



Child Protection Policy

Document Controls

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Introduction

Collingwood City FC (“CCFC”) takes seriously its responsibility to provide an environment for children and young persons (collectively “child” or “children”) that is caring, nurturing and safe. The welfare and wellbeing of children in sport is a shared and collective responsibility of all adults and CCFC expects everyone within the organisation, regardless of their role or level of responsibility to act to safeguard children from harm.

Both boys and girls can be victims of Child Abuse. Child Abuse can be inflicted on children by men or women or by young people themselves. CCFC has adopted practices and processes which set the standard when carrying out duties at the club that involve any child.

Purpose and scope

This Policy provides guidance on protecting children from abuse of all kinds in the delivery of CCFC’s activities, and stems from the recent government inquiries into child safety in Australia.

CCFC does not tolerate any form of Child Abuse which includes physical, racial, cultural, religious, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect, bullying, domestic/family violence and exploitation or any other violation of a child by a person in a position of trust and authority. A child for the purposes of this policy is considered to be a person under the age of 18 years.

Legislation

CCFC Protection Policy acknowledges that the following legislation provides legal protection to children that are affected by child abuse:

- *Crimes Act 1990* (Cth) and *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic) (collectively “Crimes Act”). Child Abuse is a crime as indicated by Commonwealth, State and Territory legislation.
- *Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012* (Vic)
- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic) (“CYFA”)

This Policy aims to protect children from abuse of all kinds in the delivery of CCFC's activities and stems from the Child Safe Standards guidelines which seek to:

1. Embed a club culture of child safety and effective leadership;
2. Have a child-safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety;
3. Have a code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children;
4. Put in place screening, supervision, training and other human resource practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel;
5. Have processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse;
6. Have strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse;
7. Have strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children.

1. CCFC Club Culture of Child Safety

“Developing a child centred, child safe culture of respect within an organisation that supports early disclosures, accountability by all adults, and challenging unacceptable behaviour is now identified as the future direction in managing organisational risk”

CCFC's Child Safety Policy and Code of Conduct identifies and establishes clear expectations of appropriate behaviour of adults towards children. CCFC has an active leadership established through elected Committee members. The Committee promotes the club culture by:

- Promoting its commitment to this Policy;
- Undertaking a policy review on an annual cycle as a minimum or at a time governed by legislation, regulations, or organisational learnings that promote a change to all relevant policy or procedural guidelines;
- Ensuring adequate resources are allocated to allow for the development and effective implementation of this policy;
- Advocating child rights, empowering and engaging children in support of this Policy and its expectations;
- Promoting opportunities for regular discussion at all levels to support a culture of continuous improvement and accountability of child protection;
- Ensuring that everyone at the club is aware of the appropriate recruitment, screening and employment practice in relation to individuals with specific roles in working, coaching or volunteering with children and families;

- Encouraging everyone at the club to challenge unacceptable behaviour and early disclosure;
- Enforcing and supporting strict guidelines in regard to coaches and contact with families and children.

2. CCFC Statement of Commitment

CCFC wants children and young people to be and feel safe, happy, respected and empowered. *Our club pays particular attention to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and children with a disability.*

- CCFC has a **ZERO** tolerance for child abuse and aims to be preventative and proactive by identifying and removing risks to continuously improve Child Safety;
- The safety, welfare and wellbeing of children at CCFC is paramount in all decisions that the club makes;
- All children regardless of age, gender, racial origin, religious belief, sexual identity and or disability, have the right to enjoy sport free from Child Abuse, bullying harassment or discrimination;
- CCFC has policies and procedures in place to promote Child Safety;
- Any allegations and safety concerns raised by anyone will be treated seriously. CCFC will report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities;
- CCFC employs best practice standards in recruitment of coaches and volunteers and is committed to regularly training and education of staff and volunteers on child abuse risks;
- CCFC educates children and young people so that they know who to talk to if they are worried, feeling unsafe or what to raise a concern.

3. Code of Conduct (see Attachment A)

CCFC's Code of Conduct promotes child safety as paramount throughout the Club and outlines appropriate standards of behaviour by adults towards children and young people with the aim to protect them and reduce opportunities for abuse or harm to occur. CCFC acknowledges that children with disabilities are especially vulnerable.

