



**Progress** the game, so **everyone** can share in its **heritage** and **possibilities**.

## AFL Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy

### 1. PURPOSE

This Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy (**Policy**) outlines how the AFL will deliver on its commitments to safeguarding Children and Young People involved in AFL activities, programs, services and facilities. This Policy is also designed to assist AFL People to understand what their responsibilities are in relation to safeguarding Children and Young People.

The particular needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and children with a disability will be addressed by AFL People in the performance of their obligations under this Policy.

Unless the context requires otherwise, capitalised terms used in this Policy are the terms defined in Appendix 1 - Definitions.

### 2. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

This Policy should be read in conjunction with and is supported by the AFL's Commitment Statement to Safeguarding Children and Young People (approved by the AFL Commission), Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of Conduct and Safeguarding Children and Young People Complaints and Reporting Procedure (**Supporting Documents**). This Policy and the Supporting Documents are available on the AFL website at: <https://www.afl.com.au/policies>.

### 3. SCOPE

This Policy applies to the AFL and all AFL People.

In short, this means that this Policy applies to the AFL, the AFL State Entities and the AFL's and the AFL State Entities' employees, directly engaged volunteers and contractors/consultants, who are engaged to

provide services to the AFL and/or an AFL State Entity that involve an interaction with Children or Young People.

Whilst the Policy does not apply to AFL clubs, nor State or community football leagues and clubs, the AFL is committed to supporting such bodies to understand their obligations in relation to safeguarding Children and Young People primarily through communication and providing relevant resources.

#### **4. AFL'S COMMITMENTS TO SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

The AFL is committed to promoting and protecting the safety and wellbeing of Children and Young People in our care who access AFL activities, programs, services or facilities including by fostering a "child safe" culture.

In the event a concern or allegation is raised in relation to Child Abuse or other inappropriate behavior towards a Child or Young Person that has occurred while a Child or Young Person is under the AFL's care, the AFL will ensure it is treated seriously, in a culturally sensitive manner and fully investigated in accordance with this Policy, the Supporting Documents, any other related policies or procedures and relevant legislation.

The AFL will actively promote the safety of Children and Young People throughout the Australian Football community, whilst recognising the need for state and local football leagues and clubs that are not under the AFL's direct control to take responsibility for providing a safe physical and online environment for Children and Young People in their care.

##### **4.1. AFL's Commitment to AFL People Understanding their Behavioural Requirements**

The AFL is committed to ensuring that each AFL Person involved in the delivery of AFL programs, activities and services to Children and Young People understands their role and the behaviour required of them in relation to this Policy. The AFL provides clear position descriptions which state relevant safeguarding requirements so that AFL People are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities from the outset.

All new AFL People will be provided with a copy of this Policy and the Supporting Documents, including the AFL Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of Conduct, which outlines the AFL's requirements for AFL People's behaviour involving or affecting Children and Young People. All new AFL People will be required to participate in an induction program, which will provide them with further information about our commitment to safeguarding Children and Young People. The AFL will support ongoing education and training for all AFL People to ensure safeguarding information is provided on an ongoing basis.

It is the responsibility of each AFL Person to understand their specific responsibilities in relation to safeguarding Children and Young People.

#### **4.2. AFL's Commitment to Recruitment and Pre-employment Screening**

The AFL is committed to implementing recruitment and screening practices for all appointments of AFL People that support safeguarding of Children and Young People from Child Abuse. All recruitment and screening practices must minimise the likelihood that the AFL will recruit a person who is unsuitable to work / volunteer with Children or Young People. The AFL's recruitment practices ensure that:

- this Policy and the commitments described in it are communicated to potential applicants for positions;
- face-to-face interviews are held which include safeguarding-related questions;
- two professional reference checks are undertaken for all potential employees and two suitable reference checks are undertaken for volunteer positions; and
- the relevant screening checks (specific to the role) are undertaken, which may include identity, criminal record, working with children checks and qualification checks.

#### **4.3. AFL's Commitment to Involving Children, Young People and their Parents/Guardians**

The AFL is committed to educating Children and Young People and their parents/guardians about self-protection and empowerment, ensuring information and resources are accessible to them.

#### **4.4. AFL's Commitment to Child Abuse Reporting**

AFL People must report all suspected Child Abuse (and other inappropriate behaviour such as Grooming and Bullying) in accordance with the AFL Safeguarding Children and Young People Complaints and Reporting Procedures and relevant legislation. The AFL documents any allegation, disclosure or concern regarding Child Abuse and any other form of inappropriate behaviour and monitors responses to all allegations, disclosures or concerns.

