

# Child Safe Guideline

Handbook for Clubs





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# About SLSA's Child Safe Program

SLSA has formally committed to keeping children and young people safe, and so this becomes an integral part of SLS culture and operations. We have reflected the sentiments of the commitment in our overarching Child Safe Policy.

Subsequent to this commitment, we have developed the Child Safe Program. The purpose of the Child Safe Program is to build the capacity of clubs to protect children and young people from physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect, and create environments which are supportive of positive and enjoyable experiences. The Child Safe Program targets key areas, including:

- Understanding the different types of child abuse;
- Identifying potential risks and dangers to children (e.g., going away on tours) and managing those risks;
- Ensuring all members are aware of the Code of Conduct for dealing with Children and Young People;
- Supporting members who challenge inappropriate behaviour; and
- Educating members on how to respond to child protection issues.

The Child Safe Program is a comprehensive framework that includes this handbook for clubs with accompanying resources to support clubs to implement actions and meet evidence-based best practice standards of safeguarding with the aim to assist with reducing the risk of abuse of children and young people that come within a club's duty of care.

Finally, to support effective implementation of this work and to fulfil the commitments outlined at the national level, SLSA recognises the importance of supporting our network of clubs by providing tailored resources to assist in the development and refinement of policy, procedure and practice to keep children and young people involved with and connected to the SLS movement safe. Accordingly, we have developed this handbook and compiled a set of tailored resources to assist clubs to better understand their responsibilities and be able to take ownership of the child safe agenda at their local levels.

This Handbook has been formally approved and endorsed by the Surf Life Saving Australia Board and are to be applied in conjunction with:

- a. All applicable Legislation within your respective state / territory in relation to protecting children
- b. All relevant policy and procedure documents, including SLSA's:
  - i. Privacy Policy 6.02;
  - ii. Child Safe Policy 6.04;
  - iii. Member Protection Policy 6.05;
  - iv. Social Media Policy 6.20; and
  - v. General community expectations in relation to appropriate behaviour concerning children.

This handbook has been developed by SLSA as part of our commitment to keeping children and young people safe and to assist our network of clubs, administrators and members to understand SLS's Child Safe Program and to develop and/or refine their approaches to keeping children and young people safe.

Within this handbook you will find:

- An overview of SLSA's Child Safe Program including:
  - Development of club-specific resources to support clubs
  - Online learning module
  - Online Reporting Register
- An outline of responsibilities and key areas of implementation for clubs to be aware of and action.



# Definitions of Abuse

Term	Definition
<b>Bullying</b>	<p>Bullying involves the inappropriate use of power by one or more persons over another less powerful person or group and can be by an adult, another child or by a group. Bullying is typically a pattern of inappropriate behaviour repeated over time. Bullying may take many forms that are often interrelated and can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• verbal (name calling, put-downs, threats)</li><li>• physical (hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting)</li><li>• social (ignoring, excluding, ostracising, alienating)</li><li>• psychological (spreading rumours, stalking, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions).</li></ul> <p>For the avoidance of doubt, Bullying includes Cyber Bullying, which can also have lasting and damaging consequences. Cyber bullying is usually done via the internet, social media, SMS, MMS or email.</p>
<b>Child Abuse</b>	<p>Child Abuse is the mistreatment by an adult of a Child or Young Person (by an adult or child) that has harmed, is harming or is likely to harm or endanger or put at risk that Child or Young Person's physical or emotional health, development or wellbeing. For the avoidance of doubt, this includes but is not limited to Emotional or Psychological Abuse, Bullying, Grooming, Sexual Exploitation, Neglect and Child Harassment.</p>
<b>Emotional or Psychological Abuse</b>	<p>Emotional or Psychological Abuse occurs when a Child or Young Person does not receive the love, affection or attention they need for healthy emotional, psychological and social development. Such abuse can also apply to an adult. Such abuse may involve repeated rejection or threats to a Child or Young Person. Constant criticism, teasing, ignoring, threatening, yelling, scapegoating, ridicule and rejection or continual coldness are all examples of emotional abuse. Specific to sport, overtraining can constitute Emotional or Psychological Abuse. These behaviours continue to an extent that results or has the potential to result in significant damage to the Child or Young Person's physical, intellectual or emotional wellbeing and development.</p>
<b>Family Violence</b>	<p>Family Violence is conduct, whether actual or threatened, by a person towards a member of the person's family (or towards the property of a member of the person's family) that causes any other member of the person's family to fear for, or to be apprehensive about, his or her personal wellbeing or safety.</p>
<b>Grooming</b>	<p>Grooming is a term used to describe what happens when a perpetrator of abuse builds a relationship with a Child with a view to abusing them at some stage. There is no set pattern in relation to the Grooming of a Child or Young Person. For some perpetrators, there will be a lengthy period of time before the abuse begins. The Child or Young Person may be given special attention and what starts as an apparently normal display of affection, such as cuddling, can develop into sexual touching or masturbation and then into more serious sexual behaviour. Other perpetrators may draw Children or Young Persons in and abuse them relatively quickly. Some abusers do not groom Children and Young People but abuse them without forming a relationship at all. Grooming can take place in any setting where a relationship is formed, such as leisure, music, sports and religious activities, or in internet chat rooms, in social media or by other technological channels.</p>



Term	Definition
<b>Harm</b>	<p>Harm to a Child or Young Person or other person, is any detrimental or harmful effect of a significant nature to the Child or Young Person's or other person's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. It does not matter how the harm is caused. Harm can be caused by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect</li> <li>• sexual abuse or exploitation</li> <li>• a single act, omission or circumstance</li> <li>• a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances.</li> </ul>
<b>Neglect</b>	<p>Neglect is the persistent failure or deliberate failure or denial to provide the Child with the basic necessities of life. Such Neglect includes the failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, adequate supervision, clean water, medical attention or supervision to the extent that the Child or Young Person's health and development is, or is likely to be, significantly harmed. Categories of Neglect include physical neglect, medical neglect, abandonment or desertion, emotional neglect and educational neglect. The issue of Neglect must be considered within the context of resources reasonably available.</p>
<b>Physical Abuse</b>	<p>Physical Abuse occurs when a person subjects a Child or Young Person to non-accidental physically aggressive acts. The abuser may inflict an injury intentionally or inadvertently as a result of physical punishment or the aggressive treatment of a Child or Young Person. Physically abusive behaviour includes, but is not limited to, shoving, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, biting, burning, excessive and physically harmful overtraining and kicking. It also includes giving Children or Young People harmful substances such as drugs, alcohol or poison. Certain types of punishment, while not causing injury, can also be considered Physical Abuse if they place a Child or Young Person at risk of Harm.</p>
<b>Sexual Abuse</b>	<p>Sexual Abuse occurs when an adult or a person of authority involves a Child or Young Person in any sexual activity. Perpetrators of Sexual Abuse take advantage of their power, authority or position over the CYP for their own benefit. It can include making sexual comments to a Child, engaging Children and Young People to participate in sexual conversations face to face, over the internet or on social media, kissing, touching any intimate part of a Child's body including a Child's genitals, bottom or breasts, oral sex or intercourse with a Child. Encouraging a Child to view pornographic magazines, websites and videos is also Sexual Abuse. Engaging Children or Young People to participate in sexual conversations over the internet is also considered Sexual Abuse.</p>



# Implementing the Child Safe Program:

## Responsibilities of Clubs

All clubs have a responsibility to create child-safe environments and minimise the risk of harm and/or abuse of children and young people. Everyone who participates in and/or contributes to a club has some responsibility to ensuring and maintaining safe environments for children and young people.

As part of our SLSA Child Safe Program, we have identified six key action areas for clubs to take responsibility to develop and/or refine strategies and initiatives as part of their approach to keeping children and young people safe.

We know, based on current research and evidence, clubs that implement the strategies we have identified in the Child Safe Program, are more likely to provide safer and more enjoyable environments for children and young people, compared with clubs that do not implement such strategies.

These six key areas are outlined in Figure 2 below. To assist SLS clubs in developing and/or refining their approach to keeping children and young people safe, this Handbook includes worksheets and resources to help guide you through the process. Each step indicates a corresponding worksheet to help you implement this step in your club.

