



Drouin Dragons Soccer Club

Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

&

Code of Conduct

2024

Gippsland Soccer League acknowledges the Gunaikurnai and Bunurong people as the traditional owners of the land on which we play, train, learn and operate. We acknowledge and respect their contributions, experience and knowledge as First Nations people. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. This is a working document, meaning that it is designed to be reviewed, revised and renewed on a regular basis. The information contained herein will change in accordance with legislative and societal expectations. We are grateful to the Football Victoria for guidance in preparing this document.

CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING POLICY

1. Introduction

The Commission for Children and Young People ("**the Commission**") has released a revision to the Standards with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (**the standards**). All Football Victoria ("**FV**") football clubs are required to implement the Child Safe Standards and the mandatory reporting guidelines which come into effect on 1 January 2023, under the Child Wellbeing and Safety (Child Safe Standards Compliance and Enforcement) Amendment Act 2021 (Vic).

This policy serves to acknowledge the vulnerability of children and young people and is in place to ensure that they are safe and that their rights are protected and promoted. Everyone involved at Drouin Dragons SC (the "**Club**") is responsible for the care and protection of children and young people and reporting information about child abuse or harm.

This policy is informed by the Child Safe Standards published by the Victorian Government. A copy of "An Overview of the Victorian Child Safe Standards" is accessible by all stakeholders at the Club. The Club continues to be a "child safe organisation" as defined within the relevant legislation.

2. Statement of Commitment to Child Safety and Wellbeing

Drouin Dragons SC is committed to promoting and protecting the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. We have zero tolerance for child abuse or harm. Drouin Dragons SC is further committed to ensuring that children and young people are safe, happy and empowered.

3. Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to:

- a) work towards a Club culture of child safety and wellbeing;
- b) ensure that all persons are aware of their responsibilities for identifying possible occasions for child abuse and for establishing procedures for preventing such abuse and/or detecting such abuse when it occurs;
- c) provide guidance on responding where a person suspects any child abuse within all Club Environments;
- d) provide a clear statement to players, committee members, volunteers, employees and contractors forbidding any such abuse; and
- e) provide assurance that any and all suspected abuse will be investigated.

The FV Child Protection Guidelines, available on the FV website, has more detailed information on each of these areas. The Club will use all reasonable endeavours to adopt and comply with those Guidelines in its recruitment practices.

In addition to this Policy, the Gippsland Soccer League (the "**League**") has a Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and a Child Safe Code of Conduct which are publicly available. FV has produced Child Protection Guidelines which are available on the FV website. The Club will comply with those Guidelines to aid and supplement this policy.

4. **Scope**

This Policy, and the attached Code of Conduct, applies to all players, committee members, volunteers, coaches, team managers, assistants, employees, and parents of players of the Club, irrespective of how they are registered. Non-registered individuals who otherwise participate in activities with or for our club are also bound to this policy by virtue of their participation in our club's activities.

Breaches of this Policy or the Code of Conduct may be investigated by the Club, by the League and/or FV and may be processed by the Club as it sees fit, or in the alternative by the League or FV as Misconduct in accordance with the GSL GDT or FV GDT.

5. **Definitions**

Child (or minor) means a person who participates at the Club under the age of 18 years, unless otherwise stated.

Child Abuse includes:

- a) any act committed against a child involving:
 - a. a sexual offence; or
 - b. an offence under section 498(2) of the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) (grooming);or
- b) the infliction, on a child, of
 - a. physical violence; or
 - b. serious emotional or psychological harm; or
- c) serious neglect of a child.

Mandatory Reporters are people (doctors, nurses, midwives, teachers [including early childhood teachers], principals and police) who must report to child protection if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse.

Physical Abuse consists of any non-accidental form of injury or serious physical harm inflicted on a child by any person. Physical abuse does not mean reasonable discipline though it may result from excessive or inappropriate discipline. Physical abuse can include beating, shaking, burning and assault with weapons. Physical injury and significant harm to a child may also result from neglect by a parent or caregiver or within the context of family violence. The failure of a parent or caregiver to adequately ensure the safety of a child may expose the child to extremely dangerous or life-threatening situations, which result in physical injury and significant harm to the child.

