



Waverley Basketball Club

Child Safety Policy

Purpose

This document sets out how the Waverley Basketball Club ("the Club") recognises the importance of child safety and how we work to ensure our Club creates and maintains an environment where all children are safe.

Scope of this policy

This policy guides how all our staff and volunteers behave with children in our organisation. The policy applies to all people associated with the Waverley Basketball Club including committee members, management, coaches, team managers, other volunteers, parents of players and players themselves.

The aim of the policy is to promote good practice in child safety and provide children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of the Club. The policy also aims to allow staff and volunteers to make informed and confident decisions and responses to specific child safety issues.

The words 'child' and 'children' in this policy refer to children and young people up to the age of 18 years. This definition is consistent with the Creating Safe Environments for Children – Organisations, Employees and Volunteers National Framework, the Commission for Children and Young People Act, the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 and the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005. Not utilising the term 'young people' is not intended to diminish any emphasis on, or acknowledgement of, the safety risks to older children or teenagers.

Child Safety in Victoria

The [Victorian Child Safe Standards](#), introduced in 2016, aim to protect children from abuse including physical violence, sexual offences, serious emotional or psychological abuse and serious neglect. The child safe standards require organisations that provide services to children to have a child safe policy and other protective strategies and practices. All child based organisations need to work to be compliant with the standards by 1 January 2017.

To create and maintain a child safe organisation, the Club must have:

Standard 1: Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements.

Standard 2: A child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety.

Standard 3: A code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children.

Standard 4: Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel.

Standard 5: Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse.

Standard 6: Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse.

Standard 7: Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children.

In complying with the child safe standards child services organisations such as the Club must include the following principles as part of our response to each standard:

- **promoting the cultural safety of Aboriginal children**
- **promoting the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds**
- **promoting the safety of children with a disability.**

Introduction

Everyone who participates in our Club's activities is entitled to do so in an enjoyable and safe environment. The Club has a moral and legal obligation to ensure that, when given responsibility for children and young people, coaches, officials, volunteers, staff members and parents provide them with the highest possible standard of care.

The Club is committed to devising and implementing policies so that everyone in our sport accepts their responsibilities to safeguard children from harm and abuse. This means to follow policies and procedures to protect children and report any concerns about their safety and/or welfare to appropriate authorities.

Child Abuse Definitions

This policy seeks to ensure children in our Club are safe and free from any form of Child Abuse. There are several types of Child Abuse, following are definitions of Forms of Child Abuse:

- **Physical abuse** - Occurs when a person purposefully injures or threatens to injure a child. The abuse can take the form of slapping, punching, shaking, kicking, burning, shoving or grabbing. The injury may take the form of bruises, cuts, burns or fractures. This does not mean reasonable discipline, though it may result from excessive or inappropriate discipline.
- **Emotional abuse** - Occurs when a child is repeatedly rejected or frightened by threats. The abuse can involve name calling, being put down or continual coldness from a parent or caregiver to the extent where the behaviour of the child is disturbed or their emotional development is at serious risk of being impaired.
- **Sexual abuse** - Occurs when a child is used by an adult, another child or adolescent for his or her own sexual stimulation or gratification. These can be contact or non-contact acts, including grooming by perpetrators, inappropriate touching, penetrative abuse, and exposure to pornography and accessing child pornography.
- **Neglect** – Occurs when there is a failure to provide the child with the basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing, shelter, supervision, medical attention or care to the extent that the health safety, or development of the child is significantly impaired or placed at risk.
- **Family Violence** – Occurs when children witness or experience the chronic domination, coercion, intimidation and victimisation of one person by another by physical, sexual or emotional means within a domestic relationship.
- **Grooming** – Occurs when communication or conduct is linked to the intention of facilitating the involvement of a child less than 16 years of age in sexual behaviour with an adult. Indicators include but are not limited to:
 - Developing special relationships with, favouring or giving gifts to a child
 - Inappropriate interactions with children either in person or via forms of media and electronic devices
 - Asking a child to keep a secret of any aspect of their relationship
 - Testing of or ignoring professional boundaries or rules

We all have a responsibility to protect the children in our community and our Club. If you have a reasonable belief that child is at risk of abuse or is being abused, please refer the section about [Reporting allegations, concerns and complaints](#) in this Policy.