**Figure 2: Six key action areas for keeping children and young people safe**



These Worksheets have been designed to highlight the importance of each step, provide an overview of the resources SLSA has developed to support each area, and to help you and your clubs think about how you can best implement strategies to create safe and inclusive environments for our children and young people – the next generation of SLS.

# Club Checklist

## Child Safe

The following checklist will help you identify areas of child-safety which your club might need to work on.

Ideally you should answer yes to each question. If you answer no or are unsure, you should speak with your State Centre Member Protection Officer, or alternatively visit [www.sls.com.au/childsafeguidelines](http://www.sls.com.au/childsafeguidelines) for resources and guidelines which may assist you.

**This Club Checklist should be completed annually by Club Management prior to the start of Season.**

Club Checklist		
Are your club members aware of the Child Safe Policy and know where to find it, through the promotion by the Club, such as emails, posters in the Club, pre-Season reminders?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Has your club adopted the SLSA Code of Behaviour for participants, parents, volunteers and staff that are relevant and feasible for your club, as outlined in the Child Safe Policy & Program?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does your club have a Member Protection Information Officer or a Child Protection Officer who is dedicated to ensuring the safety of children?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you have set policies or procedures within your club to allow youth and juniors to provide feedback and be involved in club decisions?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Has your whole committee & Board undertaken the Child Safe Online Awareness module?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Have all Age Managers and Trainers who interact with Children and Young People, undertaken the Child Safe Online Awareness Module?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you feel your club is doing all it can to create a child-safe and child-friendly environment?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Has your club adopted process surrounding communication with children and young people as outlined in the Child Safe Policy?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Has your club conducted screening of the Club's volunteers and/or employed staff in key positions in accordance with the Child Safe Policy screening requirements?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Have you maintained accurate screening records and stored them securely?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are all new members and parents made aware of your Club's commitment to the Child Safe Program and your clubs Code of Behaviour?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does your club discuss the Child Safe Program with all the children and young people within the club and advise them where to go to speak to someone if something does not feel right?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is child-safety a regular discussion topic at your clubs Committee meetings?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is your club prominently displaying your Club's commitment and the SLS Child Safe Posters?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Do your club members know how to report suspicions or allegations of child-abuse?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you feel if an incident or suspicion of child-abuse was to occur at your club it could ensure its obligations were met?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are you providing regular information to members regarding child-safety?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No



# Volunteer Checklist

## Child Safe

The following checklist will help you identify your awareness of your responsibilities regarding child-safety and to assist your club provide a child-safe environment.

As a volunteer your ideal response to these questions should be yes, however if you answer no or are unsure, you should speak to your Clubs Member Protection Information Office or Child Protection office or contact your local State Centre, alternately you may visit [www.sls.com.au/childsafepolicy](http://www.sls.com.au/childsafepolicy) for resources and guidelines to assist you.

### Volunteer Checklist

If required, have you completed the mandatory screening requirements as a volunteer at your club?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Have you been made aware of the policy that covers child-safety and wellbeing? (SLSA Child Safe Policy)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you have a copy of the Child Safe Policy or at least know where it is located?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Have you undertaken the Child Safe Online Awareness module?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does your club have a Member Protection Information Officer or a Child Protection Officer who is dedicated to ensuring the safety of children? Do you know who this person is?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are you aware of the Code of Conduct for dealing with Children and Young People? (Child Safe Policy - Code of Conduct for people in positions of authority when dealing with children & young people).	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you feel your club is doing all it can to create a child-safe and child-friendly environment?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Do people in your club talk about Child Safe and about ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Do children at your club know that they can report if anything does not feel right or if anyone makes them feel unsafe or uncomfortable?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Do children and young people at your club know that they can report unpleasant things without a negative reaction?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you know how to report an incident or suspicion of child-abuse?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you feel able to report an incident or suspicion of child-abuse even if the matter makes you feel uncomfortable?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you feel comfortable to challenge someone's behaviour if you feel they are in breach of the SLSA Code of Conduct for dealing with Children and Young People?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are you aware and familiar with the Online Reporting System? ( <a href="http://reporting.sls.com.au">reporting.sls.com.au</a> )	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No



# WORKSHEETS



# WORKSHEET 1: MAKE A COMMITMENT

## Your Club's Commitment To Child Safe

We are asking our clubs to join us in making a commitment, specifically, a Commitment Statement for Keeping Children and Young People Safe.

### Action Plan

- Identify a club committee member to take leadership for overseeing the implementation of the club's development/refinement of approach to keeping children and young people safe
- Ensure 'Child Safe' is included on your club committee agenda
- Distribute Handbook, Worksheet 1, draft Commitment Statement to club committee with meeting papers for review
- Encourage discussion at your committee meeting and consider any implications for club practices
- Once Commitment Statement is approved/endorsed, follow up with communication to club.

### Whats Next?

We encourage your club to think about ways to put your Commitment into practice.

- Some strategies include: Post the Commitment somewhere prominent on your club website
- Promote the Commitment in your club newsletter and/or via social media
- Continuously reflect on club practice to ensure the Commitment is adhered to at all times
- Schedule an annual review of the Commitment club committee to ensure practice is maintained and continuously improved.

### Why Is A Commitment Statement Important?

In the protection of children from abuse and harm it is recommended that your club clearly and publicly makes a commitment to keeping children and young people safe. A Commitment Statement is an important first-step in:

- Providing a safe environment for all, including children and young people
- Taking an inclusive approach to all activities
- Educating and informing those within your club and the wider community about your club's child safe responsibilities.

We have included the SLSA Commitment Statement below as an example of the approach we have taken at the national level. This Commitment Statement now exists as an important component in our overall SLSA Member Protection Policy and Child Safe Policy.

### Developing & Endorsing A Commitment Statement For Your Club

To help you with this important step, we have developed an editable Commitment Statement you can tailor for your club.

To get started on your child safe development/refinement journey, we encourage you to include 'Child Safe' as a standing item on your club committee agenda. It is a good idea to discuss approving and endorsing a Commitment Statement the first time this item is discussed at your meeting.



# CHILD SAFE COMMITMENT STATEMENT

## Our Club:

- is committed to the safety and wellbeing of every child and young person who takes part in our activities, programs, events or services
- is committed to providing children and young people with a positive and nurturing experience
- will support families and the community to promote the healthy development and wellbeing of all children
- will strive to ensure that children and young people are protected from abuse and harm
- will work to create an environment in which children and young people are safe and feel safe at all times
- will listen to children and young people and address any concerns that they raise with us
- will support our members and the community to report any suspicion, or concern in relation to the mistreatment, or potential mistreatment, of a child or young person will challenge inappropriate behaviour of any of its members or members of the community
- will ensure all children and young people, no matter what cultural ethnicity, language, religion or disability, shall be able to participate in surf lifesaving in a fun and safe environment will appoint a Member Protection Information Officer, or equivalent, and ensure this person is trained on the obligations and responsibilities with respect to safeguarding children and young people
- will strive to ensure that persons in a position of authority do not harm, abuse or exploit children or young people who are involved within our club
- may not ask for consent to disclose information to police or an external child protection agency in the event we have concerns about the safety or wellbeing of a child or young person.

As part of our commitment to keeping children and young people safe, our club:

- is committed to supporting parents and carers to protect their children and young people
- will offer assistance that builds on a family's strengths and make up, is sensitive to their culture and religious beliefs and empowers them to meet the changing needs of their children and young people
- is committed to communicating honestly and opening with parents and carers about the wellbeing and safety of their children and young people
- will promote and distribute information to parents and carers about our child safe commitment to children and young people as part of an introduction to our club
- endeavours to be transparent in our decision-making, with parents and carers, as long as doing so does not compromise the safety of a child/young person or breach the SLSA Privacy Policy.

This commitment was approved and endorsed by our club on:

**Club President**

**Club Secretary/Committee Member**

Signature .....

Name .....

Date .....



# WORKSHEET 2: FOLLOW THE CODE OF CONDUCT

## Promoting the Code of Conduct to Support our Child Safe Policy

### Action Plan

We encourage your club to think about ways to promote awareness and encourage adherence with the SLSA Child Safe Codes of Conduct. Some strategies include:

- Create links to the Code somewhere prominent on your club website
- Ensure you draw attention to the Code at sign-on days and member functions.
- Make sure you outline the Code, why it is important, and ways that members might report on any conduct issues that might arise
- Promote the Code, their importance and grievance procedures in your club newsletter and/or via social media
- Continuously reflect on club practice to ensure the Code is adhered to at all times (for instance, your club committee may consider including the Code of Conduct as regular agenda item to review practice and identify any areas of conduct to be addressed within the club).

