

ALTONA



The Altona Pirates Basketball Club Child Safety Policy and Procedure

Introduction

Everyone who participates in Altona Pirates' activities is entitled to do so in an enjoyable and safe environment. The Altona Pirates Basketball Club has a moral and legal obligation to ensure that, when given responsibility for young people, coaches, officials, volunteers, staff members and parents provide them with the highest possible standard of care.

The Altona Pirates Basketball Club is committed to devising and implementing policies so that everyone in sport accepts their responsibilities to safeguard children from harm and abuse. This means to follow procedures to protect children and report any concerns about their welfare to appropriate authorities.

The aim of this policy is to promote good practice, provide children and young people with appropriate safety/protection whilst in the care of Altona Pirates Basketball Club and to allow staff and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

Definitions

The words 'child' and 'children' in this policy refer to children and young people up to the age of 18 years. This definition is consistent with the national framework, Creating Safe Environments for Children – Organisations, Employees and Volunteers, the Commission for Children and Young People Act, the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 and the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005.

The term 'child' in this policy is inclusive of anyone under 18 years of age. Not utilising the term 'young people' is not intended to diminish any emphasis on, or acknowledgement of, the safety risks to older children or teenagers.

Policy Statement

The Altona Pirates Basketball Club is committed to the following principles:

- the welfare of the child is paramount
- all children, whatever their age, culture, ability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity should be able to participate in basketball in a fun and safe environment
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from harm, discrimination and degrading treatment and to respect their rights, wishes and feelings
- all suspicions and allegations of poor practice or abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- all Altona Pirates Basketball Club employees who work with children will be recruited with regard to their suitability for that responsibility, and will be provided with guidance and/or training in good practice and child protection procedures
- working in partnership with parents and children is essential for the protection of children

- we will adhere to and be guided by the principles set out in the Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

Promoting Good Practice

To provide children with the best possible experience and opportunities in basketball everyone must operate within ethical framework articulated in the Code of Conduct.

It is not always easy to distinguish poor practice from abuse. It is therefore NOT the responsibility of people, involved in the Altona Pirates to make judgements about whether or not abuse is taking place. It is, however, their responsibility to identify poor practice and possible abuse and act if they have concerns about the welfare of the child.

Please read the *Promoting good practice in keeping children safe from abuse guide* to help you identify good practice and poor practice in relation to keeping children safe.

Children’s Rights to Safety and Participation

The Altona Pirates Basketball Club is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children accessing our club. We support the rights of the child and will act without hesitation to ensure a child safe environment is maintained at all times.

The Altona Pirates Basketball Club also promotes the involvement and participation of children and young people in developing and maintaining child-safe environments.

We involve them when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them. We listen to their views and respect what they have to say.

We promote diversity and tolerance at the Altona Pirates, and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome. In particular, we:

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- ensure that children with a disability are safe and can participate equally.

Identify and Analyse Risk of Harm

To support the development of this policy the Altona Pirates Basketball Club reviewed existing child protection practices, to determine how child-safe and child-friendly the organisation is and to determine what additional strategies are required to minimise and prevent risk of harm to children because of the action of an employee, volunteer, official, parent, player or another person. The Altona Pirates Basketball Club will review this policy and related child protection policies and procedures on an annual basis. This review will occur annually at the end of the calendar year.

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

The Altona Pirates Basketball Club has ratified a Statement of Commitment to Child Safety that articulates our commitment to child safety, preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.

Member Protection Declaration

As required by the Basketball Victoria Member Protection By-Laws the Altona Pirates basketball club is required to undertake a screening process before appointing anyone who works, coach, supervise or have regular unsupervised contact with people under the age of 18 years. This includes all coaches, team managers and committee members.

In order to meet the requirements of the Basketball Victoria Member Protection By-Laws the Altona Pirates basketball club will:

- Identify positions that involve working, coaching, supervising or regular unsupervised contact with people under the age of 18 years
- Obtain a completed and signed Member Protection Declaration (MPD) from all people who are identified in the above step and keep it in a secure place. This means that all coaches, team managers and committee members have to sign a MPD unless covered by the next point
- Provide an opportunity for a person to give an explanation if a MPD isn't provided or it reveals that the person doesn't satisfactorily meet any of the clauses in the MPD. We will then make an assessment as to whether the person may be unsuitable to work with people under the age of 18 years. If unsatisfied we will not appoint them to the role/position
- Where possible, check a person's referees (verbal or written) about his/her suitability for the role
- Make sure that the person being interviewed/screened has a valid Working with Children Check (WWC) issued by the Victorian government. Our organisation recognises two (2) exceptions to the Working with Children Check – police officers and teachers

Education

Education is important to ensure that everyone in our organisation understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

Our organisational culture aims for all volunteers (in addition to parents/carers and children) to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns.

