



## Colonel Light Gardens Football Club

### Member Protection Policy

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| Club Objective:               | Member Protection                       |

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## *Colonel Light Gardens Football Club*



## **MEMBER PROTECTION POLICY**

**VERSION 1.1**

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Attachment 1: [Child Safe Environments – Appointing Members to Prescribed Positions](#)

Attachment 2: [Child Safe Environments – Mandated Notification Requirements](#)

Attachment 3: [Parent Handbook](#)

Attachment 4: [Complaints Procedure](#)

Attachment 5: [Forms and Reporting Templates](#)

These policy documents are available on request from the Club.

***The following documents, supporting the Clubs commitment to Member Protection, are under development.***

[Team Selection Policy](#)

[Cyber Bullying Policy](#)

[Disability Action Plan](#)

[Risk Assessment and Review of Child Safe Environment Policy Framework](#)

[Child-Safe Environment Compliance Statement](#)

[Disciplinary Process](#)

# **COLONEL LIGHT GARDENS FOOTBALL CLUB - MEMBER PROTECTION POLICY**

## **1. Introduction**

The Colonel Light Gardens Football Club aims to encourage all children to achieve, do their best and develop to their full potential, whilst having lots of fun.

In line with the Metro South Junior Football League objectives, the Colonel Light Gardens Football Club will promote, organise and foster the playing of the game of Australian Rules Football through our junior program, and instil a sense of fair play in the best traditions of true sportsmanship. It is our intent to create a vibrant, yet safe environment, which encourages participation in sport in general, and is accessible to all irrespective of age, gender, ethnicity or disability.

This Policy provides a code of behaviour forming the basis of appropriate and ethical conduct which everyone must abide by. The Colonel Light Gardens Football Club ("the Club") is committed to ensuring that everyone associated with the Club complies with the policy.

## **2. Purpose of Our Policy**

The main objective of our Member Protection Policy is to maintain responsible behaviour and ethical and informed decision-making by participants in this Club. This Policy outlines our commitment to a person's right to be treated with respect and dignity, and to be safe and protected from abuse. Our Policy informs everyone involved in our Club of his or her legal and ethical rights and responsibilities and the standards of behaviour that are required. It also covers the care and protection of children participating in our club's activities.

## **3. Who Our Policy Applies To**

Our Policy applies to everyone involved in the Club including committee members, administrators, coaches, officials, volunteers, players, parents and spectators.

## **4. Extent of Our Policy**

Our Policy covers unfair decisions (e.g. team selection), breaches of our code of behaviour and inappropriate behaviour that occurs at practice, at meetings, in the club rooms, at social events organised or sanctioned by the Club (or our district, regional, state or national body), on away and overnight trips and any behaviour that brings or is likely to bring our Club or sport into disrepute. It also covers behaviour where there is suspicion of harm towards a child or young person.

## **5. Club Responsibilities**

The Club will:

- implement and comply with our Policy;
- promote our Policy to everyone involved in our club;
- develop and maintain other associated policies and procedures to assist in the implementation of this Policy.
- promote and model appropriate standards of behaviour at all times;
- respond to breaches or complaints made under our policy promptly, fairly, and confidentially;
- review this policy every 12-18 months; and
- seek advice from, and if necessary or appropriate, refer serious issues to the Metro South Junior Football League

Serious issues include unlawful behaviour that involves or could lead to significant harm and includes criminal behaviour (e.g. physical assault, sexual assault, child abuse) and any other issues that our state or national body request to be referred to them.

## **6. Individual Responsibilities**

Everyone associated with the Club must:

- comply with the standards of behaviour outlined in our Policy;
- treat others with respect;
- always place the safety and welfare of children above other considerations;
- be responsible and accountable for their behaviour;
- follow the guidelines outlined in this Policy, and other associated guidance and procedures, if they wish to make a complaint or report a concern about possible child abuse, discrimination, harassment or other inappropriate behaviour.

## **7. Protection of Children**

### **7.1 Child Protection**

The Club is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people accessing our service. We support the rights of the child and will act without hesitation to ensure a child safe environment is maintained at all times. We also support the rights and wellbeing of our staff and volunteers and encourage their active participation in building and maintaining a secure environment for all participants.

The Club acknowledges that our staff, members and volunteers provide a valuable contribution to the positive experiences of children involved in our sport. The Club aims to continue this and to take measures to protect the safety and welfare of children participating in our sport by:

#### **7.1.1: Identify and Analyse Risk of Harm**

The Club will develop and implement a risk management strategy, which includes a review of existing child protection practices, to determine how child-safe and child-friendly the Club is and to determine what additional strategies are required to minimise and prevent risk of harm to children because of the action of an employee, volunteer or another person.

