



SPORTS AID PTY LTD
CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

Sports Aid Pty Ltd T/A Sports Aid (**ACN 664 104 385**) (**Sports Aid**) is committed to child safety. This policy applies to all staff and volunteers of Sports Aid, whether or not they work in direct contact with children, and to all activities at Sports Aid that involve, result in, or relate to, contact with children. This policy can be viewed by members of the general public, children and their families. See the end of this policy for '**Definitions**'.

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse you should phone 000 immediately.

If you have any feedback on this policy please contact us using the details below.

2. STATEMENT OF OUR COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

Sports Aid is a child safe organisation which welcomes all children, young people and their families.

Sports Aid is committed to ensuring that safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture, including through our governance strategies, guidelines for staff and ensuring that a child safe culture is championed and modelled at all levels of the organisation from the top down and bottom up.

Sports Aid wants children to be safe, happy and empowered. Sports Aid supports and respects all children, as well as our staff and volunteers. Sports Aid is committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children, where children's participation is valued, their views are respected, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives.

Sports Aid aims to engage in open communication with families and communities, and to keep family and communities involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing. We are committed to regularly reviewing our child safe practices, and seeking input from our children, families, staff, and volunteers to inform our ongoing strategies.

Our child safe policies, strategies and practices are inclusive of the needs of all children and children. We aim to understand children and young people's diverse circumstances, and provides support to and respond those who are vulnerable. Particular attention is given to the child safety needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, international children, children with disabilities, those unable to live at home, children and young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) and other children experiencing risk or vulnerability.

Sports Aid is committed to establishing a culturally safe environment where the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are respected, and encouraging children to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights. Sports Aid is committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.

Sports Aid has robust and thorough human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers. Sports Aid is committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on

child abuse risks. We will ensure that our staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and aware to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.

Sports Aid has zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures. Sports Aid is committed to preventing child abuse and proactively identifying risks early on, and removing and reducing these risks of harm to children, including in both physical and online environments. Sports Aid will ensure that processes for complaints and concerns are child-focused.

Sports Aid will ensure that this policy, and other relevant organisational policies and child safe practices are reviewed, updated and improved on a regular basis, and that the Child Safe Standards are properly implemented.

Sports Aid has legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when Sports Aid (its staff and volunteers) are concerned about a child's safety, which Sports Aid complies with rigorously.

Sports Aid has specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments to child safety.

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

We have provided an overview of who is responsible for particular aspects of child safety and wellbeing in the organisation below.

Sports Aid leadership team

Managers will:

- ensure effective child safety and wellbeing governance, policies, procedures, codes and practices are in place and followed;
- model a child safe culture that facilitates the active participation of children, families and staff in promoting and improving child safety, cultural safety and wellbeing;
- enable inclusive practices where the diverse needs of all children are considered;
- reinforce high standards of respectful behaviour between children and adults, and between children;
- promote regular open discussion on child safety issues within the organisation including at leadership team meetings and staff and volunteer meetings;
- facilitate regular professional learning for staff and volunteers (where appropriate) to build deeper understandings of child safety, cultural safety, child wellbeing and prevention of responding to abuse; and
- create an environment where child safety complaints and concerns are readily raised, and no one is discouraged from reporting an allegation of child abuse to relevant authorities.

Sports Aid staff, directors, board members and volunteers

All staff and volunteers will:

- participate in child safety and wellbeing induction and training provided by Sports Aid, and always follow Sports Aid's child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures;
- act in accordance with our Code of Conduct
- understand and comply with their child safety and legal obligations;
- identify and raise concerns about child safety issues in accordance with this policy;

- ensure children's views are taken seriously and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives; and
- implement inclusive practices that respond to the diverse needs of children.

4. CHILD SAFETY STRATEGIES

a) Establishing a culturally safe environment for children

At Sports Aid, we are committed to establishing an inclusive and culturally safe environment where the strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, values and practices are respected. We think about how every child can have a positive experience in a safe environment. Sports Aid promotes diversity and tolerance within our organisation, and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome. In particular, we:

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children;
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds;
- recognise the link between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, identity and safety and actively create opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to have a voice and presence in our organisational planning, policies, and activities; and
- ensure that children with a disability are safe and can participate equally.

b) Diversity and equity

As a child safe organisation, we celebrate the rich diversity of our customers, families and community and promote respectful environments that are free from discrimination. Our focus is on wellbeing and growth for all.

