

BLACKBURN JUNIOR FOOTBALL CLUB CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

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1. PURPOSE

- (a) The purpose of this policy is to set out and reinforce the Blackburn Junior Football Club's (**BJFC**) commitment to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people involved in our Club. It aims to educate all members, staff, supporters and spectators of on their responsibilities when interacting with children and outlines the Club's approach to preventing, identifying, and responding to concerns, incidents, or allegations of harm, abuse, or neglect involving children and young people.
- (b) The BJFC Child Safeguarding Policy (this **Policy**) was developed in conjunction with the BJFC Policy Handbook.
- (c) This Policy adopts the AFL's Safeguarding Children and Young People standards established in the National Community Football Policy Handbook and aligns with the Victorian Child Safe Standards.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

- (a) BJFC:
 - i. is committed to creating a safe, inclusive and welcoming environment for all children and young people who participate in football and umpiring activities at our Club;
 - ii. is committed to implementing child safe practices in accordance with the Victorian Child Safe Standards (See Appendix 1);
 - iii. is committed to implementing the safeguarding children and young people standards adopted by the AFL in the Community Football Handbook;
 - iv. has zero tolerance for any form of Child Abuse or harm and will act quickly to protect children and young people should an incident occur. All complaints will be treated seriously, fully investigated and handled confidentially;
 - v. is committed to the active participation of children and young people at the Club, ensuring all children and young people know their rights, have their views taken seriously and involve them in decisions that may directly affect them and their peers at the Club;
 - vi. recognises the important role families play in supporting children and young people to participate in Australian football and values the input of families in decision making at our Club;
 - vii. recognises the particular needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people and will promote their cultural safety within the Club environment
 - viii. is dedicated to promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities, LGBTI+ environments, ensuring an inclusive environment for all.
 - ix. acknowledges the importance of online safety and commits to implementing strategies that protect children and young people in digital environments associated with Club activities.
- (b) All children and young people have equal rights to protection from harm and abuse regardless of their race, religion, age, disability cultural background, gender, sexual orientation or family/social background. Our Club considers that the health, safety and wellbeing of children and young people take priority over all other competing considerations.
- (c) The safety and wellbeing of all children and young people at our club is a shared responsibility between the Club, its staff, contractors, associates, parents/carers, coaches, spectators, volunteers and members of our Club community.

3. APPLICATION AND SCOPE

- (a) This Policy applies to all persons involved at the Club including, but not limited to: participants, parents, spectators, administrators, volunteers, contractors, officials, coaches, and board/committee members.
- (b) This Policy should be read in conjunction with:
 - i. the BJFC Policy Handbook (Appendix 2);
 - ii. National Community Football Policy Handbook (Appendix 2);
 - iii. the Victorian Child Safe Standards (Appendix 1);
 - iv. Commonwealth and Victorian legislation and (Appendix 2); and
 - v. the BJFC Child Safe Code of Conduct (See Appendix 3).
- (c) In the event of any inconsistency between:
 - i. this Policy;
 - ii. AFL's National Rules and/or policies ; and
 - iii. EFNL Policies

the BJFC Executive Committee reserves the right to determine the appropriate application, interpretation or resolution.
- (d) Any matter not expressly provided for in this Policy Handbook will be dealt with as the BJFC Executive Committee considers appropriate, having regard to the intent of relevant EFNL and AFL policies.
- (e) Any capitalised term not defined in this Policy Handbook has the meaning given to it in the BJFC Policy Handbook or AFL Community Football Handbook, unless the context otherwise requires.
- (f) The Appendixes form part of this Policy Handbook.

4. DEFINITIONS

Child and Young Person means a person under the age of 18 years.

Child Abuse includes all forms of physical, emotional, psychological, verbal and/or sexual abuse. Child Abuse also includes sexual exploitation, neglect or negligent treatment, Grooming, harassing behaviour, bullying or other exploitation of a child or young person and includes any actions that results in actual or potential harm to a child or young person. Child Abuse can be a single incident or take place over time.

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

Club means Blackburn Junior Football Club.

Family Violence occurs when children and young people are forced to live with violence between adults in their home. Family Violence includes violence between members of a family, or extended family, or those fulfilling the role of family in a child or young person's life. It can include witnessing violence or the consequences of violence. Exposure to Family Violence places children and young people at increased risk of injury and harm and has a significant impact on their wellbeing and development.

