

CHILD SAFE POLICY

Definitions

For the purpose of this Policy, the following definitions apply:

Child

A child or young person who is under the age of 18 years.

Child Abuse

Child abuse means any act or omission that causes harm to a child or places a child at risk of harm. Child abuse may include physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, neglect, family violence, exposure to family violence, grooming, exploitation or any other behaviour that adversely impacts a child's safety, wellbeing or development.

Child Harm

Child harm means any detrimental effect on a child's physical, emotional, psychological or developmental wellbeing. Harm may result from a single incident or from a pattern of behaviour and may be caused by abuse, neglect, bullying, harassment, discrimination, exploitation or exposure to unsafe environments.

Grooming

Grooming is behaviour that is intended to establish, build or maintain a relationship of trust with a child, their family, carers or other significant persons for the purpose of facilitating abuse, exploitation or inappropriate conduct. Grooming may occur in person, online, through social media, electronic communications or other forms of contact.

Reportable Conduct

Reportable conduct includes any conduct by an employee, volunteer, contractor or other relevant person that causes harm to a child or places a child at risk of harm. This may include sexual offences, sexual misconduct, physical violence, significant emotional or psychological harm, serious neglect, grooming behaviours or any other conduct that requires notification or investigation under applicable child safety legislation and reporting obligations.

Volunteer

A volunteer is any person who performs work, services or activities on behalf of MCBA without receiving payment or financial compensation. Volunteers include, but are not limited to, coaches, team managers, committee members, officials, event personnel and other persons acting in a voluntary capacity for MCBA.

Staff Member

A staff member is any person employed by MCBA on a full-time, part-time, casual, fixed-term or contract basis who performs duties or provides services on behalf of the organisation. For the purposes of this Policy, references to staff members include contractors and consultants engaged by MCBA where applicable.

Child Safety Officer

A Child Safety Officer is a person appointed by MCBA to receive, manage and respond to child safety concerns, complaints, allegations and disclosures. Child Safety Officers provide guidance on child safe practices, support reporting processes and assist MCBA in meeting its child safety responsibilities. The MCBA is committed to child safety as well as the participation and empowerment of all children. This includes the identification of all risks to children and removing or reducing these risks as early as possible by ensuring employees and volunteers receive regular training and education about the risks.

Members of the Association

The members of the Association shall consist of BV Members, Community Members, Participating Members, Temporary Members and Life Members as defined below:

BV Members

Persons who are the directors and Chief Executive Officer of BV (CEO) from time to time are each BV Members of the Association.

Community Members

MSAC Association/User Group that agreed to become a member of the Association after its incorporation and any Community Member admitted by the MCBA Board.

Participating Members

Participating members include all individuals who are registered by BV who participate in sanctioned activities of the Association. These include players, coaches, referees, managers and officials.

Life Members

Life Members of the Association are elected at an Annual General Meeting and Life Members of a Community Member at formation of the Association.

Temporary Members

An official or sponsor of another Basketball association provided however that such temporary membership shall be applicable only on those days when a team representing the other Association is playing Basketball at the Association premises.

Any member or official of any team of Basketball players visiting from another Basketball association whose team is involved in playing Basketball at the Association's premises and/or in a competition organised by the Association PROVIDED HOWEVER that such temporary membership shall be applicable only on those days when the competition in which such team is so involved is being conducted.

Any official of another association or a league in which the Association enters or is proposing to enter a team in a competition, whilst such official is visiting the Association on official business.

Any individual involved with an activity of the Association will be considered a Participant member under the Temporary member category.

Our Commitment

MCBA is committed to complying with the Victorian Child Safe Standards and embedding child safety into our leadership, governance, culture, practices and operations.

MCBA has zero tolerance for child abuse and is committed to acting in the best interests of children at all times. All children who participate in basketball have the right to feel safe, be heard and be protected from abuse, harm, neglect, discrimination and exploitation.

Purpose

This policy was written to demonstrate the strong commitment of the management, employees, and volunteers of Melbourne Central Basketball Association (MCBA) and those under the MCBA umbrella to child safety. This policy outlines good practices and guidelines that the MCBA have developed to keep all children safe from any harm, including abuse.

