

Keeping children safe in recreation and sport

Creating safe environments is everyone's responsibility



playbytherules.net.au



Government of South Australia
Office for Recreation, Sport and Racing

Information for protecting our children for
parents, participants and volunteers.

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Office for Recreation, Sport and Racing

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This booklet has been prepared by the Office for Recreation, Sport and Racing



A child safe environment

A child safe organisation protects children from harm and creates an environment where they are respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential.

This is embedded in an organisation's policies and procedures and supported and practiced by all members, spectators and visitors.

You have created a child safe organisation when your club or group meets all its legal responsibilities to ensure it has a child safe and child friendly environment that minimises the risk to children of physical, sexual, emotional and psychological harm and neglect.



Terms we use

Bullying

When an individual or a group of people with more power (real or perceived) repeatedly and intentionally cause hurt or harm to another person or group of people who feel powerless to respond.

Child (Children)

Under South Australian law any person aged less than 18 years is a child or young person.

Child Safe Officer

This is the title of the person within an organisation whose role is to promote and support children's safety and welfare.

Club or Organisation

The sporting or recreation group to which you belong.

Participant

Children and adults who are involved in recreational and sporting activities as players, coaches, officials, staff, volunteers or members.

Parent

In the context of this publication the title includes parents, caregivers and guardians.

Volunteer

This title encompasses a broad variety of roles within recreation and sporting clubs where a person freely gives their time to support the organisation's activities. This includes, but is not limited to, the roles of coach, group leader, manager, club official, referee and supervisor.

Mandated Reporter

This person has a legal responsibility to report a suspicion on reasonable grounds that a child is, or may be, at risk.

Child Safe Policy

Every organisation providing services or activities to children and young people must have a Child Safe Policy. The policy will clearly state your organisation's commitment to the safety, protection and wellbeing of children and young people and the steps your organisation takes to promote this. *A Child Safe Policy needs to be actively implemented, not just exist on paper.*



Club members' commitment

The section introduces examples of the type of commitment statements a club may make to ensure a child safe and child friendly environment.

Everyone in our club:

Is committed to promoting children's wellbeing and protecting them from harm

Every child has the right to join a club confident that they will be supported and protected. A good club will have policies and procedures in place to encourage this and all members will be aware of and have access to these documents.

Behaves according to our club's code of conduct

All parents, players, officials and administrators are required to read and thoroughly familiarise themselves with the club's code of conduct. This sets out the guidelines by which all members are bound.

Is always on the lookout for potential risks to the safety of our children

All club members are encouraged to talk to the club administrators, coaches or other officials if they have concerns about the safety or treatment of children. It is better to address a situation early than wait to see if it gets worse.

Knows how to respond to and report behaviours that threaten or are harmful to children

Every member has a responsibility to be up to date with their club's reporting and complaint handling processes.



The people who run our club ensure:

Our club rules promote the wellbeing and safety of children

Management is responsible for ensuring that the club has a current Child Safe Policy. The club must also have a clear code of conduct that is freely available to all members.

All reasonable steps are taken to ensure coaches, other staff, officials and volunteers are not a risk to the children they work with

There are mandatory (legal) requirements for clubs to assess the suitability of members and staff who are engaged in child-related work. Screening processes must include a Working with Children Check. Other recruitment processes such as referee checks should also be undertaken.

All our staff, coaches, officials and volunteers receive ongoing training, support and development related to working with children

The club needs to be aware of the training available for all who work with children. This may involve coaching courses and qualifications, child safe training, Play by the Rules online training, and building awareness of all club policies and procedures. All volunteers should receive appropriate induction.

Our children can get involved in helping to keep our club child safe and child friendly

The club should seek opportunities to include children in its decision-making processes. It is important for children to know that they have a voice and are welcome to be involved in the running of their club.

Everyone in our club knows about our child safe rules and policies and where to find them

The club may keep copies of the policies and code of conduct pinned to a noticeboard; make them accessible on its website; distribute them by email; or use a combination of these strategies. Whatever the preferred option, the club must ensure that all members are aware of how to access these documents.

Club members' commitment

Children in our club:

Respect and look out for each other

Organised sport and recreation should be safe and fun. Children should be taught the importance of ensuring that their friends are happy to be involved in the club. Should they or any of their friends have a problem it is important that they have the confidence to talk to an appropriate adult.

Actively participate in club activities and have a say about things

Children's participation in the running of the club and its activities should be encouraged. They should feel comfortable in expressing their opinions and know that the club will listen to and act on what they have to say.

Know it is their right to feel safe and supported in our club

Children are valued members of the club. It is important that they enjoy being involved and understand the importance of rules in ensuring the club is a good place to be. They should be informed of and understand their rights and responsibilities.