To support our commitment to the safety of children The Altona Pirates Basketball Club will:

- take opportunities such as emails at the start of each season to parents and events such as presentations to reinforce our commitment to the safety of children
- reinforce this commitment at the beginning of each season to coaches and team managers
- ensure all relevant policies and procedures are available on the club's website

Club Welfare Officer

It is not the responsibility of anyone working for Altona Pirates Basketball Club in a paid or unpaid capacity to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities so that they can then make inquiries and take necessary action to protect the young person. This applies **BOTH** to allegations/suspensions of abuse occurring within our organisation's activities and to allegations/suspensions that abuse is taking place elsewhere.

The Altona Pirates Basketball Club has created a Club Welfare Officer position to look over matters concerning child safety and abuse. We expect our members and volunteers to discuss any concerns that they may have about the welfare of a child as soon as possible with the nominated club welfare officer. The club welfare officer will ensure that the concerns/incident reported to him remain confidential and that the identity of the person reporting the concern/incident is not revealed.

The Club Welfare Officer will be required to report all the incidents noted by him to the club President who will then ascertain whether or not the person/s involved in the incident play a role in the club and act accordingly. The name and contact details of the Club Welfare Officer can be found on the club's website.

Screening and Recruitment

In order to meet the requirements of the Basketball Victoria Member Protection By-Laws the Altona Pirates basketball club will:

1. Identify positions that involve working, coaching, supervising or regular unsupervised contact with people under the age of 18 years.
2. Obtain a completed Member Protection Declaration (MPD) from all people who are identified in the above step and keep it in a secure place.
3. Provide an opportunity for a person to give an explanation if a MPD isn't provided or it reveals that the person doesn't satisfactorily meet any of the clauses in the MPD. We will then make an assessment as to whether the person may be unsuitable to work with people under the age of 18 years. If unsatisfied we will not appoint them to the role/position.
4. Where possible, check a person's referees (verbal or written) about his/her suitability for the role.
5. Make sure that the person being interviewed/screened has a valid Working with Children Check (WWC) issued by the Victorian government. Our organisation recognises two (2) exceptions to the Working with Children Check – police officers and teachers. These personnel will not be required to have a Victorian WWC for the positions identified in Step 1.

Fair and Just Procedures for Personnel

The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern. We are also fair and just to personnel. The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent, and based on evidence.

We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored.

If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, we provide updates to children and families on progress and any actions we as an organisation take.

Privacy

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be staff, volunteers, officials, parents or children, unless there is a risk to someone's safety. We have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will have access to it.

Legislative Responsibilities

The Altona Pirates takes our legal responsibilities seriously, including:

- **Failure to disclose:** Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to the police.¹
- **Failure to protect:** People of authority in our organisation will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.²
- Any personnel who are **mandatory reporters** must comply with their duties.³

Risk Management

In Victoria, organisations are required to protect children when a risk is identified (see information about failure to protect above). In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our children.

Regular Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years and following significant incidents if they occur. We will ensure that families and children have the opportunity to contribute. Where possible we do our best to work with local Aboriginal communities, culturally and/or linguistically diverse communities and people with a disability.

Allegations, Concerns and Complaints

Our organisation takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. Our staff and volunteers are trained to deal appropriately with allegations.

We work to ensure all children, families, staff and volunteers know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.

We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place (see information about failure to disclose above).

If an adult has a **reasonable belief** that an incident has occurred, then they must report the incident. Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be:

- a child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves)
- behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed

¹ A person will not commit this offence if they have a reasonable excuse for not disclosing the information, including a fear for their safety or where the information has already been disclosed.

Further information about the failure to disclose offence is available on the [Department of Justice and Regulation website](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+disclose+offence) <www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+disclose+offence>.

² Further information about the failure to protect offence is available on the [Department of Justice and Regulation website](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+protect+offence) <www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+protect+offence>.

³ Mandatory reporters (doctors, nurses, midwives, teachers (including early childhood teachers), principals and police) must report to child protection if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse.

See the Department of Health and Human Services website for information about [how to make a report to child protection](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/reports-publications/guide-to-making-a-report-to-child-protection-or-child-first) <www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/reports-publications/guide-to-making-a-report-to-child-protection-or-child-first>.

- someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it
- observing suspicious behaviour

Please read the *Responding to suspicions and allegations of abuse and harm guide* for more detail on how to responding to concerns for the safety of children.

[This page](#) on the Department of Health and Human Services has information on how to make a referral or a report if you consider a child to be at risk of abuse, harm or neglect

There are some excellent resources on the [Commission for Children and Young People website](#), including [this page](#) which has information on the Child Safe Standards, child safe organisations and responding to concerns about children.

Related documents

- Altona Pirates Statement of Commitment to Child Safety
- Altona Pirates Members Protection Declaration
- Responding to suspicions and allegations of abuse and harm guide
- Promoting good practice in keeping children safe from abuse guide