



Child Safe Policy

Purpose

This policy was written to demonstrate the strong commitment of the executive committee, general committee and volunteers of the Yarra Glen Junior Football & Netball Club (the Club) to child safety and to provide an outline of the policies and practices the Club has developed to keep everyone safe from any harm, including abuse.

Commitment to Child Safety

All children who are a part of 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.

Application of this Policy

This policy was developed by the Club and in collaboration with our volunteers.

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

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

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 in relation to the protection of children and reporting or management of child safety concerns.

Child Abuse

Child abuse can take a broad range of forms including physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional or psychological abuse including via social media and neglect. People to whom this policy applies need to be aware that child abuse can occur whenever there is actual or potential harm to a child, and these are circumstances that the Club is committed to reducing the risk of occurrence.

Children's Rights to Safety and Participation

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.

We have a Child Safety officer who complaints can be made to, and we have executive and general committee members who are aware of and committed to the importance of child safety.

Valuing Diversity

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

- value and promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children and their families including by welcoming Aboriginal players into the Club;
- value and 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 including by holding an annual All Abilities clinic for children with special needs;
- seek appropriate volunteers from diverse cultural backgrounds; and
- implement anti vilification and discrimination education for all our junior teams.

Recruiting volunteers

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

- Interview and conduct referee checks on all coaches
- Require Working with Children Checks for our Executive committee members, coaches, assistant coaches, team managers, trainers and runners.
- Require our coaches and assistant coaches to obtain an AFL Victoria level 1 coaching course
- Require our coaches to sign the Club's Child Safe Code of Conduct

Our commitment to Child Safety and our screening requirements are included in all coaching applications and as part of the induction process for our volunteers.

Supporting our volunteers

The Club seeks to attract and retain the best volunteers. We provide support and supervision so people feel valued, respected and fairly treated. We have also developed a Child Safe Code of Conduct to provide guidance to our volunteers, all of whom are required to sign the Code.

Reporting a child safety concern or complaint

A Child Safety Officer will be appointed by the committee and undertake appropriate training with the specific responsibility for responding to any complaints made by volunteers, parents or children. Our complaints process is outlined in our Child Safe reporting procedures. The child safety officer will liaise with the Club President and/or the OEFN as required in relation to these matters.

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. For example we have adopted the AFL Victoria social media policy.

To reduce the risk of child abuse occurring, adults to whom this policy applies should avoid or minimise direct, unsupervised contact with children. For example, this should be a consideration when:

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

Reviewing this policy

This policy will be reviewed every two years and we undertake to seek views, comments and suggestions from children, parents, carers, and volunteers involved in the Club.



7 Child Safe Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct outlines appropriate standards of behaviour by adults towards children.

The Code of Conduct aims to protect children and reduce any opportunities for abuse or harm to occur. It also helps staff and volunteers by providing them with guidance on how to best support children and how to avoid or better manage difficult situations. This Code of Conduct applies to all people involved in the activities of the Yarra Glen Junior Football & Netball Club (Juniors), including coaches, officials, volunteers and parents.

All coaches and volunteers are responsible for promoting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people by:

- Adhering to our Child Safe Policy, this Code of Conduct and other policies
- Taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- Treating everyone with respect, including listening to and valuing their ideas and opinions
- Welcoming all children and their families and carers and being inclusive
- Respecting cultural, religious and political differences and acting in a culturally sensitive way, particularly when interacting with children who are Aboriginal or otherwise culturally or linguistically diverse and those with a disability
- Modelling appropriate adult behaviour
- Listening to children and responding to them appropriately
- Reporting and acting on any breaches of this Code of Conduct, complaints or concerns appropriately and treat them seriously and with respect.
- Complying with our guidelines on physical contact with children
- Working with children in an open and transparent way – other adults should always know about the work you are doing with children
- Respecting the privacy of children and their families, and only disclosing information to people who have a need to know.

Coaches and volunteers **MUST NOT**:

- Seek to use children in any way to meet the needs of adults
- Ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse
- Use prejudice, oppressive behaviour or language with children
- Discriminate on the basis of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability or sexuality
- Initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or do things of a personal nature that children can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- Develop 'special' relationships with specific children or show favouritism through the provision of gifts or inappropriate attention
- Exchange personal contact details such as phone number, social networking site or email addresses with children, except where necessary for a football related purpose such as availability to play or train
- Have unauthorised contact with children and young people online or by phone.



By observing these standards you acknowledge your responsibility to immediately report any breach of this code to the Yarra Glen Junior Football & Netball Club.

This Code of Conduct will be reviewed bi annually.



8 Child Safety Reporting Procedures

The Yarra Glen Junior Football & Netball Club is committed to thoroughly and quickly responding to any allegations of abuse in order to protect the safety of our players.

The safety and welfare of our players are paramount and are more important than, for example, the reputation of our club and winning games of football.

Initial reporting to volunteer

If a player discloses an allegation to a club volunteer the volunteer shall:

- Actively listen to the child or young person
- Ask open ended questions
- Respect the child or young person may only reveal some details
- show concern and empathy for the child or young person (player);
- listen to what they are saying including by letting them use their own words in their own time,
- Reassure the young person (tell the player) that they did the right thing by telling them;
- Explain that you will need to tell specific people in order to help them and let them know what will happen next;
- inform the Club's Child Safety Officer.

