



## **Child safe policy and code of conduct**

Version 1, Feb 2021

# Child Safe

## Policy

### **Our commitment to child safety**

Club Italia Sporting Club and Brimbank Stallions FC is committed to child safety.

We want children to be safe, happy and empowered.

We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers.

We are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children.

We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures.

We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously.

Club Italia Sporting Club is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early and removing and reducing these risks.

Club Italia Sporting Club has robust human resources and recruitment practices to reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing board members, staff and volunteers.

Club Italia Sporting Club is committed to regularly training and educating our board members, staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.

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.

We have specific policies and procedures in place that support our board members, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

### **Our children**

This policy is intended to empower children, who are vital and active participants at Club Italia Sporting Club. 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.

We promote diversity and acceptance at Club Italia Sporting Club, and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome. In particular, we:

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

### **Our staff and volunteers**

This policy guides our staff and volunteers on how to behave with children at Club Italia Sporting Club.

All of our staff and volunteers must agree to abide by our code of conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children. All staff and volunteers, as well as

children and their families, are given the opportunity to contribute to the development of the code of conduct.

## **Training and supervision**

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

Our organisational culture aims for all board members, staff, volunteers, families and children to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train our board members, staff and volunteers to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

We also support our board members, staff and volunteers through ongoing supervision to develop their skills to protect children from abuse and promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability.

New board members, staff and volunteers will be supervised regularly to ensure they understand Club Italia Sporting Club's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse. This will include checking that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate (please refer to Club Italia Sporting Club's code of conduct for information about appropriate behaviour). Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including the Department of Health and Human Services and Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

## **Recruitment**

We take all reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with children. We develop selection criteria and advertisements which clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legal responsibilities. Club Italia Sporting Club understands that when recruiting board members, staff and volunteers, we have ethical as well as legislative obligations.

We actively encourage applications from Aboriginal people, people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with a disability.

All people who are engaged in child-related work and who are not exempt, including volunteers, are required to hold a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this check.

We carry out reference checks and police record checks to ensure that we are recruiting the right people. If during the recruitment process a person's records indicate a criminal history then the person will be given the opportunity to provide further information and context.

## **Fair procedures for staff and volunteers**

The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern. We are also fair and reasonable to all staff and volunteers. The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent, and based on evidence.

We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using our incident reporting form. All records are securely stored. If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, we provide updates to children and families on progress and actions we as an organisation take.

## **Privacy**

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be staff, volunteers, families or children, unless there is a risk to someone's safety.

Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it and who will have access to it. This is intended to protect reporters and to ensure that all members of Club Italia Sporting Club are comfortable to disclose any allegations or concerns in relation to child safety without repercussions.

## **Legislative responsibilities**

Club Italia Sporting Club takes its legal responsibilities seriously, including:

- Failure to disclose: All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to Victoria Police
- Mandatory reporting: Any board members, staff or volunteers who are mandatory reporters (doctors, nurses, midwives, teacher, principals and police officers) must comply with their duties
- Failure to protect: People of authority in our organisation 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
- Reportable conduct: The head of our organisation must be made aware of any allegations of physical and sexual abuse, sexual misconduct, significant emotional or psychological harm or significant neglect by an employee or volunteer towards a child. We are also legally required to notify the Commission for Children and Young People of the allegation
- Duty of care: If a child is abused by an individual associated with our organisation, our organisation is presumed to have breached its duty of care unless it can prove that it took 'reasonable precautions' to prevent the abuse in question.

## **Risk management**

In Victoria, organisations are required to protect children when a risk is identified. In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our children.

We have risk management strategies in place to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks which include risks posed by physical environments and online environments.

## **Allegations, concerns and complaints**

Club Italia Sporting Club takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. Our board members, staff and volunteers are trained to deal with allegations appropriately.

We work to ensure all children, families, board members, staff and volunteers know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.

We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place. If an adult has a reasonable belief that an incident has occurred then they must report the incident. Factors contributing to reasonable belief may include:

- a child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves)
- behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed
- someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it
- observing suspicious behaviour.

## **Regular review**

This policy will be reviewed every two years and following significant incidents if they occur. We will ensure that families and children have the opportunity to contribute. Where possible we will do our best to work with local Aboriginal communities, culturally and/or linguistically diverse communities and people with a disability. The policy and code of conduct once completed and ratified by the board will be available on the websites, [clubitaliasportingclub.com.au](http://clubitaliasportingclub.com.au) and [brimbankfc.org.au](http://brimbankfc.org.au).