#### **7.1.2: Develop Codes of Conduct for Adults and Children**

The Club will ensure it has codes of conduct that specify standards of conduct and care when dealing and interacting with children, particularly those in the Club's care. The Club will also implement a code of conduct to address appropriate behaviour between children.

The code(s) of conduct will be included in Parents and Player Handbooks, and will set out professional boundaries, ethical behaviour and unacceptable behaviour. **(See Attachment 3)**

#### **7.1.3: Choose Suitable Employees and Volunteers**

The Club will ensure that the organisation takes all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work (in prescribed positions) with children.

This will be achieved using a range of screening measures. Such measures will aim to minimise the likelihood of engaging (or retaining) people who are unsuitable to work with children.

The Club will implement specific policy and procedural guidelines to ensure that appropriate criminal history checks, and other assessments as deemed necessary or appropriate or required by law, are conducted for employees and volunteers working with children. **(See Attachment 1)**

#### **7.1.4: Support, Train, Supervise and Enhance Performance**

The Club will ensure that volunteers and employees who work with children or their records have ongoing supervision, support and training such that their performance is developed and enhanced to promote the establishment and maintenance of a child-safe environment.

#### **7.1.5: Empower and Promote the Participation of Children in Decision-Making And Service Development**

The Club will promote the involvement and participation of children and young people in developing and maintaining child-safe environments.

#### **7.1.6: Report and Respond Appropriately To Suspected Abuse and Neglect**

The Club will ensure that volunteers and employees are able to identify and respond to children at risk of harm.

The Club will make all volunteers and employees aware of their responsibilities under respective state laws if they have suspicion on reasonable grounds that a child has been or is being abused or neglected. *(See Attachment 2)*

In addition to any legal obligation, if any person feels another person or organisation bound by this policy is acting inappropriately towards a child or is breaching the code(s) of practice set out they may make an internal complaint. Please refer to our complaints procedure outlined in *Attachment 5* of this policy. This will explain what to do about the behaviour and how the Club will deal with the problem.

### **7.2 Supervision**

Members under the age of 18 must be supervised at all times by a responsible adult. Our Club will provide a level of supervision adequate and relative to the members' age, maturity, capabilities, level of experience, nature of activity and nature of venue.

If a member finds another member under the age of 18 is unsupervised, they should assume responsibility for the member's safety until the parent/guardian or supervisor can be found. Wherever possible, the member requiring supervision should be brought under the temporary supervision of two or more adult Club members whilst the parent or guardian is being contacted.

Parents are expected to turn up on time to collect their child for reasons of courtesy and safety. If it appears a member (e.g. Coach) will be left alone at the end of a training session with just one child, they will ask another member to stay until the child is collected.

### **7.3 Transportation**

Parents / guardians are responsible for transporting their children to and from club activities (e.g. practice and games). Where parents make arrangements with other members for the transportation of their child, parents are reminded that the Club only undertakes suitability checks for members working in prescribed positions (as described in 7.1.3 above). No assumption can be drawn as to the suitability of another member, merely through their association with the Club as a parent, player, or in any other capacity.

Where our Club makes arrangements for the transportation of children (e.g. for away or overnight trips), we will conduct a risk assessment that includes ensuring vehicles are adequately insured, the driver has a current and appropriate licence for the vehicle being used and appropriate safety measures are available (e.g. fitted working seatbelts).

### **7.4 Taking Images of Children**

Images of children can be used inappropriately or illegally. The club requires that members, wherever possible, obtain permission from a child's parent/guardian before taking an image of a child that is not their own and ensure that the parent knows the way the image will be used.

In accordance with the permissions obtained through the player registration process, the Club will use images of the playing group to celebrate and highlight the achievements of teams and individuals. The Club will act responsibly in ensuring that no image (whether still image or video) represents any individual player in a negative light.

We also require the privacy of others to be respected and disallow the use of camera phones, videos and cameras, or other digital media recording devices inside changing areas, showers and toilets.

If the club uses an image of a child it will avoid naming or identifying the child or it will, wherever possible, avoid using both the first name and surname. We will not display personal information

such as residential address, email address or telephone numbers without gaining consent from the parent/guardian. We will not display information about hobbies, likes/dislikes, school, etc as this information can be used as grooming tools by pedophiles or other persons. We will only use appropriate images of a child, relevant to our sport and ensure that the child is suitably clothed in a manner that promotes the sport, displays its successes, etc.

## **8. Anti-harassment, Discrimination and Bullying**

Our club opposes all forms of harassment, discrimination and bullying. This includes treating or proposing to treat someone less favourably because of a particular characteristic; imposing or intending to impose an unreasonable requirement, condition or practice which has an unequal or disproportionate effect on people with a particular characteristic; or any behaviour that is offensive, abusive, belittling, intimidating or threatening – whether this is face-to-face, indirectly or via communication technologies such as mobile phone and computers. Some forms of harassment, discrimination and bullying are against the law and are based on particular characteristics such as age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, pregnancy, political or religious beliefs, race, and marital status.

