

Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing Policy



1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- 1.1. Promote **Leopold Football Netball Club Inc.** (the 'Club') commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people to the broader Club community.
- 1.2. Educate Club staff and volunteers of their responsibilities when interacting with children and young people to familiarise them with the appropriate processes for responding to any concerns (complaints incidents, disclosures, allegations or suspicions) of harm or abuse to children and young people.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1. This Policy applies to all Club People including (but not limited to) players, parents and guardians, coaches, managers, medical/trainers, volunteers, administrators, officials, spectators, employees, service providers and sponsors, and all children and young people of the LFNC.
- 2.2. This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Club's and AFL Barwon's related policies and procedures, the Victorian Child Safe Standards and Commonwealth and Victorian legislation listed in section 3.
- 2.3. The Club is committed to continually reviewing its policies and practises to protect the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis in consultation with Club board/committee members and other interested parties.

3. LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

3.1. This policy has been developed with consideration of the [11 Victorian Child Safe Standards](#), the [Child Safety & Wellbeing Act 2005](#), the [Child Youth & Families Act 2005](#) and other relevant state legislative requirements including:

- [Statutory Duty of Care Wrongs Amendment \(Organisational Child Abuse\) Act 2017](#)
- [Failure to Disclose Crimes Amendment \(Protection of Children\) Act 2014 \(Vic\)](#)
- [Failure to Protect Crimes Amendment \(Protection of Children\) Act 2014 \(Vic\)](#)
- [Grooming Crimes Amendment \(Grooming\) Act 2014 \(Vic\)](#)
- [Working with Children Check](#)
- [Worker Screening Act 2020](#)

4. DEFINITIONS

- 4.1. **Child and Young Person** means a person under the age of 18 years.
- 4.2. **Child Abuse** includes all forms of physical, emotional, psychological, verbal and/or sexual abuse. Child abuse also includes sexual exploitation, neglect or negligent treatment, grooming, harassing behaviour, bullying or other exploitation of a child or young person and includes any actions that results in actual or potential harm to a child or young person. Child abuse can be a single incident or take place over time.

4.3. **Child protection** means any responsibility, measure or activity undertaken in response to a child in need of protection.

4.4. **Leopold Football Netball Club Inc. Person / People** includes staff, volunteers, players, contractors, officials, trainers/medical staff and coaches.

4.5 **Leopold Football Netball Club Inc. activities** include activities, programs, events and tasks carried out by people for or behalf of the Leopold Football and Netball Club Inc. (Includes activities or services carried out by External Partners).

4.6. **External Partners** includes third party contractors, partner organisations engaged to facilitate programs for children and young people with, or on the behalf of the Club.

4.7. **Family violence** occurs when children and young people are forced to live with violence between adults in their home. Family violence includes violence between members of a family, or extended family, or those fulfilling the role of family in a child or young person's life. It can include witnessing violence or the consequences of violence. Exposure to family violence places children and young people at increased risk of injury and harm and has a significant impact on their wellbeing and development.

4.8. **Grooming** is a term used to describe what happens when a perpetrator builds a relationship with a child or young person with the intent to abuse or harm them. Perpetrators may also groom parents/carers by forming relationships of trust with parents/carers before harming a child or young person. Grooming can take place over a long period of time before abuse occurs or the abuse can happen relatively quickly. Grooming can take in physical (face-to-face) environments or online.

4.9 **Peer-to-Peer abuse** is the term used to explain child abuse or harm that can occur through peer-to-peer interactions and may include behaviours ranging from harassment and bullying to sexual contact.

4.10. **Harm** can be any action that may have a significant impact on a child or young person's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. Harm can be caused by:

- Physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect;
- Sexual abuse or exploitation;
- Family violence;
- a single act, omission or circumstance; and
- a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances.

4.11. **Sexual abuse or exploitation** is any act which exposes a child or young person to or involves them in sexual acts beyond their understanding or contrary to accepted community standards. Sexual offence 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, grooming, voyeurism, exhibitionism, and exposing the child to or involving the child in pornography. It also includes engaging a child or young person to participate in sexual conversations online.

4.12. **Concerns** include any issue that an adult or peer considers may negatively impact on the safety or wellbeing of a child or young person. This includes disputes, complaints, incidents, disclosures, allegations or suspicions.

5. POLICY STATEMENT

5.1. The Club is committed to creating a safe, inclusive and welcoming environment for all children and young people who participate in football and/or netball activities as players, participants, umpires, officials or spectators.

The safety and wellbeing of all children and young people across the club community is a shared responsibility between the Club, its staff, volunteers, parents/carers, officials, coaches, umpires, and spectators of the Club community, and broader AFL Barwon community.