Sexual Abuse against a child occurs when any person uses their authority over the child to involve the child in sexual activity.

Emotional Harm and abuse occurs when a child is repeatedly rejected, isolated, frightened by threats or is experiencing family violence. It also includes hostility, derogatory name-calling and put-downs, or persistent coldness from a person, to the extent where the behaviour of the child is disturbed or their emotional development is at serious risk of being impaired.

Neglect includes failure to provide the child with an adequate standard of nutrition, medical care, clothing, shelter or supervision to the extent where the health or development of the child is significantly impaired or placed at risk. A child is neglected if they are abandoned or left uncared for over unreasonable periods of time that is inconsistent with their age, stage and development.

Grooming is a criminal offence and involves predatory conduct undertaken to prepare a child for sexual activity at a later time. Grooming occurs where an adult communicates by words or conduct with a child under 16 years or with a person who has care, supervision or authority for the child with the intention of facilitating the child's involvement in sexual conduct, whether with the groomer or other adult.

Exposure to Family Violence is a form of child abuse and should be reported to Child Protection. The effects on children exposed to family violence include emotional and psychological harm and socio-economic impacts and the potential for physical harm.

Family Violence includes any act or omission undertaken by a person against a family member which results in that family member experiencing fear or apprehension for their personal safety or wellbeing, or the personal safety or wellbeing of another family member.

6. Guiding Principles

This Policy is based on the following principles:

- a) the Club has zero tolerance for child abuse;
- b) the best interests of the child are paramount;
- c) child protection is a shared responsibility;
- d) all children have a right to feel safe and be safe when they play football, and have equal rights to protection from abuse;
- e) the Club will consider the opinions of players and use their opinions to develop child protection policies and procedures;
- f) the Club is committed to the diversity and cultural safety of all children, including (but not limited to) the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, minors from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, minors with disabilities, and make reasonable efforts to accommodate these matters; and
- g) everyone covered by the Policy must comply with, and is bound to, the Club's Child Safety Code of Conduct at all times.

7. Diversity and Inclusion

The Club firmly believes that sport is about fairness, respect and equality; and that everyone should be able to participate in, compete and enjoy all aspects of the game regardless of their cultural background, economic status, language, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, disability or ability.

The Club supports the implementation of Football Victoria's Inclusion Charter, and is committed to ensuring that all people in football have the opportunity to participate safely in all forms of the game and feel welcome in their team and club environment.

The Club specifically recognises the importance of our First Nations people as the original custodians of the land on which we train, learn, compete, celebrate and commiserate. The Club is committed to ensuring that all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members of our community feel welcome and included at the Club.

8. Role of Child Safety Officers the Committee

The Club's Committee is responsible for ensuring that policies are reviewed and updated, and that training exists for committee members, volunteers, coaches, team managers, assistants and employees on child protection matters. The Committee is also responsible for identifying and managing risk in relation to child safety.

Child Safety Officers (CSOs) are available to listen, discuss and clarify issues confronting individuals in our Club. Players, members, employees, volunteers, and committee members can all speak with a CSO if they have concerns in relation to child abuse. The CSOs will make reports on behalf of the Club and ensure that adequate records are maintained. The Club CSOs will be listed on our club website and identified to all children and parents at the club.

