



Karingal Bowling Club Inc

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CHILD SAFE POLICY

POLICY NAME	Child Safe Policy
DATE OF ISSUE	09/11/2023
POLICY COVERAGE	Applies to all employees, members, volunteers and contractors.
DATE OF REVIEW	Every 2 years – 1 November 2025
CONTROLLING BODY	Karingal Bowling Club Inc.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The Karingal Bowling Club Inc. (the **Club**) is committed to ensuring that children and young people who participate in its activities have a safe and happy experience. The Club supports and respects children, young people, staff, volunteers and participants.
- 1.2. The aim of the Club's Child Safe Policy (the **Policy**) is to protect the safety of children in our care and prevent abuse from occurring, and in the event that allegations are raised in relation to child abuse, to ensure that the allegations are properly addressed. All complaints will be treated seriously and fully investigated and handled with maximum confidentiality and discretion.
- 1.3. Should a person wish to make any enquiries in relation to this Policy, please contact the Director of Administration, Peter Pecina.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

- 2.1. The Club is committed to providing the highest level of membership service. This includes protecting members' privacy, promoting positive behaviours and attitudes, protecting the health safety and wellbeing of members, particularly children and delivering the Club's activities while acting in the best interests of children who may come into contact with the Club's activities.
- 2.2. Specifically, the Club considers that the health, safety and well-being of children take priority over all other competing considerations. The Club considers that this is necessary to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all members and protect the image and reputation of the Club and its members.
- 2.3. The Club has a zero tolerance approach to child abuse and is committed to promoting and protecting children from abuse and neglect to the greatest extent possible. All children have equal rights to protection from child abuse, regardless of their sex, religion, disability or sexual orientation etc.

- 2.4. Child protection is a shared responsibility between the Club, its members, its employees, workers, contractors, associates, parents/guardians, spectators and volunteers. Everyone that participates in the Club's activities is responsible for the care and protection of children, and reporting information about child abuse.
- 2.5. The Club supports the active participation of all children in its activities, as appropriate.
- 2.6. The Club is also committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children living with a disability.
- 2.7. The Club promotes fairness and consideration for all staff, volunteers and participants.

3. SCOPE

- 3.1. This Policy applies to all members, employees, workers, contractors, associates, parents/guardians, spectators and volunteers throughout all the Club's events and activities.
- 3.2. This Policy will continue to apply retrospectively to a person or Member following the cessation of their association or employment with the Club.

4. RELATED DOCUMENTS & LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

- 4.1. This Policy must be read in conjunction with:

- 4.1.1. The laws of the Commonwealth and Victoria including but not limited to:

- 4.1.1.1. *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)*
- 4.1.1.2. *Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Act 2015 (Vic)*
- 4.1.1.3. *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)*; and
- 4.1.1.4. *Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic)*

- 4.1.2. The Club's **Employee** policies and procedures only, but not limited to:

- 4.1.2.1. Staff Handbook;
- 4.1.2.2. Disciplinary Policy;
- 4.1.2.3. Code of Conduct Policy;
- 4.1.2.4. Bullying and Harassment Policy;
- 4.1.2.5. EEO and Anti-Discrimination Policy;
- 4.1.2.6. Sexual Harassment Policy.

5. DEFINITIONS

- 5.1. **Child** means a person involved in the activities of the Club and under the age of 18 years unless otherwise stated under the law applicable to the child.
- 5.2. **Child protection** means any responsibility, measure or activity undertaken to safeguard children from harm.
- 5.3. **Sexual offence** means a criminal offence involving sexual activity or actions of indecency or any act which exposes a child to, or involves a child in, sexual activity or matters beyond his or her understanding or contrary to accepted community standards. Sexually offence behaviours can include the fondling of genitals, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or any other object, fondling of breasts, voyeurism, exhibitionism, and exposing the child to or involving the child in pornography. It includes child grooming, which includes actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child (or the child's carer, family or supervisor) to lower the child's inhibitions and prepare them for engagement in a sexual offence.
- 5.4. **Mandatory reporter** means a person who is legally required to make a report to the Department of Human Services or the Police if they form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection. It includes teachers, principals, registered psychologists, nurses, doctors and midwives.