5.2. The Club has zero tolerance for any form of child abuse or harmful behaviour and will continuously work to comply with the Victorian Child Safe Standards to fulfil this commitment.

5.3. The Leopold Football Netball Club Inc

5.3.1. Acknowledges the specific needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people and will promote their cultural safety within the football and netball environment;

5.3.2. Understands the role the committee and leadership play in leading a culture of safety and embedding the relevant structures and systems to support this;

5.3.3. Is committed to the active participation of children and young people, ensuring all children and young people know their rights, have their views taken seriously and involve them in decisions that may directly affect them and their peers;

5.3.4. Recognises the important role families play in supporting children and young people to participate in sport and values the input of families in decision making;

5.3.5. Acknowledges children and young people have equal rights to protection from harm and abuse regardless of their race, religion, age, disability, cultural background, gender, sexual orientation or family/social background;

5.3.6. Will take the appropriate steps to recruit safe and suitable people and provide appropriate supervision to staff and volunteers to fulfil their safeguarding obligations;

5.3.7. Will act promptly and sensitively to protect children and young people should a concern be raised, or an incident occur. All concerns and incidents will be treated seriously, fully investigated, referred to the appropriate authorities if required, and handled confidentially;

5.3.8. Is committed to ensuring Club People are provided appropriate, relevant education and resources to fulfil their safeguarding obligations;

5.3.9. Acknowledges the risks to children and young people associated with the physical and online environments within which the Club operate and will actively work to continually identify, mitigate, and manage these risks;

5.3.10. Recognises the importance of continuous improvement and will support the work of the Child Safeguarding Officer, in partnership with AFL Barwon to ensure the Club is prioritising its obligations;

5.3.11. Continue to review and improve this policy and other relevant procedures and actively promotes these to the Club community.

5.4. The Club is committed to implementing safeguarding practices across the Club community.

5.5. Any report of non-compliance or breach of the Child Safeguarding & Wellbeing Policy, LFNC Code of Conduct or related policies and procedures may result in a formal investigation. If non-compliance or breach is confirmed through the disciplinary process, action may include termination of club membership and/or role.

6. EXPECTED BEHAVIOUR

6.1. All Club People, including External Partners, have responsibilities in relation to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and are expected to comply with the Club's and AFL Barwon's related policies and procedures.

6.2. All Club People appointed to a coaching role are expected to sign and comply with the Club Safeguarding Behavioural Standards.

6.3. All Club People are expected to comply with the [AFL's Expected Behaviours Resource](#).

6.4. Any Club Person who does not comply with these expectations will be considered in breach of the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and the matter will be handled by the Club, AFL Barwon, the AFL Integrity Unit and/or the police and child protection authorities.

6.5. If required, Club People are expected to co-operate with police and/or other formal investigations to the best of their ability.

6.6. The Club will appoint a Member Protection Officer/ Child Safeguarding Officer or equivalent role that will be the primary point of contact for all concerns, disputes and complaints related to child safety and wellbeing.

7. CULTURAL SAFETY

7.1. The Club is committed to creating environments where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture is acknowledged and appreciated, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people, their families and community members feel safe and included.

7.2. The Leopold Football Netball Club Inc. will take a zero-tolerance approach to racism and act on any incidents of racism or other forms of unlawful discrimination promptly. The Club will also promote a Welcome to Country and/or an Acknowledgement of Country for significant meetings and formal events to show respect to the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural traditions.

8. GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

8.1. The Club Committee nominates at least one committee member to carry the Safeguarding Portfolio and provide oversight and support to the Child Safeguarding Officer (CSO) and club volunteers regarding safety, risk and integrity matters.

8.2. The Child Safeguarding Officer and nominated committee member receives and responds to club integrity matters, including those relating to safeguarding. This includes providing guidance to volunteers and members, escalating matters to AFL Barwon or the AFL Integrity Unit and externally if required (police, child protection).

Additionally, the Club committee will consider themes and trends identified in matters raised and use these to inform decision making processes, requests for resources and support and risk management considerations.

9. ENGAGEMENT OF CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR FAMILIES

9.1. The Club supports the active participation of children, young people and their families and welcomes their views, opinions, and feedback to inform the development and update of policies, resources, communication and education in relation to matters affecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

9.2. Where possible, the Club will engage with children and young people and their parents/carers about safeguarding practices and help empower them to speak up when they see or hear something that makes them feel unsafe.

10. INCLUSION, EQUITY & DIVERSITY

10.1. A safe and inclusive environment ensures that people from a range of different backgrounds feel valued and welcomed and have equal access to opportunities and resources, creating a safer environment.

