

AUSTRALIAN ALL STAR CHEERLEADING FEDERATION PTY LTD

CHILD SAFE POLICY

POLICY NAME	Child Safe Policy
DATE OF ISSUE	1 st February 2025
POLICY COVERAGE	This applies to all visitors, clients, customers, athlete's and contractors, participating in or viewing any service, program or event that will be held in or at AASCF office/warehouse and all external Venues.
DATE OF REVIEW	Annually by AASCF Management
CONTROLLING BODY	Australian All Star Cheerleading Federation Pty Ltd (AASCF)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Commitment to Child Safety

AASCF is dedicated to providing a safe, enjoyable, and supportive environment for children and young people participating in its activities. This includes a commitment to child protection, respect for children and their rights, and the promotion of a culture of safety and responsibility for everyone involved in AASCF.

1.2. Purpose

This policy aims to prevent child abuse and neglect, and to ensure that any allegations of child abuse are taken seriously and thoroughly investigated. AASCF is committed to responding promptly, effectively, and confidentially to all concerns and complaints regarding child safety, confidentiality and discretion.

1.3. Inquiries

Should a person wish to make any enquiries in relation to this Policy, please contact the Managing Director, Kerry Perry.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

2.1. Commitment to Child Safety

AASCF is committed to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of children across all its activities, programs, and events. This includes ensuring that children and young people's safety is paramount, and that AASCF upholds the highest standards of care and protection for its members, particularly minors.

2.2. Priority of Children's Safety

AASCF prioritises the health, safety, and welfare of children in its care over all other considerations. This commitment helps safeguard the reputation of the sport, the organization, and its affiliated members, while also ensuring a safe and supportive environment for children.

2.3. Zero-Tolerance for Abuse

AASCF adopts a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse. This includes physical, emotional, psychological, and sexual abuse, and neglect. Every child has the right to protection from abuse, irrespective of their ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender, or any other characteristic.

2.4. Shared Responsibility for Child Protection

Child protection is a shared responsibility between AASCF, its employees, workers, contractors, volunteers, parents/guardians, and all members of the AASCF community. Everyone involved in AASCF's activities is expected to be vigilant and proactive in ensuring children are safe and reporting any concerns about potential abuse

2.5. Children's Participation

AASCF actively encourages the participation of children in decisions that affect them, especially regarding matters of safety and wellbeing. Children's views are respected and taken into account whenever appropriate.

2.6. Cultural and Disability Inclusion

AASCF is committed to creating a culturally safe environment for Aboriginal children and children from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. We are also dedicated to providing an inclusive environment for children living with disabilities, ensuring their safety and full participation.

2.7. Fairness and Respect for All

AASCF promotes fairness, equality, and respect for all participants, staff, and volunteers, and expects the same of all people involved in its programs and services.

2.8. Online Safety

AASCF will ensure all online environments are used in accordance with the organisation's Code of Conduct and child safety and wellbeing policy and practices.

3. SCOPE

3.1. Applicability

This Policy applies to participants, parents, spectators, contractors, officials, coaches, judges and staff throughout all AASCF physical and online events and activities.

3.2. Ongoing Application

This Policy will continue to apply retrospectively to a person or Member following the cessation of their association or employment with AASCF.

3.3. Affiliated Clubs

AASCF is supported by a wide network of affiliated clubs across Victoria. Affiliation with AASCF is conditional on an affiliated club implementing and complying with this Policy. Failure to implement and comply with this Policy may cause AASCF to end its affiliation with a club that is in breach of its obligations.

4. RELATED DOCUMENTS & LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

4.1. This Policy must be read in conjunction with:

4.1.1. the law of the Commonwealth and Victoria including but not limited to:

- 4.1.1.1. Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)
 - 4.1.1.2. Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) 2022 (Vic)
 - 4.1.1.3. Crimes Act 1958 (Vic); and
 - 4.1.1.4. Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic)
- 4.1.2. AASCF policies and procedures, including but not limited to:
- 4.1.2.1. Privacy Policy;
 - 4.1.2.2. Constitution;
 - 4.1.2.3. Codes of behaviour;
 - 4.1.2.4. Member Protection Policy;
 - 4.1.2.5. Grievance and Discipline procedures; and
 - 4.1.2.6. Photography Policy

