



FOOTBALL  
NSW

# WORKING WITH KIDS HANDBOOK

INFORMATION FOR COACHES, MANAGERS & OFFICIALS





## ARE YOU LOOKING FOR...

- a **complete accommodation** solution for your sports team?
- a facility that **recognises your individual sport's** requirements?

The newly refurbished accommodation venue at Valentine Sports Park, Glenwood, is an ideal location for sports team accommodation in Sydney.



### ACCOMMODATION

Valentine Sports Park has capacity for up to 192 tenants in one period. The accommodation offers 38 quad share rooms, 20 twin share rooms and three breakout function rooms in which guests can relax or stage meetings.



### DINING

Valentine Sports Park offers complete flexibility in your dining experience. Stay with us and we'll handle breakfast, lunch and dinner. You can even choose which meals you'd like catered for your stay.



### FACILITIES

Valentine Sports Park is located in Glenwood, Sydney and has two synthetic playing fields, three turf fields and a multi-purpose indoor sports complex, conference/function/meeting rooms and is located near a range of off-site activities.

**CALL US NOW on (02) 8814 4400 or visit [www.valentinesportspark.com.au](http://www.valentinesportspark.com.au) and we'll tailor a quote based on your sports team accommodation needs.**

Include as much or as little as you want. Let us do the hard work and organise your transportation, catering and venue hire or stick to the essentials and know your accommodation is taken care of.

Ph: 02 8814 4400 235-257 Meurants Lane Glenwood NSW 2768

[www.valentinesportspark.com.au](http://www.valentinesportspark.com.au)



# Contents

---

How to Apply for a Working with Children Check and Obtain a WWC Number .....	4
The FFA Coaches Code of Ethics .....	5
Guidelines for Coaches & Others.....	6
Frequently Asked Questions .....	10
Child Protection	
What is Child Protection? .....	13
Tools & Tips for Coaching Children .....	14
Tips for Coaches.....	15
How are Children different from Adults .....	16
Dealing with Difficult Parents .....	17
Definitions of Child Abuse .....	19
Discrimination .....	21
Physical Contact with Children.....	22
Checklist for Coaches & Managers .....	24
Acknowledgements .....	25
Support for Coaches, Managers & Officials.....	26

# How to Apply for a Working with Children Check and Obtain a WWC Number

## Persons who work or volunteer with children u18 in sport must now apply for a Working with Children Check and obtain a WWC Number

The WWC Check is a NSW State Government requirement which applies to people who work or volunteer with children.

If you already have a WWC Number you must provide it to your club if you work or volunteer with children u18.

If you don't have a WWC Number and are not exempt from the WWC Check, then you must apply for a WWC Check and provide your WWC number to your club if you intend working or volunteering with children u18.

Examples: WWC1234567E - The 'E' represents an employed person but can also be used for volunteer positions

WWC1234567V - The 'V' represents a volunteer only and cannot be used by employed (paid) persons

Child related positions in sport include Coach, Assistant Coach, Manager, Trainer, Physiotherapist, Referee Coach, Referee Assessor or Mentor, MPIO and other positions that involve face-to-face work with children aged under 18.

Exemptions: Persons under 18 years of age, referees, canteen managers, canteen workers, grounds persons and volunteers who only coach or manage their own child's team or close relatives team are exempt from the WWC Check.

## How to apply for a WWC Check

### STEP 1: Apply on-line

- Go to [www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au](http://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au)
- Select the blue START HERE box
- Select the Apply for Your Check box and then complete all sections of the application form ensuring that:
- You insert your full name as stated on your Driver's Licence or the Proof of ID you intend to use.
- In the Child Related Sector section – select Clubs or other bodies providing services to children
- When you have completed the application form, click NEXT in the lower right hand corner.
- You will then receive an email with an application number similar to this: APP1234567E or V.
- Print out the Application (APP) Number and proceed to Step 2.

### STEP 2: Attend a Motor Registry

To complete the process you must now attend a NSW motor registry and take with you:

- Your Application (APP) Number, and
- Proof of your identity (i.e. NSW Drivers Licence or other ID as stated on your application).
- \$80 fee if you are in paid work (Paid workers pay \$80 for a 5 year clearance)
- There is no cost if you are a volunteer (a volunteer clearance lasts 5 years also)

### STEP 3: Provide your WWC Number to your Club

- You should receive your WWC Number by email within a few days or by post if you do not have email.
- You must then provide your WWC Number to your Club.
- Your club will verify your clearance through an on-line Checking system.

Self-employed persons must also have a WWC Number if they are self-employed in child-related work.

## More Information

Visit [www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au](http://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au) or phone **02 9286 7276**.



# The FFA Coaches Code of Ethics

---

## This code is designed:

- To emphasise the elements of enjoyment and satisfaction to junior player's and coaches involved in football.
- To make adults including parents and coach's aware that young player's play football to satisfy themselves and not necessarily to satisfy adults or member's of their own peer group.
- To improve the overall health and fitness of Australia's youth by encouraging participation in football and making it attractive, safe and enjoyable for all to play.
- To remind administrator's, coach's, referee's and parents that football must be administered, taught and provided, for the good of those young people who wish to play football, as ultimately "It is their game".