#### **4.5. AFL's Commitment to Supporting a Child-Safe Culture through Policy Compliance and Review**

The AFL monitors AFL People's and our external providers' compliance with this Policy and the Supporting Documents. The AFL requires AFL People to disclose convictions or charges affecting their suitability to engage with Children and Young People and reviews police checks and Working With Children Checks periodically.

The AFL reviews policies, procedures and practices in relation to safeguarding Children and Young People from Child Abuse on an ongoing basis.

The AFL involves relevant stakeholders in reviews of this Policy and communicates any significant alterations of this Policy to AFL People. The AFL undertakes reviews at least annually to identify and document potential risks to Children or Young People associated with the delivery of our activities, program, services and facilities. The AFL has a procedure to undertake annual reviews of this Policy, as part of our ongoing compliance with safeguarding requirements, although reviews and alterations may occur more frequently due to legislative changes, organisational changes, incident outcomes and other matters deemed appropriate by the AFL Executive.

**5. RELATED LEGISLATION**

The AFL and all AFL People are also bound by legislation relevant to the protection of Children and Young People. Please refer to Appendix B for a list of relevant legislation.

**6. AFL’s AND AFL PEOPLE’S RESPONSIBILITIES**

Entity	Role/Responsibility
<b>AFL Commission / Executive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote the AFL’s commitment to this Policy and the expectations involved.</li> <li>• Ensure adequate resources are allocated to allow for the development and effective implementation of this Policy.</li> <li>• Support review of this Policy and the Supporting Documents on an annual cycle as a minimum, or at a time governed by legislation, regulations, or organisational learnings.</li> <li>• Advocate and promote Children’s and Young People’s rights to empower and engage Children and Young People.</li> </ul>
<b>AFL State Entity CEO’s &amp; Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure all AFL People engaged by the AFL State Entity understand their obligations under this Policy and the Supporting Documents.</li> <li>• Oversee the implementation of this Policy by all AFL People engaged by the AFL State Entity.</li> <li>• Ensure adequate resources are allocated to allow effective implementation of this Policy by AFL People engaged by the AFL State Entity.</li> <li>• Provide support to AFL People in any decision of an AFL Person to initiate any form of action to protect a Child or Young Person from Child Abuse.</li> <li>• Support and guide community football bodies (Leagues, Associations and Commissions) to understand their obligations regarding safeguarding Children and Young People through communication and providing relevant resources to them.</li> <li>• Ensure AFL People engaged by the AFL State Entity that may be involved in a matter relating to the safety and wellbeing of a Child or Young Person are referred to appropriate supports, such as counselling and formal debriefing.</li> <li>• Advocate and promote Children’s and Young People’s rights to empower and engage Children and Young People.</li> </ul>

Entity	Role/Responsibility
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create opportunities for regular discussion at all levels to support a culture of continuous improvement and accountability for child protection.</li> <li>• Ensure that AFL People engaged by the AFL State Entity are aware of the appropriate recruitment, screening and employment/engagement practices in relation to individuals with specific roles in working, coaching, umpiring or volunteering with Children and Young People and their families.</li> </ul>
<b>AFL and AFL State Entity Employees, Volunteers and contractors/consultants (directly engaged)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain a full understanding of the commitments and expectations in relation to safeguarding Children and Young People as set out in this Policy.</li> <li>• Undertake any required induction and training relevant to safeguarding Children and Young People.</li> <li>• Seek guidance from management if there is a lack of understanding in relation to the commitments and expectations as set out in this Policy and the Supporting Documents.</li> <li>• Take the appropriate action to protect Children and Young People from all forms of Child Abuse and any other forms of inappropriate behaviour.</li> <li>• Assist in creating and maintaining a child safe culture and a culture of inclusion.</li> <li>• Report any concerns or evidence in regard to the safety of Children and Young People in the organisation through the appropriate reporting channels as set out in the AFL Safeguarding Children and Young People Complaints and Reporting Procedures and the other Supporting Documents.</li> <li>• Adopt the practices and behaviour set by this Policy as standard when carrying out their roles.</li> </ul>
<b>AFL Integrity &amp; Security Department</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate and take appropriate action in respect of any report received in relation to an AFL Person breaching this Policy or any other AFL policy relevant to safeguarding Children and Young People.</li> <li>• Investigate and take appropriate action in respect of any report in relation to child safety or Child Abuse or any other inappropriate behaviour in accordance with the AFL Safeguarding Children and Young People Complaints and Reporting Procedures.</li> </ul>
<b>Safeguarding Children Coordinator</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide guidance, support and advice to all AFL People in relation to concerns about a Child's or Young Person's wellbeing.</li> <li>• Act as a key contact for queries, comments or concerns raised by AFL People in relation to safeguarding Children and Young People from Child Abuse and other inappropriate behaviour.</li> <li>• Act as a resource to AFL People and provide connections to local community networks and agencies if needed (e.g. Child Protection authorities) in relation to safeguarding Children and Young People from Child Abuse and other inappropriate behaviour.</li> </ul>

