



MEJFC Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing Policy
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MEJFC Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing Policy

1 Purpose

This document sets out how the Mount Eliza Junior Football Club (MEJFC) recognises the importance of child safety and how we work to ensure our Club creates and maintains an environment where all children are safe.

This Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing Policy (Policy) outlines how the MEJFC will deliver on its commitments to safeguarding children and young people involved in club activities, programs, services, and facilities. This Policy also sets out the behaviours required of MEJFC members towards and in the presence of children and young people. MEJFC members are required to abide by the standards set out in this Policy (including complying with appropriate measures to address risks) and report any behaviours that do not comply with it.

The purpose of this Policy is to:

1. Provide a clear statement to all MEJFC members that the MEJFC has zero tolerance for child abuse and harm.
2. Safeguard children and young people against different forms of child abuse and harm.
3. Work towards an organisational culture of child safety and wellbeing within the MEJFC.
4. Ensure that all MEJFC members are aware of their responsibilities for identifying possible child abuse and harm and for establishing controls and procedures for reducing the likelihood of such abuse and/or detecting such abuse when it occurs.
5. Provide guidance to MEJFC members as to action that should be taken where they suspect any child abuse or harm within or outside of the MEJFC.
6. Provide assurance that all suspected child abuse and harm will be reported and investigated as appropriate.

Failure by MEJFC members to comply with this Policy may result in disciplinary action. Such disciplinary action may, depending on the seriousness of the misconduct, include suspension while matters are investigated. In addition to any internal disciplinary proceedings, the MEJFC will report to the police all instances in which a breach of the law has or may have occurred.

There may be exceptional situations where this Policy does not apply, for example, in an emergency. However, it is crucial that, where possible, MEJFC members seek authorisation from the MEJFC Committee prior to taking action that contravenes this Policy or advise the MEJFC Committee as soon as possible after any incident in which this Policy has not been followed.

2 Definitions

For the purpose of this policy and unless the context otherwise requires (or if State legislation differs in definition requiring a higher standard) the following definition apply:

Term	Definition
Bullying	Bullying involves the inappropriate use of power by one or more persons over another less powerful person and is generally an act that is repeated over time and is intended to cause distress and risk to a

	<p>person's wellbeing. Bullying has been described by researchers as taking many forms which are often interrelated, and may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Verbal</i> (name calling, put downs, threats); • <i>Physical</i> (hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting); • <i>Social</i> (ignoring, excluding, ostracising, alienating); and/or • <i>Psychological</i> (spreading rumours, stalking, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions); • Cyberbullying (any sustained name calling, put downs, campaigns of harassment or trolling in an online environment).
Children and Young People	A person under the age of eighteen years. Child or Young Person shall mean a single person falling within the definition of Children and Young People.
Child abuse	Child abuse includes all forms of physical abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, neglect, or negligent treatment, grooming, commercial (e.g., for financial gain) exploitation, exposure to family violence, harassing behaviour such as bullying or other exploitation of a Child or Young Person and includes any actions that results in actual or potential harm to a Child or Young Person. Child abuse can be a single incident, but usually takes place over time.
Child Safe Standard	The (Victorian) Child Safe Standards are a set of legislated outcome-based Standards that require organisations providing services, programs and/or facilities to children and young people to comply with. The Child Safe Standards (Standards) aim to support organisations in developing practices that prevent and improve responses to allegations of child abuse and support the safety and wellbeing of children and young people by embedding safeguarding practices into everyday thinking. It is the policy of the MEJFC to comply with the requirements of these Standards.
Cultural Safety	Cultural Safety is an environment where individuals can express their identity in the form they choose without any concerns. Having a culturally safe space acknowledges differences and similarities across cultural values, spirituality connections, family networks, community dynamics and enables shared respect for all individuals.
Emotional or psychological abuse	Emotional or psychological abuse occurs when a Child or Young Person does not receive the love, affection or attention they need for healthy emotional, psychological and social development. Such abuse may involve repeated rejection or threats to a Child or Young Person. Exposure to family violence can also impact the emotional and psychological wellbeing of a Child or Young Person. Constant criticism, teasing, ignoring, singling out (pointing out), threatening, yelling, scapegoating, ridicule and rejection or continual coldness are all examples of emotional abuse. These behaviours can result in significant damage to the Child's or Young Person's physical, intellectual or emotional wellbeing and development.
MEJFC Executive Committee	President, Secretary, Treasurer, Registrar and at least one Vice President (refer to MEJFC Constitution)
Family violence	Family violence occurs when Children or Young People are forced to live with violence between adults in their home. It is violence between

