

Child Safe Standards in Football



Goals of this Presentation

To provide:

- An awareness of child abuse and child protection
- What your organisation needs to have in place from 2017 communications
- The next steps and what your organisation needs to do in 2018

Why?

In 2013 the Victorian ***Betrayal of Trust*** and the Commonwealth ***Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Abuse*** were undertaken, inquiring into the handling of child abuse by religious and other non-government organisations.

New Victorian legislation was passed in 2017 from the findings of the ***Betrayal of Trust Report***:

- Criminal law reform – offences relating to grooming, failure to protect & failure to disclose.
- Creating child safe organisations – mandatory child safe standards
- Civil law reform – removal of the time limit on legal action (no longer 12 year limit).

Findings from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Abuse were released at the end of 2017, and it is expected that this will prompt other States to adopt similar reforms to what is in place in Victoria.

Standards of Child Safety

From the Royal Commission findings, the following 10 Standards have been released as vital considerations for institutions to implement for the safety of children to be of primary consideration.

1. Child safety is embedded in institutional leadership, governance and culture
2. Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously
3. Families and communities are informed and involved
4. Equity is upheld and diverse needs are taken into account
5. People working with children are suitable and supported
6. Processes to respond to complaints of child sexual abuse are child focused
7. Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training
8. Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur
9. Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved
10. Policies and procedures document how the institution is child safe.

Why is there a need to protect children?

How many child protection reports each year?

355,935 (Australian Institute of Health & Welfare 2015-16)

Australian Childhood Foundation research has found:

- Child abuse rates in importance below cost of petrol, transport & roads
- One third of respondents don't know how to recognise signs of child abuse
- One third of respondents believed that children make up stories about being abused, and 1 in 5 respondents may not believe a child who discloses abuse to them

Definitions

Child abuse is an act or omission by a parent, caregiver, other adult or child that endangers or impairs a child's physical or emotional health and development.

Types of child abuse include:

- **Physical, emotional, sexual and neglect**
- **Family violence:** occurs when children are forced to live with violence between adults in their home, and can be very harmful. Exposure to family violence places children and young people at increased risk of physical injury and harm, and has a significant impact on their wellbeing and development.
- **Grooming:** is the behaviours used to prepare a child with the intention of sexually abusing them. This includes building a trusting relationship with a child and their parents/carers, and 'special relationships' and spending time alone with children or outside the work role. It graduates from attention-giving and non-sexual touching to increasingly intimate and intrusive behaviours.

Definitions

Physical abuse is intentionally causing or threatening to cause physical injury to a child, or inadvertently causing injury as a consequence of physical punishment or physically aggressive treatment.

Examples: Physical assault, hitting, shaking, restraining, etc.

Signs: Bruises, cuts, burns, fractures, covering up seemingly unnecessarily

Emotional abuse occurs when a person engages in inappropriate behaviours such as rejecting, ignoring, humiliating, isolating, threatening or verbally abusing a child, or allowing others to do so.

Examples: Yelling, ignoring, teasing, verbal abuse, bullying, etc.

Signs: Delayed physical/emotional development, withdrawn, low self esteem, shy, agitated, anxious, self harming

Definitions

Sexual abuse is when any person uses their authority over a child to involve the child in any sexual activity.

Examples: Fondling genitals, masturbation, penetration, voyeurism and exhibitionism, exposure to pornography, sexting, etc.

Signs: Bruising, withdrawal, anxious, over-sexualisation, secretive, low self esteem, weight loss, self harming

Neglect means failing to meet a child's basic needs such as providing adequate food, drink, shelter, clothing, supervision, hygiene or medical attention.

Examples: Withholding any basic need, lack of emotional support, no security or stability, withholding education, etc.

Signs: Hunger, lack of clothing, homeless, poor hygiene, stealing, skinny, tired, regularly ill, attention seeking

Behaviour Guidelines

- Positive guidance
- Adhering to role boundaries
- Use of language and tone of voice
- Supervision – never alone
- Use of electronic communications
- Photographs of children and young people
- Physical contact with children and young people
- Sexual misconduct
- Change room arrangements
- Transporting children
- Gift giving
- Overnight stays
- Alcohol & Drugs

Criminal Laws

- **Grooming offence** - which targets communication, including online communication with a child, with the intent of committing child sexual abuse.
- **Failure to protect offence** – applies to people within an organisation who knew of a risk of child abuse by someone and had the authority to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently failed to do so.
- **Failure to disclose offence** – requires adults to report to police a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed against a child (unless they have a reasonable reason for not reporting i.e. risking the safety of the child or the person).
- **Mandatory Reporting** – requires certain professionals (teachers, principals, doctors, nurses, midwives and police) to report to DHHS if in the course of carrying out their duties, they form the belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection because the child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse.