Know someone trustworthy who they can tell if they or their friends feel unsafe or are being harmed in any way

If the club has a Child Safe Officer, ensure that children know who this is and that they can confidently speak to that person if they are feeling unsafe or are being harmed in any way. They should also know that it is okay to speak up if they are worried about a friend or teammate being harmed (even if the friend doesn't want them to). The club's Child Safe Officer will know how to help.



Recognising risk and harm

A child is taken to be at risk if:

- They have suffered or are likely to suffer from physical or psychological harm or from neglect
- Their parents are unable or unwilling to look after them, have abandoned them or have died
- They are homeless.

Recognising harm

Physical or psychological harm

Physical harm includes:

Physical abuse

This is when a person purposely injures or threatens to injure a child.

Sexual abuse

This is any sexual act or threat against a child.

Psychological harm includes:

Mental and emotional abuse

This is the result of often repeated attacks on a child's self-worth, e.g. through bullying (including name calling), threatening, ridiculing, intimidating or isolating a child, thereby undermining his or her confidence and social competence over time.

Neglect

This is when a child is harmed or at risk through a failure to have their basic physical and emotional needs met.

The above reflects part of the *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017* definitions of risk and harm. Club administrators and all mandated reporters should acquaint themselves with the full definitions.

Responding to children at risk

Responding to a child

In a situation where a child discloses harm or there is concern about a child, the way a person responds can be important to their long-term safety and wellbeing. It is important that they:

- Be caring and understanding towards the child
- Show they believe what the child says even if they find the information uncomfortable
- Let the child tell their story without leading them or asking questions. Do not ask them to repeat it
- Withhold their own emotions, so as to avoid upsetting the child i.e. if they become very upset this may increase the child's distress
- Reassure the child that the harm caused is not their fault
- Tell the child they are pleased they have shared this with them
- Do not try to prove their story. Trust the child.



Reporting suspicions of risk and harm

Everyone in a recreation group or sporting club has a responsibility to care for and protect all children who participate in its activities.

If you or anyone else suspects any child participating in your organisation's activities is at risk, you can report your concerns to the *Child Abuse Report Line* on 13 14 78. You may remain anonymous.

The *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017* makes it a legal requirement for certain people to report a suspicion on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is, or may be, at risk. This obligation is known as mandatory reporting and a penalty may arise from an individual's failure to comply.

Mandated reporters are persons who are an employee of, or volunteer in, an organisation that provides health, welfare, education, sporting or recreational, child care or residential services wholly or partly for children and:

- a) Are engaged in the actual delivery of those services to children; or
- b) Hold a management position in the organisation, the duties of which include direct responsibility for, or direct supervision of, the provision of those services to children i.e. your club Committee members

Staff and volunteers of recreation and sporting bodies who work with children fit these descriptions and so have a legal obligation (are mandated) to report any suspicion on reasonable grounds that a child is, or may be, at risk.

Reasonable grounds may include:

- A disclosure of harm by a child
- Professional judgement, based on the reporter's experience and observations
- Disclosure by a child or an adult that a child is being harmed or is at risk.

Any suspicion on reasonable grounds that a child is, or may be, at risk must be reported to the *Child Abuse Report Line* on 13 14 78.

It is illegal for any person to prevent another person from making a report or treat them badly for having made a report.

Training for mandated reporters is not a legal requirement. However it is recommended that each club has a trained Child Safe Officer who can support mandated reporters to fulfil their obligations.

Club responsibilities

Working with Children Checks

Your club has a duty of care to take all reasonable steps to protect children from harm. Choosing employees and volunteers who are suitable to work with children is part of fulfilling this duty.

The *Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016* requires your organisation to conduct a Working with Children Check (WWCC) for each staff member and volunteer, aged 14 years and older, who undertakes child-related work or works with children.

As defined in the Act, child-related work and working with children are:

- Services or activities provided in the course of the operation of clubs and associations with a significant membership of, or involvement by, children; or
- Coaching or tuition services for children.

Under this definition all workers and volunteers of a club need a Working with Children Check regardless of whether they have direct contact with children.

Some organisations and persons are excluded from this requirement. You should check with your club or association to see if any exclusions apply to your situation.

From 1 July 2019, a WWCC can only be issued by the Department of Human Services (DHS) Screening Unit.

A WWCC uses a range of information (including the person's criminal history) to determine the risk an individual poses to children. Individuals who pose an unacceptable risk will be prohibited from working with children.

Your club must have a policy and procedure in place to ensure that all staff and volunteers who require a WWCC do have one and that your organisation has verified and recorded each person's details within their club's DHS Screening Unit online portal, as required under the legislation.

A valid WWCC is transferable between different jobs or volunteer positions and lasts for five years. Continuous monitoring will remain in place for WWCCs; the checks will be reassessed as new information becomes available. If a reassessment results in a person being prohibited from working with children, both the person and their employer will be notified.