	members of a family, or extended family, or those fulfilling the role of family in a Child or Young Person's life. It can include witnessing violence or the consequences of violence. 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	Grooming is a term used to describe activities by which a perpetrator of abuse builds a relationship with a Child or Young Person, with a view to physically/sexually abusing them. Perpetrators are also known to build a trusting relationship with those associated with the Child or Young Person's care and wellbeing to help create an environment in which abuse can occur. There is no set pattern in relation to the grooming of Children or Young People. For some perpetrators, there will be a lengthy period before the physical abuse begins The Child or Young Person may be given special attention and, what starts as an apparently normal display of affection, such as cuddling, can develop into sexual touching or masturbation and then into more serious sexual abuse. Other perpetrators may draw a Child or Young Person in and abuse them relatively quickly; this could occur in both physical and online environments. Grooming can take place in any setting where a relationship is formed, such as in the context of leisure, music, sports and religious activities, in internet chatrooms, in social media or by other technological channels.
Harm	Harm to a Child or Young Person is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on a Child's or Young Person's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. It is immaterial how the harm is caused. Harm can be caused by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • emotional or psychological abuse, physical abuse or neglect; • sexual abuse; • a single act, omission, or circumstance; and • a series or combination of acts, omissions, or circumstances.
Harassment	Any type of behaviour towards a person that they do not want and is offensive, abusive, belittling, or threatening and is reasonably likely to cause harm to the person who is the subject of harassment. Sexual harassment includes unwanted or unwelcome sexual behaviour towards a person that may make them feel offended, humiliated, or intimidated.
LGBTQI+	Acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer and/or Questioning.
MEJFC Member	All people associated with MEJFC including committee members, coaches, team managers, other volunteers, parents of players and players (where appropriate).
Misconduct with a Child or Young Person	Any behaviour involving a Child or Young Person that is objectively age inappropriate and/or places the Child or Young Person at risk of harm.
Neglect	Neglect is the persistent failure or deliberate denial to provide a Child or Young Person with the basic necessities of life. Such neglect includes the failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, adequate supervision, clean water, or medical attention to the extent that the Child's or Young Person's health and development is, or is likely to be, significantly harmed. Categories of neglect include physical neglect, medical neglect,

	abandonment or desertion, emotional and educational neglect. In the context of a sporting environment, it may involve an adult being aware that a Child or Young Person is at risk of abuse and not reporting these concerns to authorities.
Non-binary	This is an umbrella term for any number of gender identities that sit within, outside of, across or between the spectrum of the male and female binary. A non-binary person might identify as gender fluid, trans masculine, trans feminine, agender or bigender. A non-binary person may or may not use the gender-neutral pronouns of 'they' and 'them'.
Physical abuse	Physical abuse occurs when a person subjects a Child or Young Person to non-accidental physically aggressive acts. The abuser may inflict an injury intentionally or inadvertently as a result of physical punishment or the aggressive treatment of a Child or Young Person. Physically abusive behaviour includes (but is not limited to) shoving, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, biting, burning, kicking and excessive and physically harmful over-training. It also includes giving Children or Young People harmful substances such as drugs, alcohol, or poison. Certain types of punishment, whilst not causing injury, can also be considered physical abuse if they place a Child or Young Person at risk of being hurt.
The MEJFC Codes of Conduct	The Codes of Conduct outlines what is, and what is not, acceptable behaviour or practice when working with or engaging with Children and Young People as further detailed in this Policy. Refer to the Coaches Code of Conduct; Player's, Parents and Supporters Code of Conduct; and Administrators Code of Conduct.
Sexual abuse	Sexual abuse is any act which exposes a Child or Young Person to, or involves a Child or Young Person in, sexual processes beyond their understanding or contrary to accepted community standards. Perpetrators of sexual abuse take advantage of their power, authority or position over the Child or Young Person for their own benefit. It can include making sexual comments to a Child or Young Person, engaging Children or Young People to participate in sexual conversations over the internet or on social media, kissing, touching a Child's or Young Person's genitals or breasts, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger, or any other object. It can involve undertaking sexual acts in the presence of a Child or Young Person or forcing them to watch such acts. Voyeurism, exhibitionism, and exposing a Child or Young Person to pornographic magazines, websites, and videos, or involving them in pornography and Sexual Exploitation are also considered forms of sexual abuse.
Sexual exploitation	Sexual exploitation occurs when a Child or Young Person is forced into sexual activities that are then recorded in some way and/or used to produce pornography. Such pornography can be in the form of actual photos or videos or published on the internet. Exploitation can also involve a Child or Young Person who is forced into prostitution.
Transgender	Someone whose gender does not exclusively align with the one they were assigned at birth. Transgender relates to a person's gender, not their sexual orientation.
Unlawful discrimination	Includes both: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • direct discrimination such as treating a Child or Young Person less

	<p>favourably than other people or groups because of personal characteristics; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • indirect discrimination when an unreasonable rule or policy applies to everyone but has the effect of disadvantaging some people because of personal characteristics they share, where such personal characteristics is protected by applicable anti-discrimination legislation
Vilification	A public act, conduct or behaviour that incites hatred, serious contempt for, or revulsion or severe ridicule of, a person or group of people because of a particular characteristic they hold, as covered by applicable legislation, including their race, religion, identifying as homosexual, transgender, or non-binary
Vicarious trauma	The experience of trauma symptoms that can result from being repeatedly exposed to other people’s trauma and their stories of traumatic events.
Wellbeing	<p>Wellbeing encompasses the health of the whole Child and Young Person – physical, mental, social, spiritual, and emotional.</p> <p>Social and Emotional Wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People includes the connection Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People have to self, family, community, culture, spirituality, and land/sea which are vital aspects of their wellbeing. It also acknowledges the impact that colonization continues to have on this population groups’ health and wellbeing.</p>

3 Supporting Documents

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the MEJFC ‘Purpose and Values, Codes of Conduct and Policy Statements’ document, October 2017.

4 Scope

This Policy applies to all MEJFC Members as defined above.

5 MEJFC’s Commitments to Safeguarding Children and Young People

All children and young people, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation, or family or social background, have the right to feel safe and be free from any harm or abuse. The MEJFC is committed to promoting and protecting the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people in our care who access MEJFC activities, programs, services or facilities, by fostering a culturally safe environment where children and young people feel safe and welcome.

