



BENTLEIGH GREENS SOCCER CLUB INC

CHILD SAFETY POLICY

Date created:	1 July 2023
Audience:	All persons involved in or connected to Football (Soccer) at Bentleigh Greens Soccer Club Inc (BGSC) including Board/Committee members, employees, contractors, coaches, team managers, players, parents, guardians, spectators and officials.
Version:	2023:1
Purpose of Document:	<p>To provide the framework for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • compliance with all laws, regulations, and standards relevant to child protection and child safety in Victoria • a Club culture of child safety and the creation of a positive and robust child safe culture • the implementation of the Victorian Child Safe Standards within BGSC • the development of systems, practices, processes, policies and procedures, consistent with Football Victoria (FV) and Football Australia (FA) policies and processes and considering the state and federal regulations regarding child safe practices • the promotion and open discussion of child safety issues within BGSC • ensuring 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 • providing guidance on responding where a person suspects any child abuse within all BGSC Environments in alignment with FV and FA policies and processes, considering the state and federal regulations regarding child safe practices • providing a clear statement to Board/Committee members, employees, contractors, volunteers, officials and players forbidding any such abuse • providing assurance that any and all suspected abuse will be investigated.
Actions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all BGSC Board/Committee members, employees, contractors and volunteers acknowledge they have read and understand this Policy. • Ensure that parents and guardians at BGSC acknowledge that they have read and understand this Policy. • Encourage relevant internal and external stakeholders to read and understand this Policy. • Ensure this Policy is published on the BGSC website.
Review:	Biennially from the date of this Policy



Bentleigh Greens Soccer Club Contact:	BGSC Club Safety Officer info@bentleighgreens.com.au
Contents:	Child Safety Policy
Other relevant resources:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The FV website <u>https://www.footballvictoria.com.au/resources/clubs/child-safety</u> has more detailed information on child safety. • <u>FA National Member Protection Framework</u> • <u>National Code of Conduct and Ethics</u> • <u>Short Guide to the Child Safe Standards</u> • <u>Child Safe Parents and Guardians Guide</u> • <u>eSafety Guide</u> • <u>Being a Child Safe Organisation</u> <p>See also BGSC website:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Child Safety Code of Conduct</u> • <u>Child Safe Standards Code of Conduct for Dealing with Children & Young People</u> • <u>Child Safe Standards Parents & Guardians Guide</u> • <u>Child Safe Standards Guide for Teens</u> • <u>Child Safe Standards ESafety Guide</u> • <u>Child Safe Standards Image Use Policy</u>

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Bentleigh Greens Soccer Club Inc (BGSC) is committed to ensuring that children and young people who participate in its activities have a safe and happy experience. BGSC supports and respects children, young people, employees, volunteers and participants.
- 1.2. The aim of BGSC’s Child Safe Policy (this Policy) is to protect the safety of children in our care and prevent abuse from occurring, and in the event that allegations are raised in relation to child abuse, to ensure that the allegations are properly addressed. All complaints will be treated seriously and fully investigated and handled with maximum confidentiality and discretion.
- 1.3. Should a person wish to make any enquiries in relation to this Policy, please contact the BGSC’s Club Safety Officer at info@bentleighgreens.com.au.



2. POLICY STATEMENT

- 2.1. BGSC is committed to providing the highest level of safety for all involved with Football (Soccer). This includes protecting Members' privacy, promoting positive behaviours and attitudes, protecting the health safety and wellbeing of Members, particularly children and delivering the BGSC's activities while acting in the best interests of children in the sport.
- 2.2. Specifically, BGSC considers that the health, safety and well-being of children take priority over all other competing considerations. BGSC considers that this is necessary to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all Members and protect the image and reputation of the sport, BGSC and its Members.
- 2.3. BGSC has a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and is committed to promoting and protecting children from abuse and neglect to the greatest extent possible. All children have equal rights to protection from child abuse, regardless of their gender, religion, disability, sexual orientation or sex characteristics.
- 2.4. Child protection is a shared responsibility between BGSC, its employees, contractors, associates, parents/guardians, coaches, spectators, volunteers and Members of the BGSC community. Everyone that participates in BGSC's activities is responsible for the care and protection of children, and reporting information about child abuse.
- 2.5. BGSC supports the active participation of all children. It listens to their views, respects their views and involves them when making decisions, where appropriate, especially about matters that will directly affect them (including their safety).
- 2.6. BGSC is also committed to:
 - 2.6.1. the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, and those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds as identified in [Standard 1 Victorian Child Safe Standards](#);
 - 2.6.2. providing a safe environment for children living with a disability; and
 - 2.6.3. providing a safe and respectful environment for children and young people with diverse sexualities and genders and those with intersex variations.
- 2.7. BGSC promotes fairness and consideration for all employees, volunteers and participants. For further details please refer to the [FA National Member Protection Framework and National Code of Conduct](#).