Grooming is a term used to describe what happens when a perpetrator builds a relationship with a child or young person with the intent to abuse or harm them. Perpetrators may also groom parents/carers by forming relationships of trust with parents/carers before harming a child or young

person. Grooming can take place over a long period of time before abuse occurs or the abuse can happen relatively quickly. Grooming can take in physical (face-to-face) environments or online.

Harm can be any action that may have a significant impact on a child or young person's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. Harm can be caused by:

- i. Physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect;
- ii. Sexual abuse or exploitation;
- iii. Family Violence;
- iv. a single act, omission or circumstance; and
- v. a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances.

Policy means this Child Safeguarding Policy including any schedules and appendixes.

Sexual abuse or exploitation is any act which exposes a child or young person to or involves them in sexual acts beyond their understanding or contrary to accepted community standards. Sexual 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, grooming, voyeurism, exhibitionism, and exposing the child to or involving the child in pornography. It also includes engaging a child or young person to participate in sexual conversations online.

Concerns and Complaints means any issue that an adult or peer considers may negatively impact on the safety or wellbeing of a child or young person.

5. EXPECTED BEHAVIOUR AT OUR CLUB

- (a) All participants, parents, spectators, contractors, officials, coaches, and board/committee members have responsibilities in relation to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people at our Club and are expected to:
 - i. understand the definitions of Child Abuse and Harm and act on anything that they hear or see;
 - ii. understand the rights of children, as appropriate to their role and cause no harm to a child or young person;
 - iii. value equity and diversity at the Club and treat all children and young people with respect regardless of their race, religion, age, disability cultural background, gender, sexual orientation or family/social background;
 - iv. at all times, know and follow this Policy and related child safety and wellbeing guidance (including but not limited to our Club's Child Safe Code of Conduct and Reporting procedures);
 - v. co-operate with police and/or other formal investigations to the best of their ability;
 - vi. avoid unsupervised contact with children and young people, ensuring that interactions occur in open and observable environments;
 - vii. use appropriate language and tone when communicating with children and young people, avoiding any form of discriminatory, harassing or abusive language;
 - viii. refrain from engaging in any form of sexual behaviour with or in the presence of children and young people.
- (b) All third-party contractors are expected to abide by our Club's Child Safe Code of Conduct (see Appendix 4), and where they may engage with children or young people, sign an agreement requiring them to comply with this Policy and our Club's Child Safe Code of Conduct, prior to delivering any services.
- (c) Our Club will appoint a Child Safeguarding Officer or equivalent role that will be the primary point of contact for all concerns and complaints related to child safety and wellbeing.

6. RECRUITMENT AND SCREENING

- (a) Our Club seeks to implement screening practices that reduce the risk of harm or abuse to children and young people by:
 - i. Recruiting individuals suitable to work and interact with children and young people, requiring valid Working with Children Checks (WWCC) and/or Police Checks before commencing any child-related role at the Club.
 - ii. Not allowing any adult to work in a child related role at our Club until a valid Working with Children Check has been obtained.
 - iii. Ensuring that all board/committee members hold a valid WWCC.
 - iv. Ensuring that staff, volunteers, board/committee members and contractors read this Policy and related documents (such as those outlined in Appendix 2) and familiarise themselves with child safe practices at our Club.
- (b) BJFC adopts the suitability requirements contained in the AFL Community Football Handbook (see Appendix 3).

7. SUPPORTING CLUB STAFF, COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS

- (a) Our Club is committed to supporting all staff, board/committee members and volunteers to understand how to create a child safe and child friendly environment at our Club by:
 - i. Providing access to online training in child-safe practices, including AFL Safeguarding Children and Young People webinars and resources, Play by the Rules training (child protection, cultural awareness, LGBTI+ inclusive Clubs, Let Kids be Kids, Complaint handling) and eSafety Commissioner (safe online environments) (See Appendix 3).
 - ii. Developing a Child Safe Code of Conduct (see Appendix 4) to provide guidance to staff and volunteers within the Club which is made available via PlayHQ at the time of volunteer registration with the Club.
 - iii. Requiring our Coaches and Assistant Coaches to obtain an AFL Victoria level 1 coaching course.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- (a) Our Club recognises the importance of identifying and managing risks to children and young people in physical and online environments and will implement a risk management plan to address risks.
- (b) BJFC will endeavour to ensure that all activities involving children and young people are planned and conducted with consideration of potential risks and the implementation of appropriate safeguards.
- (c) BJFC will review and update the risk management plan annually or when significant changes occur within the Club.
- (d) BJFC aims to proactively monitor child safety risks as adopted in our social media policy contained in the Policy Handbook.

