

Brunswick Hockey Club

Child Safe Policy

Written By: *Graeme Kennedy and Ambrie Tracy*
Approved By:
Endorsed By:
Date for Review: 2020

Purpose

This policy was written to demonstrate the strong commitment of the management, staff and volunteers of the *Brunswick Hockey 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 was developed by the Club and in collaboration with the Brunswick Hockey Club Junior Coordinator and parents and children of Brunswick Hockey Club.

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.

Should anyone wish to make any enquiries in relation to this policy please contact the Junior Coordinator, juniors@brunswickhockeyclub.org.au

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.

Children's Rights to Safety and Participation

Brunswick Hockey Club aims to provide an organisational culture which promotes child safety through effective leadership and support for its members.

The Club encourages 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 are members of our club 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.

The club aims to educate its members through information provided on their website, face to face information sessions, social media, and emails.

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.

Brunswick Hockey club understands the importance of supporting the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and is culturally sensitive to the needs and ideas of the Indigenous culture. The club acknowledges an Aboriginal child's inherent right to be immersed in their culture through community, kin, cultural practices and identity. Connectedness to culture is recognised as the greatest source of resilience for Aboriginal children. Therefore Aboriginal children involved in the Brunswick Hockey club will be encouraged to share their culture within the club.

Brunswick Hockey Club aims to support and include members of the community from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds. The club values diversity and is sensitive towards supporting members from other cultures. Brunswick Hockey Club encourages its members to become culturally competent, encouraging appropriate behaviour and attitudes towards members of the club from culturally diverse backgrounds. The club has a zero tolerance policy on discrimination based on cultural background. The club is respectful, inclusive and welcoming of members from a range of backgrounds.

Brunswick Hockey Club respects and is welcoming of people with a disability. The club understands each child is different and will experience their disability and the world differently. Brunswick Hockey Club aims to support children with a disability by empowering them to build their self-esteem and confidence. The club understands that children with a disability are more vulnerable to harm and abuse and promote zero tolerance of discrimination or abuse of children with a disability.

Recruiting staff and volunteers

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

- Require police checks and Working with Children Checks for relevant positions.

- Our commitment to Child Safety are included in all advertisements and as part of the induction process for new staff or volunteers.

Supporting staff and volunteers

The Club seeks 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.

The club recognises the importance of developing a code of conduct which is sensitive to the needs of Aboriginal, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and children with a disability. The club promotes inclusion of all members of our community and expects all members to be treated with respect and understanding relating to their social, emotional, physical, and cultural needs. Brunswick Hockey Club promotes a culturally safe organisation where members feel safe and valued regardless of their culture.

Reporting a child safety concern or complaint

The Club has appointed Ambrie Tracy and Graeme Kennedy as a Child Safety Person with the specific responsibility for responding to any complaints made by staff, volunteers, parents or children. That person can be contacted by emailing Ambrie on ambriekerr@hotmail.com or 0438883250 and Graeme on graemekennedy5@gmail.com or 0421 610 194. Our complaints process is outlined in the Brunswick Hockey Club complaints document.

Brunswick Hockey Club recognises that it is everyone's role to protect children in sport. The club encourages all members working with children to complete an online course to develop their understanding of child abuse recognition and prevention.

Risk Management

We recognise 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.

In considering the Risk management approach to minimising the potential for child abuse or harm to occur Brunswick Hockey Club recognises that certain groups of our community are more susceptible to the risk of child abuse and harm. We understand the importance of being culturally competent when dealing with Indigenous children and recognise the significance of culture and role it plays in an Aboriginal child's sense of self and identity. A culture of acceptance and respect is promoted for the safety of all children involved in the club. We acknowledge children with a disability are more vulnerable to harm and abuse such as harassment, bullying, humiliation, physical and sexual abuse. This can be due to: social isolation, limited provision of developmentally appropriate sexual and relationship information, low levels of expectation held about their capacity to identify and report concerns, inaccessible pathway to raise issues, concerns and complaints, communication difficulties, personal care needs requiring the involvement of different people and various levels of supervision, signs of abuse being viewed as being related to the child's disability. Children with a disability need to be empowered with information to support their understanding of abuse and what to do about it if it happens. Like other aspects of child safety, creating and maintaining an organisation in which the cultural safety of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds is kept safe requires effort. Steps to ensure cultural safety include sharing knowledge, raising awareness, developing understanding that leads to cultural sensitivity and finally, cultural competence. This ongoing and dynamic process leads to sustainable philosophies and values within an organisation that promotes cultural safety for children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and benefits all children, families, staff and managers.

