



Child Safe Reporting Policy

South United Football Club (SUFC) is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of all children and young people involved in our activities. We have developed this Child Safe Reporting Policy in line with the guidelines and requirements set out by the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian, aiming to provide clear instructions for all members, staff, volunteers, and stakeholders on how to respond to and report concerns about child protection.

Title	Content
Introduction	<p>This policy aims to ensure that all staff, coaches, volunteers, and members are aware of their responsibilities in preventing and responding to suspected or actual child abuse, neglect, or exploitation.</p> <p>Everyone in our organisation must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• know what to report, who to report it to and how to report it• report any concerns about the safety or welfare of a child or young person immediately• feel confident that concerns and allegations will be dealt with honestly and fairly• feel confident in reporting unacceptable behaviour around children and young people• ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child is paramount when an allegation is made.

Definitions of harm and abuse (what to report)

When it comes to safeguarding children and young people, understanding what constitutes harm and abuse is crucial. Below are the definitions and examples of harm and abuse, as well as what needs to be reported to ensure children's safety.

1. Harm

In a child protection context, harm refers to the detrimental impact on a child's physical, emotional, or psychological well-being caused by various factors, including abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

What to report:

- **Physical injury** or damage that affects the child's health and development.
- **Psychological harm** caused by exposure to traumatic events or ongoing maltreatment.
- **Neglect** that deprives the child of their basic needs.

2. Physical Abuse

Physical abuse involves the infliction of physical harm or injury upon a child. This can be deliberate or reckless actions that result in injury or risk of injury.

What to report:

- **Injuries** such as bruises, cuts, burns, fractures, or head injuries that are unexplained or inconsistent with the child's age and development.
- **Shaking**, hitting, or any other physical punishment.
- **Biting**, choking, or harming the child in any other physical way.

3. Emotional or Psychological Abuse

Emotional or psychological abuse involves behaviours that harm a child's self-esteem, emotional well-being, and mental health. It can be difficult to detect as there may be no physical signs, but the long-term effects can be significant.

What to report:

- **Verbal abuse** such as constant belittling, yelling, threats, or rejection that undermines a child's sense of worth.
- **Excessive criticism**, shaming, or humiliation that causes emotional distress.
- **Exposing children to domestic violence**, verbal arguments, or emotionally harmful situations.
- **Isolation or manipulation**, such as controlling a child's every action or not allowing them to engage in normal social activities.

4. Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves any form of sexual contact or behaviour with a child, or any behaviour that exploits or manipulates the child sexually. This can involve physical acts or non-physical forms of abuse, such as online grooming or exposure to sexual content.

What to report:

- **Inappropriate sexual contact** or physical touching.
- **Exposing a child to sexual acts** or materials (including pornography).
- **Grooming behaviours**, such as an adult attempting to build a relationship with a child for the purpose of exploitation or sexual abuse.
- **Sexual harassment or coercion**, either in person or through online platforms.
- **Sexual exploitation** in any form.

5. Neglect

Neglect occurs when a child's basic needs are not met, including their physical, emotional, educational, and medical needs. This can result in serious harm to the child's development and well-being.

What to report:

- **Failure to provide basic necessities** such as food, clothing, or shelter.
- **Failure to provide medical care** when necessary, such as not seeking treatment for illness or injury.
- **Failure to ensure the child receives an education**, either by not enrolling them in school or not supporting their educational needs.
- **Leaving a child unsupervised** for prolonged periods of time, especially when they are too young to care for themselves.
- **Failure to protect a child** from harm, such as exposing them to risky or dangerous situations.

6. Exploitation

Exploitation involves using a child for personal gain, often for financial or sexual purposes. This includes forcing a child to work or use them for illegal or unethical activities.

What to report:

- **Child labour or forced work**, especially under dangerous or harmful conditions.
- **Sexual exploitation**, such as being forced to engage in commercial sexual activities.
- **Child trafficking**—moving children from one location to another for illegal purposes.
- **Online exploitation**, including sexting, sexual solicitation, or using a child for pornography.

7. Grooming

Grooming is when an adult builds a relationship with a child to manipulate, coerce, or exploit them for sexual or other harmful purposes. Grooming can take place over time and can be difficult to recognize.

What to report:

- **Building a close personal relationship** with a child to gain trust and establish emotional dependence.
- **Inappropriate conversations** with a child, especially those of a sexual nature.
- **Gifts or favours** given to a child with the intention of gaining their trust.
- **Attempting to isolate a child** from their family or friends.
- **Involvement in illegal online activities**, including asking a child to engage in inappropriate conversations or share explicit content.

