



Banyule Junior Football Club

Child Safety Policy



1. Introduction

The Banyule Junior Football Club (the Club) believes that playing sport is a great way for children and young people to have fun, develop friendships and learn new skills which support healthy and active lives. We are proud of our community of children, young people, families and volunteers who work together to create a great child and family friendly club which is safe and inclusive. To promote the safety of children, the Victorian Government introduced legislation that requires all sporting organisations that provide sporting services to children to implement Child Safe Standards. The Club is committed to promoting and protecting the safety and wellbeing of all children and has a Child Safety Policy, Child Safety Summary, Child Safe Code of Conduct, Child Safe Recruitment Policy and a Child Safe Incident Reporting Procedure to support this.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to create and support a child safe culture including to: a) ensure that all persons are aware of their responsibilities for child safety, including the procedures for preventing abuse and/or detecting and acting on such abuse when it occurs; b) provide guidance on responding where a person suspects any child abuse within the Club Environment; c) provide a clear statement to everyone associated with the Club regarding the Club's commitment to child safety and preventing and acting on any abuse; and d) provide assurance that any and all allegations of abuse will be investigated.

3. Scope

This Policy applies to all players, committee members, volunteers, coaches, team managers, assistants, employees and parents of players of the Club, or otherwise registered with our Club. Non-registered individuals who otherwise participate in activities with or for the Club are also bound to this policy by virtue of their participation in Club activities. Breaches of this Policy, associated documents or the Code of Conduct may be investigated by the Club and/or Yarra Junior Football League (the League), and may be processed by the Club as it sees fit.

4. Guiding principles

This Policy is based on the following principles:

- a) the Club has zero tolerance for child abuse
- b) the best interests of the child are paramount
- c) protecting children is a shared responsibility
- d) all children have a right to feel safe and be safe when they play football
- e) the Club will consider the opinions of players and use their opinions to develop policies and procedures
- f) the Club is committed to the diversity and cultural safety of all children, including (but not limited to) the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, minors from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, minors with disabilities, and make reasonable efforts to accommodate these matters
- g) everyone covered by the Policy must comply with, and is bound to, the Club's Child Safety Policy, Guidelines and Code of Conduct at all times.

5. Role of the Club's nominated Child Welfare Officer

The Club's Committee of Management (the Committee) is responsible for ensuring that policies are reviewed and updated and that training exists for committee members, volunteers, coaches, team managers, assistants and employees on child safety matters. The Committee is also responsible for identifying and managing risk relating to child safety. The Club's nominated Child Welfare Officer is appointed by the Committee and available to listen, discuss and clarify issues raised by individuals at the club. Players, members, employees, volunteers and committee members can all speak with the Club's nominated Child Welfare Officer if they have questions or concerns in relation to child safety. Should concerns be raised, the Club's nominated Child Welfare Officer will implement the Policy and Guidelines using the Incident Reporting process on behalf of the Club. The Club's nominated Child Welfare Officer is listed on the Club website.

6. Recognising child abuse

Child abuse includes:

- a) any act committed against a child involving a sexual offence or an offence under section 498(2) of the Crimes Act (grooming)
- b) the infliction, physical violence; or serious emotional or psychological harm on a child
- c) serious neglect of a child

For the purposes of this Policy, "Child" (or minor) means a person who participates at the Club under the age of 18 years.

7. Reporting obligations—mandatory and voluntary

Under the Crimes Act, all persons have a legal obligation to inform police as soon as practicable where they have a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria against a child under the age of 16 years by another person of or over the age of 18 years. This legal obligation is subject to a person having a reasonable excuse for not reporting. A person will have a “reasonable excuse” to not report if that person:

- a) fears for the safety of any person (other than the alleged perpetrator of the offence) if they were to disclose the information to police
- b) believes on reasonable grounds that the information has already been disclosed to police and they have no further information.

The Club supports and encourages committee members, employees or volunteers, coaches or team managers to make a report to Victoria Police if they form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection, or they are concerned about the safety, health or wellbeing of a child. Where a report is made to the authorities (Victoria Police or DHHS) we ask the individual making the report to advise the Club through the Club's nominated Child Welfare Officer or through the Committee. If a committee member, employee or volunteer, coach or team manager is uncertain as to whether they should make a report to an external authority in relation to the safety of a child, they may speak to the Club's nominated Child Welfare Officer for guidance and information. The individual can also contact DHHS or Victoria Police for advice. In addition to the mandatory reporting obligations above, any person who believes on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from child abuse, may disclose that information to Victoria Police. The Club encourages all persons to speak with the Club's nominate Child Welfare Officer for guidance or support with addressing such concerns.

