



Child Safe Policy - May 2025

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. The policy is informed by the current Child Safe Standards (see Appendix 1)

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.

For further information about the Yarra Junior Football League's commitment to child safety, please refer to the following web page: <https://www.yarrajfl.org.au/safeguarding-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:

- Require police checks* and Working with Children Checks for all volunteer roles via PlayHQ.
- Require committee members, Coaches and Team Managers to undertake the appropriate training course accessed through the league; and
- Our commitment to Child Safety 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 NJFCChildSafety@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.

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.

Appendix 1

What are the Child Safe Standards?

Source: Commission for Children and Young People - <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/>

There are 11 Child Safe Standards:

Child Safe Standard 1 – Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued

In complying with Child Safe Standard 1, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

- 1.1. A child's ability to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights is encouraged and actively supported.
- 1.2. Strategies are embedded within the organisation which equip all members to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal culture and understand its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children and young people.
- 1.3. Measures are adopted by the organisation to ensure racism within the organisation is identified, confronted and not tolerated. Any instances of racism are addressed with appropriate consequences.
- 1.4. The organisation actively supports and facilitates participation and inclusion within it by Aboriginal children, young people and their families.
- 1.5. All of the organisation's policies, procedures, systems and processes together create a culturally safe and inclusive environment and meet the needs of Aboriginal children, young people and their families.

Child Safe Standard 2 – Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture

In complying with Child Safe Standard 2, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

- 2.1 The organisation makes a public commitment to child safety.
- 2.2 A child safe culture is championed and modelled at all levels of the organisation from the top down and bottom up.
- 2.3 Governance arrangements facilitate implementation of the child safety and wellbeing policy at all levels
- 2.4 A Code of Conduct provides guidelines for staff and volunteers on expected behavioural standards and responsibilities.
- 2.5 Risk management strategies focus on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks to children and young people.
- 2.6 Staff and volunteers understand their obligations on information sharing and recordkeeping.

Child Safe Standard 3 – Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously

In complying with Child Safe Standard 3, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

- 3.1 Children and young people are informed about all of their rights, including to safety, information and participation.
- 3.2 The importance of friendships is recognised and support from peers is encouraged, to help children and young people feel safe and be less isolated.
- 3.3 Where relevant to the setting or context, children and young people are offered access to sexual abuse prevention programs and to relevant related information in an age appropriate way.
- 3.4 Staff and volunteers are attuned to signs of harm and facilitate child-friendly ways for children and young people to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise their concerns.
- 3.5 Organisations have strategies in place to develop a culture that facilitates participation and is responsive to the input of children and young people.

3.6 Organisations provide opportunities for children and young people to participate and are responsive to their contributions, thereby strengthening confidence and engagement.

Child Safe Standard 4 – Families and communities are informed, and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing

In complying with Child Safe Standard 4, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

4.1 Families participate in decisions affecting their child.

4.2 The organisation engages and openly communicates with families and the community about its child safe approach and relevant information is accessible.

4.3 Families and communities have a say in the development and review of the organisation's policies and practices.

4.4 Families, carers and the community are informed about the organisation's operations and governance.

Child Safe Standard 5 – Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice

In complying with Child Safe Standard 5, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

5.1 The organisation, including staff and volunteers, understands children and young people's diverse circumstances, and provides support and responds to those who are vulnerable.

5.2 Children and young people have access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand.

5.3 The organisation pays particular attention to the needs of children and young people with disability, children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who are unable to live at home, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children and young people.

5.4 The organisation pays particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal children and young people and provides/promotes a culturally safe environment for them.

Child Safe Standard 6 – People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice

In complying with Child Safe Standard 6, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

6.1 Recruitment, including advertising, referee checks and staff and volunteer pre-employment screening, emphasise child safety and wellbeing.

6.2 Relevant staff and volunteers have current working with children checks or equivalent background checks.

6.3 All staff and volunteers receive an appropriate induction and are aware of their responsibilities to children and young people, including record keeping, information sharing and reporting obligations.

6.4 Ongoing supervision and people management is focused on child safety and wellbeing.

Child Safe Standard 7 – Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused

In complying with Child Safe Standard 7, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

7.1 The organisation has an accessible, child focused complaint handling policy which clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of leadership, staff and volunteers, approaches to dealing with different types of complaints, breaches of relevant policies or the Code of Conduct and obligations to act and report.

7.2 Effective complaint handling processes are understood by children and young people, families, staff and volunteers, and are culturally safe.

7.3 Complaints are taken seriously, and responded to promptly and thoroughly.

7.4 The organisation has policies and procedures in place that address reporting of complaints and concerns to relevant authorities, whether or not the law requires reporting, and co-operates with law enforcement.

7.5 Reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met.

Child Safe Standard 8 – Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training

In complying with Child Safe Standard 8, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

- 8.1 Staff and volunteers are trained and supported to effectively implement the organisation's child safety and wellbeing policy.
- 8.2 Staff and volunteers receive training and information to recognise indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and young people.
- 8.3 Staff and volunteers receive training and information to respond effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and support colleagues who disclose harm.
- 8.4 Staff and volunteers receive training and information on how to build culturally safe environments for children and young people.

Child Safe Standard 9 – Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed

In complying with Child Safe Standard 9, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

- 9.1 Staff and volunteers identify and mitigate risks in the online and physical environments without compromising a child's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities.
- 9.2 The online environment is used in accordance with the organisation's Code of Conduct and child safety and wellbeing policy and practices.
- 9.3 Risk management plans consider risks posed by organisational settings, activities, and the physical environment.
- 9.4 Organisations that contract facilities and services from third parties have procurement policies that ensure the safety of children and young people.

Child Safe Standard 10 – Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved

In complying with Child Safe Standard 10, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

- 10.1 The organisation regularly reviews, evaluates and improves child safe practices.
- 10.2 Complaints, concerns and safety incidents are analysed to identify causes and systemic failures to inform continuous improvement.
- 10.3 The organisation reports on the findings of relevant reviews to staff and volunteers, community and families and children and young people.

Child Safe Standard 11 – Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people

In complying with Child Safe Standard 11, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

- 11.1 Policies and procedures address all Child Safe Standards.
- 11.2 Policies and procedures are documented and easy to understand.
- 11.3 Best practice models and stakeholder consultation informs the development of policies and procedures.
- 11.4 Leaders champion and model compliance with policies and procedures.
- 11.5 Staff and volunteers understand and implement policies and procedures.

Last updated: May 2025

This version supercedes the former version of this policy/code of conduct dated October 2020.