



SCHOOL SPORT VICTORIA

CHILD SAFE POLICY

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

School Sport Victoria (SSV) is committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children when delivering an extensive school sport program to Victorian primary and secondary school students.

SSV want children to be safe happy and empowered.

SSV is committed to the safety, participation, and empowerment of all children.

SSV has legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously.

SSV is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.

SSV has zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures.

SSV has robust recruitment, screening, supervision and management practices for all staff involved in child-related work.

SSV is committed to ensuring regular training and educating of our supervisors on child abuse risks.

SSV is committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.

SSV has specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team and supervisors to achieve these commitments.

DEFINITIONS

School Sport Victoria: Business unit of the Victorian Department of Education and Training responsible for the delivery of interschool sport for member schools.

Supervisors: SSV Advisory Committee members, SSV staff, volunteers, agents, contractors, member schools (and their staff and volunteers), life members, ambassadors and all other persons involved in supervising school sport.

THE POLICY

SCOPE

This policy guides Advisory Committee members, our staff, volunteers, agents, contractors, member schools, life members, ambassadors and all other persons involved in supervising school sport on how SSV creates a child safe environment at our events and in our teams.

OUR CHILDREN

This policy is intended to protect and empower children who are vital and active participants in school sport. SSV involves them when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them, such as via feedback surveys. SSV listens to their views and concerns and respects what they have to say.

CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

All of the SSV Advisory Committee members, staff, volunteers, agents, contractors, member schools, life members, ambassadors and all other persons who are involved in supervising school sport must agree to abide by the SSV Codes of Conduct including the SSV Child Safety Code of Conduct which specifies the standards of behaviour required when working with children. SSV welcomes feedback on this policy, including by staff, volunteers, children and their families.

TRAINING AND SUPERVISION

Training and education are important to ensure that everyone in SSV understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

The SSV culture aims for all supervisors (in addition to parents/carers and children) to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations, disclosures or suspicions of child abuse or child safety concerns. SSV ensures that our supervisors undertake training to identify, assess, minimise and respond to risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse. Training will take place annually and include either face to face inductions, role manuals and/or online resources. In addition, SSV staff will undertake mandatory reporting training annually.

SSV also supports our supervisors through ongoing management to: develop their skills to protect children from abuse; and promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, the cultural safety of children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds, the safety of children with a disability and other vulnerable students.

SSV will ensure that trained supervisors will be supervised regularly to ensure they understand SSV's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse, as well as checking that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate (please refer to SSV Child Safety Code of Conduct to understand appropriate behaviour further). Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported in accordance with the [SSV Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations and Procedures](#) where required, including reported through appropriate channels, such as the Department of Education and Training and Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

RECRUITMENT AND SCREENING

SSV takes all reasonable steps to employ skilled and suitable people to work with children. We develop selection criteria and advertisements, which clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our obligations and responsibilities. SSV understands that when recruiting staff and volunteers we have ethical as well as legal obligations.

SSV actively encourage applications from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with a disability.

All people engaged in child-related work, including volunteers, are required to have a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this Check (unless they can provide proof of an appropriate exemption from a Working with Children Check). Applicants are expected to provide a copy of a current Working with Children Card. Please see the [Working with Children Check](#) website for further information.

SSV carry out verbal reference checks to assess the suitability of applicants to work with children and to support SSV to recruit the right people for relevant roles.

If during the recruitment process a person's criminal history is indicated, either by the applicant or Working with Children Check, then the person will be given the opportunity to provide further information and context.

SSV expects member schools and sporting organisations to comply with the Child Safe Standards applying in their own organisations in respect of the recruitment and selection of their staff and volunteers as well.

FAIR PROCEDURES FOR PERSONNEL

The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern.

SSV is also fair and reasonable to all supervisors. The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent, and based on evidence.

SSV records all allegations, disclosures or suspicions of abuse and safety concerns using the [SSV Accident and Incident Policy](#) and the [SSV Accident and Incident reporting form](#), including investigation updates. All records are securely stored.

The decisions made when recruiting, assessing incidents, and responding to an allegation of abuse or a safety concern will be made after consultation within the Department of Education and Training.

ALLEGATIONS, CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS

SSV takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly in a timely manner. Our supervisors are trained to deal appropriately with allegations appropriately.

SSV works to ensure all children, parents/carers and supervisors know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.

All supervisors must follow the [SSV Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations and Procedures](#) in addition to any other Child Safe Standards policies and guidance which is applicable to them if they witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has been or is at risk of being abused.

If an adult has a **reasonable belief** that an incident has occurred, then they must report the incident. Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be:

- a child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves in the third person),
- behavioural indicators of abuse lead you to believe that the child has been abused,
- physical indicators of abuse lead you to believe that the child has been abused,
- someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it,
- observing suspicious behaviour.