We recognise that every child has unique skills, strengths and experiences to draw on. We pay particular attention to individuals and groups of children and young people in our community with additional and specific needs. This includes tailoring our child safety strategies and supports to the needs of:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people;
- children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds;
- children and young people with disabilities;
- children unable to live at home or impacted by family violence; and
- children and young people who identify as LGBTIQ+.

c) Empowering children

This policy is intended to empower children who are important and active participants in our organisation. Sports Aid involves them when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them. Sports Aid listens to their views and respects what they have to say.

We work to create an inclusive and supportive environment that encourages children and families to contribute to our child safety approach and understand their rights and their responsibilities.

Respectful relationships between customers are reinforced and we encourage strong friendships to ensure a sense of belonging through our organisational values.

We ensure our children know who to talk to if they are worried or feeling unsafe and we encourage them to share concerns with a trusted adult at any time.

d) Family engagement

Our families and the Sports Aid community have an important role in monitoring and promoting children's safety and wellbeing and helping children to raise any concerns.

To support family engagement, at Sports Aid, we are committed to providing families and community with accessible information about our organisation's child safe policies and practices and involving them in our approach to child safety and wellbeing.

We will create opportunities for families to have input into the development and review of our child safety policies and practices and encourage them to raise any concerns and ideas for improvement.

We do this by:

- informing families and the Sports Aid community about any significant updates to our child safety policies or processes, and strategies or initiatives that we are taking to ensure customer safety
- conducting parent or guardian information sessions

e) Our staff and volunteers

This policy guides our staff and volunteers on how to behave with children in our organisation.

All of our staff and volunteers are required to abide by our Staff Handbook which sets out our general policies. All staff and volunteers, as well as children and their families, are given the opportunity to contribute to the development of this policy.

i. Staff Induction

All newly appointed staff will be expected to participate in our child safety and wellbeing induction program.

ii. Ongoing supervision and management of staff and volunteers

All staff and volunteers engaged in child-connected work will be supervised appropriately to ensure that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate.

Staff and volunteers will be monitored, assessed and supervised regularly to ensure they understand Sports Aid's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse, as well as checking that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate. Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including the Department of Health and Human Services and Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

Inappropriate behaviour towards children and young people will be managed swiftly and in

accordance with our policies and our legal obligations. Child safety and wellbeing will be paramount.

f) Child safety knowledge, skills and awareness

Ongoing training and education are essential to ensure that everyone in our organisation understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

Sports Aid's organisational culture aims for all staff and volunteers (in addition to parents/carers and children) to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train our staff and volunteers to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

Sports Aid also supports our staff and volunteers through ongoing supervision to: develop their skills to protect children from abuse; and promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, the cultural safety of children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability.

In addition to the child safety and wellbeing induction, our staff will participate in a range of training and professional learning to equip them with the skills and knowledge necessary to maintain a child safe environment. Staff child safety and wellbeing training will be delivered annually and will include guidance on:

- Sports Aid's child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes, and practices;
- recognising indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children;
- responding effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and supporting colleagues who disclose harm;
- how to build culturally safe environments for children and children;
- information sharing and recordkeeping obligations; and
- how to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in our environment.

g) Recruitment and screening practices of staff and volunteers

Sports Aid takes all reasonable steps to employ and hire skilled people to work with children. We develop selection criteria and advertisements which clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities. Sports Aid understands that when recruiting staff and volunteers it has ethical as well as legislative obligations. We are committed to ensure the safety of children and young people through our procurement policies.

When engaging staff or volunteers to perform child-related work, we:

- sight, verify and record the person's Working with Children clearance or equivalent background check (please see the Working with Children Check website www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au for further information);
- collect and record:
 - proof of the person's identity and any professional or other qualifications;
 - the person's history of working with children; and
 - references that address suitability for the job and working with children.

Sports Aid carries out reference checks to ensure that we are recruiting the right people.

Sports Aid actively encourages applications from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with a disability.

h) Fair procedures for personnel

The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern. Sports Aid are also fair and just to personnel. The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent, and based on evidence.

Sports Aid records all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using our incident reporting form, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored.

