

KEW COMETS JUNIOR FOOTBALL CLUB

CHILD SAFE POLICY

1. Purpose

The committee members, officials, and volunteers of the Kew Comets Junior Football Club (**the Club**) are committed to child safety. This document provides an outline of the policies and practices the Club has developed to keep everyone involved with our club safe from any harm, including abuse.

2. Policy Statement

Commitment to Child Safety

All children who are part of the Club have a right to feel and be safe. The welfare of the children in our care will always be our first priority and the Club has a zero tolerance to child abuse. The Club strives to create a child safe and child friendly environment where children feel safe and have fun, as well as the opportunity to develop their football skills.

3. Implementation

Application of Policy

This policy was developed by the Club Committee with reference to Victorian Government Child Safe Standards, the Working with Children Act 2005 as amended by the Children Legislation Amendment Act 2019, Vic Sport Guidelines, and AFL Community policies. The policy reflects the Club's values of respect, inclusive participation and safety-first mindset.

This policy applies to all individuals involved in the Club (paid and volunteer) including, but not limited to:-

- Administrators;
- Coaches;
- Officials;
- Volunteers;
- Players;
- Parents/Carers;
- Spectators;
- Service providers;

All of the people to which this policy applies have a role and responsibility in relation to child protection.

The Club's Child Safe Policy is communicated to volunteers and staff via email and our website.

Child Abuse

Child abuse can take a broad range of forms including physical, sexual, emotional or psychological abuse, and neglect. People to whom this policy applies need to be aware that child abuse can occur whenever there is actual or potential harm to a child, and these are circumstances the Club is committed to reduce the risk of occurrence.

Children's Rights to Safety and Participation

The Club encourages children to express any concerns about their safety to a parent, carer, Team Manager, Coach, or the Club Child Safety Officer. The Club website provides contact details for the Child Safety Officer.

We listen to and act on any concerns children, or their parents/carers, raise with us. Mandatory Reporting requirements and guidelines are adhered to by all Committee Members and volunteer officials. Matters are managed sensitively while respecting the privacy and obligations of all parties concerned.

Supporting Staff and Volunteers

The Club provides support and supervision to all volunteers so people feel valued, respected and fairly treated.

All coaches and administrators read and sign the Club Code of Conduct at the commencement of each season.

Coaches, Team Managers and Ground Managers monitor and manage behaviour of players, parents, spectators and volunteers. Serious breaches of the Code of Conduct are reported to the Child Safety Officer who will act according to Club, league and legislative processes.

Reporting a Child Safety Concern or Complaint

The Club has appointed a Child Safety Officer. This person will respond to any concerns expressed by staff, volunteers, parents, carers or children regarding known or suspected abuse of a child connected with the Club. The Child Safety Officer can be contacted via email childsafetyofficer@kewcomets.com.au or the phone number on the club website.

The Child Safety Officer will:-

- Provide support to the child, parent/carer, person who made the report;
- Clarify the nature of the complaint, and refer in accordance with legal requirements and duty of care, to police or Child Protection;
- Initiate processes to ensure the safety of the child, and other children;
- If necessary, make the report as soon as possible, or support the complainant in making the report as soon as possible;
- The Child Safety Officer may also provide support to the accused if they are a club volunteer or staff member;

- Work with the appropriate Committee members, club officials, and/or league officials regarding behaviour and/or disciplinary action, if not found to be a Child Protection or police matter;
- Review club policies and practices to minimise risk of future similar events/behaviour.

Risk Management

In addition to general health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks 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;
- Travelling to/from training, games or other club events;
- Having direct contact when coaching or managing children;
- Communicating directly with children via text, messaging apps, social media, email, written correspondence, or telephone. Parents or team officials should be copied into all correspondence with children.

Our Child Safe Policy is communicated to all volunteers and staff via our website, and by email to volunteer parents.

Working with Children Checks

Working with Children Checks (WWCC) are mandatory for all club Volunteers over the age of 18.

AFL Victoria expressly requires all parents who volunteer in a role that brings them into regular contact with children, to hold a WWCC, even if their child is participating in the activity. What is deemed ‘regular’ is a grey area, and as most of our parents are needed to volunteer in some capacity for multiple games through the season, mandatory checks apply to all adults involved as volunteers or staff at the Club.

4. Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, prior to the commencement of each season, or as required by changes in legislation.