Child Safety Policy

November 2017

Date of policy: 13 November 2017

Date of last major review: 13/11/2017

Date of next major review: 13/11/2018

RUPERTSWOOD SPORTS CLUBS: CHILD SAFETY POLICY

1. Introduction

At Rupertswood Sports Clubs we hold the care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people as a central and fundamental responsibility of our sporting community. Central to this commitment is an unequivocal commitment to fostering the dignity, self-esteem and integrity of children and young people and providing them with a safe, supportive and enriching environment in which to participate and be involved in.

2. Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to:

- demonstrate the strong commitment of Rupertswood Sports Clubs to foster the care, inclusion , safety and wellbeing of all children involved in our clubs;
- ensure that all persons are aware of their responsibilities for identifying possible occasions for child abuse and for establishing procedures for preventing such abuse and /or detecting such abuse when it occurs;
- provide guidance on responding when a person suspects any child abuse within all club environment (grounds of club, online or other venues connected to the club);
- provide a clear statement to players, coaches, volunteers, employees, team managers, assistants, sponsors/stakeholders, supporters, committee members and parents/guardians forbidding any such abuse; and
- provided assurance that any such abuse will be investigated

This policy and the a Code of Conduct applies to all players, coaches, volunteers, employees, team managers, assistants, sponsors/stakeholders, supporters, committee members and parents/guardians of players within the club who are registered with the club. Non registered individuals who otherwise participate in activities with or for our club area also bound to their bound to this policy.

Breaches of this Policy or the Code of Conduct will be investigated by the Club, and/or relevant Sporting Bodies and/or the Police.

3. Principles

Rupertswood Sports Clubs take on the responsibility of promoting a welcoming, safe and inclusive environment where participants are respected, their voices heard and they feel safe.

The following principles underpin our commitment to child safety for the Rupertswood Sports Clubs*:*

- Our clubs have zero tolerance of child abuse
- All children are entitled to, as a fundamental right, safety and protection from all forms of abuse and neglect
- Our clubs work in partnership with families and the community to ensure that they are engaged in decision-making processes, particularly those that have an impact on child safety and protection.
- All adults within our sporting community have a responsibility to care for children and young people, to positively promote their wellbeing and to protect them from any kind of harm or abuse.
- The policies, guidelines and Codes of Conduct for the care, wellbeing and protection of children are based on honest, respectful and trusting relationships between adults and children and young people.
- All persons involved in situations where harm is suspected or disclosed must be treated with sensitivity, dignity and respect.

- All players, coaches, volunteers, staff, supporters and stakeholders should be free to raise concerns about child safety, knowing these will be taken seriously by the parish leadership.
- Appropriate confidentiality will be maintained, with information being provided to those who have a right or a need to be informed, either legally or pastorally.

- The club is committed to the diversity and cultural safety of all children and young people, including (but not limited to) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, children or young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children and young people with a disability and other vulnerable groups.
- Policies and practices demonstrate commitment with legislative requirements and cooperation with reporting procedures

4. Definitions

Child: A person below the age of 18 years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.

Child abuse includes:

(a) any act committed against a child involving:

(i) a sexual offence
(ii) an offence under section 49B(2) of the **Crimes Act 1958** (grooming)

(b) the infliction on a child of:

(i) physical violence
(ii) serious emotional or psychological harm

(c) serious neglect of a child.

Child safety encompasses matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse.

Child neglect: The failure by a parent or caregiver to provide a child (where they are in a position to do so) with the conditions that are culturally accepted as being essential for their physical and emotional development and wellbeing.

Child physical abuse: Generally, child physical abuse refers to the non-accidental use of physical force against a child that results in harm to the child. Physically abusive behaviours including shoving, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, kicking, biting, burning, strangling and poisoning. The fabrication or induction of an illness by a parent or carer (previously known as Munchausen syndrome by proxy) is also included in this definition of "Child physical abuse".

Child protection: Statutory services designed to protect children who are at risk of serious harm.

Child sexual abuse: Any sexual activity between a child under the age of consent (16) and an adult or older person (i.e. a person two or more years older than the victim) is child sexual abuse.