3. SCOPE

- 3.1. This Policy applies to everyone involved in or connected to Football (Soccer), including (but not limited to) players, parents, spectators, contractors, officials, coaches, team managers judges, and contractors throughout all BGSC events and activities.
- 3.2. This Policy will continue to apply retrospectively to a person or Member following the cessation of their association, employment or engagement with BGSC.

4. RELATED DOCUMENTS & LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

- 4.1. This Policy must be read in conjunction with:
 - 4.1.1. the laws of the Commonwealth and Victoria (as amended from time to time) including but not limited to:
 - 4.1.1.1. Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)
 - 4.1.1.2. Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Act 2015 (Vic)



- 4.1.1.3. Crimes Act 1958 (Vic); and
- 4.1.1.4. Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic).

- 4.1.2. BGSC policies and procedures, including but not limited to:
 - 4.1.2.1. Constitution;
 - 4.1.2.2. Players, Coaches & Team Managers, Parent and Guardian and Spectators Codes of Conduct;
 - 4.1.2.3. Member Protection Policy.

5. DEFINITIONS

- 5.1. **Child** means a person involved in the activities of BGSC (including athletes) and under the age of 18 years unless otherwise stated under the law applicable to the child (e.g., for the purposes of child sexual offences in Victoria, a “child” refers to a person under the age of 16 years).
- 5.2. **Child Abuse** is the mistreatment of a Child or Young Person that has Harmed, is Harming or is likely to Harm or endanger that Child or Young Person’s physical or emotional health, development or wellbeing and the Child has not, or is not likely to be protected by the parent(s) or guardian(s). For the avoidance of doubt, this includes but is not limited to Emotional or Psychological Abuse, Bullying, Grooming, Sexual Exploitation, Neglect and Harassment.
- 5.3. **Child protection** means any responsibility, measure or activity undertaken to safeguard children from Harm.
- 5.4. **Grooming** is a term used to describe what happens when a perpetrator of Abuse builds a relationship with a Child with a view to abusing them at some stage. There is no set pattern in relation to the Grooming of Children. For some perpetrators, there will be a lengthy period of time before the Abuse begins. The Child may be given special attention and what starts as an apparently normal display of affection, such as cuddling, can develop into sexual touching or masturbation and then into more serious sexual behaviour. Other perpetrators may draw a Child in and Abuse them relatively quickly. Some abusers do not groom Children but Abuse them without forming a relationship at all. Grooming can take place in any setting where a relationship is formed, such as leisure, music, sports and religious activities, or in internet chatrooms, in social media or by other technological channels.
- 5.5. **Harm** means Harm to a person or a Child is any detrimental effect of a significant nature to the person or Child’s physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. It is immaterial how the harm is caused. Harm can be caused by:
 - Physical, Psychological or Emotional Abuse or Neglect;
 - Sexual Abuse or Exploitation;
 - a single act, omission or circumstance; and
 - a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances.
- 5.6. **Sexual offence** (in Victoria) means a criminal offence involving sexual activity or actions of indecency or any act which exposes a child under the age of 16 years to or involves a child under the age of 16 years in, sexual activity or matters beyond their understanding or contrary to accepted community standards. Sexually offence behaviours can include the fondling of genitals, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or any other object, fondling of breasts, voyeurism, exhibitionism, and exposing the child to or involving the child in pornography. It includes grooming, which includes actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child under the age of 16 years (or their carer,



family or supervisor) to lower their inhibitions and prepare them for engagement in a sexual offence.

5.7. **Mandatory reporter** means a person who is legally required to make a report to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing Victoria (DFFH) or the Police if they form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection. It includes (but is not limited to) teachers, principals, registered psychologists, nurses, doctors and midwives.

5.8. **Member** means all registered participants, which includes players, coaches, volunteers, administrators, officials and referees. For the purpose of this Policy, a Member includes any person who is unregistered, but ought to have been registered under the National Registration Regulations (such as a player who participated in a Match).

6. RECOGNISING AND REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

6.1. A person may, in the course of participating in the sport or other activities of BGSC or carrying out their work, form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from child abuse.

6.2. If a person is concerned about an immediate risk to a child's safety, the person must phone Victoria Police on "000" as soon as practicable.

6.3. Specific types of **Child abuse** include:

6.3.1. **Physical abuse:** occurs when a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant Harm as a result of a physical injury, such as a non-accidental physical injury.

6.3.2. **Sexual abuse:** occurs when a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant Harm as a result of sexual abuse, such as when a child is exploited, or used by another for their sexual gratification or sexual arousal, or for that of others.