9. Reporting obligations

Mandatory reporting

1. Under the Crimes Act, all persons have a legal obligation to inform police as soon as practicable where they have a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria against a child (under the age of 16 years) by another person (of or over the age of 18 years).
2. This legal obligation above is subject to a person having a reasonable excuse for not reporting. A person will have a "reasonable excuse" to not report if that person:
 - fears for the safety of any person (other than the alleged perpetrator of the offence) if they were to disclose the information to police, or
 - believes on reasonable grounds that the information has already been disclosed to police and they have no further information.
3. The Club supports and encourages committee members, employees or volunteers, coaches or team managers to make a report to the police if they form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection, or they are concerned about the safety, health or wellbeing of a child. Where a report is made to the police or DHHS, we ask the individual to also advise the Club.
4. Any committee member, employee or volunteer, coach or team manager that makes a report in good faith in accordance with their reporting obligations will be supported by the Club and will not be penalised.
5. If a committee member, employee or volunteer, coach or team manager is uncertain as to whether they should make a report to an external authority in relation to the safety of a child, they must speak to the CSO (or FV) for guidance and information. Ultimately, it is a personal decision of the committee member, employee or volunteer employee or coach or team manager whether they choose to make a report to an external authority or not.
6. If an allegation is made against a committee member, employee or volunteer, coach or team manager, the CSO will follow the reporting procedure and take all steps to ensure that safety of the child is paramount.

Voluntary reporting

In addition to the mandatory reporting obligations above, any person who believes on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from child abuse, may disclose that information to the police. The Club encourages all persons to speak with the CSO (or FV) for guidance or support with addressing such concerns.

What are "Reasonable grounds for belief"?

You have "reasonable grounds" to notify when:

- a) a minor tells you that he/she has been physically or sexually abused;
- b) a minor states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the minor may be talking about themselves);
- c) someone else, such as a relative, friend, acquaintance or sibling of the minor, tells you that a child has been abused;
- d) your observations of the minor's behaviour or knowledge of children lead you to believe that the child has been abused; or
- e) you observe physical signs or indicators of abuse (e.g. bruises, cuts etc.).

The club encourages reporting where you hold a concern about the safety of a minor.

10. Prevention

Risk Management

The Club will ensure that child safety is a part of its overall risk management approach.

As part of its risk management strategy and practices, the Club will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of its risk controls. The Club will ensure that appropriate training is conducted for all:

- Committee members
- Coaches, team managers and volunteers; and
- Employees.

Information will be provided to players (or for players in Junior teams) to their parents/carers, about child safety.

The Club will also ensure that all committee members, volunteers, coaches, team managers, and employees are provided with ongoing supervision and support such that their performance is developed and enhanced to promote the establishment and maintenance of a child-safe environment.

Communication

The Club is pro-active in the area of prevention and will communicate the Child Protection Policy, Procedure and Code of Conduct in the manner below.

PLAYERS	PARENTS, GUARDIANS, COMMUNITY, SPONSORS, PARTNERS	COMMITTEE MEMBERS, COACHES, MANAGERS, EMPLOYEES, VOLUNTEERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conditions of becoming a member• Website• Email• sms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conditions of becoming a member (Parents will receive a hard and electronic copy)• Website• Email• sms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Website• Letters of appointment/contracts/agreements• Email• sms• Annual Training Session

Recruitment

The Club is pro-active in its recruitment of individuals to the club, including committee members, volunteers and employees, coaches, and team managers, in the area of Child Safety. This includes:

- Implementing a recruitment process for all coaches, team managers, administrative staff and volunteers of our club;
- Ensuring all coaches, volunteers, etc read and understand the Clubs' Child Safe Code of Conduct and other policies;
- Screening for inappropriate people and conduct interviews, reference checks and online background searches to satisfy ourselves about people coming into positions of responsibility at our club;
- Conducting all necessary Working with Children Checks (WWCC); and
- Including child safety issues in induction training.

The FV Child Protection Guidelines, available on the FV website, has more detailed information on each of these areas. The Club will use all reasonable endeavours to adopt and comply with those Guidelines in its recruitment practices.

Further steps we will take as a Club

- Unless unavoidable, no adult will have access to an unaccompanied minor without prior permission from the minor's parents or guardian.
- We will ensure all new coaches, team managers, etc to our club have a WWCC check.
- We will ensure appropriate training and education sessions into child safety are available to all new coaches, team managers.
- We will communicate our Child Safety Policy and Code of Conduct to our stakeholders and follow it.
- We will set guidelines and rules for the appropriate levels of communication between coaches, team managers and players who are minors on social media.
- We will take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety.
- We value and empower minors to participate in decisions which affect them.
- We will foster a culture of openness that supports disclosure of incidents.
- We will respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount.
- Ensure minors know who to talk with if they are worried or are feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable to do so.
- Report suspected abuse, neglect, or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities; and
- Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk.

