meal.
- For activities conducted outside the regular schedule of games and practice.
* There should always be two responsible adults in presence of the child.

3.5 PARENTS ACCOMPANYING AT TOURNAMENTS

Have a group of parents who accompanies the team at tournaments. The list should be handed in to the Association.
3.6 CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES
The coach should establish the team’s calendar of activities and present it to the Association.

3.7 SHOWERS
Youngsters do not all react in the same manner when comes time to shower. The players’ age must be considered. Discretion on the part of interveners and their tolerance towards modesty shown by the youngsters are a must.

* A player cannot be obligated to take a shower.

Obviously, associations may implement, as they wish, accrued protection for the children.
4. PROCEDURE WHEN A CASE IS REVEALED

4.1 RESOURCE PERSONS

The “Management” of a Minor Hockey Association (M.H.A.) must gather all possible information and seek the support of competent personnel: sexologists, psychologists, social workers, Youth Protection Directorate and CLSC.

In cases where the child is a victim of abuse by a member of the M.H.A.:

4.2 EXECUTIVE OF THE M.H.A.

The Executive meets to take disciplinary measures in accordance with the situation and its own regulations. Delegate a unique representative who will act as a spokesperson with media.

The Executive shall transmit all known information to the Provincial Office.

4.3 INFORMATION MEETINGS

4.3.1 Coaches

Depending on the seriousness of the action, it is possible that the alleged culprit will not be present at the meeting (ex.: sexual abuse vs. a coach who has not allowed his players to quench their thirst during a practice).

The Executive meets the coaches of the involved team:

- Informs them on the situation while maintaining confidentiality.
- Take-over over the team according to procedures established during this meeting. No comments are to be made by any other persons other than the spokesperson designated by the M.H.A.
4.3.2 Parents

The Executive meets with the parents of the involved team:

- It informs them of the general situation while maintaining confidentiality;
- Specifically for the parents of the alleged victim, it involves them of resources available to them and the child or children (sexologists, psychologists, social workers, CLSC, etc.).

4.3.3 Players

- While maintaining confidentiality and explaining why it must be so, the coaches and / or competent persons explain the situation to the players, ex.: that a coach had to leave because of personal reasons.
- If necessary and if such is the case, the coaches define the new roles of the interveners with the players.
- Coaches offer help to players who may feel such a need, verify if the atmosphere around the team is adequate and, if necessary, do what is required to re-establish it.
- If requested, the coaches offer adequate references to a need they cannot fulfill.
5. CYBER INTIMIDATION AND USE OF SOCIAL MEDIAS

5.1 DEFINITION

For most youngsters, the Internet is foremost a place where relations are developed. While the majority of social interactions are positive, an increasing number of youngsters are using the technology to intimidate and harass others. This phenomenon is called ‘cyber intimidation’. This is conducted through the use of known various social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, E-mails, text messages, etc.

Whether it occurs in the virtual or real world, intimidation describes a group of behaviours such as:

- utter humiliating or insulting statements;
- make threats;
- apply pressure to obtain something from someone;
- reject a person;
- harass someone by repeatedly issuing wrongful messages, use someone else’s identity to make humiliating statements about another person.

As an intervener with youngsters, coaches and other interveners in the world of hockey must be attentive to such behaviours that can cause a lot of damage. If cyber intimidation can cause more prejudices than those made off-line, it is partly due to the fact it is conducted in the presence of witnesses, such that the victim no longer knows who is aware or who to believe. The technology ten folds the range the intimidator can have by allowing him to intimidate anywhere and at any time. Thus, intimidation and harassment are not, by themselves, actually new social problems, but the tools used are.

To better understand these phenomena, a few definitions are required:

- repeated acts of psychological aggressions committed by an individual, or by a group of individuals, who reaches its victims through the Internet, E-mail, instant messages or texts;
- the word designates a form of hidden psychological aggression transmitted through various means of electronic communication such as cellular phones, Websites, jokes, innuendos, role playing or multi-players adventure games, and on-line profiles;
- sending or posting cruel or insulting images or texted messages through the Internet.
5.2 CHARACTERISTICS

Sense of anonymity: The Internet gives users a sense of anonymity that allows them to accomplish things that they would not otherwise do. Cyber intimidation and cyber harassment are no exceptions.

Continuity of information: The Internet allows someone to spread information very quickly, this on a large scale. When a text or an image is posted on the Internet, many persons are able to download the content and read or view it. The information is sent to many computers and it becomes impossible to control the content.

Lack of empathy: The very nature of the Internet precludes the development of a sense of empathy towards the victims as there is no direct link between the intimidator or aggressor and his victim.

Accessibility: Accessibility to the Internet at all times allows someone to contact the victims anywhere, at any time, and even in their privacy. The effects on the victim are then multiplied, both in space and time.
5.3 HOW IS CYBER INTIMIDATION CONDUCTED?

Who are the intimidators and why are they doing it?

It is important to note that there is no unique profile for the youngster who intimidates. While certain youngsters correspond to the traditional image of an aggressive child who has problems in controlling his impulses, others will be very sensitive social differences and how to use this knowledge to the detriment of their targets.

Targets and intimidators

In cyberspace, there is a close link between the cyber intimidator and the victim. A Canadian study conducted in 2009 reveals one half of the youngsters who admitted having conducted intimidated actions did so because they had been intimidated. It is not unusual that, in an intimidation context, both parties feel that they have been victims.

Witnesses

Witnesses of intimidation have an extremely important role to play in the issue of cyber intimidation, which often occurs away from the view of adults: in fact. They represent the social consensus and, in this way, they become extremely important to put an end, or on the contrary, ratify or condone cyber intimidation.

