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# CHILD SAFETY OFFICER HANDBOOK

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2019 – SMJFL Clubs

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## Introduction

This Handbook has been created for the Child Safety Officer (CSO) at SMJFL affiliated clubs, and other club personnel such as presidents and secretaries. It has been compiled to serve the purpose of a central reference point for any doubt over matters of child safety, and to assist CSO's with understanding their responsibilities, obligations and duties in their role.

## Background

In April 2012, the Victorian government initiated an inquiry into the handling of child abuse allegations within religious and other non-government organisations. The inquiry's final report, *Betrayal of Trust*, made a number of recommendations that have been acted on by the Victorian Government. The creation of Child Safe Standards (the Standards) was one of the key recommendations.

From 1 January 2017, the Child Safe Standards will apply to sporting organisations that operate and provide sporting services to children within Victoria (including National Sporting Organisations). The Standards apply to organisations as a whole, not only the areas that work with children. The standards are flexible and principle-based initiatives to increase the safety of all children within the organisation.

The Standards apply to all personnel in an organisation. This includes:

- Board of Management / Committee Members
- All paid staff (CEO, Executive, Employees)
- All Volunteers (Coaches, officials, administrators, scorers etc)
- All students on placement
- Any contractors the organisation engages

In response to the introduction of these standards, the South Metro Junior Football League (SMJFL) and all of its affiliated clubs must implement a number of measures to ensure compliance and to instil a culture of child safety into the organisation. This handbook is designed to outline the Standards, what should be done to make your club a child safe organisation, and what the role of Child Safety Officer (CSO) will involve.

***Child safety is not an add-on or one-off exercise. It is a legal requirement that the organisation will need to be compliant with as of 1 January 2017. Having policies and procedures in place is not enough - it's about creating a culture and environment within sport that is supportive and protective of children.***

## Defining Child Safety

When considering the issue of child abuse, most will automatically think of the extreme cases – sexual abuse or physical violence. While these are the worst cases, they are not the only actions that are counted under the term.

It is important to remember that child abuse can be present in other ways, such as bullying, inappropriate behaviour, or inappropriate communication. Negligence can also be counted as child abuse. For example, leaving one child alone after training while they wait for their parents, or poorly maintained facilities or equipment, can lead to the injury of a child under your care. Do not limit your awareness of this issue to the extreme cases. Remember to consider ALL forms of child abuse as you seek to make your club safer.

## The Seven Standards for Child Safety

The Standards as defined by VicSport:

1. Strategies to embed an organisational **culture of child safety**, including through effective leadership arrangements;
2. A **child safe policy** or statement of commitment to child safety;
3. A **code of conduct** that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children
4. Screening, supervision, training and other **human resources practices** that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel;
5. Processes for **responding to and reporting** suspected child abuse;
6. Strategies to **identify and reduce or remove risks** of child abuse; and
7. Strategies to promote the **participation and empowerment of children**.

Each of the Standards must also be understood and applied in the context of:

- The cultural safety of Aboriginal children;
- The cultural safety of children from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse background; and
- The safety of children with a disability

### Changes to Legislation – effective 1 August 2017

As of the **1 August 2017** Amendments based on The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse made several recommendations aimed at strengthening the protection children receive through Working with Children Checks.

The following amendments to the Act implement these recommendations;

1. Expand the definition of 'direct contact' in the Act. The definition of direct contact now includes oral, written or electronic communication as well as face-to-face and physical contact.
2. Remove references to 'supervision' from the Act. This means that even if a person's contact with children as part of their child-related work is supervised by another person, they will still need to apply for a Working with Children Check (Check).
3. Create a new occupational category of 'child-related work', known as 'kinship care'. Family members or other persons of significance caring for a child placed by Child Protection under the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 are required to obtain a Check.
4. Ensure that non-conviction charges (charges that have been finally dealt with other than by a conviction or finding of guilt) for serious sexual, violent or drug offences are considered as part of Check assessments and re-assessments.
5. Enable the Secretary to the Department of Justice and Regulation to compel the production of certain information for the purposes of compliance monitoring.

## The 7 Standards – What do we need to do?

### *Standard 1 - Mission Statement*

Your club/committee should have a dedicated mission statement for your child safety standards. It should reflect what you aim to achieve with the measures you're implementing and show your dedication to these issues. A template hasn't been provided, as this should be a reflection of your club. However, clubs can use the SMJFL mission statement in the [Resources & Templates](#) of this handbook as a guide.

### *Standard 2 & 3 - Child Safety Policy and Code of Conduct*

These are two important and fairly formal documents that clubs will be required to have from now on.

- The Policy should be something you can refer to for clarification or issue resolution, and should comprehensively cover your club's stance on the issue – what isn't tolerated, what will happen if an incident occurs etc.
- The Code of Conduct is a document that should outline how you expect staff, volunteers, players and parents to behave, and should be more easily digestible.

Given the weight of these documents and their formal nature, the SMJFL has provided [templates](#). You may choose to simply adopt these as your own, however clubs are encouraged to review them and see if there is anything you would like to add – you should always be looking for ways to improve the measures you put in place. Alternately, you can develop your own.

### *Standard 4 - Recruitment*

You'll need to create a policy that promotes good recruitment practices within your club. This can apply to volunteers, coaches, and club personnel. This document is to ensure that you cast a critical eye over how your club recruits' people, and whether that process is adequate enough to screen out people who may be a threat to the kids at your club. Ensuring that your club has quality personnel, committed to keeping the kids safe, is a crucial part of building a child safe culture in your club.

Your policy doesn't have to be as extensive as the Child Safety Policy. The idea is to set out some minimum standards to follow during the hiring process. These might include things like ensuring the candidate has a WWC check before hiring them, or you might decide that all prospective coaches need to run a supervised trial session before they are given the job so that you can assess their approach. The most important thing is that the policy you put in place should be something you can enforce and adhere to, which will ensure the most suitable people get appointed at your club.

The [SMJFL policy](#) is provided in the appendices for reference, however your club's policy will likely be different due to the different nature of the roles involved and the immediate proximity to the kids. Make sure your end document is in line with the needs of the club.

### *Standard 4 - Training*

It is a requirement under the Standards that organisations, including clubs, seek to train and educate those within the club about issues and the steps you are taking to address them. As such, you'll need to come up with ways to teach several groups of people – club personnel, parents, and the players themselves.

For club personnel, particularly key members such as presidents, secretaries and the board, it is a good idea to hold meetings to address the standards in depth and explain the policies and requirements to them. Ensure that they understand these steps are in response to government legislation, and it is in their best interests to make child safety a central part of their club culture. For parents, you should

give a brief overview of what's being put in place. Explain that the club is taking steps to ensure the safety of their children. For example, this can be a simple letter handed out at training. They don't need all the little details, but they should be aware of the changes you are making.

The difficult part is explaining to the kids, without scaring them or confusing them, that they should speak up if something is wrong, and who to speak to. Be careful how you approach this, but it is still important to let them know they have the right to a safe environment and to be able to enjoy themselves at footy.

### *Standard 5 - Incidents and Reporting*

This section is one of the most crucial for you to understand in the role of CSO. Whilst the point of these Standards is to try and prevent any issues taking place, some may still occur, and it is vital that they are handled properly. As a CSO, you will likely be the first point of contact within your club should something happen.

The [SMJFL reporting procedure](#) is in the appendices of this handbook. Your club's reporting procedure should reflect the same process, so there is no confusion as to which one should be followed. However, you may find it beneficial to have an easy to read, readily accessible summary of the process, so that any player or parent who does not have training in child safety is able to find the right person to contact easily.

It is important to note that if you, or any other adult at the club, has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is in immediate or serious danger, you have a legal obligation to report it to the police or to the relevant government authority. This is particularly important in the cases of sexual abuse:

- **Failure to disclose:** *Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. 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 the police.*
- **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.*

If a child comes to confide in you regarding an incident, it is vital you handle the situation appropriately. Make sure you:

- DO:
  - Remain calm. While hearing of an incident will likely invoke strong emotional reactions, getting angry or distressed will make this harder for the child.
  - Listen carefully to what they tell you
  - Reassure the child you believe them
  - Reassure the child it was not their fault
  - Reassure them they did the right thing by speaking up
  - Let them know you will report this so that the abuse can stop
  - Record the incident in the child's own words as soon as possible after the disclosure
  - Report the incident
  - Ensure disclosure is properly and accurately recorded and stored.

