

SAMPLE POLICY

Child Protection Policy

Our commitment

(**Insert club name**) is committed to keeping children and young people safe from abuse and protecting them from people who are unsuitable to work with children.

We believe all children have a right to be safe when participating in sport and recreation activities.

What is child abuse

Child abuse can be when someone does something harmful, or does not provide for or protect, a child or young person. Child abuse can cause long-lasting emotional, physical and behavioural damage.

Sport is a particularly vulnerable area for potential child abuse because it:

- Involves a large number of people under the age of 18.
- Can involve overnight and away trips (eg training camps or competitions).
- Usually involves close relationships between adults and children, where the adults are in positions of trust and able to assert authority and power over children.

Working with Children Checks (Blue Cards)

Fundamental to every child-safe environment is the recruitment of staff and volunteers who are both competent and do not pose a risk to children.

All volunteers (including Committee, coaches and managers) at (**insert club name**) are required to hold a blue card (or have an approved exemption). Blue cards are issued by the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian once it has carried out the blue card check to see if a person is eligible to work in the areas of child-related work covered by the *Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000* (the Commission's Act). If a person is eligible, they are issued a positive notice letter and a blue card.

At all times (**insert club name**) will keep an up to date "Blue Card Register".

Mandatory Reporting

(Insert club name) members need to be aware that because of the large number of children participating in sport and the closeness of relationships formed, they may come across children being abused or who disclose their abuse to them. This abuse may be occurring within or outside of sport. Anyone who suspects, on reasonable grounds, that a child or young person is at risk of being neglected or abused, should contact the Department of Communities without delay to report their concerns.

Strategies for Volunteers

People working with children in sport, particularly coaches, need to be aware that not all children will understand an action or request in the same manner. One child may see an action as usual or acceptable behaviour while another may find it unacceptable. A child's interpretation of an action may also be influenced by cultural and religious differences, gender and prior experiences. It is important therefore to be aware of your communication style.

The following principles or actions may help coaches provide a safe environment.

- Ensure your actions are at all times unambiguously professional. Give a verbal explanation, in front of all players (and preferably parents as well) of how, where, when and why you may need to touch athletes.
- Remember that the welfare of the child or children is always of paramount importance.
- Know what policies, complaint processes and codes of behaviour your sport has in place (at state and/or national level) and how this applies to you.
- Understand and have signed onto your sport's code of behaviour (a requirement for coaches accredited under the National Coaching Accreditation Scheme).
- Understand how the child protection legislation in Queensland may affect you.
- Ensure that any physical contact with children is appropriate to the development of the skills required for the sport.
- Be careful about which part of your body and how much of it is in contact with a child's body.
- Avoid unaccompanied and unobserved activities with children. Try not to separate yourself and a child from the line of sight of other people. If you need to have a private talk to a child about their ability or behaviour, do this in an open place near others. Invite another coach or support person to join the conversation or talk to more than one child at a time.
- Use positive and age-appropriate language when talking to and in the presence of children.
- Before entering change rooms knock or announce that you will be coming in and try to have at least one other adult with you. Do not isolate yourself and a child from others in the change room.
- Avoid the risk of being left alone with a child by having a parent, guardian or support person assist you with the training. Require that person to wait with you until all children have left.

- Do not engage in or let others engage in any of the following:
 - Abusive initiation or team bonding activities.
 - Forcing children into ‘macho type’ activities.
 - Rough, physically hurtful or sexually provocative games.
 - Regular scapegoating, ridiculing, rejecting, or isolating a child.

Strategies for Parents

Parents often turn to sport as a safe place for children to build character, develop skills, learn valuable lessons and to have fun. While involvement in sport remains a positive experience for most participants, parents are now aware that children can face the risk of being harassed and abused in sport. In addition to clubs, organisations, community groups and government agencies, parents can also play a key role in creating a safe environment for children in sport.

- Use positive and age-appropriate language when talking to and in the presence of children.
- Before entering change rooms knock or announce that you will be coming in and try to have at least one other adult with you. Do not isolate yourself and a child from others in the change room.
- When you enrol your child in a sport, ask if the club has a harassment, abuse or member protection policy and procedures in place. If not, suggest implementation within the season.
- Ask if the club has Working with Children Checks in place.
- Ask if the club’s coaches are accredited and have signed a coaches code of behaviour.
- Get involved and get to know your coach. Maintain open and frank communication. If things occur that disturb you, talk to the coach about them.
- Speak out when you hear language or attitudes that contribute to a negative or unsafe environment. You may wish to pursue your issues with the club executive.
- Be careful not to put coaches on pedestals. Tell your children it is okay to say ‘no’ if the coach is doing something that makes them feel ‘creepy’.
- Make an effort to attend practices and games whenever you can.
- Be wary of any increase in the amount of time the coach spends with your children beyond the training session.
- If you volunteer in sport and are asked to take part in screening, accept this as a positive step to keeping children safe.
- Make sure you are not part of the problem. Don’t sling verbal abuse at referees, coaches or others.
- Encourage your child to play by the rules.
- Never ridicule your child for making a mistake or losing.

Images of Children

(Insert club name) uses images of participating children on the club’s website, social media pages and newsletters. (Insert club name) will only use images of children when so authorized by the children’s parent / guardian.