Any breaches of the Code of Conduct will be viewed very seriously and may result in sanctions and/ or removal from CCFC. All breaches will be investigated in accordance with this policy.

The Code of Conduct applies to everyone involved in the activities at CCFC whether they are in a paid or unpaid/voluntary capacity and include but are not limited to:

- Club board/committee members, administrators and other club officials;
- Coaches and assistant coaches and other personnel participating in events and activities

- that are part of the club;
- Support personnel, including team managers, physiotherapists, first aiders, maintenance staff, canteen staff and photographers
- Employees;
- Referees;
- Players;
- CCFC Members;
- Parents, guardians, adults, siblings and spectators
- All other volunteers

4. Human Resource: screening, supervision, training practices that reduce the risk of child abuse

CCFC has processes in place to ensure that coaches, volunteers and people involved in working with children at the club are suitable and appropriate to undertake these roles.

Coaches: CCFC is committed to a thorough screening process when recruiting coaches. Coaches must have a Working With Children Check, CCFC will interview at least one current referee (not related to the coach) and conduct other online screening. All applicants will be interviewed by a senior coach, and /or director of coaching and a member of the Board. Coaches will be re- assessed on a regular basis as a means of promoting a safe environment for children.

Coaches will be provided ongoing training and information regarding Child Safety, including what their legal obligations are and the processes in place to minimise risk to children. All coaches will be provided with a copy of the CCFC Code of Conduct and Child Protection Policy.

All coaches will reduce the risk of child abuse by arriving at least 20 minutes prior to the scheduled training session and 30 minutes prior to the start of a game. Coaches will ensure children are supervised during training and games and provide a safe environment to participate in. Coaches must ask children to attend to the toilet in pairs and must not under any circumstances assist or attend with a child to the toilet. Coaches will adhere to the open door two or more policy when working with children. Coaches will not contact any child or parent via any electronic means other than with the Club and parent's written permission. All coaches will comply with the Coaches Code of Conduct and all other Club policies.

Volunteers, Board members, support staff: CCFC is committed to a thorough screening process for all volunteers, board members and support staff. All volunteers, board members and support staff must have a Working with Children Check. No volunteer, board member or support staff will be permitted to work at the club without being interviewed by at least 1 current Board member.

Volunteers, Board members and support staff will be provided with a copy of the Code of

Conduct and provided training on child safety.

5. Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse.

All suspected incidents of child abuse or any breach of this Policy are required to be reported in accordance with this Policy. Breaches can be reported by a child, parent/guardian, volunteer, club member, coach, board member or any other person associated with CCCF ("CCFC personnel"). CCFC has appointed a Child Protection Officer responsible for the management of all reported child abuse incidents or breaches under this policy.

Serious breach of Child protection policy:

If a child is at immediate risk of harm or in immediate danger, CCFC personnel must report the situation immediately and directly to the relevant State child protection body and/or the police. Following any report made to the State child protection body and/or police the matter must be reported to CCFC Child Protection Officer.

Police	Child Protection Body
Victorian Police (Non-urgent police assistance) Ph: (03) 9247 6666 www.police.vic.gov.au Ph: 000 (urgent police assist)	Department of Health and Human Services Ph: 131 278 www.dhhs.voc.gov.au

Statutory Mandatory Reporting

The following statutory mandatory reporting requirements apply to CCFC Personnel identified in the table below:

Relevant Legislative Requirements	What must be reported and the required state of mind of the reporter	CCFC Personnel who must comply
Section 327 of the <i>Crimes Act '958 (Vic)</i>	Sexual offences must be reported. The legislation requires that a person have 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. In the event of such belief the person is required to disclose this information to police as soon as it is practicable to do	All CCFC Board members, coaches, team managers, child safety officer or adult volunteer

	so, unless the person has a reasonable excuse for not doing so. Failure to disclose information to police is a criminal offence.	
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Breach of Policy or reports or allegations of child abuse

CCFC requires all its Personnel to report any instance of a breach of this Policy or any form of Child Abuse that they witness or otherwise become aware of or develop a concern in relation to, to the CCFC Child Protection Officer as soon as practicable. CCFC personnel is prohibited from discussing with anyone other than the Child Protection Officer the nature of any breach reported. CCFC Personnel are prohibited from making a deliberately false or misleading or vexatious allegation.

