

Darebin Women's Sports Club Incorporated

Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy



Purpose

The Darebin Women's Sports Club's (the Club) Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (the Policy) demonstrates our commitment to creating and maintaining a child safe environment where all children and young people are safe and feel safe.

Everyone involved with the Club has obligations to act safely and appropriately towards children and young people. This policy guides our procedures and practices for the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and reporting concerns about child abuse.

Scope

This Policy, and the attached Code of Conduct, applies to all players, committee members, volunteers, coaches, team managers, assistants, employees, Club members and parents of players of the 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 the Club's activities.

Breaches of this Policy or the Code of Conduct may be investigated by the Club and breaches are subject to the policies and procedures of the relevant sporting code peak body.

Statement of commitment to child safety and wellbeing

We promote a safe, inclusive, and friendly environment for all children and young people.

We welcome all children, young people, and their families to the Club.

We have zero tolerance to mistreatment and abuse of children and young people.

We have a Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Code of Conduct all people involved with the Club must abide by.

We encourage all members to model safe behaviours (online and in person) with children and young people.

We encourage all children and young people to 'have a say' at our club.

We are committed to providing environments where our players are safe and feel safe, where their participation is valued, their views respected, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives.

We promote positive relationships between young players and their coaches/team managers and between young players and their teammates. These relationships are based on trust and respect.

We take proactive steps to identify and manage any risk of harm to children in our Club environment.

When child safety concerns are raised or identified, we treat these seriously and respond promptly and thoroughly.

We aim to always improve the experiences children and young people have at the Club and pay particular attention to children and young people who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, are from culturally diverse backgrounds, are living with disability, identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTQI+) and other players experiencing risk or vulnerability.

We are committed to regularly reviewing our child safe practices, and seeking input from our players, families, members and volunteers to inform our ongoing strategies.

Child abuse

Child abuse can take a broad range of forms including physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional or psychological abuse and neglect. People within the scope of this policy 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.

Roles and responsibilities

DWSC Committee

The Club's Committee is responsible for ensuring a strong child safe culture is created and maintained across the club. The Committee will encourage an environment where child safety complaints and concerns are readily raised, and no one is discouraged from reporting an allegation of child abuse to relevant authorities.

The Risk Management Committee is responsible for identifying and managing risk in relation to child safety through maintaining and updating the *Child Safety Risk Register*.

DWSC Child Safeguarding Officer and Child Safety Officers

The Child Safeguarding Officer is a member of the Committee and is a point of contact for child safety concerns or queries, supporting people involved with the Club to make reports and coordinating responses to child safety incidents. The Child Safeguarding Officer will make reports on behalf of the Club to authorities and is responsible for ensuring that adequate records of reports and allegations are maintained.

The Child Safeguarding Officer is responsible for ensuring that regular training and refresher courses are available to committee members, volunteers, coaches, team managers, assistants, employees, Club members and parents of players on child safeguarding.

The Child Safeguarding Officer is responsible for monitoring the *Working with Children's Check Register* and for reviewing and updating the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy at least every two years.

Child Safety Officers will be appointed to each sporting code and be a point of contact for child safety concerns or queries as well as acting on concerns in accordance with the relevant policies of the sporting code. Players, members, employees, volunteers, player families and committee members can all speak with any Child Safety Officer if they have concerns in relation to child abuse.

The Club CSOs will be listed on our Club website and identified to all children and parents at the club.

DWSC coaches, team managers, assistants and volunteers

All Club coaches, team managers and volunteers will be made aware of and required to always follow the Club's Policy and *Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct*.

All Club coaches, team managers, assistants and volunteers will encourage and implement inclusive approaches and are responsible for the boundaries and expectations they set for children and young people, the culture they create and the way in which they respond to concerns raised with them.

All Club coaches, team managers, assistants and volunteers are responsible for raising concerns about child safety issues in accordance with our Child Safety complaints and reporting process.

Child Safety Code of Conduct

Our *Child Safety Code of Conduct* sets the boundaries and expectations for appropriate behaviours between adults and children and young people in the Club environment. It also clarifies behaviours that are not acceptable in our physical and online environments and processes to report inappropriate behaviour.