### Why are Codes of Conduct important?

Codes of Conduct are an important communication tool in setting out the values of SLS and providing clear expectations of:

- Personal and professional boundaries
- Ethical behaviour
- Appropriate and inappropriate behaviour and relationships of staff, volunteers, parents, children.

### Your Club's Role in Promoting & Encouraging Adherence with the Code of Conduct

It is your club's responsibility to continuously promote awareness and encourage adherence with the Child Safe Code of Conduct. You can find these documents in the SLSA Child Safe Policy.

### Who does the Code apply to?

The Code of Conduct applies to all members. The Child Safe Policy at Section 2.1 outlines that the Policy binds everyone who is involved in SLS, including but not only:

- a. persons appointed or elected to boards, committees and sub-committees;
- b. volunteers;
- c. all Members and members of Members where they have different membership categories; and
- d. support personnel;
- e. any other person involved in SLS including but not limited to participants, parents, guardians, spectators, sponsors and licensees and other contracted parties to the full extent possible.



# WORKSHEET 3: REPORT

## Reporting Concerns for Children & Young People's Safety

At this stage in our implementation process, we have put in place policies, practices for keeping children and young people safe (see Worksheets 1, 2, 6 & 7), engaged with, and promoted educational resources to raise our member's awareness of signs and indicators of abuse (see Worksheet 4). As a complement to this, we also need to be prepared in how to respond to, and report, concerns for safety.

### Action Plan

- Distribute this Worksheet:3 to your club committee, encouraging the committee to review the document and be familiar with the document and Appendices A prior to the relevant meeting which you have designated to address these action items
- Encourage discussion at your committee meeting and consider any implications for club practice. For instance, you might conduct a staff and volunteer training session on reporting to ensure key club administrators and officials are aware of the process and can share this knowledge with club members
- Follow up with communication to club.

### Whats Next?

We encourage you to provide this information about reporting to your members and where relevant to stakeholders and broader community. Some strategies include:

- Provide links to the 'SLSA Child Safe Online Report Form' somewhere prominent on your club website
- Promote the resources for reporting and the Guide to Submitting a Report in your club newsletter and/or via social media
- Schedule an annual review time for the club committee to re-engage with the resources, and also promotion out to the club membership and stakeholders.

### Why Is Reporting Important?

Keeping children and young people safe relies on community members reporting their concerns. Unfortunately, there have been cases in Australia where abuse has been able to occur because people have taken the perspective that it is none of their business or they have not wanted to get involved.

Research tells us people may be reluctant to report because they are unsure if they have all of the facts, or they might worry about making a situation worse. This is why SLSA has taken such a comprehensive approach to educating and raising awareness. It is also important for people in the SLS movement to be clear that reporting suspected abuse, even if not entirely certain, is better than not reporting at all.

It is important that we all understand that responding and reporting is not only the right thing to do by the child or young person, there are also various state and territory legal obligations to protect children and young people from abuse. For instance, in several jurisdictions, a person may be charged with an offence known as 'failure to report' if a child discloses they are the victim of child abuse.

### Your Club's Role In Responding To And Reporting Concerns For Children And Young People's Safety

It is your club's responsibility to address complaints, reports or disclosures brought to your attention regarding the health, welfare and safety of all those involved with SLS.

Encouraging proactive reporting behaviour in your club assists SLS in investigating and responding to reports of inappropriate behaviour. Making a report is easy - we encourage your club committee to be familiar with the process:

1. Visit [sls.com.au/childsafereport](https://sls.com.au/childsafereport) and click on 'Make a Child Safe Report'
2. Follow the question prompts, noting you may wish to remain anonymous
3. Click submit once finished.

Your report will then be sent to Surf Life Saving Australia's Legal Counsel and your State/Territory Centre for investigation.



# WORKSHEET 3: APPENDIX A

## Responding to Child Safe Concerns and Allegations

As a person involved in Surf Life Saving, you play a crucial role in protecting Children and Young People. You must follow the four actions set out below when responding to any Child Abuse Allegations.

### Action 1: Responding

If a child is at risk of immediate harm you must ensure their safety by:

- Calling 000 for medical and/or police assistance to respond to urgent health or safety concerns;
- Administering First Aid, if required and qualified;
- Separating at-risk child or young person and others involved;
- Identifying an appropriate contact person for any on-going liaison with the Police.

### Action 2: Reporting

- If you suspect, on reasonable grounds that a Child is or is at risk of being abused and/or neglected, you must report it to the police and/or relevant State/Territory child protection agency.
- If the alleged Child Abuse is occurring in Surf Life Saving, you must document this by submitting a report through <http://reporting.sls.com.au>

### Action 3: Contact

You must contact the police and/or the relevant child protection agency to determine the information that may be shared with parents/guardians, and who should lead this contact (i.e police, child protection department or SLS Representative/ Person in Position of Authority (PPA). This could include advice:

1. Not to contact the parents or guardians in circumstances where they are alleged to have engaged in the abuse.
2. To contact the parents/guardians and provide agreed information as soon as possible.

### Action 4: Support

- Support should be provided to any Child that has experienced abuse.
- It is important that the person providing support to the Child does not attempt to provide support that is outside the scope of their role.
- Support should include maintaining a calm open manner when listening to any allegations and disclosures while avoiding seeking detailed information or asking leading questions.
- Information needs to be well documented and shared with Club PPA and relevant State Centre CEO
- Further support for the Child, relevant adults & others involved may be required.

# WORKSHEET 3: APPENDIX B

## Reporting Your Concerns About A Child's Safety

### What to Report

You have a responsibility to report any child safety concerns, including:

- Abuse or harm
- Potential abuse or potential harm
- Observation, allegation, and/or suspicion of abuse or harm
- Breaches of SLSA Code of Conduct
- Gut feeling when something does not feel right

### Responding to Children and Young People's Disclosure of Abuse



- Move to a suitable environment, free of distractions.
- Be calm and patient—allow for the Child or Young Person to be heard.
- Let the Child or Young Person use their own words—avoid asking leading questions.
- Avoid 'quizzing' the Child or Young Person about details of the abuse.
- Don't be afraid of saying the 'wrong' thing. Listening supportively is more important than what you say.



- Reassure the Child or Young Person that it is okay that they have told you what's been happening.
- Address any concerns about the Child or Young Person's safety.
- Reassure the Child or Young Person that they are not at fault, and not the cause of any distress they may feel.



- Respect that the Child or Young Person may reveal only some details.
- Acknowledge the Child or Young Person's bravery and strength.
- Avoid making promises you can't keep—manage the Child or Young Person's expectations.
- Explain to the Child or Young Person that in order for them to be safe you will need to report their experience to someone else.

### What Will Happen Next?

The relevant State/Territory Child Protection Representative will:

1. Make contact with you to confirm receipt of your report (if contact details are received).
2. Support will be offered to the child, the parents, the alleged perpetrator and any other members if required.
3. If Police or External Agency do not deem it to be a criminal offence and do not wish to proceed with an enquiry an internal investigation may be undertaken in line with the Child Safe Policy and Complaints Resolution Policy.
4. The alleged perpetrator may be temporarily suspended by the State/Territory CEO should the alleged offence be deemed above reasonable risk in line with the Child Safe Policy and Complaints Resolution Policy.
5. The internal investigation process will clarify the breach of policy and nature of the report and disciplinary process will commence (if required).



# CLUB CONTACTS: CHILD SAFE REPORTING

Responding to Child Safe Concerns and Allegations

SLS is committed to keeping Children and Young People safe at all times. At your Club, you have several people you can confidentially speak to regarding a concern around Child Safe Reporting and the welfare of Children and Young People. These are:

**CLUB MPIO**  
(Member Protection Information Officer)

**CLUB Member Welfare Officer**

**CLUB PPA**  
(Person in Position of Authority)

**If a criminal activity has occurred or if you believe a child is at immediate risk of harm or danger, CALL THE POLICE 000.**



# WORKSHEET 4: EDUCATE AND RAISE AWARENESS

## Educating and Raising Awareness of Keeping Children and Young People Safe

By now, your club should have policies and practices in place for keeping children and young people safe (see Worksheets 1-3). As a further step, we ask our clubs to work with us to educate and raise awareness about keeping children and young people safe through identifying and responding to signs and indicators of abuse.

