



GLEN WAVERLEY ROVERS JUNIOR FOOTBALL CLUB CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING POLICY

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GLEN WAVERLEY ROVERS JUNIOR FOOTBALL CLUB CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING POLICY

1. PURPOSE

This policy was written to demonstrate Glen Waverley Rovers Junior Football Club's (**Club**) strong commitment to child safety and wellbeing. The purpose of this policy is to:

- a) Educate all members, staff, supporters and spectators of the Club on their responsibilities when interacting with children and young people at our Club; and
- b) To familiarise all members, staff, supporters and spectators with the Club's processes for its response to any concerns, incidents or allegations of harm or abuse to children and young people.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

The Club is committed to promoting and protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in our care. Further to this, the Club is committed to responding appropriately to any allegation, incident or suspicion of child abuse or harm. To achieve this, the Club is committed to:

- 2.1. creating a safe, inclusive and welcoming environment for all children and young people who participate in football and umpiring activities at our Club.
- 2.2. implementing child safe practices in accordance with the Victorian Child Safe Standards (Appendix 1).
- 2.3. having 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.
- 2.4. 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.
- 2.5. recognising the important role families play in supporting children and young people to participate in Australian rules football and values the input of families in decision making at our Club.
- 2.6. recognising the particular needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people and will promote their cultural safety within the Club environment.
- 2.7. recognising that 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.
- 2.8. Recognising that the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people at our club is a shared responsibility within the Club, (staff, contractors, associates, parents/carers, coaches, spectators, volunteers, members of the community) and must be promoted, protected and responded to accordingly.

3. SCOPE – APPLICATION OF THIS POLICY

- 3.1. This Policy applies to *all people* involved in our organisation (paid and unpaid) including, but not limited to - administrators, coaches, officials, volunteers, participants, parents, spectators, and contractors.
- 3.2. This Policy applies to *all activities* in the Club which involve, result in or relate to contact with children and young persons.
- 3.3. This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Victorian Child Safe Standards, (Appendix 1) the Club's related policies and procedures, and relevant Commonwealth and Victorian legislation. (Appendix 2).
- 3.4. This policy will be reviewed at least annually, however will also be reviewed in response to legislative changes and/or a child safety incident or 'near miss'. Reviews will be overseen by the Management Committee however will be informed by consult with Club participants including children, young people, parents/carers, and other interested parties.
- 3.5. This Policy will be made available on the Club's website - <https://www.glenrovers.org.au>

4. DEFINITIONS

- 4.1. **Belief on reasonable grounds** is a belief a reasonable person, doing the same work, would have formed the same belief on those grounds. A reasonable belief *does not require* proof or evidence.
- 4.2. **Child and Young Person** means a person under the age of 18 years.
- 4.3. **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.
- 4.4. **Child protection** means any responsibility, measure or activity undertaken to safeguard children from harm.
- 4.5. **Club** is the name of the Club outlined in the header of this Policy document.
- 4.6. **Concerns and complaints** refer to any issue that a person considers may negatively impact on the safety or wellbeing of a child or young person.
- 4.7. **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.
- 4.8. **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:
 - Physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect.
 - Sexual abuse or exploitation.
 - Family violence.

- a single act, omission or circumstance; and
- a series or combination of acts, omissions, or circumstances.

4.9. **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. It also includes engaging a child or young person to participate in sexual conversations online.

5. EXPECTED BEHAVIOUR AT OUR CLUB

5.1. This Policy acknowledges that child protection is a shared responsibility between all Glen Waverley Rovers Junior Football Club people. As such, *all persons* affiliated with the Club are expected to:

5.1.1. understand the definitions of child abuse and harm.

5.1.2. appropriately act on anything that they hear, see or believe is occurring based on reasonable grounds.

5.1.3. understand the rights of children, as appropriate to their role and cause no harm to a child or young person.

5.1.4. 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.

5.1.5. at all times, know and follow this Policy and related child safety and wellbeing guidance, including but not limited to our Club's *Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of Conduct* (Appendix 3) and *Complaints Handling and Reporting* policy (Appendix 4).

5.1.6. co-operate with police and/or other formal investigations to the best of their ability.

5.2. All third-party contractors are expected to abide by this Policy and the Club's *Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of Conduct*. Where they may engage with children or young people, they must review & acknowledge this Policy and the *Child Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of Conduct* (Appendix 3) practices prior to delivering any services.