We ensure that players also know what is acceptable and what is not acceptable so that they can be clear and confident about what to expect from adults in the Club.

Managing risks to child safety and wellbeing

The Club will regularly identify, assess and manage risks to child safety and wellbeing across an online and physical environment.

The Club's *Child Safety Risk Register* is used to identify risks related to child abuse in the Club's online environment such as use of social media and apps used for communication, and physical environment such as facilities, changerooms, clubrooms and grounds, and specify actions in place to manage those risks.

The *Child Safety Risk Register* will also address activity-specific risks such as supervising children and young people at training, games and Club events, creating safe online environments for communicating with players, and travel.

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
- managing online group chats such as Facebook or WhatsApp chats.

The Risk Management Committee is responsible for identifying, updating and monitoring the effectiveness of the risk mitigations actions in the *Child Safety Risk Register* at the commencement of each sport season.

Establishing a culturally safe environment

We are committed to establishing an inclusive and culturally safe Club where the strengths of Aboriginal culture, values and practices are respected.

We will promote cultural safety in our Club, by beginning games with an Acknowledgement of Country, display the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags in the clubrooms, acknowledge important events and days of celebration, linking people involved in the Club with cultural awareness training opportunities, calling out racism and growing our partnership with Fitzroy Stars.

We create opportunities for Aboriginal families and players to have input into the Club's direction and encourage them to raise concerns or ideas for improving cultural safety.

Empowerment

We work to create an inclusive and supportive environment that encourages young players and families to contribute to our child safety approach and understand their rights and their responsibilities.

We will inform players of their rights through communications, newsletters, posters and give them the skills and confidence to recognise unsafe situations with adults or other students and to speak up and act on concerns relating to themselves or their peers.

We ensure our young players know who to talk to if they are worried or feeling unsafe and we encourage them to share concerns with a trusted adult at any time.

Players and families can also access information on how to report concerns at <https://falcons.org.au/safeguarding-children-and-young-people/>

The Media and Communications Committee Member is responsible for updating and distributing communications.

Family engagement

Our families and the Club community have an important role in monitoring and promoting children's safety and wellbeing and helping children to raise any concerns.

We are committed to providing families and the Club community with accessible information about our child safe policies and practices and involving them in our approach to child safety and wellbeing.

We create opportunities for families to have input into the development and review of our child safety policies and practices and encourage them to raise any concerns and ideas for improvement.

Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging

The Club celebrates the rich diversity of our players, families and community and promotes respectful environments that are free from discrimination.

We will ensure that people from a range of different backgrounds feel valued and welcomed and have equal access to opportunities and resources, creating a safer environment.

All our programs and activities of the Club should encourage and support safe and inclusive experiences for all children and young people including those who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, children and young people living with disability, children and young people from culturally diverse backgrounds, and children and young people who identify as LGBTQI+, transgender and/or non-binary.

Suitable staff and volunteers

Recruitment

The Club is pro-active in the child safe recruitment of individuals to the club, including committee members, volunteers, coaches, team managers assistants and employees.

The child safety risks relevant to all roles in the Club are identified in the *Child Safe Risk Register*. At times, the Club will collect and record proof of identify, essential or relevant qualifications, history of work involving children and references addressing suitability for the job and working with children.

- **Advertisements** for roles within the Club that work or interact with Children and Young People will feature the following wording: *'We require all applicants to undergo background checks and screening prior to or during any appointment. The Club's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy can be found at <https://falcons.org.au/safeguarding-children-and-young-people/>.'*
- **Position Descriptions** for roles that work or interact with Children and Young People will include reference to the Club's Commitment Statement to Safeguarding Children and Young People.
- The Head of Sport will **speak directly** with all new people in a role that involves children and young people to **determine suitability and experience** prior to appointment. Questions asked will be: *'Have you worked or volunteered with children or young people previously? What strategies have*

you used to manage a child whose behaviour you found challenging or to comfort a distressed child or young person?

- **Working With Children Checks** (WWCC) will be required for anyone in a role that involves children and young people: Coaches - Assistant Coaches - Team Managers - Child Safety Officer - President, Secretary, and club Committee Members.

