

# **Bulleen-Templestowe Basketball Club**



## **Child Safe Policy**

### **1. BTBC Statement of Commitment to Child Safety**

All children who participate or work in programs at Bulleen Templestowe Basketball Club have a right to feel and be safe. The welfare of the children in our care will always be our first priority. We aim to create a child safe and child friendly environment where children feel safe to engage and participate in our programs.

We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously, consistently and confidentially with our robust policies and procedures. We commit to having a dedicated Child Safety Advisor to support these processes.

Our Club is committed to preventing child abuse by identifying risks early and removing and reducing these risks in association with BTBC activities.

We will rigorously fulfil our legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we have reasonable belief that a child's safety is at risk.

Our robust human resources and recruitment practices ensure all staff and volunteers are suitable to work with children and are committed to their safety and wellbeing.

We are committed to providing safe physical and virtual environments.

We support inclusion and participation of all children. We respect and value the cultural rights and safety of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with a disability, and children who identify with the LGBTIQ community.

Each year we will speak with our members, staff, volunteers, the children and young people who participate in programs at our Club, and their parents. We will ask them what makes them feel safe or unsafe and we will consider and respond to feedback and advice about making our Club as safe as possible.

We are committed to empowering children and young people, ensuring they know their rights in relation to participation and safety, and hearing directly from them in relation to club related matters..

### **2. BTBC Child Safe Policy**

This Child Safe Policy was approved by the Board of Management on 6 December 2021. This policy demonstrates the strong commitment of the BTBC management, staff and

volunteers to child safety, and to provide an outline of the policies and practices we have developed to keep everyone safe from any harm, including abuse. The Policy has now been aligned to the 11 Standards from 1 July 2022.

At BTBC, everyone must operate within the Club Policies, Code of Conduct, Basketball Victoria's Codes of Conduct, Victorian Working with Children Checks and our Child Safety Safe Policy.

The 11 Child Safe Standards are compulsory for all organisations providing services to children and young people, aiming to drive cultural change and to ensure protecting children from abuse is embedded in the everyday planning and practices of everyone within the organisation. This will assist to:

- Prevent child abuse.
- Ensure reporting of any abuse that occurs.
- Ensure appropriate responses to any allegations of child abuse.

The 11 Child Safe Standards which underpin this policy are:

1. Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued
2. Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture
3. Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously
4. Families and communities are informed, and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing
5. Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice
6. People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice
7. Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused
8. Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training
9. Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed
10. Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved
11. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

### **3. Application of this Policy**

This policy applies to all individuals involved in our organisation (paid and volunteer) including, but not limited to:

- Board of Management (Executive and General committee members)
- Employees and volunteers
- Coaches

- Officials
- Players (children, youth, seniors)
- Parents
- Spectators
- Contractors
- Students

The words 'child' and 'children' in this policy refers to children and young people up to the age of 18 years. The term 'child' in this policy is inclusive of anyone under 18 years of age. Not utilising the term 'young people' is not intended to diminish any emphasis on, or acknowledgement of, the safety risks to older children or teenagers.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Complaints Policy.

#### **4. Child Abuse**

Child abuse can take a broad range of forms including physical abuse, sexual abuse, verbal abuse, bullying, emotional or psychological abuse and neglect. People to whom this policy applies need to be aware that child abuse can occur whenever there is actual or potential harm to a child, and these are circumstances that our Club is committed to reducing the risk of occurrence.

BTBC acknowledges that child abuse includes:

- o Physical abuse
- o Emotional and psychological abuse
- o Sexual abuse
- o Grooming
- o Verbal abuse
- o Bullying
- o Neglect
- o Family violence (including exposure to Family Violence)

Unreported abuse in childhood can cause long term trauma and adverse effects that have been linked to increased risks such as mental illness and physical disorders, homelessness, posttraumatic stress disorders, depression, anxiety, suicide, eating disorder and substance abuse.

#### **5. Children's rights to safety and participation**

BTBC is a child-centred organisation. We actively seek to include the voices of children to understand what makes children feel safe in our organisation. BTBC will act on concerns raised by children or their families regarding their safety and we will

endeavour to seek their feedback.

Children and young people will be informed of their rights and relevant complaint processes to ensure they feel empowered, valued and safe.