## Coaches Code of Ethics

- ✓ I will respect the rights, dignity and worth of all players and ensure that everyone is treated equally.
- ✓ I will ensure that the players are involved in a positive environment, and that the game and training is a positive and enjoyable experience.
- ✓ I will respect all player's individuality and help them reach their own full potential.
- ✓ I will be fair, considerate and honest with all players.
- ✓ I will be professional and accept responsibility for my actions and encourage players to demonstrate the same qualities.
- ✓ I will make a commitment to my team, and myself that I will continue to improve my own knowledge of the game through coach education and various training programs.
- ✓ I will coach my player's to play within the rules and in the spirit of the game of football.
- ✓ I will avoid any physical contact with the players and should it be required it would be appropriate to the situation and necessary for the player's skill development.
- ✓ I will refrain from any form of personal abuse towards my players. Also be aware to any form's of abuse directed towards my players from other sources whilst they are in my care.
- ✓ I will refrain from any from of harassment towards my players.
- ✓ I will provide a safe environment for training and competition, by ensuring the equipment and facilities meet safety standards.
- ✓ I will show concern and caution towards sick and injured players and allow for further participation in training and competition only when appropriate.
- ✓ I will not engage in the use of crude, foul or abusive language that may be determined offensive or engage in any conduct detrimental to the image of the game when on or off the field.
- ✓ I will refrain from arguing with the referee and / or assistant referees regarding decisions they make.
- ✓ I will treat participants, officials and spectators with courtesy and respect.
- ✓ I will always encourage my team to play within the laws of the game.
- ✓ I will not consent to the use of any banned substance or drugs of dependence by my players.
- ✓ I will act in a responsible manner and accept responsibility for my actions.

# Guidelines for Coaches & Others

---



Clubs should provide guidelines for coaches and other personnel to protect them from risk and to keep children safe. This publication is intended as a general guide and is not to be taken as professional advice. It is recommended that sporting organisations develop guidelines tailored to the needs and context of their sport.

## **Maintain appropriate boundaries**

Coaches and other personnel in positions of authority should maintain clear:

### **Physical boundaries**

- Use drills to develop fitness, not as a punishment.
- Only use physical contact that is appropriate for the development of a particular skill.
- Work within sight of others at all times.

### **Emotional/verbal boundaries**

- Use positive feedback on performance, not negative feedback about the person.
- Be encouraging and avoid put-downs.

### **Social boundaries**

- Attend sport-related events such as sponsorship and fund-raising events, celebrations and annual meetings but don't socialise with athletes outside sporting functions.

### **Sexual boundaries**

- Don't have sexual relationships with athletes you're coaching.
- Don't touch athletes in ways likely to make them feel uncomfortable.

In particular:

### **Minimise physical contact**

Generally physical contact with players/athletes should be to:

- develop sport skills
- give sports massage
- treat an injury
- prevent or respond to an injury
- meet the specific requirements of the sport.

All physical contact by personnel should fulfil the following criteria:

- physical contact should be appropriate for the development of a sport skill/s
- permission from the player/participant should always be sought
- player/athletes be congratulated or comforted in public not in an isolated setting.

---

## Avoid being alone with a child

To protect both yourself and a child from risk:

- Do not isolate yourself and a child and avoid being alone with any particular child.
- If a child approaches you and wants to talk to you privately about a matter, do so in an open area and in the sight of other adults (e.g., other coaches, officials or parents/guardians).
- Before going into change rooms knock or announce that you will be coming in. Try to have at least one adult with you in a change room with children.

## Maintain control – avoid losing your temper

Adopt positive language and behaviour (e.g., avoid bad or aggressive language that could intimidate a child or set a poor example).

- If you find that you regularly lose your temper with children, you should seek support in learning how to manage children's behaviour so that you don't lose your temper or consider whether you have the patience to work with children.

### Some ideas to assist with maintaining control include:

- Set up some basic rules at the beginning of the season such as be nice but firm, be fair, follow instructions, have a go, no put downs. Make sure children are aware of these rules. "Nice but firm" avoids creating problems of ambiguity as it makes it clear where an adult stands in relation to the child. I think being "fair" is also important because of the strong message it sends to young, impressionable children.
- Give positive messages
- Have a time out area for children and young people that are not behaving. This should be simple such as an agreed T sign with the hands that children know means to go to time out for two minutes.
- Adopt a card system to express concerns with a child's behaviour rather than becoming verbally agitated. For example a yellow card is a warning, two yellow cards means time out for two minutes and a red card could mean the child misses out of next week's game.



