



AFLQ Child Protection Policy

Statement of Commitment

AFL Queensland is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people who utilise our services. Our **workers (employees and volunteers)** will treat them with respect and understanding at all times.

To ensure children and young people are kept safe from harm, the following actions will be taken:

Adopt the AFL Queensland Risk Management Plan 2006

Leagues and Clubs encouraged to appoint a Child Protection Co-Ordinator /AFL Kids First Co-Ordinator;

Ensure all leagues and clubs comply with the existing manuals and procedures developed by the AFL;

Implement Complaint Handling Procedures as per the AFL procedures; and

Implement and adopt the guidelines for Coaches and Officials in working with children as per Play by the Rules.

Identify and classify potential risks as per attached risk management template

Compliance

All affiliated Leagues and their affiliated Clubs together with their employees and volunteers

Policy Scope

The scope of the policy relates to all situations and times pertaining to AFL programs with which children are in the care of an AFL Queensland affiliated organization or worker.

Policy

Expectations of staff and all affiliated members

That they comply with the policies and documents that relate to Risk Management and Child Protection as outlined in AFL QLD Risk Management 2006 and the AFL Club Management Program.

Roles and Responsibilities

All affiliates will develop position descriptions as per the AFL Club Management Program as per outlined in the Volunteer Management module

Practices and Procedures

The following guidelines are to assist coaches, officials and others working with children.

Physical contact

Generally physical contact with players/participants should be:

- to develop sport skills
- to give sports massage
- to treat an injury
- to prevent or respond to an injury
- to meet the specific requirements of the sport.



All physical contact by personnel should fulfil the following criteria:

- physical contact should be appropriate for the development of a sport skill
- permission from the player/participant should be sought
- player/participants should be congratulated or comforted in public not in an isolated setting.

Supervision for children

The number of staff needed will depend on the age and number of children involved, and whether or not there are disability considerations.

Being alone with a child

Do not isolate yourself and a child and avoid being alone with any particular child. If a child approaches you and wants to talk to you privately about a matter, do so in an open area and in the sight of other adults (eg. coaches, officials or parents/guardians).

Ideally advise another coach or official and ask them to stay within sight while you have the discussion and to come to your assistance if the child becomes emotional and/or you indicate support is required in dealing with the child. Avoid unaccompanied and unobserved activities with children.

Adopt positive language and behavior:

Adopt positive language when talking with children and in the presence of children. This includes avoiding bad or aggressive language that could intimidate a child or set a poor example.

Change Rooms

Try to have at least one other adult with you in a change room with children. Do not isolate yourself and a child from others in the change room.

Maintain control –avoid losing your temper

Try not to lose your temper with a child (verbally or physically). If you find that you regularly lose your temper with children you should seek support in regard to child behavior management strategies, anger management or consider whether you have the patience to work with children.

Some ideas to assist with maintaining control include:

- Set up some basic rules at the beginning of the season such as; be nice, follow instructions, have a go, no put downs. Make sure children are aware of these rules;
- Give positive messages;
- Have a time out area for children and young people that are not behaving. This should be simple such as an agreed T sign with the hands that children know means to go to time out for two minutes;
- Adopt a card system to express concerns with a child's behavior rather than becoming verbally agitated. For example a yellow card is a warning, two yellow cards means time out for two minutes and a red card could mean the child misses out of next week's game.



Collection by parents/guardians

Your club needs to let parents/guardians know about its policy on the collection of children. A list of actions that could help includes:

- Letting children, parents/guardians know the times of practices and games, when they can expect to collect their children and that it is not your responsibility to transport children home if parents are delayed;
- Have a club policy that the second to last child and their parent/guardian will wait with the coach/official and the child. This will also enable the coach/official to concentrate on making contact with the parent/guardian;
- If you have a club room where there will be other people, have a club policy that latecomers are to collect their children from the club room. Wait with the child if possible, and make contact with the parent/guardian if necessary;
- If there are other people at the ground or facility, wait for the parent/guardian closer to those people. In the meantime try to make contact with the parent/guardian;
- Avoid the risk of being alone with a child by having a parent/guardian or support person assist you with the training. Require that person to wait until all children have left;
- Have a club policy that there is a register of parent/guardian emergency contact numbers and make sure coaches/officials have access to a phone.

Transport of players/participants

Ideally all players/participants should have their own transportation to and from sporting events. You should only provide transportation when:

- the driver is properly licensed;
- other players/ participants/parents/guardians are in the vehicle;
- the ride has been approved by parents/guardians;
- the ride is directly to/from sports or recreational activities;

You should also call someone and tell them what you are doing, the exact time you are leaving – so that you are accountable for your time.