- DO NOT:
  - Make promises you can't keep, such as that you will not tell anyone
  - Push the child for details – your job is to listen, not investigate
  - Ask leading questions – instead use phrases like “Then what happened?”
  - Discuss what you have been told with others who are not directly involved with helping the child
  - Leave the child alone in a distressed state – if they are comfortable in your care, stay with them

### *Standard 6 - Risk*

It is important to identify some of the risks that may be at your club, so you can begin to plan how you might deal with these situations should they arise. Examine a regular week at the club and identify times or situations that might have higher risk of a potential issue. Think up some scenarios that might occur and try to work out how you would respond to them. As you go through this process, you may find areas of the club or its actions that you need to change in the interests of safety or better supervision.

Make sure you revisit these risk assessments regularly, as new situations will arise or change regularly. Always try to be a step ahead, to see what might happen before it does, so you can know how to prevent it, or deal with it.

### *Standard 7 - Empowerment*

Empowerment is about the emotional reaction each child has due to their time at the club. It is about building belief, confidence and identity through their sport, and much of this is reliant on how adult figures at the club interact with them.

Small gestures or comments can carry far more weight than intended, and this works in both positive and negative ways. For example, an offhand comment from a frustrated coach about a players' inability to perform a skill may cause the child to lose confidence, enjoy their footy less and even want to stop playing. It lowers the child's sense of self-worth, despite the coach not meaning anything by it. On the other hand, praise for a child's progress builds their confidence and makes them feel valued. These are simple moments that we may not consider as adults, but they can make a difference to the kids.

Empowerment is also about helping the children to find their voice. By building a culture in which the players have opportunities to speak up, give input and be involved in decisions, it not only allows them to grow and build their confidence further, but it also means that should an incident ever occur, they are more willing to speak up because they know their voice will be heard and their grievance will be taken seriously. As such, it is recommended that as well as ensuring the kids know how to speak up if something is wrong, clubs should also seek other ways for them to have a say in their experience. A simple example could be having kids nominate stretches at the end of training, or in higher age groups, have a few players run a drill each night. Coaches are particularly important to this aspect of the standards and can even bring empowerment through their feedback to kids by helping them think their way through it rather than directly telling them what to do.

## Fair Play Code

The Victoria Government have implemented a new code of conduct for Sport and Recreation Victoria, the [Fair Play Code](#). Sending the message that poor behaviour, violence, cheating and intimidation will not be tolerated in sport and recreation within Victoria.

The code employs five core values that lead to fair play for all:

### **Integrity –**

- being honest, fair, respectful, trustworthy, reliable, open and transparent in dealings with others
- avoiding any real or perceived conflicts of interest
- striving to earn and sustain a high level of community trust and goodwill
- not engaging in or advocating the possession and use of banned performance enhancing substances or methods, or illicit drugs
- not participating in or encouraging action that may jeopardise the integrity of sport and recreation including match-fixing, illegal sports betting and other corruption.

### **Respect –**

- treating everyone involved in sport and recreation in a considerate, objective and courteous manner with proper regard for their rights, dignity and worth
- refraining from any form of discrimination, harassment, bullying, abuse, child abuse, intimidation, victimisation or vilification of others, including on the basis of age, race, sex, disability, sexuality, gender identity or religion
- recognising and valuing the contribution of all to sport and recreation, including volunteer coaches, officials and administrators who give up their valuable time to make sport and recreation happen.

### **Responsibility –**

- considering and accepting the consequences of one's actions and decisions
- being a positive role model by displaying self-control, respect, care and diligence towards all involved with sport and recreation
- complying with specified child safe standards of conduct expected of adults when dealing and interacting with persons under 18 years of age
- understanding the possible consequences of breaching the *Fair Play Code* and immediately reporting any potential breaches to appropriate authorities.

### **Fairness –**

- understanding and playing by the rules and spirit of sport and recreation
- being informed, consistent, impartial, just and reasonable in dealings with others
- being a 'good sport' by encouraging and praising fair play over winning at all costs
- providing a 'fair go' to people of all abilities to be involved in sport and recreation and reach their full potential.

### **Safety –**

- providing a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment that places the health, welfare and well-being of participants above all else
- taking all reasonable steps to ensure equipment, facilities and programs meet health and safety standards and are appropriate to the age and ability of participants
- being aware of and supporting policies and practices in relation to injury management, return to play, adverse weather and child safe standards
- showing concern and caution towards others who may be sick or injured and immediately reporting any safety issues to appropriate authorities.

The code applies to every player, participant, coach, support person, official, administrator, club mentor, spectator, parent, volunteer or member of the public involved with sport and recreation in Victoria.

### Implementing the Code

All clubs should implement the code both on and off the field. SMJFL's own umpire Indiana Budimir, is a proud ambassador for the code, encouraging appropriate standards of behaviour to ensure a safe, welcoming and inclusive sport and recreation environment. Posters are available for clubs to display at their venues by contacting the [Club Development Coordinator](#). Additional resources and information on the code can be found at [Sport and Recreation Victoria's website](#).



## Child Safety Officers (CSO's)

As of January 2017, all clubs must have a nominated CSO. The role is intended to give players, clubs and parents a known point of contact for matters regarding child safety, and to give clubs a liaison for training and information regarding the issue. Essentially, having a CSO is intended to ensure that if an incident occurs, people know who to turn to, and that the person they turn to understands what to do.

It is hoped, however, that CSO's will be proactively seeking to make their club safer for the kids in as many ways as they can.

### *So where do I start?*

To begin with, make sure you understand the issue you will be dealing with. Take a look at the policies and templates you club already has in place as well as those used and provided by the SMJFL. Spend some time with the training resources that have been created to help you in your role. In particular, complete some of the online Australian Sports Commission training modules, which can be found through the Training Hub (see "Child Protection Training Course").

Once you have read this handbook, it is the CSO's responsibility to get ensure that your club complies with the standards that this legislation has set. You won't be expected to do this alone, and you will have plenty of support from the SMJFL and from other sources.

### *What are the requirements of being a CSO?*

The SMJFL will require you to undertake certain training, in the form of online modules and information sessions, the details of which will be provided to you when you nominate as CSO. This training will ensure you understand what to do if someone reports an incident to you, and what kind of problems to look out for. In order to be accepted as the CSO for your club, you must supply the certificate of completion for all requested online modules, and a valid Working With Children check.

### *What are my responsibilities?*

To ensure your club is compliant with the new legislation, they should have the following in place

- Child Safety mission statement
- Child Safety Policy
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Recruitment Policy
- 100% compliance with certifications through Everproof
- Train and educate your club personnel, players and parents about these issues and standards
- Incident Reporting Procedure
- Run risk assessments on the club
- Implement some initiatives to empower children at your club

A checklist is provided in this document to assist you in ensuring your club is compliant.

## Club Checklist – Child Safety Standards

This checklist is a guideline for clubs to ensure they are maintaining a child safe environment. As of January 1 2017 the Child Safe Standards have been integrated into the South Metro Junior Football League its clubs. This checklist enables clubs to have a clearer understanding of what should be completed prior to the start of the 2019 season and the areas that are an ongoing role and responsibility of clubs to provide for a child safe environment.

Feel free to contact the SMJFL if you require further assistance with completing any of these tasks.

### Standard 1

- Create or implement a Child Safe Mission Statement
- Upload to club website and send through evidence of completion to SMJFL

Refer to [SMJFL Mission Statement](#) for example.

### Standard 2

- Complete and implement a Child Safe Policy
- Upload to Club Website and send through evidence of completion to SMJFL.

Refer to [Child Safety Policy](#) resource for club use

### Standard 3

- Complete and implement a Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Upload to Club Website and send through evidence of completion to SMJFL.

Refer to club [Child Safe Code of Conduct Template](#) resource for club use.