6. RECOGNISING AND REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

- 6.1. A person may, in the course carrying out their work at the Club or participating in other activities of the Club, form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from child abuse.
- 6.2. If a person is concerned about an immediate risk to a child's safety, the person must phone "000" as soon as practicable.
- 6.3. **Child abuse** can be divided into four categories:
 - 6.3.1. **Physical abuse**: occurs when a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of a physical injury, such as a non-accidental physical injury.
 - 6.3.2. **Sexual abuse**: occurs when a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of sexual abuse, such as when a child is exploited, or used by another for his or her sexual gratification or sexual arousal, or for that of others.
 - 6.3.3. **Emotional and psychological abuse**: occurs when a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, emotional or psychological harm of such a kind that the child's emotional or intellectual development is or is likely to be significantly damaged; and
 - 6.3.4. **Neglect**: occurs when a child's physical development or health has been, or is likely to be significantly damaged. It refers to an omission, such as depriving a child of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults, or medical care.

6.4. Child abuse includes any actions that results in actual or potential harm to a child, in circumstances where the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child.

6.5. **Mandatory Reporters**

6.5.1. Select classes of people in the community (including teachers, nurses and doctors) are required by law to report to the Child Protection Unit of the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) where they have formed a belief, on reasonable grounds, that a child is in need of protection because they have suffered (or are likely to suffer) significant harm due to physical or sexual abuse.

6.5.2. This report must be made as soon as practicable, and after each occasion where he or she becomes aware of a further reasonable grounds for the belief.

6.6. **Reasonable grounds for belief**

6.6.1. A reasonable belief is formed if a reasonable person believes that:

6.6.1.1. the child is in need of protection;

6.6.1.2. the child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of physical or sexual injury; and

6.6.1.3. the child's parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.

6.6.2. To form a reasonable belief, you should consider and objectively assess all the relevant facts, such as the source of the allegation and how it was communicated, the nature of and details of the allegation, and whether there is any other related matters known regarding the alleged perpetrator.

6.6.3. A 'reasonable belief' or a 'belief on reasonable grounds' is not the same as having proof, but is more than mere rumour or speculation.

6.6.4. You will have reasonable grounds to notify if:

6.6.4.1. a child states that they have been physically or sexually abused;

6.6.4.2. a child states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves);

6.6.4.3. someone who knows a child states that the child has been physically or sexually abused;

6.6.4.4. professional observations of the child's behaviour or development leads a professional to form a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused or is likely to be abused; or

6.6.4.5. signs of abuse lead to a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused.

6.7. Voluntary Reporters

- 6.7.1. In addition to the mandatory reporting obligations above, any person who believes on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from any form of child abuse, *may* disclose that information to the Police or DFFH.

6.8. Reporting Child Sexual Abuse

- 6.8.1. If a person receives information that leads them to form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria against a child (under the age of 16 years) by another person (of or over the age of 18 years), the person has a legal obligation to disclose that information to the Police as soon as it is practicable. Individuals who fail to comply with this obligation under the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic) may be subject to a penalty of 3 years imprisonment.