If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, Sports Aid provides updates to children and families on progress and any actions we as an organisation take.

i) Legislative responsibilities

Sports Aid takes our legal responsibilities seriously, including:

- Failure to disclose: Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 years old have an obligation to report that information to the police.
- Failure to protect: People of authority within Sports Aid's organisation will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.
- Any personnel of Sports Aid who are mandatory reporters must comply with their duties.

j) Risk management

In Victoria, organisations are required to protect children when a risk is identified (see information about failure to protect above). In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, Sports Aid proactively manages risks of abuse to children we work with.

Our policies in relation to general occupational health and safety risks are set out in our Staff Handbook.

Sports Aid has risk management strategies in place to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks, which include risks posed by physical environments (for example, any doors that can lock), and online environments (for example, no staff or volunteer of Sports Aid is to have contact with a child or the child's family on social media, other than communication undertaken in accordance with our Staff Handbook.

k) Communications

Sports Aid is committed to communicating our child safety strategies to the school community through:

- ensuring that key child safety and wellbeing policies are available on our website including this policy;
- ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at staff and volunteer meetings; and
- updates in our communication/rostering platform & via email

l) Privacy and information sharing

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be staff, volunteers, parents or children, unless there is a risk to someone's safety. Sports Aid has safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will have access to it.

Sports Aid collects, uses, and discloses information about children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy laws, and other relevant laws. Our Privacy Policy also sets out our commitment in relation to personal information and is available on our website:

<https://sportsaid.au/>

m) Records management

We acknowledge that good records management practices are a critical element of child safety and wellbeing and manage our records by collecting and storing this information on the Sports Aid team shared drive.

n) Regular review of child safety practices

At Sports Aid, we have established processes for the review and ongoing improvement of our child safe policies, procedures, and practices.

This policy will be reviewed every two years and following significant incidents if they occur. Sports Aid will ensure that families and children have the opportunity to contribute. Where possible Sports Aid endeavours to work with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, culturally and/or linguistically diverse communities and people with a disability.

o) Allegations, concerns and complaints

Sports Aid fosters a culture that encourages staff, volunteers, children, parents, and the community to raise concerns and complaints. This makes it more difficult for misconduct or abuse to occur and remain hidden. Sports Aid takes all allegations of abuse seriously and has procedures in place to investigate these thoroughly and quickly. Sports Aid's staff and volunteers are trained to deal appropriately with allegations.

Sports Aid works to ensure all children, families, staff and volunteers know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.

When Sports Aid is gathering information in relation to a complaint about alleged misconduct or abuse of a child, we will listen to the complainant's account and take them seriously, check our understanding of the complaint, support the child and keep them (and their parents and carers, as appropriate) informed about progress.

We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place (see information about failure to disclose above).

If an adult has a reasonable belief that an incident has occurred then they must report the incident. Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be:

- a child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves);
- behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed;
- someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it; and
- observing suspicious behaviour.

5. RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

This Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy is to be read in conjunction with other related school policies, procedures, and codes. These include our: Code of Conduct, Privacy Policy, Grievance Policy, Information & Technology, Work Health & Safety, Anti Discrimination & Bullying Policy

6. DEFINITIONS

Child or young person means a person under the age of 18 years.

Child abuse includes:

- b) any act committed against a child involving:
 - (i) a sexual offence
 - (ii) grooming offences under section 49M(1) of the *Crimes Act 1958* (VIC)
- c) the infliction, on a child, of:
 - (i) physical violence
 - (ii) serious emotional or psychological harm.

Child safety includes matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk or child abuse, and responding to suspicions, incidents, disclosures or allegations of child abuse.

Parent / guardian / carer (parent): In relation to a child means any person who has parental responsibility for 'major long-term issues' as defined in the *Family Law Act 1975* (Cth) or has been granted 'guardianship' for the child pursuant to the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic) or other state welfare legislation.

Sports Aid means Sports Aid Pty Ltd T/A Sports Aid (ACN 664 104 385).

7. POLICY STATUS AND REVIEW

The Child Safety Officer is responsible for reviewing and updating the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy at least every two years. The review will include input from children, parents/carers and the community.

Sports Aid Pty Ltd T/A Sports Aid (ACN 664 104 385)

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Child Safety Policy last reviewed on: March 2023