As part of the MEJFC’s commitment to safeguarding children and young people, the MEJFC commits to the following:

- The MEJFC has zero tolerance for child abuse.
- The MEJFC will seek to provide an environment in which all children and young people feel supported and respected.



- The MEJFC recognises the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, children, and young people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, children and young people with a disability and children and young people who identify as LGBTI+, transgender and/or non-binary and will implement culturally appropriate practices and procedures to address those needs.
- The MEJFC supports the active participation of children and young people and welcomes the opinions of children, young people, and their families to inform the development and update of policies and procedures in relation to matters affecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.
- The MEJFC will engage with children and young people and their parents/carers about safeguarding practices and help empower them to speak up when they see or hear something that makes them feel unsafe. This will be achieved through the provision of relevant information through appropriate resources which are readily available and accessible to children, young people, and their parents/carers.
- In the event a concern or allegation is raised in relation to child abuse or any other inappropriate behaviour towards a child or young person that has occurred while a child or young person is under the MEJFC's care, the MEJFC will ensure it is treated seriously, in a culturally sensitive manner and fully investigated in accordance with this Policy, the Supporting Documents, any other related policies or procedures and relevant legislation.
- The MEJFC will actively promote the safety of children and young people and take responsibility for providing a safe physical and online environment for children and young people in their care.

6 Responsibilities within the MEJFC

Child safeguarding is a shared responsibility of all MEJFC Members.

All MEJFC Members must ensure that they understand their roles and responsibilities in respect of the protection of children and young people as set out in this Policy including reporting information about suspected child abuse and/or harm.

A summary of the responsibilities of key groups of MEJFC Committee is set out below.

Entity	Responsibility
MEJFC Committee	The Committee will work to ensure the MEJFC Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing Policy is implemented and reviewed.
MEJFC Child Safeguarding Officer (CSO)	The CSO role is a volunteer role appointed by the MEJFC Committee. The role will serve as the first point of contact for club community members and others who have concerns about a child or young person within the club and provide advice and



	support to assist that person with making a report. The CSO will champion the safeguarding message and work with the Committee to practically implement the policies and procedures.
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7 Recruitment and Volunteer Screening

The MEJFC is committed to implementing recruitment and screening practices that prioritise the safety of children and young people from child abuse and harm. MEJFC recruitment and screening practices must identify the most suitable people for positions who share the MEJFC's commitment to protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. The MEJFC requires all MEJFC People to pass through its recruitment and screening processes prior to commencing their engagement with the MEJFC. The MEJFC's recruitment and screening practices include:

- Clear position descriptions are provided that state relevant safeguarding requirements;
- Communication of this Policy and the commitments described to potential applicants for positions;
- Holding face-to-face interviews (or via videoconference platforms), which include safeguarding-related questions;
- Undertaking two suitable reference checks for volunteer positions;
- Undertaking the relevant screening checks (specific to the role), which may include identity, criminal record, Working with Children Checks (all MEJFC volunteers must hold a volunteer Working with Children Check) and qualification checks;
- As soon as reasonably practicable following engagement, a requirement that MEJFC members review and acknowledge their understanding of this Policy; and
- Once engaged, a requirement that all new MEJFC Members participate in an induction program, which will provide them with further information about our commitment to safeguarding children and young people.

The MEJFC requires all MEJFC Volunteers to successfully obtain, maintain and evidence for the duration of their engagement, a valid Working with Children Check and/or a satisfactory police background check.

The MEJFC may at any time request satisfactory evidence of either or both of a Working with Children Check or a satisfactory police background check. If an individual is unable to or does not obtain a Working with Children Check or satisfactory police background check, or for whatever reason is unable to maintain a Working with Children Check or current satisfactory police background check at any time, MEJFC may take action up to and including the termination of their engagement with the club.

8 Creating Culturally Safe Environments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children, Young People and Their Families



The MEJFC is committed to creating environments where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture is acknowledged and appreciated, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people, their families and community members feel safe and included.

The MEJFC will:

- Promote a Welcome to Country and/or an Acknowledgement of Country for significant meetings
 - and formal events to show respect to the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural traditions;
 - Consult with MEJFC families and members of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to identify opportunities to promote culture and practices;
 - Provide opportunities for MEJFC Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people to share their cultural identity and express their culture;
 - Adopt a social and emotional wellbeing approach towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and communities;
 - Provide training for volunteers on the strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people;
 - Celebrate NAIDOC Week and acknowledge significant events including National Sorry Day and National Reconciliation Week;
 - Seek feedback from MEJFC Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people, families, and communities on their experiences at the MEJFC, particularly how safe they feel expressing their culture; and
 - Take a zero-tolerance approach to racism and act on any incidents of racism or other forms of unlawful discrimination promptly.

9 Child Safe Practices and Requirements

This Policy addresses the major areas where interaction occurs with the children and young people who take part in any MEJFC activities, programs, services, or facilities. This Policy also imposes an obligation on MEJFC members who organise such activities, programs, services, or facilities to identify where risks to safeguarding of children and young people may arise and adopt control measures to properly manage those risks (see further at section 10) of this Policy.

9.1 Sexual misconduct

Under no circumstances is any form of 'sexual behaviour' to occur with, or in the presence of, children or young people participating in any MEJFC activities, programs, services, or facilities. Engaging in sexual behaviour, either by MEJFC Members involved in the delivery of such activities, programs, services or facilities, or persons participating in such activities (whether they be children or young people or older), is prohibited, even if the young person(s) involved may be above the legal age of consent.