Our Commitment to Child Safety

1) Club Culture and Leadership

The Club and its Leaders are building and maintaining a child safe environment and culture. Our Club culture needs to provide children with the best possible experience and opportunities. In Basketball and at this Club, everyone must operate within our accepted ethical frameworks, these include our Code of Conduct, Member Protection Declaration and this Child Safety Policy.

It is not always easy to distinguish poor practice from abuse. It is not the responsibility of anyone working or volunteering for the Club in a paid or unpaid capacity to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility for everyone to act on any reasonable concerns through contact with the appropriate personnel and authorities so that those authorities can then make inquiries and undertake investigations; and take necessary action to protect the child.

This applies to disclosures, allegations, concerns and suspicions of abuse occurring within our organisation's activities; and to disclosures, allegations, concerns and suspicions of abuse that personnel may become aware of that is taking place elsewhere.

Child Welfare and Safety Officer

The Club has appointed a Child Welfare and Safety Officer to oversee matters concerning child safety and abuse. We expect our members, volunteers and staff to discuss any concerns that they may have about the welfare or safety of a child IMMEDIATELY with the Child Welfare and Safety Officer. The Child Welfare and Safety Officer will ensure that the concern and/or incident is reported and remains confidential and that the identity of the person reporting the concern or incident is not revealed unless required by the law.

The Child Welfare and Safety Officer is required to report all the incidents noted by him/her to both the Club President and the Club. The Child Welfare and Safety Officer in consultation with the Club President and the Club will then ascertain whether or not the alleged person/s involved in the incident should continue in their role in the organisation or an investigation should take place, and act accordingly. If at any time an adult believes they have a reasonable concern they may report their concerns directly to the Victoria Police and/or the Victorian Child Protection Agency.

The Child Welfare and Safety Officer, the Club President, Vice President and the Committee will work to ensure all children, families, staff and volunteers know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.

We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place (see information about [failure to disclose](#)). If an adult has a reasonable belief that an incident has occurred, then they must report the incident.

2) Child Safety Policy Statement

At the Club, we want children to be safe, happy and empowered and we want to work in partnership with parents and children to create a child safe environment. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers. At the Club, we:

- are committed to child safety and the safety and welfare of every child is paramount
- are committed to the participation and empowerment of all children
- have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures
- have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously
- are committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks
- have robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers and we ensure all employees and volunteers who work with children are screened using a Working with children check

- are committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks. and are provided with guidance and/or training in good Child Safety practice and procedures
- will take all reports of suspicions and allegations of poor practice or abuse seriously and responded swiftly and appropriately
- take all reasonable steps to protect children from harm, discrimination and degrading treatment and to respect their rights, wishes and feelings
- ensure all children, whatever their age, culture, ability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief, and/or sexual identity will be able to participate in basketball in a fun and safe environment
- have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

Specific Child Safe Policies and Practices

The Club has both a moral and legal duty of care to ensure a child safe environment is maintained at all times. To do this the Club has developed policies and practices that demonstrate our commitment to keeping children in our Club safe.

General Policies

In acknowledging and complying with this Child Safe policy, all Club Management, Staff and Volunteers:

- are prohibited under any circumstance any physical or sexual contact with children, this includes but is not limited to massaging, pinching, punching, pushing, sitting on laps and any form of assault or any other inappropriate touching, as determined by the child
- will not use any physical force unless it is to safeguard against immediate physical danger (for example: separating players engaged in a fight is acceptable)
- are prohibited under any circumstance from verbally or psychologically abusing or denigrating children publicly or privately or from attempts to control or manipulate children through psychological means
- will not forbid children from sharing conversations or information with parents, other staff or volunteers, nor instruct children to “keep secrets” from their parents or carers
- will not ever display any attributes of Grooming as outlined in this policy
- will not be alone with any child (excluding one’s own child) in any secluded area or room, that they cannot be seen or observed by another adult staff member or volunteer
- will not display, distribute or share any demeaning, suggestive, objectionable or pornographic material
- will not indirectly or explicitly invite children to engage in inappropriate, suggestive or sexual activities which may or may not include a promise to reward for complying, or a threat of reprisal for not complying
- will refrain from any sexual attention towards others in the form of remarks, jokes or innuendos about a person’s body or clothing etc., including threats of such behaviour
- will comply with this policy at all times and ensure all allegations, concerns or complaints relating to child abuse or Child Safety are referred to the correct internal and external authority immediately.

Physical Contact

Physical contact with child may be permitted for wellbeing or medical reasons only in a manner which is consistent with the above policy and should only be carried out in a public place.

