



Purpose

This policy was written to demonstrate the strong commitment of the management, staff and volunteers of the St Bernard's Old Collegians Football Club (Senior & Junior), referred to as the Club, and the St Bernard's Old Collegians Junior Football Club, referred to as the Junior Club if specific only to the Junior section, to child safety and to provide an outline of the policies and practices the Club has developed to keep everyone safe from harm, including abuse.

Child Safety Mission Statement

The Club is committed to promoting and protecting the safety and well-being of children and young people in our care. We seek to promote and protect the rights of all children in our care and prevent abuse from occurring by fostering a child safe culture. The welfare of the children in our care will always be our first priority and the Club has a zero tolerance to child abuse.

Application of this Policy

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

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

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

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

- Understand the indicators and risks of child abuse;
- Appropriately act on any concerns raised by children; and
- Understand and follow all applicable laws 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 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.



Valuing Diversity

We value diversity and do not tolerate any discriminatory practices. To achieve this we:
Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children and their families;
Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families;
Welcome children with a disability and their families and act to promote their participation; and
Seek appropriate staff from diverse cultural backgrounds

Recruiting staff and volunteers

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

Interview and conduct referee checks on all staff and volunteers

Require police checks and Working with Children Checks for relevant positions

Our commitment to Child Safety and our screening requirements are included in all advertisements and as part of the induction process for new staff or volunteers.

Supporting staff and volunteer

The Club seeks to attract and retain the best staff and volunteers. We provide support and supervision so people feel valued, respected and fairly treated. We have developed a Child Safety Code of Conduct to provide guidance to our staff and volunteers, all of whom receive training on the requirements of the Code.

Reporting a child safety concern or complaint

The Club has appointed Person A as Child Safety Officer for the Junior section (under 10, under 12, under 14 & Under 16), and person B for the Senior section (Under 19, Under 23, Thirds, Reserves and Seniors) with the specific responsibility of responding to any complaints made by staff, volunteers, parents or children. That person can be contacted by email XXXXX –or mobile YYYY. Our complaints process is outlined in our Child Safety Code of Conduct, and also provided to all Team Managers & Coaches.

Risk Management

We encourage the importance of a risk management approach to minimising the potential for child abuse or harm to occur and use this to inform our policy, procedures and activity planning. In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our children. To reduce the risk of child abuse occurring, adults to whom this policy applied 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; or
Physical contact when coaching or managing children

At the Club, we have created a WWCC register, all of our Committee Members, Coaches & Volunteers are to lodge their details with PERSON Ci.



Evaluation & Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, prior to the commencement of each season, or as required by changes in legislation.

References

Junior Club (WRFL) <https://www.wrfl.com.au/club-hub-2/child-safety>

Senior Club (VAFA) <https://www.vafa.com.au/club-info/rules>

Commission for Children and Young People

AFL Community – Policies & Guidelines

Victoria State Government – Dept. of Justice, Working With Children Office

VicSport <https://vicsport.com.au/resources-for-child-safety>

Related Policies

AFL Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy

[https://resources.afl.com.au/afl/document/2021/03/10/9768761f-40d8-4a58-a598-](https://resources.afl.com.au/afl/document/2021/03/10/9768761f-40d8-4a58-a598-19704f397710/Safeguarding-Children-and-Young-People-Policy-version-dated-05032021-.pdf)

[19704f397710/Safeguarding-Children-and-Young-People-Policy-version-dated-05032021-.pdf](https://resources.afl.com.au/afl/document/2021/03/10/9768761f-40d8-4a58-a598-19704f397710/Safeguarding-Children-and-Young-People-Policy-version-dated-05032021-.pdf)