If a CCFC Personnel fails to report instances, allegations, disclosures or concerns in relation to abuse or neglect of a child or breaches of this policy, or makes a false report or discusses with other CCFC Personnel any report they have made, depending on the circumstances such action may result in the immediate dismissal of that CCFC Personnel from CCFC.

Reporting Process

CCFC has developed a Child Abuse Incident Form (Attachment C) which must be used by any of CCFC Personnel to document any allegation, disclosure, incident or concern regarding Child Abuse. Where CCFC Personnel become aware of Child Abuse whether through observation of potential indicators, such as bruises or cuts, or directly observing potentially abusing behaviour towards a child, they are required to complete the Child Abuse Incident Form to record their observations and concerns as accurately as possible.

All allegations of Child Abuse must be dealt with promptly, seriously, sensitively and confidentially. CCFC Child Protection Officer may take any of the following steps:

- Undertake an initial assessment of the information provided and decide on next steps;
- Seek guidance from the Police or relevant statutory government agency;
- Report the allegation to the President of CCFC and relevant Board members;
- Ensure that implementation of the reporting process respects the rights and safety of the alleged victim and alleged offender
- Ensure all steps taken are documented and a final case report prepared on conclusion;

6. Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse

CCFC has in place the following processes to minimise the risk of child abuse:

- Maintain a WWC register for all coaches and volunteers and enforcing a screening process for all coaches, volunteers, board members;
- Undertaking induction training for all coaches and ensuring all our volunteers are made aware of training for the Safeguarding of Children;
- Ensuring all our volunteers and coaches and members know the behaviour that the club expects by publishing and reviewing CCFC Policies and processes;
- Enforcing the CCFC Code of Conduct
- Encouraging the involvement of children and parents in the development and maintenance of a safe, inclusive and supportive environment.

CCFC is committed to child safety, but nothing replaces the vigilance of parents, carers and other responsible adults.

CCFC has a number of procedures in place to reduce the risk of child abuse when selecting coaches, volunteers, board members and support staff. CCFC further implements additional processes to reduce risk including requesting all parents adhere to CCFC's terms and conditions including:

- requiring that parents of children under 9 remain for the duration of the training session and games. If a parent is unable to attend training, they can arrange another parent to supervise their child. The child should know who this parent is and seek their assistance as required;
- ensuring that if assistance is required for their child to attend the toilet that an adult is in attendance to give that assistance. Under no circumstances will a coach assist a child with toileting;
- requiring that ALL players (from and including) under 12 downwards must be dropped-off and collected from the playing field, this allows the coaches to monitor for children that have not been picked up.
- Ensuring parents to not enter onto the training grounds while sessions or games are in place or cause any disruptions. The only people allowed in the technical area and grounds during games are the Team Manager and marshal.

If a parent witnesses something that concerns them, they must report this to the team manager, child safety officer or the club immediately. The team manager, child safety officer or club will then follow the processes outlined in this policy to report and document these concerns.

CCFC provides all parents with access to the following video and has developed suggested guidelines for parent's involvement at the club (see Appendix B).

7. Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children.

The children are the most important people at the club

CCFC is a club that cares about the welfare of all its members and especially the children at the club. CCFC works to ensure all children feel safe, happy and comfortable, so that soccer is fun and enjoyable.

CCFC has in place a regular process for communicating the Child Protection Policy with children in an age appropriate manner. CCFC is committed to ensuring all children understand that anything that makes them feel uncomfortable or that they don't like shouldn't happen.

CCFC communicates the following message to children through training sessions and posters at the club:

- **No-one** at the club is allowed to behave badly or inappropriately at any time and children should never feel worried to say something;
- People at the club should treat each other with respect.
- Some things our club does not accept from anyone are:
 - Hitting, punching, pushing or rough contact of other people
 - Bullying, bad sportsmanship, bad language or comments that make people feel bad;
 - Touching or contact that makes people uncomfortable (your body is your private property and people must respect that);
 - Treating someone badly because they have different beliefs, or family traditions (People have the right to be different and like or do things differently);
 - threatening people.

If a child has a problem or they think someone else has a problem CCFC encourages them to speak to an adult that they can trust. This could be a parent, older sibling, coach, team manager, child safety officer or other club people.

