

Procedure for Managing and Investigating Allegations of Abuse

Purpose The purpose of this procedure is to outline the steps for managing and investigating allegations of abuse within Powerhouse Elite Australia. This ensures compliance with legal obligations in New South Wales (NSW), maintains the safety and wellbeing of all parties, and upholds the organisation's commitment to integrity and accountability.

Scope This procedure applies to all members of Powerhouse Elite Australia, including employees, volunteers, contractors, participants, and visitors. It covers all allegations of abuse, including physical, emotional, sexual, and neglect.

Definitions

- **Abuse:** Any action that causes harm, exploitation, or mistreatment of another person.
 - **Physical Abuse:** The use of physical force against another person that results in injury, pain, or harm. This includes but is not limited to hitting, slapping, kicking, shaking, or using an object to cause harm.
 - **Emotional Abuse:** Behaviours that harm an individual's self-esteem, sense of worth, or emotional wellbeing. This includes verbal abuse, threats, intimidation, manipulation, or isolating someone from supportive relationships.
 - **Sexual Abuse:** Any act of a sexual nature performed without consent, including sexual assault, exploitation, or inappropriate touching. This also includes exposing someone to sexual content against their will.
 - **Neglect:** The failure to provide necessary care, supervision, or resources to a person, resulting in harm to their health, wellbeing, or development.
 - **Grooming:** the process by which an individual (often a predator) builds trust and emotional connection with a child (and sometimes their family) to manipulate, exploit or abuse the child.
 - **Complainant:** The individual making the allegation.
 - **Respondent:** The individual against whom the allegation is made.
 - **Mandatory Reporter:** An individual required by NSW law to report suspected abuse, as outlined in the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998.
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Principles

- **Safety First:** The safety and wellbeing of the alleged victim take precedence.
 - **Confidentiality:** Information will be shared only on a need-to-know basis.
 - **Impartiality:** Investigations will be conducted fairly and without bias.
 - **Compliance:** Adherence to all legal and regulatory requirements in NSW.
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Responsibilities

- **Management:** Ensure all staff are trained on this procedure and legal reporting obligations under NSW law.
 - **Mandatory Reporters:** Fulfil legal obligations to report any reasonable suspicion of abuse to the NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) or the police.
 - **Investigator:** Conduct impartial and thorough investigations.
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Procedure

1. Receiving an Allegation

1. Treat all allegations seriously.
2. Record the allegation immediately using the Powerhouse Elite Australia Incident Report Form.
3. Ensure the immediate safety of the alleged victim.
4. Notify the appropriate authorities if required by law (e.g., NSW Police, DCJ Child Protection Helpline at 132 111).

2. Initial Assessment

1. Determine if the allegation falls under mandatory reporting obligations.
2. Assign a point of contact for the complainant and respondent.
3. Inform the complainant and respondent of the process, ensuring they understand their rights and responsibilities.

3. Formal Investigation

1. Appoint an impartial investigator to handle the case.
2. Gather evidence, including statements from the complainant, respondent, and witnesses.

3. Review any relevant documents, logs, or communications.
4. Maintain a detailed record of all actions and findings.

4. Decision-Making

1. Evaluate the findings of the investigation.
2. Decide on appropriate actions, which may include:
 - Reporting to external authorities.
 - Disciplinary measures for the respondent.
 - Support measures for the complainant.
3. Communicate the outcome to both the complainant and respondent, ensuring clarity and support.

5. Post-Investigation Support

1. Provide ongoing support to all parties involved, including access to counselling or external services if necessary.
2. Review and address any systemic issues identified during the investigation.
3. Monitor and assess the effectiveness of implemented actions.

Record-Keeping All records related to allegations and investigations will be securely stored for a minimum of 7 years, in line with NSW legal requirements. Access will be restricted to authorised personnel only.

Training and Awareness

- Regular training for all staff on identifying, managing, and reporting abuse under NSW legislation.
 - Ongoing review and updates to this procedure to reflect best practices and legal changes.
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Review of Procedure This procedure will be reviewed annually or following any significant incident to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with current laws and regulations in NSW.



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Contacts

- NSW Police:
 - 000 (Emergency)
 - Narellan local police station (02) 4632 4499 or 13 14 44.
- NSW DCJ Child Protection Helpline: 132 111.
- Powerhouse Elite Australia Designated Safeguarding Officer: Justin Dobson: 0413187055.

Approved by: Justin Dobson [Director]

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