# Child Safe Code of Conduct

## 1. Introduction

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to promote child safety within our Club (Brimbank Stallions FC and Club Italia Sporting Club).

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, sexuality or age, are unacceptable. 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. Unacceptable behaviour

The following matters are derived from the Victorian Government's *Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority*.

These actions are prohibited:

- a) ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.
- b) put a minor at risk of abuse.
- c) speak 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. Some examples are offensive swearing in the presence of a minor, or intimidatory language and gestures directed at a minor.
- d) express inappropriate personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of a minor (unless the minor is a member of your family).
- e) discuss sexual activities with a minor (unless it is a specific job requirement and the person is trained to discuss these matters, or the minor is a member of your family) or engaging in any sexually-oriented conversations with a minor.
- f) have contact with a minor outside of Club activities or events without the Club's knowledge and/or consent.
- g) have any online contact with a minor (including by social media, email, instant messaging etc) or their family without the Club or Team's knowledge and/or consent.
- h) exchange personal contact details such as phone number, social networking sites or email addresses with a minor (unless the minor is a member of your family without the Club or Team's knowledge and/or consent).
- i) using, possessing, or being under the influence of illegal drugs while in the presence of a minor.

- j) using, possessing, or being under the influence of alcohol while supervising a minor (unless the minor is a member of your family or your contact with the minor is accidental/incidental and you are not performing your professional obligations).
- k) providing or allowing a minor to consume illegal drugs.
- l) discriminate against any minor, including because of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity or disability.
- m) engage in rough physical games (outside of what is reasonably considered appropriate in a Club training session), hold, massage, kiss, cuddle or touch a minor in an inappropriate and or/culturally insensitive way (unless the minor is a member of your family and you comply with all relevant legislation).
- n) take a minor to their home or encourage meetings outside Club activities or events (unless the child is a member of your family or parental permission has been provided without the Club or Team's knowledge and/or consent).
- o) photograph or video a minor inappropriately, or in circumstances where you have been requested to cease.
- p) photograph or video a minor without the consent of the guardian or parent
- q) being naked in the presence of a minor (unless the minor is a member of your family);
- r) possess sexually oriented or morally inappropriate printed materials (magazines, cards, videos, films, messages, clothing, etc.) in the presence of a minor.
- s) sleep in the same bed, sleeping bag or tent with a minor (unless the minor is a member of your family); and/or
- t) engage in sexual contact with a minor.

Any violation of this Code of Conduct 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 FFV as Misconduct under the FFV GDT provisions or Victoria Police.

### **3. Physical contact / touching**

Committee members, volunteers, employees, coaches, managers and players are prohibited from using physical discipline in any way for behaviour management of minors. This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or 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.

Appropriate contact between committee members, volunteers, employees, coaches, managers and players and minors is part of normal human relationships. Some considerations and guidelines include the following:

- a) consider the minor's age, developmental level, maturity and level of care required, for example, touching a minor to gain their attention, guiding or comforting a distressed minor.

- b) work in an open environment; for example, in one-to-one discussions indoors the door should be open with visual access.
- c) be alert to cues from minors about how comfortable they are in your proximity and respect their need for personal space.
- d) be sensitive when interacting with minors who may misinterpret your actions, such as those who may have been traumatised by abuse or adolescents seeking attention from a member of the opposite sex.
- e) be aware of cultural norms that may influence the interpretation of your behaviour.
- f) be 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, maintain a safe and appropriate distance.
- g) physical contact should be made in a way that makes minors feel comfortable, for example, shaking hands, a congratulatory pat on the back or rub on the side of their arm for reassurance. Massaging a minor if you are not trained to do so or allowing a child to massage you is inappropriate physical contact.

#### **4. 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).

#### **5. Confidentiality**

##### *Disclosing information to committee members and CPO*

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 Protection Officer (CPO) 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. These guidelines should be published in an accessible place for children.

**6. Related legislation**

- a) *Creating Safe Environments for Children – Organisations, Employees and Volunteers*
- b) *Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012*
- c) *Child Wellbeing and Safety act 2005*
- d) *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005*
- e) *Victoria's Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*

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