Child sexual abuse can also be:

- any sexual behaviour between a child and an adult in a position of power or authority over them; the age of consent laws do not apply in such instances due to the strong imbalance of power that exists between young people and authority figures, as well as the breaching of both personal and public trust that occurs when professional boundaries are violated
- any sexual behaviour between a child and an adult family member, regardless of issues of consent, equality or coercion
- sexual activity between peers that is non-consensual or involves the use of power or coercion
- non-consensual sexual activity between minors (e.g. a 14-year old and an 11-year old), or any sexual behaviour between a child and another child or adolescent who, due to their age or stage of development, is in a position of power, trust or responsibility over the victim. Sexual activity between adolescents at a similar developmental level is not intended to be included in this definition of "Child sexual abuse".

Mandatory Reporting: The legal requirement to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect is known as mandatory reporting. Mandated persons include teachers, nurses, police, psychologists, psychiatrists and medical practitioners.

Reasonable Belief: When an adult is concerned about the safety and wellbeing of a child or young person, they must assess that concern to determine if a report should be made to the relevant agency. This process of considering all relevant information and observations is known as forming a 'reasonable belief'. A 'reasonable belief' or a 'belief on reasonable grounds' is not the same as having proof but is more than mere rumour or speculation. A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds.

5. Recognising Child Abuse

Child: A person below the age of 18 years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.

Child abuse includes:

(d) any act committed against a child involving:

(iii) a sexual offence
(iv) an offence under section 49B(2) of the **Crimes Act 1958** (grooming)

(e) the infliction on a child of:

(iii) physical violence
(iv) serious emotional or psychological harm

(f) serious neglect of a child.

For the purpose of this policy 'Child' (or minor) means a person who participates at this Club that is under the age of 18, unless otherwise stated under the law applicable to the child

6. Responding and Reporting Obligations

Three new criminal offences have been introduced under the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic.):

- **failure to disclose offence**, which requires adults to report to police a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed against a child
- **failure to protect offence**, which applies to people within organisations who knew of a risk of child sexual abuse by someone in the organisation and had the authority to reduce or remove the risk, but failed to do so
- **grooming offence**, which targets communication with a child or their parents with the intent of committing child sexual abuse.

6.1 Mandatory Reporting

Any person involved with the Rupertswood Sports Clubs who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria by an adult against a **child under 16** must disclose that information to police. Failure to disclose the information to police is a criminal offence under **section** *327 of the Crimes Act 1958 (Victoria)* and applies to **all adults** in Victoria, not just professionals who work with children. The obligation is to disclose that information to the police as soon as it is practicable to do so, except in limited circumstances such as where the information has already been reported to DHHS Child Protection.

6.2 Failure to protect

Any member of the Rupertswood Sports Clubs in a position of authority who becomes aware that an adult associated with their organisation (such as an employee, contractor, volunteer, parent, sport coach or visitor) poses a risk of sexual abuse to a child **under 16** who is in the care or supervision of the organization, must take all reasonable steps to reduce or remove that risk. Failure to take reasonable steps to protect a child in the organisation from the risk of sexual abuse from an adult associated with the organisation is a criminal offence contained in **section** *49C (2) of the Crimes Act 1958***(Vic.)**.

6.3 Grooming

The offence of grooming prohibits predatory conduct designed to prepare or 'groom' a child for future sexual activity and is contained in *section 49B (2) of the Crimes Act 1958* **(Vic.)**. The offence applies to communication with children **under 16 years**. Grooming can be conducted in person or online, for example via interaction through social media, web forums and emails. The offence can be committed by any person aged 18 years or over. It does not apply to communication between people who are both under 18 years of age. Failure to disclose the information to police is a criminal offence under **section** *327 of the Crimes Act 1958 (Victoria)* and applies to **all adults** in Victoria, not just professionals who work with children. For further information about the 'grooming offence', see: Department of Justice and Regulation – Grooming offence

When to report criminal offences

This table sets out when to report a concern that a child or a young person has been abused, or is in need of protection.

