



SMSC Child Safety Policy

Mission Statement:

SMSC is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all players and members of our Futsal Club and are proactive in promoting and providing an environment that supports child safety and wellbeing.

Purpose:

This policy was written to demonstrate the strong commitment of the committee and volunteers of SMSC (the Club) to child safety.

The purpose of this Policy is to:

1. work towards a Club culture of child safety;
2. ensure that all persons are aware of their responsibilities for identifying possible occasions for child abuse and for establishing procedures for preventing such abuse and/or detecting such abuse when it occurs;
3. provide guidance on responding where a person suspects any child abuse within the Club Environment;
4. provide a clear statement to players, committee members, volunteers, employees and contractors forbidding any such abuse.

Guiding Principles:

This Policy is based on the following principles:

1. All children who are a part of the Club have a right to be safe;
2. The welfare of the children in our care will always be our first priority;
3. The Club has zero tolerance to child abuse;
4. The Club aims to create a child safe and child friendly environment where children feel safe and have fun and the Club's activities are always carried out in the best interests of the children;
5. Child protection is a shared responsibility;
6. The Club will consider the opinions of players and use their opinions to develop child protection policies and procedures;
7. The Club is committed to the diversity and cultural safety of all children, including (but not limited to) the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, minors from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, minors with disabilities, and make reasonable efforts to accommodate these matters; and
8. Everyone covered by the Policy must comply with, and is bound to, the Club's Child Safety Code of Conduct at all times (Attachment 1).

Application of this Policy:

This policy was developed by the Club and in collaboration with the committee, 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:

- Committee members
- Coaches
- Team Managers
- 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 and Torres Strait Islander 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
- encourage children of both sexes to participate at our Club.

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 coaching staff and volunteers
- Require Working with Children Checks for relevant positions.
- Ensure all coaches, volunteers, etc read and understand the Clubs' Code of Conduct and other policies.

Supporting staff and volunteers

The Club seeks to attract and retain the best members and volunteers. We provide support and supervision so people feel valued, respected and fairly treated. We have developed a Code of Conduct to provide guidance to

our staff and volunteers. It will be a requirement of all supporting staff and volunteers to have read and understood of the Code.

Role of Child Safety Officers:

The Club's Committee is responsible for ensuring that policies are reviewed and updated and that training exists for committee members, volunteers, coaches, team managers, and assistants on child protection matters. The Committee is also responsible for identifying and managing risk in relation to child safety.

Child Safety Officers (CSOs) are available to listen, discuss and clarify issues confronting individuals in our Club. Players, members, employees, volunteers and committee members can all speak with a CSO if they have concerns in relation to child abuse. The CSOs will make reports on behalf of the Club and ensure that adequate records are maintained. The Club CSOs will be listed on our club website and identified to all children and parents at the club.

Reporting a child safety concern or complaint

The Club has appointed Paul Dorian and Sarah Wallace as Child Safety Officer's (CSO) with the specific responsibility for responding to any complaints made by staff, volunteers, parents or children. These persons can be contacted at smmc.mtevelyn@gmail.com. Our complaints process is outlined in the attached policy document.

Reporting obligations

Mandatory reporting

- Under the Crimes Act, all persons have a legal obligation to inform police as soon as practicable where they have a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria against a child (under the age of 16 years) by another person (of or over the age of 18 years).
- This legal obligation above is subject to a person having a reasonable excuse for not reporting. A person will have a "reasonable excuse" to not report if that person:
 - fears for the safety of any person (other than the alleged perpetrator of the offence) if they were to disclose the information to police, or
 - believes on reasonable grounds that the information has already been disclosed to police and they have no further information.
- The Club supports and encourages committee members, volunteers, coaches or team managers to make a report to the police if they form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection, or they are concerned about the safety, health or wellbeing of a child. Where a report is made to the police or DFFH, we ask the individual to also advise the Club.
- Any committee member, volunteer, coach or team manager that makes a report in good faith in accordance with their reporting obligations will be supported by the Club and will not be penalised.
- If a committee member, volunteer, coach or team manager is uncertain as to whether they should make a report to an external authority in relation to the safety of a child, they must speak to the CSO for guidance and information. Ultimately, it is a personal decision of the committee member, volunteer employee or coach or team manager whether they choose to make a report to an external authority or not.
- If an allegation is made against a committee member, employee or volunteer, coach or team manager, the CSO will follow the reporting procedure and take all steps to ensure that safety of the child is paramount.

