



American Football South Australia (AFSA)

Child Safety & Safeguarding Policy

Policy Owner: AFSA Board of Management

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1. Policy Overview and Purpose

American Football South Australia (AFSA) is committed to the safety, wellbeing, and protection of all children and young people involved in the sport.

This policy establishes the minimum safeguarding standards and legal obligations required to prevent harm, respond to concerns, and create a child-safe environment across all AFSA sanctioned activities.

This policy aligns with South Australian and Australian child safety legislation, including mandatory reporting obligations and child safe environments requirements.

2. Underlying Principles

- The safety and wellbeing of children is the highest priority
 - All children have the right to feel safe, respected, and valued
 - Zero tolerance for abuse, harm, or exploitation
 - All adults share responsibility for safeguarding children
 - Concerns must be taken seriously and acted on promptly
 - Decisions must prioritise the best interests of the child
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3. Scope and Application

This policy applies to all individuals involved in AFSA activities, including:

- Players (under 18)
- Coaches
- Officials
- Volunteers
- Board members
- Club administrators
- Contractors and service providers

This policy applies to all AFSA sanctioned activities, including:

- Matches
- Training sessions

- Events and programs
 - Travel and accommodation associated with football activities
 - Online and digital environments
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4. Core Policy Requirements

4.1 Child Safe Environment

AFSA and all affiliated clubs must:

- Provide safe, inclusive, and supervised environments
 - Identify and manage risks to children
 - Ensure appropriate conduct at all times
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4.2 Working With Children Check (WWCC)

- All relevant personnel must hold a valid WWCC in accordance with South Australian law
 - WWCC must be verified and recorded prior to engagement
 - Individuals without a valid WWCC must not work with children
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4.3 Code of Behaviour

All individuals must:

- Treat children with respect and dignity
 - Maintain appropriate professional boundaries
 - Avoid situations where they are alone with a child where possible
 - Act as positive role models at all times
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4.4 Prohibited Conduct

The following behaviours are strictly prohibited:

- Physical, emotional, or sexual abuse
- Grooming or exploitation
- Bullying, harassment, or intimidation

- Inappropriate communication with minors
 - Any behaviour that places a child at risk
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4.5 Recruitment and Screening

AFSA and clubs must:

- Screen all relevant personnel
 - Verify qualifications and suitability
 - Ensure safeguarding requirements are met prior to appointment
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5. Social Media and Digital Communication

AFSA is committed to ensuring that all digital communication involving children and young people is safe, transparent, respectful and aligned with child safeguarding principles. All staff, coaches, volunteers, officials, contractors and members must adhere to the following requirements when communicating with children and young people through electronic or online platforms. The AFSA approved communication platform is Spond; should a club wish to use any other communication platform they will need to seek league approval first.

5.1 No Private One-on One Communication

Adults must not engage in private electronic communication with children or young people through text messages, direct messages, social media platforms or other digital channels. All communication must include a parent/guardian and/or another authorised club representative to ensure transparency and accountability. Where communication with a child or young person is necessary, it must occur through group messaging, official club communication platforms or other arrangements that include at least one additional responsible adult (Two Deep Communication).

All club related communication must occur through approved and monitored club communication channels, such as Spond. Personal social media accounts, private messaging applications and unmonitored platforms should not be used for club business involving children and young people.

5.2 Images, Videos and Online Consent

Written consent from a parent or legal guardian must be obtained before photographing, filming, livestreaming or publishing images or videos of children or young people.

Images and videos must portray children and young people in a respectful, dignified and appropriate manner. Children must be suitably clothed and content must not place them at risk of embarrassment, exploitation or harm.

The organisation will take reasonable steps to protect the identity and privacy of children and young people. Personal information, including full names, addresses, contact details, school information, schedules or location data must not be published without appropriate consent and a legitimate purpose.

5.3 Compliance and Reporting

The organisation will comply with all applicable legislation, regulations and platform age restrictions relating to social media and digital communication. Communication with children under the minimum age requirements for a platform must occur through approved parent-facing communication channels.

Any suspected grooming behaviour, cyberbullying, online harassment, inappropriate communication, privacy breach or violation of this policy must be reported immediately to the Club's Child Safety Officer, Member Protection Officer or AFSA's Child Safety Officer. All concerns will be treated seriously and managed in accordance with the organisation's child safeguarding, reporting and disciplinary procedures.

AFSA reserves the right to monitor official communication channels and investigate any alleged breaches of this policy. Failure to comply may result in disciplinary action including suspension, removal from duties, reporting to relevant authorities, and/or termination of membership or engagement with the organisation.

6. Procedures / Processes

6.1 Reporting Concerns

Any concern regarding the safety or wellbeing of a child must be reported immediately.

Reports may be made to:

- Club Child Safety Officer, or
- AFSA directly

Serious concerns must be escalated to relevant authorities in accordance with mandatory reporting obligations under South Australian law.

6.2 Mandatory Reporting

Where a person suspects a child is at risk of harm:

- They must comply with mandatory reporting obligations
- Reports must be made to appropriate government authorities

Failure to report may constitute a breach of legal obligations.

6.3 Response to Allegations

AFSA will:

- Act immediately to ensure child safety
 - Remove individuals from roles where risk is identified
 - Refer matters to external authorities where required
 - Maintain confidentiality where possible
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6.4 Risk Management

AFSA and clubs must:

- Identify child safety risks
 - Implement controls to reduce risk
 - Regularly review safeguarding practices
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7. Breaches and Penalties

Failure to comply with this policy may result in:

- Immediate removal from activities
- Suspension or termination of roles
- Referral to Tribunal
- Referral to external authorities

Serious breaches will be treated with zero tolerance.

8. Enforcement and Responsibility

This policy is enforced by:

- AFSA Board of Management
- Designated Child Safety Officers
- Club administrators

All individuals share responsibility for safeguarding children.

9. Related Policies

- Member Protection Policy
 - Code of Conduct Policy
 - Coaching Policy
 - Grievance & Dispute Resolution Policy
 - Tribunal Policy
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10. Policy Review and Approval

This policy will be reviewed every two (2) years or earlier if required.

It will be assessed to ensure alignment with South Australian legislation, national safeguarding standards, and AFSA governance requirements.