



Child Safety Policy

Purpose

This document sets out how the Armadale Bowls 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 members and staff behave with children in our Club. The policy applies to all people associated with the Armadale Bowls Club.

The aim of the policy is to promote good practice, provide children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of the Club and to allow members and staff to make informed and confident 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 – Clubs, 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 in Clubs, including physical violence, sexual offences, serious emotional or psychological abuse and serious neglect. The child safe standards require Clubs that provide services for children to have a child safe policy and a statement of commitment to child safety. All child-based Clubs need to work to be compliant with the standards by 1st July 2022.

Introduction

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

Armadale Bowls Club is committed to devising and implementing policies so that everyone

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. The aim of the policy is to promote good practice, provide children and young people with appropriate safety/protection whilst in the care of Armadale Bowls Club.

To create and maintain a child safe Club, the Armadale Bowls Club must comply with 11 Child Safe Standards.

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:

Child means a person involved in the activities of BV and under the age of 18 years unless otherwise stated under the law applicable to the child.

Child protection means any responsibility, measure or activity undertaken to safeguard children from harm.

Sexual offence means a criminal offence involving sexual activity or actions of indecency or any act which exposes a child to, or involves a child in, sexual activity or matters beyond his or her understanding or contrary to accepted community standards. Sexually offence behaviours can include the fondling of genitals, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or any other object, fondling of breasts, voyeurism, exhibitionism, and exposing the child to or involving the child in pornography. It includes child grooming, which includes actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child (or the child's carer, family, or supervisor) to lower the child's inhibitions and prepare them for engagement in a sexual offence.

Mandatory reporter means a person who is legally required to make a report to the Department of Health Human Services (DHHS) or Victoria Police if they form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child needs protection. It includes teachers, principals, registered psychologists, nurses, doctors, and midwives.

OUR COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

Child Safe Standard 1 – Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.

Children within our Club are encouraged to express their culture and cultural rights. The welfare, well-being and interest of all children will always be our priority.

The protection of interests and safety of the child, and not organisation, is our priority.

We have a child friendly environment, where children feel safe, have fun, but are also encouraged to strive to reach the best bowling potential.

We have zero tolerance approach to child abuse and racial, religious, or cultural discrimination.

If applicable, members will have access to information which will equip them to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal culture and understand its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children and young people.

Any racism within the Club will be identified, confronted, and not tolerated. We have appointed a Child Welfare Safety Officer to oversee any matters concerning child safety or abuse.

Any instances of racism must be reported to the Child Welfare Safety Officer. The name of the Officer will be clearly displayed in the Clubhouse.

The Club supports and facilitates participation and inclusion within it, by Aboriginal children, young people and their families

All of the Club's policies, procedures, systems and processes together create a culturally safe and inclusive environment and meet the needs of Aboriginal children, young people and their families.

Child Safe Standard 2 – Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture

At our Club, we want children to be safe, happy, and empowered.

We work in partnership with parents and children to create a safe environment

A child safety poster is displayed prominently in our clubhouse.

We have appointed a Child Welfare and Safety Officer to oversee matters concerning child safety and abuse.

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

Club members and staff will be made aware of the identity of the Child Welfare Officer.

Everyone in our club

- is committed to child safety and the safety and welfare of every child is paramount
- is committed to the participation and empowerment of all children
- has zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures
- has legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's

safety, which we follow rigorously

- is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks
- has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all members and staff and we ensure all who work with children are screened using a Working with Children check
- A register will be kept of members and staff holding current Working with Children certificates
- is committed to regularly training and educating our members and staff 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 orientation will be able to participate in bowling in a fun and safe environment
- has specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, members, and staff 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, Members and Staff:

- are prohibited under any circumstance any physical or sexual contact, 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
- 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 use any physical force unless it is to safeguard against immediate physical danger (for example: separating players engaged in a fight is acceptable)
- will not forbid children from sharing conversations or information with parents, other members, and staff, 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 staff member or adult
- 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 always comply with this policy 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 conducted in a public place.

When comforting a distressed child, the use of a side hug instead of front body embrace is allowed. When teaching, or coaching a child in bowling 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

Members and staff 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
- 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 members and staff 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

Members and staff 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

Members and staff are responsible for supervising children at 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.

Members, staff and parents must not leave a child unsupervised outside of any bowling club where training or a game is about to commence 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.

Child Safe Standard 3 – Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously

We have procedures in place that are child-friendly and easy to understand so children and young people who may be subject to abuse are able to report allegations themselves.

