



Injury Prevention Policy of the
Altona Hockey Club, Inc.

Rationale

The Altona Hockey Club Inc., Sugargum Drive, Altona (or AHC) fully recognises its responsibilities in the prevention and management of injuries. The success of our teams and the general enjoyment of sport for our players can be partially attributed to this Injury Prevention Policy.

The most serious hockey injuries stem from being hit by the ball or stick. The more common include open wounds, fractures, sprains, and strains. Although head, eye and dental injuries are uncommon, they tend to be more severe and with dental, most probably irreversible.

Injuries are not an inevitable part of participation, and much can be done to prevent them. This policy has been developed by the AHC to limit the number of injuries and to document clearly the Club's injury management program to make hockey a safer sport. This policy acknowledges the Victorian Government recommendations for treatment and prevention of sports injuries as described on its Betterhealth website: www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au

The AHC acknowledges its leadership role in the sport of Hockey and aims to be a good role model for affiliated clubs. A focus on Injury Prevention and Management complements the club's desire to create a safer family and community environment. The AHC believes that such an environment and image will be advantageous in attracting new members and positively promoting our sport and the club to the community.

Who is affected by this Policy

The policy applies to all members, administrators, officials, coaches, players, visitors, and volunteers of the Altona Hockey Club Inc. It supersedes all previous injury Prevention Policy versions.

Junior Sport

The AHC's guidelines on the participation of children in sport are based on the Children in Sport Guidelines produced by Sports Medicine Australia (SMA) www.sma.org.au and the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) www.ausport.gov.au . Guidelines are available online.

Alcohol Usage

The AHC strongly discourages the consumption of alcohol before, during and immediately after participation. In the interests of the health, comfort, and safety of all our patrons, the AHC actively encourages a responsible service and consumption of alcohol environment under the AHC Alcohol Management Policy.

Smoke Free

For the health and safety of our participants and patrons designated areas and facilities are smoke free and this is managed via the AHC Smoking Management Policy

Asthma Management

AHC recognises the high incidents of asthma within the community and understands the importance of being equipped to deal with the condition.

Members with asthma are responsible for disclosing their condition to the club during the annual registration process. Additionally, they are responsible for always carrying their medication with them, and maintenance of their own asthma action plan.

Coaches and team managers are made aware of the junior players with asthma via a data disclosed on the member registration form. Where this is known, they encourage these individuals to have up to date asthma management plans and to have appropriate medication readily at hand.

Concussion and Head Injury

Concussion affects athletes at all levels of sport from the part-time recreational athlete through to the full-time professional.

Concussion in Sport Australia brings together contemporary evidence-based information on concussion for athletes, parents, teachers, coaches and medical practitioners. It provides a valuable and trusted resource for the management of sports-related concussion for all Australians, regardless of the sport, location or level of participation. AHC endorses the Concussion in Sport Australia Position Statement. To view the Concussion in Sport website and position statement, [click here](#).

Hockey Australia updated its Concussion Policy and protocols in January 2024, including a comprehensive toolkit to assist in the management of concussion at all levels in hockey. As an Affiliated Club, AHC adopts the Hockey Australia Concussion policy as the basis for the club, teams, and players to manage suspected concussion and subsequent return to play protocols.

The most recent Return to Play Protocols include:

- Anyone with a suspected or actual concussion is not to:
 - **Resume training before 14 days from the date of suspected concussion (if free of symptoms at rest); and**
 - **Return to playing before a minimum of 21 days from the date of the suspected concussion.**
- Unless otherwise cleared in writing by a specialist concussion doctor such as a neurologist, neurosurgeon or sport and exercise physician.
- This position follows extensive benchmarking of national and international best practices, current medical advice and guidance and is in line with the following:
 - 6th Consensus Statement on Concussion in Sport; and
 - AIS Concussion and Brain Health Position Statement 2024.

Below are the links to the full HA Concussion policy and toolkits.

[Concussion Policy](#)

[Concussion Toolkit](#)

[Concussion Management Workflow](#)

[Concussion Poster](#)

AHC recognises that the decisions made by coaches, managers, and officials with respect to cases of suspected concussion will most likely be made without input from a qualified medical professional. The position of the AHC is to adopt a conservative approach to cases of actual or suspected concussion by following the procedures and workflows as described in the HA Concussion policy. All team managers, coaches, officials should read and acquaint themselves with the Concussion Policy in its entirety and follow the protocols as described. AHC strongly recommends that all members review the policy so that they are aware of the expected procedures and protocols.