## Make sure parents are clear about collection of their children

Parents need to be responsible for the collection of their children from practise and games. A list of actions that could help include:

- Have a register of parent/guardian emergency contact numbers and make sure coaches/officials have access to a phone.
- Letting children, parents/guardians know practise and game times, when they can expect to collect their children and that it is not your responsibility to transport children home if parents are delayed.
- Asking the second to last child and their parent/ guardian to wait with the coach/official and the child.
- Getting parents to collect their children from the club room (e.g., if you have a club room where there will be other people).
- If there are other people at the ground or facility, wait for the parent/ guardian closer to those people. In the meantime try to make contact with the parent/ guardian.
- Avoid the risk of being alone with a child by having a parent/guardian or support person assist you with the training. Require that person to wait until all children have left.

---

## Avoid transporting players/athletes

Ideally all players/participants should have their own transportation to and from sporting events. You should only provide transportation when:

- the driver is properly licensed to carry passengers; and
- other players/ participants/parents/guardians are in the vehicle; and
- the ride has been approved in writing by parents/ guardians; and
- the ride is directly to/from sports or recreational activities.

Signed authorisation by the parents should be sought at the commencement of the season saying that they agree to their child being transported by the relevant person if they are unavailable to provide transport.

You should also call someone and tell them what you are doing, and the exact time you are leaving so that you are accountable for your time.

## Plan for overnight and away trips

Make sure you have appropriate levels of supervision. The general rule of thumb is a minimum of two staff with a ratio of 1:8 although this can vary between 1:12 and 1:4 and depends on a number of other factors.

Other considerations include:

- If you're taking a mixed team or all girls' group away, there must be at least one woman accompanying the group.
- If there's only going to be one adult accompanying you, the person must not be a relation or a partner.
- At least one adult on the trip should have a current First Aid Certificate.
- Adults should not share rooms with children.
- Ensure emergency procedures are in place to enable supervising adults to be able to respond to any alarm raised by a child. If an alarm is raised by a child, more than one adult should respond.

Adults attending overnight or away trips should have a police or Working With Children Check (or in Queensland be holders of a current Blue Card).

## Qualified personnel should attend to injuries

Only personnel who are qualified in administering first aid or treating sports injuries should attempt to treat an injury. Personnel should avoid treating injuries out of sight of others. Other considerations include:

- The comfort level and dignity of the player/participant should always be the priority.
- Only uncover the injured area, or drape private parts of the player/participants body.
- Always report injuries and any treatment provided to parents and document an incident. Clubs should keep an injuries register that will contain basic information about the time and date of the injury, where it occurred, what it was, the treatment provided and by whom, and whether further medical attention was required or recommended.
- If necessary, seek medical attention as soon as possible or recommend that parents seek medical attention. It's important to have a "blood rules" policy and ensure coaches and officials know to remove any child that is bleeding from a game and to stop the flow of blood before being allowed to again join in the activity.





---

## Support participants with disabilities

It is important that participants with disabilities have the same opportunities to be involved in sport and recreation activities as able bodied participants. This may require, where reasonable, the modification of games, equipment and rules. Provision of specialist support, appropriate transport and training for those assisting with matters such as lifting and toileting may also be required.

Because participants with disabilities may be more vulnerable to abuse or neglect, clubs and organisation may need to take additional steps to ensure their safety. Advice can be obtained from the relevant disabled sporting association.

## Have clear guidelines for photographing children

It's important that clubs and coaches understand current advice around acquiring and using images of children.

Some key points include:

- Do not allow photographers (professional photographers, spectators, fans, coaches or members of the media) unsupervised or individual access to children.
- Ensure you inform the team/athlete and parent(s) if you want to photograph or video the athlete(s) as a tool to analyse and improve performance. (This practice would need to consider any photographing policy in existence for the sport and if on private property)
- Obtain the written consent of parent /guardian and their agreement to be present before approving photo/video sessions outside the event venue or at the home of a child. Where possible, have the photo taken at the event venue.
- If the photographs/videos are to be used generally, e.g., as teaching tools or for some other purpose such as for promotional reasons, obtain the written consent of the parents that the photographs/videos can be used for those purposes.
- Provide details of who to contact within the club or organisation if concerns or complaints of inappropriate photographic behaviour or content are raised. There are some people who visit sporting events to take inappropriate photographs or video footage of children. You need to be alert to this possibility and report any concerns to a responsible person in your club (e.g., the President, Secretary, a committee person).

### **These guidelines have been adapted from information from the:**

Child Protection in Sport Unit UK - [www.thecpsu.org.uk](http://www.thecpsu.org.uk)

Australian Sports Commission - [www.ausport.gov.au](http://www.ausport.gov.au)

New South Wales Department for Tourism Sport and Recreation - [www.dsr.nsw.gov.au/children](http://www.dsr.nsw.gov.au/children)

*Play by the Rules is supported by the Australian, state and territory governments.*

*The information on Play by the Rules is not intended as a substitute for legal or other professional advice.*

© Play by the Rules [www.playbytherules.net.au](http://www.playbytherules.net.au)

Updated May 2011

# Frequently Asked Questions

---

## How can I best give feedback to a player or participant about their poor behaviour?

Feedback should be used to teach or reinforce appropriate behaviour and not to gain power, embarrass or humiliate a child or young person. Behaviour management strategies are a normal part of a coaching relationship.