9. CHILD SAFE CODE OF CONDUCT

- (a) BJFC has adopted a Child Safe Code of Conduct (see Appendix 4). This Code of Conduct applies to all people involved in the activities of the BJFC, including coaches, officials, administrators, volunteers and parents/guardians.

10. REPORTING A CHILD SAFETY CONCERN OR COMPLAINT

- (a) The safety and welfare of our players are paramount to BJFC and are of the utmost importance over winning games of football.
- (b) Our Club will take all concerns and complaints seriously, whether they are raised by an adult, child or young person. All child related concerns and complaints will be responded to promptly and confidentially.

(c) Child Safety Concern

- i. A Concern or Complaint can be made by a parent, child, staff or volunteer regarding:
 - Disclosure of abuse or harm, whether physically or online.
 - Allegation, suspicion or observation.
 - Breach of Child Safe Code of Conduct or this Policy.
 - Environment Safety Issue.
- ii. The Concern or Complaint should be communicated to the Child Safety Protection Officer (CSPO) who has the specific responsibility of responding to any complaints made by children, parents/guardians or volunteers which pertain to an allegation or incident of Child Abuse or harm.
- iii. The CSPO can be contacted via our Club Secretary at secretary.junior@blackburnfc.com.au. The current contact for this role can be found in the BJFC Policy Handbook (see Appendix 2).
- iv. If a player or participant discloses an allegation to a Club Volunteer, the volunteer should involved in this reporting process must:
 - Show empathy and listen;
 - Not make promises they can't keep;
 - Not pressure children for detail; and
 - Inform only those directly involved in the safeguarding process (CSPO).
- v. If there is concern for the immediate safety of a child or young person, immediately call the Police '000'. If a child or young person is not in immediate danger but any person who believes on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is in need of protection from any form of Child Abuse or harm, they may disclose that information to the Police, Child Protection or the Commissioner for Children & Young People.
- vi. Our Club also has a Dispute Resolution policy within the BJFC Policy Handbook (see Appendix 2) and adopts the AFL's 'child safety at our club poster' to help children and young people to understand how they can raise a concern or a complaint with the Club.

(d) Next Steps

- i. Following the report of allegations to the CSPO, the CSPO with the assistance of the Executive Committee, if required, will determine next steps, which may include:
 - Providing initial support to the individual;
 - Advising the EFNL and/or AFL of the complaint in accordance with the reporting obligations contained in the AFL Community Handbook (see Appendix 2);
 - Internal investigation;
 - Obtain legal advice
 - Reporting to external authority;
 - Consulting with Police or DHS prior to investigations (Abuse Allegations/Criminal offence).
- ii. If there is concern for the immediate safety of a child or young person, immediately call the Police '000'. Any Club staff member, board/committee member or volunteer who is the subject of a child or young person related concern or complaint may be requested to stand down from their position in the Club during an investigation, have their duties altered so they do not engage with children and young people and/or have their access to the Club's IT system/database removed.

- iii. Our Club will investigate allegations of inappropriate conduct against a child or young person in accordance with procedural fairness and will handle the allegations in a confidential and sensitive manner.
- iv. AFL Victoria and the EFNL will be confidentially informed of incidents required.

(e) Internal Investigation

- i. When an internal investigation is conducted the specific details concerning the incident should be obtained by asking questions such as:
 - Can you tell me what happened from the start?
 - When and where did the incident occur?
 - Did anyone see the incident?
 - Who was there?
 - What was said?
 - Did you make a note of what happened including via text or social media message etc.?
- ii. All participants in the investigation must be required to maintain confidentiality as part of this process.

11. REPORTING SEXUAL ABUSE

- (a) If a person receives information that leads them to form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed, that person has a legal obligation to disclose that information to the Police as soon as it is practicable. Individuals who fail to comply with this obligation under the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic) may be subject to further severe penalty.
- (b) A number of professions in the community (including but not limited to teachers, nurses and doctors) are also required by law to report to Child Protection where they have formed a belief, on reasonable grounds, that a child is in need of protection because they have suffered (or are likely to suffer) significant harm due to physical or sexual abuse.
- (c) This report must be made as soon as practicable, and on any occasion where they become aware of other allegations and have reasonable grounds for belief.

12. POLICY BREACHES

- (a) It is a breach of this Policy for any person or organisation subject to this Policy to have been found to have done anything contrary to this Policy. Any person who breaches this Policy is subject to the Club's disciplinary process outlined in the Dispute Resolution Policy of the Policy Handbook (see Appendix 2).

