



Child Safe Policy

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Purpose	<p>This policy aims to provide a framework for creating and maintaining a child-safe environment within the Club. It is aligned with the NSW Child Safe Standards, ensuring compliance with legislative requirements and best practices in protecting children from harm.</p> <p>This Policy sets protocols for child safe practices and informs everyone within our organisation of their obligations and responsibilities to keep children safe</p>
Scope and audience	<p>Applies to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Staff and Volunteers – Includes all employees, coaches, managers, volunteers, and anyone working with children in the Club.2. Players – All children and young people participating in Club activities.3. Parents and Guardians – Responsible for supporting child safety and cooperating with the Club's policies.4. Club Officials and Committee Members – Individuals overseeing the Club's operations, ensuring child protection at all levels.5. Visitors and Spectators – Expected to respect child safety principles and behaviours. <p>Applies to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Football Programs and Events – All Club activities like training, competitions, and social events.2. Online or Virtual Activities – Includes online training, communication, and social media.3. Club Premises and Facilities – All physical locations used by the Club.4. Transport and Travel – Organised travel for events and matches.5. Interactions Between Children and Adults – Ensures respectful and safe relationships during all activities.

Responsibilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Child Protection Officer (CPO) Responsibilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Oversee the implementation and adherence to the Child Safe Policy. ○ Provide guidance and support to staff, volunteers, and parents/guardians on child safety matters. ○ Manage and investigate any child protection concerns or allegations, in collaboration with relevant authorities. ○ Maintain records of staff and volunteer Working with Children Checks (WWCC). ○ Lead child protection training sessions for staff and volunteers. ○ Act as the point of contact for all child protection issues. 2. Committee Members Responsibilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure the overall implementation of the Child Safe Policy within the Club. ○ Promote a child-safe culture and foster an environment where the safety and well-being of children are prioritized. ○ Support the CPO in handling child protection matters and ensuring compliance with child safety laws and regulations. ○ Review and update the Child Safe Policy regularly to reflect any changes in legislation or best practices. ○ Ensure appropriate reporting mechanisms are in place for any child protection concerns. 3. Coaches and Team Officials Responsibilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Act as role models for children and young people, adhering to the Club's Code of Conduct. ○ Ensure a safe environment during training and games, including proper supervision and appropriate behaviour. ○ Report any concerns related to child safety or welfare to the CPO. ○ Participate in child protection training and stay informed of the Club's child safety policies. ○ Recognize and respond appropriately to signs of abuse, neglect, or unsafe behaviour. ○ Maintain appropriate boundaries in all interactions with children and young people. 4. Players (Children and Young People) Responsibilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Treat other children, staff, and volunteers with respect and fairness. ○ Report any concerns or incidents related to safety, bullying, or mistreatment to a coach, volunteer, or parent/guardian. ○ Follow all rules and guidelines designed to ensure safety during football activities. 5. Parents and Guardians Responsibilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Support the child-safe environment by ensuring their children adhere to the Club's Code of Conduct.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Be involved in their children’s activities, attend meetings, and maintain open communication with coaches and Club staff. ○ Report any concerns about their child’s safety or well-being to the CPO or another appropriate staff member. ○ Support the Club’s child protection efforts by ensuring their child’s behaviour is aligned with the Club’s values. <p>6. Volunteers Responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Abide by the Club’s child protection policies and Codes of Conduct. ○ Act as positive role models and ensure children are supervised appropriately during activities. ○ Report any concerns about child safety or welfare to the CPO. ○ Participate in child protection training provided by the Club. <p>7. Spectators Responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Treat all children with respect and ensure their behaviour does not negatively impact the safety or well-being of children. ○ Report any concerning behaviour or incidents to Club staff or the CPO. ○ Respect the boundaries and rules set by the Club to ensure a safe and positive environment for all children.