Any concussion that occurs at a training or match venue must be reported by the club or team representative using the online HA concussion reporting form and sent by email to Hockey Australia at concussion@hockey.org.au and to AHC at enquiries@altonahc.org.au. Team managers (or in their absence, the coach) has the responsibility of ensuring that suspected concussions are reported.

In addition to the HA policy, AHC also adopts the following protocols:

- A player with a suspected concussion should be encouraged and assisted to have a proper medical assessment of their condition, as soon as practical after the incident, and before they return to play/train.
- A player under the age of 18 with a suspected concussion must be accompanied by a responsible adult until they are in the care of a qualified medical professional or under the supervision of their parent/guardian.

- Any adult member with a suspected concussion must not be allowed to drive themselves home from the event. Members should assist in arranging alternate transportation to ensure the member's safety.
- AHC will observe the Return to Play guidelines as described in the policy unless the player provides a medical certificate from a medical professional clearing them to resume full training and to play in matches earlier than the prescribed timeline.

Sports First Aid

First aid and immediate injury management are important in the prevention and treatment of injuries at the time they occur. The Club will, where possible, have suitably qualified first aiders present at all games and training sessions. The Club will encourage that qualifications are up to date at the start of each season. Each team will be assigned a first aid kit containing sufficient and varied material required to treat the most frequent of hockey injuries. The contents list (Appendix A) will be reviewed annually by the AHC Hockey Operations manager and First Aid Coordinator. As material is used, they are replaced via request to the AHC Hockey Operations manager or the First Aid Coordinator. AHC will at all times make available at training and games a fully equipped medical first aid supply. Ice will also be available at the AHC. Emergency telephone numbers of local hospitals, the ambulance service and other key numbers will be clearly visible at each and every phone within the clubhouse and notice boards.

Physical Preparation

Participants of all ages and all skill levels are warmly welcomed to the club and will be instructed in the correct warm up, stretching and cool down methods for hockey and these will be used both at training and at matches. Training in the skills of hockey will be provided at all training sessions and be delivered so as to incorporate information on injury prevention.

Coaches and Officials

All coaches and umpires are encouraged to be accredited to at least the minimum level; yet not be limited to this level. It is the responsibility of the coaches and umpires to ensure their accreditation is kept current and consistent to their desired levels. Coaches, officials and supervisors will conduct themselves as positive role models by following the AHC code of conduct and other relevant club policies.

Sporting Equipment

Correct equipment is fundamental, whatever the sport being played. With the correct use, care and maintenance the AHC will ensure we get the maximum protection and benefit from these resources; always replacing damaged or inappropriate equipment.

AHC Injury Prevention Policy

Only equipment that conforms to the regulations of hockey will be used for training and competition and will be checked bi-annually by the Equipment Coordinator and be maintained within manufacturer's recommendations. AHC promotes the use of protective equipment as required and suitable for hockey and that they conform to recommended safety or industry guidelines. The wearing of mouth guards and shin guards are strongly recommended for protection. Goal keepers are required to be fitted with specific goal keeping equipment consistent with the level of play. The AHC will provide appropriate goal keeping equipment for use by junior players.

Playing Environment and Facilities

As is the case for the workplace, the AHC has a responsibility to ensure the environment in which our sport takes place is as safe as possible. The controlling body of hockey in Victoria inspects the playing surface annually as being suitable for use. Any debris or items will be removed prior to the commencement of any activity. Lighting will be bright and regularly maintained in all areas. Goal post structures will be adequately padded. Change rooms, including shower and toilet facilities will be cleaned regularly. The club's Sun Smart Policy will be strictly adhered too and frequently communicated.

Insurance

The AHC will consider reasonable and appropriate insurance as part of the club's insurance program. Any insurance policy will complement our sport safety plan and will not replace it. The AHC will annually review insurance policies to ensure adequate and appropriate cover is in place.

Policy Review

The policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains relevant to club operations and reflects both community expectations and regulatory requirements.

Dated April 11, 2024

Reviewed: Policy to be reviewed annually

For and on Behalf of its Members.
The Altona Hockey Club Inc. Board

Appendix A – AHC First Aid Kit Contents

Saline
Gauze
Latex gloves
Band-aids
Non-adhesive and adhesive dressing – various sizes
Scissors
Adhesive tape
Bandages – various types
Triangular bandages
Cold Pack
Concussion Recognition tool (pdf quick reference)
(Spare whistle)

**For and on Behalf of its Members.
The Altona Hockey Club Inc. Board**