



## Werribee Bowling Club Inc

### Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

#### Stronger Standards, safer children

Victoria's Child Safe Standards are a set of mandatory requirements to protect children and young people from harm and abuse.

The Child Safe Standards (the Standards) commenced in Victoria in January 2016. After six years, we have seen how the Standards improve safety for children and young people.

Changes have been made to make our Standards even stronger. The new Child Safe Standards came into force on 1 July 2022 and organisations now need to comply with these new Standards.

- The Werribee Bowls club have now implemented a policy to the standards set out above by the Victorian Child Safety Standards Program

<sup>11</sup> The Werribee Bowls Club is a community-based Sports organization that helps children aged four and up to develop skills in the Sport of Lawn Bowls. The Werribee Bowls Club has approximately 2000 students who flow through the club on an annual basis. The Bowls club operates in Metro Melbourne in the suburb of Werribee and the community has a significant multiculturalism population in the Wyndham community.

#### Werribee Bowls Club Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

*The Werribee Bowls Club acknowledges the Wurundjeri people, the Traditional Owners of the land on which we operate. We acknowledge and respect their contributions, experience and knowledge as First Nations people. We pay our respects to their Elders, past and present.*

This Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy was approved by the Management Committee on 30 June 2021. It demonstrates the strong commitment of management, staff and volunteers to child safety and wellbeing, and how our organization keeps children safe from harm, including child abuse.

#### Commitment to child safety

All children who come to the Werribee Bowls Club have a right to feel and be safe. The welfare of the children in our care will always be our first priority and we have a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and harm. We aim to create a child safe and child-friendly environment where children feel safe and have fun while enjoying learning the performing arts.

#### Purpose

This WBC Policy outlines how Kids at our premises prioritises the safety and wellbeing of children and what steps we will take to do this.

<https://werribeebowlsclub.com>

## **Scope**

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, Management Committee members, children and other individuals involved in our organization. This policy applies to all activities – coaching, classes, tutoring and performances – conducted by the Werribee Bowls Club

## **Definitions**

*Management Committee* means the Board Chairperson and the board, committee members and all coaching members, and Parents' Representatives.

*Child abuse* means:

- a sexual offence committed against a child
- an offence committed against a child under section 49M(1) of the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic), such as grooming
- physical violence against a child
- causing serious emotional or psychological harm to a child
- Serious neglect of a child.

*Harm* is damage to the health, safety or wellbeing of a child or young person, including as a result of child abuse by adults or the conduct of other children. It includes physical, emotional, sexual and psychological harm. Harm can arise from a single act or event and can also be cumulative, that is, arising as a result of a series of acts or events over a period of time.

*Child/Children* means a person who is under the age of 18 years.

### *Concerns and complaints*

A concern refers to any potential issue that could impact negatively on the safety and wellbeing of children.

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction to Werribee Bowls Club related to one or more of the following:

- our services or dealings with individuals
- allegations of abuse or misconduct by a staff member, a volunteer or another individual associated with WBC
- disclosures of abuse or harm made by a child or young person
- the conduct of a child or young person at WBC
- the inadequate handling of a prior concern
- General concerns about the safety of a group of children or students or activity.

## **Role of the Management Committee**

The Management Committee has the role of making sure Werribee Bowls Club prioritises children's safety and that action is taken when anyone raises concerns about children's safety.

The Management Committee will champion and model a child safe culture at the Werribee Bowls Club. We encourage anyone involved with the organisation to report a child safety concern. The Management Committee will work to create a positive culture around reporting so that people feel comfortable to raise concerns.

Everyone at the Werribee Bowls Club has a role in identifying and managing risks of child abuse and harm. The Management Committee will make sure that staff and volunteers are

conducting risk assessments and taking action to manage risks in accordance with this policy. They will also ensure that appropriate child safety training for staff and volunteers is identified and completed.

The Management Committee will conduct an annual review of how effectively the Werribee Bowls Club is delivering child safety and wellbeing. The input of people involved with Werribee Bowls club will be sought as part of this review.

### **Children's empowerment and participation**

Werribee Bowls Club is a family and child-centred sports organisation. We actively seek to include children's views and ideas at an adolescent age in our organisational planning, delivery of services including sports performances, and management of coaching facilities.

We want children to develop new friends through the bowls community and encourage children to be supportive of each other. We do not tolerate bullying or abusive behaviour between children and take action if this occurs.

We respect the rights of children and provide them with information about their rights including the right to be safe at the Werribee Bowls Club. We actively seek to understand what makes children feel safe in our organisation. We regularly communicate with children about what they can do if they feel unsafe.

