



SAWTELL FOOTBALL CLUB

Child Safe Reporting Policy

INTRODUCTION

- Everyone in the Club must report any concerns about the safety or welfare of a child or young person immediately;
- Everyone in the Club should be confident that concerns and allegations will be dealt with honestly and fairly;
- Everyone in the Club should be confident in reporting unacceptable behaviour around children and young people;
- Where an allegation is made, the safety and wellbeing of the child is paramount.

REPORTING OBLIGATIONS

Mandatory Reporting

Legislation varies between states however at this stage most volunteers of the Club are not classified as Mandatory Reporters. A Mandatory Reporter is required by law to report to the relevant Government Department when they have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child, or class of children, is at risk of significant harm from abuse or neglect.

Mandatory Reporting applies to all people in New South Wales who have a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed against a Child or Young Person. This must be immediately reported to the Police.

Reporting to the Club

All staff and associated personnel including paid employees, volunteers, committee members, administrators, coaches and members, have an obligation to report suspicions of “risk of significant harm”.

If you are concerned about an immediate risk to a child’s safety, call 000 as soon as possible.

NSW Police

The police should be contacted for any situation that would be considered a criminal offence and includes child sexual assault, physical assault and grooming offences.

NOTE: It is a criminal offence for adults not to report to police if they *‘know, believe or reasonably ought to know that a child abuse offence has been committed’*.

In addition, people employed in children-related work may be subject to a criminal offence if they fail to reduce or remove risk of a child becoming a victim of child abuse.

Department of Communities and Justice (“DCJ”)

Any person who has reasonable grounds to believe that a child or young person is at risk of significant harm may report to DCJ by phoning 132 111 (this is a 24-hour service).

Office of the Children's Guardian

Relevant entities in NSW, such as the Club, must report allegations and findings of sexual offences, sexual misconduct, ill-treatment of a child, neglect of a child, an assault against a child, failure to protect a child or failure to report if a child has been harmed, as well as any behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child.

TYPES OF CONCERNS

All complaints should be reported. This includes:

- a) Disclosures of abuse;
- b) Unacceptable behaviour around children and young people; and
- c) Suspicion of abuse or harm to a child or young person.

RESPONSIBLE WORKERS

All complaints must be reported to the child safety contact officers which include any of the committee members named on the Clubs website but most specifically, the Member Protection Information Officer.

RAISING A CONCERN

A child or young person, or any staff member, volunteer or parent can make a complaint or raise a concern by:

- a) Face-to-face meeting with the child safe contact officers or the Member Protection Information Officer;
- b) Phone call: Member Protection Information Officer - 0401 259 991
- c) Email: see our website for email addresses of committee members (child safety contact officers) or more specifically sawtellfcmpio@gmail.com;
- d) Letter: Sawtell FC, PO Box 2, Toormina NSW 2452.

NOTE: If you wish to raise a complaint against a child safe contact officer, please contact North Coast Football on 0434 135 570 or office@northcoastfootball.com.au.

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS

- a) Steps are taken to ensure the child is removed from immediate harm, including removing the person the allegation is made about from child-related work if required.
- b) The incident is recorded on our complaint record form.
- c) If required, NSW Police and DCJ are contacted and will give us instructions on how to proceed.
- d) If required, the OCG is contacted and will give advice on how to proceed with an investigation.
- e) Investigation is carried out in a timely, fair and transparent manner (being mindful of privacy obligations) in line with our policy on responding to child safety reports.
- f) The child receives information about the investigation process, timeframes and outcome (being mindful of privacy and not compromising any ongoing investigation).
- g) The child receives ongoing support from both the Club and through referrals as needed (for example, counselling).
- h) Critical incident review conducted to improve policies and procedures to prevent the incident reoccurring.

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

We follow the obligations defined under the Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth).

- a) All information is recorded on our complaints and allegations reporting form.
- b) All complaints and allegations reporting forms are stored securely and only accessed by those in the organisation with responsibility for oversight or investigation.
- c) Information may be exchanged under Chapter 16A of the Child and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW) with other agencies who have responsibilities relating to the safety, welfare or wellbeing of children or young persons.

The privacy of those involved is maintained by the Club in accordance with our obligations under the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW).

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT FOR STAKEHOLDERS

We ensure that all our stakeholders (including workers, families and children) know how to raise a concern in the following ways.

- a) We hold information sessions about our policies and procedures (including this Child Safe Reporting Policy) and how they apply to families, workers and children.
- b) We create and display our resources (including fact sheets, brochures and posters) on the Sawtell FC website, that describe what to report and who to report to.
- c) We provide our staff and volunteers with internal and external training opportunities, so they understand our complaints and allegations processes.

We create and promote age and ability appropriate programs for children and young people that explain what to do if they feel sad, angry or concerned.

REVIEW DATE

This policy will be reviewed annually and after critical incidents, to ensure continuous improvement in our practices and that we keep up to date with relevant legislation and industry requirements.

Next review date is January 2024 and the responsible officer is the Member Protection Information Officer.

Children and young people have an opportunity to provide feedback on the policy and complaint handling process.