5. DEFINITIONS

- 5.1. **Child** means a person involved in the activities of AASCF (including athletes) and under the age of 18 years unless otherwise stated under the law applicable to the child.
- 5.2. **Child protection** means any responsibility, measure or activity undertaken to safeguard children from harm.
- 5.3. **Sexual offence** means a criminal offence involving sexual activity or actions of indecency or any act which exposes a child to, or involves a child in, sexual activity or matters beyond his or her understanding or contrary to accepted community standards. Sexual offence behaviours can include the fondling of genitals, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or any other object, fondling of breasts, voyeurism, exhibitionism, and exposing the child to or involving the child in pornography. It includes child grooming, which includes actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child (or the child's carer, family or supervisor) to lower the child's inhibitions and prepare them for engagement in a sexual offence.
- 5.4. **Mandatory reporter** means a person who is legally required to make a report to the Department of Human Services or the Police if they form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection. It includes teachers, principals, registered psychologists, nurses, doctors and midwives.

6. RECOGNISING AND REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

- 6.1. A person may, in the course of participating in the sport or other activities of AASCF or carrying out their work, form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from child abuse.
- 6.2. If a person is concerned about an immediate risk to a child's safety, the person must phone "000" as soon as practicable.

6.3. **Child abuse** can be divided into four categories:

- 6.3.1. **Physical abuse:** occurs when a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of a physical injury, such as a non-accidental physical injury.
- 6.3.2. **Sexual abuse:** occurs when a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of sexual abuse, such as when a child is exploited, or used by another for his or her sexual gratification or sexual arousal, or for that of others.
- 6.3.3. **Emotional and psychological abuse:** occurs when a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, emotional or psychological harm of such a kind that the child's emotional or intellectual development is or is likely to be significantly damaged; and
- 6.3.4. **Neglect:** occurs when a child's physical development or health has been or is likely to be significantly damaged. It refers to an omission, such as depriving a child of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults, or medical care.

6.4. Child abuse includes any actions that results in actual or potential harm to a child, in circumstances where the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child.

6.5. **Mandatory Reporters**

- 6.5.1. Mandatory reporters and voluntary reporters alike must report reasonable beliefs that a child is in need of protection. These reports should be made to the relevant authorities such as Police or the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)..
- 6.5.2. **Legal Obligation to Report Sexual Abuse**
Under Victorian law, individuals who form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has occurred against a child under 16 years must report it to the Police.
- 6.5.3. **AASCF's Response to Reports**
AASCF supports individuals making reports in good faith and will ensure that they are protected from retaliation. AASCF will investigate any allegations and take appropriate actions to protect the child, including possible suspension of the accused during the investigation.

6.6. **Reasonable grounds for belief**

- 6.6.1. A reasonable belief is formed if a reasonable person believes that:
 - 6.6.1.1. the child is in need of protection;
 - 6.6.1.2. the child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of physical or sexual injury; and
 - 6.6.1.3. the child's parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.
- 6.6.2. To form a reasonable belief, you should consider and objectively assess all the relevant facts, such as the source of the allegation and how it was communicated, the nature of and details of the allegation and whether there are any other related matters known regarding the alleged perpetrator.

6.6.3. A 'reasonable belief' or a 'belief on reasonable grounds' is not the same as having proof, but is more than mere rumour or speculation.

6.6.4. You will have reasonable grounds to notify if:

6.6.4.1. a child states that they have been physically or sexually abused;

6.6.4.2. a child states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves);

6.6.4.3. someone who knows a child states that the child has been physically or sexually abused;

6.6.4.4. professional observations of the child's behaviour or development leads a professional to form a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused or is likely to be abused; or

6.6.4.5. signs of abuse lead to a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused.

6.7. Voluntary Reporters

6.7.1. In addition to the mandatory reporting obligations above, any person who believes on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from any form of child abuse, *may* disclose that information to the Police or DHHS.

