

NATIONAL CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

As at March 2015



1 Application

The *National Child Protection Policy* (**Policy**) will apply to an Australian Football league that is conducted or administered by:

- (a) a State or Territory league or body that is affiliated with the AFL, including:
 - a. NSW/ACT: AFL (NSW/ACT) Commission Ltd ACN 086 839 385;
 - b. NT: AFL (Northern Territory) Ltd ACN 097 620 525;
 - c. QLD: AFL (Queensland) ACN 090 629 342;
 - d. SA: South Australian Football League Inc ABN 59 518 757 737;
 - e. TAS AFL (TAS) ACN 135 346 986;
 - f. Victoria: Australian Football League (Victoria) ACN 147 664 579;
 - g. WA: West Australian Football Commission Inc ABN 51 167 923 136); or
- (b) an entity or body that is affiliated with (or licensed by) an Affiliated State or Territory Body.

(Football Body)

The Policy applies to the Football Body and Australian Football: players; coaches; officials; spectators; volunteers and administrators and all people reasonably connected to the Football Body (**Members**).

2 Policy Statement

The Football Body and Members are committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people involved in Australian Football.

The rights of children are fundamental. The Football Body and Members support the active participation of children in Australian Football.

This Policy provides the Football Body and Members guidance to ensure a safe and inclusive environment for all children in Australian Football and to assist with obligations under child protection laws.

3 What is Child Abuse?

Child protection laws apply in each state and territory and cover the reporting and investigation of child abuse. The Football Body and Members must comply with all applicable child protection laws.

Child abuse involves conduct which puts children, including unborn children, at risk of harm or neglect. Child abuse can be inflicted by adults or other children and can include:

- a) Physical abuse by hurting a child or a child's development (e.g. hitting, shaking or other physical harm; giving a child alcohol or drugs; or training that exceeds the child's development or maturity).
- b) Sexual abuse by adults or other children where a child is encouraged or forced to watch or engage in sexual activity or where a child is subject to any other inappropriate conduct of a sexual nature (e.g. sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, pornography including child pornography or inappropriate touching or conversations).
- c) Emotional abuse by ill-treating a child (e.g. humiliation, taunting, sarcasm, yelling, negative criticism, name calling, ignoring or placing unrealistic expectations on a child).
- d) Neglect, including medical neglect (e.g. failing to give food, water, shelter or clothing or to protect a child from danger or foreseeable risk of harm or injury).

In addition, The Football Body and Members should ensure that a child is not left unattended without making appropriate arrangements for the child's supervision and care.

4 Reporting Child Abuse

If the Football Body or any Member reasonably suspects or believes that a child needs protection, it should report immediately to the police or the relevant government agency.

The Football Body and Members must comply with all applicable mandatory reporting laws. Mandatory reporting is a term used to describe the legislative requirement imposed on selected classes of people to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect to government authorities. All Australian states and territories have enacted mandatory reporting laws. However, the laws are not the same across all jurisdictions.

The Football Body and Members must comply with all relevant child protection laws when dealing with a complaint or incidence of child abuse. In particular:

- a) The Football Body and Members should deal with all allegations of child abuse promptly and confidentially and should not disclose information about the child, the accused or details of the complaint except as required by law.
- b) The Football Body and Members should not attempt to investigate, mediate or conduct any hearing into any allegation of child abuse.

5 Working with Children: Statutory Obligations

The Football Body acknowledges that selecting suitable and appropriate people to work with children is vital. The Football Body should conduct reference checks as far as practicable in relation to Members who are required to work with children.

All Members who are required to work with children must comply with the working with children obligations in their state or territory. This may involve a Member undertaking a “working with children check” to determine their suitability to work in a paid or volunteer capacity with children.

Information about statutory working with children obligations can be found in the URLs below:

- QLD: <http://www.bluecard.qld.gov.au/>
- NSW: www.check.kids.nsw.gov.au/
- WA: www.checkwwc.wa.gov.au
- VIC: www.justice.vic.gov.au/workingwithchildren
- SA www.families.sa.gov.au/pages/protectingchildren
- TAS: www.police.tas.gov.au
- NT: <http://www.workingwithchildren.nt.gov.au>
- ACT: <http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/isysquery/search.asp>

NB: The Football Body or Member may be required to comply with multiple state or territory obligations.

If the Football Body or Member intends to engage in child-related work in a different state or territory it should refer to the relevant state or territory body for advice about what obligations apply.

For example, a Football Body or Member taking children interstate for training camps or competition should ensure compliance with all applicable laws of the state or territory it is visiting.

6 Taking Images of Children

The Football Body and Members should comply with the Australian Football League’s Privacy Policy (available at www.aflcommunityclub.com.au or www.afl.com.au/privacy) in relation to holding and disclosing images and any other personal information. In particular, the Football Body or Member should inform the parent/guardian about the nature of the use of the image(s) as well as how the image(s) will be stored and how the image(s) can be accessed by the parent/guardian.

The Football Body or Member should obtain permission from a child’s parent/guardian before taking an image of a child. The image(s) should be sufficiently connected to Australian Football and the child should be suitably clothed in a manner that promotes Australian Football.

The Football Body and Members should respect the privacy of other Members and should not use camera phones, cameras, video cameras or any other type of recording or photo taking device inside changing areas, showers and toilets.

7 Communication and Review

The Football Body should:

- a) distribute and discuss this Policy with all Members including during induction sessions for new staff and volunteer Members;
- b) ensure that a copy of this Policy is accessible to all Members. Further, the Policy will be available online at:
<http://www.afl.com.au/policies> and
- c) review this Policy at least annually.