A WWCC will be requested at the start of the season or on appointment to the Committee to completed online at <https://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/individuals/applicants/how-to-apply-1> and a copy of the Check, number, expiry date will be recorded in the Club WWCC register.

A person may be exempt from requiring a Working with Children Check where they would otherwise usually have to obtain one. VIT registered teachers and Victoria Police, or Australian Federal Police officers, are not required to hold a WWCC unless suspended or dismissed (or VIT registration is cancelled). The individual must notify their club within seven days. If this occurs, they must also cease any duties that would require a WWCC until they obtain one or their suspension is lifted. The third exemption is for volunteers under the age of 18 themselves.

- **Referee check** at times the Club may ask potential applicants for a referee and ask the referee “*do you have any reason to be concerned about the applicant having contact with a child or young person?*”

The Head of Sport is responsible for child safe recruitment in their area and updating the *Working with Children Check Register*. The Child Safeguarding Officer is responsible for reviewing and maintaining the *Working with Children Check Register*.

Induction

The Club will ensure appropriate briefings, training and education sessions into child safety and wellbeing are available to all new committee members, coaches, team managers, assistants and volunteers closely involved with children and young people.

A Child Safety and Wellbeing briefing will be provided at the start of each season for any new people closely involved in the Club and provide guidance on

- our Club policy and Code of Conduct
- legal obligations (failure to protect, failure to disclose)
- expectations of adults in the Club (child safe supervision, communication)
- abuse signs and indicators
- responding to concerns and complaints
- how to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in our Club environment

All new people recruited will be required to complete an online training module which will address types of abuse, indicators and responding to concerns and confirm completion to childsafety@falcons.org.au

All new people recruited will be expected to read and understand The Policy and Code of Conduct, emailing confirmation copy to childsafety@falcons.org.au

The Child Safeguarding Officer is responsible for monitoring the Club’s *Working with Children Check Register* and ensuring all people have received an appropriate induction.

Child safety knowledge, skills and awareness

Ongoing training and education are essential to ensuring that everyone involved in the Club understand their roles and responsibilities and develop their capacity to effectively address child safety and wellbeing.

Refresher training will be made available annually to committee members, coaches, team managers, assistants and volunteers, parents, players and Club members and will include guidance on:

- our Club policy and Code of Conduct
- legal obligations (failure to protect, failure to disclose)
- expectations of adults in the Club (child safe supervision, communication)
- abuse signs and indicators
- responding to concerns and complaints
- how to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in our Club environment

Other professional learning and training on child safety and wellbeing, for example, training for coaches and Child Safety Officers, will be tailored to specific roles and responsibilities and any identified or emerging needs or issues. Child Safety Officers will be encouraged to attend safeguarding training provided by specific sporting codes.

The Child Safeguarding Officer is responsible for communicating to everyone involved in the Club training and education opportunities available by the Club and circulating opportunities generated by other clubs, sporting peak bodies etc.

Process to report concerns

The Club fosters a culture that encourages committee members, players, volunteers, coaches, team managers, assistants, parents and the Club community to raise concerns and complaints. This makes it more difficult for breaches of the code of conduct, misconduct or abuse to occur and remain hidden.

The Club encourages all persons to speak with any Child Safety Officer or Child Safeguarding Officer for guidance or support with addressing such concerns. If in doubt, ask for assistance.

Any committee members, players, volunteers, coaches, parents and the Club community that makes a report in good faith in accordance with their reporting obligations will be supported by the Club and will not be penalised.

For immediate help for a Child or Young Person

- To report concerns that are life threatening, you should contact Victoria Police: **000**
- To report concerns about the immediate safety of a child outside of normal business hours, you should contact the After-Hours Child Protection Emergency Service on **13 12 78**.
- If a child does not appear to be experiencing abuse but there are significant concerns for their welfare (e.g., lack of food, significant relationship difficulties with their parents), you should contact the Child and Family Information, Referral and Support Teams (Child FIRST): **1800 260 338**

How to make a report to child safety authorities

Any person in Victoria is able to make a report if they believe a child is in need of protection from actual or likely significant harm AND that they have not or are unlikely to be protected by their parents/guardians – you don't need to be a mandatory reporter or wait to inform the Club. Child protection staff are experienced practitioners skilled in receiving reports and discussing concerns about a child with reporters.