## Should I drive a player/participant home after a game or practice?

Ideally, all players/participants should have their own transportation to and from sporting events. You should follow your club's guidelines for transporting children. You should avoid transporting players if possible, but if you have no other options:

### You can provide transportation when:

- the ride has been approved by parents/guardians
- other players/participants/parents/guardians are also in the vehicle (where possible).

## What should I do if an athlete is injured and clothing must be removed to treat the injury?

Only people who are qualified in administering first aid or treating sports injuries should attempt to treat an injury. You should avoid treating injuries out of sight of others.

### Other things to consider include:

- the comfort level and dignity of the player/participant should always be the priority
- only uncover the injured area, or drape the player's/participant's private parts
- always report injuries and treatment to parents, and document an incident fully.

## Can I physically comfort a player or participant?

It is okay to comfort a child or young person who is upset or hurt. However, you should comfort a player/participant in public and not in an isolated setting.



---

## What if I witness someone harassing a team mate?

Where possible you should intervene and stop the behaviour, following the guidelines for dealing with harassment as outlined in your club's Member Protection policy. You could also use the situation as an opportunity for an open discussion with the entire team about the club's policy on discrimination, harassment and abuse.

## What should I do if I discover that initiation rites/behaviours occurred during a team trip?

Do not take part in, encourage or tolerate behaviour that frightens, embarrasses, demoralises or negatively affects a player's/participant's self esteem and sense of safety. You should talk to all players/participants and discuss the organisation's policy on bullying and harassment. You should discuss the implications, and follow policy guidelines.

## What should I do if a parent, who is involved in a custody dispute over a child on your team, arrived to pick up his/her child without the other parent's permission?

You may need to ask your club or association to seek the advice of a lawyer when establishing guidelines regarding child-release policies and procedures. Check if your club has a 'release form' for parents, specifying who may pick up the child from games, practices, etc. If in doubt, contact the other parent before releasing the child. Try to keep the child protected from public tussles between parents over who should take the child home. Call the police to deal if matters escalate.

## What should I do if a parent is repeatedly late to pick up a player after games and practices - often so late that everyone else has left the facility?

Late pick-up of athletes can create difficult situations for coaches and other people working with children.

### Some ideas include:

- attempt to phone the parent/guardian
- attempt to contact the alternative contact provided by the parent/guardian
- wait at the facility with the child - ideally with other club members, team members or parents.
- when the parent/guardian arrives, address the issue of late pick-up immediately and directly.
- talk to parents early in the season about picking their children up on-time
- Some coaches have a policy that they keep the last 2 players back until their parents arrive to ensure they are not left alone with an individual player.

## How might coaches and officials manage the 'ugly' parent?

The 'ugly' or angry parent can be a big problem for the child or young person, the team, and the club or organised group. Some solutions are: Codes of Conduct for parents' behaviour, banning or excluding parents from games or events, or club policy regarding appropriate parent behaviour.

### As a coach or official, it is important that you:

- stay calm and in control, not getting caught up in the same behaviour
- remind them of the Codes of Conduct, and that they are role models for the children and young people
- get support from the club if excluding or banning parents from games

- 
- have a parent meeting at the start of the season and set some ground rules
  - circulate a “Dos and Don’ts” of expected behaviour before each season.

### **As a coach, can I become friends with parents and not be accused of playing favourites?**

Stay professional and objective. If the child or young person is left off the team, or is on the field more than others you could be perceived as having a bias.

#### **Ways to avoid this are:**

- have two officials on selection panels
- routinely rotate players on the field
- make the game the important thing not the winning.

If it is clear that you are acting professionally at all times, it will be difficult to accuse you of favouritism.

### **Two junior team members ask to be dropped off in the city following an away game. Is this okay?**

No. During all activities where you have the care and responsibility for children, you retain a duty of care for their safety and wellbeing until they are returned to their parents/guardians.

**For more information visit: [www.playbytherules.net.au](http://www.playbytherules.net.au)**



# Child Protection - What is Child Protection?

---

Child protection is a complex subject and involves a number of aspects. These include the various club, association and sport policies and practices that are put in place to keep children safe from harm – from emotional, physical and sexual abuse. These include having a Member Protection Information Officer at your club and ensuring compliance with the Working with Children Check requirements and forms.

The NSW Working with Children Check also imposes certain obligations on people working in and running child based sporting organisations and other community groups. The WWCC in NSW includes a requirement for people working with children, such as coaches and managers, to undergo a Background Check (Working with Children check) to determine their suitability for the role and hold a WWC number.

The NSW WWCC also requires that sport organisations report reasonable suspicions of children being abused or neglected. Individuals working with children, including teachers and child care workers, and responsible persons in our community, such as Police officers and Doctors are also what are referred to as 'mandatory reporters' and are required by law to report any suspicions of child abuse, maltreatment or neglect.