### Action plan

- Schedule a Child Safe strategy meeting with your club committee/board. Distribute the link to the Child Safe Online Awareness Module to your club committee a few days prior to this meeting, allowing enough lead in time for committee members to undertake the online module (approx. 30 minutes to complete)
- Encourage discussion at your committee/board meeting and consider any implications for club practices. For instance, your club might consider including the online module in formal training or inductions.
- Follow up with promotion of the education resources to your broader club membership. This could include:
  - Displaying posters and signs associated with Child Safe practices
  - Promoting awareness to children, young people and their families/carers via newsletters, social media posts and campaigns throughout the season.

### What next?

We encourage you to promote information about the Online Awareness Module to your members and where relevant, to stakeholders and the broader community. Some strategies include:

- Provide links to the Online Awareness Module somewhere prominent on your club website
- Promote the Online Awareness Module in your club newsletter and/or via social media
- Schedule an annual review for the club committee to familiarise themselves with the resources again and continue promotion to your club membership and stakeholders about being a child safe club.

### Why is education and raising awareness important?

Educating and raising awareness of abuse will give people more confidence in identifying and appropriately responding to questionable behaviours and occurrences of abuse.

The more educated and aware our members, stakeholders and communities are, the better equipped we will be to work together to reduce unacceptable behaviours and contribute to creating safe and positive environments for our children and young people in SLS.

### SLSA's resources for educating and raising awareness

As part of SLSA's Commitment to Keeping Children and Young People Safe, SLSA have developed resources to assist with educating the SLS movement about child safe principles, raising awareness of the signs and indicators of abuse, and how to respond if you have concerns for a child or young person's safety.

Resources include SLSA's:

- *'Safeguarding Children and Young People Guideline'* – This comprehensive document takes the reader through SLSA's Safeguarding Children and Young People Program and the SLSA Member Protection Policy. This document includes helpful information like examples of how to adhere to the Code of Conduct, indicators of child abuse, ways to keep children safe and how to report concerns about a child's safety.
- *'Safeguarding Children and Young People Online Awareness Module'* - This free online learning module takes the learner through an interactive and informative education experience with practical examples and scenario-based training. Completion of the course will raise awareness about the signs and indicators of abuse, including recognising harm, the potential for harm to occur, and provides guidelines on how to respond. The estimated learning time is 30 minutes and participants can access the resource via the SLSA Safeguarding Children and Young People landing page [sls.com.au/safeguarding](https://sls.com.au/safeguarding). SLSA members can also access this resource through the SLSA Member's Area. Members who access and complete the online course via the SLSA Members Area will obtain the SLS Safeguarding Children and Young People Awareness Award. This award will appear in your SLS awards transcript.



# WORKSHEET 5: ENGAGE AND COMMUNICATE

## Engaging & Communicating about Keeping CYP Safe

As we have progressed through the worksheets, you might have noticed that we have encouraged you to engage and communicate with your club members, stakeholders and communities during the work you have carried out for each of the previous stages.

This stage does take things one-step further, and this worksheet focuses on what your club can do to better engage and empower children and young people in the child safe process in particular, and within the SLS movement more broadly.

### Action Plan

- Ensure Child Safe is a standing agenda item on your club committee meeting agendas to enable you to monitor and respond to any child safe developments or issues
- Encourage discussion at your committee meeting and consider any implications for club practice – remember you might need to trial a few different options before you find the right fit for your club
- Identify a committee member to take leadership for:
  - compiling two to three possible strategies your club can consider implementing. You might even consider running a survey or some focus groups with your children and young members to find out their thoughts and preferences for engagement and communication
- Follow up with communication to club.

### What next?

We encourage you to continually provide information to your members about the club's commitment and efforts in keeping children and young people safe. Some further ideas for communication to your club and community include:

- Regularly promote your club's Commitment to Keeping Children and Young People Safe, the Code of Conduct and relevant updates through club meetings and events
- Promote the Child Safe Program via your club website and social media channels
- Encourage your volunteers to complete the 'Volunteer Checklist', available online
- Schedule an annual review time for the club committee to complete the 'Club Checklist' (available online), ensure policies and approaches continue to be relevant and continue to strive for best practice in creating safe and positive environments for children and young people
- Ensure the Keeping Children and Young People Safe posters are visible to all members

### Why is engaging and communicating with children and young people important?

Research tells us that organisations that engage children in communication and decision-making on a regular basis are more likely to encourage a culture where children and young people feel comfortable, have a sense of belonging and are more likely to express themselves if things don't feel right.

Regular promotion of child safe initiatives and updates is likely to build a positive club culture towards children and young people, and at the same time will assist in deterring any negative, or potentially negative behaviours.

### Your Club's Role In Engaging and Communicating

It is your club's responsibility to engage children and young people involved with your club and to work towards a club culture where children and young people feel comfortable, have a sense of belonging and are confident to express themselves. It is also your club's responsibility to provide regular communication about the Child Safe Program to members.



# WORKSHEET 6: SCREEN & RECRUIT THE RIGHT PEOPLE

## Child Safe Screening of Volunteers

An important step in the Child Safe process is to engage the safest and most suitable volunteers to volunteer with children and young people. Your club should endeavour to ensure that those volunteers share the values of SLS, always act in the best interests of children and young people and protect children and young people from all forms of abuse.

### Action plan

- Identify a club committee member to take leadership for
  - investigating the screening requirements for working with children/young people in your state/territory, and
  - determining any need for development/update of screening processes in your club to ensure compliance with the SLSA screening and recruitment procedures and your state/territory legal requirements.
- Encourage discussion at your committee meeting and consider any implications for club practice. This will include developing a club response where screening checks reveal any issues for concern (e.g. a volunteer fails to get a Working With Children Check (or your state/territory equivalent))
- Once your procedure is approved/endorsed by your club committee, give thought to your induction and training processes and follow up with communication to club

### What next?

We encourage your club to think about ways to put your procedure into practice. Strategies include:

- Ensure members responsible for the screening of volunteers are provided access to the SLSA procedure, club-specific details (e.g. local legislation and dealing with issues of concern). You might make these available somewhere on your website for ease of access
- Promote the screening process in your club newsletter and/or via social media
- Continuously reflect on club practice to ensure the SLSA screening procedure is adhered to at all times
- Schedule a review of existing volunteer Working With Children Checks (or your state or territory equivalent) to ensure compliance across your club. Including the monitoring of expiry dates on relevant checks to ensure these remain up to date.

### Why is screening important?

This step is critically important as we move from the child safe policy framework to child safe practice. Research tells us that organisations with weak child safe screening procedures increase the risk of engaging someone who may pose an unacceptable risk of harm (e.g. physical, sexual or emotional) to children and young people.

As such, it is important that all our SLS clubs follow the procedure set out by their respective state or territory to provide a minimum assurance that people recruited to work within our clubs have been appropriately screened. \*This is a legal obligation in all states and territories of Australia.



# WORKSHEET 7: SCREEN & RECRUIT THE RIGHT PEOPLE

## Child Safe Screening and Recruiting of Paid Staff

An important step in the Child Safe process is to recruit the safest and most suitable staff to work with children and young people. Your club should ensure that those recruited share the values of SLS, always act in the best interests of children and young people and protect children and young people from all forms of abuse.

### Action Plan

- Identify a club committee member to take leadership for
  - investigating the screening requirements for working with children/young people in your state/territory, and
  - determining any need for development/update of screening processes in your club screening and recruitment procedures meet your state/territory legal requirements.
- Encourage discussion at your committee meeting and consider any implications for club practice. This will include developing a club response where screening checks reveal any issues for concern (e.g. an applicant fails to get a Working With Children Check (or your state/territory equivalent))
- Once your procedure is approved/endorsed by your club committee, give thought to your induction and training processes and follow up with communication to club

### Whats Next?

We encourage your club to think about ways to put your screening procedure into practice. Strategies include:

- Ensure members responsible for the screening of paid staff are provided access to the SLSA procedure and state/territory-specific details (e.g. local legislation). You might make these available somewhere on your website for ease of access
- Promote the screening process in your club newsletter and/or via social media
- Continuously reflect on club practice to ensure the procedure is adhered to at all times
- Schedule a review of existing paid staff Working With Children Checks (or your state or territory equivalent) to ensure compliance across your club. Including the monitoring of expiry dates on relevant checks to ensure these remain up to date.