'Sexual behaviour' needs to be interpreted widely, and encompasses all actions that would reasonably be considered sexual in nature, including but not limited to:

- 'contact behaviour', such as sexual intercourse, kissing, fondling, sexual penetration or exploiting a child through prostitution; and
- 'non-contact behaviour', such as flirting, sexual innuendo, sexual harassment, inappropriate text

- messaging/sharing of images, sexual conduct in the presence of a minor, inappropriate photography or exposure to pornography or nudity.

9.2 Grooming

Although children and young people can be vulnerable to all types of abuse in sport, the sporting sector needs to be particularly aware of the potential for grooming children and young people in and around sporting activities. Grooming includes behaviours used to prepare a child or young person with the intention of sexually abusing them. Some common grooming strategies described in past sporting abuse cases (as reported to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse) include:

- coaching relationships – perpetrators can exploit their power and authority over children and young people through the private and exclusive coach or instructor relationship;
- inappropriate activity and adult material – many survivors of child sexual abuse in sport and recreation settings report that alcohol and other enticements were used by perpetrators as a form of grooming;
- erosion of interpersonal boundaries – coaches can shift the interpersonal boundaries from the acceptable, for example, legitimate touching to correct a technique, to the inappropriate;
- targeting vulnerability – research indicates that young athletes who are experiencing difficulties in their home life can be targets for perpetrators. Many survivors describe family conflict, family violence or family break-up at the time of the abuse.

Perpetrators will seek to build a trusting relationship with a child, young person and/or their family and/or act to isolate the child or young person to abuse them. Grooming in online environments has become more prevalent in recent years with the increase in online communication. Online grooming can occur quickly with children or young people being persuaded to participate in sexual activity on webcams or exchanging sexual images (nudes).

MEJFC Members are strictly prohibited from engaging in any conduct that may reasonably be considered to be of the nature of grooming or in any way exploitative of the power imbalance that may exist in relationships with children and young people.

9.3 Peer-to-Peer abuse

The MEJFC acknowledges that child abuse or harm can occur through peer-to-peer interactions and may include behaviours ranging from harassment and bullying to sexual contact. If an MEJFC Member becomes aware of or witnesses any peer-to-peer abuse (for example, bullying, harassment, physical fights) they should act to stop it immediately and report to the MEJFC Committee. If the behaviour persists, the MEJFC Committee must take steps to protect the abused child or young person. Parents and carers should be contacted and informed about any peer-to-peer abuse and how it will be managed.

All identified or suspected peer-to-peer abuse that may be of criminal nature must be reported to the Police and AFL South East.

9.4 Positive guidance



The MEJFC strives to ensure that children and young people participating in any MEJFC activities, programs, services, or facilities are aware of the acceptable limits of their behaviour so that we can provide a positive and safe experience for all participants.

Wherever possible, children and young people are encouraged to 'have a say' and participate in all relevant organisational activities and decision making in relation to those activities, especially on issues that are important to them. Children, young people, and their families are to be given access to relevant information to assist them in their involvement, including about the MEJFC's safeguarding approach. However, there are times when MEJFC Members may be required to use appropriate techniques and behaviour management strategies, to discourage, prevent or discipline particular behaviour to ensure:

- an effective and positive environment; and
- the safety and/or wellbeing of children and young people and/or MEJFC Members participating in MEJFC programs, services or using MEJFC facilities.

MEJFC are required to use behaviour management strategies that are fair, respectful, and appropriate to the developmental stage of the children or young people involved. The child or young person needs to be provided with clear directions and given an opportunity to redirect any misbehaviour in a positive manner.

Under no circumstances are MEJFC Members to take disciplinary action involving physical punishment or any form of treatment that could reasonably be considered as degrading, cruel, frightening or humiliating. Please refer to section 9.12 of this Policy for further information on when an MEJFC Member may make physical contact with a child or young person when carrying out a behaviour management strategy.

9.5 Promoting equity and diversity

All MEJFC Members must ensure that their approach and interactions with children and young people are sensitive, respectful, and inclusive of all backgrounds and abilities. In particular, MEJFC Members are expected to:

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people (for example, by never questioning a child's self-identification);
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children and young people with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by translating our children, young persons, and family resources into multiple languages to ensure accessibility and by having zero tolerance of discrimination);
- promote the safety, participation and empowerment of children and young people with a disability (for example, by ensuring children and young people have appropriate access to MEJFC programs, services, and facilities); and
- promote the safety, participation and empowerment of children and young people who identify as LGBTI+, transgender or non-binary (for example, supporting the right for trans children to participate in the team of their preferred gender).

9.6 Adhering to professional role boundaries



Interactions between MEJFC Members and children and young people should be limited to interactions directly associated with MEJFC activities, programs, services, or facilities and MEJFC Members should not act outside the confines of their duties (as specified in their position description, the activity description or similar documents formulated in advance).

Without express authorisation from the MEJFC President or person delegated with their authority, all MEJFC members **should not**:

- provide unauthorised transportation, for example, giving children or young people lifts in their car to an activity without consent from a parent or carer (see section 9.16 below);
- provide support to a child or young person, or their family, unrelated to MEJFC activities, programs, or services; for example, tutoring, financial support, babysitting or providing accommodation;
- seek contact with children or young people (or former participants) outside MEJFC programs, activities, or services, including through social media platforms or by phone;
- where there is no existing social, personal, or family relationship prior to engaging in MEJFC services, accept an invitation to attend any private social function at the request of a child or young person who has participated, or is participating, in any MEJFC program, activity or service – or at the request of their family (for example, graduation ceremony);
- develop any 'special' relationships with children or young people that could be seen as favouritism, such as the offering of gifts, special treatment or singling specific children or young people out, or being secretive with relationships;
- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature with or in the presence of children or young people; or
- discriminate against a child or young person based on gender, race, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation, family or social background.