Werribee Bowls Club values the voices of children and will act on safety concerns raised by children or their families. Werribee Bowls Club supports children's participation in the following ways:

- Regular discussions with children, including child-led conversations on what makes them feel safe and unsafe.
- A suggestion box for children that is regularly emptied with suggestions assessed and acted on where appropriate. Children are provided with feedback on their suggestions.
- Consultation with children about any proposed significant changes to the physical environment, policies, procedures, programs or staffing. Children's views are collected by designated staff, provided to management and considered in the decision-making process.
- Information provided to children and families about Werribee Bowls club operations, staffing and programs are made suitable for different age groups and diversity of the children. Child safety information sessions will be offered in the appropriated language where possible

### **Families and communities**

Werribee Bowl's Club recognises the important role of families and involves parents and carers when making significant decisions about their child. Parents, family's communities and members are welcome to provide feedback at any time through our contact email address and are encouraged to raise any concerns they have with us.

It will be discussed at the Monthly Board general meetings each month, we elect the Chair and possible parent representatives on the Management Bowls Committee and all community members are invited to share their thoughts on the direction of Kids at the Werribee Bowls club for the next year.

Werribee Bowls Club provides information to families and community about our child safe policies and practices including through:

- publishing this Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Code of Conduct on our website

- including information about our child safety approach, our operations and Management Committee and management structure, in the Werribee Bowls club parent and paper information manual (To be established on a defined date)
- Including articles and information on child safety and wellbeing, and reminders about our policies and procedures, in our clubs newsletter.

### **Creating culturally safe environments for all Aboriginal children and their families**

Werribee Bowls Club is committed to creating environments where Aboriginal culture is celebrated and Aboriginal children, families and community members are welcomed and included. Strategies to embed cultural safety for Aboriginal children include:

- an Acknowledgement of Country at all performances
- consulting with families and members of the Aboriginal community to identify opportunities to promote Aboriginal culture and practices in the Werribee Bowls club programs
- providing opportunities for children to share their cultural identity and express their culture, including through performance and during their sports interests in community activities while at the WBC
- supporting children who wish to explore their culture, including consulting with their family and relevant Aboriginal organisations
- providing training for staff and volunteers on the strengths of Aboriginal culture and its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children
- celebrating NAIDOC Week and acknowledging significant events including National Sorry Day and National Reconciliation Week
- Seeking feedback from Aboriginal children, families and communities on their experience at the Werribee Bowls Club particularly how safe they feel expressing their identity including their culture.

### **Valuing diversity**

We value diversity and equity for all children. To achieve this, we:

- provide training for all Management Committee members, staff and volunteers on understanding diversity and how to support inclusion and cultural safety
- welcome and support participation of all children, including children with disability, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who are unable to live at home, LGBTIQ children and Aboriginal children and their families
- offer students and families through our enrolment forms the opportunity to provide information about themselves, including any specific needs to participate fully in our programs
- have zero tolerance of racism and other forms of discrimination and take action when discrimination or exclusion is identified
- deliver programming that reflects the diversity of our students, their interests and cultures
- strive to reflect the diversity of our community through representation in our staff and Management Committee members – we are committed to having representatives of any diverse culture through our kids programs acknowledge and celebrate important cultural dates in our classes
- have a physical and online environment that actively celebrates diversity
- Commit to ensuring our facilities and online activities promote inclusion of children of all abilities.

## **Code of Conduct**

The Werribee Bowls Club has a Safe Code of Conduct Policy. Staff, volunteers and the Management Committee must comply with the Code of Conduct at all times. Breaches of the Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action including termination of a person's involvement with the organisation.

All third-party contractors are also expected to abide by the Child Safe Code of Conduct, and where they are engaging with children will have to sign an agreement to comply with the code, prior to delivering any services.

## **Recruiting staff and volunteers**

Werribee Bowls Club puts child safety and wellbeing at the centre of recruitment and screening processes for staff and volunteers as outlined in the newly updated recruitment and screening policy. We only recruit staff and volunteers who are appropriate to engage with children. Members of the Management Committee must also be screened.

We require a Working with Children Check, Police Checks and referee checks for all staff and volunteers who have a role with children or have access to children's personal information. We require staff to have appropriate qualifications for their roles and check to make sure these qualifications are valid. Members of the Management Committee must hold a valid Working with Children Check and a national Police Check is required.

## **Supporting staff and volunteers**

Werribee Bowls Club is committed to ensuring that all leaders, staff and volunteers receive training to ensure they understand their responsibilities in relation to child safety and to support their engagement with children. Werribee Bowls Club assists its leaders, staff and volunteers to incorporate child safety considerations into decisions and to promote a safe environment where children are empowered to speak up about issues that affect them.

Werribee Bowls Club Management Committee members, leaders, staff and volunteers are required to complete annual child safety training. Training will be recorded in the Child Safety Training Action Plan.