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Definitions of harm and abuse	<p>1. Harm Harm refers to any detrimental effect on a child's physical, emotional, or psychological well-being. It can occur through various forms of abuse or neglect and may be physical, emotional, sexual, or developmental in nature. Harm can be caused by deliberate actions or neglect, or through failure to provide a safe environment for the child.</p> <p>2. Abuse Abuse refers to any act or behaviour that causes harm to a child, either intentionally or through neglect. There are several types of abuse, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical Abuse: The intentional use of force or physical harm to a child, such as hitting, shaking, burning, or inflicting any other type of injury. It may also include inappropriate physical restraint or punishment. • Emotional Abuse: The persistent emotional mistreatment or neglect of a child, which can harm their self-esteem or emotional well-being. This includes behaviours such as belittling, threats, isolation, or constant criticism, which can damage the child's mental health. • Sexual Abuse: Any sexual activity or behaviour involving a child, such as inappropriate touching, exposure to sexual acts, or exploitation. It also includes grooming behaviours, where an adult builds a relationship with a child for the purpose of sexual exploitation. • Neglect: The failure to provide for a child's basic needs, such as food, shelter, clothing, emotional support, or medical care. Neglect can also include leaving a child in unsafe or unsuitable conditions or not ensuring their emotional and developmental needs are met. • Bullying: Repeated, harmful behaviour that targets a child, such as physical violence, verbal abuse, or social exclusion. Bullying can occur in various forms, including cyberbullying, and often involves a power imbalance where the child being bullied feels helpless or afraid. <p>3. Child Exploitation Child exploitation involves taking advantage of a child for personal or financial gain. This may include using a child in child labour, illegal activities, or any situation that harms the child for the benefit of another person.</p> <p>4. Grooming Grooming refers to the process by which an adult builds a relationship with a child to manipulate, control, or prepare them for exploitation or abuse. Grooming often involves gaining the child's trust and making them feel special or valued, only to later exploit or harm them.</p> <p>5. Witnessing Abuse Children who witness abuse, whether it's physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, may also suffer harm. This exposure can have long-lasting psychological effects, even if the child is not the direct victim.</p> <p>6. Duty of Care The obligation of the Club and its members (staff, coaches, volunteers) to ensure the safety, health, and well-being of children in their care during all activities. Duty of care involves taking reasonable steps to prevent harm and responding appropriately if harm is suspected or identified.</p> <p>7. Safeguarding Safeguarding is the proactive approach to protecting children from harm, abuse, and neglect. It involves creating and maintaining safe environments, implementing policies, and providing education and training to reduce the risk of harm.</p>

Reporting thresholds

Reporting Thresholds

1. Internal Reporting Obligations

Internal reporting refers to the process of reporting concerns or incidents within the Club. All staff, volunteers, and members of the Club have a duty to report any concerns about the safety or well-being of children participating in the Club's activities.

When to Report Internally:

- **Suspicion or Concern of Harm:** If there is a suspicion or reasonable concern that a child may be at risk of harm (e.g., physical or emotional abuse, neglect, bullying, or grooming).
- **Allegation or Disclosure of Abuse:** If a child discloses or an allegation is made regarding abuse or exploitation (whether recent or historical), it must be reported immediately.
- **Observing Unsafe Behaviors:** If an adult or another child exhibits behaviors that could endanger a child (e.g., inappropriate physical contact, threats, or verbal abuse).
- **Failure to Meet Child's Needs:** If there are concerns that a child's basic needs (e.g., food, shelter, emotional support, medical care) are not being met during Club activities.

Steps for Internal Reporting:

1. **Report to the Child Protection Officer (CPO):** Any concerns must be reported immediately to the CPO, who is responsible for managing and overseeing child protection matters within the Club.
2. **Documentation:** The person reporting the concern should document the incident, including details of the allegation, any actions taken, and any other relevant information.
3. **Confidentiality:** Reports should be treated confidentially to protect the identity of the child and the individual making the report, unless disclosure is necessary for further investigation.
4. **Support:** The CPO will offer support to the child and the reporting individual, ensuring that the child's safety and emotional well-being are prioritized.

2. External Reporting Obligations

External reporting involves notifying the appropriate authorities when there is a concern that requires investigation beyond the Club's internal processes. This ensures compliance with legal and regulatory requirements.

When to Report Externally:

- **Immediate Danger or Risk of Harm:** If a child is in immediate danger or at risk of significant harm (e.g., an emergency situation where the child's safety is at risk), the incident must be reported to external authorities.
- **Child Protection Concerns:** If the CPO determines that there are sufficient grounds to believe a child is at significant risk of harm, it must be reported to relevant external authorities such as Family and Community Services (FACS), the police, or the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian.
- **Serious Allegations:** Any serious allegations of abuse, exploitation, or neglect that meet the thresholds for investigation by external authorities must be reported.
- **Failure to Act:** If the Club's response to a concern is inadequate or inappropriate, the issue must be escalated to the relevant authorities.

