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Child Safety Policy

1. Statement of Commitment

- 1.1 The Shepparton Rugby League Club Inc. is committed to child safety and protecting the safety and wellbeing of all children who participate in Shepparton Rugby League Club Inc.'s events.
- 1.2 We want children to be safe, happy and empowered, and we have zero tolerance for child abuse.
- 1.3 We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we have concerns about a child's safety. All allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our policies and procedures.
- 1.4 The Shepparton Rugby League Club Inc. is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early and removing and reducing these risks.
- 1.5 We have robust human resources and recruitment practices to reduce the risk of child abuse by committee members, staff, contractors and volunteers (together, **Representatives**).
- 1.6 The Shepparton Rugby League Club Inc. is committed to training and educating our Representatives on child abuse risks.
- 1.7 All Representatives are responsible for the care and protection of children and reporting concerns of child abuse.
- 1.8 We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.
- 1.9 We have specific policies and procedures in place that support our Representatives to achieve these commitments.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all Representatives engaged by The Shepparton Rugby League Club Inc. in Victoria and New South Wales. It applies to all aspects of a Representative's engagement with children in connection with the Shepparton Rugby League Club Inc.

3. Definitions and Key Terms

'child' means a person under 18, unless the otherwise defined by law.

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'child safety' means any responsibility, measure or activity undertaken to safeguard children from harm.

'child abuse' means any act committed against or in the presence of a child, including a sexual offence, child sexual abuse, grooming, physical violence, serious emotional or psychological harm, serious neglect and/or a child's exposure to family violence.

'child sexual abuse' means any act which exposes a child to, or involves a child in, sexual processes beyond his or her understanding or contrary to accepted community standards. Sexually abusive behaviours can include the touching of breasts or genitals, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration and exposing the child to or involving the child in pornography. It includes grooming, which refers to actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child or their parent, guardian or carer in preparation for sexual activity with the child.

'event' means any activity or performance conducted by the Shepparton Rugby League Club Inc. as part of Rugby League competition, participation and training.

4. Principles

4.1 The Shepparton Rugby League Club Inc.'s commitment to child safety is based on the following overarching principles:

- (a) All children have the right to be safe.
- (b) The views of children should be heard and respected.
- (c) Child safety awareness is promoted within the Shepparton Rugby League Club Inc.'s community and program.
- (d) Child safety and protection is everyone's responsibility.
- (e) Children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds have the right to special care and support, including those who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders.
- (f) Children who have any kind of disability have the right to special care and support.

5. Responsibilities

5.1 This policy guides our Representatives on how to behave with children at a Shepparton Rugby League Club Inc, event, match day or training.

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5.2 All of our representatives must agree to abide by this Policy, the Child Safety Procedure and our Code of Conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children.

5.3 This section sets out the responsibilities of different roles.

Role	Key responsibilities
Committee members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approving child safety policies and procedures • Ensuring that the Shepparton Rugby League Club Inc. is complying with its child safety obligations • Creating a child safe culture from the top • Ensuring that the child safety policy, procedure and code of conduct are publicly available on the website and communicated to stakeholders.
Secretary, President and Vice President	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for the operational management of the Shepparton Rugby League Club Inc. and the implementation of child safety policies and procedures • Maintain a register of Working With Children Checks (WWCC) details for all Representatives, including the start and expiry date • Periodically review the WWCC register to ensure that all Representatives have maintained a valid WWCC and are registered to work with the Shepparton Rugby League Club Inc. • Responsible for monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of child safety strategies • Ensuring that a strong and sustainable child protection culture is maintained within the Shepparton Rugby League Club Inc. • Ensuring Representatives are suitable to work with children and undergo the required training
Child Safety Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for championing child protection at events, match days and training involving the Shepparton Rugby League Club Inc. • Key point of contact for any child safety concerns or allegations