For up-to-date information on organisation screening obligations visit: SA.GOV.AU

Child safe policies and procedures

Every sporting or recreational organisation that provides a service to children or young people must have lodged or had lodged on its behalf a Child Safe Environments Compliance Statement with the Department of Human Services.

Many governing bodies have done this on behalf of their affiliated organisations. A Child Safe Environments Compliance Statement is a statement from your organisation about how you are implementing your Child Safe policies and procedures.

Under the *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017* organisations must develop and implement a Child Safe Policy. This is often incorporated in the club's Member Protection Policy.

Clubs that are affiliated with state associations will generally accept this policy as part of the affiliation agreement. Organisations that are not affiliated need to develop their own policies.

Your club is responsible for ensuring that all members are aware of its Child Safe Policy.

Informing members about where they can access the document is very important. Make the policy available on the club website if it has one, pin a copy to the clubroom noticeboard, or email it to all members.

The Office for Recreation, Sport and Racing recommends that your club choose a member to take on the role of Child Safe Officer. The role generally involves promoting awareness of the club's policies for establishing a child safe environment, clarifying procedures to minimise risks to children, ensuring required Working with Children Checks are completed, and providing assistance when issues are identified. The Child Safe Officer's role should be clearly defined by the club.

Child Safe Officer training is available through Sport SA. Please check the website <https://www.sportsa.org.au/trng/> or contact Sport SA on (08) 8353 7755 or membership@sportsa.org.au

Private coaching or tuition

Sole traders or people in partnerships must also meet certain obligations under the *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017* and *Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016*. Parents of children who are accessing these services should ask to sight the Working with Children Check of the person providing the service.

National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

The National Principles outline the ten elements that are fundamental for making an organisation safe for children.

Following are examples of how a principle may be upheld in your organisation. For more information visit: <https://childsafe.humanrights.gov.au/national-principles>

Principle 1: **Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.**

Your club leaders model and regularly reinforce attitudes and behaviours that value children and young people and a commitment to child safety and wellbeing.

Principle 2: **Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.**

Your club regularly seeks children and young people's views and encourages participation in decision-making.

Children and young people are informed about their roles and responsibilities in helping to ensure the safety and wellbeing of their peers.

Principle 3: **Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.**

Your club has clear and accessible information for families and communities about the club's activities and policies.

Principle 4: **Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.**

Club leaders, staff and volunteers reflect on how discrimination and exclusion, whether intentional or unintentional, may work against a safe and inclusive culture and they develop proactive strategies to address this

Principle 5: **People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.**

Your club emphasises its commitment to child safety and wellbeing when advertising for, recruiting and screening staff and volunteers.

Staff and volunteers understand the child safety policy and procedures of the club and meet their reporting responsibilities.

Principle 6: **Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused.**

Your club's complaints handling policy prioritises the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

Timely feedback is provided to children and young people, families, staff and volunteers who raise concerns or complaints.

Principle 7:

Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.

Your club provides regular opportunities to educate and train staff and volunteers on child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures. Staff and volunteers recognise the range of indicators of child harm.

Principle 8:

Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.

Your club is proactive in identifying and mitigating physical and online risks.

Principle 9:

Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved.

Your club regularly reviews, evaluates and improves child safe practices.

Principle 10:

Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

The clubs's child safety policy is comprehensive and addresses all ten of these Principles, in a language and format that is easily understood and accessible to staff, volunteers, families and children and young people.



Checklist for parents

This checklist will help parents contribute to a child safe environment. If you are unable to answer YES to any question, you should take action by speaking with your club.

- Does your club have a policy that covers child safety and wellbeing e.g. a Child Safe Policy?
- Does your club have a policy that covers child safety and wellbeing e.g. a Child Safe Policy?
- Do you have a copy of this policy or at least know what the policy addresses?
- Does your club have a Child Safe Officer or a person dedicated to ensuring the safety of participants aged less than 18 years?
- Is there a code of conduct for participants, parents, volunteers and staff?
- Are there guidelines for how coaches, instructors, trainers, leaders and officials should behave around children?
- Do people in your club talk about ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children?
- Does your child know that they should tell you immediately if anything or anyone makes them feel unsafe or uncomfortable?
- Does your child know that he or she can tell you unpleasant things without a negative reaction? It is important that you can listen carefully and non-judgementally to disclosures that may be unexpected and/or distressing.
- Do you feel able to report an incident or suspicion of a child at risk even if the matter makes you feel uncomfortable?

Checklist for volunteers and adult participants

This checklist will help volunteers and other adult participants contribute to a child safe environment.

If you are unable to answer YES to any question, you should take action by speaking with your club.