### Standard 4 (ongoing)

- Complete and implement a Recruitment Policy
- Upload to Club Website and send through evidence of completion to SMJFL.
- Upload all volunteer's WWCC's onto Everproof (formerly BlueQ)
- Upload all other relevant qualifications onto Everproof (refer to [Qualifications Matrix](#))
  - **Coaches:** Junior or Youth Accreditation
  - **Trainers:** First Aid, CPR [and ERC if 13+]
- Assign all volunteers to teams
- Receive 100% compliance on Everproof for all individuals and teams and notify SMJFL once this

Refer to [SMJFL Recruitment Policy](#) and [Best Recruitment Practices and Guidelines](#) for example.

### Standard 5

- Complete and implement a club incident reporting procedure and template
- Upload to Club Website and send through evidence of completion to SMJFL.

Refer to club [Incident Reporting Procedure](#) resource for the SMJFL Incident reporting procedure example and [Incident Reporting Template](#) for club use.

**Standard 6**

- Complete a risk assessment of your club (with a focus on child safety) and identify risks that can be removed or reduced
- Send through evidence of completion of risk assessment and action plan to SMJFL

*Include in your current Risk Assessment of the club and facilities and please [ask the Club Development Coordinator](#) if you require further assistance.*

**Standard 7**

- Promote the participation and empowerment of children through club run initiatives
- Upload to Club Website and send through evidence of initiatives the club has completed to SMJFL.

*Examples of child empowerment include; if you have different team captains each game or have a player committee who assist in making club decisions. Please [ask the Club Development Coordinator](#) if you require further assistance or help with initiatives.*

## Working with Children Checks – Who Needs One

The list of personnel requiring a WWCC check includes:

- Coaches
- Assistant Coaches
- Trainers
- Runners
- Team Managers
- Coaching Coordinator
- Club Volunteer Umpires (modified rules)
- Child Safety Officer
- President, Secretary, Board members and Committee members
- Any person at the club that does not have children at the club i.e. senior players helping with training
- Umpire Escorts

### *Working with Children Checks – Applying for a Check*

When a member of your club is applying for their WWCC, they need to complete the first part of the application online at [www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au](http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au). They will need to complete the online application portion, after which an email will be sent to the applicant. They must then go to their nearest participating Australia Post outlet to finalise the application, and at this point their photo will be taken for the card (at no cost). It is important to note that if the applicant is a paid staff member of your organisation, they must get an employee check, not a volunteer check. If this is the case, they must also pay a small fee at this point of the application process.

Applicants will need to verify their identity during the process. They can do this during the online portion, or they can present three valid identification documents at Australia Post (a list is available on the WWCC website). If they verify online, they must still have valid photo ID when finalising at Australia Post.

Once they have received a receipt to say the process has started, they must return to the website and create a MyCheck Portal. Once they log in to this, they can click “Change My Details” and align themselves with the club by adding an organisation. They will need to add their club as “SMJFL – Club Name” (e.g. “SMJFL – Beaumaris”), address should be listed as PO Box 3, Morrabbin VIC 3189. Please ensure that all applicants list their club the same, as this assists us in grouping clubs together to check compliance. They can complete this part during the initial online application as well.

Note: applicants need to apply under organisational codes #42 and #70.

### *Working with Children Checks – Expiration and Non-Compliance*

If a member of your club does not have a WWCC and are required by the SMJFL to have one, they **must not** perform duties at the club until they do. In many cases, it will be illegal for them to do so, and both the club and the individual can be liable. This is why it is so important for these checks to be completed and properly monitored. For this reason, the SMJFL uses the Everproof system (formerly BlueQ), which allows us to monitor the status of checks for all personnel, verify that they are legitimate, and be notified when one expires.

At club level, it is vital that you ensure all required personnel get their WWCC prior to working, that they take ownership of an Everproof account linked to the club, and that they upload their check (and

other relevant qualifications for their role) to Everproof as soon as possible. This is in the best interests of clubs, personnel, players and the SMJFL as it allows a proper level of accountability.

Once a qualification expires, they **cannot continue to perform their duties** until they are reaccredited *and* proof of this is uploaded to Everproof. Personnel with qualifications close to their expiration will be notified by Everproof via email, and it is their duty to ensure they renew those qualifications before expiry. To help you stay on top of this, it is recommended you ask to have administration access to the clubs Everproof account, allowing you to monitor the qualifications of all personnel and ensure they renew on time. It will also allow you to upload qualifications for those who are unable to.

To clarify, **personnel are not considered compliant until they have a valid WWCC and have uploaded it to their Everproof account**, connected to the club. They cannot perform the duties of their role without both parts of this requirement being fulfilled. The SMJFL is able to see that the check is verified via Everproof, which is why this step is mandatory. Details on Everproof are explained later in this Handbook.

### *Working with Children Checks - Exemptions*

The WWC check website lists several exemptions, including VIT registered teachers, police officers and anyone under the age of 18 themselves. Please note that for the purposes of working or volunteering at an SMJFL club, **the only exemption that applies is if the person is under 18 years of age themselves**. As such, personnel who would normally fall under another exemption category must still obtain a WWC check to perform their role at the club.

The reasons for this include the accountability and control that the WWC check allows the SMJFL in terms of monitoring the validity of club personnel's accreditations and being notified of a change in their status. Additionally, it is a safety measure that the SMJFL has decided to implement to maximise the protection of the children who play football in the league, which is what the SMJFL (and its clubs) are legally obligated to do under this new legislation.

While some volunteers may be unhappy with the decision, remind them that this is in response to legal requirements and that the safety of the children is the undisputed top priority. Ensuring an extra level of protection for them far outweighs any inconvenience to an individual incurred by obtaining a WWC check.

### *Working with Children Checks – Negative Notices*

If a person applies for a Working with Children Check, they will either pass all background checks and receive their card, or the checks may find something that prevents them from being issued a WWCC. In such cases, they are issued either a Negative Notice or an Interim Negative Notice. If this occurs, follow the walkthrough below.

Important things to remember if your club receives a notice from the Department of Justice and Regulation:

- The letter you receive is confidential and should only be read by yourself and not be shared with others. Sharing personal information with others is an offence against the Department of Justice and Regulation.
- The letter you receive will also be received by SMJFL. This will only occur if the person has nominated SMJFL as an employer
- The letter you receive may be the following, interim negative notice, negative notice or withdrawal notice
- Ensure the letter is filed or stored away in a secure area where no one else can gain access
- It is not your responsibility to question or assume guilt of the person in question

- The ruling given when checking status in step 1 is non-negotiable, and is not our decision – we do not answer questions as to why they must stop, beyond stating that it is due to the negative or interim negative notice
- If you are unsure what to do, contact SMJFL CSO's for assistance

#### Step 1: **Check status of application**

- Go to [WWCC site](#) and perform a check on the negative notice received application. Once you enter the required details (card number and surname, both of which will be on the letter), the system will tell you whether or not the person must be removed from work in the meantime.

### Check status

 Working with Children Check number [REDACTED] (Volunteer) for [REDACTED] is being processed. This person must not engage in child related work until they receive an Assessment Notice.

[New Search](#)

- If you are not confident or have questions, call the Department of Justice at this point, **BEFORE** contacting anyone else.
- If the information you receive from the Departments site tells you that the person in question cannot work with children, you must ensure this person cannot work with children at your club. Please follow the steps below if the Departments website informs you the person in question cannot work with children.

#### Step 2: **Contact the club Child Safety Officer at the SMJFL**

- You must contact the CSO of the SMJFL to ensure they are aware of this notice, in case they have not received a letter. You must not divulge any information to other staff members besides the CSO.
- Currently, the league CSO's are **Sarah Loh, Dominique Bebbington and Emily Beventyre.**
- Inform the CSO if the individual is required to stand down from duties or reassigned.
- Inform them that you will contact the individual to inform them of the situation.