**For information about the Working with Children check, visit [www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au](http://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au)**



# Tools & Tips for Coaching Children

## What's important to children in sport?

What are the 3 main reasons that children play sport?

According to a recent survey the 3 main reasons children play sport are:

- 1) To have fun
- 2) To make friends
- 3) To play and learn the sport

## Did you notice that winning was not one of the top 3?

According to the same survey, the children felt that winning was most important to a) their coach and b) their parents.

## When coaching children it is also important to remember:

- Children want to be involved in a broad range of activities and an opportunity to be creative
- The focus should be on skill development and individual improvement, not winning
- Specialization in sport is not recommended for young children, participation is the key
- Give all children your time and attention and remember, you are there for everyone



# Tips for Coaches

---

There are several coaching practices that help to ensure children feel safe and protected when participating in sport:

- Use positive reinforcement and acceptable language when talking to a child.
- Behave in a calm and non-confrontational manner at all times.
- Make any physical contact with children in a way that makes them feel comfortable (for example, shaking hands and a congratulatory pat on the back). If a coach must make physical contact with participants as part of a sport activity, then they should explain the activity clearly and ask for the participant's permission to involve them in the activity.
- Avoid situations where a child may feel uncomfortable, for example when applying first aid or ice to an injury. Ask the child first before applying first aid and ask the child to apply the ice if possible.
- Avoid situations where an adult may be alone with a child, for example, change rooms or first aid rooms.
- When children need to be transported, ensure there is more than one child (and, if possible, more than one adult) in the vehicle. Avoid having to transport another person's child if possible and only ever do so with their parent's prior permission.
- If a child ever discloses to you that he or she is being abused by someone, ensure that you notify an appropriate person at the club and/or association and/or NSW Family and Community Services. Remember a child may only ever feel comfortable telling someone about these things once in their lifetime, so take in what they are telling you and don't ignore or disregard the information.
- Document anything involving children that seems to be unusual or 'out of the ordinary'.
- Coach children to be 'good sports' and to 'play fair' and to recognize that they have a right to feel safe, and to know who to come to or tell if they do not feel safe.

# How are Children different from Adults?

---

Children have different sporting capabilities and develop at different stages so for this reason particular consideration should be given to common aspects where children differ from adults.

## **Compared to adults, children:**

### **Technical**

- Have limited co-ordination, agility and balance

### **Tactical**

- Have limited positional awareness

### **Team Play**

- Instinctively play for themselves
- Have limited communication skills

### **Physical**

- Have limited strength
- Endurance – children have lots of energy but need frequent breaks
- Speed – their speed tends to be reactive. There is a window of opportunity to develop speed amongst Children
- Poor response and awareness to heat and cold

### **Psychological**

- Can lack confidence
- Can be emotionally immature – moody/lose self control
- Can be very choosy about friends and who they play with
- Tend to lose concentration quickly or be easily led by others
- Decision making ability can be poor and slow
- May not know how to react to the different situations they might face in a group
- Will often try to emulate what they see from sports stars

People who coach and work with children need to be mindful that each child's stage of development, confidence, communication skills, coping skills and abilities will be different.

Emphasis should be put on a child's own progress, and not on comparing their achievements with others. This means that where possible individual instruction and challenges should be included and a broad range of activities planned and presented.

Activities should steadily be increased through stages to those which are more difficult or complex. Activities for children should be challenging but never impossible to achieve.

---

**ALL CHILDREN ARE INDIVIDUALS  
and the rate at which they develop  
will always be different**

---



# Dealing with Difficult Parents

---

Being a coach is not always easy... especially when you run into difficult parents or parents who try to interfere in what you or the team are doing.

These types of parents can be overbearing, overly competitive, and overly engaged in your decisions as a coach. And some often try to take on the role of coach.

The majority of issues relate to complaints about playing time, who gets to play what position, sportsmanship issues and conflict with schooling and other sports.

No matter how knowledgeable, fair, or kind you are to your team, you can probably expect an irate parent or two to crop up during the season. Here are a few tips for dealing with these situations.

## 1. Club Policy

Know what the club policy is relating to complaints and consult with the club at the start of the season on how to best respond to parent issues.

## 2. Club MPIO (Member Protection Information Officer)

Remember that your club has an MPIO and if you are unable to resolve an issue with the parent/s, then consider referring them to your MPIO or the Play By the Rules website where parents can find helpful information. [www.playbytherules.net.au](http://www.playbytherules.net.au)

## 3. Not at the game

Don't discuss any issues or complaints at the game.

The first thing the coach should avoid is discussing a problem with a parent on or near the field, especially if the parent is visibly upset.

## 4. Don't react

Remain calm. Rather than discuss the problem, the coach should agree to meet at another time to discuss the complaint or refer the parent to a club official.