- Does your club have a policy that covers child safety and wellbeing e.g. a Child Safe Policy?
- Do you have a copy of this policy or at least know what the policy addresses?
- Does your club have a Child Safe Officer or a person dedicated to ensuring the safety of participants aged less than 18 years?
- Do people in your club talk about ensuring the safety of children?
- Does the club have a code of conduct related to your involvement in the club?
- Are there guidelines for how people should behave around children?
- Are you aware of how much physical contact is appropriate between yourself and a child?
- Do you ensure you stay in an open area in the sight of other adults when alone with a child?
- Are you aware that some verbal comments are abusive?
- Do you avoid using bad or aggressive language when talking to a child or in the presence of children?
- Do you know what to do to report an incident or suspicion of a child at risk?
- Do you feel able to report an incident of child abuse even if the matter makes you feel uncomfortable?

Checklist for children and young people

This checklist will help children and young people contribute to a child safe environment. We recommend that younger children go through this checklist with a parent or another trusted person. If you are unable to answer YES to any question, you should take action by speaking with your club.

Do you feel safe from abuse or harm (including bullying) at your club?

Has anyone in your club talked to you and other children about how they can help you to be safe?

Do you have a Child Safe Officer or some other person who you trust and can talk to about anything that worries you?

Has your parent or guardian read this book?

Do you know what sort of physical contact is okay between yourself and a leader, coach, official, trainer, instructor, teammates or other people in your club?

Are you aware that some verbal comments can hurt other people's feelings?

Would you tell your parent or a trusted person if someone tried to harm you?

Would you tell your parent or a trusted person if you knew of someone else who was sad or being hurt in any way?

Do you know it is your right to feel safe and comfortable at all times?

Would you phone the Kids Help Line (1800 55 1800) or the Youth Health Line (1300 131 719) to talk to someone if you felt unhappy or unsafe?

Other information and services

For more information on child protection and child safe recreation and sport, look at these websites or call the listed phone numbers:

Child Abuse Report Line

13 14 78

Kids Help Line (24-hour counselling)

1800 551 800

www.kidshelpline.com.au

Department of Human Services - Child Safe Environments team

(08) 8463 6468

<https://dhs.sa.gov.au/services/community-and-family-services/child-safe-environments>

Department of Human Services

– Screening Unit 1300 321 592

Office for Recreation, Sport and Racing

1300 714 990

www.orsr.sa.gov.au/clubs-and-associations/child-safety

Australian Human Rights Commission

<https://childsafe.humanrights.gov.au/national-principles>

Play by the Rules

www.playbytherules.net.au

Child Safe Sport Australia

https://www.sportaus.gov.au/integrity_in_sport/child_safe_sport

Shine SA

(Sexual Health Information, Networking and Education) www.shinesa.org.au

Parent Helpline

(information service for parents in SA)

1300 364 100

www.cafhs.sa.gov.au/services/parent-helpline

www.parenting.sa.gov.au

Child and Family Health

(a resource for parents and caregivers on everything related to the health and development of children)

www.cafhs.sa.gov.au

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

www.wchn.sa.gov.au/our-network/camhs

SA Police – Child Protection

131 444 (non-urgent police assistance)

Nunkuwarrin Yunti

(provides emergency assistance, counselling, information and referral services for Indigenous people)

(08) 8406 1600

www.nunku.org.au

Youth Healthline

1300 131 719



Play by the Rules

playbytherules.net.au

Fair and safe
behaviour in sport
and recreation

Everyone needs to feel safe and to act fairly and respectfully towards each other.

Be a good sport

- Treat all participants in your sport as you like to be treated yourself.
- Co-operate with your team-mates, coach and opponents.
- Control your temper. Verbal abuse and sledging are not acceptable behaviours.
- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of all participants regardless of their ability, gender or cultural background.

You must feel safe

- playing, at training and practice
- travelling to and from games and training
- with other players, your coach and team personnel

No-one should

- make you feel unsafe
- ask you to do anything that you are not comfortable with
- verbally abuse you or anyone else
- make racist and sexist jokes or comments
- allow offensive pictures or graffiti to be visible
- look at or touch anyone in ways that make them feel uncomfortable
- make uninvited sexual comments that offend, intimidate or humiliate
- discriminate against or harass anyone else

Bad sporting behaviour is unacceptable and it can be unlawful.

www.playbytherules.net.au

Provides information and online training on equal opportunity and child protection laws to address inappropriate behaviour in sport.

If a person is not following your sport's guidelines and is behaving inappropriately or if you think that you been abused, discriminated against or harassed, then tell someone about it:

- a friend, colleague or parent
- a club official or contact officer
- your state or national association
- your department of sport and recreation
- your equal opportunity or anti-discrimination body
- the Australian Sports Commission
- your child welfare agency or the police.



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Office for Recreation, Sport
and Racing
Phone 1300 714 990
www.orrs.sa.gov.au

Equal Opportunity Commission
Phone 1800 188 163
www.eoc.sa.gov.au





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