8. Cyber Abuse or Online Harm

Cyber abuse involves using digital platforms to harm or exploit children. This can include online bullying, exposure to inappropriate content, or sexual exploitation.

What to report:

- **Cyberbullying** or online harassment, where a child is targeted, threatened, or ridiculed through digital means.
- **Inappropriate or explicit messages** sent to a child online, including sexually explicit content.
- **Online exploitation or grooming** by adults attempting to manipulate or sexually exploit a child.

Title	Content
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exposure to harmful or inappropriate content, such as violence or pornography, on social media or the internet.
Types of complaints (what to report) List what should be reported	<p>All complaints should be reported. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • criminal conduct • <u>risk of significant harm (ROSH)</u> • disclosures of abuse • unacceptable behaviour around children and young people that breaches our Child Safe Code of Conduct • suspicion of harm or abuse to a child or young person • reportable conduct.
Making a complaint (who can report)	<p>Everyone in our organisation has the right to make a genuine complaint and won't be punished if they do. This includes children and young people, parents, player, coaches and volunteers. Reporting abuse is mandatory and encouraged – it is never obstructed or prevented.</p>
Reporting obligations (who to report to)	<p>Reporting criminal conduct</p> <p>Contact NSW Police on 131 444 for anything you consider could be a criminal offence. This includes sexual assault, physical assault, grooming offences, and producing, disseminating or possessing child abuse material.</p> <p>Note: It is a criminal offence for adults not to report to police if <u>they know or believe that a child abuse offence has been committed</u>. In addition, people employed in child-related work may be subject to a criminal offence if <u>they fail to reduce or remove the risk of a child becoming a victim of child abuse</u>.</p> <p>Reporting risk of significant harm</p> <p>Any person who has reasonable grounds to believe that a child or young person is at risk of significant harm (ROSH) can report to the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) on 132 111 (this is a 24-hour service).</p> <p>Mandatory reporters must report to the <u>ChildStory Reporter Community</u> if they have reasonable grounds to suspect a child is at ROSH.</p> <p>Reporting allegations and convictions</p> <p>Relevant entities must notify the Office of the Children's Guardian of reportable allegations or convictions (that is, reportable conduct). This includes sexual offences, sexual misconduct, ill-treatment of a child, neglect of a child, an assault against a child, failure to protect a child or failure to report if a child has been harmed, as well as any behaviour that causes significant psychological harm to a child.</p> <p>Reporting breaches of our Child Safe Code of Conduct</p> <p>All complaints must be reported to our child safe contact officers.</p>

Title	Content
Risk management strategies (how to report)	<p>To ensure the immediate and ongoing safety of the child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establish the welfare and safety of the child and take steps to ensure the child is removed from the risk • reassure them and remain calm • listen carefully without interrupting • don't ask leading questions or any additional questions once you've established there is a genuine concern (to not compromise future investigations by NSW Police or DCJ) • support them, reassuring the child that they have done the right thing, that you believe them and that the abuse is not their fault • explain what will happen, including timeframes • don't make promises you can't keep • don't confront the alleged perpetrator • seek guidance if you are unsure about what to do. <p>It is the child safety officer's role to conduct a risk assessment after receiving an allegation, to ensure the safety of all people involved and maintain the integrity of the investigation.</p>

Procedural fairness, including privacy and confidentiality

Procedural fairness refers to the process of ensuring that all parties involved in a complaint or allegation are treated with fairness and respect. It involves the application of principles that guarantee the rights of all individuals to have their case heard and considered impartially.

Key principles of procedural fairness include:

- **The Right to Be Heard:** All parties involved (the person making the complaint, the person accused, and any witnesses) are given the opportunity to be heard and present their version of events. Everyone has the right to be informed of the nature of the complaint or allegation and to provide their side of the story.
- **Impartiality:** Investigations into complaints are conducted impartially and objectively. The individuals conducting the investigation (Child Protection Officer, club committee members, etc.) must avoid bias or preconceived judgments.
- **Natural Justice:** No decision will be made without providing all parties involved with an opportunity to present their case. The process is designed to ensure that decisions are made based on the facts and evidence presented during the investigation.
- **Timeliness:** Complaints and concerns are dealt with promptly, ensuring that all parties are informed of the progress and outcomes of any investigation in a timely manner. The aim is to prevent undue delays that may harm or distress those involved.
- **Right to Appeal:** If a party is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation or the decision made, they have the right to appeal the decision. The appeal process is designed to be fair and transparent, providing a second review of the decision.