If comforting a distressed child, the use of a side hug instead of front body embrace is allowed. When teaching, or coaching a child in a basketball technique or method please use another adult to demonstrate the technique and refrain from otherwise touching the child. If a child initiates physical contact it is up to the Adult to ensure it is appropriate and take measures to ensure the child understands the limits of physical contact.

Transporting Children

The Club acknowledges that there may be certain circumstances whereby a child may need to travel alone in a car with a staff member or volunteer. Whilst the Club does not encourage this practice, we are cognisant that as a community this may occur. In these circumstances, staff or volunteers must email or text the child's parent/s and obtain their permission in writing prior to the transportation taking place. Where this is a regular occurrence, for example, a ride to training, the driver must ensure they have written permission from the parents or carers acknowledging the ongoing arrangement.

Where one-to-one travel is undertaken, the child must be seated in the back seat of the car and fitted with a seat belt.

Change Room Arrangements

Staff and volunteers may be required to supervise children in change rooms. This must meet the requirement with a child's right to privacy. To ensure this staff and volunteers:

- provide the level of supervision required for preventing abuse by members of the public, adult service users, peer service users, or general misbehaviour, while also respecting a child's privacy
- must avoid one-to-one situations with a child in a change room area
- are not permitted to use the change room area to undress or change, while children are present
- must undertake same gender supervisor. Female staff are not to enter male change rooms and male staff are not to enter female change rooms for any reason.

Giving Gifts

Giving of gifts by staff or volunteers to a child is subject to the gift being given as a reward or prize in a public manner whereby there is no secrecy about the gift and why it is being awarded.

Use, possession or supply of alcohol or drugs

Staff and volunteers must not use, possess or be under the influence of an illicit drug or alcohol or supply alcohol or drugs (including tobacco) to children participating in our Club.

Child Supervision

Staff and volunteers are responsible for supervising children at Club and Club games, training, programs and events, to ensure those participating are in a safe environment and are protected from external threats and/or intruders and are supervised at all times. Children are expected behave appropriately toward one another, for example, no bullying or harassing behaviour.

Staff, volunteers and parents must not leave a child unsupervised outside of any stadium where training or a game is about to commence, is underway or has just been completed.

Appropriate language

Language and/or tone of voice used in the presence of children should provide clear direction, boost their confidence, encourage and/or affirm and not be harmful in any way. Adults should avoid language that is discriminatory, racist or sexist, derogatory, belittling or negative or intended to threaten, psychologically abuse or frighten the child.

Electronic Communication

Use of electronic media and communication must comply with this policy, in addition:

- Staff and volunteers should not initiate social media contact with children nor initiate children becoming their social media 'friend'. If a child requests to friend or follow any adult on social media the parent's permission must be granted. Adults should never use social media private messaging when communicating with children and should act consistently with this policy at all times.
- Under extenuating circumstances, for non-Club information, permission for electronic communication with children may be obtained from the Club President.
- Formal electronic communication to parents and children must be sent from Club email or mobile phone accounts. Personal email accounts should not be used by staff and volunteers to correspond one on one with children.

- Text messages must only be sent to children as a matter of urgency and a copy of the text sent to and received from a child should be retained on the staff members or volunteers phone and advised to their immediate Supervisor or Committee member.

Overnight Stays/Camps

Overnight stays or camps may occur from time to time. All overnight arrangements are only made with the authorisation of the Club President and the parents/guardians of the children(s) involved.

Children's accommodation must be safe and secure at all times. Staff accommodation should be in close proximity to children accommodation. If medical or emotional circumstances warrant separate sleeping arrangements, two staff members or two children must always be present. Under no circumstances will adult staff and volunteers sleep in the same bed as a child or young person, or share a room on their own with a child or young person.

Practices and behaviour by staff and volunteers during overnight stays must be consistent with this Policy, practices and behaviour expected during delivery of all Club programs and events at other times. Standards of conduct that must be met by staff and volunteers during an overnight stay include:

- Providing children with privacy when bathing and dressing.
- Observing appropriate personal standards when children are present. Under no circumstances should children be exposed to adult nudity or any state of undress.
- Not leaving children under the supervision or protection of unauthorised persons such as maintenance staff, stadium staff or friends.
- The right of children to contact their parents, or another trusted adult, if they feel unsafe, uncomfortable or distressed at any time during their time away.
- Ensuring children are not exposed to age inappropriate material of any kind including movies, television, the internet or magazines.