11. Training and Supervision

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone at the Club understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

Our Club's culture aims for all stakeholders to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train our coaches, team members, volunteers, etc to identify, assess and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

The Club requires all new coaches, team managers and volunteers to be supervised regularly to ensure that they understand the club's commitment to child safety and wellbeing 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 in line with the Club's Child Safe Code of Conduct.

12. Responding to an allegation

In the case of an allegation being made against a committee member, coach, team manager, employee, volunteer and/or contractor at the Club, the CSO will follow this Child Protection Procedure. At all times the safety of the child is paramount.

Withdraw the individual

The first step is to consider withdrawal of the accused person from active duty, which could entail standing down (with pay, where applicable), re-assignment to other duties that do not have direct contact with children, or to work under increased supervision while the matter is being investigated. During the investigation process, it may be necessary for a person to be stood down from their usual duties at the Club or suspended from all activities at the Club.

Investigations

In the event of a child disclosing an incident of abuse to someone they trust it is essential that it is dealt with sensitively and professionally:

The Club will appropriately investigate all allegations relating to an incident of abuse in accordance with its obligations. In some circumstances, it may be necessary for the Club to conduct an investigation in addition to any investigation conducted by authorities (e.g., the police).

The CSO will conduct an independent investigation, or will appoint an appropriate person to do so, into the allegation to the extent that it will not interfere with investigations by the police and will co-operate with authorities as required. In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for the Club to engage a person from outside the Club to conduct an independent investigation in relation to allegations.

All people covered by this Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct must co-operate fully with any investigation by DHHS, the police or the Club.

The CSO will make every effort to keep any such investigation confidential; however, from time-to-time other committee members, employees, volunteers may need to be consulted in conjunction with the investigation (e.g., to provide witness statements).

An investigation conducted by the Club will be conducted in accordance with procedural fairness to protect the integrity of the investigation and the interests of all the participants involved in the investigation. The Club will also handle the allegations in a confidential manner to the greatest extent possible.

The outcome will depend on the findings of the investigation, but may include withdrawal from active duty, re-assignment to duties with no contact with children, increased supervision, disciplinary action, dismissal or criminal prosecutions.

The Club shall notify the League and FV of the outcome of any investigation that results in suspension of an individual from the Club for abuse related matters.

13. Record keeping

All reports of alleged abuse or harm, or risk thereof, must be recorded by the CSO. Places, times, dates, names of people, observable behaviours or evidence of harm are to be recorded. Reports must be securely stored by the CSO or club administrator, in accordance with the club's Grievance Policy and Disciplinary Procedures, and the Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme, established by the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic).

14. Privacy and confidentiality

The Club will collect, use, disclose and hold personal information in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988 (*Cth*) and FV's Privacy Policy.

There are two guiding principles in respect to a child's privacy.

- a) First, the Club will operate on the best interest's principle. All committee members, employees, volunteers, and contractors will do what they believe to be in the best interest of the child. This principle supersedes all others.
- b) Second, the Club will respect a child's confidentiality except in situations where it conflicts with the best interest's principle.

Those who make reports, and those about whom accusations are being made, are entitled to confidentiality. Where there is suspected abuse or misconduct, committee members, employees or volunteers must not disclose or make use of the information in a manner that breaches confidentiality, other than to report and act consistent with this Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct, and relevant statutory requirements.

15. Legislative Responsibilities

The Club takes its 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 have an obligation to report that information to the police.

Failure to protect: People of authority in our club 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 within the club who are mandatory reporters must comply with their duties.