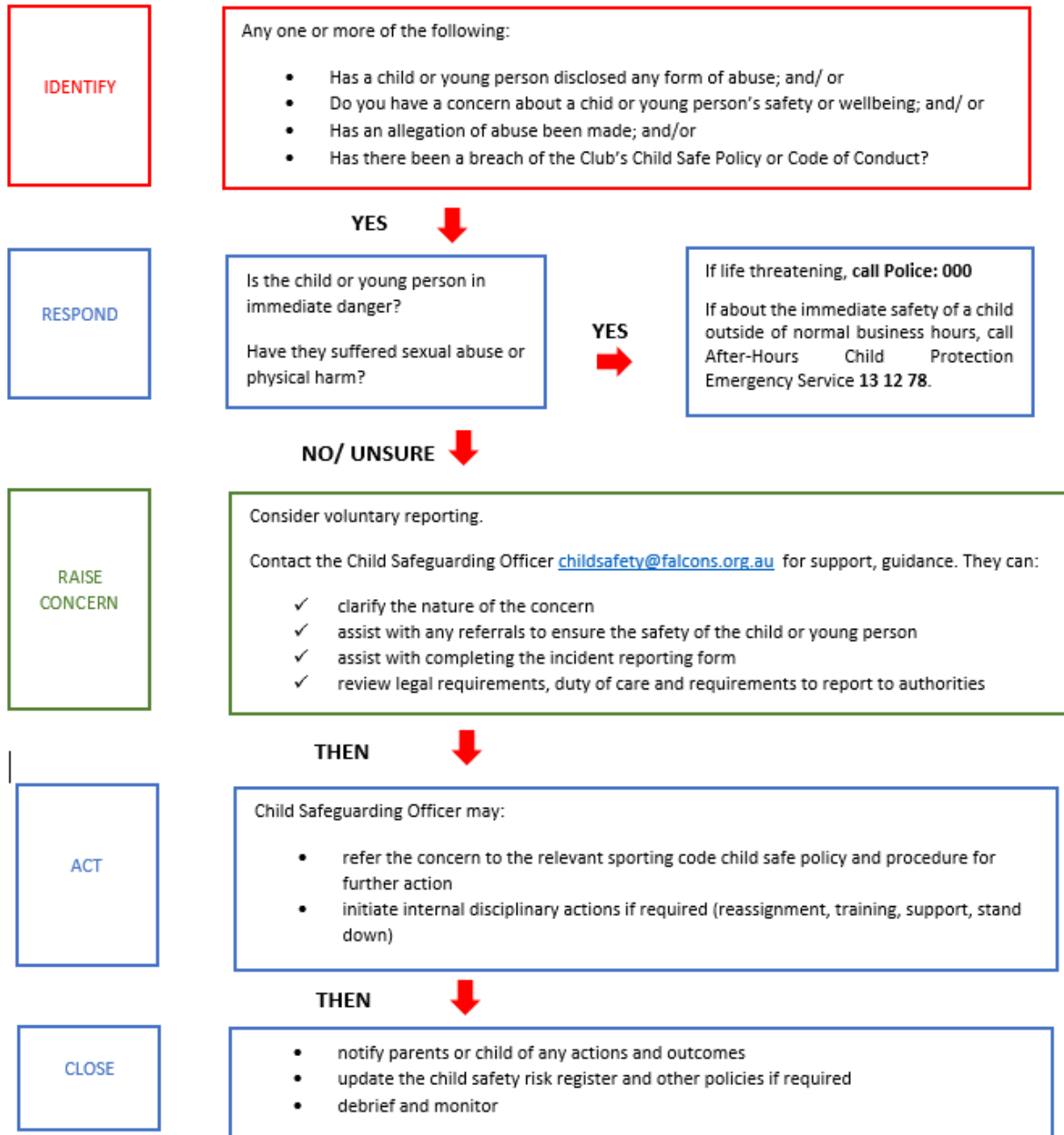
In Victoria, almost all reports are made to child protection by phone.

