

Leongatha Knights Football Club

CHILD SAFE POLICY

Purpose

This policy was written to demonstrate the strong commitment of the Committee, coaches and volunteers of the Leongatha Knights Football Club (**the Club**) to child safety and to provide an outline of the policies and practices the Club has developed to keep everyone safe from any harm, including abuse.

Commitment to Child Safety

All children who are a part of the Club have a right to feel and be safe. The welfare of the children in our care will always be our first priority and the Club has a zero tolerance to child abuse. The Club aims to create a child safe and child friendly environment where children feel safe and have fun and the Club's activities are always carried out in the best interests of the children.

Application of this Policy

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

- Committee members
- Coaches
- Officials
- Participants
- Parents
- Spectators

All of the people to which this policy applies have a role and responsibility in relation to child protection. They must all:

- understand the indicators and risks of child abuse;
- appropriately act on any concerns raised by children; and
- understand and follow all applicable laws in relation to the protection of children and reporting or management of child safety concerns.

Child Abuse

Child abuse can take a broad range of forms including physical abuse, sexual abuse, 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 the Club is committed to reducing the risk of occurrence.

Children's Rights to Safety and Participation

The Club encourages children to express their views about their safety. We listen to their suggestions, especially on matters that directly affect them. We actively encourage all children who use our services to 'have a say' about things that are important to them.

We teach children about what they can do if they feel unsafe. We listen to and act on any concerns children, or their parents, raise with us.

We have a Club Child Safety Officer on our Committee, Bridget Cornish, and any person, Parent or Child, Member or Non Member can reach out to Bridget via phone (0401 166 087) or email at bridget.cornish@gmail.com.

Valuing Diversity

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

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children and their families;
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families;
- welcome children with a disability and their families and act to promote their participation; and
- seek appropriate staff from diverse cultural backgrounds
- welcome children and their families that are refugees and seek safety and inclusion.

Recruiting coaches and volunteers

The Club takes the following steps to ensure best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of staff and volunteers:

- Interview and conduct referee checks on all coaches and volunteers who may need to supervise children
- Require Working with Children Checks for all coaches and those who may need to supervise children
- Our commitment to Child Safety and our screening requirements are included in all advertisements and as part of the induction process for new coaches or volunteers.

Supporting coaches and volunteers

The Club seeks to attract and retain the best volunteers. We provide support and supervision so people feel valued, respected, and fairly treated. We have developed a Code of Conduct to provide guidance to our staff and volunteers, all of whom receive training on the requirements of the Code.

Reporting a child safety concern or complaint

The Club has appointed *Bridget Cornish* as Child Safety Officer with the specific responsibility for responding to any complaints made by coaches, volunteers, parents or children. That person can be contacted by *bridget.cornish@gmail.com* or via phone 0401 166 087.

The Child Safety Officer will:

- Provide support to the child, parent/carer, person who made the report.
- Clarify the nature of the complaint, and refer in accordance with legal requirements and duty of care, to police or Child Protection.
- Initiate processes to ensure the safety of the child, and other children.
- If necessary, make the report as soon as possible, or support the complainant in making the report as soon as possible.
- The Child Safety Officer may also provide support to the accused if they are a club volunteer, coach or committee member.
- Work with the appropriate Committee members, club officials, and/or league officials regarding behaviour and/or disciplinary action, if not found to be a Child Protection or police matter.
- Review club policies and practices to minimise risk of future similar events/behaviour.

Risk Management

We recognise the importance of a risk management approach to minimising the potential for child abuse or harm to occur and use this to inform our policy, procedures and activity planning. In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our children. To reduce the risk of child abuse occurring, adults to whom this policy applies should avoid direct, unsupervised contact with children. For example, this should be a consideration when:

- using change room facilities
- using accommodation or overnight stays
- travel; or

- physical contact when coaching or managing children.

Reviewing this policy

This policy will be reviewed every two years and we undertake to seek views, comments and suggestions from children, parents, carers, coaches and volunteers involved in the Club. This policy will remain in effect until a replacement is issued.

Signed

Club President 2023