Child Safety Mission Statement

The Melbourne Central Basketball Association is committed to promoting and protecting the safety and well-being of children in our care. MCBA seeks to promote and protect the rights of all children in our care and prevent abuse from occurring by fostering a child safe culture. The welfare of the children in our care will always be our highest priority. MCBA has a zero tolerance to any form of child abuse and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated seriously and according to our policies and procedures.

Application of this Policy

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

- Members of the Association
- Administrators
- Parents
- Spectators

All 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 those under the MCBA umbrella is committed to reducing the risk of occurrence.

Children's and Families Rights to Safety and Participation

The MCBA encourages children to express their views about their safety. MCBA listen to their suggestions, especially on matters that directly affect them. MCBA actively encourage all children and families who use our services to 'have a say' about things that are important to them in the following way:

- Youth Advisory Panel formed each year commencing 2027
- Feedback form available on MCBA website for feedback at any time
- Signage at venues (where possible) providing ways to report or feedback information
- Child Safety Officer contact available on websites at all times
- The organisation provides an anonymous reporting mechanism through its website. Reports may be submitted without identifying the reporter. All reports will be managed confidentially wherever possible, and any person who raises a concern in good faith will be protected from reprisal, discrimination, victimisation or other detrimental treatment.

MCBA listen to and act on any concerns children, or their parents, raise with us.

Valuing Diversity

MCBA value diversity and do not tolerate any discriminatory practices. To achieve this, MCBA:

- Promote the cultural safety, participation, and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families;
- Promote the cultural safety, participation, and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families;
- Promote the cultural safety, participation, and empowerment of children from LGBTI+ backgrounds and their families;
- Welcome children with a disability and their families and act to promote their participation;
- Address all instances of racism with appropriate consequences.

Recruiting employees and volunteers

MCBA and those under its umbrella take the following steps to ensure best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of employees and volunteers:

- Interview all potential employees
- Conduct reference checks, where appropriate, to assess an individual's suitability to work with children and young people.
- Require all employees and volunteers to comply with MCBA's Child Safe Policy and Code of Conduct as part of their induction.
- Require police checks for all managers employed at MCBA
- Working with Children Checks are required for all employees and volunteers
- Our commitment to Child Safety and our screening requirements are included in all advertisements and as part of the induction process for new employees or volunteers.

Supporting employees and volunteers

MCBA seeks to attract and retain the best employees and volunteers for all programs and competitions. MCBA provides support and supervision, so people feel valued, respected, and fairly treated. MCBA support our employees and volunteers through ongoing training to develop their skills to protect all children from abuse. MCBA has developed a Code of Conduct to provides guidance to our employees and volunteers.

MCBA is committed to ensuring that employees, volunteers including Board members and Board Advisory Committee members receive appropriate child safety information, training and education relevant to their role. Child safety training will be provided during induction and periodically throughout an individual's involvement with MCBA to support ongoing compliance with Child Safe Standards and child safe practices.

Online Safety and Electronic Communications

To promote the safety and wellbeing of children in online environments, MCBA expects all employees, volunteers, contractors and participants to:

- Use approved and transparent communication methods when communicating with children, including team management applications, club email accounts and authorised communication platforms.
- Ensure communications with children are related to basketball activities, competitions, training, events or welfare matters relevant to their participation.
- Avoid one-on-one private messaging with children. Where direct communication is necessary, a parent/carer/guardian and/or another authorised adult should be included in the communication.
- Use group-based communication channels for team information, schedules, training updates and general correspondence.
- Ensure team group chats are used appropriately, respectfully and only for legitimate basketball-related purposes.
- Monitor team communication platforms to ensure interactions remain safe, respectful and free from bullying, harassment, discrimination or inappropriate conduct.
- Obtain appropriate consent before capturing, storing, using or publishing photographs, videos or other images of children.
- Only use photographs and videos of children for approved basketball-related purposes and in accordance with MCBA's Photography and Filming Policy.
- Never share, distribute or publish images, videos or personal information of children without appropriate authorisation.
- Maintain professional boundaries in all online interactions and ensure their online behaviour reflects the standards expected under MCBA's Code of Conduct.
- Refrain from posting, sharing or engaging with content that may be offensive, discriminatory, intimidating, harmful or inconsistent with MCBA's values.
- Report any concerns regarding online safety, cyberbullying, inappropriate communications or suspected grooming behaviours to a Child Safety Officer as soon as practicable.
- Staff and volunteers must not connect with children through personal social media accounts unless a family relationship exists.
- Any electronic communication with children should be capable of review by parents/carers and MCBA management where required.

