

Creating a Child Safe culture



The care and protection of children and young people in football should never just be a compliance matter. We must all uphold the Best Practice imperative placed on all sporting clubs and champion our organisation's commitment to keeping children safe in our sport.

Below are guidelines that can assist in creating a Child Safe Culture.

- **Child Safe commitment statement**

Create a Child Safe Commitment statement. This statement can be used on role descriptions, displayed in newsletters and bulletins and on websites. It outlines that your club is committed to the safety and protection of children and young people.

- **Be a Child Safe Organisation**

Create an environment where children's safety and wellbeing is at the centre of thought, values and actions. Place emphasis on valuing children and young people. Create conditions that reduce the likelihood of harm and increase the likelihood of identifying any harm. Respond to any concerns, disclosures, allegations or suspicions of harm.

- **Child Safe Signage & Promotion**

It is good practice to visually display your club's commitment to safeguarding children and young people. The signage should include who the Child Safe contact is at your club and be child friendly in its messaging. Child Safe promotion can include links to child safe information, websites and videos on your website and social media platforms.

- **Child Safe Policies and Practices**

Policies should provide guidance and structure on acceptable and unacceptable behaviours. They should also show appropriate measures for responding to any areas of misconduct and disclosures of abuse by a child to a club official. Other policies and practices could relate to; minimum supervision ratios, player collection policies and practices, changeroom policy, complaints policy etc.

- **On the Agenda**

At club meetings, discuss how your Child Safe culture and Child Safe practices are being achieved, reviewed, accepted and promoted. This should occur on a regular basis throughout the year.

- **Child Safe recruiting practices**

Good practices can include: providing role descriptions; providing a copy of the Child Safe Commitment Statement, FNSW Working with Kids Handbook; reference checking; interviewing; Working with Children Checks; a proper induction; probation periods for both paid workers and volunteers; closely monitoring people in their roles. These practises will also help to deter unsuitable applicants and reduce risk to children and young people.

- **Regular training**

Without suitable training and resources, all of the above points become ineffective. Those involved in children's sport have any responsibility to children and young people and need regular training aimed at equipping and empowering them to work with children with confidence, manage any issues in line with club policy and know who to speak to and where to get support.

- **Professional Supervision**

Supervision of workers and volunteers within the club forms part of the club's duty of care to its children and young people and also to those who are in leadership roles. All workers and volunteers should have a point of contact at the club to be able to consult and share any concerns regarding the players in their team or under their management.

- **Club Contacts**

Information about who to contact regarding child safe concerns should be provided to all parents, guardians and children and included on club website and communications.