Type of Reporting	By Whom	To Whom
Reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16. Any adult who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria by an adult against a child under 16 must report that information to police. You will not be guilty of an offence if you do not report in the following circumstances: ▪ The victim is 16 years of age or older and does not have an intellectual disability that limits his/her capacity to make an informed decision; and he/she does not want the information reported to the police. ▪ The victim has disclosed the information in confidence in the course of a therapeutic relationship with you as a registered medical practitioner or counsellor. ▪ The victim turned 16 years of age before 27 October 2014. ▪ Reasonable excuses for failing to comply with the requirement include: ▪ a reasonable belief that the information has already been reported to police or DHHS Child Protection disclosing all of the information ▪ a reasonable fear that the disclosure will place someone (other than the alleged perpetrator) at risk of harm.	Any person aged 18 or over	Victoria Police

6.4 The Rupertswood Sport Club supports and encourages all players, coaches, volunteers, employees, team managers, assistants, sponsors/stakeholders, supporters, committee members and parents/guardians to make a report to police if they form a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection, or they are concerned about the safety, health or wellbeing of a child. Where a report is made to the police, we ask that the individual to also advise the Club.

6.5 Any player, coach, volunteer, employee, team manager, assistant, sponsor/stakeholder, supporter, committee member or parent/guardian that make a report in good faith in accordance with their reporting obligations will be supported by the Club.

6.6 The Rupertswood Sports Clubs have appointed a Child Safety Officer (CSO). This Child Safety Officer is available to listen, discuss and clarify issues confronting individuals in our Club. All players, coaches, volunteers, employees, team managers, assistants, sponsors/stakeholders, supporters, committee members and parents/guardians can all speak to the CSO if they have concerns in relation to child abuse. The CSO will make a report of behalf of the club and ensure all adequate records are maintained. The CSO will be identified to all children and parents in the Club. The current Club CSO is Emma Williamson.

6.7 If a player, coach, volunteer, employee, team manager, assistant, sponsor/stakeholder, supporter, committee member or parent/guardian is uncertain about as the whether they make a report to an external authority in relation to the safety of a child, they must speak to the Child Safety Officer or relevant Sporting bodies (such as the AFL) for guidance and information. Ultimately, it is a personal choice of the committee member, employee or volunteer, coach, or team manager whether they choose to make a report to an external authority or not.

6.8 If an allegation is made against player, coach, volunteer, employee, team manager, assistant, sponsor/ stakeholder, supporter, committee member or parent/guardian the CSO will follow the reporting procedure and take all steps to ensure the safety of the child is paramount.

Voluntary reporting

In addition to the mandatory reporting obligations above, any person who believes on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection form child abuse, may disclose that information to police.

7. What are 'reasonable grounds for belief'?

You have 'reasonable grounds' to notify when:

- a child states that they have been physically or sexually abused;
- a child states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves);
- someone who knows a child states that the child has been physically or sexually abused;
- a child or young person exhibits sexually-abusive or age-inappropriate behaviours;
- professional observations of the child's behaviour or development leads a professional to form a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused or is likely to be abused; and/or
- signs of abuse (such as bruises, cuts, etc) lead to a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused.

8. Reporting Procedure

The reporting procedure of the club is an alliance with the Child Safe Standards and includes:

- Reports of breach of the Victorian Child Safety Standards can be made by CSO. CSO to report to the police and report of sexual or physical abuse of a child. CSO to provide support to the alleged victim
- Reports of breach of the Victoria Child Safety Standards can be made by any individual who has reasonable belief. The individual report to the police and report of sexual or physical abuse of a child.
- Full documentation is made of the report and stored by the Club President
- Club President to report to the Principal of Salesian College Sunbury , and official associated bodies if necessary
- Alleged perpetrator (if a member of the club) will be 'stood down' until investigation is completed.

9. Policy Commitments

All children involved in the Rupertswood Sports Clubs community have the right to feel safe and be safe. The wellbeing of children in our care will always be our first priority and we do not and will not tolerate child abuse. We aim to create a child-safe and child-friendly environment where children are free to enjoy life and sport to the full without any concern for their safety. There is particular attention paid to the most vulnerable children, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and children with a disability.