To make a report, you should contact the child protection intake service covering the local government area (LGA) where the child normally resides during business hours (8.45am -5.00pm), Monday to Friday.

- **North:** 1300 664 977 |
- **South:** 1300 655 795 |

- **East:** 1300 360 391 |
- **West - metropolitan:** 1300 664 977 |
- **West- rural and regional:** 1800 075 599

Child Safety Reporting Process



Reporting obligations

There are both mandatory and voluntary reporting obligations for child abuse incidents. Below is a basic guide to these obligations – these should be reviewed should any incident arise to ensure your legal obligations are met.

Failure to protect offence

A person in authority in an organisation must take reasonable steps to reduce or remove a known substantial risk that an adult associated with their organisation will commit a sexual offence against a child.

The offence requires a person in authority to act if they know that a person associated with their organisation poses a substantial risk to a relevant child.

Legislation	Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)	Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)	
Reporting obligation	Mandatory Reporting of Child Sexual Abuse	Mandatory	Voluntary
Who is obligated?	In Victoria, ALL adults who have a reasonable belief that child sexual abuse of a child under 16 years, by an adult, has occurred or is likely to occur MUST report that belief to police. Failure to disclose the information may be a criminal offence unless you have a 'reasonable excuse' or have an 'exemption' from doing so.	Registered medical practitioners, nurses, midwives; Teachers and principals; Police	<u>Any person in Victoria</u> is able to make a report if they believe a child is in need of protection from actual or likely significant harm AND that they have not or are unlikely to be protected by their parents/guardians
When must a report be made?	A mandated reporter must make a report if they form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria against a child by another person of or over the age of 18 years. (NB: exceptions may apply)	A mandated reporter must make a report if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child needs protection from physical injury or sexual abuse. • The parents cannot or will not protect the child; AND • The belief is formed in the course of practising their position of employment 	Any time a person in Victoria has concerns for a child's safety and wellbeing
Who counts as a child in this ruling?	A person under 16 years	A person under 17 years	A person under 17 years
Who must the report be made to?	Police	Department of Health and Human Services	Department of Health and Human Services or Police

Responding to an allegation

If an allegation is made against a committee member, employee, player, volunteer, coach or team manager the Child Safeguarding Officer will follow the Club's reporting procedure and that of the relevant sporting code and take all steps to ensure that safety of the child and other children is paramount, and their cultural safety is considered.

Communications

The Club ensures that the community are aware of the Policy and Code of Conduct, what is expected of them and the role they play in keeping children and young people safe.

The Club communicates our child safety strategies to our sporting community through a number of channels:

- ensuring the Club's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct are available on our website
- displaying child safety posters around the Club
- updates in our Club newsletter
- child safety is a standing agenda item at every second Board meeting

The Policy will be made available to the public on the Club website.

The Media and Communications Committee Member is responsible for updating and distributing communications.

Privacy and information sharing

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

- a) 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.
- b) 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 Policy and Code of Conduct, and relevant statutory requirements.

Records management

All reports of alleged abuse or harm, or risk must be recorded and securely stored by the Child Safeguarding Officer. Places, times, dates, names of people, observable behaviours or evidence of harm are to be recorded using the *Incident Reporting Form*.

Confidentiality and privacy for children and families is in accordance with legislation.

Review of child safety practices

The Club will review and improve our policy every 2 years or after any significant child safety incident and analyse any complaints, concerns, and safety incidents to improve policy and practice.

Related policies and procedures

This Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy is to be read in conjunction with our:

- DWSC Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct
- DWSC Code of Conduct
- DWSC Gender Diversity Policy
- DWSC Racial and Religious Tolerance Policy

The committee will move a motion and endorse at the AGM each year the child safety policies of relevant sporting leagues and associations including NFNL, Football Australia, Cricket Australia.

Policy status and review

The Child Safeguarding Officer is responsible for reviewing and updating the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy at least every two years. The review will include input from players, members, and families.

Approval

Created date	13 July 2022
Consultation	Club parents and Club players
Endorsed by	DWSC Board
Endorsed on	September 2022
Next review date	30 June 2023