## **6. BTBC values diversity and has no tolerance for discrimination**

BTBC strive to welcome all community members and provide accessible programs regardless of age, gender, cultural background or ability.

We value diversity and do not tolerate racism or any discriminatory practices. To achieve this, we:

- are committed to the cultural safety and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families, respect and value their cultural rights and support their inclusion and participation within our club.
- are committed to the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families
- welcome children of all abilities and their families and act to promote their inclusion and participation
- seek to recruit appropriate staff from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- welcome children and families who identify with the LGBTIQ community

## **7. Recruiting staff and volunteers**

BTBC applies the best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of staff and volunteers to ensure that child safety requirements are met. Recruitment processes and strategies include:

### ***Deciding to recruit***

- Working with Children Clearances are required for all staff and volunteers regardless of their roles and level of contact with children.
- We assess the qualifications and prerequisites required to ensure the staff are appropriately skilled for the role.
- We assess the training, guidance and supervision required for the position and the current resources available to meet these requirements.

### ***Advertising***

- All positions are advertised with a Statement of Commitment to Child Safety.
- Positions will clearly state the responsibilities with regard to children, where relevant
- Prerequisite criteria will be listed for positions, for example: National Police Check, Working with Children Check, training and qualifications.

- Advertised positions will state that referee checks will be performed for shortlisted candidates.

### **Selection**

- Interview questions and reference checks will address the applicants experience and previous engagement with children and will gauge their attitudes and values toward children.
- Reference checks must ask about the person's ability to work with children and whether there are any issues or concerns
- Before commencing in their role, successful applicants must sign and agree to the BTBC Code of Conduct and Child Safe Policy and undertake BTBC Child Safe Training

## **8. Supporting staff and volunteers**

All staff and volunteers must read the Code of Conduct and Child Safe policy and seek advice where needed from the Child Wellbeing and Safety Advisor.

All staff and volunteers will be provided with information and training to ensure:

- they support a child safe culture,
- are able to identify indicators of abuse,
- understand reporting requirements to ensure the safety for children from further harm
- and required record keeping processes.

## **9. Child Safety Advisor**

BTBC has appointed two Child Wellbeing and Safety Advisors who have specific responsibility for responding to any complaints made by staff, volunteers, parents or children related to child safety and wellbeing matters. If a person does not feel comfortable making a report to a Child Wellbeing and Safety Advisor, they may report their concern to a member of the Board of Management or a staff member or volunteer, who will be required to report concerns to the Child Wellbeing and Safety Advisor.

## **10. Reporting procedures**

All reports of child abuse will be treated as serious, whether they are made by an adult or a child.

The Child Wellbeing and Safety Advisor should be informed of any reports related to child safety and wellbeing at the soonest time possible to support an appropriate response which ensures the best possible outcome for the child. They can be contacted on [childsafety@bulleenboomers.com.au](mailto:childsafety@bulleenboomers.com.au)

The BTBC Reporting Procedure (as published on the BTBC Child Safe web page) outlines how to respond to an allegation or incident of child abuse.

- If there is any immediate risk of harm to a child or children, then the staff member or volunteer should **immediately call 000**.
- Any suspected criminal behaviour should be reported to police.

It is not the responsibility of anyone involved in our Club to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place, however if there is a reasonable belief that the child has suffered abuse or is at risk of suffering abuse, there is a responsibility for all adults involved in our Club to act on any concerns with the appropriate authorities. They will then make the inquiries and take necessary actions to protect the child. This applies to both concerns of abuse occurring within our Club, and to allegations that abuse is taking place elsewhere.

Any reports made must be treated with the strictest confidentiality.

Failure to make a police report in regard to an allegation or reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 can result in criminal charges under the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic).

## **11. Record keeping and incident monitoring**

All reports related to the safety and wellbeing of children will be recorded on the BTBC complaints/incident register which shall be maintained securely to preserve confidentiality and privacy for children and families in accordance with legislation. Records will be retained in line with the recommendations from the Office of Public Records.

## **12. Risk management**

We recognise the importance of a risk management approach to minimising the potential for child abuse or harm occurring during our Programs. All existing activities are assessed for risks to children including:

- environmental risks (e.g. areas that might obscure a line of sight)
- vulnerability risks (such as activities that may foster personal relationships between staff/volunteers and children who have an increased risk of being exploited, such as children who are highly vulnerable and dependent on the staff/volunteer for their

needs).