If an MEJFC Member's position description or similar document does not expressly grant that person the right to do any of the above, such authorisation may not be inferred and instead the MEJFC member must seek express authorisation from the MEJFC President, or person delegated with their authority to do any of the above.

Any MEJFC Member that becomes aware of a situation in which a child or young person requires assistance that is beyond the confines of that person's role, or beyond the scope of usual services, they should at the earliest opportunity:

- contact the child or young person's parent or carer to discuss;
- seek advice from the MEJFC President or person delegated with their authority; and/or
- refer the matter to an appropriate support agency (for example, Child Protection).

9.7 Use of language and tone of voice

MEJFC Members should use language and tone of voice in the presence of children and young people that:

- provides clear direction, boosts their confidence, and encourages and affirms them;
- is not abusive or harmful to children or young people;
- does not include language that is:
 - o discriminatory, racist, or sexist or in any way vilifies a child or young person;
 - o derogatory, belittling, or negative, for example, by calling out a child's behaviour in front of other teammates, by calling a child a 'loser' or telling them they are 'too fat';



- o intended to threaten, intimidate, or frighten, for example, finger pointing or getting in a child or young person's personal space; or
- o profane or sexual in nature.

These examples are all types of verbal abuse. Any language that is used to intimidate, frighten, or control a child or young person or is thought to 'toughen them up' is never justifiable. Any form of verbal abuse and use of inappropriate language can affect a child or young person's self-esteem and may cause them to lose interest in participating in Australian Football.

9.8 Supervision

MEJFC Members are responsible for supervising children and young people participating in an MEJFC program, activity or service to ensure those participants:

- engage positively with the program or activity;
- behave appropriately toward one another; and
- are in a safe environment and are protected from external threats.

MEJFC Members are required to avoid one-to-one unsupervised situations with children and young people participating in MEJFC program, activity, or service and, to the extent possible, conduct all activities and/or discussions with children or young people in view of other adults.

9.9 Use of electronic and online communications

Where possible, all email, text messages and other forms of messages sent to a child or young person should be copied to their parent or carer.

Where a parent or carer is not included in a communication between an MEJFC Member and a child or young person, the MEJFC Member must:

- restrict such communication to issues directly associated with delivering the MEJFC program, activity, or service, such as advising that a scheduled event is cancelled;
- limit the personal or social content in such communication to what is required to convey the service-related message in a polite, friendly manner. In particular, the communication must not contain anything that a reasonable observer could view as being of a suggestive or sexual nature;
- not request (or accept a request) to be "friends", "follow" or communicate with children or young people using a personal social media account including, but not limited to, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, Internet chat rooms or similar forums, game sites or instant messaging;
- not use such communication to promote unauthorised 'social' activity or to arrange unauthorised contact; and
- not request a child or young person to keep a communication a secret from their parent or carer, nor keep the communication a secret from the MEJFC President or person delegated with their authority.

MEJFC Members are required to report to the MEJFC Child Safety Officer if they become aware of any children or young people who may have been placed at risk of abuse or exploitation via social networking sites, text messaging, gaming sites or through web searches, or inappropriate email



communication.

9.10 Photographs, filming or live streaming of children and young people

Subject to any applicable terms of entry of a venue, under this Policy:

- children and young people are to be photographed, filmed or part of live streaming while involved in an MEJFC program, activity, or service only if:
 - consent is obtained from the child's or young person's parent or carer;
 - the child or young person consents to being photographed, filmed or live streamed;
 - the context is directly related to participation in the program, activity or service;
 - the child or young person is appropriately dressed and posed; and
 - the image is taken in the presence of other MEJFC Members where possible.
- If a child or young person does not wish to be photographed, filmed, or live streamed or a child or young person's parent or carer has not provided permission for the child or young person to be photographed, filmed, or live streamed, the child or young person is not to be singled out or made to feel purposely excluded.
- Images are not to be distributed (including as an attachment to an email) to anyone other than the child or young person photographed without the relevant Committee or a person delegated with their authority's knowledge and approval.
- Where photography is permitted and where practicable, MEJFC Members should use a work device rather than a personal device (phone, camera, etc) to photograph, film or livestream children and young people.
- Photographs, films, or livestreaming should not be taken or conducted in the presence of or whilst children or young people are getting dressed.
- Images are to be stored in a manner that prevents unauthorised access and should be destroyed or deleted as soon as practicable after they are no longer required subject to any IT data storage processes.
- MEJFC should inform a child's or young person's parent or carer about the nature of the use of the image(s) as well as how the image(s) will be stored and how the image(s) can be accessed by the parent or carer.

9.11 Giving gifts

MEJFC Members may only give a gift to a child or young person engaged in an MEJFC program, activity or service when:

- the MEJFC President has provided their consent being satisfied that the giving of the gift is appropriate and proportionate in the circumstances; and
- parents or carers are made aware of any gift given.

9.12 Physical contact with children and young people

Any physical contact with children and young people must be appropriate to the delivery of the program, activity or service, such as assisting with skill learning, and based on the needs of the child or young person. Where physical contact is appropriate (for example, a coach demonstrating a safe tackling technique) children and young people should always be asked if they consent to physical contact.



