



Bellarine Sharks
Association Football Club

MEMBER PROTECTION POLICY

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MEMBER PROTECTION POLICY

1. Introduction

The Bellarine Sharks Soccer Club was started in 2004 to primarily service the recreational and soccer needs of the North side of the Bellarine Peninsula.

The Bellarine Sharks is a “not for profit” organisation where all work at the club is performed by volunteers. The Bellarine Sharks is a “Good Sports”, family oriented club. Our aim is to provide players of all ages regardless of gender, ethnicity, or disability with an enjoyable aerobic activity in a safe, family friendly environment.

2. Purpose of Our Policy

The main objective of our Member Protection Policy is to maintain responsible behaviour and the making of informed decisions by participants in this club. It 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 (umpires/referees/judges), players, parents and spectators.

4. Extent of Our Policy

Our policy covers unfair decisions (e.g. team selection) and actions, breaches of our code of behaviour and behaviour that occurs at practice, in the club rooms, at social events organised or sanctioned by the club (or our sport), and on away and overnight trips. It also covers private behaviour where that behaviour brings our club or sport into disrepute or there is suspicion of harm towards a child or young person.

5. Club Responsibilities

We will:

- implement and comply with our policy;
- promote our policy to everyone involved in our club;
- 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 refer serious issues to Football Federation Victoria

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 our 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 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 Bellarine Sharks AFC 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.

Bellarine Sharks AFC acknowledges that our staff, members and volunteers provide a valuable contribution to the positive experiences of children involved in our sport. Bellarine Sharks AFC 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 Bellarine Sharks AFC 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 organisation 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 Bellarine Sharks AFC will ensure that the organisation has codes of conduct that specify standards of conduct and care when dealing and interacting with children, particularly those in the organisation's care. The organisation will also implement a code of conduct to address appropriate behaviour between children.

The code(s) of conduct will set out professional boundaries, ethical behaviour and unacceptable behaviour.

7.1.3: Choose Suitable Employees and Volunteers

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

This may 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 Bellarine Sharks AFC will ensure that working with children checks/criminal history assessments are conducted for employees and volunteers working with children, where an assessment is required by law.

If a criminal history report is obtained as part of their screening process, the Bellarine Sharks AFC will ensure that the criminal history information is dealt with in accordance with relevant state requirements.



7.1.4: Support, Train, Supervise and Enhance Performance

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

The Bellarine Sharks AFC 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.

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 to the Bellarine Sharks AFC committee.

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 a 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.

Parents must turn up on time to collect their child for reasons of courtesy and safety. If it appears a member 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 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. We also require the privacy of others to be respected and disallow the use of camera phones, videos and cameras 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).

9. Inclusive practices

Our club is welcoming and we 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 Football Federation Victoria.

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, Member Protection Information Officer) 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 Football Federation Victoria ; 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 Football Federation Victoria 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 Football Federation Victoria's recommendations.

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 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 Football Federation Victoria. 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.



Attachment 1.1: WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK REQUIREMENTS

The following information was updated in April 2011. It is subject to change at any time.

1. VICTORIA

The Working with Children (WWC) Check creates a mandatory minimum checking standard across Victoria. The *Working with Children Act 2005* requires that some people who work or volunteer in child-related work require a WWC Check. The check involves a national police records check and a review of relevant findings from prescribed professional disciplinary bodies (currently only the Victorian Institute of Teaching). There is an exemption for volunteers whose own children are involved in the particular activity; however they should still be required to complete the screening process.

A person who has no criminal or professional disciplinary history will be granted an *assessment notice*. This notice will entitle the person to undertake child-related work in Victoria and is valid for five years (unless revoked). A person deemed unsuitable to work or volunteer with children will be given a *negative notice* and cannot work in child-related work in Victoria.

For more information:

- www.justice.vic.gov.au/workingwithchildren or 1300 652 879



Attachment 2: CODES OF BEHAVIOUR

The Bellarine Sharks AFC has adopted The Codes of Behaviour developed by Football Federation Victoria.

- Player Code of Behaviour
- Parent Code of Behaviour
- Spectator Code of Behaviour
- Coaches Code of Behaviour
- Administrators Code of Behaviour
- Match Officials Code of Behaviour



PLAYERS'

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

(ALL LEVELS)

- (a) Play by the Rules and within the spirit of the game;**
- (b) Do not argue with the match official. If you disagree, have your captain or coach approach the match official during a break in play or after the match is concluded;**
- (c) Control your temper. Verbal abuse of officials or other players, deliberately distracting or provoking another person is not acceptable or permitted in any sport;**
- (d) Maintain your focus and work hard for yourself and your team;**
- (e) Be a good sport and be prepared to acknowledge good play whether it is from your team or the opposition;**
- (f) Treat all players as you would like to be treated. Do not interfere with, bully or take unfair advantage of another player;**
- (g) Cooperate with your coach, team mates and opponents. Without them, there would be no competition;**
- (h) Play for your own enjoyment, and not just to please parents and coaches;**
- (i) Remove all jewellery prior to training and match play, as it is a hazard to you and those around you;**
- (j) Do not accept or use any banned or unauthorised drug(s), including the consumption of alcohol at any time.**