6.8. Reporting Child Sexual Abuse

6.8.1. If a person receives information that leads them to form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria against a child (under the age of 16 years) by another person (of or over the age of 18 years), the person has a legal obligation to disclose that information to the Police as soon as it is practicable. Individuals who fail to comply with this obligation under the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) may be subject to a penalty of 3 years' imprisonment.

6.9. AASCF Approach to Reports of Abuse

6.9.1. AASCF supports and encourages a person to make a report to the Police or DHHS if they form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection, or they are concerned about the safety, health or wellbeing of a child.

6.9.2. Any person that makes a report in good faith in accordance with their reporting obligations (whether mandatory or discretionary) will be supported by AASCF and will not be penalised by AASCF for making the report.

6.9.3. If a person is uncertain as to whether they should make a report to an external authority in relation to the safety of a child, they may speak to the AASCF Managing Director for guidance and information. If in doubt, ask for assistance.

6.9.4. If an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer, AASCF will follow the reporting procedure outlined in (AASCF-Child Safety Policy) and take all steps to ensure that the safety of the child is paramount. An initial step will involve the withdrawal of the accused person from active duty, which could entail standing down, reassignment to a role without direct contact with children, working under closer supervision during an investigation, working from home, or any other measures deemed appropriate depending on the seriousness of the allegation.

- 6.9.5. AASCF will investigate allegations of inappropriate conduct against a child in accordance with procedural fairness and will handle the allegations in a confidential manner to the greatest extent possible.
- 6.9.6. AASCF will cooperate with the directions of the Police and/or DHHS in relation to any investigation conducted by these authorities.
- 6.9.7. AASCF will keep a register of any allegations regarding inappropriate conduct.

7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PERSONNEL PROTECTING CHILDREN

7.1. Personnel involved in protecting children include the board, management, staff and volunteers within AASCF. Those people have responsibilities in relation to protection of children and are expected to:

- 7.1.1. Recognise the rights of children;
- 7.1.2. Respect the cultural and religious practices of families who access AASCF's services, programs or events;
- 7.1.3. Understand and appropriately respond to the needs of children with developmental delays or disabilities;
- 7.1.4. Appropriately act on any concerns raised by children;
- 7.1.5. Understand the definitions, indicators and impact of child abuse;
- 7.1.6. know and follow regulations in relation to the care of children;
- 7.1.7. co-operate with Police and/or other formal investigations to the best of their ability;
- 7.1.8. not harm or exploit children who access AASCF's services.

8. CHILD SAFE AND CHILD FRIENDLY GUIDELINES TO PREVENT AND MANAGE RISKS OF CHILD ABUSE

8.1. Change Rooms

8.1.1. Adult officials, regardless of gender, should only enter change rooms if accompanied by another adult. Prior to entering change rooms, officials should notify the people in the change room of their intended entrance. For the avoidance of doubt this requirement does not apply to parents/legal guardians when in a room with their child.

8.2. Hotel rooms and other accommodation

- 8.2.1. No official should be alone in the room of an athlete without the presence of another adult. The doors should always be open. Should it be necessary for an official to be alone in the room of an athlete, the Team Manager or other responsible official must be informed. For the avoidance of doubt this requirement does not apply to parents/legal guardians when in a room with their child.
- 8.2.2. AASCF will not require or allow Staff Members under the age of 18 to travel for the purpose of running Events.

8.3. Travel - General

- 8.3.1. All team members over 18 years of age retain an overriding responsibility for the welfare of all athletes they accompany during team travel activities. They have a 'duty of care' for athletes and they must meet that duty and avoid unaccompanied and unobserved activities with persons less than 18 years of age wherever possible. For the avoidance of doubt this requirement does not apply to parents/legal guardians when in a room with their child.
- 8.3.2. AASCF will not require or allow Staff Members under the age of 18 to travel for the purpose of running Events.