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

1.1. Change Rooms

1.1.1. Adult officials, regardless of gender, should only enter change rooms if accompanied by another adult. Prior to entering change rooms, officials should notify the people in the change room of their intended entrance. For the avoidance of doubt this requirement does not apply to parents/legal guardians when in a room with their child.

1.2. Hotel rooms and other accommodation

1.2.1. No official should be alone in the room of an athlete without the presence of another adult. The doors should always be open. Should it be necessary for an official to be alone in the room of an athlete, the Team Manager or other responsible official must be informed. For the avoidance of doubt this requirement does not apply to parents/legal guardians when in a room with their child.

1.3. Travel - General

1.3.1. All team members over 18 years of age retain an overriding responsibility for the welfare of all athletes they accompany during team travel activities. They have a 'duty of care' for athletes and they must meet that duty and avoid unaccompanied and unobserved activities with persons less than 18 years of age wherever possible. For the avoidance of doubt this requirement does not apply to parents/legal guardians when in a room with their child.

1.4. Sexual Relationships while on tour.

1.4.1. During all team travel activities officials must not, under any circumstances engage in conduct of a sexual nature with an athlete. Improper conduct of a sexual nature by an official towards an athlete includes any form of child sexual abuse (defined within the Brunswick Hockey Club Member Protection Policy) as well as but not limited to the following:

- 1.4.1.1. inappropriate conversations of a sexual nature;
- 1.4.1.2. obscene language of a sexual nature;
- 1.4.1.3. suggestive remarks or actions;
- 1.4.1.4. jokes of a sexual nature;
- 1.4.1.5. obscene gestures;
- 1.4.1.6. unwarranted and inappropriate touching;
- 1.4.1.7. sexual exhibitionism;
- 1.4.1.8. use of any device to show/watch offensive material; and
- 1.4.1.9. any other action that could lead to an athlete being physically, emotionally or psychologically harmed.

1.5. Adults under investigation

1.5.1. 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 Brunswick Hockey Club Board, from participating in Brunswick Hockey Club activities.

1.6. Coach Assistance

1.6.1. All coaches must ensure that all physical contact with athletes which occurs when coaching is appropriate for the situation and necessary for the athlete's safety. It is strongly recommended that:

- 1.6.1.1. coaches ensure that there are other adults present whenever coaching;
- 1.6.1.2. coaches take care to explain the procedure to the child prior to beginning any physical contact; and
- 1.6.1.3. coaches obtain consent from the athlete prior to beginning any physical contact.

2. ENGAGING NEW PERSONNEL

- 2.1. The minimum standard for background checks of employees and volunteers of Brunswick Hockey Club and its members is the law as it applies in Victoria.
- 2.2. Brunswick Hockey Club undertakes a comprehensive recruitment and screening process for all staff and volunteers which aims to:
 - 2.2.1. promote and protect the safety of all children who participate in the activities of Brunswick Hockey Club
 - 2.2.2. identify and recruit the safest and most suitable candidates who share Brunswick Hockey Club's values and commitment to protect children; and
 - 2.2.3. prevent a person from working at Brunswick Hockey Club if they pose an unacceptable risk to children.
- 2.3. Brunswick Hockey Club requires staff and volunteers to pass the recruitment and screening process prior to commencing their engagement with Brunswick Hockey Club.
- 2.4. 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.
 - 2.4.1. all Brunswick Hockey Club staff and Board members require a WWCC; and
 - 2.4.2. the following key event personnel must have a valid WWCC:
 - 2.4.2.1. those paid by Brunswick Hockey Club for their services (excluding bump in and bump out);
 - 2.4.2.2. volunteers;
 - 2.4.2.3. relevant contractors who may have unsupervised access to children; and
 - 2.4.2.4. anyone else who Brunswick Hockey Club staff feel requires a WWCC due to the nature of the work that they are undertaking for Brunswick Hockey Club.
- 2.5. The type of evidence that an applicant is required to provide to Brunswick Hockey 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.
- 2.6. Brunswick Hockey 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 Brunswick Hockey Club in regular intervals.
- 2.7. Brunswick Hockey Club will undertake thorough reference checks prior to engaging any personnel.

- 2.8. Once engaged, Brunswick Hockey Club will provide staff and volunteers with access to this policy and staff and volunteers must review and acknowledge their understanding of this policy.
- 2.9. Brunswick Hockey Club requires that affiliated clubs ensure all staff and volunteers (including coaches and any officials) likely to have contact with athletes (and other children) have a current WWCC, which needs to be signed off annually as part of the affiliation process. Clubs which do not comply with their legal obligations will be found to have not complied with the Brunswick Hockey Club affiliation requirements and will be disaffiliated.
- 2.10. Brunswick Hockey Club requires all affiliated club personnel including owners, Committee Members, Volunteers, Coaches and Judges and anyone else who has contact with children to possess a valid working with children check. Any costs associated with gaining a valid WWCC will be dealt with in a manner determined by that club.