5.3. Our Club has appointed a Child Safeguarding Officer (CSO) 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

- 6.1. Our Club seeks to implement best practice standards in the recruiting and screening process to reduce the risk of harm or abuse to children and young people. Such standards include:
 - 6.1.1. Interview and conduct referee checks on all staff and volunteers.
 - 6.1.2. Interview process to include specific child safety and wellbeing related questions.
 - 6.1.3. Clear position descriptions are provided that state relevant safeguarding requirements.
 - 6.1.4. Communication of this Policy and the Club's *Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of Conduct* practices, emphasising the commitments described to potential applicants.
 - 6.1.5. Ensuring all persons who will be working and/or interacting with children and young people have a valid Working with Children and Police Check. This includes board/committee members.
 - 6.1.6. Forbidding adults from working (paid or unpaid) in a child related role at our Club until a valid Working with Children Check and/or Police Check has been obtained.
 - 6.1.7. Expectation for full disclosure of convictions or charges from potential applicants that may affect their suitability to engage with Children and Young People.
- 6.2. Once engaged, staff, volunteers, board/committee members must read this *Policy* and related documents (such as those outlined in Appendix section of this document) and familiarise themselves with child safe practices at our Club.

7. SUPPORTING CLUB STAFF, COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS

- 7.1. 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.
- 7.2. Our Club recommends and promotes that staff, board/committee members and volunteers familiarise themselves with the Club's *Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of Conduct* practices (Appendix 3).
- 7.3. Our Club will have one or more from the committee or/and certified CSO attend one of the following online training in child safe practices (Appendix 5):
 - *AFL Safe Footy* - Safeguarding webinars and resources,
 - *Play by the Rules* training (child protection, cultural awareness, LGBTI+ inclusive clubs, Let Kids be Kids, Complaint handling) and
 - e Safety Commissioner (safe online environments and sporting organisations)

The club will keep an ongoing register of training attendance and documentation.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT APPROACH

- 8.1. Our Club recognises the importance of a risk management approach to prevent, identify and mitigate the potential for child abuse or harm to occur. As such, our Club will utilise the *Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of Conduct* (Appendix 3) to guide our staff and volunteers in their interaction with children and young persons and implement a *Risk Management Assessment Plan* (Appendix 6) to assess and address risks both within the physical and online environment.

- 8.2. The risk management plan will be reviewed and updated at least annually in consultation with staff, volunteers, parent representatives and children and young people to ensure it is fit for purpose.

9. COMPLAINTS AND REPORTING

- 9.1. 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 and must be reported in accordance with the *AFL Safeguarding Children and Young People Complaints and Reporting Procedure* (Appendix 4).
- 9.2. Our Club has an appointed CSO to guide all affiliated persons through the reporting process.
- 9.3. Our Club has child safety posters displayed in prominent positions throughout the Club (Appendix 7) to help children and young people understand how they can raise a concern or a complaint within the Club.
- 9.4. As per the *AFL Safeguarding Children and Young People Complaints and Reporting Procedure*, (Appendix 4).if there is concern for the immediate safety of a child or young person, immediate contact with the Police '000' will be instigated.
- 9.5. If a child or young person is not in immediate danger but any person has formed a belief on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is in need of protection from any form of child abuse or harm, that information will be disclosed to either the Police, Child Protection or the Commissioner for Children & Young People, and the Club's CSO who can assist the person with the reporting process.
- 9.6. As per the *AFL Safeguarding Children and Young People Complaints and Reporting Procedure*, (Appendix 4).any incidents occurring at the Club will be reported to the AFL online reporting platform that can be accessed via the website link <https://eafl.austfoot.com.au/afl-makeareport/en/#/home>
- 9.7. The incident or allegation will be further documented by the Club using the Club's Safeguarding Child incident reporting form
- 9.8. 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 have their access to the Club's IT system/database removed.
- 9.9. Our President & Child Safety Officer will assist with investigations into the 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.

For all other matters that are complaint-based and child related, (but do not involve child safety or child abuse), the Club will investigate the matter accordingly which may include contacting external authorities should the Club see as appropriate to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children participating at the Club.

9.10. REPORTING SEXUAL ABUSE

- 9.10.1. **If any** 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 a penalty of imprisonment.
- 9.10.2. 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.
- 9.10.3. 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.

10. RECORD KEEPING AND INFORMATION SHARING

- 10.1. Our Club is committed to making and retaining accurate records of reports of child safety related concerns and complaints.
- 10.2. Our Club will maintain records and outcomes of investigations and resolutions of concerns and complaints as per the Club's Safeguarding Child incident reporting form. (Appendix 8) In maintaining records related to child safety, our Club will maintain confidentiality and privacy for children and families.
- 10.3. 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 assessment plan.
- 10.4. 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.

11. POLICY BREACHES

- 11.1. It is a breach of this Policy for any person or organisation subject to this Policy to be found to have done anything contrary to this Policy. Any person who breaches this Policy is subject to internal investigation and disciplinary action within the Club, and/or may also be subjected to investigation and disciplinary action by external authorities if relevant.