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Role	Key responsibilities
Representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Required to familiarise themselves with the content of this policy, the Child Safety Code of Conduct and the Child Safety Procedure, and other Shepparton Rugby League Club Inc. policies and procedures Understand and comply with their child safety and legal obligations, including reporting of child abuse It is each individual's responsibility to be aware of key risk indicators of child abuse, to be observant, and to raise any concerns they may have relating to child abuse in accordance with the Child Safety Procedure Attend relevant child safety briefings and training Report any reasonable belief that a child's safety is at risk to the relevant authorities and fulfil their reporting obligations Provide an environment that is supportive of all children's emotional and physical safety

6. Working With Children Checks

6.1 All Representatives must:

- Obtain a valid Working With Children Check (**WWCC**) prior to commencing work with the Shepparton Rugby League Club Inc., and maintain the WWCC for the duration of their engagement;
- Provide details of the WWCC to the Shepparton Rugby League Club Inc. prior to commencing work with Shepparton Rugby League Club Inc., and inform the Shepparton Rugby League Club Inc. about any changes to their WWCC or the information listed on their WWCC;
- Ensure they carry their WWCC at all times; and
- Abide by the terms of their WWCC.

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7. Child Safety Strategies

- 7.1 The Shepparton Rugby League Club Inc. has developed child safety strategies to advance the safety of all children with whom it interacts. Only Representatives with a current WWCC without conditions will be engaged by the Shepparton Rugby League Club Inc.
- 7.2 In accordance with the Shepparton Rugby League Club Inc.'s commitment to a culture of child protection, the Shepparton Rugby League Club Inc.:
- (a) Has developed this policy along with others to safeguard against any form of abuse against children;
 - (b) Will direct Representatives to adhere to this Policy;
 - (c) Trains its staff and management in matters related to child safety (including this policy, the Child Safety Code of Conduct and Child Safety Procedure);
 - (d) Has adopted a procedure for the screening, recruitment and induction of Representatives;
 - (e) Has risk management strategies in place to identify, minimise and monitor child safety risks.

8. Recruitment

- 8.1 The Shepparton Rugby League Club Inc. formally screens, interviews and trains all Representatives. In recruiting Representatives, The Shepparton Rugby League Club Inc. will:
- (a) Conduct a formal interview with all potential Representatives for positions involving working with children, which involves enquiring into their past experience(s) of working with children or vulnerable individuals;
 - (b) Ask potential Representatives to disclose any past allegations, concerns, charges or offences related to children, and any other charges or offences (e.g. family violence);
 - (c) Undertake at least two reference checks with contacts supplied by the candidate (and keep a record of those checks);
 - (d) Enquire with at least two previous employers regarding suitability for the position (and keep a record of those checks);

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- (e) Ensure that potential Representatives have a valid WWCC (or apply for one at the time of their engagement);
- (f) Reserve the right to limit a Representative's role until they have obtained a valid WWCC;
- (g) Refuse to engage any person who has a known history of child abuse (e.g. allegations, concerns, charges or offences related to children) or prior conviction relating to a violent or sexually related offence; and
- (h) Engage in face-to-face interviews that include questions to check for suitability to safeguard children's wellbeing.


9. Training and supervision

- 9.1 The Shepparton Rugby League Club Inc. will provide Representatives with formal training on this policy, including formal refresher / update procedure update training, based on current best practice and changes to legislation on an annual. We provide information and education to our Representatives to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse in line with this Policy and our Child Safety Procedure.
- 9.2 New Representatives will be supervised regularly to ensure they understand the Shepparton Rugby League Club Inc.'s commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse. Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels set out in the Child Safety Procedure depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

10. Risk Management Strategies

- 10.1 The Shepparton Rugby League Club Inc. has risk management strategies to ensure that a child safe environment is created, including:
- (a) Inducting and providing annual training for Representatives on their child safety obligations, relevant child safety policies and procedures, and reporting requirements;
 - (b) Recording and monitoring of WWCCs;
 - (c) Suspending or standing down a Representative if they are under investigation for any child related offence or allegation or any other allegation which poses a threat to children;
 - (d) Taking disciplinary action, including and up to termination of a Representative's role if they are found to have breached this policy or any other Shepparton Rugby League Club Inc. policy or procedure;

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- (e) Terminating or restricting a Representative's role if their WWCC is no longer valid.