Privacy and **confidentiality** are essential elements of the complaint and investigation process. The club takes steps to protect the personal information and sensitive details of all individuals involved in the process, ensuring their rights are respected.

Key Privacy and Confidentiality Measures

1. **Confidential Reporting:**
 - Complaints can be made confidentially. The identity of the complainant will not be disclosed to others without their consent unless there is a risk of serious harm or it is required by law (such as reporting to authorities).
2. **Information Sharing:**
 - Information shared during the investigation will only be disclosed to individuals who need to know in order to carry out the investigation or resolve the complaint. For example, the CPO or committee members may need to know the details of the complaint, but the rest of the club will not be informed unless necessary.
 - In cases where external authorities (e.g., the police or child protection agencies) are involved, relevant information will be shared only in accordance with legal requirements.
3. **Limitations on Disclosure:**
 - Any information about the complainant, the accused, or the investigation will be kept strictly confidential. This includes personal details, the nature of the complaint, and the outcome of the investigation.
 - The names and personal information of any parties involved will not be disclosed to others unless required for the investigation or legal proceedings.
4. **Protection from Retaliation:**
 - Individuals who make a complaint in good faith or participate in an investigation are protected from retaliation. Any act of retaliation against someone making a complaint will be treated as a serious matter and may result in disciplinary action.

Title	Content
	<p>5. Access to Records:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The complainant and the person being investigated will have access to the records of the investigation, though this may be limited to protect sensitive information or prevent harm. In some cases, summaries or redacted versions of records may be provided. <p>6. Data Protection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ All records relating to the complaint, including personal details and investigation findings, are stored securely and protected against unauthorized access. The club complies with relevant data protection and privacy legislation to safeguard personal information.
Complaint process (how to report)	<p>When a complaint or concern is raised, the process for reporting and investigating is as follows:</p> <p>Step 1: Report the Concern or Complaint</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who to report to: The complaint should be reported to the Child Protection Officer (CPO), MPIO, or the club committee. If the issue involves the CPO or they are unavailable, the report should be directed to a committee member or an appropriate authority. • How to report: Reports can be made in person, over the phone, or in writing (email, letter). Reports should be as detailed as possible, including dates, times, descriptions of events, and the names of people involved. <p>Step 2: Acknowledgment of the Complaint</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CPO or relevant staff member will acknowledge receipt of the complaint as soon as possible. This ensures that the complainant knows their concerns are being taken seriously. • The complainant will be informed of the investigation process and what steps will be taken to address the complaint. <p>Step 3: Investigation Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial assessment: A thorough initial assessment of the complaint will be made to determine the seriousness of the issue and whether it requires immediate action. If the situation involves potential child abuse or safety risks, the appropriate authorities (NSW Child Protection Helpline or police) will be notified. • Investigation: The investigation will be carried out in an unbiased and fair manner. The person conducting the investigation will gather evidence, speak with witnesses, and interview relevant parties, including the complainant, the person accused, and any other involved individuals. If necessary, the club may engage external experts or authorities to conduct the investigation. <p>Step 4: Decision and Action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcome: After the investigation, the findings will be reviewed, and a decision will be made based on the evidence. The decision will be communicated to the parties involved, with the rationale for the decision provided. • Actions: If the complaint is substantiated, appropriate actions will be taken in line with club policies and procedures. This could include disciplinary action, staff training, referral to support services, or reporting to authorities. <p>Step 5: Confidentiality and Privacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All parties involved in the investigation process will be reminded of the importance of confidentiality, both during and after the process. Confidentiality ensures that the process is not compromised, and that individuals are protected from harm or retaliation.

Title	Content
Legislation	<p><u><i>Crimes Act 1900</i></u></p> <p><u><i>Child and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998</i></u></p> <p><u><i>Children’s Guardian Act 2019</i></u></p> <p><u><i>Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth)</i></u></p> <p><u><i>Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998</i></u></p>
How we publicise our Child Safe Reporting Policy	<p>At South United Football Club, we prioritize child safety by ensuring that our Child Safe Reporting Policy is widely communicated and easily accessible to all members. Here's how we publicize the policy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Online Accessibility: The policy is available on our website in a clear, user-friendly format. 2. Social Media & Digital: The policy is shared through the club's social media accounts and email campaigns. 3. Feedback & Open Communication: We create open channels for feedback and encourage ongoing dialogue on child safety.
Review date	<p>This policy will be reviewed annually and after any critical incidents, to ensure continuous improvement of our child safe practices and that we keep up to date with relevant legislation and industry requirements.</p> <p>Children and young people have an opportunity to provide feedback on the policy and complaint handling.</p> <p>Next Review Date: 01/02/2026</p>