-Children and young people are informed about all their rights, including to safety, information and participation.

-Staff and volunteers are attuned to signs of harm and facilitate child-friendly ways for children and young people to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise their concerns.

-have strategies in place to develop a culture that facilitates participation and is responsive to the input of children and young people.

-provide opportunities for children and young people to participate and are responsive to their contributions, thereby strengthening confidence and engagement.

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 diversity and tolerance in our Club, and people from all levels of society and cultural backgrounds are welcome. 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 stored securely.

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

Privacy

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be members, staff, 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. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will have access to it. We will ensure we have systems where all records are stored securely and safeguards and practices are in place to ensure any personnel meet their obligation and their information is protected. We will meet all our obligations relating to the Commonwealth Privacy Act and Information Privacy Principles, and the Victorian Privacy and Data Protection Act.

Child Safe Standard 4 – Families and communities are informed, and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing

- Families will be informed of Club Child Safety Policies and issues that arise concerning their children.
- Families participate in decisions affecting their child.

-The Club engages and openly communicates with families and the community about its child safe approach and relevant information is accessible.

Child Safe Standard 5 – Equity is upheld, and diverse needs respected in policy and practice

The Club including staff and volunteers, understands children and young people's diverse circumstances and provides support and respond to those who are vulnerable.

The Club pays particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal children and young people and provides/promotes a culturally safe environment for them.

Child Safe Standard 6 – People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice

Armadale Bowls Club ensures that all reasonable steps are taken to engage the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children. This is achieved using a range of screening measures as discussed above. Such measures help us minimise the likelihood of engaging (or retaining) people who are unsuitable to work with children. 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. 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.

c. Ensure the person being interviewed and screened has a valid Working with Children Check (WWCC) issued by the Victorian government with the Armadale Bowls Club registered as an organisation on their WWCC profile. Our organisation recognises two (2) exceptions to the Working with Children Check - police officers and teachers. These personnel are screened and monitored through their professional accreditation and therefore do not need a Victorian WWCC for the positions identified above.

Child Safe Standard 7 – Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused Allegations, Concerns and Complaints

Armadale Bowls Club takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly

We take our legal responsibilities seriously and we abide by all existing and new laws

relating to child safety in Victoria. The following sets out the Victorian laws that apply to every adult person who is a member or staff of the Armadale Bowls 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 needs protection from physical injury or sexual abuse. Any personnel who are mandatory reporters whether at work or not, must comply with their duties.

Reporting

We work to ensure all children, families, members, and staff 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 an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took 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.

The Armadale Bowls Club Committee has appointed a Child Welfare and Safety Officer to support the Club in our child safety endeavours. Our Child Welfare and Safety Officer is trained to deal appropriately with allegations any disclosure, allegation or observations relating to child safety and child abuse.

If you have received an allegation, have concerns or a complaint about child safety you should direct your calls to 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.

Child Safe Standard 8 – Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training

All of our new and existing members and staff will be trained and supported to effectively implement our Child Safety Policy

- recognise indicators of child harm, including the harm caused by other children
- support colleagues who disclose any harm to children
- understand how to build a culturally safe environment for children

All training will be tailored to the needs of our club and the role the person performs at the Club.

The training will enable all members and staff to create a club-wide culture of child safety.

Appropriate training will be delivered annually, and the Child Safety Policy will be kept in the Club Office.

All members and staff will know its location.

Child Safe Standard 9 – Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed

The Club will-

- ensure that the physical and online environment will promote safety and well-being while minimising the opportunity for children to be harmed.
- inform children and their families about the appropriate use of the club technology and how to seek help and report concerns and safety risks.
- have risk management strategies to identify, assess and take steps to minimise child risk abuse posed by physical and online environment.

Electronic Communication

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

- Members and staff 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 always act consistently with this policy.
- Electronic communication to parents and children must be sent from Club email accounts. Members and staff should never use personal email account.
- 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 members or staff phone.

Child Safe Standard 10 – Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved

The Club is-

-a Child Safe organisation and have an open and transparent culture.

-open to learn from our mistakes and always put the interests of child safety first.

We will carefully review policies, procedures and practices every two years and make changes and report outcomes, as applicable.

Child Safe Standard 11 – Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people

The Club has policies and procedures to ensure the safety of children who visit the Club and meet the required standards.

The policy is easily understood.

All members and staff will implement it.

Version 1

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Approved.....

Date.....