**Unaccompanied Children**

HMGC wholly support and wish to encourage the development and level of participation of young golfers in the sport.

The majority of other sports have traditional safeguarding factors ‘built-in' to ensure that a child is supervised whilst they are participating. These include having a defined, time-bound, coach-led session usually within a contained space or environment. However, the unique nature of where and how golf is played dictates that none of these measures are routinely in place.

It follows therefore that a balance has to be struck between developing and encouraging young people to play golf against ensuring their safety and wellbeing whilst using the course and practice facilities.

It is acknowledged that there can be a significant variance in the maturity and confidence of young people who are of a similar age, as well as their level of experience, ability and understanding of golf, in particular their familiarity of the environment at HMGC.

Whilst all adults have a duty of care to protect children, parents must be aware that as a matter of routine HMGC does not have a person ‘on duty’ who has the designated responsibility to supervise a child whilst they are using the club facilities. In that regard a child may be required to manage the initial response to any type of injury, incident or emergency situation.

**Risk factors**

In addition to all the common features of playing on a golf course which present inherent risks, the geographical layout of the course at HMGC presents some additional risk factors which are important to consider. These include;

* The driveway which has to be used by all vehicles visiting the clubhouse (including waste collection and commercial delivery wagons) cuts across the 6th and 8th fairways
* The roadway between the 1st green and 2nd tee and the 5th green and the 6th tee
* Several public access pathways run across the course
* The 16th green/17th tee area is very remote from the clubhouse
* Several water and ditch hazards
* The clubhouse may not always be open
* There may not always be a responsible adult present on the course or in the clubhouse

All of the above highlighted complex factors have been taken into consideration when developing the following policy guidelines for allowing unaccompanied children to use the course and practice facilities.

**Playing on the course**

Parents are best placed to know and assess the capability of their own child to respond appropriately to an incident. Parents are encouraged to consider all the highlighted risk factors when deciding whether to allow their child (irrespective of their age) to play on the course whilst unaccompanied.

The policy of HMGC is that in order to play on the course whilst unaccompanied by an adult (person 18 years and above) a child (person under 18 years of age) **must**;

* Have a valid handicap index via WHS (World Handicap System) **AND**
* Be ofYear **8** school age or above

All children below a Year 8 school age must be accompanied at all times by an adult (person 18 years and above)

**Playing on the Practice Facilities**

The practice facilities at HMGC are limited to the;

* Designated nets located at the rear of the club house
* Putting green located in front of the 10th tee
* Putting green at the side of the 1st tee
* Designated practice area located and in front of the greens shed

Parents are best placed to know and assess the capability of their own child to respond appropriately to an incident. Parents are encouraged to consider all the highlighted risk factors when deciding whether to allow their child (irrespective of their age) to use the practice facilities whilst unaccompanied.

In recognition of the closer proximity to the clubhouse of the above facilities the policy of HMGC is that in order to play on the course whilst unaccompanied by an adult (person 18 years and above) a child (person under 18 years of age) **must**;

* Be of Year **7** school age

All children below Year 7 school age must be supervised directly at all times by an adult (person 18 years and above)

**Good Safeguarding Practice Measures**

It is impossible to eliminate all risks. However there are a number of good practice measures that that parents should consider to minimise the risk of harm to their child whilst they are using the course and practice facilities.

These include ensuring that;

* Clear arrangements are in place to ensure how the child is going to arrive/get home from the club safely
* The player is ‘booked on’ the on-line BRS system to play
* When the club professional’s shop is open-the player should inform the member of staff in the shop that they are on the course/practice ground
* The player has possession of a mobile phone and knows how to use it
* The phone number for the clubhouse is stored within the phone so that assistance can be sought if needed (0161 432 2134 press 2 for the professional shop or 4 for the bar)
* The phone numbers of parents or other responsible adults are stored in the phone
* Any medical needs are effectively managed (e.g. possession of asthma inhalers)

**Approved by the Board of Directors: October 2022**