



Child Safety Policy

Purpose

To demonstrate the strong commitment of the Board, management, staff and volunteers of the Essendon District Football League (EDFL) and its affiliated clubs to child safety and to provide an outline of the guidelines and practices the EDFL has developed to minimise the risk of harm or abuse occurring.

This Policy aims to protect children and young people against the risk of abuse and harm and eliminate, so far as is practicable, the opportunity for these situations to occur. It is intended to complement child protection legislation, club policies, procedures and professional standards, codes of conduct or ethics as applied by staff, volunteers and personnel.

Mission Statement

The EDFL and its affiliated clubs are committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Our community recognises the importance of, and a responsibility for, ensuring the EDFL and clubs are a safe, supportive and enriching environment which respects and fosters the dignity and self-esteem of children and young people, and enables them to thrive in their learning and development.

Application

All staff, contractors, volunteers and any other member of the EDFL community involved in child-related work or roles are required to comply with this policy by observing and adhering to the guidelines and procedures set out by the EDFL and, more broadly, National Child Safe Legislation.

Child Abuse

Child abuse is defined as *an act or omission by a parent, caregiver, other adult or child that endangers or impairs a child's physical or emotional health and development.*

Types of child abuse include:

(as documented by AFL Vic – Child Safe Standards in Football)

- **Physical abuse** is intentionally causing or threatening to cause physical injury to a child, or inadvertently causing injury as a consequence of physical punishment or physically aggressive treatment.
 - Examples: Physical assault, hitting, shaking, restraining, etc.
 - Signs: Bruises, cuts, burns, fractures, covering up seemingly unnecessarily

- **Emotional abuse** occurs when a person engages in inappropriate behaviours such as rejecting, ignoring, humiliating, isolating, threatening or verbally abusing a child, or allowing others to do so.
 - Examples: Yelling, ignoring, teasing, verbal abuse, bullying, etc.
 - Signs: Delayed physical/emotional development, withdrawn, low self esteem, shy, agitated, anxious, self harming

- *Sexual abuse* is when any person uses their authority over a child to involve the child in any sexual activity.
 - Examples: Fondling genitals, masturbation, penetration, voyeurism and exhibitionism, exposure to pornography, sexting, etc.
 - Signs: Bruising, withdrawal, anxious, over-sexualisation, secretive, low self esteem, weight loss or gain, self harming

- *Neglect* means failing to meet a child's basic needs such as providing adequate food, drink, shelter, clothing, supervision, hygiene or medical attention.
 - Examples: Withholding any basic need, lack of emotional support, no security or stability, withholding education, etc.
 - Signs: Hunger, lack of clothing, homeless, poor hygiene, stealing, skinny, tired, regularly ill, attention seeking

- *Family violence* occurs when children are forced to live with violence between adults in their home, and can be very harmful. Exposure to family violence places children and young people at increased risk of physical injury and harm, and has a significant impact on their wellbeing and development.

- *Grooming* is the behaviours used to prepare a child with the intention of sexually abusing them. This includes building a trusting relationship with a child and their parents/carers, and 'special relationships' and spending time alone with children or outside the work role. It graduates from attention-giving and non-sexual touching to increasingly intimate and intrusive behaviours.

Reporting

All EDFL clubs must have a nominated Child Safety Officer (CSO). The role of the CSO is to give players, clubs and parents a known point of contact for matters regarding child safety. For all incidents or concerns in regards to child safety, CSO's are the best club contact. They must be equipped with the knowledge and resources to either help with issues, or support the club or individual in taking the matter further. (For further reporting resources, please see Appendix A). All reports/complaints must be treated seriously and handled with maximum confidentiality and discretion.

Recruitment

The EDFL recognises the importance of a risk management approach to minimising the potential for child abuse or harm to occur – therefore, we encourage clubs to maintain a strict recruitment process for all staff and volunteers who will likely have regular contact with children and young people at the club (see Appendix B for a suggested Appointment Application). As a minimum, clubs are to ensure that all adults who are involved with children under the age of 18 hold a current Working with Children Check.