#### Step 3: **Contact the individual to notify them**

- Do not issue a "Please Explain" or similar – you are required to notify, not investigate
- Do not make accusations or inferences about the individual – there can be a range of reasons that may trigger this notice.
- Direct them to contact the Department of Justice regarding the issue
- Do not give extra information to the individual – anything beyond "we have received this notice and you are unable to continue your duties at this time" is not your place to say

#### Step 4: **Follow up with the club to ensure the individual has ceased work, if required**

- Confirm, prior to next training/game, that the individual will not be present

### *What if someone else is going to take over as CSO?*

If the CSO role is changing hands at your club, you **must** tell the SMJFL at least a week before the new CSO begins their duties. This allows us time to confirm the new CSO is compliant with the requirements for the role, update our contact sheets, and ensure that the new CSO has everything they need to perform their duties. You must also ensure that any online registries where you are listed as CSO (such as Everproof or FootyWeb) are updated to reflect the change.

### *Child Protection Training Course*

As the CSO for your club, you are required to not only have your Working with Children Check, but also to complete an online training module. This module is an educational resource from the Australian Sports Commission and provides a great foundation of understanding for a child safety role. The module takes around 45 minutes to complete, but it can be completed in multiple sittings.

To access this module, you should:

- Go to [www.learning.ausport.gov.au](http://www.learning.ausport.gov.au)
- Create an account and sign in
- Click on Learning Resources
- Enrol in the “Child Protection Training” module. You will find it on the second page of Learning Resources
- Enrolling should take you directly to the beginning of the module. If it does not, you can access it by the link that is immediately emailed to you, or by clicking the number next to your profile icon. Doing so will take you to an inbox, with a direct link waiting for you in a message.
- Complete the training module. Make sure you save your certificate of completion.
- Upload your certificate of completion to your Everproof account (Everproof instructions are below). Make sure you use the Document Title “Child Protection Training” and list the expiry as 2 years from the date of issue.

It is recommended that you go over the case studies that are part of this module with your club committee, to see how they respond to each situation. Doing so will allow you to consider situations that show the complicated nature of child safety issues before one actually arises.

## Everproof (formerly BlueQ)

Everproof is an online accreditation storage platform, which allows users to upload their qualifications, certificates and licenses and make them visible to organisations for whom they work or volunteer. For organisations such as the SMJFL, this is an easy way to verify and monitor the status of the accreditations their volunteers are required to have. Everproof has the added benefit of automatically verifying the validity of some accreditations, such as the Working with Children Check, at regular intervals. Everproof will also notify the league, club and individual when someone's qualification is going to expire.

It is required that all staff and volunteers at your club are allocated an Everproof account. This can be done by anyone who has administrator access to the club's account. Once they activate their account, they can upload their qualifications, and once all are uploaded correctly, they will show as compliant for their job. However, there are a few extra steps that the club needs to do for them - clubs will need to assign all personnel to a role and assign all personnel to a "group" representing the team with which they work (see below for more information).

If you find that you or another member of your club is having difficulty with Everproof, click 'Support' as the bottom of the page and this will take you to the Everproof Help Centre.

### *Everproof (formerly BlueQ) Troubleshooting Guide*

If one of your personnel has uploaded all of their required qualifications and yet still shows as non-compliant, double-check the following:

- **Ensure the person's name is spelt correctly** on both their Everproof account and the uploaded documents. This is especially important for auto-verifying documents (e.g. Working with Children Check) as the document may not verify if the names do not match on both. Also ensure the first and last name are entered the correct way around on both.
- **Ensure the correct document number is entered**, and there are no typos. To continue the example of a WWCC, the document number will be 8 digits, followed by -01 or similar. E.g., 02245533-01. The receipt number, or the reference number received after doing the online application, will not trigger verification or compliance. Note that for WWCC's, the correct number will be emailed to you as soon as you have completed requirements at the post office - you should not have to wait for the card.
- **Ensure document title is correct.** Everproof compliance requirements work on the basis that your uploaded qualifications match our set requirements exactly. Ensure that when you upload a qualification, allow the system to find the document in the drop-down menu as you type. Clicking on the corresponding entry from this drop-down menu will help minimise issues where entries do not match. To further help this, ensure the document title is written as stated on the document.  
As an example, entering "Level One Coaching" will not mark you as compliant for "AFL Coaching Accreditation - Level 1" even though the certificate may be valid.
- **Ensure expiry is entered and accurate.** This may not apply to some documents, such as a registration with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency, however many others need to be checked by Everproof to show they are not expired qualifications. entering this data properly will also allow Everproof to remind you in time if something you need to have is going to expire soon.

- **Ensure all personnel are allocated to the correct role.** Compliance has been set for the roles that your personnel should be allocated to. If their role is written differently, it will affect their compliance status. Currently, roles should be set as:
  - Junior Coach (U8-U12)
  - Youth Coach (13+)
  - Trainer (U8-U12)
  - Trainer (13+)
  - Club Volunteer Umpire (non-modified rules)
  - Club Volunteer Umpire (Modified Rules)
  - Team Manager
  - Runner

Note that for trainers and coaches, the age specification is important as there are different requirements at different age levels. Please do not include age groups in the role title for other roles (e.g. "Team Manager Under 10 Blue" will not work correctly). Make sure the roles you allocate match these titles.
- **Ensure personnel are allocated to the correct group.** Note that their group is different from their role. Allocating to groups is how you group an individual teams' staff together. For example, an Under 10 team would have coaching staff, trainers, a team manager and a runner, as well as possibly a club volunteer umpire. Your groups should already be present in Everproof, as their staff have done this for you - you simply need to allocate your personnel to those groups.
- **Where possible, attach a copy of the document when uploading.** This is usually not required, however having the document attached can often allow us to spot minor errors that are preventing compliance from triggering and fix them accordingly. It also allows us to verify documents that do not automatically do so.

To help you ensure your personnel have addressed all their required criteria for their positions, below is a list outlining the minimum requirements for each role.

**CLUB VOLUNTEER ROLES & QUALIFICATIONS MATRIX**

Role	WWCC	Junior Foundation (or Level 1) Coaching Accreditation	Youth Foundation (or Level 1) Coaching Accreditation	First Aid & CPR	AFL Emergency Response Coordinator (ERC) Training	SMJFL Umpiring Session	Child Protection Training
Child Safety Officer							
Junior Coach (U8-U12)							
Junior Assistant Coach (U8-U10)							
Junior Assistant Coach (U11-U12)							
Youth Coach (U13+)							
Youth Assistant Coach (U13+)							
Trainer (U8-U12)							
Trainer (U13+)							
Team Manager							
Runner							
Club Volunteer Umpire (U8-U10 Mixed/U12Girls)							
Umpire Escort							
Committee							

**EXPIRIES:**

- **CPR accreditation** expires after 1 year, even when attained under another qualification, and as such this must be listed separately with an accurate expiry date.
- **ERC Training** expires 3 years after date of completion on certificate
- **First Aid** expires 3 years after date of completion on certificate
- **Working with Children Check (WWCC)** expires 5 years after issue date on card

There are often cases where trainers may hold qualifications that are higher than these minimums. As a guideline, "Medical practitioners can act as a trainer provided they are in a current clinical practice and registered with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency". If a trainer meets this criteria, they can upload their AHPRA registration to Everproof to tick off some of their requirements. In a similar vein, the "Level I Sports Trainer" course will count as equivalent for certain requirements. If a trainer has qualifications that fall outside those listed above, which they believe are beyond those required, contact the league and it may be considered on a case by case basis.

## Resources and Templates

### *Useful Contacts*

#### **SMJFL**

(03) 8594 0293

Dominique Bebbington – [clubdev@smjfl.com.au](mailto:clubdev@smjfl.com.au)

Sarah Loh (SMJFL Child Safety Officer) – [ceo@smjfl.com.au](mailto:ceo@smjfl.com.au)

Emily Beventyre – [gmfootball@smjfl.com.au](mailto:gmfootball@smjfl.com.au)

#### **The Department of Health & Human Services**

(03) 9096 0000

Email: [childsafestandards@dhhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:childsafestandards@dhhs.vic.gov.au)

[www.dhs.vic.gov.au](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au)

#### **The Commission for Children and Young People**

(03) 8601 5281

Email: [childsafestandards@ccyp.vic.gov.au](mailto:childsafestandards@ccyp.vic.gov.au)

[www.ccyp.vic.gov.au](http://www.ccyp.vic.gov.au)

#### **Vicsport**

(03) 9698 8109

Email: [admin@vicsport.com.au](mailto:admin@vicsport.com.au)

[www.vicsport.com.au/child-safe-standards](http://www.vicsport.com.au/child-safe-standards)

### *Child Safety Training Hub*

[The Training Hub](#) is a central location for training, articles, templates and other resources to support Child Safety Officers at each club, as well as for the benefit of any other club officials, parents or players who may want to better understand the Standards

### *Club Corner*

[Club Corner](#) is a password protected location for all club documents that need to be store securely. Any documents that aren't located in the Child Safety Training Hub will be located here.