3. RELATED DOCUMENTS & LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

3.1. This Policy must be read in conjunction with:

3.1.1. the law of the Commonwealth and Victoria including but not limited to:

- 3.1.1.1. Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)
- 3.1.1.2. Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Act 2015 (Vic)
- 3.1.1.3. Crimes Act 1958 (Vic); and
- 3.1.1.4. Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic)

3.1.2. Brunswick Hockey Club policies and procedures, including but not limited to:

- 3.1.2.1. BHC Rules including Grievance and Discipline procedures;
- 3.1.2.2. Member Protection Policy

4. DEFINITIONS

- 4.1. **Child** means a person involved in the activities of Brunswick Hockey Club (including athletes) and under the age of 18 years unless otherwise stated under the law applicable to the child.
- 4.2. **Child protection** means any responsibility, measure or activity undertaken to safeguard children from harm.
- 4.3. **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.
- 4.4. **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.

5. RECOGNISING AND REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

- 5.1. A person may, in the course of participating in the sport or other activities of Brunswick Hockey Club or carrying out their work, form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from child abuse.
- 5.2. If a person is concerned about an immediate risk to a child's safety, the person must phone "000" as soon as practicable.
- 5.3. **Child abuse** can be divided into four categories:
 - 5.3.1. **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.
 - 5.3.2. **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.
 - 5.3.3. **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
 - 5.3.4. **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.
- 5.4. 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.

5.5. Mandatory Reporters

- 5.5.1. 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 Health and Human Services (DHHS) 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.
- 5.5.2. 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.

5.6. Reasonable grounds for belief

- 5.6.1. A reasonable belief is formed if a reasonable person believes that:
 - 5.6.1.1. the child is in need of protection;
 - 5.6.1.2. the child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of physical or sexual injury; and
 - 5.6.1.3. the child's parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.
- 5.6.2. 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.

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

5.6.4.You will have reasonable grounds to notify if:

- 5.6.4.1. a child states that they have been physically or sexually abused;
- 5.6.4.2. a child states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves);
- 5.6.4.3. someone who knows a child states that the child has been physically or sexually abused;
- 5.6.4.4. 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
- 5.6.4.5. signs of abuse lead to a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused.

5.7. Voluntary Reporters

5.7.1.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 DHHS.

5.8. Reporting Child Sexual Abuse

5.8.1.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.

5.9. Brunswick Hockey Club Approach to Reports of Abuse

5.9.1. Brunswick Hockey Club supports and encourages a person to make a report to the Police or DHHS 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.

5.9.2.Any person that makes a report in good faith in accordance with their reporting obligations (whether mandatory or discretionary) will be supported by Brunswick Hockey Club, and will not be penalised by the club for making the report.

5.9.3.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 Brunswick Hockey Club's Child safe person for guidance and information.

5.9.4.If an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer, Brunswick Hockey Club will follow the reporting procedure outlined in the child safe policy 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 standing down, 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.

5.9.5. Brunswick Hockey Club will investigate allegations of inappropriate conduct against a child in accordance with procedural fairness and will handle the allegations in a confidential manner to the greatest extent possible.

5.9.6. Brunswick Hockey Club will cooperate with the directions of the Police and/or DHHS in relation to any investigation conducted by these authorities.

5.9.7. Brunswick Hockey Club will keep a register of any allegations regarding inappropriate conduct.

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PERSONNEL PROTECTING CHILDREN

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

- 6.1.1. understand the rights of children, as appropriate to their role;
- 6.1.2. respect the cultural and religious practices of families who access (Organisation)'s services, programs or events;
- 6.1.3. understand and appropriately respond to the needs of children with developmental delays or disabilities;
- 6.1.4. appropriately act on any concerns raised by children;
- 6.1.5. understand the definitions, indicators and impact of child abuse;
- 6.1.6. know and follow regulations in relation to the care of children;
- 6.1.7. co-operate with police and/or other formal investigations to the best of their ability; and
- 6.1.8. not harm or exploit children who access Brunswick Hockey Club's services.

7.1 Failure to disclose- Any adult who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16 has an obligation to report that information to police. Failure to disclose the information to police is a criminal offence.

7.2 Failure to Protect- The offence applies where there is a substantial risk that a child under the age of 16 under the care, supervision or authority of a relevant organisation will become a victim of a sexual offence committed by an adult associated with that organisation. A person in a position of authority in the organisation will commit the offence if they know of the risk of abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.

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 Club.