### Why is screening important?

This step is critically important as we move from the child safe policy framework to child safe practice. Research tells us that organisations with weak child safe screening procedures increase the risk of engaging someone who may pose an unacceptable risk of harm (e.g. physical, sexual or emotional) to children and young people.

As such, it is important that all our SLS clubs follow the procedure set out by their respective states or territories to provide a minimum assurance that people recruited to work within our clubs have been appropriately screened\*.

To assist you with this important step, we have developed a 'Paid Staff Screening Checklist Form' that you can use in your recruitment of paid staff and volunteers. You will find an example of the form at the end of this fact sheet, copies can also be downloaded from Members Area. Using this Checklist Form can assist your club in discussing your club's screening requirements and identifying information or screening gaps to be actioned before a potential staff or volunteer commences their role.

# Paid Staff Screening Checklist Form

## Child Safe

The following checklist is to assist clubs in the recruitment of paid staff, and should be completed by the Club during the recruitment process.

Insert Club Name

### Personal Details

Name .....  
Date of Birth ..... Contact No. ....  
Position applied for? .....  
Address: .....

### Screening Checks

Working with Children (or State equivalent)(WWC)  Yes  No      Number/Ref No. .... Expiry .....

To be Submitted  Submitted Pending Approval      Application No. ....

National Police Check (NPC)  Yes  No      NPC No. .... Expiry .....

To be Submitted  Submitted Pending Approval      Application No. ....

Referees Checked  Yes  No

### Additional Screening

Member Protection Declaration signed  Copy Attached

### Screening Notes

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

### Authorised Club Representatives

Club President (Name)..... Recruitment Coordinator. ....  
Signature..... Signature.....  
Date ..... Date. ....

Instructions for Club Representatives:  
Please be aware that once this form has been completed it should be securely stored because it contains private information.  
It is recommended that clubs retain this information for a minimum of seven years



## Reference Check #1

Referee Name.....  
Referee Position Title.....  
Professional/Personal Referee .....

Company.....  
Referee contact details .....

Date reference provided.....

## Reference Check #2

Referee Name.....  
Referee Position Title.....  
Professional/Personal Referee .....

Company.....  
Referee contact details .....

Date reference provided.....

### Privacy Act (please tell referee the following)

Under the Privacy Act candidates can obtain access to their files. Please be aware of this when answering the following questions:

Position Applicant held: .....

Relationship with Applicant: .....

Dates employed: .....

Reason for leaving: .....

What were his/her duties and responsibilities? .....

Would you have any concerns about the applicant working with children or young people? .....

Have there been any incidents, findings or allegations against the applicant in relation to allegations of inappropriate behaviour with respect to children and young people?

Describe his/her ability to work within a team? How did he/she relate to their peers/colleagues/supervisors? .....

Have you ever had any reason to question his/her honesty or integrity? If yes, why? .....

---

Name (Club member who conducted reference check).....

Position .....

Signature.....

Date reference completed .....

Recommended for position with Club  Yes  No

Please include answers to all questions, and file this to ensure a record of this reference check is kept



# CODE OF CONDUCT DO'S & DONT'S

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# Code of Conduct for People in Positions of Authority When Dealing with Children and Young People

The Code of Conduct should be followed at all times and by all Members and all people involved in any way with SLS.

## Adhering to Role Boundaries

Persons in Positions of Authority should act within the confines of their duties at all times, subject to a direction by a relevant Senior Person.

### Do



- make it clear to the Child or Young Person what your role is within the Club and to them (i.e., As a coach my role is to train, instruct and guide you and not to be your best friend or counsellor)
- seek a Child or Young Person's permission to touch or interact when demonstrating an activity. At all times you are to avoid any intimate part of a Child or Young Person's body e.g., genitals, backside or breast area
- stick to contacting a Child or Young Person via their parents or guardians rather than contact the Child directly.

### Don't



- adopt an ongoing welfare role with a Child or Young Person that is beyond the scope of your role, or that is the responsibility of another member (e.g., a counsellor)
- engage in the massage/stretching of Children or Young People, if not your specified role within the Club. If authorised to conduct such activity you must first ask the Child or Young Person's permission and ensure it is always within line of sight of other adults. Massage/stretching can be done only with the prior authorisation of a parent or guardian and wherever possible in their presence
- try to engage in activities with Children and Young People outside your specified role, such as watching a Child's basketball game, playing virtual video games together or attending their birthday party
- use personal rather than Club approved equipment, unless authorised by the Club
- offer overnight/weekend/holiday care of Children and Young People as respite to parents or extra tuition or coaching.

## Uniform and Identity Card/Pass/Badge/Working with Children Check (WCC)

Persons in Positions of Authority other than parents/carers of Children and Young People or Participants should have available their uniform or identification tag/badge/pass (where issued and/or available) only while involved in delivering services, programs, events or activities or as required by their role, such as when representing an SLS Entity at designated events and functions, or to and from that work.

### Do



- try to be identifiable in your role when delivering services, programs, events or activities
- make it clear to a Child or Young Person if you are off-duty and refer them to someone who is on duty and representing SLS entity.

### Don't



- wear your uniform when not delivering services, events or activities as required by your role

# Code of Conduct for People in Positions of Authority When Dealing with Children and Young People

## Use of Language and Tone of Voice

Language and tone of voice used in the presence of Children and Young People should:

- provide clear direction, boost their confidence, encourage or affirm them
- not be harmful—therefore, avoid language that is intended to be, or is received or likely to be received by the individual it is directed at or any other person as:
  - discriminatory, racist or sexist
  - derogatory, belittling or negative, for example, by calling a Child or Young Person a ‘loser’ or telling them they are ‘too fat’
  - threatening or frightening
  - profane or sexual.

Similar language and tone of voice should be used in all Member-to-Member transactions.

### Do



- talk to the Child or Young Person in a professional manner and with respect
- use language that is encouraging and supportive and that supports a fun and inclusive environment
- pick up on and address a situation when negative language or tone is being used by a Child or Young Person, parent/guardian or other Member and reinforce that it is not appropriate and not right.

### Don't



- make inappropriate comments about a Child/Young Person's appearance, including excessive flattering comments
- have inappropriate conversation or enquiries of a sexual nature (e.g., questions about a Child or Young Person's sexuality or his/her sexual relationship with others)
- use pet names
- make jokes or innuendos of a sexual nature
- use obscene gestures and language
- discuss personal lifestyle details of self, other staff or Children and Young People
- single out a Child or Young Person or denigrate them in front of peers or other members.

## Supervision of Children and Young People

Persons in Positions of Authority responsible for supervising Children and Young People in relation to whom SLS Entities have a direct role in providing activities, events, programs and services must strive to ensure that those Participants:

- engage positively within the delivery of the service, program, event or facility
- behave appropriately towards one another
- are in a safe environment and are protected from external threats.

### Do



- try not to be alone with a Child. If you find yourself in a situation where you are alone with a Child you should wait with the Child in an area that is open and light until the parent arrives, and use your mobile to inform another Person in Position of Authority of the situation.

### Don't



- allow a Child to leave with an adult or Person in a Position of Authority without the prior authorisation of the Child's parent or guardian.

# Code of Conduct for People in Positions of Authority When Dealing with Children and Young People

## Use of Electronic Communications

Other than between Children and Young People, wherever possible, social media messages (such as text, email, Facebook or Instagram, Snapchat, WhatsApp) sent to a Child or Young Person by a Person in a Position of Authority should be copied to their parent or carer.

### Do



- try to communicate through the parent/guardian rather than the Child
- restrict communication, if communication with a Child is necessary, to issues directly associated with delivering services, activities or programs that are SLS related, such as advising that training is cancelled
- try to communicate in a group text rather than texting a Child individually
- inform the parent or guardian or Persons in Position of Authority within your club if a Child communicates with you outside your role, and kindly advise the Child that that behaviour is inappropriate.

### Don't



- befriend the Child or Young Person on social media
- ask a Child or Young Person to not tell their parents or carers when you have communicated with them
- send photos or videos to directly to a Child or to another person without the prior authority of their parent or guardian
- upload or publish still/moving images or audio recordings of Children or Young People without the prior authorisation of their parent or guardian.

