



Child Safe Policy		Approval Date:	10/08/2018
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PURPOSE

This policy was written to demonstrate the strong commitment of the management, staff and volunteers of the Bentleigh Lakers Basketball Club (**Club**) to child safety and to provide an outline of the policies and practices the Club has developed to keep everyone safe from any harm, including abuse.

COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

All children who are a part of the Club have a right to feel and be safe. The welfare of the children in our care will always be our first priority and the Club has a zero tolerance to child abuse. The Club aims to create a child safe and child friendly environment where children feel safe and have fun and the Club's activities are always carried out in the best interests of the children.

APPLICATION OF THIS POLICY

This policy applies to all individuals involved in our Club (paid and volunteer) including, but not limited to Administrators, Coaches, Officials, Players and Parents/Guardians.

All individuals 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.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. 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 Club is committed to reducing the risk of occurrence.

2. Children’s Rights to Safety and Participation

The Club:

- encourages children to express their views about their safety
- actively encourages all children to ‘have a say’ about things that are important to them.
- listens to their suggestions, especially on matters that directly affect them.

- teaches children about what they can do if they feel unsafe.
- listens to and acts on any concerns raised by children or their parents.

3. Valuing Diversity

The Club values diversity and does not tolerate any discriminatory practices and:

- promotes the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children and their families;
- promotes the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families;
- welcomes children with a disability and their families and act to promote their participation; and
- seeks appropriate staff from diverse cultural backgrounds.

4. Recruiting staff and volunteers

The Club takes the following steps to ensure best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of staff and volunteers:

- All contracted staff and coaches will be interviewed and reference checked;
- All volunteers, and paid staff/coaches, will be required to participate in all compliance requirements set by the BLBC including, but not limited to, Working with Children Check, Play by the Rules Certificate of Completion, Child Safe Code of Conduct and Code of Conduct relating to their position at the Club.

5. Supporting staff and volunteers

Codes of Conduct are developed to provide guidance to our staff and volunteers, all of whom will receive training on the requirements of the Code – the club currently uses Play By The Rules <https://www.playbytherules.net.au/>

6. Reporting a child safety concern or complaint

It is not the responsibility of anyone working for our Club in a paid or unpaid capacity to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to report any concerns to the appropriate authorities so that they can then make inquiries and take necessary action to protect the child. This applies **BOTH** to allegations/suspicious of abuse occurring within our Club's activities and to allegations/suspicious that abuse is taking place elsewhere.

Everyone is encouraged to raise issues, concerns or allegations relating to child safety. The Club's Child Safe Officer is the person designated to receive reports or concerns and is required to report all the incidents noted by him/her to the appropriate authority,

Please refer to Appendix A for more detail on reporting.

7. Risk Management

The Club recognises the importance of a risk management approach to minimising 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 applies should avoid direct, unsupervised contact with children. For example, this should be a consideration when:

- using change room facilities;

- using accommodation or overnight stays;
- travelling to venues etc; or
- coaching or managing children i.e. physical contact should be rare except for usual social contact such as the shaking of a hand or a “high five”.

POLICY PROCEDURES

The Club recognises that developing an organisational culture of child safety is an ongoing process requiring continual review/self diagnosis and implementation.

As a start, the Club will ensure that:

1. A Child Safe Officer is appointed – Joanne Morley was appointed at a Committee meeting on July 31, 2018;
2. All committee members, coaches and other relevant volunteers complete the Play By The Rules Child Protection Training and the completion certificate is stored centrally with the Working With Children Check data - **by September 30 2018**;
3. The Website advises children/other stakeholders of our commitment and who they can contact with concerns - **by August 31 2018**; and
4. Banners are displayed at training venues advising children/other stakeholders of our commitment and who they can contact with concerns - **by August 31 2018**.
5. Guidelines regarding child safety are incorporated in all codes of conduct – coaches, parents, volunteers and players – **By August 31 2018**.

To ensure an organisational culture of child safety is developed the Club will form a working group **by August 31 2018** which will:

1. undertake a child safety review to:
 - Identify what is in place;
 - liaise with all stakeholders to identify what is being done well and what can be done better;
 - Identify the level of risk in relation to the services and activities provided to members;
 - Identify any gaps in policies and procedures;
 - Identify any further information, advice and support the Club requires;
 - Develop action plans to ensure the Club meets its obligations under this policy and relevant legislation.
2. Report its findings and action plan to the Committee by **October 30 2018**.
3. Update this policy as required by **November 30 2018**

COMMUNICATION

This is a public document and should be available on the Club’s website.

POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed by 30/11/2018 and we undertake to seek views, comments and suggestions from all stakeholders.

Appendix A REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

1. Receiving Evidence of Possible Abuse

If you receive evidence of possible abuse directly from the child:

- **Stay calm** so as not to frighten the young person.
- **Reassure** the child that he/she is not to blame and that it was right to tell.
- **Listen** to the child, showing that you are taking him/her seriously.
- **Keep questions to a minimum** so that there is a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said. The law is very strict and child abuse cases have been dismissed where it is felt that the child has been led or words and ideas have been suggested during questioning. Only ask questions to clarify.
- **Inform** the child that you have to inform other people about what he/she has told you. Tell the child this is to help stop the abuse from continuing.
- **Safety of the child** is paramount. If the child needs urgent medical attention call an ambulance, inform the doctors of the concern and ensure they are made aware that this is a child protection issue.

2. Recording Information

A detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern. Confine the record to the facts and distinguish what is your personal knowledge and what others have told you. Do not include your own opinions. Information should include the following:

- The child's name, age and date of birth.
- The child's home address and telephone number.
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing his/her concern or someone else's.
- The nature of the allegation, including dates, times and any other relevant information.
- A description of any visible bruising or injury, location, size etc. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes.
- Details of witnesses to the incident.
- The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising/injuries occurred.
- Have the parents been contacted? If so what has been said?
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so record details
- Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record details.

3. Reporting a Concern

The Club expects its members, volunteers and staff to report any concerns they may have about the welfare of a child IMMEDIATELY to the Club's Child Safe Officer. If the Club's Child Safe Officer is not available or is the person of concern, you should take the matter to the Club President. The Child Safe Officer (or Club President) will proceed according to the nature of the complaint:

- **Criminal (physical or sexual abuse)** – police.
- **Child Protection** – Child Protection, Victorian Department of Health and Human Services.
- **Disciplinary or Misconduct** – MBA and/or Basketball Victoria.