

HAWTHORN CITIZENS JUNIOR FOOTBALL CLUB CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING POLICY



SUMMARY

Hawthorn Citizens Junior Football Club is resolute that all children have the right to feel safe and be safe.

All Children should:

1. Feel safe and protected from all forms of abuse, harm, and neglect; and
2. Participate in sport in a safe, positive, and enjoyable environment.

Hawthorn Citizens Junior Football Club (HCJFC) has a zero-tolerance policy to child abuse and neglect in any form and is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of Children by

1. Providing a safe and inclusive environment; and
2. Ensuring that everyone involved at HCJFC is informed of their responsibilities and understand their obligations to protect and look after Children.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to set out Hawthorn Citizens Junior Football Club's (HCJFC):

1. Commitment to the wellbeing and safety of children and young people;
2. Obligations and responsibilities of all members, volunteers, staff, supporters and spectators of the Club when interacting with children and young people at our Club; and;
3. Processes for its response to any concerns, incidents or allegations of harm or abuse to children and young people.

SCOPE

1. This Policy applies to everyone involved at our HCJFC including (but not limited to) participants, parents, spectators, staff & contractors, volunteers, coaches & game day officials and board/committee members.
2. This Policy should be considered in conjunction with the Victorian Child Safe Standards any relevant Commonwealth or other Victorian legislation along with the relevant AFL, YJFL and Club policies and procedures (Refer to Appendix)
3. This Policy and any related documents will be available on our Club Website for all members of the Club and wider community to access and familiarise themselves with child safe practices at our Club.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. HCJFC considers that the health, safety and wellbeing of children and young people take priority over all other considerations.
2. All children and young people have equal rights to protection from harm and abuse regardless of their race, religion, age, disability, cultural background, gender, sexual orientation or family/social background.
3. The safety and wellbeing of all children and young people at the HCJFC is a shared responsibility between the Club and all members of the Club Community including and in particular, parents/carers of children associated with the Club.
4. The Club is committed to supporting all Members and volunteers to understand how to create a child safe and child friendly environment at our club.
5. In particular, HCJFC:
 - a) is committed to promoting a fair, inclusive and welcoming environment for all children, young people & their families
 - b) has zero tolerance for any form of abuse or harm of children and young people
 - c) will act quickly to protect children and young people should it become aware of any issue or incident;
 - d) abides by all Victoria Child Safe Standards and is committed to implementing child safe practices in accordance its legal obligations;
 - e) will require that all board/committee members, adults employed or engaged to provide services and / or volunteers performing official roles within the club hold a valid Working with Children Check in compliance with legal obligations.
 - f) expects all members, volunteers and or staff comply with these standards and this policy
 - g) encourages all its members to model safe behaviours with children and young people, both online and in person
 - h) uses positive reinforcement to support our children and young people
 - i) encourages all children and young people to 'have a say' and contribute to the operation of the Club
 - j) recognises that differing cultural backgrounds of Club members, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, may generate unique needs or circumstances and as a Club, we will actively work with any of these groups to support them in expressing their culture and how to best accommodate any specific requirements;
 - k) we will facilitate updates to this policy and provide further education (and or training as relevant) in child safe practices to our members and volunteers as recommended and advised by the AFL, YJFL or other relevant organisations from time to time.

EXPECTED BEHAVIOUR AT OUR CLUB

All participants, parents, spectators, contractors, officials, coaches, staff and board/committee members are expected to:

1. Actively contribute to a child safe culture by prioritising the safety of children and as appropriate to their role, adopt practices and display behaviours that cause no harm to a child or young person

2. Value equity and diversity at the club and treat all children and young people with respect regardless of their race, religion, age, disability cultural background, gender, sexual orientation or family/social background
3. Take appropriate action if they have concerns about children's safety, including contacting the HCJFC Child Safety Officer, Club President or Club Secretary as soon as practicable if they hear or see anything that may constitute child abuse or harm
4. Abide by this policy and any related child safety and wellbeing guidance or directions , including but not limited to, any updates to the Victorian Child Safe Standards and AFL / YJFL codes of conduct and / or policies
5. Co-operate with the Club, AFL, YJFL, police and/or other formal investigations to the best of their ability.

COMPLAINTS AND REPORTING

1. With the exception of Item 4 below, the Club Child Safeguarding Officer (CSO) is the primary point of contact for all concerns and complaints related to child safety and wellbeing related to HCJFC or the Club community.
2. All concerns and complaints will be taken seriously, whether they are raised by an adult, child or young person.
3. Concerns and complaints reported to the Club will be responded to promptly and confidentially and will be investigated fully by the appropriate authorities.
4. If a person receives information that leads them to form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed against a child, that person has a legal obligation to disclose that information to the Police as soon as it is practicable.

REVIEW

1. HCJFC is committed to continually reviewing its policies and practises to protect the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people.
2. This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis in consultation with all Club participants and take into consideration feedback from children, young people, parents/carers, board/committee members and other interested parties.
3. The review will take into account any changes in legislation, AFL or YJFL policy and feedback received from all Club members and participants.

DEFINITIONS

Child and Young Person means a person under the age of 18 years.

Child Abuse includes all forms of physical, emotional, psychological, verbal and/or sexual abuse. Child abuse also includes sexual exploitation, neglect or negligent treatment, grooming, harassing behaviour, bullying or other exploitation of a child or young person and includes any actions that results in actual or potential harm to a child or young person. Child abuse can be a single incident or take place over time.

Harm can be any action that may have a significant impact on a child or young person's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. Harm can be caused by:

physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect ,sexual abuse or exploitation , family violence , a single act, omission or circumstance , a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances.

Concerns and complaints include any issue that an adult or peer considers may negatively impact on the safety or wellbeing of a child or young person.

APPENDIX 1

Relevant Legislation and Standards

This Policy should be read in conjunction with:

1. the laws of the Commonwealth and Victoria (as amended from time to time) including but not limited to:
2. Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)
3. Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Act 2015 (Vic)
4. Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) Failure to Disclose Sexual Offence Committed Against a Child Under 16 (section 327); Failure by a Person in Authority to Protect a Child from a Sexual Offence (section 49 O);
5. Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic); and
6. Wrongs Act 1958 (Vic) Organisational liability for child abuse.

APPENDIX 2

Related Child Safety Education Resources and Links

1. AFL Safe Footy Safeguarding webinars and resources
www.afl.com.au/clubhelp/safeguarding-children
2. Play by the Rules training (child protection, cultural awareness)
www.playbytherules.net.au
3. eSafety Commissioner (safe online environments and sporting organisations)
www.esafety.gov.au

VERSION CONTROL

Version No.	1.0
Version Date:	April 2023
Approved By:	David Stanford, HCJFC President
Next Review Date:	No later than April 2024