AT ALL TIMES, THE CHILD SAFE STANDARDS MUST BE OBSERVED AND ACTED UPON

STEP 1:

Any person (aged 18 or over) that forms a belief, on reasonable grounds, that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria against a child (under the age of 16 years) by another person (aged 18 or older), must make a report to the police as soon as practicable, unless exceptions apply.

Committee members, employee, volunteers, or of-age players of the Club should discuss these observations and concerns with the Club Child Safety Officer, who can assist the person to make the report to the police as required. FV can also assist.

Any person (of any age) that forms a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from child abuse (physical, sexual, emotional, psychological or neglect), **may** disclose that information to the police or the Department of Health and Human Services ("**DHHS**"). The Club encourages all persons with concerns to raise this directly with the Club Child Safety Officer.

STEP 2:

It may be that, following the previous step, a person decides to make a report to DHHS or the police with the support of the Club Child Safety Officer.

Where a report is made, the individual should also advise the Club.

Making a report:

Ring:

- Victoria police on 000 for emergencies.
- If it is not an emergency, ring the Victoria Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigation Team on (03) 8690 4056.
- DHHS on 1300 664 977 or 131 278(AH). Ask for Child Protection.

Information for making a report:

- name, age and address of child.
- the reason for suspecting that the behaviour or injury is a result of abuse.
- an assessment of the immediate danger to the child.
- a description of the injury or behaviour observed.
- the current whereabouts of the child.
- any other information about the family.
- any specific cultural details, e.g., English speaking, disability, etc.

Ask that the Club be informed of each step of the procedure.

Request that if an interview is to take place at the Club the visiting officer is in plain clothes and the time of the interview is specified so that appropriate arrangements for a meeting room can be organized.

If the complainant alleges that a crime has been committed by a committee member, employee, volunteer, or contractor, that person will be stood aside immediately.

The Club Child Safety Officer should conduct (or appoint another person to conduct) an independent investigation into the allegation to the extent that it will not interfere with investigations by DHHS or the police and will co-operate with the authorities as required.

Where an allegation has been made, the Club will make, secure, and retain records of the allegation of child abuse and the Club's response to it.

Fulfilling the roles and responsibilities contained in this Procedure does not displace or discharge any other obligations that arise if a person reasonably believes that a child is at risk of child abuse.

STEP 3:

If the child is agreeable to be interviewed by DHHS or the police, the Club Child Safety Officer should offer to be present at the interview to give support.

STEP 4:

Following a report, DHHS or the police may need to contact the Club about the notification. Inform the Club Child Safety Officer that a report has been made or is about to be made.

The Club Child Safety Officer should advise FV of such matters so that we can update our records in relation to the individual.

STEP 5:

Following a report, it is important to both protect confidentiality and the interests of the child and family at all times, as well as natural justice for the process.

Special comments:

- DHHS will only interview the child if he/she is agreeable.
- the family will not be contacted until it is believed there is a case, and the child is at risk.
- the identity of the person making a notification will be kept confidential (except when that information is required in a court case) unless that person gives permission for the information to be divulged. Such confidentiality should also be requested by Club Child Safety Officer and any other person who may become aware that a notification is to be, or has been, given.
- throughout the entire process of observation, discussion and reporting, the interests of the child and their family should be protected from unnecessary disclosure of information concerning abuse.
- following the making of a report to the DHHS or the police, any investigation that takes place is the responsibility of that external body.

CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

1. Introduction

The Commission for Children and Young People ("**the Commission**") has released a revision to the Standards with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (the standards). All Football Victoria ("**FV**") football clubs are required to implement the Child Safe Standards and the mandatory reporting guidelines which come into effect on 1 January 2023, under the Child Wellbeing and Safety (Child Safe Standards Compliance and Enforcement) Amendment Act 2021 (Vic).

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to promote child safety within the Drouin Dragons SC (the "**Club**"). It is to be read and implemented with reference to the Drouin Dragons SC Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.

Any form of abusive, derogatory, discriminatory, offensive or intimidating behaviour or language by adults towards minors, or minors towards other minors, is not acceptable.

Any action that may be hurtful or risk being interpreted by a reasonable observer as grooming behaviour is unacceptable.