Roles & Responsibilities of Personnel Protecting Children

While the CSO may be the best point of contact for child safety issues, it is also the responsibility of all club and community members to be diligent in relation to child protection. It is mandatory for all affiliated clubs, with the guidance of their CSO, to ensure all players, coaches, officials, administrators, parents, spectators and members are educated about Child Safety, including a basic understanding of the indicators and risks of child abuse and how to respond to any concerns that have been observed by, or reported to, them. Clubs should make this policy known and readily available to everyone at their club, as well as any other relevant resources provided to them by their CSO.

Child Safe & Child Friendly Guidelines

The following guidelines are simple ways that all persons can uphold their child protection responsibilities and promote positive, safe and friendly behaviour towards children and young people.

- Positive guidance - acting appropriately with children.
- Diversity & Inclusion – Do not tolerate any discriminatory practices; promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal or culturally/linguistically diverse children and their families; welcome children with a disability and act to promote their participation
- Adhering to role boundaries – should not act outside out of the confines of the duties of your role.
- Use of language and tone of voice – no swearing or defamatory language, clear direction and encouragement, not being harmful in what you say.
- Supervision – avoid being alone one on one with a child out of the view of others where possible.
- Use of electronic communications – where possible email, text messages and social media communications to include parent/guardian or within an open group message.
- Photographs of children and young people – within expectations of AFL privacy policy e.g. photos taken in context of the program, dressed appropriately, etc.
- Physical contact with children and young people – done when reasonable and in an appropriate manner.
- Sexual misconduct – under no circumstances are sexual acts to occur with or in the presence of children.
- Change room arrangements – important to supervise children while also balancing a child’s right to privacy.
- Transporting children – prior authorisation from management and child’s parents.
- Gift giving – prior authorisation from management and child’s parents.
- Overnight stays – work purposes only within a part of a formal program with authorisations from parents. Gender of supervisors considered and balanced with children participating.
- Alcohol & Drugs – while on duty must not use, possess, supply or be under the influence of alcohol or drugs, including being incapacitated from legal medications.

Policy Promotion

In conjunction with the club board or committee, it is the responsibility of the CSO to ensure that the EDFL Child Safety Policy is well known and readily available to players, coaches, officials, administrators, parents, spectators and members of all affiliated EDFL clubs. This may include, but is not limited to, displaying of policy in club social rooms, downloadable version of policy available on club websites, printed copies of policy available from club CSO’s. A master copy of the EDFL Child Safety Policy will always be publicly available via the league website (<http://essendondfl.com.au/>).