6.3.3. **Emotional and psychological abuse:** occurs when a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, emotional or psychological Harm of such a kind that the child's emotional or intellectual development is or is likely to be significantly damaged; and

6.3.4. **Neglect:** occurs when a child's physical development or health has been or is likely to be significantly damaged. It refers to an omission, such as depriving a child of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults, or medical care.

6.4. **Mandatory Reporters**

6.4.1. Select classes of people in the community (including teachers, nurses and doctors – amongst others) are required by law to report to the Child Protection Unit of the DFFF where they have formed a belief, on reasonable grounds, that a child is in need of protection because they have suffered (or are likely to suffer) significant harm due to physical or sexual abuse.

6.4.2. This report must be made as soon as practicable, and after each occasion where they become aware of a further reasonable grounds for the belief.

6.5. **Reasonable grounds for belief**

6.5.1. A reasonable belief is formed if a reasonable person believes that:

6.5.1.1. the child is in need of protection;

6.5.1.2. the child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of physical or sexual injury; and



- 6.5.1.3. the child's parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.
- 6.5.2. To form a reasonable belief, you should consider and objectively assess all the relevant facts, such as the source of the allegation and how it was communicated, the nature of and details of the allegation, and whether there are any other related matters known regarding the alleged perpetrator.
- 6.5.3. A 'reasonable belief' or a 'belief on reasonable grounds' is not the same as having proof, but is more than mere rumour or speculation.
- 6.5.4. You will have reasonable grounds to notify if:
 - 6.5.4.1. a child states that they have been physically or sexually abused;
 - 6.5.4.2. a child states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves);
 - 6.5.4.3. someone who knows a child states that the child has been physically or sexually abused;
 - 6.5.4.4. 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; or
 - 6.5.4.5. signs of abuse lead to a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused.
- 6.6. **Voluntary Reporters**
 - 6.6.1. In addition to the mandatory reporting obligations above, any person who believes on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from any form of child abuse, may disclose that information to the Police, DFFH or the Commission for Children & Young People (CCYP).
- 6.7. **Reporting Child Sexual Abuse**
 - 6.7.1. If a person receives information that leads them to form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria against a child (under the age of 16 years) by another person (of or over the age of 18 years), the person has a legal obligation to disclose that information to the Police as soon as it is practicable. Individuals who fail to comply with this obligation under the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) may be subject to a penalty of imprisonment.
- 6.8. **BGSC Approach to Reports of Abuse**
 - 6.8.1. BGSC supports and encourages a person to make a report to the Police, CCYP or DFFH if they form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection, or they are concerned about the safety, health or wellbeing of a child.
 - 6.8.2. Any person that makes a report in good faith in accordance with their reporting obligations (whether mandatory or voluntary) will be supported by BGSC, and will not be penalised by BGSC for making the report.
 - 6.8.3. If a person is uncertain as to whether they should make a report to an external authority in relation to the safety of a child, they may speak to



the BGSC Club Safety Officer for guidance and information. If in doubt, ask for assistance.

- 6.8.4. If an allegation is made against an employee, contractor or volunteer, BGSC will follow the reporting procedure outlined in [FA National Member Protection Framework](#) and take all steps to ensure that the safety of the child and other children is paramount.
- 6.8.5. BGSC will investigate allegations of inappropriate conduct against a child in accordance with procedural fairness and will handle the allegations in a confidential and sensitive manner to the greatest extent possible.
- 6.8.6. BGSC will co-operate with the directions of the Police, DFFH and/or CCYP in relation to any investigation conducted by these authorities.
- 6.8.7. BGSC will keep a register of any allegations regarding inappropriate conduct.

7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PERSONNEL PROTECTING CHILDREN

- 7.1. Personnel involved in protecting children include the BGSC Board/Committee, management, employees and volunteers within BGSC. Those people have responsibilities in relation to protection of children and are expected to:
 - 7.1.1. understand the rights of children, as appropriate to their role;
 - 7.1.2. respect the cultural and religious practices of families who access BGSC's services, programs or events;
 - 7.1.3. understand and appropriately respond to the needs of children with developmental delays or disabilities;
 - 7.1.4. appropriately act on any concerns raised by children;
 - 7.1.5. understand the definitions, indicators and impact of child abuse;
 - 7.1.6. at all times, know and follow regulations in relation to the care of children and follow the [National Code of Conduct and Ethics](#);
 - 7.1.7. co-operate with police and/or other formal investigations to the best of their ability; and
 - 7.1.8. not harm or exploit children who access BGSC's services.
- 7.2. BGSC Child Safety Officer will be the primary point of contact for all concerns related to child safety.

