



## **POLICY STATEMENT**

**Each child participating at Brisbane City Football Club has the right to feel safe and be protected from 'harm' at all times. Brisbane City Football Club is committed to provide a safe, supportive, caring environment for children whilst participating at the Club. Any behaviour that jeopardises that environment is contrary to the ethos of the Club, and will not be tolerated.**

**All suspected or alleged 'harm' to children will be handled by procedures that provide an immediate response and comply with civil law requirements.**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Football is about having fun, being with friends, making new ones, playing games, trying new skills and being part of a team, if you want.

It should be fun to do all of these things - having fun is what is important. Sometimes adults get it wrong and do things which hurt, frighten or worry children. It doesn't happen often in football, but it does happen.

If a child is worried about the way an adult is behaving towards them, they feel threatened or frightened it is important they know who to tell and how to get help. What they are experiencing might be child abuse.

This document provides advice and guidance including: know what child abuse is, who to tell, where to get help and advice, and what their rights are.



**Compliance with this Policy is MANDATORY for each person working for Brisbane City Football Club. For the purposes of this policy, working for Brisbane City Football Club includes volunteers. It clearly states that all information related to suspected or alleged “harm” or “poor practice” to a child at the Club must be treated with the utmost confidentiality and that all implicated must be treated with respect for their privacy and dignity.**

**Annexures are included to assist in the implementation of and compliance with this policy. Compliance with an Annexe is also MANDATORY.**

## **1. PURPOSE**

Brisbane City Football Club Football Committee believes it is the responsibility of the Club’s controlling body to have a clear safeguarding children policy that is accessible to and adopted by everyone at the Club.

Safeguarding Children is everyone’s responsibility and having a clear policy for the club is crucial to our overall approach to safeguarding young people, which includes:

- Getting the right people involved – carrying out references and blue card checks.
- Creating a safe environment - Codes of Conduct, Respect, Education and Best Practice.
- Promoting clear systems to deal with any concerns - Policy and Procedures.

## **2. Key Principles**

The child’s welfare is, and must always be, the paramount consideration.

- All children and young people have a right to be protected from abuse regardless of their age, gender, disability, culture, language, racial origin, religious beliefs or sexual orientation.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- Working in partnership with other organisations, children and young people and their parents and carers is essential.

We acknowledge that every child or young person who plays or participates in football should be able to take part in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from poor practice and abuse. Brisbane City Football Club recognises that this is the responsibility of every adult involved in our club.



## Appendix 1

# Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures

### Using this Policy

1. Brisbane City Football Club acknowledges its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of every child and young person who has been entrusted to its care and is committed to working to provide a safe environment for all members. A child or young person is anyone under the age of 18 engaged in any club football activity.

2. The key principles of the Policy are that:

- The child's welfare is, and must always be, the paramount consideration.
- All children and young people have a right to be protected from abuse regardless of their age, gender, disability, culture, language, racial origin, religious beliefs or sexual orientation.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- Working in partnership with other organisations, children and young people and their parents/carers is essential.

3. Brisbane City Football Club has a role to play in safeguarding the welfare of all children and young people by protecting them from physical, sexual or emotional harm and from neglect or bullying. It is noted and accepted that the policy applies to everyone in at the Club whether in a paid or voluntary capacity. This means whether you are a volunteer, match official, helper on club tours, football coach, club official or medical staff.

4. We will endeavour to adopt good recruitment guidelines for recruiting volunteers and we will:

- Specify what the role is and what tasks it Involves;
- Request identification documents;
- As a minimum meet and chat with the applicant(s) and where possible interview people before appointing them;
- Ask for and follow up with references before appointing someone;
- Require a blue card check.



5. We acknowledge bullying as a category of abuse. Bullying of any kind is not acceptable at our club. If bullying does occur, all players or parents/carers should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly. Incidents need to be reported to the appropriate Club Official and in instances of serious bullying the Football Development Manager may be contacted.

6. Respect codes of conduct for Players, Parents/Spectators, Officials and Coaches have been implemented by Brisbane City Football Club. In order to validate these codes of conduct the club has clear actions it will take regarding repeated or serious misconduct at club level.