If a student feels unsafe or an incident has occurred, then they should be supported and enabled to speak to the adult or teacher who accompanied them, or an SSV official or Team Vic official at an SSV event to raise any concerns about their safety or any other concerns they may have.

SSV works to ensure all children, parents/carers and supervisors, by a variety of means including the display of posters at SSV events, training and publication of this policy on the SSV website, know what to do and who to tell if they observe or suspect abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.

SPECIFIC ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Everyone within SSV is responsible for ensuring a culture of child safety and preventing child abuse. Our expectations are as follows:

Roles	Responsibilities
Advisory Committee Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adhere to the Child Safe Policy, Codes of Conduct and the SSV Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations and Procedures• Lead and promote internal and external discussions on a culture of child safety• Lead and promote understanding and practices of cultural safety
Chief Executive Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adhere to the Child Safe Policy, Codes of Conduct and the SSV Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations and Procedures• Ensure policies and procedures are current and address the risks of child abuse• Lead and promote internal and external discussions on a culture of child safety• Act on allegations of child abuse by supervisors as per the SSV Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations and Procedures• Facilitate learning on cultural safety and procedures• Ensure organisations we work with, including member schools, understand our policy• Seek feedback on our practices
School Sport Officers, Administration Officers and other casual staff employed from time to time by DE or SSV	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lead and adhere to the Child Safe Policy, Codes of Conduct and the SSV Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations and Procedures• Ensure supervisors are aware, including through provision of training and inductions, of and adhere to procedures• Coach supervisors on managing risks• Ensure supervisors understand and adhere to the Child Safety Code of Conduct and the SSV Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations and Procedures• Ensure new supervisors are aware of roles and responsibilities during induction process• Encourage discussion and learning about changing risks• Seek external feedback on our practices

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report any concerns of abuse in accordance with the SSV Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations and Procedures
Members of Forums, Committees, District, Division and Region Coordinators, organisers, convenors, agents, contractors, Life Members, ambassadors and volunteers, Team Vic Team Officials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adhere to the Child Safe Policy, Codes of Conduct and the SSV Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations and Procedures Participate in the development of the School Sport Victoria Board's child safe practices Identify any cultural safety knowledge gaps and actively seek training Report any concerns of abuse in accordance with the SSV Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations and Procedures
Member schools (including their staff and volunteers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have and promote a child safe culture within their respective school and comply with all relevant laws.

COMPLIANCE

All people to whom this policy applies must adhere to the policy at all times. Non-compliance with this policy may constitute a breach of employment or contractual obligations and may also constitute misconduct, harassment, discrimination or some other contravention of the law. Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action and, in serious cases, termination of the person's employment or engagement or membership of the person's school by SSV.

PRIVACY

All staff and volunteers collecting, using or disclosing personal or health information about a student or volunteer will be required to do so in compliance with the [SSV Privacy Policy](#) and relevant privacy laws. SSV record keeping practice and procedure will also comply the [Department's Privacy Policy](#).

RISK MANAGEMENT

The SSV Child Safe Risk management document records the risk management strategies in place to identify, assess, and minimise child abuse risks, which include risks posed by physical environments and online environments.

SUITE OF DOCUMENTS THAT SUPPORT THIS POLICY

[Vicsport Guidelines for Communication when working with Children](#)

[Vicsport Guidelines for Physical Contact when working with Children](#)

[SSV Codes of Conduct](#)

[SSV Inclusion Policy](#)

[SSV Privacy Policy](#)

[SSV Safe Participation in Sport Policy](#) and its associated documents

[SSV Accident and Incident Report Procedures](#)

[SSV Accident and Incident Report Form](#)

[SSV Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations and Procedures](#)

[DE Reportable Conduct Scheme](#)

[Reportable Conduct - FAQs](#)

[DE – Protect Program](#)

IMPLEMENTATION

1. This policy reflects current practice
2. All policies can be found on the SSV website
3. All schools and all coordinators will be notified of any significant changes via the SSV website, Social Media and the SSV eNewsletter
4. This policy will be included in all Convener kits for Region and State championships
5. Presented at Team Vic Team Officials Inductions and in the Team Officials Manual
6. Circulated to suppliers of Umpires, Referees and Conveners

ENDORSEMENT

This policy was endorsed by the Executive Director, Schools Operations and Statewide Services Division, Department of Education and Training in August 2021

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed every two years or when advice changes or following any significant incidents. We will ensure that families and children have the opportunity to contribute. Where possible we do our best to work with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, culturally and/or linguistically diverse communities and people with a disability during this review process.