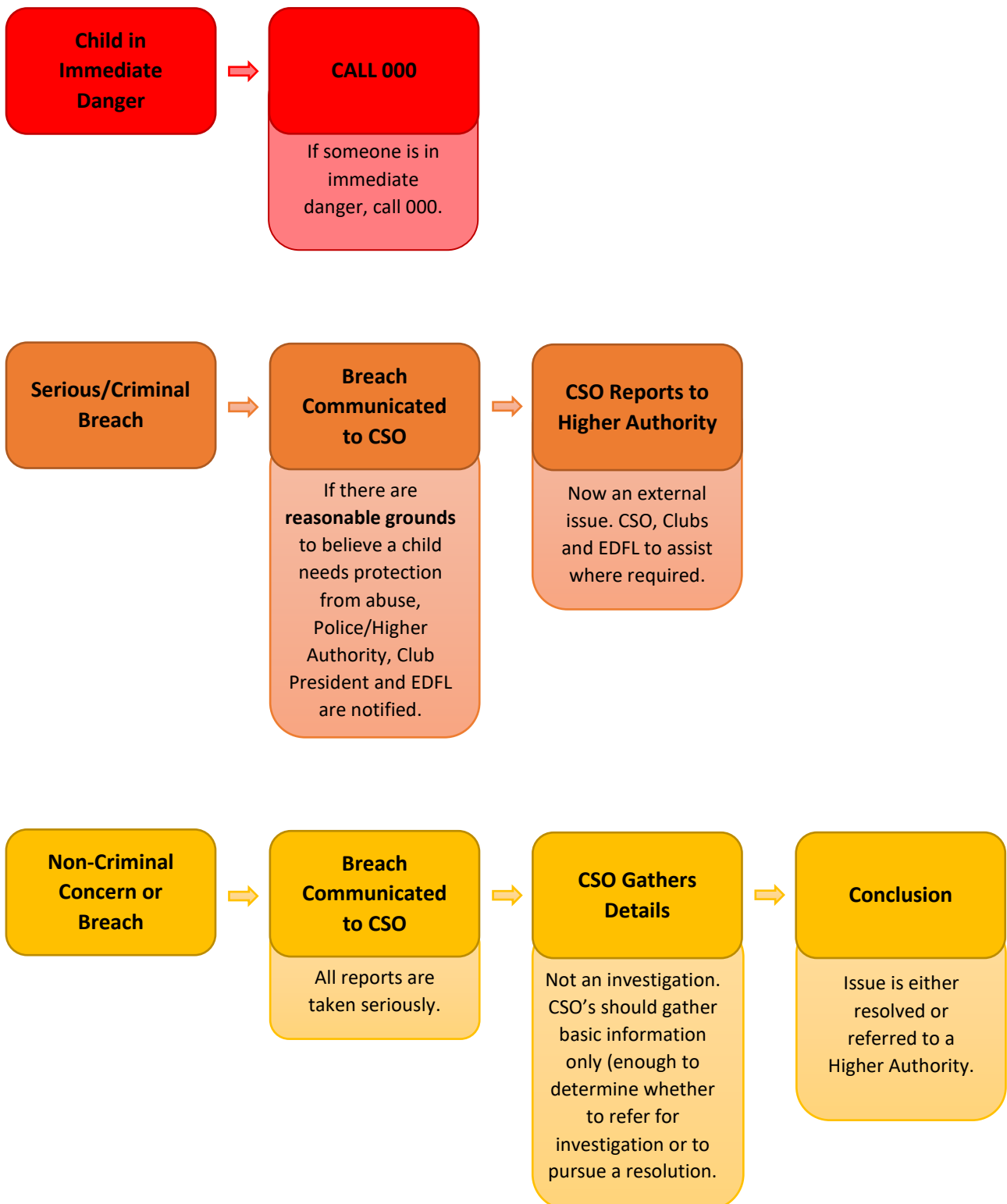
Further Information on Child Safety

Club CSO’s are available for individuals seeking further clarity on any child safety related issues. They must be provided with the training, information and resources to assist with a large array of issues and will know the proper course of action for a majority of complaints, concerns or reports. Should they not have the ability to provide assistance, they will know the appropriate method of advancing the issue to higher authorities, whether that be the EDFL, Police, DHHS or other department.

Review

As Legislation and National Policies change and develop, so too will the EDFL Child Safety Policy. Taking on board national changes as well as seeking input from children, parents, carers, staff and volunteers involved with the EDFL and its affiliated clubs, this policy will be reviewed in February of each year and changes will be made accordingly.

Appendix A – Reporting Procedure



Appendix B – Example Position Appointment Guide

Applicant Name: _____

Role Appointment: _____

Contact Number: _____

Email Address: _____

WWCC Number: _____

Why I wish to work with children in football/netball?

Any relevant history working/volunteering with children?

Reasons for leaving previous roles working with children?

Referee 1

Name: _____

Organisation: _____

Role/Title: _____

Contact Number: _____

Referee 2

Name: _____

Organisation: _____

Role/Title: _____

Contact Number: _____

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Date Last Reviewed	13/03/2019
Due for Review	February 2020