Comments or actions that are negatively and unreasonably critical of a person's culture, ethnicity, language, gender identity, disability, ability, sexuality or age are unacceptable.

This Code of Conduct is informed by the Child Safe Standards published by the Victorian Government. A copy of "An Overview of the Victorian Child Safe Standards" is accessible by all stakeholders at the Club. The Club continues to be a "child safe organisation" as defined within the relevant legislation.

Committee members, volunteers, employees, coaches, managers, players, and parents/guardians of players at the Club are bound by, and required to abide to, this Code.

2. Statement of Commitment to Child Safety and Wellbeing

The Club is committed to promoting and protecting the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. We have zero tolerance for child abuse or harm. The Club is further committed to ensuring that children and young people are safe, happy and empowered.

The Club is privileged to be entrusted with the development of minors throughout its soccer program. This is not a responsibility taken lightly by anyone at the Club.

All members of the club's Executive Committee, the General Committee, volunteers, employees, coaches, managers, players and parents / guardians of players are bound by and required to abide to this Code of Conduct.

3. Unacceptable behaviour

The Club prohibits the unacceptable behaviour as listed immediately below. Such unacceptable behaviour may also constitute misconduct in accordance with the Football Victoria's governing regulations.

Unacceptable behaviour includes:

- Ignoring or disregarding any suspected or disclosed child abuse;
- Putting a minor at risk of abuse;
- Speaking to a minor in a way that is or could be construed by any observer as overly harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating;
 - Including, but not limited to, offensive swearing in the presence of a minor, or intimidatory language and gestures directed at a minor;

- Expressing inappropriate personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of a minor;
- Discussing sexual activities with a minor or engaging in any sexually-oriented conversations with a minor;
- Using, possessing, or being under the influence of alcohol while supervising a minor;
- Using, possessing, or being under the influence of illegal drugs while in the presence of a minor;
- Providing or allowing a minor to consume alcohol and/or illegal and/or illicit drugs;
- Discriminating against any minor,
 - Including but not limited to reasons of ethnicity, religion, nationality, age, gender, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, or disability;
- Taking photographs or video of a minor inappropriately, or in circumstances where you have been asked to cease doing so;
- Engaging in rough physical games (outside of what is considered appropriate in a Club training session), holding, massaging, kissing, cuddling or touching a minor in an inappropriate and / or culturally insensitive way;
- Being naked in the presence of a minor;
- Possessing sexually orientated or morally inappropriate printed materials (magazines, cards, videos, films, messages, clothing, etc) in the presence of a minor;
- Sleeping in the same bed, sleeping bag or tent as a minor;
- Engaging in sexual contact with a minor;
- Taking a minor to their home or encouraging meetings outside Club activities;
- Having unnecessary contact with a minor outside of Club activities or events without the Club's knowledge or consent;
- Having unnecessary online contact with a minor (including by social media, email, instant messaging, etc) or their family without the Club's knowledge and / or consent;
- Exchanging personal contact details such as phone numbers, social networking sites or email addresses with a minor without the Club's knowledge and / or consent.

The above behaviours will not be considered unacceptable if the following circumstances are present and applicable:

- Where the minor is a member of your own family;
- Where such behaviour is a specific job requirement and the person is trained to undertake such activities or behaviours;
- Where your contact with the minor is incidental / accidental and you are not performing your professional obligations; and
- Where, given the Club's commitment to promoting a family-friendly culture and the practical realities of living in a regional community, such activities or behaviours could not be reasonably considered inappropriate or unacceptable.

Any violation of this Code of Conduct within the Club by a committee member, volunteer, employee, coach, manager, player, parent or guardian or other Club Associate at the Club may be dealt with as a disciplinary matter by the Club, or may be referred to the League or to Football Victoria as Misconduct

Any violation of this Code of Conduct may also result in the violating party being reported to Victoria Police and / or other protective and legislative authorities as relevant and necessary.

