

SACCSS

Child Safe Policy

1. Statement of Context and Purpose

SACCSS has a zero-tolerance policy for child abuse and is committed to promoting child safety, children's wellbeing and protecting children from abuse. SACCSS runs sports events where staff may come into contact with children. Where staff do come into contact with children or otherwise deal with children in the course of their role, staff must ensure that they comply with the requirements set out in this Policy.

This Policy sets out key elements of SACCSS's approach to child safety and has been developed to create and maintain a child safe organisation in accordance with the Child Safe Standards introduced by the Victorian Government. It also outlines:

- the overarching principles and values that guide its approach to child safety; and
 - refers to the Code of Conduct which in turn provides the standards of expected behaviour and appropriate behaviour in dealing with children.
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2. Application

This Policy applies to all employees, volunteers and contractors (collectively referred to as **staff** throughout this Policy);

To properly implement this Policy, all SACCSS Member Schools must ensure that they implement a Child Safe Policy that complies with the child safety standards and Ministerial Order [1359](#), which sets out specific requirements for registered schools in relation to child safety.

3. Reference Points / Background Papers

- *Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)*
 - *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)*
 - *Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic)*
 - *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)*
 - *Crimes Amendment (Protection of Children) Act 2014 (Vic)*
 - *Crimes Amendment (Grooming) Act 2014 (Vic)*
 - *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)*
 - DHS Child Safe Standards Toolkit: Resource 2: Child Safe Policy and Statement of Commitment;
 - *Ministerial Order 1359*
 - *Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)*
 - SACCSS Child Safe Procedure; and
 - SACCSS Code of Conduct.
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4. Definitions

Child means a person who is under the age of 18 years who attends an SACCSS event.

Child abuse encompasses a broad range of matters set out in Part 6 of this Policy.

Child-connected work means work organised by SACCSS and performed by an adult in SACCSS's environment while children are present.

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, disclosures or allegations of child abuse.

Child Safe Officer is the first point of contact to provide advice and support to children, parents and staff regarding the safety and well-being of children at SACCSS, as set out in the Child Safety Procedure.

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

Reportable conduct: Five types of reportable conduct are listed in the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic.) (as amended by the *Children Legislation Amendment (Reportable Conduct) Act 2017*). These include:

1. sexual offences (against, with or in the presence of a child)
2. sexual misconduct (against, with or in the presence of a child)
3. physical violence (against, with or in the presence of a child)
4. behaviour that is likely to cause significant emotional or psychological harm
5. significant neglect.

SACCSS's environment means any physical place made available to or used by SACCSS for child-connected work.

Staff means an individual working in the SACCSS environment who is directly engaged or employed by SACCSS and/or a volunteer or a contracted service provider for the SACCSS (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary).

5. Overarching values and principles

SACCSS's approach to child safety is guided by a number of overarching principles and values (which are set out below).

5.1 *Commitment to child safety and best interests*

SACCSS is committed to child safety and wants children to be safe, happy and empowered. SACCSS supports and respects all children, as well as staff and parents.

SACCSS is committed to:

- embedding and promoting a culture of child safety;
- preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks;
- protecting the rights of all children to be safe, without fear of abuse or exploitation as outlined in the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989) and is committed to keeping children safe by all reasonable means;
- acting in children's best interests and keeping children safe;



- ensuring cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds;
- providing a safe environment for children with a disability;
- actively working to empower children; and
- regularly training and educating staff on child abuse risks.

5.2 *Zero tolerance for child abuse*

SACCSS has zero tolerance for child abuse and will not tolerate any form of child abuse, including by anyone who is working within SACCSS's environment or in child-connected work.

SACCSS has both legal and moral obligations to contact, as appropriate, the parents, school and/or relevant authorities when child safety concerns are raised and will comply with that obligation.

All instances of suspected child abuse, allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns must be reported to the Child Safe Officer and will be treated very seriously.

