



Southern United Hockey Club

Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

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Purpose & Background

This policy was developed to demonstrate the strong commitment of the Committee and volunteers of the *Southern United Hockey Club (the Club)* to child safety and to provide an outline of the policies and practices the Club has developed to keep everyone safe from any harm, including abuse. The Club refers to all policies and procedures implemented by our National Sporting Organisation, Hockey Australia (HA) via the [Safe Hockey Hub](#).

Hockey Australia works closely with Sport Integrity Australia, the national agency established to protect hockey against integrity threats. Hockey Australia adopted the **Sport Integrity Australia** National Integrity Framework effective 1 January 2024.


The National Integrity Framework is a suite of policies that sets out rules for unacceptable behaviour in hockey and explains the way complaints about breaches of these rules are managed. These policies are available at: <https://www.hockey.org.au/integrity>


Positioned within the National Integrity Framework, the Victoria's Child Safe Standards are a set of mandatory requirements to protect children and young people from harm and abuse. The Child Safe Standards (the Standards) commenced in Victoria in January 2016. New Child Safe Standards came into force on 1 July 2022 and organisations are bound to comply. [Translated copies of the Child Safe Standards are available here.](#)


Victoria's Child Safe Standards


Plain language summary


- 1** Your organisation welcomes Aboriginal children. You support them to express their culture and to enjoy their rights. You don't allow racism.



- 2** Child safety is important to everyone at all levels in your organisation. You document how you find, avoid, and stop risks of child abuse or harm.


- 3** Your organisation supports children to know their rights to be safe from abuse, informed, and involved. You help them to talk openly and take part in decisions that affect them.



- 4** Your organisation tells families and the community about what you do, and how you keep children safe from harm and abuse. You help families to have a say and to take part in decisions that affect their child.



- 5** Your organisation understands that every child is different and has different needs. You make sure that they can get the information and help that they need.



- 6** Staff know what they must do to keep children safe from abuse and harm. They record, report, and share information about child safety when they should. Staff who work with children have had the background checks they need.



- 7** Children and their families know how to make a complaint and what happens when a complaint is made. Your staff know how to respond properly to complaints.


- 8** Your organisation trains and supports staff to keep children safe from abuse and harm. Your staff know the signs of child abuse and harm and what to do if there are issues of abuse and harm.


- 9** Your organisation makes sure children are safe when they use your services, settings, and activities. This includes when children are online.


- 10** Your organisation checks and improves the ways you keep children safe from abuse and harm.


- 11** Your organisation has written policies about how you keep children safe from abuse and harm. They are easy to understand, and all staff follow them.



For more information, contact the Commission for Children and Young People
www.ccyp.vic.gov.au



Southern United Hockey Club's Commitment to Child Safety

All children who are a part of the Club have a right to feel and be safe.

The welfare of the children in our care will always be our priority and the Club has a zero tolerance to child abuse.

The Club aims to create a child safe and child friendly environment where children feel safe and have fun.

The Club's activities are always conducted in the best interests of the children.

All allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures.

We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously.



Application of this Policy

This policy was developed by the Club.

This policy applies to all individuals involved in our organisation (paid and volunteer) including, but not limited to:

- Administrators
- Coaches
- Officials
- Participants
- Parents
- Spectators

All the people to which this policy applies have roles and responsibilities in relation to child protection. They must all:

- understand the indicators and risks of child abuse;
- appropriately act on any concerns raised by children; and
- understand and follow all applicable laws in relation to the protection of children and reporting or management of child safety concerns.

Child Abuse

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

Children's Rights to Safety and Participation

The Club encourages children to express their views about their safety. We listen to their suggestions, especially on matters that directly affect them. We actively encourage all children who use our services to 'have a say' about things that are important to them.

Inclusion

The Club understands the diverse circumstances of children including those with disabilities, culturally linguistically diverse backgrounds, children in varied living arrangements, LGBTIQ children and young people and Aboriginal Children.

The Club does not stereotype or make assumptions about a child's abilities but rather recognises that each child is different and experiences the world differently.