By doing this, you avoid giving the parent an audience, allow them to 'cool off', and give yourself and/or the club time to prepare a response.

## 5. Be an active listener

When you eventually talk to the parent, one of the most important things you can do is listen. Acknowledge what you have heard what the parent is saying is important. Show an interest in what they are saying.

## 6. Don't interrupt

At a meeting avoid interrupting the parent, just listen and respond once the parent is finished. Sometimes they just want to ensure they have been heard.

## 7. Don't get defensive

The coach should avoid defending or justifying their action. Such behavior at this point may only make the situation worse.

Respond to their concerns with statements like "I'm sorry you feel that way". This will help the parent to understand their problem is being taken seriously. They are likely to be calmer and more willing to find a solution.

---

## 8. Clarify the problem

Asking questions helps both parties to focus on the problem, stick to the facts and avoid being caught up in other issues.

## 9. Offer a range of solutions

A lot of times, parents just want their feelings to be heard. If they want more, try to offer a range of solutions. This demonstrates a willingness to work together to solve the problem. It's important to avoid making promises that you can't keep. Explain to them what you can and cannot do.

## 10. Get closure

Ideally, you will eventually reach a mutual course of action. At this point it's appropriate to end the meeting.

### It should conclude with three things:

1. Leave the parent with a closing statement (E.g. 'I'll be sure that happens')
2. Thank the parent for their interest (no matter how unpleasant the meeting).
3. If follow-up is required, tell them when you will contact them (E.g. 'I'll ring you tomorrow').

This will leave the parent feeling as though their complaint has been heard, and the parent-coach relationship will be strengthened.

## 11. Leave the door open

There will be cases, however after this whole process where you will not be able to give the parent the response they are looking for. It is important in these circumstances that the coach leave the door open for the parent, e.g.. 'If there is ever anything else, please come and see me or see the club official'. By doing this the parent will at least feel that his/her complaint has been taken seriously, and the coach-parent relationship, however strained, will remain intact. Not doing this could allow the problem to fester... and the parent could damage your reputation through word-of-mouth. Complaint processes often vary from club to club depending on their policies and club structure. Be sure you know the clubs policies and processes and ensure that the club is notified of any issues or complaints presented to you that you consider to be of a serious nature or which relate to the welfare of a child.

Always seek the assistance of your club MPIO or a club official if a parent becomes abusive or threatens the welfare of any child in the team at any time.



**Additional information for coaches can be found at [www.playbytherules.net.au](http://www.playbytherules.net.au)**

# Definitions of Child Abuse

---

## Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse refers to acts in which a person with power or authority over a child (female or male) uses the child for sexual gratification. Acts of sexual abuse may be perpetrated by an adult, an adolescent or an older child.

Sexual abuse spans a range of contact and non-contact behaviours.

### **Non-contact behaviours include:**

- Making sexual comments directly, in letters, by telephone, text messages or email
- Voyeurism
- Exposing a child to pornography
- The perpetrator exposing parts of their body, or the child's body
- Exploiting a child through prostitution or pornography.

## Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse refers to a situation in which a child's caregiver or parent repeatedly rejects or threatens the child. It is also referred to as psychological abuse.

This may involve name-calling, putdowns, and inappropriate symbolic acts or continual coldness from the caregiver or parent, to the extent that is significantly damages the child's physical, intellectual or emotional well being and development.

It is a pattern of abuse, not a single incident.

It includes rejecting, ignoring, humiliating, terrorizing, corrupting, verbal abuse and belittlement.

Witnessing family violence is also a form of emotional/psychological abuse. In some states and territories it is defined by legislation as a category of abuse in its own right.



---

## Physical Abuse

Physical abuse occurs when a child or young person is subjected to any non accidental physically aggressive act.

The injury may be inflicted intentionally or may be the inadvertent result of physical punishment, or the aggressive treatment of a child.

Physically abusive behaviours include: shoving, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, biting, burning and kicking.

## Neglect

Neglect refers to a situation in which a child's parent or caregiver fails to provide the child with the basic necessities of life.

It includes the failure to provide:

- Adequate food
- Clothing
- Shelter
- Medical attention or supervision

To the extent that the child's health and development is, or is likely to be, significantly harmed.

*References: Department of Human Services, Victorian Government, Child Protection & Juvenile Justice Branch, (2003) "Responding to Child Abuse".*

*Office for Children, Youth & Family Support, ACT Government (2005) "Keeping Children and Young People Safe". ACCYO*

# Discrimination

---

Discrimination means treating or proposing to treat someone less favourably than someone else because of a particular characteristic in the same or similar circumstances in certain areas of public life (this is Direct Discrimination).

The law also covers Indirect Discrimination. This is imposing or intending to impose an unreasonable requirement, condition or practice that is the same for everyone, but which has an unequal or disproportionate effect on individuals or groups with particular characteristics.

