

Child Safe Policy

October 2020



Purpose

Northcote Junior Football Club's (NJFC) primary focus is the participation and enjoyment of junior football by all interested children in the community. We respect the diversity of our community and do not tolerate bullying by players, parents, carers, volunteers or staff. This policy documents the strong commitment of management, staff and volunteers of the *Northcote Junior Football Club* to child safety and provides an outline of the policies and practices NJFC has developed to keep everyone safe from any harm, including abuse.

Commitment to Child Safety

All children who are a part of Northcote Junior Football Club (NJFC) have a right to feel and be safe. The welfare of the children in our care will always be our first priority and NJFC has a zero tolerance to child abuse. The Club aims to create a child safe and child friendly environment where children feel safe and have fun. NJFC's activities are always carried out in the best interests of the children.

Application of this Policy

This policy was developed by NJFC in collaboration with parents, carers, volunteers and the children who use our service. Personnel includes all volunteers, staff or contractors involved at the Club.

This policy applies to all individuals involved in our organisation including, but not limited to:

- Administrators
- Coaches
- Officials
- Participants
- Parents
- Spectators
- Paid contractors

All of the people to which this policy applies have a role and responsibility in relation to child protection. They must all:

- understand the indicators and risks of child abuse;
- appropriately act on any concerns raised by children, parents, carers or volunteers; and
- understand and follow all applicable laws in relation to the protection of children and reporting or management of child safety concerns.

Child Abuse

Child abuse can take a broad range of forms including physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional or psychological abuse and neglect. People to whom this policy applies need to be aware that child abuse can occur whenever there is actual or potential harm to a child, and these are circumstances that NJFC is committed to reducing the risk of occurrence.

Children's Rights to Safety and Participation

NJFC encourages children to express their views about their safety. We listen to their suggestions, especially on matters that directly affect them. We actively encourage all children who use our services to 'have a say' about things that are important to them.

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We teach children about what they can do if they feel unsafe. We listen to and act on any concerns children, or their parents/carers, raise with us.

Valuing Diversity

We value diversity and do not tolerate any discriminatory practices. To achieve this we aim to:

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children and their families;
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families;
- welcome children with a disability and their families and act to promote their participation wherever possible; and
- seek appropriate volunteers from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Recruiting staff and volunteers

The Club takes the following steps to ensure best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of personnel:

- Interview and conduct referee checks on all volunteers and staff working directly with children (coaches, assistant coaches, trainers, team managers);
- Require police checks* and Working with Children Checks for relevant positions;
- Require committee members, Coaches and Team Managers to undertake the 'Play by the Rules' (or approved equivalent) online training course; and
- Our commitment to Child Safety (Child Safe Club?) and our screening requirements are included in all advertisements and as part of the induction process for new staff or volunteers.

Supporting staff and volunteers

NJFC seeks to attract and retain the best personnel. We provide support and supervision so people feel valued, respected and fairly treated. We have developed a Code of Conduct to provide guidance to our staff and volunteers, all of whom receive training on the requirements of the Code. We will provide support to children, parents/carers or volunteers who are involved in the reporting of suspected child abuse.

Reporting a child safety concern or complaint

Each year NJFC appoints several people as Child Safety Officers with the specific responsibility for responding to any complaints made by personnel, parents, carers or children. The photos and contact details and photos of these people are displayed on the main noticeboard in the clubrooms. This group can also be contacted at pwo@njfc.com.au

Risk Management

We recognise the importance of a risk management approach to minimising the potential for child abuse or harm to occur and use this to inform our policy, procedures and activity planning. In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our children. To reduce the risk of child abuse occurring, adults to whom this policy applies should avoid direct, unsupervised contact with children. For example, this should be a consideration when:

- using change room facilities;
- travel; or
- physical contact when coaching or managing children.

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Reviewing this policy

This policy is to be reviewed every two years. We undertake to seek views, comments and suggestions from children, parents, carers, staff and volunteers involved in NJFC.

*Police checks will be required for all Committee members and other personnel who handle money as part of their role.