The club is committed to respecting and valuing all cultures, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children. We encourage and support all children to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights. The Club actively supports and facilitates participation and inclusion within the organisation by Aboriginal children and their families. The Club



appreciates the strengths of Aboriginal culture and understands its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children.

Racism and discrimination will not be tolerated within The Club and the Club will implement its disciplinary processes in the event that racism or discrimination is witnessed or reported. Disciplinary proceedings will be in line with the [Hockey Australia Complaints, Disputes and Discipline Policy](#).

We teach children about what they can do if they feel unsafe. We listen to and act on any concerns children, or their parents, raise with us. The Club actively promotes a Child Safe culture, using visuals (posters, banners etc), social media and newsletters and other accessible materials, as well as appointing a Safe Hockey Officer as a contact for children, families and members of the community to report concerns.

E-Safety

The Club is also committed to child safety online and the same principles, policies and practices apply to the expected conduct of club members online as offline. The club actively promotes these expectations via social media posts, and via materials available at the club. Any club member with concerns regarding another member's conduct online are encouraged to report this to the Club Secretary. Any concerns regarding children should be directed to the Club Safe Hockey Officer.

Safe Hockey has further information available online regarding the safeguarding of children online here: <https://www.esafety.gov.au/communities/sport>. The Club adopts these recommendations and actively promotes e-safety and follows the Hockey Australia Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy guidelines around general conduct and e-safety conduct.

WhatsApp and other messaging App Guidelines

It is recognised that at times, junior players play and train with senior teams. The Club has varying methods of communicating generally to team members including but not limited to:

- WhatsApp groups
- Newsletters
- Social media

Most senior teams at Southern United Hockey Club utilise WhatsApp for the coach to communicate with their players. Given juniors are also players at the senior level, they are required to be a part of WhatsApp groups so they receive the required information for games and training.

In order to ensure these groups remain child safe, they are required to follow a number of guidelines as outlined below:



1. Who can be in a team WhatsApp with juniors
 - Must include:
 - Coach.
 - At least one other official (assistant coach, team manager, or committee member).
 - May include:
 - All players in the team (including juniors).
 - At minimum, parents must be told the group exists, who runs it, and what it's used for.
2. Purpose of the group
 - Only for:
 - Fixtures and start times.
 - Training times and changes.
 - Venue / field changes.
 - Uniform and equipment requirements.
 - Short availability messages (e.g. "I'm away this week").
 - Not for: general banter, jokes that could embarrass juniors, sharing memes, alcohol-related chat, or anything sexualised or offensive.
3. Content rules (because juniors are present)
 - No abusive, discriminatory or sexual language.
 - No images, memes or videos that would be inappropriate if shown in the clubrooms to a mixed-age group.
 - Remember juniors read everything; if in doubt, leave it out or move it to a separate adults-only group.
4. Direct messaging with juniors
 - Adult officials avoid one-to-one messaging with juniors where reasonably possible.
 - If a one-to-one message is needed (e.g. selection, welfare check, logistics):
 - Keep it brief and sport-related.
 - Where possible, copy in a parent/guardian or another official, or send via the parent instead.
 - No discussion of non-hockey personal issues, and no "please don't tell your parents" types of messaging.
5. Parents' role and options
 - When a junior is selected in a senior team, the team manager or junior coordinator:
 - Explains the communication setup to the parent.
 - Receive all key information via a "Team Info" broadcast list / email / app instead.
 - Parents are told who to contact if they are concerned about something in the chat.
6. Separate spaces for 'adult banter'
 - If the senior playing group wants a social chat:
 - They create a separate, players-only "Social" group for adults (18+).
 - Juniors are not added to that group.



- Coaches do not have to be in the social group if they don't want to manage that space.

To reduce noise and workload for the coach:

- Make coach, assistant coach and team manager the only admins.
- Ask that only admins post "big" messages (fixtures, changes) and that players keep replies minimal ("👍", "Yes/No").
- Remind parents that long discussions should go via the team manager or in a separate parents' chat, not in the main group.