3) Codes of Conduct

To provide children with the best possible experience and opportunities in basketball everyone must operate within an accepted ethical framework such as our Codes of Conduct.

The Club will ensure that all adults are aware of and adhere to the Club's Codes of Conduct that specify standards of conduct when dealing and interacting with children, particularly those in the Club's care. The Club will also implement a code of conduct to address appropriate behaviour between children.

All staff and volunteers, as well as children and their families, are given the opportunity to contribute to the development or changes to the Codes of Conduct.

4) Recruitment, Screening, Training and Supervision

Recruitment

Our Club understands that when recruiting any staff and volunteers, we have ethical as well as legislative obligations.

We actively encourage applications from Aboriginal peoples, people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with a disability.

To ensure stringent checking of volunteers and (if applicable) employees, the Club undertakes the following:

- Approval of appointments to designated roles at a properly constituted meeting of the Committee; and
- Requiring the appointees to any designated role to provide the Club with a current Working with Children Check.

The Club ensures that all reasonable steps are taken to engage the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children. This is achieved via the measures referred to above. Such measures help us minimise the likelihood of engaging (or retaining) people who are unsuitable to work with children.

As required by the Basketball Victoria Member Protection By-Laws, the screening process for people in our Club who work, volunteer, coach, supervise or have regular contact with people under the age of 18 years are required to hold a Victorian Working with Children Check that is linked to our Club; and to provide evidence of this Check to the Club. As part of our maintenance of this screening our Club will:

- a. Identify positions that involve working, volunteering, coaching, supervising or other regular contact with people under the age of 18 years.
- b. Ensure the persons so identified have a valid Working with Children Check (WWCC) issued by the Victorian government. The Club recognises two (2) exceptions to the Working with Children Check - police officers and teachers, who are screened and monitored through their professional accreditation and are thereby exempt from the need for a Victorian WWCC.
- c. In conjunction with our Child Welfare and Safety Officer, the Club President and committee will then make an assessment as to whether the person may be unsuitable to work with people under the age of 18 years. If unsatisfied we will not appoint them to the role/position.

Obtaining and recording a Victorian Working with Children Check

[Victorian Working with Children Check](#) must be obtained and maintained by every committee member, and all adult coaches, assistant coaches, team managers or trainers and any other volunteers that participate in basketball teams that include children. If you are currently performing one of these roles on a paid or voluntary basis you must immediately obtain a valid working with children check. If you receive gain or profit from your role you must have an "Employee" WWCC and you must pay the government fee to obtain it. Volunteer WWCC are free.

Please forward a copy of all existing and new WWCC to the Child Welfare and Safety Officer and Club Manager for our records.

Training and education

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone in our organisation understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility. The Club will continue to develop specific policies, procedures and training that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve the commitments set out in the Child Safe standards.

Our organisational culture aims for all staff and volunteers (in addition to parents/carers and children) to feel confident and safe in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train our staff and volunteers to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse. In addition to pre-selection checks, the safeguarding process includes training after recruitment to help staff and volunteers to:

- Work safely and effectively with children
- Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice and/or abuse
- Respond to concerns expressed by a child in a supportive and safe way
- Analyse their own practice against what is deemed good practice, and to ensure their practice is likely to protect them from false allegations

Induction

All employees and volunteers will receive induction during which:

- The job requirements and responsibilities will be clarified;
- They will be provided with a copy of the Club's Codes of Conduct and Child Safety Policy; and
- Child Safety Policy will be explained and training needs will be identified e.g. basic child safety awareness.

Staff and Volunteer Supervision

We support our staff and volunteers through ongoing supervision to develop their skills to protect children from abuse. New employees and volunteers will be regularly engaged in supervision to ensure they understand our Club's commitment to child safety and know that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse. Staff and volunteers' will be held accountable for their approach to their role and their behaviour towards children to ensure it is safe and appropriate at all times. This will occur through regular communication with the Club and observations by its members.

Any inappropriate behaviour that is observed or identified will be reported through the Child Safety and Welfare Officer and any other appropriate channels which may include the Department of Health and Human Services and/or Victoria Police, depending on the type of abuse or behaviour, severity and urgency of the matter. Please refer to this organisation's code of conduct to understand appropriate behaviour further.

5) Allegations, Concerns and Complaints

The Club takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. We have staff and volunteers who are trained to deal appropriately with allegations.