Under no circumstances should any MEJFC Member have contact with children or young people participating in our program or activity that:

- involves touching of:
 - genitals;
 - buttocks; or
 - the breast area,

other than as part of delivering medical or allied health services by a medical professional (in an emergency where a child or young person may not be able to consent) or in the process of administering first aid (however, where possible, consent should always be sought before making physical contact.

- would appear to a reasonable observer to have a sexual connotation;
- is intended to cause pain or distress to the child or young person (e.g., physical punishment);
- is overly physical (e.g., wrestling, horseplay, tickling or other roughhousing);
- is unnecessary (e.g., assisting with toileting when a child does not require assistance);
- is initiated against the wishes of the child or young person, except if such contact may be necessary to prevent injury to the child or young person or to others, in which case:
 - physical restraint should be a last resort;
 - the level of force used must be appropriate to the specific circumstances, and aimed solely at restraining the child or young person to prevent harm to themselves or others; and
 - the incident must be reported to the MEJFC Committee and the child or young person's parent or carer as soon as possible.

All MEJFC Members are required to report to the MEJFC Committee as soon as possible any physical contact initiated by a child or young person (whether directed to another child or young person, to an MEJFC Member or any other person) that is sexual and/or inappropriate, for example, acts of physical aggression, to enable the situation to be managed in the interests of the safety of the child or young person, MEJFC and any other participants.

9.13 Overnight stays and sleeping arrangements

Overnight stays are to occur only within or part of a formal program, activity, or service. Written authorisation of the parent or carer of each child and young person involved must be obtained including medical forms.

Practices and behaviour by all MEJFC Members during an overnight stay with children and young people must be consistent with the practices and behaviour expected during delivery of MEJFC programs, activities, or services at all other times.

Standards of conduct that must be observed by MEJFC Members during an overnight stay include:

- minimum of two adults on any overnight stay with children or young people present. If an exemption is required, written permission from the MEJFC President and each parent or carer must be obtained in advance;
- providing children and young people with privacy when bathing, using the bathroom and dressing;
- observing appropriate dress standards when children and young people are present (e.g., no exposure to adult nudity);



- not allowing children or young people to be exposed to pornographic material (e.g., through movies, television, the internet, or magazines);
- not leaving children or young people under the supervision or protection of peers or unauthorised persons such as hotel staff;
- not allowing sleeping arrangements that may compromise the safety of children and young people such as unsupervised sleeping arrangements, or an adult sleeping in the same bed as a child or young person;
- the exercisable right of children and young people to contact their parents, carers, or others if they feel unsafe, uncomfortable, or distressed during the stay; and
- ensuring an appropriate gender balance of adult supervisors is present if male and female children and young people are participating in the overnight stay (e.g., female supervisors available if female children or young people are involved and vice versa).

9.14 Change room arrangements

MEJFC Members are required to supervise children and young people in change rooms while balancing that requirement with a child or young person's right to privacy. In addition:

- MEJFC Members should avoid one-to-one situations with a child or young person in a change room area;
- MEJFC Members should where possible, avoid being present in a change room area with a child or young person whilst they are changing;
- MEJFC Members are not permitted to use the change room area to undress or dress, while children and young people are present;
- MEJFC Members need to ensure adequate supervision in 'public' change rooms when they are used, providing the level of supervision required for preventing abuse by members of the public, adult users, or general misbehaviour, while also respecting a child's or young person's privacy;
- phones, cameras and recording devices are not to be used in changing rooms and whilst children and young people are in a state of undress and/or getting dressed; and
- MEJFC Members should respect and where possible, accommodate the wishes of children and young people to use toilets, change rooms and other facilities in accordance with their gender identity.

9.15 Use, possession or supply of alcohol or drugs

Whilst supervising children or young people, MEJFC Members must not:

- use, possess or be under the influence of an illegal drug;
- use or be under the influence of alcohol;
- be incapacitated by any other legal drug such as prescription or over the counter drugs;
- supply alcohol or drugs (including tobacco/vapes) to children or young people; or
- supply or administer medicines, except when permitted by law (e.g., epi pen) or with the consent of a child or young person's parent or carer under a valid prescription for that child or young person and at the prescribed dosage.

Use of legal drugs, other than alcohol and tobacco, is permitted, provided such use does not interfere with the MEJFC's ability to care for children and young people involved in MEJFC activities, programs, or services.



9.16 Transporting children and young people

The MEJFC acknowledges that from time to time there are valid reasons for transporting children and young people. Children and young people are to be transported only:

- in circumstances that are directly related to the delivery of an MEJFC program, activity or service;
- with prior authorisation from the MEJFC President or person delegated with their authority and from the child or young person's parent or carer; and
- by a designated adult that has a full driver's licence and insurance.

It is recommended that the child or young person being transported sits in the back seat of the car and expected timelines of travel are to be communicated to that child or young person, the parent or carer and management.

9.17 Drop off/pick up of children and young people

The MEJFC acknowledges that parents and carers may not always be present during the delivery of programs or services. Where parents or carers drop off and pick up children and young people, MEJFC Members must:

- ensure children, young people and their parent or carer know the start/finish times and location of the activity;
- have an accessible register of parent or carer emergency contact numbers and always have access to a phone;
- ensure they are aware of any alternative pick up arrangements for children and young people and that the parent or carer has provided written or direct verbal consent;
- where an alternative pick up arrangement has been made, that MEJFC Member request photo identification to confirm identity of person to pick up the child or young person;
- wait until the last child or young person is collected before they leave;
- when a parent or carer is running late, ask the second to last child or young person and their parent or carer (or another coach or club member) to wait also to avoid being left alone; and
- contact police if a parent or carer or other family member cannot be reached.