Our commitment to our children

(a) We commit to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people in our clubs.

(b) We commit to providing children and young people with positive and nurturing experiences.

(c) We commit to listening to children and young people and empowering them by taking their views seriously, and addressing any concerns that they raise with us.

(d) We commit to taking action to ensure that children and young people are protected from abuse or harm.

(e) We commit to teaching children and young people the necessary skills and knowledge to understand and maintain their personal safety and wellbeing.

(f) We commit to seeking input and feedback from children regarding the creation of a safe parish environment.

Our commitment to the parents/guardians involved

(a) We commit to communicating honestly and openly with parents and carers about the wellbeing and safety of their children.

(b) We commit to engaging with, and listening to, the views of parents and carers about our child- safety practices, policies and procedures.

(c) We commit to transparency in our decision-making with parents and carers where it will not compromise the safety of children or young people.

(d) We commit to acknowledging the cultural diversity of those helping in our clubs and being sensitive to how this may impact on child safety issues.

(e) We commit to continuously reviewing and improving our systems to protect children from abuse.

Our commitment to our players, coaches, volunteers, employees, team managers, assistants, sponsors/ stakeholders, supporters, Committee members and Parents/guardians **– (called "members" for this policy)**

(a) We commit to providing all Rupertswood Sports Club members with the necessary support to enable them to fulfil their roles. This will include regular and appropriate learning opportunities.

(b) We commit to providing regular opportunities to clarify and confirm policy and procedures in relation to child safety and young people's protection and wellbeing. This will include annual training in the principles and intent of the Child Safety Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct, and staff responsibilities to report concerns.

(c) We commit to listening to all concerns voiced by the Rupertswood Sports Club's members about keeping children and young people safe from harm.

(d) We commit to providing opportunities for Rupertswood Sports Club's members to receive formal debriefing and counselling arising from incidents of the abuse of a child or young person.

10. Responsibilities and Organisation Arrangements

Everyone employed or volunteering for the Rupertswood Sports Clubs have a responsibility to understand the important and significant role he/she plays individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make. The responsibility for all the Rupertswood Sports Club in relation to child safety within their club rests with the President. To assist with this responsibility the President should form a Child Safety subcommittee, inclusive of a designated Child Safety Office.

The Rupertswood Sports Clubs have allocated roles and responsibilities for child safety as follows:

10.1 Guide to Responsibilities of Club Leadership

The Presidents of each Rupertswood Sports Club recognise their particular responsibility to ensure the development of preventative and proactive strategies that promote a culture of openness, awareness of, and shared responsibility for child safety. Responsibilities include:

- creating an environment for children and young people to be safe and to feel safe
- upholding high principles and standards for all members in the community
- promoting models of behaviour between adults and children and young people based on mutual respect and consideration
- ensuring thorough and rigorous practices are applied in the recruitment, screening and ongoing professional learning of staff
- ensuring that members of the clubs have regular and appropriate learning to develop their knowledge of, openness to and ability to address child safety matters

- providing regular opportunities to clarify and confirm legislative obligations, policy and procedures in relation to child and young people's protection and wellbeing
- ensuring the clubs meet the specific requirements of the Victorian Child Safe Standards.

10.2 Guide to Responsibilities of Club Members

Responsibilities of Rupertswood Sports Clubs include:

- treating children and young people with dignity and respect, acting with propriety, exercising their duty of care, and protecting children and young people in their care
- following the legislative (including mandatory reporting obligations where appropriate) they form a reasonable belief that a child or young person has been or is being abused or neglected
- providing a physically and psychologically safe environment where the wellbeing of children and young people is nurtured
- undertaking regular training and education in order to understand their individual responsibilities in relation to child safety and the wellbeing of children and young people
- assisting children and young people to develop positive, responsible and caring attitudes and behaviours which recognise the rights of all people to be safe and free from abuse

11. Expectations of all adults – Child Safety Code of Conduct

Committee members, volunteers, employees, coaches, managers, and parent/guardians of the players at the Rupertswood Sports Club are bound by, and are required to abide by the Child Safety Code of Conduct and

Child Safety Policy as a condition of being a member of the Rupertswood Sports Clubs or associated with the Clubs in any capacity.