8. What are “Reasonable grounds for belief”?

You have “reasonable grounds” to notify when:

- a) a child or young person tells you that he/she has been physically or sexually abused
- b) a child or young person states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (please note, this may relate to someone known to the minor or, the minor may be talking about themselves)
- c) someone else, such as a relative, friend, acquaintance or sibling of the minor, tells you that a child or young person has been abused
- d) your observations of the minor's behaviour or knowledge of children lead you to believe that the child may have been abused; or e) you observe physical signs or indicators of potential abuse (e.g. bruises, cuts etc).

The Club encourages reporting where you hold a concern about the safety of a child or young person.

9. Prevention Risk Management

Child safety is an important part of the Club's overall risk management approach. To this end, the Club monitors its approach to Child Safety, ensuring that appropriate training is conducted for:

- committee members
- coaches, team managers and volunteers
- employees
- sponsors

Information about child safety is available on the Club's website and provided to players, officials, parents/guardians and volunteers. The Club also ensures that all committee members, coaches, team managers, and employees are provided with supervision and support such that they are supported to promote a child-safe environment.

Communication

The Club communicates its commitment and approach to Child Safety, sharing the Child Safety Policy, Guidelines and Code of Conduct on the website and/or through other communication channels such as Team App and email.

Recruitment

The Club incorporates Child Safety into its recruitment of individuals to the Club, including committee members, volunteers and employees, coaches and team managers. The Club:

- a) implements a recruitment process that includes Child Safety requirements for coaches, assistant coaches, team manager positions
- b) ensures coaches, officials and relevant personnel have been provided with and understand the Clubs' Code of Conduct and policies including the Child Safety policy
- c) screens, conducts interviews and reference checks for people coming into positions of responsibility at the Club as required
- d) requires a Working with Children Check (WWCC) for all committee members, ground manager, canteen staff, coaches, assistant coaches, trainers, runners and team managers
- e) includes Child Safety in season start up meeting.

Further steps taken at the Club:

- a) unless unavoidable, no adult will have access to an unaccompanied minor without prior permission from the minor's parent/guardian

- b) provide training on child safety to new coaches, team managers and committee members
- c) communicate the Child Safety Policy and Code of Conduct to stakeholders, requiring and supporting its implementation
- d) provide guidance and rules for appropriate levels of communication between coaches, team managers and players on social media
- e) take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety
- f) value and empower minors to participate in decisions that impact them
- g) foster a culture of openness that supports disclosure of incidents.
- h) ensure minors know who to talk with if they are worried or are feeling unsafe
- i) report allegations of abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities
- j) share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk

10. Responding to an allegation

This Policy and the associated Guidelines will be followed at all times, regardless of the nature of the allegation, or those involved, and the child's best interests and safety will always be paramount. In the case of an allegation being made against a Club official or person undertaking duties on behalf of the Club, the Child Welfare Officer will follow the Child Safety Policy and Guidelines. Withdraw the individual Where an allegation has been made, consideration will be immediately given to withdrawing the alleged person from active duty, which could entail standing down (with pay, where applicable), re-assignment to other duties that do not have direct contact with children, or to work under increased supervision while the matter is being investigated. During the investigation process, it may be necessary for a person to be stood down from their usual duties at the Club or suspended from all activities at the Club until the investigation concludes with a recommended outcome. Investigations In the event of a child disclosing an incident of abuse to someone it is essential that the child is supported and the matter is dealt with sensitively and professionally. Importantly:

- the child will be responded to in a sensitive and professional way and the information they provide will be managed in accordance with this policy and procedure
- the Club will investigate all allegations in accordance with its obligations. In some circumstances, it may be necessary for the Club to conduct an investigation in addition to any investigation conducted by authorities (e.g. the police, DHHS)
- the Child Welfare Officer will conduct the independent investigation or will appoint an appropriate person to do so. Investigations conducted by or on behalf of the Club will be conducted in accordance with procedural fairness to protect the integrity of the investigation and the interests of all the participants involved. The Club will also handle the allegations in a confidential manner to the greatest extent possible
- where authorities such as the DHHS or Victoria Police are involved, the Club will co-operate as required ensuring its investigation does not interfere with investigations by the police
- all people covered by this Child Safety Policy, Guidelines and Code of Conduct must co-operate fully with any investigation by DHHS, Victoria Police or the Club
- investigations will remain confidential noting that from time to time other parties (for example: committee members, employees, volunteers) may need to be consulted in conjunction with the investigation (e.g. to provide witness statements)
- the outcome of any investigation will be determined based on findings of the investigation, but may include withdrawal from active duty, re-assignment to duties with no contact with children, increased supervision, disciplinary action or dismissal. The outcome will also be informed by the outcomes of DHHS or Victoria Police investigations where these are underway

11. Record keeping

All allegations will be reported using the Club's Incident Report form available from the Club's nominated Child Welfare Officer, any person on the Committee or via the Club website. Any person associated with the Club may use this form to make the report or can speak with the Club's nominated Child Welfare Officer or a club official who can assist with the form. The report, and all other associated written information will be securely stored by the Club's nominated Child Welfare Officer or club administrator.

12. Privacy and confidentiality

The Club will collect, use, disclose and hold personal information in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988. There are two guiding principles in respect to a child's privacy:

1. first, the Club will operate on the best interest's principle. All committee members, employees, volunteers and contractors will do what they believe to be in the best interest of the child. This principle supersedes all others
2. second, the Club will respect a child's confidentiality except in situations where it conflicts with the best interest's principle. Those who make reports, and those about whom accusations are being made, are entitled to confidentiality. Where there is suspected abuse or misconduct, committee members, employees or volunteers must not disclose or make use of the information in a manner that breaches confidentiality, other than to report and act consistent with this Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct, and relevant statutory requirements.

13. Further information

Any questions regarding the Club's approach can be directed to the Club's nominated Child Welfare Officer or the Committee. Further information regarding child safety may also be sourced from the DHHS website which provides detail on the Child Safe legislative standards, policy and an overview of the requirements, supports and obligations. At all times, the Child Safe Standards must be observed and acted upon.

14. Reporting

Any person aged 18 or over that 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, must make a report to the police as soon as practicable, unless the exception above applies. Committee members, employees, volunteers, or of-age players of the Club should discuss these observations and concerns with the Club's nominated Child Welfare Officer, who can assist the person to make the report to the police 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, emotional, psychological or neglect), may disclose that information to the police or the Department of Health and Human Services ("DHHS"). The Club encourages all persons with concerns to raise this directly with the Club's nominated Child Welfare Officer.

A person may then decide to make a report to DHHS or the police with the support of the Club's nominated Child Welfare Officer. Where a report is made, the individual must also advise the Club. To make a report, call:

- Victoria police on 000 for emergencies.
- if it is not an emergency, ring the Victoria Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigation Team on 8690 4056
- DHHS on 1300 664 977 or 131278 (AH), asking for Child Protection

Information required when making a report:

- name, age and address of child
- the reason for suspecting that the behaviour or injury is a result of abuse
- an assessment of the immediate danger to the child
- a description of the injury or behaviour observed
- the current whereabouts of the child
- any other information about the family
- any specific cultural details, e.g. English speaking, disability, etc.

Ask the agency that the Club be informed of each step of the procedure. Request that if an interview is to take place at the Club the visiting police officer is in plain clothes and the time of the interview is specified so that appropriate arrangements for a meeting room can be organised. If the complainant alleges that a crime has been committed by a committee member, employee, volunteer or contractor, that person will be stood aside immediately. The Club's nominated Child Welfare Officer should conduct (or appoint another person to conduct) an independent investigation into the allegation to the extent that it will not interfere with investigations by DHHS or the police and will co-operate with the authorities as required. 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. Fulfilling the roles and responsibilities contained in this procedure does not displace or discharge any other obligations that arise if a person reasonably believes that a child is at risk of child abuse.

Where Victoria Police or DHHS are involved, they will determine the nature of their involvement. The Club's nominated Child Welfare Officer will offer to be present at an interview with a child or young person to provide the child with support if the matter proceeds to interview.