13. RECORD KEEPING AND INFORMATION SHARING

- (a) As part of our Club's commitment to continuously improve our children and young people safety practices, the Club will review identified risks to Child and Young people through the incident management and record keeping process and will incorporate those risks into the risk management plan.
- (b) From time to time, our Club may share relevant information to promote the safety and wellbeing of children and young people where appropriate and in their best interest. This may include sharing information with external authorities to comply with the law or to prioritise the safety of a child or young person.
- (c) These procedures will be reviewed annually or after any major incident. Review will also consider changes issued by the AFL in its updated Community Football Handbook.

APPENDIX 1 – VICTORIAN CHILD SAFE STANDARDS

Victorian Child Safe Standards	
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.
2	Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.
3	Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
4	Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
5	Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.
6	People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.
7	Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused.
8	Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.
9	Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
10	Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.
11	Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

APPENDIX 2 - RELATED DOCUMENTS & LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

This Policy should be read in conjunction with:

1. the laws of the Commonwealth and Victoria (as amended from time to time) including but not limited to:
 - *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic)
 - *Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Act 2015* (Vic)
 - *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic) Failure to Disclose Sexual Offence Committed Against a Child Under 16 (section 327); Failure by a Person in Authority to Protect a Child from a Sexual Offence (section 49 O);
 - *Working with Children Act 2005* (Vic); and
 - *Wrongs Act 1958* (Vic) Organisational liability for Child Abuse.
2. policies and procedures, (as amended from time to time) including but not limited to:
 - [*AFL Community Football Handbook*](#)
 - *BJFC Policy Handbook*;
 - *BJFC Child Safe Code of Conduct*;
 - [*EFNL Incorporated By-Laws; and*](#)
 - [*EFNL Code of Conduct*](#)

APPENDIX 3 - RELATED CHILD SAFETY EDUCATION RESOURCES AND LINKS

- AFL Safeguarding Children and Young People webinars and resources
<https://play.afl/safeguarding>
- Play by the Rules training (Child Protection, cultural awareness)
www.playbytherules.net.au
- eSafety Commissioner (safe online environments and sporting organisations)
www.esafety.gov.au

APPENDIX 4 – BJFC CHILD SAFE CODE OF CONDUCT

This Code of Conduct outlines appropriate standards of behaviour by adults towards children. By applying to volunteer or coach with BJFC, I acknowledge that I have read, understood and agree to always abide by the Child Safe Code of Conduct.

The Code of Conduct aims to protect children and reduce any opportunities for abuse or harm to occur. It also helps staff and volunteers by providing them with guidance on how to best support children and how to avoid or better manage difficult situations. This Code of Conduct applies to all people involved in the activities of the Blackburn Junior Football Club, including coaches, officials, administrators, volunteers and parents/guardians.

All coaches and volunteers are responsible for promoting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people by:

- Adhering to our Player Safety Policy and [Child Safeguarding Policy](#), the [EFNL's Code of Conduct](#) and all relevant policies as detailed within this document.
- Taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse.
- Treating everyone with respect, including listening to and valuing their ideas and opinions.
- Welcoming all children and their families and carers and being inclusive.
- Respecting cultural, religious and political differences and acting in a culturally sensitive way, particularly when interacting with children who are Aboriginal or otherwise culturally or linguistically diverse and those with a disability.
- Modelling appropriate adult behaviour.
- Listening to children and responding to them appropriately.
- Reporting and acting on any breaches of this Code of Conduct, complaints or concerns appropriately and treat them seriously and with respect.
- Complying with our guidelines on physical contact with children.
- Working with children in an open and transparent way – other adults should always know about the work you are doing with children.
- Respecting the privacy of children and their families, and only disclosing information to people who have a need to know.

Coaches and volunteers **MUST NOT**:

- Seek to use children in any way to meet the needs of adults.
- Ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse.
- Use prejudice, oppressive behaviour or language with children.
- Discriminate on the basis of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability or sexuality.
- Initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or do things of a personal nature that children can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes.
- Develop 'special' relationships with specific children or show favouritism through the provision of gifts or inappropriate attention.
- Exchange personal contact details such as phone number, social networking site or email addresses with children, except where necessary for a football related purpose such as availability to play or train.
- Have unauthorised contact with children and young people online or by phone.

By observing these standards you acknowledge your responsibility to immediately report any breach of this code to the Blackburn Junior Football Club.