7. Reporting your concerns about the welfare of a child or young person is everyone's responsibility.

If you are worried about a child it is vitally important that you report your concerns – no action is not an option. If you are worried about a child then you need to report your concerns to the Club Official or via the email address:

[childprotection@brisbanecityfc.com.au](mailto:childprotection@brisbanecityfc.com.au).

Anyone who has reasonable grounds for suspecting that a child or young person is being neglected, abused or needs protection should report it. The person does not have to be certain or have proof, but only needs to make sure the concerns are well founded and based on information they know or have from a reliable source.

If you believe a child is in immediate danger or in a life-threatening situation, contact the Police immediately.

For more information on what constitutes Child Abuse - please visit <http://www.playbytherules.net.au/interactive-scenarios/free-online-training/child-protection-harassment-and-discrimination-course>.



## Appendix 2 Signs and Indicators of Abuse

### What is abuse?

Where and how does it happen? Does it really happen in sport and indeed, in football?

'Child abuse' is a term used to describe what happens when a person, or group of people, harm a child or young person under the age of 18. Child abuse may mean that harm is actively done to the child or young person, such as beating or burning, or it may refer to neglect where the carers fail to protect the child or young person from harm.

The abuser is often an adult, but may also be another young person and occasionally even a child. Usually the abuser has some sort of power over the child or young person, and often knows them well. Abuse can happen anywhere, e.g. in the family, any institution or group and in any activity where children or young people are present. There is a risk that direct abuse, or neglect, can happen in football.

The Club defines abuse into five categories. These are:

- Neglect.
- Physical abuse.
- Sexual abuse.
- Emotional abuse.
- Bullying.

### Neglect

Neglect takes place if adults fail to meet a child or young person's basic physical needs, e.g. for food, warmth and clothing, or emotional needs such as attention and affection. It occurs if children or young people are left alone or inadequately supervised or where they are exposed to danger, injury or extreme weather conditions.

In football, neglect could occur if children or young people do not have proper supervision, clothing or are allowed or encouraged to play whilst injured. It could occur if a child or young person's particular health needs are disregarded before, during, or after a game. An unsatisfactory playing surface or equipment can also constitute neglect.



## **Physical abuse**

Physical abuse occurs if people physically hit, burn, poison, shake or in some way hurt or injure children and young people, or fail to prevent these injuries from happening. In football, physical abuse could happen where training methods are inappropriate for the developmental age of the child or young person, where they are allowed to play with an injury or where inappropriate drugs or alcohol are offered or accepted. It would clearly happen if a child or young person is hit or physically restrained or manhandled by those supervising the game or training session.

## **Sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse occurs if children or young people are used to meet another person's sexual needs. This includes any form of sexual behaviour with a child or young person (by an adult or another child or young person), the use of sexually explicit language and jokes, inappropriate touching and exposure to pornographic material. Sexual abuse can occur in football. For example, where there is inappropriate touching, or where sexually-explicit jokes occur between adults and children or young people or if indecent images are taken or adapted and placed on child pornography sites.

## **Emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse includes frequent threatening, taunting or sarcastic behaviour, withholding affection or being extremely overprotective. It includes racist or sexist behaviour and demeaning initiation ceremonies. It can be inflicted by other children and young people as well as by adults. Children and young people who are being abused or bullied in any way will also experience emotional abuse. In football, coaches or parents emotionally abuse children and young people if they constantly criticise, abuse their power, or impose unrealistic pressure to perform to a high standard. It may also occur if a club allows members to deride people with disabilities or from minority cultures and use derogatory language about them.

## **Bullying**

Although anyone can be the target of bullying, children and young people who are perceived as "different" from the majority may be at greater risk of bullying. This includes children and young people from minority cultures or children and young people with disabilities. Victims are often shy and sensitive and perhaps anxious or insecure.

- Physical: hitting, kicking and theft.



- Verbal: name calling, constant teasing, sarcasm, racist or homophobic taunts, threats and gestures.
- Emotional: tormenting, mobile text messaging, ridiculing, humiliating and ignoring.
- Sexual: unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments.