10.2. All Club activities should encourage and support safe and inclusive experiences for all children and young people including those who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, children and young people with disabilities, children and young people from culturally diverse backgrounds, and children and young people who identify as LGBTI+, transgender and/or non-binary.

10.3. The Club upholds the rights of children and young people to express their culture, celebrate diversity and appreciate the strengths of cultures. Club activities must meet the needs of all children and young people (and their families) and provide environments that are inclusive, sensitive and friendly.

10.4. The Club will provide children, young people and their families with access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand via the translated [AFL Safeguarding Resources](#) available.

10.5. The Club prioritises gender diversity and equality as outlined in the AFL's [Gender Diversity Policy](#).

11. RECRUITMENT AND SCREENING

11.1. The Club ensures to recruit people (staff and volunteers), that are suitably qualified and committed to providing professional, safe, and enjoyable programs and services for children and young people.

11.2. For the purpose of this policy, appointed Coaches, Managers, and Trainers First-Aiders/Primary Carers of junior teams and Club Committee members are considered child-related positions due to direct and in-direct contact with children and young people across the Club, events and games and due to having access to personal information of children and young people.

11.3. The Club requires all Club People named above (para 11.2) to hold a Working with Children Check due to direct and in-direct contact with children and young people in their role and complete prescribed safeguarding education requirements offered.

11.3.1. Working with Children Checks: Working with Children Check (WWCC) laws aim to help prevent people who pose a known unacceptable risk from working with children and young people as paid staff or volunteers.

12. CONCERNS, DISPUTES AND COMPLAINTS AND REPORTING

12.1. The Club may receive information about safeguarding matters regarding the behaviour of a member of the Club community.

12.2. Matters raised may be a concern, a complaint or a direct report of a breach of policy or the law. These may be received verbally (in person or over the phone), via email, text message or another online mechanism or in writing (as provided for in the Clubs Dispute Resolution and Complaint Policy).

The Club will consider all matters regardless of how they are received.

12.3. The Club will take all concerns, complaints or reports seriously, whether they are raised by an adult, child or young person. All child related concerns and complaints will be responded to promptly and confidentially according to the LFNC Dispute Resolution and Complaint Policy.

12.4. The Club will actively promote the reporting process on its website, social media and onsite across facilities to help children, young people, their families, and Club people to understand how they can raise a concern or a complaint with the Club.

12.5. If there is concern for the immediate safety of a child or young person, immediately call the Police '000'.

12.6. If a child or young person is not in immediate danger but a Club person believes on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is in need of protection from any form of child abuse or harm, they will disclose that information to the Police, Child Protection or the Commissioner for Children & Young People.

12.7. If a concern or complaint includes an allegation or incident of child abuse or harm, Club people and volunteers must report it in accordance with the Club's Receiving and Responding to Safeguarding Concerns Flowchart.

12.8. Any Club person who is the subject of a child or young person related concern or complaint may be requested to stand down from their position in the Club during an investigation, have their duties altered so they do not engage with children and young people and/or have their access to the Club's IT system/database removed.

12.9. When concerns of inappropriate conduct and/or a breach of policy involving a child or young person are raised, the Club will assess the matter in line with section 23.2 of the National Community Football Policy Handbook and either:

- Escalate to the AFL Barwon or AFL Integrity Unit
- Support the complainant to refer the matter to the AFL Integrity Unit
- Engage a qualified investigator to consider the matter and provide recommendations for actioning.

The Club will handle all matters in accordance with procedural fairness and in a confidential and sensitive manner.

12.10. The Club will keep a register of any allegations regarding inappropriate conduct.

13. REPORTING SEXUAL ABUSE

13.1. If any Club person receives information that leads them to form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed, that person has a legal obligation to disclose that information to the Police as soon as it is practicable.

13.2. Individuals who fail to comply with this obligation under the [Failure to Disclose Crimes Amendment \(Protection of Children\) Act 2014 \(Vic\)](#) and the [Failure to Protect Crimes Amendment \(Protection of Children\) Act 2014 \(Vic\)](#) may be subject to a penalty of imprisonment.

14. MANDATORY REPORTING

14.1. A number of professions in the community (including but not limited to teachers, nurses and doctors) are also required under the Child Youth & Families Act 2005 to report to Child Protection where they have formed a belief, on reasonable grounds, that a child is in need of protection because they have suffered (or are likely to suffer) significant harm due to physical or sexual abuse.

This report must be made as soon as practicable, and on any occasion where they become aware of other allegations and have reasonable grounds for belief.

15. RISK MANAGEMENT

15.1. The Club recognises the responsibility to proactively identify and reduce or remove risks to children and young people. Risk Management strategies are in place to identify, assess, and recognise safeguarding risks. This includes Wellbeing and Safeguarding as an agenda topic on the Clubs Committee meetings.