### *SMJFL Mission Statement*

*“To provide kids a safe, supportive and inclusive environment which develops, promotes and encourages participation in Australian Rules Football.”*



## South Metro Junior Football League (SMJFL) CHILD SAFE POLICY

<b>POLICY NAME</b>	Child Safe Policy
<b>DATE OF ISSUE</b>	08/03/2017
<b>POLICY COVERAGE</b>	This policy applies to the SMJFL, its employees and members
<b>DATE OF LAST REVIEW</b>	14/01/2019
<b>REVIEW PERIOD</b>	Annually
<b>CONTROLLING BODY</b>	SMJFL

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. SMJFL is committed to ensuring that children and young people who participate in its activities have a safe and happy experience. SMJFL supports and respects children, young people, staff, volunteers and participants.
- 1.2. The aim of SMJFL's Child Safe Policy (**the Policy**) is to protect the safety of children in our care and prevent abuse from occurring, and in the event that allegations are raised in relation to child abuse, to ensure that the allegations are properly addressed. All complaints will be treated seriously and fully investigated and handled with maximum confidentiality and discretion.
- 1.3. Should a person wish to make any enquiries in relation to this Policy, please contact the CEO of SMJFL.

## 2. POLICY STATEMENT

- 2.1. SMJFL is committed to providing a quality membership service. This includes protecting members' privacy, promoting positive behaviours and attitudes, protecting the health safety and wellbeing of members, particularly children and delivering the SMJFL's activities while acting in the best interests of children in the sport.
- 2.2. Specifically, SMJFL considers that the health, safety and well-being of children take priority over all other competing considerations. SMJFL considers that this is necessary to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all members and protect the image and reputation of the sport, SMJFL and its affiliate members.
- 2.3. SMJFL has a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and is committed to promoting and protecting children from abuse and neglect to the greatest extent possible. All children have equal rights to protection from child abuse, regardless of their sex, religion, disability or sexual orientation etc.
- 2.4. Child protection is a shared responsibility between SMJFL, its employees, workers, contractors, associates, parents/guardians, coaches, spectators, volunteers and members of the SMJFL community. Everyone that participates in SMJFL's activities is responsible for the care and protection of children, and reporting information about child abuse.
- 2.5. SMJFL supports the active participation of all children. It listens to their views, respects their views and involves them when making decisions, where appropriate, especially about matters that will directly affect them (including their safety).
- 2.6. SMJFL is also committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, and those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children living with a disability.
- 2.7. SMJFL promotes fairness and consideration for all staff, volunteers and participants. For further details please refer to the SMJFL Member Protection Policy.

### 3. SCOPE

- 3.1. This Policy applies to participants, parents, spectators, contractors, officials, coaches, judges and staff throughout all SMJFL events and activities.
- 3.2. This Policy will continue to apply retrospectively to a person or Member following the cessation of their association or employment with SMJFL.
- 3.3. SMJFL is supported by a wide network of affiliated clubs across Victoria. Affiliation with SMJFL is conditional on an affiliated club implementing and complying with this Policy. Failure to implement and comply with this Policy may cause SMJFL to end its affiliation with a club that is in breach of its obligations.

### 4. RELATED DOCUMENTS & LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

- 4.1. This Policy must be read in conjunction with:
  - 4.1.1. the law of the Commonwealth and Victoria including but not limited to:
    - 4.1.1.1. Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)
    - 4.1.1.2. Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Act 2015 (Vic)
    - 4.1.1.3. Crimes Act 1958 (Vic); and
    - 4.1.1.4. Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic)
  - 4.1.2. SMJFL policies and procedures

### 5. DEFINITIONS

- 5.1. **Child** means a person involved in the activities of SMJFL (including athletes) and under the age of 18 years unless otherwise stated under the law applicable to the child.
- 5.2. **Child protection** means any responsibility, measure or activity undertaken to safeguard children from harm.
- 5.3. **Sexual offence** means a criminal offence involving sexual activity or actions of indecency or any act which exposes a child to, or involves a child in, sexual activity or matters beyond his or her understanding or contrary to accepted community standards. Sexually offence behaviours can include the fondling of genitals, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or any other object, fondling of breasts, voyeurism, exhibitionism, and exposing the child to or involving the child in pornography. It includes

child grooming, which includes actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child (or the child's carer, family or supervisor) to lower the child's inhibitions and prepare them for engagement in a sexual offence.

- 5.4. **Mandatory reporter** means a person who is legally required to make a report to the Department of Human Services or the Police if they form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection. It includes teachers, principals, registered psychologists, nurses, doctors and midwives.

## 6. RECOGNISING AND REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

- 6.1. A person may, in the course of participating in the sport or other activities of SMJFL or carrying out their work, form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from child abuse.
- 6.2. If a person is concerned about an immediate risk to a child's safety, the person must phone "000" as soon as practicable.
- 6.3. **Child abuse** can be divided into four categories:
- 6.3.1. **Physical abuse:** occurs when a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of a physical injury, such as a non-accidental physical injury.
  - 6.3.2. **Sexual abuse:** occurs when a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of sexual abuse, such as when a child is exploited, or used by another for his or her sexual gratification or sexual arousal, or for that of others.
  - 6.3.3. **Emotional and psychological abuse:** occurs when a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, emotional or psychological harm of such a kind that the child's emotional or intellectual development is or is likely to be significantly damaged; and
  - 6.3.4. **Neglect:** occurs when a child's physical development or health has been, or is likely to be, significantly damaged. It refers to an omission, such as depriving a child of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults, or medical care.
- 6.4. Child abuse includes any actions that results in actual or potential harm to a child, in circumstances where the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child.
- 6.5. **Mandatory Reporters**
- 6.5.1. Select classes of people in the community (including teachers, nurses and doctors) are required by law to report to the Child Protection Unit of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) where they have formed a belief, on reasonable grounds, that a child is in need of protection because they

have suffered (or are likely to suffer) significant harm due to physical or sexual abuse.

- 6.5.2. This report must be made as soon as practicable, and after each occasion where he or she becomes aware of further reasonable grounds for the belief.

## 6.6. Reasonable grounds for belief

- 6.6.1. A reasonable belief is formed if a reasonable person believes that:
- 6.6.1.1. the child is in need of protection;
  - 6.6.1.2. the child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of physical or sexual injury; and
  - 6.6.1.3. the child's parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.
- 6.6.2. To form a reasonable belief, you should consider and objectively assess all the relevant facts, such as the source of the allegation and how it was communicated, the nature of and details of the allegation, and whether there are any other related matters known regarding the alleged perpetrator.
- 6.6.3. A 'reasonable belief' or a 'belief on reasonable grounds' is not the same as having proof but is more than mere rumour or speculation.
- 6.6.4. You will have reasonable grounds to notify if:
- 6.6.4.1. a child states that they have been physically or sexually abused;
  - 6.6.4.2. a child states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves);
  - 6.6.4.3. someone who knows a child states that the child has been physically or sexually abused;
  - 6.6.4.4. professional observations of the child's behaviour or development leads a professional to form a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused or is likely to be abused; or
  - 6.6.4.5. signs of abuse lead to a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused.

## 6.7. Voluntary Reporters

- 6.7.1. In addition to the mandatory reporting obligations above, any person who believes on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from any form of child abuse, *may* disclose that information to the Police or DHHS.