Bullying can take place anywhere, but is more likely to take place where there is inadequate supervision. In football it is more likely to take place in the changing rooms, or on the way to and from the football pitch - but can also take place at a training session or in a competition. Football's competitive nature can create and even support an environment for the bully if individuals and clubs are unaware.

The bully in football can be a parent who pushes too hard, a coach or manager who has a win-at-all costs philosophy; a child or young person intimidating another; or an official who places unfair pressure on a child or young person.

The victim is often weaker and less powerful and the outcome is always painful and distressing.

### **Signs and indicators**

Children and young people are reluctant to tell someone when they are being abused, so it is essential that every adult is aware of the possible signals that a child and young person's welfare or safety is being threatened. However, there is rarely a clear sign and you may often have to piece together various snippets of information and rely on your instinct that something does not seem quite right.

You may have one piece of information that, when added to that of others, forms a clear picture of abuse. This is often compared to fitting pieces of a jigsaw together.

Only when you have a few pieces can you start to see the true picture.

Remember, it is not your job to decide whether or not a child or young person is being abused - however it is your responsibility to share your concerns.

The table on the next page shows some possible physical and behaviour signs of abuse. Some are very explicit and specific to the type of abuse, others are much more general.

However, you need to be careful as any one of these signs might have another very plausible explanation, such as a death in the family, loss of a pet, an absent family member or problems at school.



However you should remember to raise your concerns if there is a combination of unexplained changes over a period of time.

Never allow a child or young person's disability or cultural difference to explain away concerns. This is not a judgement for you to make.

Category of abuse	Physical signs	Behavioural
Physical abuse	Unexplained and unusual bruising, finger, strap and bite marks, injuries, cigarette burns, fractures, scalds, missing teeth. Injuries that a child with limited mobility would find it difficult to get.	Fear of contact, aggression, temper, running away, fear of going home, reluctance to change or uncover body, depression, withdrawal, cowering, bullying or abuse of others.
Neglect	Constant hunger, ill-fitting or inappropriate clothes, weight change, untreated conditions, continual minor infections, failure to supply hearing aids, glasses and or inhalers.	Always being tired, late, absent, few friends, regularly left alone, seeks adult company or withdraws from people, stealing, no money, parent or carer not attending or interested.
Sexual abuse	Genital pain, itching, bleeding, bruising, discharge, stomach pains, discomfort, pregnancy, incontinence, urinary infections or STDs, thrush, anal pain on passing motions.	Apparent fear of someone, nightmares, running away, age inappropriate sexually explicit knowledge or behaviour, bedwetting, eating problems, substance abuse, unexplained money or gifts, inappropriate masturbation, sexual approaches to others, sexual games with toys.
Bullying	Weight change, unexplained injuries and bruising, stomach and head aches, incontinence, disturbed sleep, hair pulled out.	Difficulty making friends, anxiety over school/football, truancy, withdrawn, depressed, anger, moodiness, suicide attempts, reduced performance, money or possessions reported as 'lost', stealing from the family, distress and anxiety on reading e-mails or texts.
Emotional abuse	Weight change, lack of growth/development, unexplained speech disorders, self harm, clothing inappropriate for child's age, gender or culture.	Unable to play, fear of mistakes, fear of telling parents, withdrawn, unexplained speech and language difficulties, few friends.





<p><b>Child's Details:</b></p> <p>Parent / Guardian's name:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Contact No: _____</p>	<p>*Child's name: _____</p> <p>Address: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>*Sex: M F    DOB: ___/___/___    Yr. Level _____    Age _____</p>
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**\*Brief details of awareness of or suspicion of 'harm' or poor practice: (provide extra details on separate sheet of paper if necessary)**


In cases of suspected sexual abuse by a Club member if you are aware of the identity of anyone else who may have information about the 'harm', you will be required to include this in the above details.

<b>*Details of abuse / suspected abuse (provide extra details on separate sheet of paper if necessary)</b>

**Name and age of child's siblings (if known).**


This information can be given to any club official or left in the office in a clearly marked envelope.

Alternatively, an electronic copy of this form can be completed and sent to [childprotection@brisbanecityfc.com.au](mailto:childprotection@brisbanecityfc.com.au).