6.9. Club Approach to Reports of Abuse

- 6.9.1. The Club supports and encourages a person to make a report to the Police or DFFH if they form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection, or they are concerned about the safety, health or wellbeing of a child.
- 6.9.2. Any person that makes a report in good faith in accordance with their reporting obligations (whether mandatory or discretionary) will be supported by the Club, and will not be penalised by the Club for making the report.
- 6.9.3. If a person is uncertain as to whether they should make a report to an external authority in relation to the safety of a child, they may speak to the **Club's Director of Administration and Bowls Operation Manager** for guidance and information. If in doubt, ask for assistance.
- 6.9.4. If an allegation is made against a member, an employee or volunteer, the Club will follow the reporting procedure outlined above and take all steps to ensure that the safety of the child is paramount. An initial step will involve the withdrawal of the accused person from active duty, which could entail being stood down on paid leave, reassignment to a role without direct contact with children, working under closer supervision during an investigation, working from home, or any other measures deemed appropriate depending on the seriousness of the allegation.
- 6.9.5. The Club will investigate allegations of inappropriate conduct against a child in accordance with its Disciplinary Policy, will afford the accused person procedural fairness and will handle the allegations in a confidential manner to the greatest extent possible.
- 6.9.6. The Club will cooperate with the directions of the Police and/or DFFH in relation to any investigation conducted by these authorities.
- 6.9.7. The Club will keep a register of any allegations regarding inappropriate conduct.
- 6.9.8. The Club has appointed the Director of Administration and the Bowls Operation Manager as Child Safety Persons with the specific responsibility for responding to any complaints made by staff, volunteers, parents of children.

Those persons can be contacted by phoning the Bowls Operations Manager and directly to the Club.

7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PERSONNEL PROTECTING CHILDREN

7.1. Personnel involved in protecting children include the board of management, staff and volunteers within the Club. Those people have responsibilities in relation to protection of children and are expected to:

- 7.1.1. understand the rights of children, as appropriate to their role;
- 7.1.2. respect the cultural and religious practices of families who access the Club's services, programs or events;
- 7.1.3. understand and appropriately respond to the needs of children with developmental delays or disabilities;
- 7.1.4. appropriately act on any concerns raised by children;
- 7.1.5. understand the definitions, indicators and impact of child abuse:
- 7.1.6. know and follow regulations in relation to the care of children;.
- 7.1.7. co-operate with police and/or other formal investigations to the best of their ability; and
- 7.1.8. not harm or exploit children who access the Club's services.

8. CHILD SAFE AND CHILD FRIENDLY GUIDELINES TO PREVENT AND MANAGE RISKS OF CHILD ABUSE

8.1. Change Rooms

- 8.1.1. Children are not permitted to enter Club change rooms, regardless of gender, unless accompanied by their parent or legal guardian.

8.2. General Club rooms and other accommodation

- 8.2.1. No person should be alone in any room within the Club or external accommodation with a child, regardless of gender, unless accompanied by their parent or legal guardian.

8.3. Travel - General

- 8.3.1. In relation to any Club activities requiring travel by members or staff, no person shall travel with a child, regardless of gender, unless accompanied by their parent or legal guardian.
- 8.3.2. Subclause 8.3.1 will not apply where the person is able to produce written evidence that the child's parent or guardian has authorised the child to travel with the person.

8.4. Sexual Relationships

8.4.1. Members and employees of the Club must not, under any circumstances, engage in conduct of a sexual nature with a child. Improper conduct of a sexual nature by any Club member or employee towards a child includes any form of sexual abuse (as defined within this Policy), as well as but not limited to the following:

- 8.4.1.1. inappropriate conversations of a sexual nature;
- 8.4.1.2. obscene language of a sexual nature;
- 8.4.1.3. suggestive remarks or actions;
- 8.4.1.4. jokes of a sexual nature;
- 8.4.1.5. obscene gestures;
- 8.4.1.6. unwarranted and inappropriate touching;
- 8.4.1.7. sexual exhibitionism;
- 8.4.1.8. use of any device to show/watch offensive material; and
- 8.4.1.9. any other action that could lead to a child being physically, emotionally or psychologically harmed.

8.5. Adults under investigation

8.5.1. Adults under investigation in relation to a matter involving child abuse, or any matter which has the potential to jeopardise their Working With Children Check (**WWCC**) (or if based in another State the equivalent requirement) status may be prohibited, by the Club's Board of Management, from participating in Club's activities.