Staff and volunteers will receive supervision to support their engagement with children and for compliance with our Code of Conduct and Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy. (Being developed)

Issues or concerns about behaviour with children will be raised immediately and addressed in line with our Code of Conduct, complaint handling policy and disciplinary policy.

## **Complaints and reporting**

All reports of child abuse and child safety concerns will be treated seriously, whether they are made by an adult or a child and whether they are about the conduct of an adult or a child. All complaints and child safety concerns will be responded to promptly and thoroughly.

Werribee Bowls Club has a complaint handling policy that includes information for staff and volunteers about how a complaint or child safety concern will be responded to. An easy-to-understand complaints information sheet will be provided for children, families and the community to know about the complaint process and the supports available to those making a complaint and those involved in the complaint process.

If a complaint includes an allegation or incident of child abuse or harm, then staff and volunteers at the Werribee Bowls Club must report it in accordance with the complaint handling policy. Werribee Bowls club staff and volunteers are required to prioritise children's safety in any response and to report all potentially criminal conduct to Victoria Police. Under the complaint handling and disciplinary policies, staff and volunteers may be subject to actions to support child safety including:

- being stood down during an investigation or terminated following an investigation
- having their duties altered so they do not engage with children at the Werribee Bowls Club
- not allowing unsupervised contact with children at Werribee Bowls Club
- Removing their access to the child programs and facilities.

Complaints can be emailed to [werribeebowls@hotmail.com](mailto:werribeebowls@hotmail.com) or you can speak with one of the WBC Board of directors in person.

***If there is concern for the immediate safety of a child, immediately call 000.***

### **Child Safety Person**

Werribee bowls club will appoint a trained child safety persons with responsibility for responding to any child safety related complaints or concerns.

Child safety persons are introduced to children so they know and understand who the appointed officers are, and how and when they may contact them. Photos and names of the child safety persons are displayed on our noticeboard and in our newsletters.

If a person does not feel comfortable making a report to a child safety person, they may report their concern to the Chair of the Board of Management Committee.

### **Record keeping**

Werribee Bowls Club is committed to making and keeping full and accurate records about all child-related complaints or safety concerns.

All child safety complaints, concerns, incidents and near misses will be recorded and lodged in the incident reporting system folder.

Records which may assist with the investigation of a complaint or safety concern will be identified and kept as part of the record of an investigation. Records will be kept even if an investigation does not substantiate a complaint.

We will record and keep the outcome of any investigations, and the resolution of any complaints. This includes findings made, reasons for decisions and actions taken.

Records will be stored securely and kept by Werribee Bowl's club for at least 45 years.

### **Information sharing**

Werribee Bowl's Club may share relevant information to promote the safety and wellbeing of children, where it is appropriate and in their best interests. WBC will keep information about complaints confidential, except where it is necessary to share information to respond properly to a complaint or to prioritise child safety. We may also need to share information about incidents or complaints with external authorities to comply with the law or to prioritise safety. More information is available in our complaint handling policy.

## **Risk management**

We recognise the importance of identifying and managing risks of child harm and abuse in the physical and online environments operated by Werribee Bowls Club.

We conduct regular risk assessments and have a risk management plan to address the risk of child abuse and harm at Werribee Bowls Club. The risk management plan will be developed in consultation with our staff, volunteers, parent representatives, Schools and children. We will ensure that any risk controls put in place balance the need to manage harm with the benefits of participating at Werribee Bowls Club. The Board of Management Committee is responsible for approving the risk management plan.

Any contractors or other providers of services will always be supervised by a member of staff while working with us to ensure child safety. See also Code of Conduct above.

Werribee Bowl's club will enforce this policy, the Code of Conduct and any other child safety and wellbeing policies. Potential breaches by anyone will be investigated and may result in restriction of duties, suspension or termination of employment or engagement or other corrective action. More information can be found in our disciplinary code of Conduct policy.  
Review

Werribee Bowls Club will review all child safe practices and policies at least every two years. We also review relevant practices and policies in response to a child safety incident or 'near miss'. Findings from reviews will be reported to the people involved in our organisation and also inform our approach to continuous improvement of our child safety practices. Reviews are overseen by the Board of Management Committee and will be informed by consultation with children, families, members and staff. Supporting documents –Werribee Bowls Club child safety and wellbeing system

- The following policies and procedures work together to support child safety and wellbeing across all of our operations:
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy See above
- WBC Code of Conduct
- complaint handling policy
- recruitment and screening policy
- disciplinary policy
- risk management plan
- child safe training plan.

## **Supporting legislation**

- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)* (including Child Safe Standards)
- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)* (including reporting to Child Protection)
- *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)* (including Failure to Protect and Failure to Disclose offences)

*Wrongs Act 1958 (Vic) (including Part XIII – Organisational liability for child abuse)*

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