



# Footscray Swimming and Water Polo Clubs Inc.

## Child Safe Policy

Version	Prepared by	Date:	Endorsed by:	Date endorsed:	Next review date:
1	Emma Steele (President)	June 2021	Committee	June 2021	May 2022
2	Emma Steele (President)	May 2022			May 2023

## Introduction

All children who are a part of the Footscray Swimming and Water Clubs Inc (**the Club**) have a right to feel and be safe. The welfare of the children in our care will always be our first priority and the Club has a zero tolerance to child abuse. The Club aims to create a child safe and child friendly environment where children feel safe and have fun and the Club's activities are always carried out in the best interests of the children.

## Purpose

This policy was written to demonstrate the strong commitment of the management, staff and volunteers of the Club to child safety and to provide an outline of the practices the Club has developed to keep everyone safe from any harm, including abuse.

## Policy

This policy was developed by the Club and in collaboration with volunteers, children who use our services and their parents.

This policy applies to all individuals involved in our Club (paid and volunteer) including, but not limited to:

- Administrators
- Coaches
- Officials
- Participants
- Parents
- Spectators.

All of the people to which this policy applies have a role and responsibility in relation to child protection. They must all:

- understand the indicators and risks of child abuse;
- appropriately act on any concerns raised by children; and
- understand and follow all applicable laws and the [Water Polo Victoria Safe Sport Framework](#) in relation to the protection of children and reporting or management of child safety concerns.

### Children's rights to safety and participation

The Club recognises the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child:

- The right to participate and be heard,
- The right to be safe and not harmed by anyone,
- The right to live and grow up healthy,
- The right to express their views and have a say about decisions that affect them, and
- The right to information, such as information about the policies and procedures that affect them.

The Club encourages children to express their views about their safety. We listen to their suggestions, especially on matters that directly affect them. We actively encourage all children who use our services to 'have a say' about things that are important to them.

We teach children about what they can do if they feel unsafe. We listen to and act on any concerns children, or their parents, raise with us.

### **Valuing diversity**

We value diversity and do not tolerate any discriminatory practices. To achieve this we:

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children and their families;
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families;
- welcome children with a disability and their families and act to promote their participation;
- seek appropriate staff and volunteers from diverse cultural backgrounds;
- and
- welcome children and family members who identify as LGBTQIA+.

## **Responsibilities**

The Club Committee has ultimate responsibility for the detection and prevention of child abuse and is responsible for ensuring that appropriate and effective internal control systems are in place. The Committee is also responsible for ensuring that appropriate policies and procedures are in place.

The Club President is responsible for:

- Dealing with and escalating reports of child abuse as appropriate (in conjunction with the Club Grievance Officer);
- Ensuring that all staff, volunteers and members are aware of relevant laws, Club policies and Code of Conduct; and
- Providing support for staff and volunteers in undertaking child safety responsibilities

The Club Grievance Officer is responsible for:

- Acting as the appointed Child Safety Person;
- Responding to any complaints about child safety made by staff, volunteers, parents or children; and
- Escalating serious child safety concerns or complaints to the Police or Department of Families, Fairness and Housing child protection service.

Event and activity organisers are responsible for:

- Promoting child safety at all times;
- Assessing the risk of child abuse within their area of control and eradicate or minimise any risk to the extent possible; and
- Facilitate the reporting of any inappropriate behaviour or suspected abusive activities.

All staff, volunteers, members and parents share the responsibility for the prevention and detection of child abuse, and must:

- Familiarise themselves with the relevant laws, the Code of Conduct, and Club policy and procedures in relation to child protection, and comply with all requirements;
- Report any reasonable belief that a child's safety is at risk to the relevant authorities (such as the police and/or or Department of Families, Fairness and Housing child protection service);
- Report any suspicion that a child's safety may be at risk to their supervisor (or, if their supervisor is involved in the suspicion, to a responsible person in the organisation); and
- Provide an environment that is supportive of all children's emotional and physical safety.

# Procedures

## Recruiting staff and volunteers

The Club takes the following steps to ensure best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of staff and volunteers:

- Interview and conduct referee checks on staff and volunteers;
- Require police checks and/or Working with Children Checks for relevant positions;
- Include our commitment to child safety and our screening, record-keeping and reporting obligations in all advertisements and/or internal position descriptions and in the induction process for new staff or volunteers.

## Setting expectations

New members will receive information about the Club's Child Safe Policy as part of their welcome pack. At the start of club events, seasons and other activities, the Club leader welcoming players and participants will be responsible for setting expectations of behaviours, emphasising the need for everyone to feel safe and valued and reiterating the Club's zero-tolerance position on discrimination, harassment and abuse for members, participants, volunteers and staff.

## Supporting staff and volunteers

The Club seeks to attract and retain the best staff and volunteers. We provide support and supervision so people feel valued, respected and fairly treated. Our Club has adopted the Water Polo Victoria Safe Sport Framework to provide guidance to our staff and volunteers, all of whom receive information and education on their responsibilities under the framework.

The Club has a system to record the currency of Working with Children Checks of all staff and volunteers who have direct contact with children (verbal, written, electronic and face to face communication). Staff and volunteers who are required to have a Working with Children Check will not be allowed to perform their duties unless they have met this requirement.

## Reporting a child safety concern or complaint

Serious concerns or complaints should be directed to the police or the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing child protection service.

The Club grievance officer acts as the appointed as Child Safety Person with the specific responsibility for responding to any complaints made by staff, volunteers, parents or children. That person can be contacted via the Club President or emailing [info@footscraywaterpolo.com](mailto:info@footscraywaterpolo.com).

If someone wishes to make a child safety-related complaint but does not feel comfortable contacting the Club directly, they can contact the grievance officer at Water Polo Victoria via [info@vicwaterpolo.com.au](mailto:info@vicwaterpolo.com.au).

## Risk management

We recognise the importance of a risk management approach to minimising the potential for child abuse or harm to occur and use this to inform our policy, procedures and activity planning. In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our children. To reduce the risk of child abuse occurring, adults to whom this policy applies should avoid direct, unsupervised contact with children. For example, this should be a consideration when:

- using change room facilities;
- using accommodation or overnight stays;
- travel;
- physical contact when coaching or managing children; or
- Online environments.

In addition, Club activities and environments will be risk-assessed to minimise the risk of child to child interactions.

## Definitions

Term	Definition
Child abuse	Child abuse is the mistreatment of a child or young person that has harmed, is harming or is likely to harm or endanger that child or young person's physical or emotional health, development or wellbeing. This includes but is not limited to physical abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, bullying, grooming, sexual abuse and exploitation, neglect and harassment.
Harm	Any detrimental effect of a significant nature to the person or Child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. It is immaterial how the harm is caused. Harm can be caused by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Physical, Psychological or Emotional Abuse or Neglect;</li><li>• Sexual Abuse or Exploitation;</li><li>• a single act, omission or circumstance; and</li><li>• a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances</li></ul>

## Related Documents

[Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment \(Child Safe Standards\) Act 2015 \(Vic\)](#)

[Working with Children Act 2005 \(Vic\)](#)

[Water Polo Victoria Safe Sport Framework](#)

Club Working with Children Register