Media and Consent

- 10.2 The Shepparton Rugby League Club Inc. will only take photographs or videos of children or publicise such media with their/their parents' consent. Any such media will portray children in a respectful manner.
- 10.3 Where consent is granted and media is publicised, all such media will be anonymous unless students request otherwise (e.g. if a child was to tag themselves in a photo posted by the Shepparton Rugby League Club Inc. on a social medial platform such as Facebook). Where possible and practical, any such media will be removed if a child or their parent withdraws consent.

Events

- 10.4 The Shepparton Rugby League Club Inc. aims to protect children who participate in its events by:
- (a) Requiring them to be accompanied by a responsible adult during all Shepparton Rugby League Club Inc. events (including rehearsals and workshops);
 - (b) Ensuring all Representatives abide by their induction training, which emphasises treating all individuals with respect, non-judgment and inclusivity; and
 - (c) Wherever possible, preventing situations where a child is left alone with a Representative.
- 10.5 Consent to participate must be obtained from a child's parent or legal guardian at least a week prior to any involvement in a Shepparton Rugby League Club Inc. event. The parent or legal guardian will be asked to sign a 'Consent to Participate' form which includes information about:
- (a) The activity/event/performance that the child wishes to participate in;
 - (b) The amount of time that may be required for activities including rehearsal, performance and participation; and
 - (c) Any anticipated costs of participating.

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11. Reporting

- 11.1 Representatives must comply with all applicable mandatory reporting laws in relation to child abuse, which are set out in the Child Safety Procedure.
- 11.2 If any person believes a child is in immediate risk of abuse, telephone 000.
- 11.3 The Shepparton Rugby League Club Inc. also supports and encourages Representatives to make a report to the Police and/or the relevant government agency 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.
- 11.4 As set out in the Child Safety Procedure, if a person would like internal guidance or support with addressing their concerns, they are encouraged to speak with the GM or Child Safety Officer.
- 11.5 Ultimately, it is a personal decision of the Representative whether they choose to make a report to an external authority or not.
- 11.6 Any Representative that makes a report in good faith in accordance with their reporting obligations will be supported by the Shepparton Rugby League Club Inc., and will not be penalised for making the report.
- 11.7 Individuals who have a child safety concern should speak with the Shepparton Rugby League Club Inc.'s Child Safety Officer whose details can be found on our website or contact the club Secretary. All concerns will be treated confidentiality to the greatest extent possible, and the Shepparton Rugby League Club Inc. will secure all relevant records.
- 11.8 Please refer to our Child Safety Procedure for more information.

12. Allegations, concerns and complaints

- 12.1 The Shepparton Rugby League Club Inc. takes all allegations seriously.
- 12.2 We work to ensure all children, families and Representatives know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.
- 12.3 We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection.
- 12.4 Please refer to our Child Safety Procedure for more information.

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13. Empowering children

13.1 This policy is intended to empower children, who are vital and active participants at the Shepparton Rugby League Club Inc. We involve them when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them. We listen to their views and respect what they have to say.

13.2 We promote diversity and acceptance at the Shepparton Rugby League Club Inc., and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome. In particular, we:

- (a) promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children
- (b) promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- (c) ensure that children with a disability are safe and can participate equally.

14. Breaches

Representatives that breach this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, including and up to termination of their employment or engagement.

15. Review

15.1 The Committee of the Shepparton Rugby League Club Inc. will review this Policy and every three years.

Policy created date 1 January 2024

Next policy review date 1 January 2027

16. Acknowledgements and Agreement


By signing this document, you confirm that you have read, understood and agreed to adhere to the guidelines, practices and policies stated in it.

I, _____ have read, understood and agree to this Policy. I further acknowledge the terms and conditions outlined in this document and agree to operate within the guidelines set out.

Representative Name: _____

Commencement date: ___ / ___ / ___

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Signed: _____

Date: ___ / ___ / ___

17. Related policies, procedures and legislation

17.1 Related policies and procedures

- (a) Child Safety Code of Conduct
- (b) Child Safety Procedure
- (c) Protection of Vulnerable Individuals Policy

17.2 Related legislation

- (a) *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic)
- (b) *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic)
- (c) *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic)
- (d) Child Safe Standards Victoria

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