The volunteer must not:

- Speak over or shut down the child or young person
- Ask leading questions
- make promises you cannot keep eg such as promising you won't tell anyone;
- push the (player) child or young person into giving details of the alleged abuse. The role of the volunteer is to listen and not to investigate; and
- indiscreetly discuss the circumstances of the incident with others not directly involved with the player.

Next steps

The Club via it's Child Safety Officer and executive committee will initially consider which steps to take which may include:

- providing appropriate support to the player and their family including counselling;
- commencing an internal investigation;
- reporting to an external authority; and
- obtaining legal advice.

If appropriate the Club should consult the Police or Department of families, fairness and housing (DFFH) regarding how they want the Club to proceed before undertaking any internal investigation.

Such bodies may for example want to speak to the accused or witnesses before the Club does this.



Internal investigation

When an internal investigation is conducted the specific details concerning the incident should be obtained by asking questions such as:

- Can you tell me what happened from the start?
- When and where did the incident occur?
- Did anyone see the incident?
- Who was there?
- What was said?
- Did you make a note of what happened including via text or social media message etc?

All participants in the investigation must be required to maintain confidentiality and should be required to sign a confidentiality agreement as part of this process.

Depending on the circumstances the Club should consider appointing an independent and external investigator who is suitably qualified.

All participants must be afforded procedural fairness. To ensure this, the accused must be made aware of the allegations against them in sufficient detail and must be allowed a reasonable opportunity to respond to them.

The investigator may then seek to interview all relevant witnesses and gather all relevant documents. They should then prepare a witness statement for each participant to record their version of events and sign.

The investigator should then prepare a comprehensive report setting out their findings on the balance of probabilities and their reasoning for the findings. All information collated as part of the investigation should be attached to the investigation report and stored in an appropriate location to ensure confidentiality.

It's very important that the report is kept confidential and not circulated or disseminated.

Reporting obligations

If any person (aged 18 or over) forms a belief on reasonable grounds that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria against a child (under the age of 16 years) by another person (aged 18 or older), that person must make a report to the police as soon as possible unless certain exceptions apply.

Committee members, volunteers or of age players of the Club should discuss their concerns and observations with the Club's Child Safety Officer who can assist the person to make the report to the police as required. The AFLOEOEFN and/or AFL Victoria can also be contacted on a confidential basis as required.

Any person (of any age) that forms a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from child abuse (physical, sexual (including grooming behaviours) emotional, psychological or neglect) may disclose that information to the police or DHSDFH. The Club encourages all persons with concerns to raise this directly with the Club's Child Safety Officer.

Keep in mind:

- you don't have to prove that the abuse has occurred
- a belief is a belief on reasonable grounds if a reasonable person in your position would have formed the belief on those grounds
- grounds for a belief are matters of which you have become aware, and opinions based on those matters
- if you have formed the belief, you are obliged to make the report even if someone in a position of authority over you directs you not to make a report
- you are responsible for reporting your belief – it is not the responsibility of your boss, supervisor, principal or anyone else –



however, if you honestly and reasonably believe all of the grounds for your belief have already been reported to Child Protection by someone else, this is a valid reason for you not to make the same report

- mandatory reporting requirements take precedence over professional codes of practice where confidentiality or client privilege would otherwise apply
- a report made in good faith does not constitute unprofessional conduct or a breach of professional ethics, nor does it subject the person to any liability, or contravene the confidentiality provisions in the legislation governing health and mental health services.

Making a report

- Call Victoria police on 000 for emergencies;
- If not an emergency, call the Victoria Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigation Team on (03) 8690 4056 or DFFH on 1300 664 977 or 131 278 (After hours). Ask for child protection. The Child Protection Intake worker will ask you for certain information including:
 - name age and address of child;
 - the reason for suspecting that the behaviour or injury is a result of abuse;
 - an assessment of the level of danger to the child;
 - a description of the injury or behaviour observed;
 - the current whereabouts of the child;
 - any other information about the family; and
 - any specific cultural details eg English speaking or disability etc.

A report should still be made, even if you don't have all the information listed above. The reporter's identity is protected unless they provide written consent for it to be disclosed or it is required by order of the Court. The reporter and the Child Safety Officer should maintain written records for future reference.

- Reporting Timeframes

Reports and notifications must be made as soon as practicable and no later than before ending that person's shift or session of work.
- Confidentiality and Privacy

Confidentiality and privacy of all concerned (including the alleged perpetrator) should be maintained, except if doing so would compromise the welfare of the child or young person and/or investigation of the allegation.
- The person making the report should:
 - ask that the Club where possible be informed of each step of the procedure; and
 - As that if an interview is to take place at the club the visiting officer is in plain clothes and the time of the interview is specified so that the club can make appropriate arrangements.

If the complainant alleges that a crime has been committed by a committee member, coach, volunteer or contractor, that person will be stood aside immediately while an investigation takes place.

Further matters

Where an allegation has been made the Club will make secure and retain records of the allegation of child abuse and the Club's response to it.

If the child is to be interviewed by the police or DFFH then the Club's child safety officer should offer to be present at the interview to give support.

If a report is made the child safety officer should confidentially inform AFL Victoria and the OEFN so that any records can be amended or updated as is appropriate.



Throughout the process outlined above, the interests of the child and their family should be protected from unnecessary disclosure of information concerning the alleged abuse.

If any club volunteers, coaches players or parents have any queries concerning these procedures they should contact the club's child safety officer or an executive committee member.

These procedures will be reviewed in May 2025.