8. RECRUITMENT AND SCREENING

- 8.1. BGSC undertakes the minimum standard for background checks of employees, contractors and volunteers of BGSC as is the law as it applies in Victoria.
- 8.2. BGSC's recruitment and screening process for all employees, contractors and volunteers aims to:
 - 8.2.1. promote and protect the safety of all children who participate in the activities of BGSC;
 - 8.2.2. identify and recruit the safest and most suitable candidates who share BGSC's values and commitment to protect children; and
 - 8.2.3. prevent a person from working at BGSC if they pose an unacceptable risk to children.
- 8.3. As part of the screening and recruitment process, an applicant must provide appropriate evidence (e.g. WWCC or other state equivalent and/or Police check) to show that they are suitable to work with children and young people in a recreational setting.
- 8.4. BGSC requires that:
 - 8.4.1. all BGSC employees, contractors and BGSC Board/Committee members have a WWCC or equivalent; and



- 8.4.2. the following key event personnel (likely to have contact with athletes (and other children) have a valid WWCC or equivalent:
- 8.4.2.1. those paid by BGSC for their services;
 - 8.4.2.2. volunteers with regular roles in BGSC;
 - 8.4.2.3. relevant contractors who may have unsupervised access to children; and
 - 8.4.2.4. anyone else who BGSC feels requires a WWCC or equivalent due to the nature of the work that they are undertaking for BGSC,
- and any costs associated with gaining a valid WWCC will be borne by the person obtaining the WWCC.

- 8.5. The type of evidence that an applicant is required to provide to BGSC will vary depending on the type of position that they are applying for. However, an applicant will not be offered a position until they provide the required evidence to BGSC.
- 8.6. BGSC will exercise discretion and may require employee, contractor applicants and/or volunteers to provide a Police check and/or International Criminal History Check (ICHC) in accordance with the law and as appropriate before they commence their engagement and during their time with BGSC in regular intervals.
- 8.7. BGSC will undertake at least two thorough reference checks prior to engaging any employees or contractors.
- 8.8. Once engaged, BGSC will provide employees, contractors and volunteers with access to this Policy and employees, contractors and volunteers must review and acknowledge their understanding of this Policy.

9. SUPPORTING PERSONNEL

- 9.1. BGSC is committed to ensuring that all BGSC Board/Committee members, employees, contractors and volunteers receive training to ensure that they understand their responsibilities in relation to child safety. Mandatory training at BGSC includes:
- 9.1.1. Induction training for new coaches and team managers;
 - 9.1.2. BGSC Board/Committee Members to complete:
 - 9.1.2.1. Play by the Rules training;
 - 9.1.2.2. child safety training and risk management training; and
 - 9.1.2.3. cultural awareness and diversity training.
- 9.2. BGSC assists its BGSC Board/Committee members, employees, contractors and volunteers to incorporate child safety considerations into decision-making and to promote a culturally safe environment where children are supported to speak up about issues that affect them.
- 9.3. BGSC will undertake an annual review of training completed and additional training required within its community.

10. RISK MANAGEMENT APPROACH

- 10.1. Child safety is a part of BGSC's overall risk management approach.
- 10.2. See [CCYP Guide for Creating a Child Safe Organisation](#).

11. POLICY BREACHES

- 11.1. It is a breach of this Policy for any person or organisation to which this Policy applies, to have been found to have done anything contrary to this Policy. Any person who may breach this Policy is subject to [FA National Member Protection Framework](#).

12. POLICY PROMOTION



- 12.1. This Policy will be made available to all Members via the BGSC website.
- 12.2. This Policy will be communicated to all BGSC Board/Committee members, employees, contractors, via email and at BGSC Board/Committee Meetings and meetings with employees and contractors.

13. RECORD KEEPING

- 13.1. BGSC will retain records of reports of child abuse and complaints about child safety.
- 13.2. In maintaining records of reports about child safety, BGSC will maintain confidentiality and privacy for children and families in accordance with legislation.
- 13.3. BGSC will appropriately note identified risks to child safety through the record keeping process and will incorporate those into its risk management plan.

14. REVIEW PROCESS

- 14.1. This Policy will be reviewed by the BGSC Board/Committee on a biennial basis.
 - 14.2. If you would like to provide BGSC with any feedback or suggestions to improve this Policy, please contact the BGSC Club Safety Officer at info@bentleighgreens.com.au.
 - 14.3. In addition to the regular review of this Policy, recommendations for changes to the Policy may be submitted to the BGSC Board/Committee for consideration at any time. In the event that changes are accepted, this Policy will be updated, and circulated to all stakeholders via the BGSC website, email and/or other appropriate communication channels.
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