-online risks -includes any technical platform such as computers, phones, websites, intranet, social media and video conference facilities.

Risk management will also include regular review and analysis of reports made to the club related to child safety and wellbeing to support the identification of new risks or how to mitigate existing risks.

Via provision of training and information, staff, volunteers and contractors are made aware of their responsibility for identifying risks of child abuse and their obligation to work with management on reducing those risks. Families and children are made aware of how to report on identified risks of child abuse.

### 13. Relevant Legislation, Policies and Codes

#### *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) (including Child Safe Standards)*

Provides an overarching legislative framework designed to encourage and support a shared commitment towards children in Victoria.

#### *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)*

Doctors, nurses, midwives, teachers (including early childhood teachers), principals, and police are all 'mandatory reporters'. They must report to Child Protection if they form a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse.

#### *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic):*

**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:** A person in a position of authority in the organisation will commit the offence if they know of the risk of abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.

#### **Relevant BTBC Policies:**

- Complaints Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Bullying Policy
- Dropping off and picking up policy
- Social Media and Electronic Communications Policy

#### **14. Reviewing this policy**

This policy will be reviewed every year and we undertake to seek the views, comments and suggestions from members, staff, volunteers, the children and young people who participate in programs at our Club, and their parents. as a part of this process.

#### **15. Non-compliance with this policy and the Code of Conduct**

BTBC will enforce this policy and the Code of Conduct. All reported non-compliance is investigated and a review that may result in restriction of duties, suspension or termination of employment or other corrective action.

#### **16. Practice Notes**

This policy includes practice notes, which are regularly reviewed and updates as examples of good and poor practice.

#### **Examples of Good Practice**

All personnel should adhere to the following principles and actions:

- always work in an open environment (e.g., avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets)
- make the experience of basketball fun and enjoyable: promote fairness, confront and deal with bullying
- treat all children with respect and dignity
- always put the welfare of the child first, before winning
- maintain a safe and appropriate distance with players (e.g., it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them)
- avoid unnecessary physical contact with children. Where any form of manual/physical support is required it should be provided openly and with the consent of the child. Physical contact can be appropriate so long as it is neither intrusive nor disturbing and the child's consent has been given
- involve parents/carers wherever possible, e.g., where children need to be supervised in changing rooms, encourage parents to take responsibility for their own child. If groups have to be supervised in changing rooms always ensure parents, coaches, etc. work in pairs
- request parental consent if Club officials are required to transport children in their cars
- gain written parental consent for any significant travel arrangements e.g., overnight stays
- ensure that if mixed teams are taken away, they should always be accompanied by a male and female member of staff
- ensure that at away events adults should not enter a child's room or invite young



people to their rooms

- be an excellent role model; this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of children
- always give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- recognising the developmental needs and capacity of the children and do not risk sacrificing welfare in a desire for Club or personal achievements. This means avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will
- only engage in online contact with a child with the permission or inclusion of a parent/carer. Do not request/accept invitation to be “friends” or “follow” child using Internet chat rooms, social networking sites, game sites, instant messaging or anything of a similar nature, particularly to encourage social contact of an unauthorised nature.

### **Poor Practice**

The following are regarded as poor practice and should be avoided by all personnel:

- unnecessarily spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others
- taking children alone in a car on journeys, however short
- taking children to your home where they will be alone with you
- sharing a room with a child
- engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- allowing or engaging in inappropriate touching of any form
- engaging with children on social media platforms
- taking unauthorised photographs of children (please read the attached document on precautions to be taken while photographing/filming children)
- allowing children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- making sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun
- reducing a child to tears as a form of control
- allowing allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- doing things of a personal nature that the children can do for themselves. When a case arises where it is impractical/impossible to avoid certain situation e.g., transporting a child in your car, the tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of the parent/care and the child involved. If during your care you accidentally hurt a child, the child seems distressed in any manner, appears to be sexually aroused by your actions and/or if the child misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done, report any such incidents as soon as possible to another colleague and make a written note of it. Parents should also be informed of the incident.