## 6.8. Reporting Child Sexual Abuse

- 6.8.1. If a person receives information that leads them to form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria against a child (under the age of 16 years) by another person (of or over the age of 18 years), the person has a legal obligation to disclose that information to the Police as soon as it is practicable. Individuals who fail to comply with this obligation under the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) may be subject to a penalty of 3 years imprisonment.

## 6.9. SMJFL Approach to Reports of Abuse

- 6.9.1. SMJFL supports and encourages a person to make a report to the Police or DHHS 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.
- 6.9.2. Any person that makes a report in good faith in accordance with their reporting obligations (whether mandatory or discretionary) will be supported by SMJFL and will not be penalised by SMJFL for making the report.
- 6.9.3. If a person is uncertain as to whether they should make a report to an external authority in relation to the safety of a child, they may speak to the SMJFL CEO or Chairperson of the SMJFL Board for guidance and information. If in doubt, ask for assistance.
- 6.9.4. If an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer, SMJFL will follow the reporting procedure outlined in its Child Safety Incident Reporting Procedure and take all steps to ensure that the safety of the child is paramount. An initial step will involve the withdrawal of the accused person from active duty, which could entail standing down, reassignment to a role without direct contact with children, working under closer supervision during an investigation, working from home, or any other measures deemed appropriate depending on the seriousness of the allegation.
- 6.9.5. SMJFL will investigate allegations of inappropriate conduct against a child in accordance with procedural fairness and will handle the allegations in a confidential manner to the greatest extent possible.
- 6.9.6. SMJFL will cooperate with the directions of the Police and/or DHHS in relation to any investigation conducted by these authorities.
- 6.9.7. SMJFL will keep a register of any allegations regarding inappropriate conduct.

## **7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PERSONNEL PROTECTING CHILDREN**

- 7.1. Personnel involved in protecting children include the board, management, staff and volunteers within the Organisation. Those people have responsibilities in relation to protection of children and are expected to:
- 7.1.1. understand the rights of children, as appropriate to their role;
  - 7.1.2. respect the cultural and religious practices of families who access SMJFL's services, programs or events;
  - 7.1.3. understand and appropriately respond to the needs of children with developmental delays or disabilities;
  - 7.1.4. appropriately act on any concerns raised by children;
  - 7.1.5. understand the definitions, indicators and impact of child abuse;
  - 7.1.6. know and follow regulations in relation to the care of children;
  - 7.1.7. co-operate with police and/or other formal investigations to the best of their ability; and
  - 7.1.8. not harm or exploit children who access SMJFL's services.

## **8. CHILD SAFE AND CHILD FRIENDLY GUIDELINES TO PREVENT AND MANAGE RISKS OF CHILD ABUSE**

### **8.1. Change Rooms**

- 8.1.1. If possible adult officials, regardless of gender, should only enter change rooms if accompanied by another adult. For the avoidance of doubt this requirement does not apply to parents/legal guardians when in a room with their child.

### **8.2. Hotel rooms and other accommodation**

- 8.2.1. No official should be alone in the room of an athlete without the presence of another adult. The doors should always be open. Should it be necessary for an official to be alone in the room of an athlete, the Team Manager or other responsible official must be informed. For the avoidance of doubt this requirement does not apply to parents/legal guardians when in a room with their child.

### **8.3. Travel - General**

- 8.3.1. All team members over 18 years of age retain an overriding responsibility for the welfare of all athletes they accompany during team travel activities. They have a 'duty of care' for athletes and they must meet that duty and avoid unaccompanied and unobserved activities with persons less than 18 years of age

wherever possible. For the avoidance of doubt this requirement does not apply to parents/legal guardians when in a room with their child.

#### **8.4. Sexual Relationships while on tour.**

- 8.4.1. During all team travel activities officials must not, under any circumstances engage in conduct of a sexual nature with an athlete. Improper conduct of a sexual nature by an official towards an athlete includes any form of child sexual abuse (defined within the SMJFL Member Protection Policy) as well as but not limited to the following:
  - 8.4.1.1. inappropriate conversations of a sexual nature;
  - 8.4.1.2. obscene language of a sexual nature;
  - 8.4.1.3. suggestive remarks or actions;
  - 8.4.1.4. jokes of a sexual nature;
  - 8.4.1.5. obscene gestures;
  - 8.4.1.6. unwarranted and inappropriate touching;
  - 8.4.1.7. sexual exhibitionism;
  - 8.4.1.8. use of any device to show/watch offensive material; and
  - 8.4.1.9. any other action that could lead to an athlete being physically, emotionally or psychologically harmed.

#### **8.5. Adults under investigation**

- 8.5.1. Adults under investigation in relation to a matter involving child abuse, or any matter which has the potential to jeopardise their Working With Children Check (WWCC) (or if based in another State the equivalent requirement) status may be prohibited, by the SMJFL Board, from participating in SMJFL activities.

#### **8.6. Coach and Volunteer Assistance**

- 8.6.1. All coaches and volunteers must ensure that all physical contact with athletes which occurs when coaching and/or volunteering is appropriate for the situation and necessary for the athlete's safety. It is strongly recommended that:
  - 8.6.1.1. Coaches and volunteers ensure that there are other adults present whenever coaching and/or training;
  - 8.6.1.2. Coaches and volunteers take care to explain the procedure to the child prior to beginning any physical contact.

### **9. ENGAGING NEW PERSONNEL**

- 9.1. The minimum standard for background checks of employees and volunteers of SMJFL and its members is the law as it applies in Victoria.

- 9.2. SMJFL undertakes a comprehensive recruitment and screening process for all staff and volunteers which aims to:
  - 9.2.1. promote and protect the safety of all children who participate in the activities of SMJFL;
  - 9.2.2. identify and recruit the safest and most suitable candidates who share SMJFL's values and commitment to protect children; and
  - 9.2.3. prevent a person from working at SMJFL if they pose an unacceptable risk to children.
- 9.3. SMJFL requires staff and volunteers to pass the recruitment and screening process prior to commencing their engagement with SMJFL.
- 9.4. As part of the screening and recruitment process, an applicant must provide appropriate evidence (e.g. WWCC or other state equivalent and/or Police check) to show that they are suitable to work with children and young people in a recreational setting.
  - 9.4.1. all SMJFL staff and Board members require a WWCC; and
  - 9.4.2. the following key event personnel must have a valid WWCC:
    - 9.4.2.1. those paid by SMJFL for their services;
    - 9.4.2.2. volunteers who undertake the following positions - coach, assistant coach, trainer, team manager, runner, on-field volunteer umpire (excludes goal and boundary umpires) and those persons who regularly assist during training and have direct unsupervised contact with children;
    - 9.4.2.3. relevant contractors who may have unsupervised access to children; and
    - 9.4.2.4. anyone else who SMJFL staff identify as requiring a WWCC due to the nature of the work that they are undertaking for SMJFL.
- 9.5. The type of evidence that an applicant is required to provide to SMJFL will vary depending on the type of position that they are applying for. However, an applicant will not be offered a position until they provide the required evidence to SMJFL.
- 9.6. SMJFL will exercise discretion and may require applicants to provide a Police check in accordance with the law and as appropriate, before they commence their engagement and during their time with SMJFL in regular intervals.
- 9.7. SMJFL will undertake thorough reference checks prior to engaging any personnel.
- 9.8. Once engaged, SMJFL will provide staff and volunteers with access to this policy and staff and volunteers must review and acknowledge their understanding of this policy.
- 9.9. SMJFL requires that affiliated clubs ensure all staff and volunteers (including coaches and any officials) likely to have contact with athletes (and other children) have a current

WWCC, which needs to be signed off annually as part of the affiliation process. Clubs which do not comply with their legal obligations will be found to have not complied with the SMJFL affiliation requirements and will be disaffiliated.

- 9.10. SMJFL requires all affiliated club personnel including, Committee Members, Volunteers and Coaches and anyone else who has direct unsupervised contact with children to possess a valid working with children check. Any costs associated with gaining a valid WWCC will be dealt with in a manner determined by that club.
- 9.11. Should the WWCC of a person subject to section 9.10 expire, that person must not continue to perform their duties until they regain a valid WWCC, and proof of such has been communicated to the SMJFL via Everproof (formerly BlueQ) or such other process as nominated by the SMJFL.