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PARENTS' CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

- (a) Remember that children play the sport for their enjoyment, and not yours;**
- (b) Encourage all children to participate, do not force them;**
- (c) Focus on the child's efforts and performance rather than the result of the activity (that is, winning or losing);**
- (d) Encourage children to always participate according to the rules;**
- (e) Never ridicule, yell at a child for making a mistake or losing a game;**
- (f) Remember that children learn best by example, so applaud good play by both teams;**
- (g) Support all efforts to remove racial and religious vilification, verbal and physical abuse from sporting activities;**
- (h) Respect the match official's decisions and teach your child to do likewise;**
- (i) Show respect and appreciation to Club officials, including coaches, officials and administrators. Ensure any issues are raised through the correct channels;**
- (j) Do not smoke or consume alcohol near the team bench (Technical Area) or sideline.**

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SPECTATOR CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

It is important that all spectators at a Football Federation Victoria (FFV) approved fixture are able to enjoy the match in a safe and comfortable environment. Accordingly, each person present at a FFV fixture must:

- (a) respect the decisions of the Match Officials;
- (b) respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person regardless of their race, colour, religion, language, politics, national or ethnic origin;
- (c) not engage in the use of violence in any form, whether it is by other Spectators, Team Officials (including coaches) or Players;
- (d) not engage in discrimination, harassment or abuse in any form whether lawful or otherwise, including but not limited to the use of obscene or offensive language or gestures, the incitement of hatred or violence or partaking in indecent or racist chanting;
- (e) comply with FFV's "Conditions of Entry" at all venues, and any ticket conditions;
- (f) not carry, light or throw flares or missiles (including on to the field of play or at other spectators);
- (g) not enter the field of play or its surrounds without lawful authority; and
- (h) conduct themselves in a manner that enhances, rather than injures, the reputation and goodwill of FFV, Football Federation Australia (FFA) and football generally.

Any person who does not comply with this Code or who in the opinion of the Club and/or FFV causes or attempts to cause or is reasonably likely to cause a disturbance may be evicted from the venue and banned from attending future matches held on behalf of FFV. Any offender who then breaches the ban order against them may be charged with trespass and subject to further penalties and sanctions, including the possibility of further legal action.



COACHES' CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

- (a) Remember that players participate for the fun of it and that winning is not everything;
- (b) Never ridicule or yell at a player for making a mistake or being in a losing team;
- (c) Be reasonable in your demands on younger players time, energy and enthusiasm,
- (d) Teach your players to abide by the Rules and Laws of the Game;
- (e) Whenever possible, alternate the group of players to ensure everyone has a reasonable chance of success;
- (f) Avoid overplaying the talented players as all players deserve equal time on the playing field;
- (g) Ensure that equipment and facilities meet a reasonable safety standard and are appropriate to the age and ability of the players;
- (h) Modify your approach to suit the skill levels and needs of players;
- (i) Develop and enhance respect between players, opposition coaches and the decisions of the match official;
- (j) Follow the advice of a physician when determining the extent of a player's injury and beyond that, when players are returning from injury to training and match play;
- (k) Keep up to date with the latest coaching practices (refer to Coach Accreditation Criteria);
- (l) Take time out to teach players (& others) the Laws of the Game, hence raising their awareness;
- (m) Remind all players to play within the spirit of the game at all times;
- (n) Ensure players are good sports and ensure each team member shakes the hand of their opponents at the conclusion of every match;
- (o) Do not smoke or consume alcohol from the team bench (Technical Area) or sideline;
- (p) Remember the actions of yourself and your team is reflective of the perception others take away with them.

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ADMINISTRATORS' CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

- (a) Involve young people in the planning, leadership, evaluation and decision making process in the club network;**
- (b) Give all children equal opportunities to participate;**
- (c) Ensure the rules, equipment, length of games and training principles suit the age, ability and maturity level of participants;**
- (d) Provide quality supervision and instruction for junior players;**
- (e) Remember that children will only continue with football, provided they enjoy their experience, so do not over-emphasise awards;**
- (f) Help coaches and match officials highlight appropriate behaviour and skill development, and assist in raising the standards of coaching and officiating;**
- (g) Ensure everyone involved in football emphasises fair play, and not a winning at all costs approach;**
- (h) Be tolerant and calm under pressure and approach problem solving in a supportive manner as members and players will expect you to set an example for others;**
- (i) Support the implementation of the National Junior Sport Policy;**
- (j) Make every effort to educate persons who breach these guidelines from time to time.**

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MATCH OFFICIALS' CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

- (a) Modify your approach to suit the skill levels and needs of players;**
- (b) Praise and encourage all participants;**
- (c) Be consistent, objective and courteous when making decisions;**
- (d) Do not tolerate unsporting behaviour and promote respect for all opponents;**
- (e) Emphasise the spirit of the game rather than focus on negative aspects;**
- (f) Encourage and promote rule changes to all players and members;**
- (g) Be a good sport yourself, as actions speak louder than words;**
- (h) Keep up to date with the latest trends in refereeing;**
- (i) Remember that you set the example on the park, therefore, your behaviour and comments should always be positive and supportive;**

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