ATTACHMENT A: CCFC CODE OF CONDUCT

All Club board/committee members, administrators and other club officials, coaches and assistant coaches and other personnel participating in events and activities that are part of the club, support personnel, including team managers, physiotherapists, first aiders, maintenance staff, canteen staff and photographers, employees, referees, players, CCFC Members, parents, guardians, adults, siblings and spectators and all volunteers, who attend the club, are required to comply and are responsible for promoting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people by:

- Following the club's OPEN door or TWO or more Policy which states that any meeting between a child and an adult must NOT occur behind closed doors unless there are two or more adults present;
- All work done with children must be in an open and transparent way – other adults should always know about the work being done with children;
- Adhering to our Child Safe Policy and any other club policies;
- Adhering to the clubs anti bullying and racism, zero tolerance stance;
- Taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse;
- Treating other people with respect and listening to and valuing their ideas and opinions;
- Welcoming all children and their families and carers to the club;
- Respecting cultural, religious and political differences and acting in a culturally sensitive way;
- Modelling appropriate adult behaviour;
- Listening and responding appropriately and in accordance with the CCFC Child Protection Policy to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another;
- Reporting and acting in accordance with the CCFC Child Protection Policy on any breaches of this Code of Conduct, complaints or concerns complying with the Code of Conduct;
- Respecting the privacy of children and their families, and only disclosing information to people who have a need to know. This includes keeping confidential all medical information contact information including email address, mobile phone numbers and address.

CCFC coaches, staff and volunteers must NOT:

- Put a minor at risk of abuse;
- Seek to use children in any way to meet the needs of adults or engage in sexual contact with a minor;
- Ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse (do not ignore behaviours by other adults towards players when they appear to be overly familiar or inappropriate);

- Use prejudice, oppressive behaviour or language with children;
- Speak to a minor in a way that is or could be construed by any observer as overly harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. Including but not limited to offensive swearing in the presence of a child, or intimidatory language and gestures directed at a child.
- Express inappropriate personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of a child;
- Discuss sexual activities with a minor or discuss content of an intimate nature or use sexual innuendo with players,
- Possess sexually oriented or morally inappropriate printed materials (magazines, cards, videos, films, messages, clothing) in the presence of a child;
- Discriminate on the basis of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality or disability;
- 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;
- Develop 'special' relationships with specific children or show favouritism through the provision of gifts or inappropriate attention;
- Take a child to their home or encourage meetings outside of CCFC activities or events without the Club AND parents/ guardians knowledge and consent (unless the child is a member of your family or written parental permission has been provided to CCFC each and every time);
- Communicate directly or have online contact with children through personal or private contact channels without the Club's AND parents/ guardians knowledge and consent (including by mobile phone, social media, email, instant messaging, texting,) except where that communication is reasonable in the circumstances, or where there is a safety concern or other urgent matter or the child is a member of your family,
- Have contact with a child outside of Club activities or events without the Club's AND parents/ guardians knowledge and consent;
- Photograph or video a child inappropriately, or in circumstances where you have been requested to cease or where the team manager or parent has expressly requested you to cease;
- Using, possessing, or being under the influence of illegal drugs while in the presence of a child;
- Using, possessing, or being under the influence of alcohol while supervising a child at CCFC (except where the contact is accidental/incidental and you are not performing your professional obligations at CCFC of the child is a member of your family and you comply with all relevant legislation);
- While coaching or at matches where children are present or within view, consume alcohol, smoke or take illicit drugs under any circumstances;
- Providing or allowing a child to consume illegal drugs, alcohol or cigarettes;
- Sleep in the same bed, sleeping bag or tent with a child and/or being naked in the presence of a minor while performing duties at CCFC (unless the child is a member of your family and you comply with all relevant legislation) ;
- Engage in rough physical games (outside of what is reasonably considered appropriate in

a Club training session), hold, massage, kiss, cuddle or touch a minor in an inappropriate and or/culturally insensitive way (unless the child is a member of your family and you comply with all relevant legislation);

- Communicate directly with club families or children (all communications via team manager) unless explicit permission given by the club and the family;
- Transport children to games, training sessions or home without written permission of parents/guardians and informing the club.

