



BRUNSWICK NETBALL CLUB CHILD SAFE POLICY

Policy statement

Brunswick Netball Club is committed to child safety. This policy outlines:

- BNC's approach to safeguarding children and young people
- Responsibilities for child safety at BNC
- What constitutes child abuse
- Procedures for dealing with allegations of child abuse.

This policy is intended to empower children and young people, who are vital and active participants at Brunswick Netball Club. 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 acceptance at Brunswick Netball Club, 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.

Scope of application

This policy was developed by the BNC Committee and its appointed Child Safety Officer.

This policy guides our members and volunteers on how to behave with children at our Club. This policy applies to all individuals involved in our organisation (paid and volunteer) including, but not limited to:

- Administrators/Committee members
- Coaches
- Officials-trainers
- Players
- Parents
- Spectators.

All of the people to which this policy applies have a role and responsibility in relation to safeguarding children and young people. As such they must:

- Understand the indicators and risks of child abuse

- Act appropriately on any concerns raised by children
- Understand and follow all applicable laws in relation to the protection of children and reporting or management of child safety concerns.

All of our members and volunteers must agree to abide by our Code of Conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children. All members and volunteers, as well as children and their families, are provided with a copy of the Code of Conduct.

Understanding our child safety responsibilities

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone at Brunswick Netball Club understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility. Our Club culture aims for all members and volunteers, families and children to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. BNC will display information regarding child safety at training venues and on its website, including how to make a complaint.

We also support our members and volunteers to protect children from abuse and promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability.

All members and volunteers of Brunswick Netball Club understand our commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in safeguarding children and young people. The Club has a designated Child Safety Officer and they are the first point of contact for any child safety concerns. Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including the Department of Health and Human Services and Victoria Police.

Recruitment

Brunswick Netball Club takes all reasonable steps to ensure that all members and volunteers who are engaged in activities directly involved with children, and who are not exempt, including volunteers, are required to hold a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this check.

For more information, please refer to the [Working with Children website <Working with Children Check | vic.gov.au>](http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au).

Privacy

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be volunteers, families or children, unless there is a risk to someone's safety. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it and who will have access to it. This is intended to protect reporters and to ensure that all members of Brunswick Netball Club are comfortable to disclose any allegations or concerns in relation to child safety without repercussions.

Legal responsibilities

Brunswick Netball Club takes its legal responsibilities seriously, including:

Failure to disclose: 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 Victoria Police.

Failure to protect: People of authority at our Club will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.

Any members or volunteers who are mandatory reporters must comply with their legal responsibilities as mandatory reporters.

Risk management

In Victoria, organisations including sporting clubs are required to protect children when a risk is identified.

We recognise the importance of a risk management approach to minimising the potential for child abuse or harm to occur and use this to inform our policy, procedures and activity planning. In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our children.

To reduce the risk of child abuse occurring, adults to whom this policy applies should avoid direct, unsupervised contact with children.

For example, this should be a consideration when:

- using change room facilities (e.g. any doors that can be locked);
- using accommodation or overnight stays
- physical contact when coaching or managing children
- using online environments (eg: contacting a child on social media).

Allegations, concerns and complaints

Brunswick Netball Club takes all allegations seriously and has procedures in place to respond to allegations of child abuse.

We work to ensure all children, families 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.

Factors that contribute to reasonable belief may include:

- A child states that 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
- Someone else has raised a suspicion but is unwilling to report it
- Observing suspicious behaviour.

Child abuse definitions

Child abuse is the mistreatment of a child causing detrimental effect to the physical, emotional, psychological health and wellbeing.

Physical abuse: occurs when a person subjects a child to physical force. Physically abusive behaviour includes, but is not limited to: shoving, hitting, slapping, throwing, punching, biting, burning, kicking; and

Harmful training methods or overtraining where there is the potential to result in the child's physical development.

Emotional or psychological abuse: occurs when a child does not receive the affection or attention they need for a healthy emotional, psychological and social development or are exposed to violence/abuse against other children or adults.

Such abuse may involve:

- Repeated rejection or threats to a child
- Constant criticism, teasing, threatening, yelling, scapegoating, ridicule, intentional exclusion, continual coldness and rejection
- Bullying and harassment. *Bullying* means a person or group of people repeatedly and intentionally using words or actions, or the inappropriate use of power, against someone or a group of people to cause distress and risk to their wellbeing. *Harassment* means any type of behaviour towards a person that they do not want and that is offensive, abusive, belittling or threatening and is reasonably likely to cause harm to the person who is the subject of the harassment.

Sexual abuse occurs when an adult or a person in authority (ie: older or younger but more physically or intellectually developed) involves a child in any sexual activity. A child cannot provide sexual consent, therefore even if "consent" is given, it still constitutes sexual abuse.

Perpetrators of sexual abuse take advantage of their power, authority or position over the child for their own benefit. Sexual abuse can include making sexual comments to a child, kissing, touching a child's genitals or breasts, oral sex, or intercourse with a child.

Sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse and occurs when children are forced into or involved in sexual activities that are recorded in some way, or recorded without the consent of one or more parties, or used to produce child sexual abuse material. Such material can be in the form of photos or videos, whether published or circulated on the internet or social media. Encouraging a child to view pornographic websites or images, or engaging a child to participate in sexual conversations over social media or otherwise is also considered sexual exploitation.

Grooming is a criminal offence in Victoria and concerns predatory conduct undertaken to prepare a child for sexual activity at a later date. Grooming:

- Includes actions deliberately taken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a particular child for the purpose of lowering the child's inhibitions; and
- Occurs where an adult communicates, by words or conduct, with a child or with a person who has care, supervision or authority for the child, with the intention of facilitating the child's involvement in sexual conduct, either with the groomer or another person.

Grooming behaviours may include:

- Gaining a child's trust by making promise and giving gifts

- Lavishing the child with attention and praise so they enjoy spending time with the perpetrator
- Inappropriately allowing the child to overstep rules or legal boundaries
- Asking the child to keep the relationship to themselves
- Testing boundaries with the child, e.g. by undressing in front of them, 'accidental' intimate touching
- Engaging with the child in various forms of close physical contact so they become comfortable with the contact, e.g. tickling
- Trying to isolate the child from their parent or guardian, creating a situation where the child wants to spend time with the perpetrator
- Spending time exclusively with the child in order to create a 'special relationship'
- Inappropriate personal communication, including use of technology
- Providing cigarettes, drugs or alcohol to the child
- Making sexual comments or jokes to a child
- Showing pornography to commence sexual discussions with a child.

Neglect: is the persistent failure or deliberate failure or denial to meet a child's basic needs. Child neglect includes the failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, adequate supervision, clean water, medical attention, or supervision to the extent that the child's health and development is or is likely to be harmed. Types of neglect include physical, medical, emotional, educational and abandonment.

Exposure to family violence: is any abusive behaviour used in a relationship to gain and maintain control over their partner or ex-partner. It can include a broad range of behaviour that causes fear and physical or psychological harm. If a child is living in a household where there have been incidents of domestic violence, then they may be at risk of significant physical or psychological harm.

Responding to child abuse or breaches of this policy

We work to ensure all BNC members, including players and volunteers, know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, or 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 after observing suspicious behaviour, or if a child reports that they have been abused.

ACTION 1 - RESPONDING

If a child is at risk of immediate harm you must ensure their safety by:

- Calling 000 for medical and/or police assistance
- Administering first aid if required
- Separating at-risk child and others involved
- Identifying an appropriate contact person for any on-going liaison with police.

If there is no immediate harm go to Action 2

ACTION 2 - REPORTING

If you suspect on reasonable grounds that a child was, is or is at risk of being abused and/or neglected, you must report it to the police and/or the relevant State child protection agency.

If the alleged abuse is occurring at Brunswick Netball Club you must also notify your Club's designated Child Safety Officer who will report to the Committee President.
BNCsafety@brunswicknetballclub.org

The Committee will advise the Netball Australia Integrity Team.

Nicole Malcher, Head of Integrity
Ph: 03 8621 8600
Email: integrity@netball.com.au

ACTION 3 - CONTACT

You must contact the police and/or the relevant child protection agency to determine information that may be shared with parents/guardians, and who should lead this contact (ie: police, child protection agency, or BNC representative).

This could include advice:

- Not to contact the parents or guardians in circumstances where they have been alleged to have engaged in the abuse.
- To contact parents/guardians and provide agreed information as soon as possible.

ACTION 4 - SUPPORT

- Support should be provided to any child who experiences abuse.
- It is important that the person providing support to the child does not try to provide support outside the scope of their role.
- Support should include maintaining a calm open manner when listening to any allegations and disclosures, while avoiding asking any leading questions.
- This information needs to be well documented and shared with the relevant organisation being the Police, Child Protection Agency and/or the Club's Child Safety Officer.
- Further support for the child, relevant adults and others may be required, including a referral to wellbeing or healthcare professionals and/or the development of a safety plan.

Contact details for advice or to report child abuse allegations

If a child is at risk of immediate harm call 000

VICTORIA POLICE Non-urgent police assistance 131 444 police.vic.gov.au	DEPT of HUMAN SERVICES Child protection business hours (Monday – Friday) 1300 598 521 After hours: 13 12 78	BNC CHILD SAFETY OFFICER BNCsafety@brunswicknetballclub.org
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Monitoring and review

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

Related policies and procedures

BNC Commitment to Child Safety

BNC Code of Conduct

BNC Complaints Procedure

BNC Risk Management Plan

BNC WWCC Register

Further information

Netball Victoria Child Safety Standards Resource Hub

<https://vic.netball.com.au/child-safeguarding-resource-hub>

Document history table

Version	Reason for update	Date approved
1	New document	25 April 2023
2	Updated to include grooming definition and reference to other BNC policy documents	24 January 2024