Working With Children Check

- The Working with Children Check (WWCC) screens people's criminal records and professional conduct, preventing those who pose an unjustifiable risk to children from working with or caring for them. It is not a suitability tool, we as organisation's need to still assess if someone is suitable to be involved with children.
- AFL Victoria and all Affiliates have clear responsibilities to ensure all aspects of a proper check have been carried out, i.e. copy of the card is collected, status check on the Department of Justice website, alignment letter received from applicant, any negative notices followed up.

Applying for a WWCC

- Online application and a verification of personal documents is done on the Department of Justice Website (www.justice.vic.gov.au/workingwithchildren)
- Applications are free for Volunteers as well as the passport photo required from Australia Post.
- A WWCC is valid for 5 years and is transferrable between organisations.
- A WWCC is different to a Police Check as it is an ongoing monitoring of offences.

Who Needs a WWCC?

AFL Victoria expects that Clubs with Junior teams (Under 18) will, as a minimum, have the following people obtain a WWCC:

- All Executive Committee Members – President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, as well as Canteen Manager/Supervisor
- Child Safety Officer
- Coaches of all Junior teams
- Team Managers of all Junior teams
- Club Trainers of all Junior teams
- Any adult attending overnight trips with any Junior teams
- Other members of the club Junior teams who are involved in regular contact with children

In the case where Junior players are playing in a Senior team, the minimum requirement for a Club is that the following people obtain a WWCC:

- Coaches of any team that will have a Junior player
- Team Managers of any team that will have a Junior player
- Club Trainers of any team that will have a Junior player

WWCC - Updating Details & Organisations

A *MyCheck* Portal needs to be created by the card holder at the Department of Justice website - www.justice.vic.gov.au/workingwithchildren

Login

What is MyCheck?

MyCheck is the online portal that enables:

- applicants and cardholders to update personal, contact and organisation/s details
- cardholders to:
 - renew their WWC Check
 - change from a Volunteer to an Employee WWC Check
 - order a replacement card.

Existing user

Email

Password

Login

[Forgotten email address?](#)

[Forgotten password?](#)

New user?

You need to register before using MyCheck.

To register, you will need to provide your WWC application or card number and your personal details.

I want to register

WWCC - MyCheck Portal

Once a *MyCheck* Portal is created the Card Holder can update their details at any time, including adding an organisation. Login into the Portal and click on 'Change my details'.

The screenshot displays the MyCheck Portal interface. At the top, there are three navigation tabs: 'About the Check', 'Applications', and 'Cardholders'. Below the tabs, a breadcrumb trail reads 'Home > MyCheck > Welcome to MyCheck'. The main heading is 'Welcome to MyCheck'. A green banner below the heading states 'Your WWC Check is current and expires on 19 May 2021'. To the left, a 'MyCheck menu' is visible, containing options such as 'MyCheck home', 'Apply for Check', 'Change my details', 'Renew my Check', 'Replace my card', 'Volunteer to Employee Check', and 'Resume draft'. A blue arrow points from the 'Change my details' menu item to the 'Change my details' link in the main content area. Below the banner, a list of user details is shown, including 'Name: Mrs Dale Lynley WAIN', 'Application/Card number', 'Card type', 'Mobile', 'Home phone', 'Work phone', 'Residential address', 'Postal address', and 'Email address'.

WWCC - MyCheck Portal

Then scroll down and 'Add an organisation'.

Organisation details

Organisation name **PARKHILL PRIMARY SCHOOL**
Postal number and street **PARKHILL DRIVE**
Suburb **ASHWOOD**
State **VIC**
Postcode **3147**
Phone **98072239**
[remove](#)

Organisation name **AFL VICTORIA - AUSKICK IKON PARK**
Postal number and street **GPO BOX 4337**
Suburb **CARLTON NORTH**
State **VIC**
Postcode **3054**
Phone **83416000**
[remove](#)

[add an organisation](#)

Examples of alignment

Jo Citizen

AFL Victoria – Inner West GDO
GPO Box 4337
Carlton North
Vic
3054

AFL Victoria – Multicultural Ambassador - Eastern
GPO Box 4337
Carlton North
Vic
3054

AFL Goulburn Murray – AFL Sportsready Trainee
PO BOX 1253
Shepparton
Vic
3630

Expectations of your Organisation

Child Safety Officer

Each organisation is required to nominate a Child Safety Officer who would be the initial point of contact for any report.