Entity	Role/Responsibility
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review reports in relation to investigations conducted under this Policy and provide feedback to appropriate AFL People.</li> <li>• Report and provide full briefing to the AFL Head of Integrity and General Manager - People in the instance of an allegation of Child Abuse or other form of inappropriate behaviour being made against any AFL Person.</li> <li>• Report to the AFL Head of Integrity and General Manager – People on issues relating to safeguarding Children and Young People and on compliance with this Policy and the Supporting Documents.</li> <li>• Develop, maintain and review this Policy, the Supporting Documents and associated procedures and processes.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Child Safety Officer</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide guidance, support and advice to all AFL People in relation to concerns about a Child's or Young Person's wellbeing.</li> <li>• Act as a key contact for queries, comments or concerns raised by AFL People or parents and other external parties in relation to safeguarding Children and Young People from Child Abuse.</li> <li>• Report any concerns or breaches of this Policy to the AFL Integrity Department and the Safeguarding Children Coordinator.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Human Resources</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cooperate with the AFL Security and Integrity Department in respect of any investigations relating to this Policy, the Supporting Documents and any other related safeguarding Children and Young People policies and procedures.</li> <li>• Take appropriate action in respect of any AFL People found to be in breach of this Policy, the Supporting Documents and any related safeguarding Children and Young People policies and procedures (which may include dismissal).</li> </ul>

## Appendix 1 – DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
<b>AFL</b>	Australian Football League being the governing body for Australian Football and which conducts Australian Football competitions throughout Australia.
<b>AFL People</b>	<p>The following persons associated with the AFL and/or AFL State Entities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All employees (including casual); and</li> <li>• All directly engaged volunteers and contractors / consultants who are engaged to provide services to the AFL or an AFL State Entity that involve an interaction with Children or Young People.</li> </ul>
<b>AFL State Entities</b>	<p>The State entities controlled by the AFL being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AFL (NSW/ACT (Commission Limited));</li> <li>• AFL Northern Territory Limited;</li> <li>• AFL QLD Limited;</li> <li>• Football Tasmania Limited; and</li> <li>• Australian Football League (Victoria) Limited.</li> </ul>
<b>Bullying</b>	<p>Bullying involves the inappropriate use of power by one or more persons over another less powerful person and is generally an act that is repeated over time. Bullying has been described by researchers as taking many forms which are often interrelated, and may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Verbal</i> (name calling, put downs, threats);</li> <li>• <i>Physical</i> (hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting);</li> <li>• <i>Social</i> (ignoring, excluding, ostracising, alienating); and/or</li> <li>• <i>Psychological</i> (spreading rumours, stalking, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions).</li> </ul>
<b>Children and Young People</b>	A person under the age of eighteen years. Child or Young Person shall mean a single person falling within the definition of Children and Young People.
<b>Child Abuse</b>	Abuse is an act by a parent, caregiver, other adult or older adolescent that endangers a Child or Young Person's physical or emotional health or development. Abuse can be a single incident, but usually takes place over time. Abuse can happen in several different ways, and can be Physical, Emotional or Psychological and/or Sexual Abuse. Abuse can also encompass Neglect and harassing behaviour, such as Bullying.
<b>Emotional or Psychological Abuse</b>	Emotional or psychological abuse occurs when a Child or Young Person does not receive the love, affection or attention they need for healthy emotional, psychological and social development. Such abuse may involve repeated rejection or threats to a Child or Young Person. Constant criticism, teasing, ignoring,