## **10. SOCIAL MEDIA**

- 10.1. Social Media platforms and other online environments are also subject to the terms of this policy.
- 10.2. Online bullying, harassment, abuse, humiliation, sexual comments or behaviour and other misconduct are all offences under this policy and subject to punishment under its terms.
- 10.3. Incidents of online or social media misconduct are also subject to the SMJFL Social Media Guidelines.

## **11. RISK MANAGEMENT APPROACH**

- 11.1. Child safety is a part of SMJFL's overall risk management approach.

## **12. POLICY BREACHES**

- 12.1. It is a breach of this policy for any person or organisation to which this policy applies, to have been found to have done anything contrary to this policy. Any person who may breach this policy is subject to the AFL Victoria and Affiliated Members Member Protection Policy (2009).

## **13. POLICY PROMOTION**

- 13.1. This policy will be made available to all members via email (upon request) and the SMJFL website.
- 13.2. This policy will be communicated to all staff, Board, and Committee members via email and internal meetings.
- 13.3. References to this policy will be included in documentation provided to all team officials that represent SMJFL.

## **14. REVIEW PROCESS**

- 14.1. This policy will be reviewed by the SMJFL Board on an annual basis.

- 14.2. If you would like to provide SMJFL with any feedback or suggestions to improve this policy, please contact the CEO of SMJFL.
  
  - 14.3. In addition to the regular review of this policy, recommendations for changes to the policy may be submitted to the Board for consideration at any time. In the event that changes are accepted, the policy will be updated, and circulated to all stakeholders via the webpage, bulletin and other appropriate communication channels.
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## SOUTH METRO JUNIOR FOOTBALL LEAGUE (SMJFL)

### Child Safe Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct outlines appropriate standards of behaviour by adults towards children.

The Code of Conduct aims to protect children and reduce any opportunities for abuse or harm to occur. It also helps staff and volunteers by providing them with guidance on how to best support children and how to avoid or better manage difficult situations. This Code of Conduct applies to all people involved in SMJFL's activities, including coaches, officials, volunteers and parents.

All SMJFL staff and volunteers are responsible for promoting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people by:

- Adhering to our Child Safe Policy, this Code of Conduct and other SMJFL policies
- Taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- Treating everyone with respect, including listening to and valuing their ideas and opinions
- Welcoming all children and their families and carers and being inclusive
- Respecting cultural, religious and political differences and acting in a culturally sensitive way, particularly when interacting with children who are Aboriginal or otherwise culturally or linguistically diverse and those with a disability
- Modelling appropriate adult behaviour
- Listening to children and responding to them appropriately
- Reporting and acting on any breaches of this Code of Conduct, complaints or concerns appropriately and treat them seriously and with respect.
- Complying with our guidelines on physical contact with children
- Working with children in an open and transparent way – other adults should always know about the work you are doing with children
- Respecting the privacy of children and their families, and only disclosing information to people who have a need to know.

SMJFL staff and volunteers **MUST NOT**:

- Seek to use children in any way to meet the needs of adults
- Ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse
- Use prejudice, oppressive behaviour or language with children
- Discriminate on the basis of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability or sexuality
- Initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or do things of a personal nature that children can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- Enter a room, toilet or space alone with children and young people whereby you will be conducting things of a personal nature, such as toileting or changing clothes
- Develop 'special' relationships with specific children or show favouritism through the provision of gifts or inappropriate attention
- Exchange personal contact details such as phone number, social networking site or email addresses with children
- Have unauthorised contact with children and young people online or by phone.

By observing these standards, you acknowledge your responsibility to immediately report any breach of this code to the CEO of SMJFL.

This Code of Conduct will be reviewed by SMJFL annually.

I have read this Code of Conduct and agree to abide by it at all times.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Role: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## SMJFL Recruitment Policy

### 1. PURPOSE

This policy is intended to assist the SMJFL in ensuring all incoming SMJFL staff are aware of and meet the minimum behavioural standards expected, and is designed to ensure that child safety, equality, and fair treatment are issues at the core of the SMJFL culture. Further, it is intended to give SMJFL staff guidelines by which to make the right decisions during the hiring process.

### 2. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND DISCRIMINATION

- 2.1 The SMJFL will give equal consideration to the submissions of all applicants, and will not show bias or discrimination on the grounds of gender, race, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion or any other characteristic.
- 2.2 Recruitment staff will treat all applicants with the same respect, and will provide an “even playing field” during interviews. This includes, but is not limited to, using the same base list of questions for applicants (except when pursuing the specifics of an applicant’s career), allowing the same amount of time for interviews, and allowing the applicants equal chances to ask their own questions.
- 2.3 The SMJFL will not terminate the employment of an employee on the basis of these characteristics.
- 2.4 This clause is intended to work in conjunction with the SMJFL’s “*Equal Opportunity, Bullying and Harassment Policy*” which should be referred to for more detail.

### 3. APPLICANT SCREENING

- 3.1 It is the responsibility of the SMJFL to conduct adequate background checks on applicants under consideration for a position with the SMJFL. The applicant may only be offered a position if they both agree to and satisfactorily pass these requirements.
- 3.2 Applicants must supply personal and professional referees with their application. SMJFL staff will contact these referees to ensure the suitability of the applicant to our organisation.
- 3.3 Prior to being offered a full-time permanent position with the SMJFL, applicants must pass a police check. Applicants may refuse to submit to this test, but will no longer be considered for the role.
- 3.4 Prior to being offered a position with the SMJFL, applicants will be required to sign a “*Member Protection Declaration*”.
- 3.5 Prior to commencing employment with the SMJFL, the successful applicant must attain a valid Working With Children Check. The SMJFL may offer a position to an applicant prior to the WWC being attained, on the condition that the applicant gains one before commencing work.
- 3.6 Working With Children Checks must be uploaded and verified via Everproof and sighted by a current SMJFL staff member to meet the requirements in clause 3.3.
- 3.7 In addition to these regulated checks, the SMJFL staff member(s) undertaking the recruitment process must strive to determine the compatibility of all applicants to these standards through the applicants’ CV and any resulting interviews. Recruiters can consult the “*Best Recruitment Practices and Guidelines*” during this process.

- 3.8 Any applicant hired by the SMJFL will commence under a two month probation period, during which the SMJFL may further assess the applicants suitability to the role and ensure they pose no threat to child safety standards.

#### **4. CONFIDENTIALITY**

- 4.1 The SMJFL will treat all information obtained during the application process with discretion, and will not share this information with third parties or other applicants, with the exception of information required for the stated background checks.
- 4.2 The SMJFL may retain applicants' contact information and application documents against the possibility of future employment opportunities. Applicants may request for their information to not be kept at any time following an unsuccessful application.

#### **5. DISCLOSURE**

- 5.1 This Policy must be made available to all applicants from the commencement of the application process, to ensure their full understanding of rights and requirements prior to submitting an application.

## BEST RECRUITMENT PRACTICES AND GUIDELINES

### Purpose

This document is designed to assist SMJFL staff during recruitment processes, to ensure that all potential applicants are made aware of our expectations, and to ensure all successful applicants meet those expectations. It is the responsibility of the SMJFL to ensure all future staff are committed to the importance of child safety, equality and fair treatment in our organisation, and as such the recruitment process must be sound enough to screen out those who pose a risk to our members or other staff.

These guidelines should be considered as minimum standards, and any further techniques or procedures aimed to ensure the quality of our future staff should be considered.

### Job Listings

- All advertised job listings must contain sufficient information about the position, its requirements and expectations.
- All advertised listings must contain a statement declaring our commitment to equal opportunity.
- All advertised listings must contain a link to our Recruitment Policy, or information on how to access it.
- All advertised listings must note the requirement of a police check and a Working With Children check for successful applicants.

