

Child Safe Policy	Approval Date	14/05/2026
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	Version No	5
Author:	Ali Cowan	
President	Justin Woodford	
Vice President	Ven Jayarangan	

Bentleigh Lakers Child Safe Policy

1. Purpose

Bentleigh Lakers Basketball Club is committed to providing a safe, inclusive and empowering environment for all children and young people. This policy outlines our responsibilities in preventing and responding to child abuse, promoting child wellbeing, and meeting the Victorian Child Safe Standards and Basketball Victoria's Safeguarding Children and Young People Framework.

2. Commitment to Child Safety

The Club has zero tolerance for child abuse. We prioritise child wellbeing, empower children to participate, and commit to creating a child-safe culture across all parts of the Club.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all individuals involved in Bentleigh Lakers, including Committee Members, Coaches, Team Managers, volunteers, contractors, parents/guardians, and players.

4. Definition of Child Abuse

Child abuse includes physical abuse, sexual abuse, grooming, emotional or psychological harm, neglect, family violence, and online abuse. Abuse can occur in person or online.

5. Children's Rights and Participation

Children have the right to feel safe, be heard, participate in decisions that affect them and raise concerns without fear. Coaches and volunteers encourage children to speak up and share concerns.

6. Valuing Diversity and Inclusion

The Club supports the safety and inclusion of all children, including those from diverse cultural backgrounds, children with disabilities, and children from all family structures. We are committed to creating an inclusive environment for every participant.

7. Recruitment, Screening & Compliance

All relevant appointments are discussed and approved by the Committee. The Club undertakes appropriate screening to ensure individuals are suitable for their role, including WWCC and child safety compliance requirements.

8. Behaviour Expectations – Adult Code of Conduct

Adults involved with Bentleigh Lakers are expected to:

- Maintain professional boundaries
- Communicate respectfully and appropriately
- Report any concerns immediately

9. Reporting Child Safety Concerns

Everyone involved with Bentleigh Lakers has a responsibility to report concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing. It is not the role of coaches, volunteers, or parents to decide whether abuse has occurred — only to act when something doesn't seem right.

Reports should be made when:

- A child discloses something concerning
- You witness behaviour that is inappropriate or worrying
- You suspect a child may be experiencing harm
- The Child Safe Code of Conduct is breached

If a child is in immediate danger, call 000. Otherwise, concerns should be reported to the Child Safe Officer at registerforlakers@gmail.com, or to the Club President at bentleighlakerspresident@gmail.com if the Officer is unavailable or implicated. All reports will be taken seriously, recorded, and managed confidentially.

10. Responding to a Child Who Discloses

Stay calm and listen carefully. Reassure the child, avoid leading questions, record the facts in their own words, and report the disclosure immediately to the Child Safe Officer or President. The child's safety and wellbeing must always come first.

11. Risk Management

Bentleigh Lakers takes a proactive approach to identifying and reducing risks to child safety across all Club environments, including training, games, events, and online spaces.

To minimise risks, adults should:

- Maintain visible and appropriate supervision at all times
- Avoid one-on-one unsupervised contact with children
- Follow safe change-room practices
- Use approved communication channels that include parents/guardians
- Report any hazards or child-safety concerns promptly
- Take care when transporting players and avoid one-on-one situations where possible
- Ensure appropriate arrangements for any overnight stays or accommodation
- Limit physical contact to what is appropriate and necessary (e.g. instruction or encouragement)

The Club reviews child safety risks regularly and updates procedures when required.

12. Online Safety

To protect children online, adults must:

- Never privately message children
- Ensure all communication includes parents or guardians
- Use only approved team channels
- Protect children's privacy on social media
- Share images or identifying information only with prior parental consent.

13. Policy Review

This policy is reviewed every 12 months or following any incident, legislation change, or Basketball Victoria update. Latest Review: May 2026. Next Review: May 2027.

Appendix A – Reporting Requirements

1. Receiving Evidence of Possible Abuse

If you receive evidence or a disclosure of possible abuse directly from a child:

- Stay calm so as not to frighten the child.
- Reassure the child that they are not to blame and that it was right to tell.
- Listen carefully, showing that you are taking them seriously.
- Keep questions to a minimum. Only clarify what is necessary.
 - The law is strict about questioning; cases can be dismissed if a child is led or suggestions are made.
- Inform the child that you must report what they have told you.
 - Explain that reporting helps keep them safe.
- Prioritise the child's safety.
 - If urgent medical attention is needed, call an ambulance and inform medical staff that this is a child protection matter.

2. Recording Information

A detailed record should be made as soon as possible after a disclosure or concern.

Records must be factual and distinguish clearly between:

- What you observed directly
- What the child told you
- What others have reported

Do not include your own opinions.

Information should include:

- The child's name, age, and date of birth
- The child's home address and phone number
- Whether the concern is your own or reported by someone else
- Details of the allegation, including dates, times, locations, and relevant observations
- Description of any visible injuries (location, size, colour), and any behavioural indicators
- Names of any witnesses

- The child's account (in their words) of what occurred
- Whether parents have been contacted, and if so, what was said
- Whether anyone else has been consulted (record details)
- Whether an alleged abuser has been identified (record details)

3. Reporting a Concern

Bentleigh Lakers requires all members, volunteers, and staff to report any concern about the welfare of a child immediately to the Child Safe Officer.

If the Child Safe Officer is unavailable or is the person of concern, the matter must be referred to the Club President.

Depending on the nature of the concern, the Child Safe Officer (or President) will take appropriate action:

- Criminal concerns (physical or sexual abuse): Victoria Police
- Child Protection concerns: Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) – Child Protection
- Misconduct or disciplinary issues: McKinnon Basketball Association (MBA) and/or Basketball Victoria

Policy Revision History

Version	Date	Author	Summary of Changes
4	2018	Joanne Morley	Original Policy
5	May 2026	Ali Cowan	Full update aligned to Victorian Child Safe Standards & Basketball Victoria