9.18 Uniform

Where a uniform has been provided, MEJFC Members should wear MEJFC uniforms, while involved in delivering a service associated with the MEJFC or as required by the MEJFC, such as when representing the MEJFC at designated functions, or while coaching.

10 Risk Management

The MEJFC will prioritise the safety of children and young people in its overall risk management approach.

The MEJFC has prepared and maintains a Safeguarding Children and Young People Risk Register. The risk register is continuously updated to capture any key safeguarding children and young people risks across MEJFC, programs or services and the controls in place to mitigate these risks.



An MEJFC Safeguarding Children and Young People Risk Assessment (risk assessment) should be undertaken in advance of the provision of any MEJFC activities, programs or services involving children or young people. The risk assessment must identify potential risks to the safety of children and young people and the proposed control measures to be implemented to manage those risks. The risk assessment must be prepared in consultation with the MEJFC Child Safeguarding Officer and approved prior to the activities, programs or services taking place.

11 Reporting Obligations

If a child or young person is at imminent risk of harm or in immediate danger, all MEJFC Members are required to report the situation directly to the Police - CALL '000' (within Australia).

MEJFC Members are required to immediately report:

- any instance of any MEJFC Member breaching this Policy or the MEJFC Codes of Conduct;
- any instances, allegations or disclosures of child abuse or other inappropriate conduct such as grooming or bullying that they become aware of, or any concerns that they develop in relation to these matters (whether by a source internal or external to the MEJFC, including a family member, carer or guardian of the child or young person).

Reports must be submitted to the MEJFC Child Safeguarding Officer via email vicepresident@mtelizajfc.com.au or via MEJFC Online incident report at www.mtelizajfc.com.au

The MEJFC documents any allegation, disclosure or concern regarding child abuse and any other form of inappropriate behaviour and monitors responses to all allegations, disclosures, or concerns.

The legal obligations for Victoria regarding mandatory reporting are defined in the following documents (source Appendix A, AFL Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing Policy, V.1 August 2022)

Principle Child Protection Act: Children: Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.) and Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005

Mandatory Reporting: Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.) and Crimes Act 1958

Working with Children Check: Worker Screening Act 2020

Reportable Conduct: Children Legislation Amendment (Reportable Conduct) Act 2017 and Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005

11.1 Acknowledging vicarious trauma and support to MEJFC Members

It is acknowledged that disclosures of harm and/or abuse can be traumatic for every person involved. If an MEJFC Member requires assistance or support to debrief about an incident, allegation and/or disclosure they are encouraged to discuss this confidentially with the MEJFC Child Safeguarding Officer.

12 Investigating

If an appropriate service (e.g., child protection service, the police, or the AFL) investigate a report, all MEJFC Members must co-operate fully with the investigation.

13 Record Keeping



Good record management plays an important role in safeguarding children and young people by assisting the MEJFC to identify causes for concern at an early stage and to monitor and manage safeguarding issues in a timely and thorough manner when they arise. The management of accurate and up to date records also plays an important role in the continuous review and improvement of the MEJFC's safeguarding policies and practices.

The MEJFC will:

- retain records of reports of child abuse and complaints about child safety;
- in maintaining records of reports about child safety, maintain confidentiality and privacy for children, young people, and their families in accordance with legislation; and
- will appropriately note identified risks to child safety through the record keeping process and will incorporate those into its risk register.

14 Privacy

Protecting personal information is fundamental to the MEJFC. The MEJFC will comply with all privacy laws (including the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) and the Australian Privacy Principles) in handling any personal information as required by this Policy. All personal information collected or recorded by the MEJFC in relation to the safety of children and young people will be treated seriously and the MEJFC will respect the privacy of the individuals involved.

On occasion, to support the safety and wellbeing of children and young people, the MEJFC may share information both internally between MEJFC Members and/or with relevant external bodies. Any information shared will be done so in a confidential manner and in accordance with applicable data protection legislation.

15 Communication and Education

The MEJFC communicates this Policy to all MEJFC members. The MEJFC involves MEJFC members in reviews of this Policy and communicates any significant alterations of this Policy to its members. All MEJFC volunteers will be required to undertake safeguarding training as part of the onboarding process and regular updates to refresh their knowledge on safety and wellbeing matters.

16 Monitoring and Review

The MEJFC monitors our compliance with this Policy and the Supporting Documents. The MEJFC reviews policies, procedures, practices, and incident data in relation to safeguarding children and young people from child abuse and harm on an ongoing basis.

The MEJFC involves relevant stakeholders in reviews of this Policy and communicates any significant alterations of this Policy to MEJFC Members. The MEJFC undertakes reviews at least annually to identify and document potential risks to children or young people associated with the delivery of our activities, program, services, and facilities. The MEJFC has a procedure to undertake annual reviews of this Policy, as part of our ongoing compliance with safeguarding requirements, although reviews and alterations may occur more frequently due to legislative changes, organisational changes, incident outcomes and other matters deemed appropriate by the MEJFC Executive.



17 Appendix A

<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/the-11-child-safe-standards/>

Accessed 20/02/2023



Child Safe Standard 1 – Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued

In complying with Child Safe Standard 1, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

- 1.1, A child's ability to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights is encouraged and actively supported.
- 1.2, Strategies are embedded within the organisation which equip all members to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal culture and understand its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children and young people.
- 1.3, Measures are adopted by the organisation to ensure racism within the organisation is identified, confronted, and not tolerated. Any instances of racism are addressed with appropriate consequences.
- 1.4, The organisation actively supports and facilitates participation and inclusion within it by Aboriginal children, young people, and their families.
- 1.5, All of the organisation's policies, procedures, systems, and processes together create a culturally safe and inclusive environment and meet the needs of Aboriginal children, young people and their families.