Term	Definition
	threatening, yelling, scapegoating, ridicule and rejection or continual coldness are all examples of emotional abuse. These behaviors continue to an extent that results in significant damage to the Child's or Young Person's physical, intellectual or emotional wellbeing and development.
<b>Family Violence</b>	Family violence occurs when Children and Young People are forced to live with violence between adults in their home. It is Harmful to Children and Young People. It can include witnessing violence or the consequences of violence. Family violence is defined as violence between members of a family, or extended family, or those fulfilling the role of family in a Child or Young Person's life. Exposure to family violence places Children and Young People at increased risk of physical injury and Harm, and has a significant impact on their wellbeing and development.
<b>Grooming</b>	Grooming is a term used to describe what happens when a perpetrator of abuse builds a relationship with a Child or Young Person, with a view to abusing them. There is no set pattern in relation to the grooming of Children or Young People. For some perpetrators, there will be a lengthy period of time before the abuse begins. The Child or Young Person may be given special attention and, what starts as an apparently normal display of affection, such as cuddling, can develop into sexual touching or masturbation and then into more serious sexual behaviour. Other perpetrators may draw a Child or Young Person in and abuse them relatively quickly. Some abusers do not groom Children or Young People but abuse them without forming a relationship at all. Grooming can take place in any setting where a relationship is formed, such as leisure, music, sports and religious activities, in internet chatrooms, in social media or by other technological channels.
<b>Harm</b>	Harm to a Child or Young Person is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the Child's or Young Person's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. It is immaterial how the harm is caused. Harm can be caused by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emotional or Physiological Abuse, Physical Abuse or Neglect;</li> <li>• Sexual Abuse;</li> <li>• a single act, omission or circumstance; and</li> <li>• a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances.</li> </ul>
<b>Neglect</b>	Neglect is the persistent failure or deliberate denial to provide a Child or Young Person with the basic necessities of life. Such neglect includes the failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, adequate supervision, clean water, medical attention or supervision to the extent that the Child's or Young Person's health and development is, or is likely to be, significantly Harmed. Categories of neglect include physical neglect, medical neglect, abandonment or desertion, emotional neglect and educational neglect. The issue of neglect must be considered within the context of resources reasonably available.
<b>Physical Abuse</b>	Physical abuse occurs when a person subjects a Child or Young Person to non-accidental physically aggressive acts. The abuser may inflict an injury intentionally



Term	Definition
	<p>or inadvertently as a result of physical punishment or the aggressive treatment of a Child or Young Person. Physically abusive behavior includes (but is not limited to) shoving, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, biting, burning, excessive and physically harmful over-training and kicking. It also includes giving Children and Young People harmful substances such as drugs, alcohol or poison. Certain types of punishment, whilst not causing injury, can also be considered physical abuse if they place a Child or Young Person at risk of being hurt.</p>
<p><b>Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of Conduct</b></p>	<p>The <i>Safeguarding Children Code of Conduct</i> aims to identify and prevent behaviour that may be Harmful to Children and Young People. The Code of Conduct outlines what is, and what is not, acceptable behaviour or practice when working with or engaging with Children and Young People.</p>
<p><b>Sexual Abuse</b></p>	<p>Sexual abuse occurs when an adult or a person of authority (e.g. older) involves a Child or Young Person in any sexual activity. Perpetrators of sexual abuse take advantage of their power, authority or position over the Child or Young Person for their own benefit. It can include making sexual comments to a Child or Young Person, engaging Children or Young People to participate in sexual conversations over the internet or on social media, kissing, touching a Child's or Young Person's genitals or breasts, oral sex or intercourse with a Child or Young Person. Encouraging a Child or Young Person to view pornographic magazines, websites and videos, engaging a Child or Young Person in sexual conversations over the internet and Sexual Exploitation are also considered forms of sexual abuse.</p>
<p><b>Sexual Exploitation</b></p>	<p>Sexual exploitation occurs when a Child or Young Person is forced into sexual activities that are then recorded in some way and/or used to produce pornography. Such pornography can be in the form of actual photos or videos or published on the internet. Exploitation can also involve a Child or Young Person who are forced into prostitution.</p>

## Appendix B – RELEVANT LEGISLATION

	Principle Child Protection Act	Mandatory Reporting	WWCC	Reportable Conduct
<b>NSW</b>	Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)	Children & Young Persons (Care & Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)	Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012	Ombudsman Act 1974
<b>ACT</b>	Children and Young People Act 2008 (ACT)	Children & Young People Act 2008 (ACT)	Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Act 2011	Reportable Conduct and Information Sharing Legislation Amendment Act 2016
<b>VIC</b>	Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.)	Children, Youth & Families Act 2005 (Vic)	Working With Children Act 2005	Children Legislation Amendment (Reportable Conduct) Act 2017
<b>TAS</b>	Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1997 (Tas.)	Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1997 (Tas)	Registration to Work with Vulnerable People Act 2013	
<b>QLD</b>	Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld)	Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld)	Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000	
		Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 (Qld)		
<b>NT</b>	Care and Protection of Children Act 2007 (NT)	Care & Protection of Children Act 2007 (NT)	Care and Protection of Children Act 2007 (NT)	
<b>CTH</b>		Family Law Act 1975 (Cth)		
<b>Australian Employment Legislation</b>				
	Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986			
	Age Discrimination Act 2004			
	Disability Discrimination Act 1992			
	Racial Discrimination Act 1975			
	Sex Discrimination Act 1984			

Fair Work Act 2009

Fair Work Regulations 2009

Freedom of Information Act 1982

Privacy Act 1988

Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Cth)

Fair Work Amendment (Protecting Vulnerable Workers) Act 2017