If staff believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse, they must immediately phone 000.

6. What is child abuse

Definition of child abuse as set out in the Education Training Report Act 2006 (Vic)

Child abuse includes:

- any act committed against a child involving:
 - a **sexual offence**; or
 - an offence under section 49b(2) of the *Crimes Act 1958*, that is, the offence of "grooming" which prohibits communicating (including electronically) by words or conduct with a child with the intention of facilitating the child's engagement or involvement in a sexual offence with you or another adult;
- the infliction on a child of:
 - **physical violence**; or
 - **serious emotional or psychological harm**; and
- serious neglect of a child.



6.1 *Physical violence and abuse*

Physical violence occurs when a child suffers or is likely to suffer significant harm from a non-accidental injury or injuries inflicted by another person. Physical violence can be inflicted in many ways, including beating, shaking, burning or use of weapons.

Possible physical indicators:	Possible behavioural indicators:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• unexplained bruises• burns and/or fractured bones	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• showing wariness or distrust of adults• wearing long sleeved clothes on hot days (to hide bruising or other injury)• fear of specific people• unexplained absences• academic problems

6.2 *Sexual offences and abuse*

Sexual offences occur when a person involves a child in sexual activity, or deliberately puts the child in the presence of sexual behaviours that are exploitative or inappropriate to his/her age and development. Child sexual abuse can involve a range of sexual activity including fondling, masturbation, penetration, voyeurism and exhibitionism. It can also include exposure to or exploitation through pornography or prostitution, as well as grooming behaviour.

Possible physical indicators:	Possible behavioural indicators:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• presence of sexually transmitted diseases• pregnancy• bleeding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• displaying sexual behaviour or knowledge that is unusual for the child's age• difficulty sleeping• being withdrawn• complaining of headaches or stomach pains• fear of specific people• showing weariness or distrust of adults• displaying aggressive behaviour

6.3 *Serious emotional or psychological abuse*

Serious emotional or psychological abuse occurs when harm is inflicted on a child through repeated rejection, isolation, or by threats or violence. It can include derogatory name-calling and put downs, or persistent and deliberate coldness from a person, to the extent where the behaviour of the child is disturbed or their emotional development is at serious risk of being impaired. Serious emotional or psychological abuse could also result from conduct that exploits a child without necessarily being criminal, such as encouraging a child to engage in inappropriate or risky behaviours.

Possible physical indicators:	Possible behavioural indicators:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> delays in emotional, mental or even physical development physical signs of self-harming. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> exhibiting low self-esteem or anxiety displaying aggressive or demanding behaviour being withdrawn, passive and/or tearful

6.4 *Serious neglect*

Serious neglect is the continued failure to provide a child with the basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing, shelter, hygiene, medical attention or adequate supervision, to the extent that the child's health, safety and/or development is, or is likely to be, jeopardized. Serious neglect can also occur if an adult fails to adequately ensure the safety of a child where the child is exposed to extremely dangerous or life threatening situations.

Possible physical indicators:	Possible behavioural indicators:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> frequent hunger malnutrition poor hygiene inappropriate clothing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> stealing food staying at school outside of school hours aggressive behaviour using alcohol or drugs academic issues

7. Child safety actions taken by SACCSS

SACCSS has taken, and/or proposes to take, the actions set out below in order to:

- demonstrate its commitment to child safety and monitor its adherence to its Child Safe Policy;
- support, encourage and enable staff, parents, and children to understand, identify, discuss and report child safety matters; and
- support or assist children who disclose child abuse, or are otherwise linked to suspected child abuse.

As part of the screening process, the following key event personnel must have and, if requested, provide appropriate evidence of a valid WWCC (or other state equivalent) to show that they are suitable to work with children and young people in a school setting:

- All SACCSS staff and Board members
- those paid by SACCSS for their services (excluding bump in and bump out);
- volunteers;
- relevant contractors who may have unsupervised access to children; and
- anyone else who SACCSS staff feel requires a WWCC due to the nature of the work that they are undertaking for SACCSS
- Any costs associated with gaining a valid WWCC will be the responsibility of the individual.