Child Safe Standard 2 – Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture

In complying with Child Safe Standard 2, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

- 2.1, The organisation makes a public commitment to child safety.
- 2.2, A child safe culture is championed and modelled at all levels of the organisation from the top down and bottom up.
- 2.3, Governance arrangements facilitate implementation of the child safety and wellbeing policy at all levels.
- 2.4, A Code of Conduct provides guidelines for staff and volunteers on expected behavioural standards and responsibilities.
- 2.5, Risk management strategies focus on preventing, identifying, and mitigating risks to children and young people.
- 2.6, Staff and volunteers understand their obligations on information sharing and recordkeeping.

Child Safe Standard 3 – Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously

In complying with Child Safe Standard 3, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

- 3.1, Children and young people are informed about all of their rights, including to safety, information, and participation.
- 3.2, The importance of friendships is recognised and support from peers is encouraged, to help children and young people feel safe and be less isolated.
- 3.3, Where relevant to the setting or context, children and young people are offered access to sexual abuse prevention programs and to relevant related information in an age-appropriate way.
- 3.4, Staff and volunteers are attuned to signs of harm and facilitate child-friendly ways for children



- and young people to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise their concerns.
- 3.5, Organisations have strategies in place to develop a culture that facilitates participation and is responsive to the input of children and young people.
- 3.6, Organisations provide opportunities for children and young people to participate and are responsive to their contributions, thereby strengthening confidence and engagement.

Child Safe Standard 4 – Families and communities are informed, and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing

In complying with Child Safe Standard 4, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

- 4.1, Families participate in decisions affecting their child.
- 4.2, The organisation engages and openly communicates with families and the community about its child safe approach and relevant information is accessible.
- 4.3 Families and communities have a say in the development and review of the organisation's policies and practices.
- 4.4, Families, carers and the community are informed about the organisation's operations and governance.

Child Safe Standard 5 – Equity is upheld, and diverse needs respected in policy and practice

In complying with Child Safe Standard 5, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

- 5.1, The organisation, including staff and volunteers, understands children and young people's diverse circumstances, and provides support and responds to those who are vulnerable.
- 5.2, Children and young people have access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that are culturally safe, accessible, and easy to understand.
- 5.3, The organisation pays particular attention to the needs of children and young people with disability, children, and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who are unable to live at home, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children and young people.
- 5.4, The organisation pays particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal children and young people and provides/promotes a culturally safe environment for them.

Child Safe Standard 6 – People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice

In complying with Child Safe Standard 6, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

- 6.1, Recruitment, including advertising, referee checks and staff and volunteer pre-employment screening, emphasise child safety and wellbeing.
- 6.2, Relevant staff and volunteers have current working with children checks or equivalent background checks.
- 6.3, All staff and volunteers receive an appropriate induction and are aware of their responsibilities to children and young people, including record keeping, information sharing and reporting obligations.
- 6.4, Ongoing supervision and people management is focused on child safety and wellbeing.

Child Safe Standard 7 – Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused

In complying with Child Safe Standard 7, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:



7.1, The organisation has an accessible, child focused complaint handling policy which clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of leadership, staff and volunteers, approaches to dealing with different types of complaints, breaches of relevant policies or the Code of Conduct and obligations to act and report.

7.2, Effective complaint handling processes are understood by children and young people, families, staff, and volunteers, and are culturally safe.

7.3, Complaints are taken seriously, and responded to promptly and thoroughly.

7.4, The organisation has policies and procedures in place that address reporting of complaints and concerns to relevant authorities, whether or not the law requires reporting, and co-operates with law enforcement.

7.5, Reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met.

Child Safe Standard 8 – Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training

In complying with Child Safe Standard 8, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

8.1, Staff and volunteers are trained and supported to effectively implement the organisation's child safety and wellbeing policy.

8.2, Staff and volunteers receive training and information to recognise indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and young people.

8.3, Staff and volunteers receive training and information to respond effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and support colleagues who disclose harm.

8.4, Staff and volunteers receive training and information on how to build culturally safe environments for children and young people.

Child Safe Standard 9 – Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed

In complying with Child Safe Standard 9, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

9.1, Staff and volunteers identify and mitigate risks in the online and physical environments without compromising a child's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities.

9.2, The online environment is used in accordance with the organisation's Code of Conduct and child safety and wellbeing policy and practices.

9.3, Risk management plans consider risks posed by organisational settings, activities, and the physical environment.

9.4, Organisations that contract facilities and services from third parties have procurement policies that ensure the safety of children and young people.

Child Safe Standard 10 – Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved

In complying with Child Safe Standard 10, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

10.1, The organisation regularly reviews, evaluates, and improves child safe practices.

10.2, Complaints, concerns and safety incidents are analysed to identify causes and systemic failures to inform continuous improvement.



10.3, The organisation reports on the findings of relevant reviews to staff and volunteers, community and families and children and young people.

Child Safe Standard 11 – Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people

In complying with Child Safe Standard 11, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

- 11.1, Policies and procedures address all Child Safe Standards.
- 11.2, Policies and procedures are documented and easy to understand.
- 11.3, Best practice models and stakeholder consultation informs the development of policies and procedures.
- 11.4, Leader's champion and model compliance with policies and procedures.