Risk Management

MCBA recognise the importance of a risk management approach to preventing, identifying, and mitigating 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, MCBA 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. Adults should also be cautious when engaging with children in the online/social media environment. For example, this should be a consideration when:

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

- travel;
- physical contact when coaching or managing children;
- Adults should not communicate privately with children through phone calls, text messages, social media or electronic messaging platforms without the knowledge and involvement of a parent/carer, except where authorised by MCBA and appropriate safeguards are in place.
- Parents/carers should be included in team communication platforms involving children.

Reporting a Child Safety Concern or Complaint

MCBA is committed to ensuring that all child safety concerns, complaints, allegations and disclosures are taken seriously and responded to promptly, appropriately and in accordance with relevant legislation and Child Safe Standards.

Any person who believes a child is at immediate risk of harm should contact Victoria Police on 000 without delay.

Where there are concerns relating to child abuse, neglect or a child's safety and wellbeing, reports may also be made to the Victorian Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) Child Protection. MCBA encourages all employees, volunteers, officials, participants, parents/carers and spectators to report any child safety concern, complaint, disclosure, allegation or suspected breach of this policy as soon as possible.

Reports may be made through MCBA's internal reporting process by:

- Submitting the Child Safety Reporting Form available on the MCBA website; or
- Contacting one of MCBA's appointed Child Safety Officers directly via their published email address.

MCBA's Child Safety Officers are responsible for receiving and responding to child safety reports and ensuring concerns are managed appropriately. Contact details for Child Safety Officers are available on the MCBA website and may be provided upon request.

All reports will be treated sensitively and, where appropriate, confidentially. MCBA acknowledges that individuals do not need to have proof that abuse, harm or misconduct has occurred in order to make a report. Concerns should be raised whenever there is a reasonable belief that a child's safety, welfare or wellbeing may be at risk.

Upon receiving a report, the Child Safety Officer will:

- Assess the nature and urgency of the concern;
- Take appropriate action to protect the safety and wellbeing of any child involved;
- Determine whether the matter must be referred to Victoria Police, DFFH Child Protection or another relevant authority;
- Maintain appropriate records of the report and actions taken; and
- Escalate the matter to Basketball Victoria where required under applicable policies, reporting obligations or affiliation requirements.

MCBA will not tolerate victimisation or adverse treatment of any person who, in good faith, raises a child safety concern or participates in an investigation relating to child safety.

MCBA is committed to ensuring that all child safety concerns are managed in a fair, respectful, timely and child-centred manner, with the safety and wellbeing of children remaining the highest priority at all times.

Nothing in this policy prevents an individual from reporting concerns directly to Victoria Police, Child Protection or another relevant authority where they believe a child's safety is at risk.

Privacy

MCBA will meet all our obligations relating to the Commonwealth Privacy Act and Information Privacy Principles, and the Victorian Privacy and Data Protection Act. All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be employees, volunteers, technical officials, parents, or children, unless there is a risk to someone's safety.

MCBA have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected and used in a reasonable and legal way. MCBA will ensure systems are in place where all records are securely stored.

Information relating to child safety concerns and investigations will only be shared with those who require access to the information in order to manage the matter appropriately or comply with legal obligations.

Regular Review

MCBA will review this policy:

- Every year; or
- Earlier where legislative changes, operational requirements or significant incidents indicate a review is required.

Version Control	
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