Valuing Diversity

We value diversity and do not tolerate any discriminatory practices. The Club celebrates diversity of sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, intersex status, ability, skill, cultural background, ethnicity, location, religious or political beliefs, or life stage. There is a place in our sport for everyone, exactly as they are. The Club has a zero-tolerance to any form of bullying, harassment and vilification in our sport. The Club adopts the principles of [the Hockey Australia Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#) and actively supports and encourages inclusivity.

Recruiting staff and volunteers

The Club takes the following steps to ensure best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of staff and volunteers:

- Require Working with Children Checks for relevant positions
- The club does personal reference checks by consulting with members/coaches to check suitability for the role at the club.
- The Club monitors suitability for roles/ positions ongoing.

Supporting staff and volunteers

The Club seeks to attract and retain the best staff and volunteers. We have developed a Code of Conduct to provide guidance to our staff and volunteers and made it publicly available on the Club website. All volunteers (committee members, team managers and coaches) are provided with a copy of the Code of Conduct at the commencement of the season.

Training

The Club will provide training to all members that are risk assessed as requiring Working with Children Checks including members of the committee, team managers and coaches. This training is required to be completed only once and the record of this will be stored by the WWCC Coordinator.

The training, developed by Sport Integrity Australia will educate participants in:



- Understanding what child safeguarding in sport is
- Understanding what the Child Safeguarding Policy is, who it applies to and when
- Understanding the role of the 14 Child Safe Principles in the Policy
- Understanding recruitment and screening requirements
- Recognise alleged breaches of the Policy
- Identify how to respond to alleged breaches

Training can be accessed on the sport Integrity Site/ Play by the Rules site here:

<https://elearning.sportintegrity.gov.au/login/index.php>

A detailed guide on how to start the learning is included in the links below.

Reporting a child safety concern or complaint

Legislative responsibilities

The Club takes its legal responsibilities seriously, including:

- *Failure to disclose*: All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to Victoria Police.
- *Mandatory reporting*: Any board members, staff or volunteers who are mandatory reporters (doctors, nurses, midwives, teacher, principals and police officers) must comply with their duties.
- *Failure to protect*: People of authority at the Club will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.
- *Reportable conduct*: The head of the Club must be made aware of any allegations of physical and sexual abuse, sexual misconduct, significant emotional or psychological harm or significant neglect by an employee or volunteer towards a child. We are also legally required to notify the Commission for Children and Young People of the allegation.
- *Duty of care*: If a child is abused by an individual associated with the Club, our organisation is presumed to have breached its duty of care unless it can prove that it took 'reasonable precautions' to prevent the abuse in question. For more information, please refer to the [new organisational duty of care to prevent child abuse page](#) on the Department of Justice and Regulation's website.

Club Point of Contact

The Club Secretary should be the first point of contact for anyone wishing to report a child safety concern. Once reported, the Club Secretary will refer the matter to the appointed Safe Hockey Officer.

Club Secretary: Anna Jennings | email: secretary@suhc.com.au

Child Safety Officer (2025): Ben Grant



In the event that the Club Secretary is unavailable, reports should be made to the Club's Member Protection Officer who will refer the matter on.

