



ST JOHN'S UNITING NETBALL CLUB

CHILD SAFETY POLICY

INTRODUCTION

St John's Uniting Netball Club, also known as St John's Netball Club or the Club, is committed to promoting and protecting the interests and safety of children. We have zero tolerance for child abuse.

Everyone involved in St John's Uniting Netball Club is responsible for the care and protection of children and reporting information about child abuse.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is

1. To minimise the risk that child abuse will occur within St John's Uniting Netball Club.
2. To work towards an organisational culture of child safety.
3. To ensure that all parties are aware of their responsibilities for identifying possible occasions for child abuse and for establishing controls and procedures for preventing such abuse and/or detecting such abuse when it occurs.
4. To provide guidance to volunteers as to the action that should be taken where they suspect any abuse within or outside of the organisation.
5. To provide a clear statement to volunteers forbidding any such abuse.
6. To provide assurance that any and all suspected abuse will be reported and fully investigated.

This policy must be read in conjunction with:

- a. The law of the Commonwealth or of the relevant state or territory;
- b. The Club's Code of Conduct and code of conduct specific to each role.
- c. The Clubs Complaints Policy
- d. The Club's Risk Management Policy
- e. The Clubs Constitution

POLICY

St John's Uniting Netball Club is committed to promoting and protecting at all times the best interests of children involved in its programs.

- All children, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation, or family or social background, have equal rights to protection from abuse.
- St John's Uniting Netball Club has zero tolerance for child abuse. Everyone volunteering in the Club is responsible for the care and protection of the children within our care and reporting information about suspected child abuse.
- Child protection is a shared responsibility between the Club and members of the St John's Uniting Netball Club community.
- St John's Uniting Netball Club will consider the opinions of children and use their opinions to develop child protection policies.

If any person believes a child is in immediate risk of abuse, telephone 000.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The **Committee of St John's Uniting Netball Club** has ultimate responsibility for the detecting and minimising the risk of child abuse. The Committee is also responsible for ensuring that appropriate policies and procedures and a Child Protection Code of Conduct are in place.

The President of St John's Uniting Netball Club (or nominated person), will be appointed as Child Protection Officer and is responsible for the reporting of child abuse on the basis of reasonable belief.

The Committee is responsible for:

- Maintaining and update a Working With Children's check register
- Ensuring that all volunteers are aware of relevant laws, organisational policies and procedures, and the organisation's Code of Conduct;
- Ensuring that all adults within the St John's Uniting Netball Club community are aware of their obligation to report suspected sexual abuse of a child in accordance with these policies and procedures;
- Ensuring that all volunteers and spectators are aware of their obligation to observe the Code of Conduct (particularly as it relates to child safety);
- Providing support for volunteers in undertaking their child protection responsibilities.
- Promote child safety at all times;
- Assess the risk of child abuse within their area of control and minimise any risk to the extent possible
- Educate volunteers about the prevention and detection of child abuse; and
- Facilitate the reporting of any inappropriate behaviour or suspected abusive activities

Coaches and team managers should be familiar with the types of abuse that might occur within their area of responsibility and be alert for any indications of such conduct.

All club members share in the responsibility for the detection and minimising the risk of child abuse.

REPORTING

Any Committee Member, Volunteer or club member who has reasonable belief to suspect abusive activity must immediately notify the appropriate child protection service or the police. They should also advise the President about their concern.

INVESTIGATING

If the appropriate child protection service or the police decide to conduct an investigation of this report, all committee members and volunteers must co-operate fully with the investigation.

RESPONDING

If it is alleged that a volunteer may have committed an offence or have breached the Club's policies or its Code of Conduct the person concerned may be removed from all activities within the Club while any investigation resulting from the report is conducted.

If the investigation concludes that on the balance of probabilities an offence (or a breach of the Club's policies or Code of Conduct) has occurred then disciplinary action may follow, up to and including cessation of involvement with the Club. The findings of the investigation will also be reported to any external body as required.

PRIVACY

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved unless there is a risk to someone's safety. St John's Netball Club will have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected.

Everyone is entitled to know how the personal information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will be able to access it.

POLICY REVIEW

Every two years, and following every reportable incident, a review shall be conducted to assess whether the Club's child protection policies or procedures require modification to better protect the children under the St John's Netball Club's care.

DEFINITIONS

Child means a person below the age of 18 years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.

Child protection means any responsibility, measure or activity undertaken to safeguard children from harm.

Child abuse means all forms of physical abuse, emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse and exploitation, neglect or negligent treatment, commercial (e.g. for financial gain) or other exploitation of a child and includes any actions that results in actual or potential harm to a child.

Child sexual assault is any act which exposes a child to, or involves a child in, sexual

processes beyond his or her understanding or contrary to accepted community standards. Sexually abusive behaviours can include the fondling of genitals, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or any other object, fondling of breasts, voyeurism, exhibitionism, and exposing the child to or involving the child in pornography. It includes child grooming, which refers to actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child to lower the child's inhibitions in preparation for sexual activity with the child.

Reasonable grounds for belief is a belief based on reasonable grounds that child abuse has occurred when all known considerations or facts relevant to the formation of a belief are taken into account and these are objectively assessed. Circumstances or considerations may include the source of the allegation and how it was communicated, the nature of and details of the allegation, and whether there are any other related matters known regarding the alleged perpetrator.

A reasonable belief is formed if a reasonable person believes that:

- i. The child is in need of protection,
- ii. The child has suffered or is likely to suffer "significant harm as a result of physical injury",
- iii. The parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.

A 'reasonable belief' or a 'belief on reasonable grounds' is not the same as having proof, but is more than mere rumour or speculation.

A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds. For example, a 'reasonable belief' might be formed if:

- A child states that they have been physically or sexually abused;
- A child states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves);
- Someone who knows a child states that the child has been physically or sexually abused;
- Professional observations of the child's behaviour or development leads a professional to form a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused or is likely to be abused; and/or
- Signs of abuse lead to a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused.

Additional information can be found at www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+protect+offence

- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)*
- Department of Health and Human Services ph 1300664977
- Child Protection Crisis Line (24 hours) 131278