Risk Management

We recognise 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 applies should avoid direct, unsupervised contact with children. The Committee has an expectation of parents/guardians to be present at all games and training.

For example, this should be a consideration when:

- using change room facilities;
- traveling;
- physical contact when coaching or managing children.

Further steps we will take as a Club:

1. Unless unavoidable, no adult will have access to an unaccompanied minor without prior permission from the minor's parents or guardian.
2. We will ensure all new coaches, team managers, etc to our club have a WWC check.
3. We will ensure appropriate training and education sessions into child safety are available to all new coaches, team managers.
4. We will communicate our Child Safety Policy and Code of Conduct to our community and follow it.
5. We will set guidelines and rules for the appropriate levels of communication between coaches, team managers and players who are minors on social media.
6. We will take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety.
7. We value and empower minors to participate in decisions which affect them.
8. We will foster a culture of openness that supports disclosure of incidents.
9. We will respect diversity in cultures while keeping child safety paramount.
10. Ensure minors know who to talk with if they are worried or are feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable to do so.
11. Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities; and
12. Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk.

Responding to an allegation

In the case of an allegation being made against a committee member, coach, team manager, volunteer and/or contractor at the Club, the CSO will follow this Child Protection Procedure. At all times the safety of the child is paramount.

Withdraw the individual

The first step is to consider withdrawal of the accused person from active duty, which could entail standing down (with pay, where applicable), re-assignment to other duties that do not have direct contact with children, or to work under increased supervision while the matter is being investigated. During the investigation process, it may be necessary for a person to be stood down from their usual duties at the Club or suspended from all activities at the Club.

Investigations

In the event of a child disclosing an incident of abuse to someone they trust it is essential that it is dealt with sensitively and professionally:

- The Club will appropriately investigate all allegations relating to an incident of abuse in accordance with its obligations. In some circumstances, it may be necessary for the Club to

conduct an investigation in addition to any investigation conducted by authorities (e.g. the police).

- The CSO will conduct an independent investigation, or will appoint an appropriate person to do so, into the allegation to the extent that it will not interfere with investigations by the police, and will co-operate with authorities as required. In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for the Club to engage a person from outside the Club to conduct an independent investigation in relation to allegations.
- All people covered by this Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct must co-operate fully with any investigation by DFFH, the police or the Club.
- The CSO will make every effort to keep any such investigation confidential; however, from time to time other committee members, employees, volunteers may need to be consulted in conjunction with the investigation (e.g. to provide witness statements).
- An investigation conducted by the Club will be conducted in accordance with procedural fairness to protect the integrity of the investigation and the interests of all the participants involved in the investigation. The Club will also handle the allegations in a confidential manner to the greatest extent possible.
- The outcome will depend on the findings of the investigation, but may include withdrawal from active duty, re-assignment to duties with no contact with children, increased supervision, disciplinary action, dismissal or criminal prosecutions.

Record keeping

All reports of alleged abuse or harm, or risk thereof, must be recorded by the CSO. Places, times, dates, names of people, observable behaviours or evidence of harm are to be recorded. Reports must be securely stored by the CSO.

Privacy and confidentiality

The Club will collect, use, disclose and hold personal information in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) and the Club's Privacy Policy.

There are two guiding principles in respect to a child's privacy.

1. First, the Club will operate on the best interests principle. All committee members, volunteers and contractors will do what they believe to be in the best interest of the child. This principle supersedes all others.
2. Second, the Club will respect a child's confidentiality except in situations where it conflicts with the best interests principle.

Those who make reports, and those about whom accusations are being made, are entitled to confidentiality. Where there is suspected abuse or misconduct, committee members, contractors or volunteers must not disclose or make use of the information in a manner that breaches confidentiality, other than to report and act consistently with this Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct, and relevant statutory requirements.

Reviewing this policy

This policy will be reviewed every two years and we undertake to seek views, comments and suggestions from children, parents, carers, staff and volunteers involved in the Club.