Overnight trips

Always have more than one adult with children on an overnight trip/ camp and do not separate yourself and children from other adult/s.

There should always be more than one adult with a group of children, even if the number of children is small. Mixed gender is preferable.

Options to consider on an overnight trip/camp include obtaining separate sleeping accommodation from the children (adults in separate rooms).

There must be emergency procedures in place to enable supervising adults to be able to respond to any alarm raised by a child. If an alarm is raised by a child, more than one adult should respond.

Injuries and illness

Your club needs to have guidelines for handling injuries that occur during sporting activities. Only personnel who are qualified in administering first aid or treating sports injuries should attempt to treat an injury. Personnel should avoid treating injuries out of sight of others. Other considerations include:



- The comfort level and dignity of the player/participant should always be the priority;
- Only uncover the injured area, or drape private parts of the player/participants body;
- Always report injuries and any treatment provided to parents and document an incident;
- If necessary seek medical attention as soon as possible.

Your club should also have in place policies regarding “blood rules” and ensure coaches and officials know to remove any child that is bleeding from a game and to stop the flow of blood before being allowed to again join in the activity.

Participants with disabilities

It is important that participants with disabilities have the same opportunities to be involved in sport and recreation activities. This may require, where reasonable, the provision of specialist support, appropriate transport and training for those assisting with matters such as lifting and toileting. At all times participants should be treated with dignity and respect. Because participants with disabilities may be more vulnerable to abuse or neglect clubs and organisation may need to take additional steps to ensure their safety.

Photographing children

All clubs need to be aware that there are some people who visit sporting events to take inappropriate photographs or video footage of children. You need to be alert to this possibility and report any concerns to a responsible person in your club.

Your club needs to have clear guidelines on the use of images as there is evidence that information posted on an Internet site or published in a magazine or newspaper can be used to target children, to locate them, and then to groom them. Also images can be used and adapted for inappropriate use.

Safe Playing Environment

All clubs must follow the AFL Queensland policy in relation to annual facilities inspection and match day check lists (refer to page 41 of the Risk Management module of the Club Management Program).

Blue Cards

All clubs must ensure that all junior coaches and any open age coach with a minimum of one 17 or under player are a holder of a blue card (to be renewed every two years) or have submitted an application before the current season commences. This is a compulsory Coach Accreditation requirement, failure to do so will result in loss of coaching accreditation for a two year period. Coaches who are a parent of a player are no longer exempt under AFL Queensland Coach Accreditation policy.

ACCEPTABLE and UNACCEPTABLE WORK PRACTICES

Acceptable and unacceptable work practices are governed by the adherence to the current codes of conduct relating to parents, coaches, umpires and officials codes of conduct. Please refer to the AFL Kids First brochure and the AFL Coaches’ Code of Conduct Administration Booklet.



IMPLEMENTING THE POLICY

Putting the policy into practice

AFL Queensland will meet with all affiliated leagues annually to detail the child protection policy and procedures. The affiliated leagues will be directed to implement the policy and procedures at league level and inform their affiliated clubs to replicate at club level.

Policy effective from

1st January 2006

Promotion and resourcing the policy

The policy promotion will be via several mediums: website, direct mail, annual conferences, accreditation and administration courses.

All AFL Queensland affiliated leagues and clubs will be provided with a copy of the child protection policy and any amendments on an annual basis. Any amendments to the policy will be provided by the first of February each year.

It is recommended that this policy is on display at all league and club venues for the perusal of members.

MONITORING COMPLIANCE

Monitoring the policy

AFL Queensland is responsible for monitoring the policy at league level and the affiliated leagues are responsible for monitoring at club level.

Compliance reporting

In line with affiliation agreements all leagues and clubs are to provide policy documentation upon request from AFL Queensland.

BREACHES

Dealing with breaches

When dealing with breaches please refer to the guidelines in the AFL Kids First operational Manual, page 11.

EVALUATION AND REVIEW

AFL Queensland will evaluate and review the child protection policy on an annual basis, this will occur by the end of November of each year.

Reference Related Documents

Refer to the following AFL Risk Management Resources

- A) AFL Coaches Codes of Conduct Administration Booklet;
- B) AFL “Kids First” Operational Manual
- C) AFL Club Management Program (Volunteer Management Booklet)

These guidelines have also been adapted from information from the:

Play by the Rules www.playbytherules.net.au

Child Protection In Sport Unit UK www.thecpsu.org.uk

Australian Sports Commission www.ausport.gov.au/ethics/

New South Wales Department for Tourism Sport and Recreation www.dsr.nsw.gov.au/children