## The characteristics covered by discrimination law across Australia are:

- Age;
- Disability;
- Family/carer responsibilities;
- Gender identity/transgender status;
- Homosexuality and sexual orientation;
- Irrelevant medical record;
- Irrelevant criminal record;
- Political belief/activity;
- Pregnancy and breastfeeding;
- Race;
- Religious belief/activity;
- Sex or gender;
- Social origin;
- Trade union membership/activity.

Some States and Territories include additional characteristics such as physical features or association with a person with one or more of the characteristics listed above.

## Examples of Discrimination in sport:

**Age:** A club refuses to allow an older person to coach a team simply because of their age.

**Breastfeeding:** A member of the club who is breastfeeding her baby in the club rooms is asked to leave.

**Disability:** A junior player is overlooked because of her mild epilepsy.

**Family responsibilities:** A club decides not to promote an employee because he has a child with a disability even though the employee is the best person for the job.

**Gender Identity:** A transgender contract worker is harassed when employees refuse to call her by her female name.

**Homosexuality:** An athlete is ostracised from her team after she tells a team mate that she is a lesbian.

**Marital Status:** A player is deliberately excluded from team activities and social functions because she is single.

**Pregnancy:** A woman is dropped from her squad when she becomes pregnant.

**Race:** An Italian referee is not permitted to referee games with a high proportion of Italian players on one team because of his race.

**Sex:** Specialist coaching is only offered to male players in a mixed team.

# Physical Contact with Children

---

Issues surrounding physical contact in sport can be controversial and complex. Some sports require physical contact between adults and children for skill development; others do not.

If physical contact is to occur, it should always be within clear guidelines to reduce the risk of inappropriate touching and to ensure people working with children e.g., coaches, officials etc. are not placed in situations where they could be accused of abuse.

## **Physical contact is appropriate if it:**

- is used to assist in skill development
- is required for the child's safety
- occurs with the player's understanding and permission
- is for the child's benefit, not adult gratification
- occurs in an open environment.

## **Physical contact is inappropriate if it:**

- includes touching the groin, genital area, buttocks, breasts or any part of the body that may cause distress or embarrassment
- frightens, distresses or embarrasses a child
- destroys their trust
- occurs in a private place.



---

Laws exist throughout Australia to protect children and young people from abuse. Measures that are genuinely necessary to protect the health and safety of children and young people are permitted. In deciding whether contact is appropriate ask: "Is it serving the needs of the player/participant or the adult?"

## Physical Contact When Demonstrating a Skill

- Give verbal instructions first and keep physical contact to a minimum.
- Ask the player's permission before performing a particular activity that may require contact and do not proceed if they feel uncomfortable.
- Be explicit about what you're going to do and why.
- Make sure that the physical contact is appropriate to the development of the skill required.

For example, teaching a child to swim will involve holding arms/feet to demonstrate appropriate movements and supporting the child in learning to float. Holding the child under the breasts or around the groin is inappropriate.

- Demonstrate the skill in a public place, in sight of other people, wherever possible.
- Do not touch genital areas, buttocks, breasts or any part of the body that might cause a child/ young person distress or embarrassment.
- Adopt positive language and behaviour and treat all team members appropriately.

## Physical Contact in Your Coaching Style

Some coaches use physical contact as a way of relating to children and young people. This is not recommended. You need to be aware that:

- legitimate contact that occurs during teaching a skill may be misunderstood or misconstrued by parents, observers and participants;
- touching young participants can result in suspicion and parental concern, particularly if the behaviour occurs repeatedly or appears to focus on particular children;
- gratuitous or unnecessary physical contact may prompt questions about your intentions.

## Responding to Success or Distress

- Ensure you congratulate children and young people in public, never in a private setting.
- Contact should be directly related to the event (e.g., winning a game) and not prolonged, unnecessary or targeted at a particular child or young person.
- Recognise that young people/children may be embarrassed by behaviours that are acceptable to adults.
- Understand that some cultures and religions disapprove of physical contact between adults and children, particularly if the coach is male and the young person female.
- Seek permission, where possible, from the child/young person before making any physical contact.
- Provide appropriate measures to treat or prevent an injury. If an injury occurs, draw upon the skills of a properly trained or qualified practitioner as soon as possible.

# Checklist for Coaches & Managers

---

This checklist will help you to contribute to keeping children safe in your club.

Ideally you should be able to answer yes to each question. If you can't then you should take action so that you can.

## CHILD SAFETY

- Does your club have an MPIO (Member Protection Information Officer)?
- Does your club have a good 'child-safe' culture?
- Are there Codes of Conduct at your club?
- Do you avoid using bad or aggressive language when talking to children?
- Do you know who to report any concerns to at your club about child safety?
- Have you completed the free on-line training at [www.playbytherules.net.au](http://www.playbytherules.net.au)?
- Have you provided your WWC number to your club?

## GROUNDS, EQUIPMENT AND GOALPOST SAFETY

- Do you regularly conduct safety checks on equipment that you use?
- Do you conduct a safety check of the field before training and games?
- Does your club ensure that portable goalposts are secured at all times?
- Do you check that portable goalposts are secured correctly by pegs or sandbags before training and games as per the Australian Standard? (e.g. minimum 10 stakes or 12 sand bags)
- Do your club's portable goalposts have Warning Stickers on them?