Our Code also protects Adults through clarification of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

12. Child Safety and Participation

As Rupertswood Sports Clubs, we actively encourage all children to openly express their views and feel comfortable about giving voice to the things that are important to them.

We foster an environment where they can express if they feel unsafe and enable them to understand, identify, discuss and report on child safety. We listen to and act on any concerns children or their parents or carers, raise with us.

To support Child Safety and Participation the Child Safety Officer's name should be clearly identified to all players

13. Screening and Recruitment of Club Members

Members looking to be involved in the Rupertswood Sports Clubs will apply thorough a rigorous screening processes when looking to be involved in child-connected work. Our commitment to child safety and our screening requirements will be communicated to all those looking to fill these positions and all applicants are provided with copies of the clubs Child Safety Code of Conduct and the Child Safety Policy.

When recruiting and selecting players, coaches, volunteers, staff, supporters, stakeholders Committee members and Parents/Guardians involved in child-connected work, we make all reasonable efforts to:

- confirm the applicant's Working with Children Check and National Police Check status and/or professional registration (as relevant)
- obtain proof of personal identity and any professional or other qualifications
- verify the applicant's history of work involving children
- obtain references that address the applicant's suitability for the job and working with children.

We have processes for monitoring and assessing the continuing suitability of members to work with children, including regular reviews of the status of Working with Children Checks.

14. Child Safety – Education and Training for Club Members

The Rupertswood Sports Clubs will provide players, coaches, team managers, employees, volunteers, staff, stakeholders, committee members and parents/guardians with regular and appropriate opportunities to develop their knowledge of, openness to and ability to address child safety matters. This will include induction, ongoing training and continual communication to ensure everyone understands their responsibilities, and the procedures for reporting suspicion of child abuse and neglect.

15. Risk Management

As Rupertswood Sports Clubs we are committed to proactively and systematically identifying and assessing risks to child safety across our whole community (physical and online), and reducing or eliminating (where possible) all potential sources of harm. We document, implement, monitor and periodically review our risk management strategies for child safety and ensure that the strategies change as needed and as new risks arise. The group responsible for identifying and managing child safety risks with the Rupertswood Sports Clubs will be the President and the Child Safety Committee.

16. Relevant Legislation

- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.)
- Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic.)
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic.)
- Privacy Act 1988 (Vic.)
- Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.) – Three new criminal offences have been introduced under this Act.

(a) **Failure to disclose offence**: Any adult who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16 has an obligation to report that information to police. Failure to disclose the information to police is a criminal offence.

(b) **Failure to protect offence**: The offence will apply where there is a substantial risk that a child under the age of 16 under the care, supervision or authority of a relevant organisation will become a victim of a sexual offence committed by an adult associated with that organisation. A person in a position of authority in the organisation will commit the offence if they know of the risk, but negligently fail to reduce or remove it.

(c) **Grooming offence**: This offence targets predatory conduct designed to facilitate later sexual activity with a child. Grooming can be conducted in person or online, for example via interaction through social media, web forums and emails.

17. Related Policies

Insert related policies here

18. Breach of Policy

Where an adult is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this Policy, this may result in disciplinary consequences.

Where the President is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this policy or if there is any reasonable belief that a criminal act has been committed, the concerned party is advised to contact Victoria Police.

Where any **other member of the sporting community** is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this policy, the President is to take appropriate action.

19. Review of this Child Safety Policy

At Rupertswood Sports Clubs we are committed to continuous improvement of our child safety systems and practices. We intend this policy to be a dynamic document that will be regularly reviewed to ensure it is working in practice and updated to accommodate changes in legislation or circumstance.

We will maintain a history of updates to the policy.

History of Updates to Policy

Date	Comment (e.g. major review, minor review)
13 November 2017	