This must be communicated to all members and players, with a particular emphasis on children being made aware that the Child Safety Officer is a safe person for them to approach if they are feeling unsafe.

The Child Safety Officer **MUST** have a valid and current WWCC.

In the absence of a CSO, or lack of knowledge of roles by any child or member, anyone who suspects a child may be being abused is to report it to the President/Manager.

Expectations of your Organisation

Recruitment Processes

Child Safe Standards are integral in any appointment providing football to people under 18 years of age.

Child Safety Standards should be addressed for appointments to positions where the person will be working directly with children, and the processes used for appointments need to include clear steps that address the requirements of the Child Safe Standards.

The following steps are provided as the minimum which must be undertaken to appoint people to a role.

- Position selection criteria relevant to each role to be filled.
- Position description, including reference to the Child Safe Commitment, should be available to all potential applicants.

Expectations of your Organisation

Recruitment Processes

All positions which will have people working with children should include a formal application process, which requires a written application, including the following details:

- Contact details for two referees relevant to the role
- Proof of a current WWCC, or evidence of application for a WWCC
- WWCC number (if currently held) and alignment of the card to the organisations

An interview process should be undertaken, including within this, questions that identify:

- Why the person wishes to work with children
- The candidate's history of working with children and why they left their previous position

Ensure that the applicant is aware that referees will be contacted. Speak directly to listed referees and explore the applicants suitability to work with children. If unable to be contacted, ensure alternates are provided by the applicant and contacted.

Expectations of your Organisation

Reporting

- a) Any report of child abuse is to be made to the Child Safety Officer (CSO). CSO to report to Police if there is any report of sexual or physical abuse of a child. CSO to stay in contact with reporter and alleged victim to provide support.
- b) CSO to communicate the report to President/Manager. Detailed written report must be recorded and stored by the CSO & President/Manager, including Who, What, When, Where & Why the incident is of concern.
- c) President/Manager to report to League Management if necessary i.e. if report was communicated to Police or DHHS, if report is of significance to League Management, etc.
- d) If the alleged perpetrator is a member of staff/volunteer, they are to be reassigned to other duties (no child-related work) until the process is completed.
- e) If the alleged perpetrator is a member of staff/volunteer, a League/Commission appointed independent investigation is to take place, only after Police involvement has been completed. Communication with and approval of investigation process from AFL Victoria Community department is required.

Reporting

1. Disclosures of actual harm to a child

If any adult suspects an instance of child abuse, you are responsible to report this to the police, and in an emergency situation must call 000 immediately

2. Signs or indicators

3. Breaches of policy

4. Potential risk

Reporting

DO	DON'T
Believe the child / young person	Make promises that you cannot keep
Be calm, supportive and reassuring	Promise secrecy
Reassure them that the abuse is not their fault	Push the child to give details of the alleged abuse
Concentrate on their feelings rather than on questions and answers	
Explain what you are going to do now that you have been told	

Reporting

It is not your responsibility to investigate.

Gather information and report details about:

1. **WHO** was involved – including age, details of carers/parents
2. **WHAT** you saw or heard
3. **WHEN** it occurred
4. **WHERE** it occurred
5. **WHY** you are concerned
6. **WHAT** you think should be next steps

Commitment Statement

AFL Victoria Commitment to Safeguarding Children & Young People

AFL Victoria is committed to promoting and protecting the safety and well-being of children and young people in our care.

We seek to promote and protect the rights of all children in our care and prevent abuse from occurring by fostering a child safe culture.

All Victorian Leagues, Clubs & Associations that provide football to children and young people will present environments and experiences that always consider and put measures in place to ensure the safety of children.

Summary

- Child abuse can have devastating long term consequences for children.
- The first step in stopping abuse is being aware that it does occur in organisations that provide services and sport to children.
- Children cannot stop child abuse. Adults can.
- You can help protect children by:
 - Following rules for behaviour that protect children
 - Speaking up if you have concerns about a child or about the way they are being treated

New Steps

In conjunction with the AFL and the Australian Childhood Foundation, AFL Victoria will be developing further resources to create an extensive and thorough Child Safe Policy for all football in Victoria.

- AFL Victoria Commitment Statement to be included on all websites and used in relevant communications
- Child Safety Policy – to be provided in near future