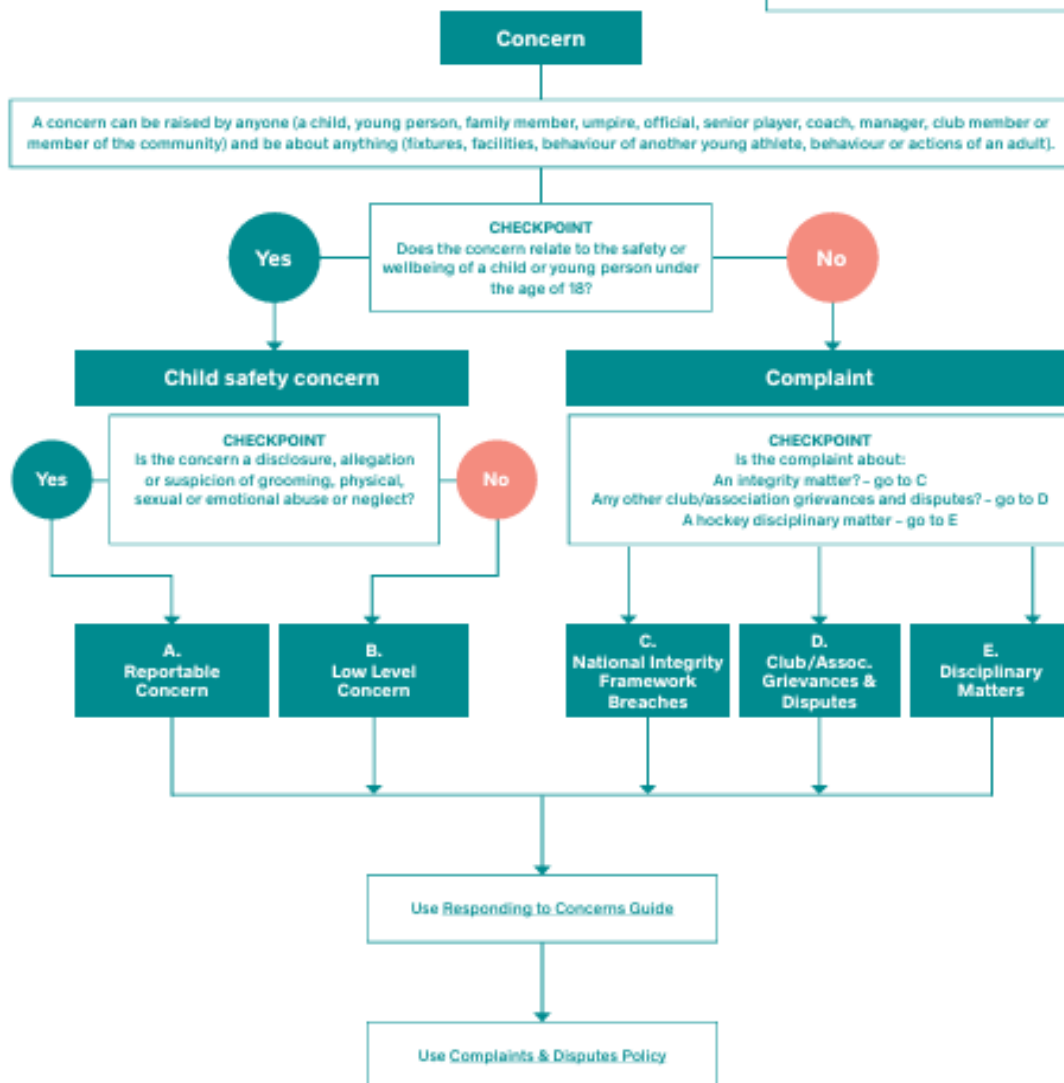
Reports are managed as per the [Safe Hockey Responding to Complaints Process](#) and the [Hockey Australia Complaints, Disputes and Disciplinary Policy](#).

For any matters requiring urgent or immediate assistance, including concerns for the welfare of a child or young person call 000 to report the matter to police. For any matters of immediate risk relating to the treatment of a child or young person in the family context, follow the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) Child Protection on 13 13 78.

The diagram below will assist with decision-making in the event a concern is identified.

SAFE HOCKEY RESPONDING TO CONCERNS FLOWCHART

SAFE HOCKEY OFFICERS (SHO)
 Clubs and associations must delegate someone internal to hold the Safe Hockey portfolio until an SHO is recruited and trained.





Privacy

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be staff, volunteers, families, or children, unless there is a risk to someone's safety. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it and who will have access to it. This is intended to protect reporters and to ensure that all members of the Club are comfortable to disclose any allegations or concerns in relation to child safety without repercussions.