8.6. School Visits and Programs

8.6.1. Any Club member or employee who participates in any school visit or program at the Club involving children must ensure that any physical contact with children, such as through coaching, only occur if appropriate for the situation and necessary for the child's safety. It is strongly recommended that:

- 8.6.1.1. Members and employees ensure that there are other adults present undertaking coaching of school children;
- 8.6.1.2. Members and employees take care to explain the procedure to the child prior to beginning any physical contact; and
- 8.6.1.3. Members and employees obtain consent from the child prior to beginning any physical contact.

9. ENGAGING NEW PERSONNEL

- 9.1. The minimum standard for background checks of employees and volunteers of the Club and its members is the law as it applies in Victoria.
- 9.2. The Club undertakes a comprehensive recruitment and screening process for all member, staff and volunteers which aims to:
 - 9.2.1. promote and protect the safety of all children who participate in the activities of the Club;
 - 9.2.2. identify and recruit the safest and most suitable candidates who share the Club's values and commitment to protect children; and
 - 9.2.3. prevent a person from working at the Club if they pose an unacceptable risk to children.
- 9.3. The Club requires staff and volunteers to pass the recruitment and screening process prior to commencing their engagement with the Club.
- 9.4. As part of the screening and recruitment process, an applicant must provide appropriate evidence (e.g. **WWCC** or other state equivalent and/or Police check) to show that they are suitable to work with children and young people in a recreational setting.
- 9.5. The Club requires:
 - 9.5.1. any Club members (including the Board of Management), employees and volunteers to hold a valid WWCC if they are to have interactions with children during Club activities; and
 - 9.5.2. the following key event personnel must have a valid WWCC:
 - 9.5.2.1. those paid by the Club for their services that involve interaction with children;
 - 9.5.2.2. relevant contractors who may have unsupervised access to children; and
 - 9.5.2.3. anyone else who the Club's Board of Management or senior employees feel requires a WWCC due to the nature of the work that they are undertaking for the Club.
- 9.6. The type of evidence that an applicant is required to provide to the Club will vary depending on the type of position that they are applying for. However, an applicant will not be offered a position until they provide the required evidence to the Club.
- 9.7. The Club will exercise discretion and may require applicants to provide a Police check in accordance with the law and as appropriate, before they commence their engagement and during their time with the Club in regular intervals.
- 9.8. The Club will undertake thorough reference checks prior to engaging any personnel.
- 9.9. Once engaged, the Club will provide staff and volunteers with access to this policy and staff and volunteers must review and acknowledge their understanding of this policy.

- 9.10. The Club requires that all persons, whether in a paid or voluntary capacity that perform work for the Club and are likely to have contact with children, hold a valid WWCC.

10. RISK MANAGEMENT APPROACH

- 10.1. Child safety is a part of the Club's overall risk management approach.
- 10.2. The Club will maintain a register of WWCCs held by all Club members, employees and volunteers who are likely to have interactions with children during Club activities.

11. POLICY BREACHES

- 11.1. It is a breach of this policy for any person to which this policy applies, to have been found to have done anything contrary to this policy. Any person who may breach this policy is subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Club's Disciplinary Policy.

12. POLICY PROMOTION

- 12.1. This policy will be made available to all members via email and from then on, via the website.
- 12.2. This policy will be communicated to all staff, Board, and members via the policy, Staff hand book internal memo, email, and meetings.
- 12.3. References to this policy will be included in documentation provided to all members that represent the Club.

13. REVIEW PROCESS

- 13.1. This policy will be reviewed by the Club's Board of Management on a biennial basis.
- 13.2. If you would like to provide the Club with any feedback or suggestions to improve this policy, please contact the Director of Administration.
- 13.3. In addition to the regular review of this policy, recommendations for changes to the policy may be submitted to the Board of Management for consideration at any time. In the event that changes are accepted, the policy will be updated, and circulated to all stakeholders via the webpage, bulletin and other appropriate communication channels.