**(Stickers can be obtained by contacting the Football NSW Risk Manager on 02 88144400)**

**For more information about Policies, Safety Guidelines, Goalpost Safety and Injury Prevention visit the Club Resources webpage at [www.footballnsw.com.au](http://www.footballnsw.com.au)**



# Acknowledgements

---

- Australian Sports Commission
- NSW Office of the Children’s Guardian
- NSW Office of Communities, Sport and Recreation
- Play By the Rules - [www.playbytherules.net.au](http://www.playbytherules.net.au)
- NAPCAN (National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and neglect)
- ACCYO (Australian Council for Children and Youth Organisations)
- Child Protection and Juvenile Justice, Victorian Govt. “Responding to Child Abuse”.
- Office for Children, Youth and Family ACT “Keeping Children and Young People Safe”.

# Support for Coaches, Managers & Officials

---

## **SUPPORT**

- Member Protection Information Officer (MPIO) at club or association
- Head Coach or Coaching Director
- Club Secretary or Official

## **EDUCATION**

On-line training courses, child protection information - [www.playbytherules.net.au](http://www.playbytherules.net.au)

MPIO Training - [www.playbytherules.net.au](http://www.playbytherules.net.au)

Child-safe Training - [www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au](http://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au)

## **INFORMATION**

Football NSW - [www.footballnsw.com.au](http://www.footballnsw.com.au)

Play by the Rules - [www.playbytherules.net.au](http://www.playbytherules.net.au)

NSW Sport & Recreation - [www.dsr.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dsr.nsw.gov.au)

Australian Sports Commission - [www.ausport.gov.au](http://www.ausport.gov.au)

NSW Office of the Children's Guardian - [www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au](http://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au)

## **FOOTBALL NSW**

Website [www.footballnsw.com.au](http://www.footballnsw.com.au)

Contact: Michelle Hanley

Risk Manager & State MPIO

Phone: 02 8814 4402 or 02 8814 4400

E-mail: [michelle@footballnsw.com.au](mailto:michelle@footballnsw.com.au)

[www.playbytherules.net.au](http://www.playbytherules.net.au)

# Play by the Rules

Fair and safe  
behaviour  
in sport  
and recreation

Everyone needs to feel safe and to act fairly and respectfully towards each other.

## Be a good sport

- Treat all participants in your sport as you like to be treated yourself.
- Co-operate with your team-mates, coach and opponents.
- Control your temper. Verbal abuse and sledging are not acceptable behaviours.
- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of all participants regardless of their ability, gender or cultural background.

## You must feel safe

- playing, at training and practice
- travelling to and from games and training
- with other players, your coach or team personnel

## No-one should

- make you feel unsafe
- ask you to do things that you are not comfortable with
- verbally abuse you or anyone else
- make racist or sexist jokes or comments
- allow offensive pictures or graffiti to be visible
- look at or touch anyone in ways that make them feel uncomfortable
- make uninformed sexual comments that offend, intimidate or humiliate
- discriminate against or harass anyone else

Bad sporting  
behaviour is  
unacceptable and  
it can be unlawful.

[www.playbytherules.net.au](http://www.playbytherules.net.au)

Provides information and online training on equal opportunity and child protection laws to address inappropriate behaviour in sport. It complements the Australian Sports Commission's Harassment-free Sport Strategy.

If a person is not following your sport's guidelines and is behaving inappropriately or if you think that you have been abused, discriminated against or harassed, then tell someone about it:

- a friend, colleague or parent
- a club official or contact officer
- your state or national association
- your department of sport and recreation
- your equal opportunity or anti-discrimination body
- the Australian Sports Commission
- your child welfare agency or the police



Department of Tourism,  
Sport and Recreation  
6 Figtree Drive,  
Homebush Bay NSW 2127  
Locked Bag 1422  
Silverwater NSW 2128  
**Telephone:** (02) 9006 3700  
**Fax:** (02) 9006 3800  
**email:** [info@dsr.nsw.gov.au](mailto:info@dsr.nsw.gov.au)



**Anti-Discrimination**  
Board of New South Wales

Level 17 201 Elizabeth Street  
Sydney NSW 2000  
PO Box 2122 Sydney  
South 1235  
**Telephone:** (02) 9268 5555  
**Fax:** (02) 9268 5500  
**Toll Free:** 1800 670 812  
[www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/adb](http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/adb)



**Australian Government**  
Australian Sports Commission  
[www.ausport.gov.au](http://www.ausport.gov.au)



**Michelle Hanley**

**Risk Manager & State Member Protection Officer,  
Member Services & Legal**

**Email: [michelle@footballnsw.com.au](mailto:michelle@footballnsw.com.au)**

**Ph: 8814 4402**



**FOOTBALL  
NSW**