### Interview

- Treat all applicants with equal respect.
- Be aware of how cultural backgrounds may affect your interaction with an applicant. This does not mean you treat them differently, it is an effort to understand how they may speak or behave and be respectful in your reactions to this.
- Use the same base list for your questioning of each applicant. You will have more specific questions based on their experiences or responses, however you should be offering an even playing field at the start of each interview, regardless of how you think each applicant may compare.
- Do not offer longer interviews to applicants you think will be best. Interviews will vary in their length, but allow each the same amount of time in case it is needed. You can always ask a strong applicant back for a second interview.
- Explain to every applicant the SMJFL's commitment to equal opportunity, to building a culture of tolerance and respect between staff members and also with outside stakeholders, and to the safety and proper treatment of our members, especially to children. All applicants should be aware of the importance of these issues to the SMJFL.
- Try to gain an insight into the applicants' background with regard to these issues. Have they worked with children before? Have they witnessed bullying, harassment or discrimination in the workplace before? Is there anything in their history that suggests they may not uphold these values? Be careful in your questioning – do not offend or accuse.
- Be prepared and willing to answer whatever questions the applicant has at any stage of the interview.
- Ensure the applicants are aware of the required police, referee and Working With Children checks.

**Checks**

- Once you know the applicants you are considering for the role, ensure the required checks are followed up.
- Contact their provided referees and ensure their compatibility for the role and our organisation as a whole.
- Conduct a police check if applicable – this is vital to ensuring the safety of the children who play football with the SMJFL.
- The successful candidate must supply their valid WWC prior to starting work with the SMJFL. This can be done after offering them the position, so long as it is supplied before working.

## SMJFL Incident Reporting Procedure

### 1. Overview

This procedure has been developed to ensure that complaints about inappropriate behaviour described in this policy are addressed sensitively, consistently, fairly and confidentially.

A complaint may be reported about an individual or group behaviour informally or formally. It may be about an act, behaviour, omission, situation or decision that someone thinks is unfair, unjustified, unlawful and/or a breach of this policy.

A complaint should first be reported to the Club's nominated Child Safety Officer, who will be knowledgeable on the correct process to take. If the complaint is about a member of SMJFL staff, or about the Child Safety Officer to whom the incident would otherwise be reported, a report can be made to the SMJFL's nominated Child Safety Officer.

### 2. Internal Procedure

#### (a) Self Resolution

Self resolution may be appropriate where the alleged harasser or bully is oblivious to the impact of their behaviour towards the complainant. If the complainant feels it is appropriate, they can attempt to resolve the issue directly with the alleged harasser without the assistance of SMJFL or Club Child Safety Officers, by speaking directly to the person/s involved and asking them to stop the offensive behaviour immediately.

#### (b) Resolve the Complaint Informally

Informal assistance may be appropriate where the complainant is not sure how to handle the problem and wants to talk confidentially about the problem or the problem continues after the complainant has tried to approach the person/s involved. If this is the case, the individual/s should talk with their clubs nominated Child Safety Officer.

Informal procedures that may be adopted could include the following:

- provide possible options/methods for the complainant to resolve the problem and/or make a referral to an appropriate person to help the complainant resolve the problem e.g.: a mediator
- explain how the SMJFL complaints procedure works;
- act as a support person;
- privately speak with the alleged offender on behalf of the complainant
- inform the relevant government authorities and/or police if required by law to do so

#### (c) Resolve the Complaint Formally

Formal procedures may be appropriate where informal procedures have been ineffective, the complaint involves serious and/or criminal allegations or the complainant wishes to make a formal complaint from the outset. Formal complaints can be lodged with the clubs nominated Child Safety Officer using an Incident Report Form.

If the complaint is about an SMJFL staff member or the Child Safety Officer to whom the incident would normally be reported, a report can be made to the SMJFL Child Safety Officer. If the club Child Safety Officer is unsure how to proceed, they can escalate the matter to the SMJFL Child Safety Officer.

Both parties involved in a formal complaint have a number of rights and responsibilities which are detailed below:

Complainant's Rights	Respondent's Rights
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have the complaint investigated and if necessary conciliated</li> <li>• Have support/representation if requested</li> <li>• Express views and opinions without intimidation from others</li> <li>• Discontinue a complaint</li> <li>• Have the situations remedied</li> <li>• Privacy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have natural justice</li> <li>• Not be discriminated against</li> <li>• Not be dismissed unfairly, harshly or unreasonably</li> <li>• Privacy</li> <li>• Have support/representation if requested</li> <li>• Not be defamed</li> <li>• Not be the subject of unfounded</li> </ul>

A formal procedure will be followed as appropriate for each individual complaint which may include one or more of the following steps:

- document full information from the complainant about the complaint and how they want it resolved;
- put the information received from the complainant to the person/people that the complaint is about and ask them to provide their side of the story;
- decide whether enough information has been obtained to determine whether the matter alleged in the complaint did or didn't happen; and/or
- determine what, if any, further action to take. This action may include appointing a person to investigate the complaint, referring the complaint to an informal or a formal mediation session and/or referring the complaint to the police or other appropriate authority.

**NB: Where a complaint relates to an allegation of child abuse the matter will immediately be referred to the police or relevant state government authority (see below).**

More detailed information on conducting internal investigations can be found at [www.ausport.gov.au/ethics/policy.asp](http://www.ausport.gov.au/ethics/policy.asp)

#### **(d) Appeal Process**

If the internal complaints processes set out in this Policy do not achieve a satisfactory resolution/outcome, or if the complainant believes it would be impossible to get an impartial resolution within the Club or the SMJFL, an external agency such as The Equal Opportunity Commission may be contacted to assist with a resolution.

### 3. External Procedure

There may be a range of external options available depending on the nature of the complaint. In the case of harassment or discrimination advice can be sought from the State or Territory Equal Opportunity Commission without being obliged to make a formal complaint. In the case of more serious breaches such as child abuse, the police or relevant state government department responsible for issues of child welfare should be notified.

### 4. Police or Government Authorities

Where an incident or suspected incident is of a serious enough nature as to be considered child abuse, the matter will be escalated to the police or relevant government authorities.

Child abuse relates to children (a person under 18 years old) at risk of harm, usually by adults, sometimes by other children, and often by those they know and trust. It can take many forms. Children may be harmed by verbal and emotional abuse and physical actions and by people failing to provide them with basic care.

Child abuse may include:

- 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).
- 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).
- 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).
- 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).

All allegations of child abuse will be dealt with promptly, seriously, sensitively and confidentially. It is a **legal obligation** that anyone who reasonably suspects that a child has been or is being abused by someone within our sport, or by his/her parents/guardians, must report it immediately to the police or relevant government agency, and the SMJFL Child Safety Officer. The SMJFL will not attempt to investigate, mediate or conduct any hearing into any allegation of child abuse as this is the role of the police and the relevant government agency.

# Incident Report

## Incident details

<b>Date of incident:</b>	
<b>Time of incident:</b>	
<b>Location of incident:</b>	
<b>Name(s) of child/children involved:</b>	
<b>Name(s) of staff/volunteer involved:</b>	

**If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.**

Does the child identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?

*(Mark with an 'X' as applicable)*

No  Yes, Aboriginal  Yes, Torres Strait Islander

## Please categorise the incident

Physical violence

Sexual offence

Serious emotional or psychological abuse

Serious neglect

Minor neglect

Unacceptable behaviour (physical)

Unacceptable behaviour (emotional/psychological)

Inappropriate behaviour


## Please describe the incident

<b>When did it take place?</b>	
<b>Who was involved?</b>	

<b>If you were present, what did you see?</b>	
<b>If you were not present, what was reported to you?</b>	
<b>Other information</b>	

**Does this incident involve discrimination based on any of the following:**

- Race?** No / Yes
- Gender?** No / Yes
- Sexual orientation?** No / Yes
- Religious or cultural beliefs?** No / Yes
- Other?** No / Yes (Please state):
- 

**Office use:**

<b>Date incident report received:</b>	
<b>Staff member managing incident:</b>	
<b>Follow-up date:</b>	
<b>Incident ref. number:</b>	

**Has the incident been reported?**

<b>Child protection</b>	
<b>Police</b>	
<b>Another third party (please specify):</b>	

**Does the incident reporter wish to remain anonymous?**

(Mark with an 'X' as applicable)

Yes  No