Our club takes all claims of harassment, discrimination, bullying and cyber bullying seriously. We encourage anyone who believes they have been harassed, discriminated against or bullied to raise the issue with the Club (see Responding to Complaints in Section 10 below).

## **9. Inclusive Practices**

Our club recognises the contributions of, and will seek to include members from, all areas of our community.

### **9.1 People with a disability**

Where possible we will include people with a disability in our teams and club. We will make reasonable adaptations (e.g. modifications to equipment and rules) to enable participation.

### **9.2 People from diverse cultures**

We will support and respect people from diverse cultures and religions to participate in our club, and where possible will accommodate requests for flexibility (e.g. modifications to uniforms).

### **9.3 Sexual & Gender Identity**

All people, regardless of their sexuality, are welcome at our club. We strive to provide a safe environment for participation and will take action over any homophobic behaviour.

### **9.4 Pregnancy**

Pregnant women should be aware that their own health and wellbeing, and that of their unborn children, should be of utmost importance in their decision making about the way they participate in our sport. We recommend pregnant women to consult with their medical advisers, make themselves aware of the facts about pregnancy in sport, and ensure that they make informed decisions about participation.

### **9.5 Girls playing in boys teams**

If there is not a separate sex competition, our club will support girls playing in boys teams up until the age of 12 years (when federal sex discrimination law says if differences in strength, stamina and physique are relevant, then single sex competition is required). After this age our club will consider each request on an individual basis including looking at the nature of our sport and other opportunities to compete.

## **10. Responding to Complaints**

### **10.1 Complaints**

Our club takes all complaints about on and off-field behaviour seriously. Our club will handle complaints based on the principles of procedural fairness (natural justice), that is:

- all complaints will be taken seriously;
- both the person making the complaint (complainant) and the person the complaint is against (respondent) will be given full details of what is being said against them and have the opportunity to respond (give their side of the story);
- irrelevant matters will not be taken into account;
- decisions will be unbiased and fair; and
- any penalties imposed will be fair and reasonable.

More serious complaints may be escalated to the Metro South Junior Football League.

If the complaint relates to suspected child abuse, sexual assault or other criminal activity, then our club will need to report the behaviour to the police and/or relevant government authority.

## **10.2 Complaint Handling Process**

When a complaint is received by our club, the person receiving the complaint (e.g. President, or person identified by club with responsibility for Member Protection issues) will:

- listen carefully and ask questions to understand the nature and extent of the problem;
- ask what the complainant would like to happen;
- explain the different options available to help resolve the problem;
- take notes; and
- maintain confidentiality but not necessarily anonymity.

Once the complainant decides on their preferred option for resolution, the club will assist, where appropriate and necessary, with the resolution process. This may involve:

- supporting the person complaining to talk to the person being complained about
- bringing all the people involved in the complaint together to talk objectively through the problem (this could include external mediation);
- gathering more information (e.g. from other people that may have seen the behaviour);
- seeking advice from our district, regional, state and/or national body or from an external agency (e.g. State Department of Sport or anti-discrimination agency);
- referring the complaint to the Metro South Junior Football League; and/or
- referring the complainant to an external agency such as a community mediation centre, police or anti-discrimination agency.

In situations where a complaint is referred to the Metro South Junior Football League, and an investigation is conducted, the club will:

- co-operate fully;
- ensure the complainant and respondent are not victimised;
- where applicable, ensure the complainant is not placed in an unsupervised situation with the respondent(s); and
- act on any recommendations made by the Metro South Junior Football League.

At any stage of the process, a person can seek advice from or lodge a complaint with an anti-discrimination commission or other external agency.

## **10.3 Disciplinary Measures**

Our club will take disciplinary action against anyone found to have breached our policy(ies) or made false and malicious allegations. Any disciplinary measure imposed under our policy must:

- Be applied consistent with any contractual and employment rules and requirements;
- Be fair and reasonable;
- Be based on the evidence and information presented and the seriousness of the breach;
- Be determined by our Constitution, By Laws and the rules of the game.

Possible measures that may be taken include:

- verbal and/or written apology;
- counselling to address behaviour;

- withdrawal of any awards, placings, records, achievements bestowed in any tournaments, activities or events held or sanctioned by our club;
- suspension or termination of membership, participation or engagement in a role or activity;
- de-registration of accreditation for a period of time or permanently;
- a fine; or
- any other form of discipline that our club considers reasonable and appropriate.

#### **10.4 Appeals**

The complainant or respondent can lodge one appeal against decisions of or disciplinary measures imposed by our Club to the Metro South Junior Football League. Appeals must be based on either a denial of natural justice, because of unjust or unreasonable disciplinary measure(s) being imposed, or on the grounds that the decision was not supported by the information/evidence presented and available to the decision maker/club.