7.1 *Development, maintenance, implementation and publication of child safe policies, procedures and codes of conduct*

This Policy (along with the Code of Conduct and the Child Safe Procedure) guides staff on how to behave with children.

All staff must abide by SACCSS's Code of Conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children. SACCSS welcomes input from staff, as well as children and their families, regarding the development and content of the Code of Conduct.

We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place. SACCSS:

- takes all allegations seriously and has a procedure in place to enable allegations to be investigated thoroughly and quickly; and
- works to ensure all children and staff know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.

7.2 *Appointment of Child Safe Officer*

SACCSS has appointed a Child Safe Officer as a first point of contact to provide advice and support to children, parents and staff regarding the safety and well-being of children during certain SACCSS events (see the Child Safe Procedure).

The Child Safe Officer will receive appropriate training and support in relation to child safety, prevention of child abuse and responding to allegations of child abuse.

SACCSS staff can contact the Child Safe Officer for further information regarding child safety and for any questions or concerns or reports of suspected or alleged child abuse.

7.3 *Provision of counselling*

SACCSS will link children who disclose child abuse or are otherwise linked to suspected child abuse with an appropriate counselling service through the relevant member school.

7.4 *Risk management strategies*

SACCSS proactively manages risks of abuse to children.

SACCSS has developed and implemented risk management strategies regarding child safety which will identify and mitigate the risk(s) of child abuse in SACCSS's environment by taking into account:

- the nature of SACCSS's environment, for example risks posed by physical environments; and
- the activities expected to be conducted in that environment (including the provision of services by other volunteers from outside organisations); and
- the characteristics and needs of all children expected to be present in that environment.

Where risks of child abuse occurring in one or more of SACCSS's environments are identified, the Child Safe Officer will:

- make a record of those risks;
- specify the action(s) SACCSS will take to reduce or remove the risks (risk controls), which will take into account the nature of the risk and the diversity characteristics of the children affected by the risk.

The Child Safe Officer will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of its risk controls.

The Child Safe Officer will ensure (at least annually) that appropriate guidance and training is provided to themselves and staff about individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for managing the risk of child abuse; child abuse risks in SACCSS's environment; and the current Child Safe Standards.

8. Consequences for Breach of this Policy

SACCSS emphasises the need to fully comply with the requirements of this Policy. Any staff found to be in breach of the requirements of this Policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment (or engagement, where appropriate). Breaches may also result in disclosure to appropriate authorities and/or the Police.

9. Implications for Practice

9.1 *At Committee Level*

To properly implement this Policy, SACCSS must:

- ensure that this Policy is endorsed on an annual basis and following significant incidents if they occur;
- ensure that copies of this Policy are made available to all staff, for example in physical form in the briefing room and the break out area;
- ensure that this Policy is incorporated into the Committee's record of current policies;
- ensure that this Policy is incorporated into SACCSS's induction program, to ensure that all staff (particularly those who are engaged in child-connected work) are aware of the Policy, have read and understood the Policy, and acknowledge their commitment to comply with the policy;
- ensure that all staff are directed towards the Code of Conduct and the Child Safe Procedure; and
- ensure that this Policy is accessible to the public (including children and parents).

9.2 *At Other Levels*

To properly implement this policy, all SACCSS staff must ensure:

- that they will abide by this Policy, the Code of Conduct and the Child Safe Procedure and assist SACCSS in the implementation of this Policy; and
- that they have read and understood the definitions of child abuse outlined in this Policy.

9.3 *At SACCSS Member School Level*

To properly implement this Procedure, all SACCSS Member Schools must ensure that they implement a Child Safe Policy that complies with the Child Safe Standards and Ministerial Order **1359**, which sets out specific requirements for registered schools in relation to child safety.