We take our legal responsibilities seriously and we abide by all existing and new laws relating to child safety in Victoria and Australia. The following sets out the Victorian laws that apply to every adult person who is a staff member or volunteer of the Club and include:

- **Failure to disclose:** Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to the police.
- **Failure to protect:** People of authority in our organisation will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.
- **Mandatory reporters:** In Australia doctors, nurses, midwives, teachers including early childhood teachers, principals and police are all mandatory reporters. They must report to [child protection](#) if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse. Any personnel who are mandatory reporters whether at work or not, must comply with their duties.

Making a report

We work to ensure all children, families, staff and volunteers know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim of abuse, or if they notice inappropriate behaviour. We all have a responsibility to report sexual; abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident has taken place (see information about failure to disclose above).

If an adult has a **reasonable belief** that an incident has occurred, then they must report the incident. Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be:

- a child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves)

- behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed¹
- someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it
- observing suspicious behaviour.

Our Child Welfare and Safety Officer is trained to deal appropriately with allegations, disclosures, concerns or observations relating to child safety and child abuse.

If you have received an allegation or disclosure, have concerns or a complaint about child safety or any type of abuse you should direct your calls the Club President and/or the Club's Child Welfare and Safety Officer.

Reporting details

When providing a report of any abuse type, please provide as many details as possible. These facts should be collected **without** any interrogation of the child. Including but not limited to:

- The child's name, approximate age and team
 - Date, time and location of alleged abuse (if known)
 - The suspected perpetrators name (if known)
 - Type of abuse that is suspected to have occurred (refer to [abuse types](#) in this policy)
 - Any other issues that are relevant to the case (eg. history, physical marks, child's behaviour)
 - Where appropriate, take photos of any physical evidence such as marks or bruises shown to you by the child.
 - Your view on the immediate risks or otherwise of the child
- Notes made by the child or the discloser
- Belief that you hold and why

The child's and/or the suspected perpetrator's name is a minimum requirement. Where any of these other facts are unavailable, you must still report the matter to the Child Welfare and Safety Officer.

If you want to make a report about a child that is in immediate risk or danger of an offence, please call Triple Zero (000).

All other reports can be made by contacting your local police station or the Victorian Child Protection Agency on 13 12 78 or Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000.

Victimisation

Disciplinary measures can be imposed on anyone who harasses or victimises another person for making a complaint or supporting another person's complaint.

Improper and Vexatious Complaints

If at any point in the complaint handling process, the Club considers that the person(s) making the complaint has knowingly made an untrue or vexatious complaint, and the complaint is malicious, frivolous or intended to cause distress to the person who is the subject of the complaint, disciplinary action may also be taken against the person(s) who made the complaint.

6) Identify and Analyse Risk of Harm

All participants in the Club are encouraged to raise issues that they feel create risks for children in our Club to the Child Welfare and Safety Officer.

¹ For example of behaviour, please see [An Overview of the Victorian child safe standards](#)

7) Children Empowerment and Right to Safety and Participation

The Club promotes the involvement and participation of children and young people in developing and maintaining child safe environments. We support the rights of the child and will act without hesitation to ensure a child safe environment is maintained at all times.

We involve children when making decisions and encourage children to speak up if they feel unsafe. We listen to their views and respect what they have to say. We promote feedback, diversity and tolerance in our Club, and people from all walks of life, abilities and cultural backgrounds are welcome. In particular, we will:

- develop ways to empower children who are vital and active participants in our organisation. We want to involve them when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them.
- develop a child friendly reporting process that records all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using an incident reporting form or method that is legislatively compliant.

Fair and Just Procedures for Personnel

The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern. We are also fair and just with all Club personnel. The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent, and based on evidence. We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns, including investigation and outcomes and all records will be securely stored.

If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, we provide updates to relevant children and families on progress and any actions we as an organisation take.

Privacy

We will meet all our obligations relating to the Commonwealth Privacy Act and Information Privacy Principles; and the Victorian Privacy and Data Protection Act. All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be staff, volunteers, officials, parents or children, unless there is a risk to someone's safety.

We have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected and used in a reasonable and legal way. We will ensure we have systems where all records are securely stored and safeguards and practices are in place to ensure any personal meet their obligation and their information is protected.

Regular Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years and/or following a significant incident if one occurs. We will ensure that families and children have the opportunity to contribute to any reviews undertaken by the Club.

Refer to the Club website for further information or contact the Child Welfare and Safety Officer at wwc@waverleybasketball.net