## Giving Gifts to Children and Young People

Other than parents/carers of Children and Young People giving gifts to their own child or children, the giving of gifts by Persons in Positions of Authority to Children and Young People to whom services are provided is subject to:

- obtaining prior authorisation from a Senior Person permitted to authorise gift-giving from an SLS Entity
- parents or other responsible adults being made aware of any gift given.

### Do



- make sure, if giving a gift to a Child or Young Person, that all Children and Young People are receiving a gift, and it is done in the presence of their parents or guardians and with their prior authorisation.

### Don't



- give out personal gifts or special favours
- single out a Child with a gift or special favours
- give out personal gifts to a Child without the presence of another Person in a Position of Authority and without prior authorisation of their parent or guardian.

# Code of Conduct for People in Positions of Authority When Dealing with Children and Young People

## Photographs of Children and Young People

Subject to all relevant SLSA policies (including this Policy) Children and Young People to whom a service is delivered are to be photographed while involved in a relevant SLS service, activity, event or facility only if:

- prior approval has been granted by the relevant Child and Young Person or the parents/guardian of the relevant Child and Young Person and by the relevant SLS Entity
- the context is directly related to participation in SLS
- the Child or Young Person is appropriately dressed and posed
- the image is taken in the presence of other Persons in Positions of Authority.

### Do



- ask permission from the Child's parent or guardian before taking any photos or videos
- say something if you see someone acting suspiciously
- delete any photos as soon as they are no longer required
- ensure the context in which you are taking photos or videos is directly related to their participation in SLS.

### Don't



- use any camera/video device including phones in change rooms or bathrooms
- forward, share or send on any photos or videos of a Child or Young Person
- publish a photo or video on social media without the prior approval of the Child or Young Person's parent or guardian.

## Change Room Arrangements

Persons in Positions of Authority:

- should avoid one-on-one situations with Children and Young People in a change room area
- are not permitted to use the change room area to, for example, undress, while Children and Young People are present unless they are also competing in a SLS event or are participating in a SLS training environment
- need to ensure adequate supervision in public change rooms when they are used
- need to provide the level of supervision required for preventing Child Abuse by members of the public, adult service users, peer service users or general misbehaviour, while also respecting a Child's privacy.

In addition, females should avoid entering male change rooms and males should avoid entering female change rooms in any circumstance (other than an emergency). If a female has to enter a male change room or a male has to enter a female change room, adequate supervision is required.

### Do



- knock or announce yourself before entering change rooms
- try to have at least one other adult with you in a change room with Children
- try to get changed in an individual closed cubicle.

### Don't



- undress in the presence of Children and Young People
- isolate yourself and a Child from others in the change room.

# Code of Conduct for People in Positions of Authority When Dealing with Children and Young People

## Physical Contact with Children and Young People

Any physical contact with Children and Young People must be appropriate to the delivery of SLS services, events, programs or activities, such as when fitting sporting equipment like goggles, and appropriately correcting technique and based on the needs of the Child or Young Person (such as to assist or comfort a distressed young person) rather than on the needs of Persons in Positions of Authority.

### Do



- seek a Child or Young Person's permission to touch or interact when demonstrating an activity. At all times you are to avoid any intimate part of a Child or Young Person's body e.g., genitals, backside or breast area
- check that physical contact is acceptable to a particular Child or Young Person. Even non-intrusive touch may be inappropriate if a Child or Young Person indicates they do not wish to be touched
- respect and respond to signs that a Child or Young Person is uncomfortable with touch
- try to use verbal directions rather than touch (e.g., ask a Child or Young Person to move in a particular way, rather than physically place the Child or Young Person in the required position)
- try to discourage younger Children from inappropriate expectations of hugs or cuddles. This should be done gently and without embarrassment or offence to the Child. For example, offer a high five as encouragement
- kindly and appropriately tell a Child or Young Person who is inappropriately or excessively touching another Child or Young Person to stop, and raise the concern with a Person in a Position of Authority
- use non-intrusive gestures to comfort a Child or Young Person who is experiencing grief and loss or distress, such as a hand on the upper arm or upper back
- use non-intrusive touch (e.g., congratulating a Child or Young Person by shaking hands or a pat on the upper arm or back). Try to accompany such touch with positive encouraging words.

### Don't



- initiate, permit or request inappropriate or unnecessary physical contact with a Child or Young Person (e.g., massage, kisses, tickling and wrestling games) or facilitating situations that unnecessarily result in close physical contact with a Child or Young Person
- single out the same Child or Young Person when performing demonstrations
- inflict corporal punishment (physical discipline, smacking, long runs in hot weather, no water breaks etc.).

# Code of Conduct for People in Positions of Authority When Dealing with Children and Young People

## Sexual Misconduct and Relationships

Under no circumstances is any form of sexual behaviour to occur between, with, or in the presence of, Children or Young People participating in any SLS environment. Engaging in sexual behaviour while participating in SLS services, events, programs or activities is prohibited even if the Children or Young Persons involved may be above the legal age of consent.

‘Sexual behaviour’ needs to be interpreted widely to encompass the entire range of actions that would reasonably be considered to be sexual in nature, including but not limited to:

- ‘contact behaviour’, such as sexual intercourse, sexual penetration or exploiting a Child through prostitution
- ‘non-contact behaviour’, such as flirting between adults and Children and Young People, sexual innuendo, inappropriate text messaging, inappropriate photography or exposure to pornography or nudity.

Consensual intimate relationships (whether or not of a sexual nature) between a Person in a Position of Authority and an adult Participant should, where possible, be avoided as they can have harmful effects on the Participant involved and on other Members and on our organisation’s public image.

### Do



- avoid at all costs any consensual intimate relationships between Persons in Positions of Authority and an adult Participant or Younger Person. This may be, for example, a 17-year-old coach and a 15-year-old Participant
- advise a Person in a Position of Authority if you are aware of, or are involved in, a relationship with a Person in a Position of Authority or you are a Person in a Position of Authority who is having a relationship with a fellow member.

### Don't



- undress in front of or expose yourself in any way to a Child or Young Person
- flirt with or make any innuendo or sexual connotations towards a Child or Young Person
- do any of the above-mentioned actions in person or online.

# Code of Conduct for People in Positions of Authority When Dealing with Children and Young People

## Overnight Stays and Sleeping Arrangements for Children and Young People

Standards of conduct that must be observed by Persons in Positions of Authority during an overnight stay include but are not limited to:

- providing Children and Young People with privacy when bathing and dressing
- observing appropriate dress standards when Children and Young People are present—such as no exposure to adult nudity
- not allowing Children and Young People to be exposed to pornographic material, for example, through movies, television, the internet or magazines
- not leaving Children and Young People under the supervision or protection of unauthorised persons, such as hotel staff or friends
- not involving sleeping arrangements that may compromise the safety of Children and Young People, such as unsupervised sleeping arrangements, or an adult sleeping in the same bed as a Child or Young Person unless authorised to do so by a relevant SLS Entity, as appropriate
- the right of Children and Young People to contact their parents, or others, if they feel unsafe, uncomfortable or distressed during the stay must be respected. As a representative of SLS you are required to facilitate contact with parents whenever a Child feels distressed or unsafe.
- parents expecting that their Children and Young People can, if they wish, make contact.

### Do



- make sure there are appropriate levels of supervision. General rule is a minimum of two adults with a ratio of 1:8
- plan appropriate accommodation. If Children share a room they should be the same age and sex
- plan for emergencies. If you need to administer first aid, do so only if you are qualified and in the presence of others
- keep parents informed and let them know: aim of the trip; destinations and venues; competition details; supervision levels; roles and responsibilities of accompanying adults and the estimated time of arrival and departure
- keep Children informed and let them know: what's expected of them; roles and responsibilities of adults accompanying them; their rights and who to talk to if they have any concerns.

### Don't



- share rooms with Children. If an adult presence is required, there should always be more than one Child in the room with the adult
- be alone in a room with a Child
- remove a Child's clothing, even in an emergency, unless you have their permission and at least one other person is with you.