4. Physical contact/touching

Members of the general committees, volunteers, employees, coaches, managers and players at the club are prohibited from using physical discipline in any way for behaviour management of minors.

This prohibition includes, but is not limited to: -

- Spanking
- Slapping
- Pinching
- Hitting
- Any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behaviours by minors

Physical contact may be required in an emergency situation to remove minors quickly from danger or threat of danger.

It is recognised that appropriate contact between people is part of normal human relationships. Some considerations when determining whether contact is appropriate include:

- The minor's age, developmental level, maturity, and level of care required;
 - Eg: touching a minor to get their attention, guiding a minor, or comforting a distressed minor
- Working in an open environment
 - Eg: in one-to-one discussions indoors the door should be open with visual access –
- Being alert to cues from minors about how comfortable they are in your proximity and respecting their need for personal space
- Being sensitive when interacting with minors who may misinterpret your actions;
 - Including those who may have been traumatised by abuse, or adolescents seeking attention of a sexual nature
- Being aware of cultural norms that may influence the interpretation of your behaviour
- Being cautious about physical contact in training or during matches
 - If you need to make physical contact for demonstrations, explain the activity and what you will do

5. Transportation and off-site events

Other than in an emergency or other abnormal situation where no other option could be reasonably foreseen, it is unwise to transport children without permission of their parent, carer, or guardian.

It is prohibited to have unnecessary and/or inappropriate physical contact with minors while in vehicles. Minors should be transported directly to their destination. No stops should be made other than those that are reasonably scheduled for meals or comfort stops.

It is prohibited to have minors spend the night at the residence of a committee member, volunteer, employee, or contractor without parental/guardian prior approval.

Changing and showering facilities or arrangements for adults must be separate from facilities or arrangements for children (unless the child is a member of your family).

Sleeping arrangements for adults at off-site events must be separate from arrangements for children (unless the child is a member of your family).

6. Confidentiality

Disclosing information to committee members and CSO

The privacy of the child should be respected at all times. When considering breaching the privacy who and how many people are told should be based on what is believed to be in the best interests of the child.

Information in relation to abuse or suspected abuse of a minor should be disclosed to a committee member or Child Safety Officer of the club only, in order to limit the potential dissemination of confidential information.

Disclosing information to people external to the organisation

Committee members, volunteers, employees, coaches, managers and players should not discuss confidential matters about children with people outside the organisation in a way that identifies that child except when they have the express permission of the child, or it complies with the Club's Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct. In circumstances where committee members, volunteers, employees, coaches, managers, and players believe that there is not enough knowledge within the Club to provide the best possible assistance to a child, they are able to seek expertise external to the Club. When communicating with people outside the Club the child's identity should be protected.

Informing children

It is the responsibility of the Club to communicate the limits of confidentiality in the Club to children who are likely to have an ongoing relationship with the Club in accordance with the Club's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.

These guidelines should be published in an accessible place for children.

7. Related legislation and relevant documents

Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth)

Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)

Child Wellbeing and Safety (Child Safe Standards Compliance and Enforcement) Amendment Act 2021 (Vic)

Children, Youth and Families Act (2005) (Vic)

Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)

An Overview of the Child Safe Standards- <https://www.providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/child-safestandards>

Failure to Disclose Offence – <https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/safer-communities/protectingchildren-and-families/failure-to-disclose-offence>

Failure to Protect Offence – <https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/safer-communities/protectingchildren-and-families/failure-to-protect-a-new-criminal-offence-to>

Football Victoria, Child Protection Procedure – <https://www.footballvictoria.com.au/sites/ffv/files/2023-05/Child%20Safe%20Policy%20-%20November%202022.pdf>

Football Victoria, Inclusion Charter - <https://www.footballvictoria.com.au/inclusion-charter>

Gippsland Soccer League Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

Gippsland Soccer League Child Safety Code of Conduct

Reporting Child Abuse – <https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/reporting-child-abuse>

Mandatory Reporting – <https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/mandatory-reporting>

Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme

Child Protection Crisis Line – 24 Hours, seven days a week. Telephone: 13 12 78