15.2. Club People will act in accordance with the LFNC Code of Conduct.

15.3. The Club will take all reasonable and practical steps to ensure that safe physical environments will be provided to children and young people. Safety assessments will be conducted on the main facilities utilised to ensure they are suitable and safe for activities, and programs with children and young people. These may be conducted using the AFL's [Club Risk Assessment Template](#).

15.5. The Club will take all reasonable and practical steps to ensure a safe online environment and will have an awareness of safe practice when communicating with children and young people via online and electronic systems and regarding the use, sharing and storing of photos and images of children and young people.

15.6. Further guidance can be sought from the AFL's [Communicating with Children & Young People Resource](#), or [Professional Boundaries Resource](#) and from SIA's [Photography and Filming of Children and Young People in Sport Guide](#).

15.7. The Club's risk management processes will be updated regularly, based on complaints, concerns and incidents data, with oversight from the Clubs Child Safeguarding Officer and nominated Committee member.

16. SUPPORTING CLUB STAFF, COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS

16.1. Our Club is committed to supporting all staff, board/committee members and volunteers to understand how to create a child safe and child friendly environment at our club.

16.2. Our Club recommends that staff, board/committee members and volunteers familiarise themselves with the following online training in child safe practices - AFL *Safe Footy* Safeguarding webinars and resources, Play by the Rules training (child protection, cultural awareness, LGBTI+ inclusive clubs, Let Kids be Kids, and eSafety Commissioner (safe online environments)

17. REVIEW AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

17.1. The Club aims to continuously improve safeguarding practices and strategies and actively seeks feedback from stakeholders (staff, volunteers, partners, children, young people, families, clubs) to do so.

17.2. The Club will review identified risks to child and young people through the incident management and record keeping processes and will consider those risks as part of a risk management plan.

17.3. The Club will also use the outcomes of concerns, complaints and reports to influence and inform decision making, policy review, resources, education, and investment in personnel.

17.4. The Club will engage in review processes and education and training regularly to ensure the organisation is up to date and across changes in the safeguarding landscape and that these are reflected in the continuous improvement processes.

18. RECORD KEEPING AND INFORMATION SHARING

18.1. The Club is committed to making and retaining accurate records of reports of safeguarding related concerns and complaints.

18.2. The Club will maintain records and outcomes of investigations and resolutions of concerns and complaints. In maintaining records of reports about child safety, The Club will maintain confidentiality and privacy for children and families in accordance with legislation.

18.3. From time to time, the Club may share relevant information to promote the safety and wellbeing of children and young people where appropriate and in their best interest. This may include sharing information with external authorities to comply with the law or to prioritise the safety of a child or young person.

19. RELATED DOCUMENTS AND SAFEGUARDING EDUCATION RESOURCES AND LINKS

LFNC

- LFNC Privacy Policy;
- LFNC Constitution;
- LFNC Code of Conduct
- LFNC Dispute Resolution and Complaint Policy;

AFL Barwon or AFL

- AFL Member Protection Policy
< <https://www.afl.com.au/clubhelp/match-day-management/policies/afl-member-protection-policy>>;
- AFL Barwon Cyber Safety Policy Photography and Videography Policy
< <https://www.aflbarwon.com.au/general-resources/policies-forms/policies>>;
- AFL National Social Media Engagement Policy
< <https://s.afl.com.au/staticfile/AFL%20Tenant/AFL/Files/Schedule%202%20-%20National%20Social%20Media%20Engagement%20Policy.pdf>>
- 2025 National Community Football Policy Handbook.
< <https://www.aflbarwon.com.au/general-resources/policies-forms/policies>>
- AFL Safe Footy Safeguarding webinars and resources
<www.afl.com.au/clubhelp/safeguarding-children>

Netball Australia

- Netball Australia Code of Conduct for Community Netball
< https://vic.netball.com.au/sites/vic/files/2026-02/Code%20of%20Conduct%20for%20Community%20Netball%20-%201%20February%202026_0.pdf>
- Netball Australia Integrity Policies
< <https://netball.com.au/integrity-policies>>

Other

- eSafety Commissioner (safe online environments and sporting organisations)
<<https://www.esafety.gov.au/communities/sport>>

21. POLICY BREACH

It is a breach of this Policy for any person or organisation subject to this Policy to have been found to have done anything contrary to this Policy. Any person who breaches this Policy will be removed from their position immediately and may face additional club imposed sanctions, such as, but not limited to, suspension or expulsion.

This policy was last updated on : 20 February 2026

The next review is due after : 01 January 2031