5.4 FIGHTING AND PREVENTION STRATEGY

Prevention of cyber intimidation and cyber harassment calls for many actors, notably parents, youngsters, school personnel and Internet or cellular phone access providers. There are many prevention Internet sites that are geared to security. In most cases, these sites include a section that targets cyber intimidation.

Advice to parents:

Cyber intimidation involves everyone, and the best response resides in action and prevention.

The basis that will allow minimizing the risks related to the use of the Internet is for parents to establish as soon as possible open exchanges with the child about his on-line activities and determine with him rules that will evolve along with his age.
Whatever the age of your child, discuss the responsible use of the Internet:

- Teach him to never post on the Internet any thing that he would not show to anyone, including you;
- Encourage him to speak to an adult as soon as he feels threatened. Do not take it for granted that your child will do so: only 8% of the youngsters targeted by cyber intimidation stated they have spoken to their parent about it;
- Remain calm: What withholds youngsters from talking to their parents is, foremost, the fear that they will cut him off from the Internet;
- Instill in your child that what occurs on the Internet is everyone’s business: when someone witnesses on-line intimidation, he has no choice but to react. Not to do so would appear to approve cyber intimidation;
- ... And obviously, be your child’s role model in the matter of on-line ethics.

React when your child becomes a victim of cyber intimidation:

- Be attentive to revealing distress signals that indicate possible intimidation: for example, going to school reluctantly or refusal to use a computer;
- If the guilty party attends the same school, meet with school authorities and ask them to help you settle the problem;
- Report any case involving on-line harassment or physical threats to the local police deartment and your Internet service provider (ISP);
- If the intimidation is conducted through a cellular phone, advise your cellular phone provider and, if the situation is ongoing, ask the provider to change your phone number;
- Report on-line harassment and physical threats incidents to the police. Some Canadian Laws may apply to cyber intimidation. For example: the Criminal Code considers as an infraction the fact of harassing a person in such a way if it causes that person to fear for his safety or that of close relatives.

Parents should also teach their children how to react to an on-line intimidator:

- Immediately leave the on-line environment or activity in which the intimidation occurs (chat rooms, games, instant texting, social networks sites, etc.);
- Block E-mails and instant text messages sent by a person who constantly harasses you. Never respond to these messages;
- Save any and all harassment messages and transfer them to his Internet service provider. Most service providers have an appropriate discipline policy applicable to users who use their servers to harass other persons. And their young users are bound to such policy like everyone else;
- Alert an adult AND the police if the intimidation includes physical threats.
What should you do if a youngster is victim of cyber intimidation?

It is not normal to be afraid to go to school, to go at the park, to go out of the house. Here is what may be suggested to a child if his efforts to have the cyber intimidation stop have not been successful:

1. Talk with an adult that the child trusts (a parent, a teacher, a coach, etc.);
2. Discuss the situation with the parents of the involved child or children (intimidated or intimidator as the case may be);
3. Signal these acts to Facebook, You Tube, Twitter or the Internet site on which cyber intimidation has occurred;
4. Contact of the following help organizations:
   - Kids Help Phone
   - Tel-Jeunes
   - Cyber aid
5. Register a complaint with the authorities if there is fear for the safety of the youngster and denounce the cyber intimidator.
   - In Montreal: Register your complaint at your neighbourhood police station.
   - Everywhere else, dial 9-1-1.
6. Save the Web page (forum, chat, E-mail or site) on which you witnessed the cyber intimidation.

Use of Social Medias within the team

To prevent disgraceful and unfortunate events, as much for the youngster who writes the messages than for the one receiving them, it is suggested that the following elements be put in place:

1. Forbid the use of cellular phones and / or cameras in the dressing room;
2. Establish clear directives with regards to comments to be avoided on social network sites, text messages or other platforms:
   - messages involving game results;
   - negative or offensive messages related to opponents, teammates, officials, parents or other interveners involved with the team;
   - share or disclose photos, videos or comments that promote negative or criminal influences, including but not limited to: alcohol abuse, intoxication in public, racist comments, intimidation, sexual exploitation, etc;
   - share or disclose confidential information (injuries and others), strategies, game plans or any other information of a confidential nature.
3. Advise the parents of a player who has failed to abide by this policy and cooperate with them with regards to the assessment of a sanction, as they case may be.
CONCLUSION

In the world of sports and in society at large, cases of abuse are not usual occurrences. However, knowing that children may represent various potential targets that are interesting for abusers of all sorts, the world of hockey is offering tools that will increase vigilance towards potential situations of abuse.

However, knowing that children may represent various potential targets and who are quite interesting for abusers of any kind, the world of hockey is offering tools that will allow being vigilant towards potential situations of abuse.

Parents have the responsibility of their children, but when young athletes are participating in a sports activity, the Association has the duty to oversee the children’s safety.

In order to provide all necessary means to help the child, the families and those surrounding the child, you will find in an annex the list of Youth Protection Directors as well as a series of Internet sites that give access to information and references. You may also get support from CLSC’s, the school system or from professionals in the private sectors (sexologists, social workers and psychologists).
To reach the Health and Social Services Centre in your community, please visit the following Website:
http://wpp01.msss.gouv.qc.ca/appl/M02/M02ListeInstLoc.asp

Community organizations that help victims of sexual assault:

Crime victims assistance centre:
Online contact-free: 1 888 933-9007
Montreal area: 514 933-9007

Support resources for youth
Tel-Jeunes 1 800 263-2266
http://www.teljeunes.com

Information Centre of the CHU Sainte-Justine: Info Family Guide
http://www.chu-sainte-justine.org/Family
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