# Code of Conduct for People in Positions of Authority When Dealing with Children and Young People

## Transporting Children

Children and Young People are to be transported by Persons in Positions of Authority [other than by their parent(s)/carer(s)] only in circumstances that are directly related to the delivery of SLS services, events, programs or activities. For example, Children and Young People should not be given casual lifts unrelated to SLS services, events or activities by Persons in Positions of Authority.

Children and Young People are to be transported by Persons in Positions of Authority only with prior authorisation from a relevant SLS Entity Senior Person and from the Child or Young Person's parent/carer. Gaining approval involves providing information about the proposed journey.

### Do



- vary the order in which you drop the Children off if you regularly take Children home from practice, so that you're not always alone with the same Child
- have a Person in a Position of Authority ask the Child whether they feel comfortable travelling with you
- tell the Child's parents the route you'll be taking and the estimated time of arrival.

### Don't



- allow a Child to sit in the front seat. Make sure the Children sit in the back seats.

## Positive Guidance

Children or Young Persons participating in SLS events, services, programs and activities should be made aware of the acceptable limits of their behaviour so that a positive experience can be provided for all Participants. There are times, however, when Persons in Positions of Authority will be required to use appropriate techniques and behaviour management strategies to ensure:

- an effective and positive environment
- the safety and/or wellbeing of Children, Young People or other SLS personnel.

Persons in Positions of Authority should use strategies that are fair, respectful and appropriate to the developmental stage of the Children and Young People involved. Children and Young People need to be provided with clear directions and given an opportunity to redirect their misbehaviour in a positive manner.

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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# Indicators of Abuse

Often Children and Young People will not be able to speak about abuse and your concern for them will be based on observations of physical and behavioural signs or indicators of harm in the Children and those around them. These indicators will often reflect the impact abuse is having on the Child.

## Indicators of Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse/psychological abuse may cause delays, such as those below, in physical, emotional or cognitive development.

- Delays in physical development
- Failure to thrive
- Speech disorders

## Behavioural Indicators of Emotional Abuse

- Stealing food
- Staying at school or other activities outside hours and not wanting to go home
- Lacking trust in other people
- Being reluctant to attend an activity at a particular club or organisation
- Being tired, lethargic, falling asleep at inappropriate times
- Abusing alcohol or drugs
- Exhibiting aggressive behaviour
- Having poor peer relationships
- Being indiscriminate with affection
- Lacking social skills
- Exhibiting distress, e.g., frequent crying or apathy
- Demonstrating fear of parent, caregiver or other adult
- Exhibiting attention-seeking or risk-taking behaviour

## Indicators of Neglect

When a Child has been neglected, you may notice the following signs.

- Frequent hunger or malnutrition
- Poor hygiene
- Inappropriate clothing
- Unsupervised for long periods of time
- Lack of proper medical attention
- Experience of abandonment by parents/carers
- Failure to thrive

## Behavioural Indicators of Neglect

- Stealing food
- Spending time at school or other external activities beyond the usual hours
- Being reluctant to attend an activity at a particular club or organisation
- Being tired or falling asleep at inappropriate times
- Abusing alcohol or drugs
- Exhibiting aggressive behaviour
- Having poor peer relationships
- Being indiscriminate with affection
- Desiring adult affection
- Exhibiting poor emotional response/lack of expression or enthusiasm
- Exhibiting anxiety about being left alone
- Exhibiting frequent rocking and sucking behaviour



# Indicators of Abuse



Indicators of Physical Abuse	Behavioural Indicators of Physical Abuse
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bruises, burns, sprains, bite marks, cuts, welts, scratches</li><li>• Fractured bones</li><li>• Poisoning</li><li>• Internal injuries</li><li>• Shaking injuries</li><li>• Strangulation marks</li><li>• Ingestion of alcohol and drugs</li><li>• Dislocations</li><li>• Head injuries</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Expressing little or no emotion when hurt</li><li>• Offering unlikely explanations for injuries</li><li>• Wearing long-sleeved clothes on hot days (possibly to hide bruising or other injuries marking the body)</li><li>• Demonstrating fear of particular caregivers, other adults or children</li><li>• Demonstrating a fear of their parents or a fear of going home</li><li>• Being fearful when other children cry or shout</li><li>• Being excessively friendly to strangers</li><li>• Being passive and compliant</li><li>• Being nervous, hyperactive, aggressive, disruptive</li><li>• Telling someone that physical harm has occurred</li></ul>

Indicators of Sexual Abuse	Behavioural Indicators of Sexual Abuse
<p>Many of the physical indicators of sexual abuse, such as those below, are identifiable only via a medical examination.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sexually transmitted diseases</li><li>• Semen in the vagina</li><li>• Vaginal or anal injury or scarring</li><li>• Injury to the penis or scrotum</li><li>• Abrasions, tears and bruises to the vagina or anus</li><li>• Chronic urinary tract infections or difficulty urinating</li><li>• Bleeding from the anus or vagina</li></ul> <p>Often the first indicator the Child gives is when they tell a person whom they trust that they have been sexually abused.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Exhibiting persistent and age-inappropriate sexual activity</li><li>• Exhibiting sexual aggression towards younger more naïve children</li><li>• Offering sexual invitations or gestures to older people</li><li>• Exhibiting sexual interaction involving animals or toys</li><li>• Exhibiting sexual promiscuity or prostitution</li><li>• Exhibiting regressive behaviour, such as bedwetting and speech loss</li><li>• Exhibiting challenging and aggressive behaviour</li><li>• Being fearful of people of a particular type or gender</li><li>• Exhibiting suicidal and self-harm behaviour including self-mutilation, drug or alcohol abuse</li><li>• Exhibiting risk-taking behaviour such as lighting fires</li><li>• Exhibiting cruelty to animals</li><li>• Being involved in criminal activity</li><li>• Exhibiting frequent rocking, sucking and biting behaviour</li></ul>



# Indicators of Abuse

## Indicators of Grooming

Grooming refers to behaviours used to prepare a child or young person with the intention of sexually abusing them.

### **The groomer builds a trusting relationship with a parent or carer...**

The groomer may attempt to build trust with the parent or carer by:

- seeking out time poor parents/carers, e.g., Single mothers
- assisting and integrating themselves with the family and the child e.g., offering to babysit, financial assistance, tutoring.

### **... and moves from attention and non-sexual touching to increasingly intimate, intrusive behaviours ...**

Grooming behaviours move from harmless-seeming, maybe even innocent-looking things like:

- lavishing a child or young person with attention and praise
- making promises and giving gifts engaging with the child in various forms of close physical contact so that they become comfortable with that, e.g., by rough play, tickling, patting.

### **But eventually becomes more sinister:**

- Making sexual comments or jokes.
- Using pornography to open sexual discussions with children and young people.
- Providing cigarettes, drugs or alcohol to a child or young person.
- Using their role, position of authority or uniform to encourage or force the child to comply with the adult's wishes.
- Using threats and fear to force the child to comply.
- Using guilt and shame tactics to stop the child from telling.
- Using physical force to overpower the child.

### **... eventually to isolating the child, such that they can abuse him or her.**

The groomer will attempt to isolate the child or young person from their parent/s or carer, and create situations where the child or young person wants to spend time exclusively with them or will spend time exclusively with the child.

Eventually, they will isolate the child with the intention of abusing them.



# Keeping Vulnerable Children Safe

Children with additional needs are more susceptible to experiencing violence and may require more information, help and support when implementing the safeguarding program.

Additional barriers can exist when detecting the abuse or neglect of Children with a disability or those with additional needs. This can create extra safeguarding challenges. It is important to be mindful:

- not to make any assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury to a child relate to the Child's disability. Further exploration and questions should be asked
- that children with a disability or additional needs can be disproportionately impacted by bullying without outwardly showing any signs
- that there may be communication barriers that are difficult to overcome in order to determine if action under the Child Safe Policy is required.

Children may be more susceptible to harm than other participants because they may:

- lack the mutual support and protection of a peer group
- require higher degrees of physical care and support
- have limited communication skills
- find it difficult to resist inappropriate interventions
- have a history of having limited or no choice
- have a degree of dependency on a carer conflicting with the need to report harm or raise concerns.

Strategies to protect vulnerable Children and Young People include:

- providing information and education about safeguarding, especially what is and what is not safe touching to be learnt and practised by all members
- recognising the importance of listening to children, using basic language and, where possible, using visual cues to assist
- embracing the safeguarding program throughout the entire Club.



# Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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## FAQS About Keeping Children And Young People Safe

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### **Is a Child Safe program adding more to our responsibilities?**

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No. This is already an integral part of your work. The program has been developed to align with best practice in keeping children and young people safe today and aims to ensure that the ways in which we do things are more effective.

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### **Who is it applicable to?**

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Child Safe is everyone's responsibility and the framework has been developed to support any individual involved in SLS.

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### **Why the change? Are we doing something wrong?**

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There is more information about child abuse available than ever before and it is being used to develop best practice.

We are in a very privileged position. Every day, parents around the nation entrust the safety of their children to SLS. We play a very important role in the movement and in the greater community and we are leading the way to keeping children and young people safe

Importantly, a Child Safe program not only keeps children and young people safe but everyone involved in our movement, for example, staff, volunteers, coaches, officials, parents and families as well as our organisation and our brand. The program makes clear what is expected of everyone and provides the tools and support needed to do so.

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### **What if we lose volunteers because it is too much for them to do?**

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A Child Safe program does not add more responsibility or workload; rather it strengthens policies and systems to safeguard Children. Volunteers have the same responsibility to keep children and young people safe as paid staff and any other person involved in our activities. If individuals determine that they do not want to adhere to the Child Safe program rules then it potentially undermines the organisation's commitment to keeping children and young people safe

### **How do I raise awareness with parents without generating mistrust?**

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Emphasise the commitment to keeping children and young people safe. Keep the focus on the facts—the policy and code of conduct. Encourage anyone with any sort of concern to raise it. It will all hopefully reassure parents and explain the steps being taken in a more positive context.

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## FAQS About the Code of Conduct

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### **Will this mean that we can't touch Children at all?**

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On occasions there will be the need to have appropriate physical contact with a Child or Young Person. Any physical contact with Children and Young People must be appropriate to the delivery of services, events, programs or activities, such as when fitting sporting equipment and appropriately correcting technique and based on the needs of the Child or Young Person (such as to assist or comfort a distressed Young Person) rather than on the needs of the adult. Asking the Child/Young Person before making physical contact with them and explaining what you will do and why you are doing it is important.

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### **Can I physically comfort a Young Person who is upset or can I congratulate a member who has done well by shaking their hand?**

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The answer to all the above is yes, but always in a reasonable and appropriate manner. Be mindful that to comfort a Young Person who is upset, it is not always necessary or appropriate to place an arm around them. You can show concern for their situation by sitting down and listening to them. Often Young People do get distressed if they compete and feel they haven't done well. Sometimes you can assist just by being positive. You can certainly shake the hand of a member who has done well. This is often seen by a Young Person as high praise from a person they respect.



# Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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## **What should I do if an athlete is injured and clothing must be removed to treat the injury?**

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Only people who are qualified in administering first aid or treating sports injuries should attempt to treat an injury. You should avoid treating injuries out of sight of others. Other things to consider include:

- the comfort level and dignity of the athlete/Participant should always be the priority
- uncover only the injured area or drape a covering over the athlete's/Participant's private parts
- always report injuries and treatment to parents and document an incident fully.

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## **I am friends with many of the families whose children I coach and we all socialise together outside my role of coaching. Our children have grown up together. Can I no longer socialise with them?**

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You can socialise with your friends and their children. The rules are not intended to limit appropriate social interactions between coaches and Children and their families. They are intended to limit the opportunities available to Persons in Authority to use their position to create opportunities to spend time alone with Children and to develop inappropriate relationships with Children. If you have an existing personal relationship with Children and their families you do need to be mindful of how this might impact on your professional relationship with the Child as their coach. It is best to be open with your club about any existing relationships.

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## **What do I do if I find I am inadvertently left alone with a Child?**

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You are now the only person available who can ensure the wellbeing of that Child, so although the guidance says 'do not place yourself in a situation where you are alone with a Child in this scenario, to absent yourself could potentially put that Child at risk. You should therefore ensure the wellbeing of the Child, as that should always be the first and foremost consideration. In this case, that means you should wait with that Child until the parent arrives. If you cannot contact the parent, use your mobile to inform another Person of Authority of the situation, for example, your manager, another coach or committee member. Take sensible precautions while waiting with the Child. Talk only about matters that are acceptable between coach and Participant and if you are in a place with other users, for example a leisure centre, wait for the parent in a public area.

If you are at a venue that has no other users, wait in an area that is open and light and where the parent can clearly see you when they arrive.

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## **We use public facilities for some activities and have no control over the change room arrangement. There are no separate spaces for coaches to change—what should I do?**

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Speak with the council or facility provider to seek alternative arrangements. Should this not be possible, a protective strategy would be to change before everyone arrives and after they leave.

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## **FAQs About Reporting Breaches**

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### **If a parent fails to arrive, it is getting late and I cannot contact them by phone what should I do?**

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In such circumstances, it may be necessary for you to consider transporting that Child home. If other suitable adults are present, ask one to accompany you and the Child in the car to their home. If not, ensure you tell another Person of Authority of the action you are taking by phone, letting them know the route and estimated arrival time. Sit the Child in the back of the car and make sure you know where you are going before you set off to return the Child safely home. Inform the Member Protection Information Officer or appropriate person of authority and ask that they speak to the parent the following day.

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### **I and other parents have noticed that another parent is speaking inappropriately to their child, being negative, aggressive and pushy. The child does not seem bothered by this and others confirm this is normal for them as a family. What should I do?**

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If the behaviour is in breach of the Code of Conduct, you have an obligation to report it. Given that other parents have also noticed, it is affecting others within the community and must be reported.



# Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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## **Does talking about abuse mean that people are more likely to make allegations?**

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What comes with raising awareness is a responsibility to do something about what you're aware of. This doesn't automatically mean that people are more likely to make allegations but where there is a concern we expect people to report any concerns they have and to take the allegations seriously.

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## **Will I be expected to investigate an allegation?**

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No. You are not expected to become a child protection expert. You are expected to have an awareness of the issue of child abuse and exploitation, understand what is expected of you with regards to your own behaviour and to understand your responsibility to report your concerns.

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## **What if I don't have enough information to prove the allegation?**

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It is not your job to investigate child abuse. You do not have to prove that the abuse or breach of code of conduct is happening. You must report a child protection concern if you form a reasonable belief that it is occurring or is at risk of occurring.

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## **What if the Child involved won't share information with me as they are afraid?**

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It is not your responsibility to investigate. However, sensitively record as much information as they will share, trying to capture their name, age, who was involved and their age, what happened, where it happened and what they would like to happen next. Reassure them that you are there to help them and the information will be handled confidentially.

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## **I've received a report and I know the person whom the report has been made against, what should I do?**

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This would be classed as a conflict of interest and you must declare this and remove yourself from the conflict. Seek out another appropriate Person in a Position of Authority to take over managing the report.

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## **We are a small club where everyone knows each other and so there isn't anyone else to ask to manage the report.**

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In Australia, every sport has designated Member Protection Information Officers. If appropriate, consider finding another MPIO from another sport in the local area. If you do not know of any, contact the Member Protection Information Officer (MPIO) in your state.

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## **How should you initially approach someone in a position of power in a Club whom you feel may be operating outside the Policy?**

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The key is to reaffirm the policies and code of conduct and check that they understand them. It may be that in this situation you require the support of someone outside of the immediate Club, for example, the state body. Be clear about the nature of your concerns, and specific about the way someone may be in breach of the rules. Make a record of your concern and discussions.

## Further Information and Support Resources?

A full suite of Child Safe resources, guidelines, educational modules, tips and link to report can be found in the Members Area Document Library under the Child Safe Tab.

### Play by the Rules

Play by the Rules is a unique collaboration between the Australian Sports Commission that provides information, resources, tools and free online training to increase the capacity and capability of clubs across Australia.

- **Child Protection Information:** <https://www.playbytherules.net.au/got-an-issue/child-protection>
- **Child Protection Online Course:** <https://www.playbytherules.net.au/online-courses/child-protection-online-course>
- **Complaint Handling Training:** <https://www.playbytherules.net.au/online-courses/complaint-handling-online-course>
- **Harassment & Discrimination Online Course:** <https://www.playbytherules.net.au/online-courses/harassment-and-discrimination-online-course>
- **Member Protection Information Officer Course:** <https://www.playbytherules.net.au/online-courses/mpio-online-course>



# Notes