Steps for External Reporting:

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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contact NSW Police: If the child is in immediate danger or has been harmed, contact the NSW Police on 000 for emergency situations or the Crime Stoppers line for non-emergency cases. 2. Report to Family and Community Services (FACS): If there are concerns about significant harm or neglect, the CPO must report the matter to FACS via the Child Protection Helpline at 132 111. 3. Notify the Office of the Children’s Guardian (OCG): If the issue involves a violation of child protection standards or a breach of the Club’s policies, the OCG must be notified to ensure the matter is addressed in accordance with child safety laws. <p>Guidelines for Reporting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report without Delay: Concerns should be reported immediately once they are identified. Delayed reporting can compromise the safety and well-being of the child. • Legal Requirement: Under the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW), certain individuals (such as the CPO) are legally required to report suspected cases of significant harm to children. • Confidentiality: Reports to external authorities should maintain confidentiality but also ensure that sufficient information is provided for the investigation to proceed. • Follow-up: After an external report is made, the CPO will follow up to ensure appropriate actions are taken and that the child’s safety is maintained. <p>3. Mandatory Reporting</p> <p>In New South Wales, certain individuals have a mandatory reporting obligation under the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW). These individuals must report suspected child abuse or neglect to the authorities. The mandatory reporters typically include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaches and team officials • Child protection officers (CPOs) • Teachers or any other professionals who work with children (e.g., medical professionals).

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What the policy covers	<p>What the Child Safe Policy Covers</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Commitment to Child Safety <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Club's dedication to providing a safe and enjoyable environment for all children and young people. The policy outlines the responsibility of everyone involved in the Club to always prioritize the safety and wellbeing of children. 2. Scope of the Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who the policy applies to (staff, volunteers, players, parents/guardians, visitors, and officials). The activities and environments the policy covers, including all football programs, events, and online interactions. 3. Definitions of Harm and Abuse <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed definitions of various types of harm and abuse, such as physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, bullying, grooming, and exploitation. Clarifies what constitutes harm to children and the different forms of abuse to help individuals recognize warning signs. 4. Roles and Responsibilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear roles and responsibilities for the Club's staff, volunteers, coaches, and officials in ensuring child safety. The specific responsibilities of the Child Protection Officer (CPO) and other key individuals involved in child protection. Expectations for parents, guardians, players, and spectators regarding child safety and behaviour. 5. Reporting Concerns <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear instructions on how and when to report concerns about child safety, both internally (to the CPO) and externally (to relevant authorities). Internal Reporting: The steps to follow when an individual within the Club suspects or witnesses harm, abuse, or neglect. External Reporting: The obligation to report to external authorities such as NSW Police or Family and Community Services (FACS) when necessary. Mandatory Reporting: Outlining the obligation of mandatory reporters, including coaches and staff, to report suspected abuse or neglect. 6. Responding to Child Abuse and Safety Concerns <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific protocols for responding to child abuse allegations or safety concerns, including the immediate actions to take if a child is at risk. How the Club will cooperate with external authorities during investigations and provide ongoing support to the child and family. The steps to ensure that the safety of the child is always the top priority in any situation. The process for maintaining confidentiality when handling sensitive child protection information.

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Related child safe documents	<p>The following child safe documents are integral to the operations and policies of South United Football Club Tamworth in ensuring a safe environment for children and young people involved in our programs:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Statement of Commitment to Child Safety 2. Child Safe Code of Conduct 3. Child Safe Recruitment, Induction, and Training Policy 4. Child Safe Reporting Policy 5. Child Safe Risk Management Plan <p>By implementing and maintaining these documents, South United Football Club Tamworth ensures that child safety is embedded in all aspects of the organisation's operations, fostering a safe and supportive environment for all children involved in Club activities. All these documents can be found on our website.</p>
Related legislation, regulations and standards	<p>Related Legislation, Regulations, and Standards</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Children's Guardian Act 2019 (NSW) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Establishes the Office of the Children's Guardian (OCG) and provides the framework for implementing child-safe practices across organizations, ensuring the safety and well-being of children in their care. 2. Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 (NSW) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mandates that individuals working with children undergo a Working with Children Check (WWCC) to ensure they do not pose a risk to children's safety. This is a critical regulation for staff, volunteers, and coaches at the Club. 3. NSW Child Safe Standards (2019) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provides a comprehensive set of standards that organizations must follow to create and maintain child-safe environments, covering areas like child protection policies, staff conduct, and creating a child-safe culture within the organization. 4. Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Outlines the legal obligations for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities, such as Family and Community Services (FACS), and ensures children's protection from harm. 5. National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (2018) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A national framework of 10 principles that set the benchmark for child-safe practices across all organizations in Australia, ensuring that child safety is embedded in the organization's culture, leadership, and practices.

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Publication, communication and engagement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Website: The Child Safe Policy will be available on the Club's website for easy access by volunteers, parents, and the public. 2. Social Media: Regular updates and posts on platforms like Facebook will promote the policy and child safety practices. 3. Committee Meetings: Regular discussions at committee meetings will ensure all staff and volunteers are aware of their responsibilities regarding child safety. 4. Ongoing Training: Regular training sessions will be offered to ensure all volunteers to remain informed on best practices for child protection. 5. Email Communication: Updates and policy reminders will be sent to parents, and volunteers via email.
Next 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>