Risk Management

We recognise the importance of a risk management approach to minimising the potential for child abuse or harm to occur and use this to inform our policy, procedures and activity planning. In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our children, including the annual completion and review of a Risk Assessment of Club Facilities. To reduce the risk of child abuse occurring, adults to whom this policy applies should avoid direct, unsupervised contact with children. For example, this should be a consideration when:

- using change room facilities;
- using accommodation or overnight stays;
- travel; or
- physical contact when coaching or managing children
- photographing or filming children at sporting events

The Club has a two-deep leadership model when doing room checks (including changerooms) attending team meetings and/or other activities. Two-deep leadership is when 2 authorised adults should be present and observable by others, and interruptible environments should be maintained.

Use of Phones or Recording Devices in Changerooms

It is club policy to disallow the use of phones or recording devices in changerooms or bathrooms at the Club. Posters are displayed throughout the changerooms notifying its users of this rule. Any member or member of the public caught using recording devices in Club changerooms or bathrooms will be subject to disciplinary action.

Governance

Child Safety and Wellbeing (events, issues, how they were handled, actions, new items) is a standing item on the Committee agenda. The Safe Hockey Officer is responsible for ensuring matters are documented and reviewed at the Committee Meeting as they arise.

Reviewing this policy



This policy should be reviewed every year or when new Child Safe Standards are released. The Club Secretary and Safe Hockey Officer (or other nominated person) should subscribe to updates from the Commission for Children and Young People and apply/ update standards as soon as possible following the roll out of new standards.

References/ Further Information:

- Commission for Children and Young People: <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/>
- [Translated copies of Child Safe Standards](#)
- [SUHC Working with Children Check Policy](#)
- SUHC Diversity and Inclusion Policy (? Remove if using HV D&I policy)
- SUHC Code of Conduct
- SUHC Risk Management Policy
- Hockey Australia Safe Hockey Hub: <https://www.hockey.org.au/info-hub/safe-hockey>
- [Hockey Australia Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy](#)
- Sport Integrity Australia: [Protecting Sport Together | Sport Integrity Australia](#)
- Sport Integrity Australia: [Photography and Filming of Children in Sport](#)
- Sport Integrity Australia Safe Practices Guide: <https://www.sportintegrity.gov.au/sites/default/files/SIA009-0722-Children%20and%20Young%20People%20Safe%20Practices%20Do's%20%26%20Don'ts-C-2%20%5BDIGITAL%5D.pdf>
- Sport Integrity Australia Reporting Concerns: <https://www.sportintegrity.gov.au/sites/default/files/SIA010-0423-Child%20Safeguarding%20Reporting%20Information-C-3%20%5BDIGITAL%5D.pdf>
- E-Safety Commissioner: <https://www.esafety.gov.au/communities/sport>
- [Hockey Australia Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#)
- [Safe Hockey Responding to Complaints](#)
- A Guide to Child Centred Complaints Handling: [https://www.oco.ie/app/uploads/2018/02/14433_OCO_child-centred-complaints_covers WEB-1.pdf](https://www.oco.ie/app/uploads/2018/02/14433_OCO_child-centred-complaints_covers_WEB-1.pdf)
- [Hockey Australia Complaints, Disputes and Disciplinary Policy](#)
- [Sports Integrity E-Learning Guide SUHC](#)
- [Picking Up and Dropping Off Children Policy](#)



Version	Developed/ Reviewed by	Date of Completion Review	Notes
004	Helen Ward	31/03/2020	
005	Fran Nicholson	22/05/2024	Updated to incorporate current Child Safe Standards; Updated Reference Links; Added suggestion to subscribe to updates from CCYP; Added SHO role and contact; Added filming and photography; revised cultural inclusion section; added link to translated information; added HV policy links; complaints handling info for children
006	Fran Nicholson	11/12/2024	Added Hockey Australia Safeguarding Children and Young People Link
007	Fran Nicholson	02/04/2025	Updated Club Secretary and Child Safe Officer details.
007	Fran Nicholson	02/04/2026	What'sApp Guidelines
		Next scheduled review: May 2027	