ATTACHMENT B: PARENT GUIDELINES

1. **Let the football coaches' coach.** If you are telling your son or daughter or any other player to do something different from what their coach is telling them, you create distraction and confusion.
2. **Do not yell out instructions.** It is very unnerving for many young players to try and perform difficult tasks on the field in the spur of the moment when parents are yelling at them from the sidelines. Let the kids play. If they have been well coached, they should know what to do on the field. If they make a mistake, chances are they will learn from it.
3. **Do not make negative comments on the play of specific young players in front of other parents.** Negative comments such as, "I don't know how that boy made this team..." or "she's just not fast enough" are hurtful and unnecessary. Negative comments and attitudes effect parent harmony which is essential to youth team success.
4. **Discourage toxic behaviour** by listening patiently to any negative comments that might be made, then address issues in a positive way. Speak of the positive qualities of a player, family or coach.
5. **Do not complain about your son or daughter's coaches to other parents.** If you have what you truly feel is a legitimate problem with your child's coach – either regarding game strategy or playing time, speak to your team manager who at their discretion will arrange a time for you to discuss your concerns with the coach away from the pitch and children.
6. **Make only positive comments from the sideline.** Be encouraging. Young players do not need to be reminded constantly about their perceived errors or mistakes. Their coaches will instruct them, either during the game or at half-time, and during training.
7. **Avoid making any negative comments about players on the other team, or the match officials.** This creates a negative environment and is hostile and unnecessary.
8. **Try to keep interactions with parents on the other team as positive as possible.** Be courteous 'till it hurts; avoid the 'tit for tat' syndrome. Walk away from any confrontation and always create a positive atmosphere. Parents on the 'other' team are not the enemy. Neither are the children on the other team.
9. **Don't criticise the referees.** There are times when the officials may make mistakes which can unfortunately, directly affect the outcome of a game but recognise that this is not intentional. Be supportive. Any outburst from parents towards the referees may signal to our children that they can blame the referee if things go against them. Blaming others is not a formula for success in sports.
10. **Don't be sarcastic or superficial in your support.** Yelling out comments such as "good call, ref" or "thanks ref" or "that kid finally touched the ball" may come across as sarcastic or superficial. Keep your comments positive or to yourself.
11. **Don't walk up and down the sidelines during the game.** Walking up and down the sidelines, following the play, is unnerving to players and totally unnecessary. If you are also yelling out instructions to various players, including your own son or daughter it is likely that you are embarrassing the player/players involved including your own child.
12. **Ask yourself before you yell out: will I be proud of what I am about to say or do when I**

reflect on it tomorrow? We are all capable of saying things in the 'heat of the moment' but our children are not excused for 'heat of the moment comments/actions' (there are penalties, suspensions, etc.) so we should apply similar standards to our own sideline behaviour.

13. **Don't harass the coach, official or a parent on the other team after the game is over** The car park is not the time to 'fan the flames'. Whether it is a coach's decision, a referee's call, a comment that was made, let it go. Go home, relax, and unwind. Talk positively with your child. The trip home is sometimes as important as the game itself. Make that time a good memory for your son or daughter by discussing as many positives as you can about him/her, her coach, her teammates.
14. **Love the game, support your child and all the players.** This is a junior sporting competition. Allow this to be the place your child learns and enjoys themselves so that they continue to play soccer well into the future.

ATTACHMENT C: Child Abuse Incident Form

The child safe standards require organisation that provide services for children to have processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse. This template must be provided to a child or their family or any other CCFC Personnel if they disclose an allegation of abuse or safety concern at CCFC.

All incident reports must be stored securely.

Incident details

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

If you believe a child is in immediate risk of abuse phone the police on 000

Does the child identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?

No ☐

Yes ☐

Aboriginal ☐

Torres Strait Islander ☐

Please categorise the incident

Physical Violence

☐

Sexual Offence

☐

Serious emotional or psychological abuse

☐

Serious neglect

☐

Other

☐

Please provide details _____

Please describe the incident

When did the incident take place?	
Who was involved in the incident?	

What were your observations?	
What information did the child give you?	
Other information	

OFFICE USE

Date incident report received	
Staff member managing incident	
Follow-up date:	

Has the Incident been reported?

Child Protection Officer	
Police	
Another third party	

Does the incident reporter wish to remain anonymous?

No ☐

Yes ☐