



# **Western Region Football League**

## **Child Safe Policy**

**Endorsed By:** WRFL Board, WRFL Board Meeting – *10 February 2022*  
**Applicable To:** This policy applies to all Clubs that are affiliated with the League  
**Date for Review:** 30 November 2022

### **Purpose**

This policy was written to demonstrate the strong commitment of the management, staff and volunteers of the Western Region Football League (WRFL) and its affiliated clubs to child safety and to provide an outline of the policies and practices the WRFL has developed to keep everyone safe from harm, including abuse.

### **Child Safety Mission Statement**

The Western Region Football League 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. The welfare of the children in our care will always be our first priority and the WRFL has a zero tolerance to child abuse. The affiliated clubs 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.

### **Application of this Policy**

This policy was developed by the WRFL and in collaboration with AFL Victoria.

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

- Administrators
- 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 WRFL Clubs are committed to reducing the risk of occurrence.



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### Children's Rights to Safety and Participation

WRFL Clubs encourage 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.

### 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

### Recruiting staff and volunteers

WRFL Clubs take the following steps to ensure best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of staff and volunteers:

- Interview and conduct referee checks on all staff and volunteers
- Require police checks and Working with Children Checks for relevant positions
- Our commitment to Child Safety and our screening requirements are included in all advertisements and as part of the induction process for new staff or volunteers.

### Supporting staff and volunteer

WRFL Clubs seek to attract and retain the best staff and 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 (*See WRFL CCS Code of Conduct 2022*).

### Reporting a child safety concern or complaint

The WRFL has appointed **Matt Duck** as Child Safety Person with the specific responsibility of responding to any complaints made by staff, volunteers, parents or children, and they can be contacted by phone (03) 9315 5400. All WRFL affiliated clubs have an appointed Child Safety Person who can be contacted through the club.

### Risk Management

We encourage the importance of a risk management approach to minimizing 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 applied should avoid direct, unsupervised contact with children. For example, this should be a consideration when:



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- 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 year and we undertake to seek views, comments and suggestions from children, parents, carers, staff and volunteers involved in the WRFL and its affiliated clubs.