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A.B.N. 20 005 881 201

## Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy

### Introduction

While the vast majority of players registered by the Fitzroy Football Club (FFC) are over 18 years old, our teams include some players who are younger than 18 years old. These players will train and play with teammates who are over 18 years of age.

To ensure we safeguard all children and young people who play with the Club, the FFC Board has developed a Safeguarding Children and Young People framework, which includes a Declaration, this policy and appointment of a Safeguarding Officer. Information about our framework can be found on our website and we also promote this information directly to players, members and supporters.

### Our Commitment

The Fitzroy Football Club believes strongly that all children and young people have equal rights to protection from harm and abuse regardless of their race, religion, age, disability cultural background, gender, sexual orientation or family/social background. Our Club considers that the health, safety and wellbeing of children and young people take priority over all other competing considerations.

The safety and wellbeing of all children and young people at our club is a shared responsibility between the Club, its staff, contractors, associates, parents/carers, coaches, spectators, volunteers and members of our Club community.

The Fitzroy Football Club:

- is committed to creating a safe, inclusive and welcoming environment for all children and young people who participate in football and umpiring activities at our Club
- is committed to implementing child safe practices in accordance with the Victorian Child Safe Standards (<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/>)
- has zero tolerance for any form of child abuse or harm and will act quickly to protect children and young people should an incident occur. All complaints will be treated seriously, fully investigated and handled confidentially.
- is committed to the active participation of children and young people at the Club, ensuring all children and young people know their rights, have their views taken seriously and involve them in decisions that may directly affect them and their peers at the Club
- recognises the important role families play in supporting children and young people to participate and values the input of families in decision making at our Club
- recognises the particular needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people and will promote their cultural safety within the Club environment.

### Policy Scope

This Policy applies to everyone involved at our Club including (but not limited to) participants, parents, spectators, contractors, officials, coaches, and Board members.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with Club's related policies and procedures, the Victorian Child Safe Standards (<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/>) and related legislation.



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Our Club is committed to continually reviewing its policies and practises to protect the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people.

### **Safeguarding Officer**

The Fitzroy Football Club will ensure there is a Safeguarding Officer appointed by the Board prior to every season. This person will be the initial point of contact for any report or concern raised.

The name and contact details of the Safeguarding Officer will be communicated to everyone associated with the Club, with a particular emphasis on ensuring that players under 18 years of age are aware that this is a safe person for them to approach if they are feeling unsafe.

The Safeguarding Officer must have a valid and current Working with Children Check.

### **Behaviour at our Club**

All participants, parents, spectators, contractors, officials, coaches, and Board members have responsibilities in relation to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people at our Club and are expected to:

- understand the definitions of child abuse and harm and act on anything that they hear or see
- understand the rights of children, as appropriate to their role and cause no harm to a child or young person
- value equity and diversity at the club and treat all children and young people with respect regardless of their race, religion, age, disability cultural background, gender, sexual orientation or family/social background
- at all times, know and follow this Policy and related child safety and wellbeing framework
- co-operate with police and/or other formal investigations to the best of their ability.

All third-party contractors are expected to abide by our Club's Safeguarding Children and Young People framework, and where they may engage with children or young people, sign an agreement requiring them to comply with this framework prior to delivering any services.

Our Club will annually appoint a Child Safeguarding Officer that will be the primary point of contact for all concerns and complaints related to child safety and wellbeing.

### **Electronic Communications, including via social media**

Fitzroy Football Club coaches, team managers and Board members communicate with players as needed via email, text, Messenger and social media team pages/groups. Such communication will include players under 18 years of age.



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Club electronic communication will adhere to the following guidelines:

No adult in a role working with players under 18 years of age will engage in individual social media friendships with such players.

Multiple adults, include the Club President and Director of Football Operations will be part of contact lists and included in any social media communications with players from, or on behalf of, the Club.

Any Club or team social media platform will be overseen by a Club appointed administrator.

### **Recruitment and Screening**

Our Club seeks to implement screening practices that reduce the risk of harm or abuse to children and young people by recruiting people suitable to work and interact with children and young people (e.g. by requiring Working With Children Check or other State equivalent and/or Police checks).

When appointing coaches and volunteers who will have contact with players under 18 years of age, our Club will ensure that all applicants are provided with a copy of this policy and current details of the Safeguarding Officer.

Recruitment of coaches will include an interview process which requires:

- Contact details of two referees
- Proof of a current Working with Children Check, evidence of application or a commitment to provide such evidence within two weeks of being appointed.

Our Club requires all Board members, Coaches, Team Managers and Trainers to present proof of a current Working with Children Check. Any adult attending an overnight trip which includes players under the age of 18 and other Club members in regular contact with players under the age of 18 are also required to provide proof of a current Working with Children Check.

Once engaged, volunteers, Board members and contractors must read this Policy and related documents to familiarise themselves with the Club's framework.

### **Complaints and Reporting**

The Fitzroy Football Club will take all concerns and complaints seriously, whether they are raised by an adult, child or young person. All child related concerns and complaints will be responded to promptly and confidentially.

Any concern or complaint is to be made to the Safeguarding Officer who will report to Victoria Police if there any report of sexual or physical abuse of a child. This Safeguarding Officer will remain in contact with the reporter and alleged victim to provide support.

The Safeguarding Officer will communicate any reports to the Fitzroy Football Club President, who will report to VAFA management if a report is communicated to Victoria Police.

Any Club staff member, Board member or volunteer who is the subject of a child or young person related concern or complaint will be reassigned to other duties which do not allow them to engage with children and young people until the process is completed.



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Our Club will investigate allegations of inappropriate conduct against a child or young person in accordance with procedural fairness and will handle the allegations in a confidential and sensitive manner. The Club will keep a register of any allegations regarding inappropriate conduct.

## Appendix 1 Definitions

**Child and Young Person** means a person under the age of 18 years.

**Child Abuse** includes all forms of physical, emotional, psychological, verbal and/or sexual abuse. Child abuse also includes sexual exploitation, neglect or negligent treatment, grooming, harassing behaviour, bullying or other exploitation of a child or young person and includes any actions that results in actual or potential harm to a child or young person. Child abuse can be a single incident or take place over time.

**Child protection** means any responsibility, measure or activity undertaken to safeguard children from harm.

**Family violence** occurs when children and young people are forced to live with violence between adults in their home. Family violence includes violence between members of a family, or extended family, or those fulfilling the role of family in a child or young person's life. It can include witnessing violence or the consequences of violence. Exposure to family violence places children and young people at increased risk of injury and harm and has a significant impact on their wellbeing and development.

**Grooming** is a term used to describe what happens when a perpetrator builds a relationship with a child or young person with the intent to abuse or harm them. Perpetrators may also groom parents/carers by forming relationships of trust with parents/carers before harming a child or young person. Grooming can take place over a long period of time before abuse occurs or the abuse can happen relatively quickly. Grooming can take in physical (face-to-face) environments or online.

**Harm** can be any action that may have a significant impact on a child or young person's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. Harm can be caused by:

- Physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect;
- Sexual abuse or exploitation;
- Family violence;
- a single act, omission or circumstance; and
- a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances.

**Sexual abuse or exploitation** is any act which exposes a child or young person to or involves them in sexual acts beyond their understanding or contrary to accepted community standards. Sexual offence behaviours can include the fondling of genitals, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or any other object, fondling of breasts, grooming, voyeurism, exhibitionism, and exposing the child to or involving the child in pornography. It also includes engaging a child or young person to participate in sexual conversations online.