8.4. Sexual Relationships while on tour.

- 8.4.1. During all team travel activities official's must not, under any circumstances engage in conduct of a sexual nature with an athlete. Improper conduct of a sexual nature by an official towards an athlete includes any form of child sexual abuse (defined within the AASCF Member Protection Policy) as well as but not limited to the following:
 - 8.4.1.1. inappropriate conversations of a sexual nature;
 - 8.4.1.2. obscene language of a sexual nature;
 - 8.4.1.3. suggestive remarks or actions;
 - 8.4.1.4. jokes of a sexual nature;
 - 8.4.1.5. obscene gestures;
 - 8.4.1.6. unwarranted and inappropriate touching;
 - 8.4.1.7. sexual exhibitionism;
 - 8.4.1.8. use of any device to show/watch offensive material; and
 - 8.4.1.9. any other action that could lead to an athlete being physically, emotionally or psychologically harmed.

8.5. Adults under investigation

- 8.5.1. Adults under investigation in relation to a matter involving child abuse, or any matter which has the potential to jeopardise their Working with Children Check (WWCC) (or if based in another State the equivalent requirement) must notify AASCF immediately of their change in status and will be prohibited by AASCF Management, from participating in all AASCF activities.

8.6. Coach Assistance

- 8.6.1. All coaches must ensure that all physical contact with athletes which occurs when coaching is appropriate for the situation and necessary for the athlete's safety. It is strongly recommended that:
 - 8.6.1.1. coaches ensure that there are other adults present whenever coaching;
 - 8.6.1.2. coaches take care to explain the procedure to the child prior to beginning any physical contact;

- 8.6.1.3. coaches obtain consent from the athlete prior to beginning any physical contact.

9. ENGAGING NEW PERSONNEL

- 9.1. The minimum standard for background checks of employees and volunteers of AASCF and its members is the law as it applies in Victoria.
- 9.2. AASCF undertakes a comprehensive recruitment and screening process for all staff and volunteers which aims to:
 - 9.2.1. promote and protect the safety of all children who participate in the activities of AASCF;
 - 9.2.2. identify and recruit the safest and most suitable candidates who share AASCF's values and commitment to protect children; and
 - 9.2.3. prevent a person from working at AASCF if they pose an unacceptable risk to children.
- 9.3. AASCF requires staff and volunteers to pass the recruitment and screening process prior to commencing their engagement with AASCF.
- 9.4. As part of the screening and recruitment process, an applicant must provide appropriate evidence (e.g. WWCC or other state equivalent and/or Police check) to show that they are suitable to work with children and young people in a recreational setting.
 - 9.4.1. all AASCF staff require a WWCC; and
 - 9.4.2. the following key event personnel must have a valid WWCC:
 - 9.4.2.1. those paid by AASCF for their services (excluding bump in and bump out);
 - 9.4.2.2. volunteers;
 - 9.4.2.3. relevant contractors who may have unsupervised access to children; and
 - 9.4.2.4. anyone else who AASCF staff feel requires a WWCC due to the nature of the work that they are undertaking for AASCF.
- 9.5. The type of evidence that an applicant is required to provide to AASCF will vary depending on the type of position that they are applying for. However, an applicant will not be offered a position until they provide the required evidence to AASCF.
- 9.6. AASCF will exercise discretion and may require applicants to provide a Police check in accordance with the law and as appropriate before they commence their engagement and during their time with AASCF in regular intervals.
- 9.7. AASCF will undertake thorough reference checks prior to engaging any personnel.
- 9.8. Once engaged, AASCF will provide staff and volunteers with access to this policy and staff and volunteers must review and acknowledge their understanding of this policy.
- 9.9. AASCF requires that affiliated clubs ensure all staff and volunteers (including coaches and any officials) likely to have contact with athletes (and other children) have a current

WWCC, which needs to be signed off annually as part of the affiliation process. Clubs which do not comply with their legal obligations will be found to have not complied with the AASCF affiliation requirements and will be disaffiliated.

- 9.10 AASCF requires all affiliated club personnel including owners, Committee Members, Volunteers, Coaches, Judges and anyone else who has contact with children to possess a valid working with children check. Any costs associated with gaining a valid WWCC will be dealt with in a manner determined by that club.

10. RISK MANAGEMENT APPROACH

- 10.1. Child safety is a part of AASCF's overall risk management approach.

11. POLICY BREACHES

- 11.1. It is a breach of this policy for any person to which this policy applies, to have been found to have done anything contrary to this policy. Any person who may breach this policy is subject to instant dismissal.

12. POLICY PROMOTION

- 12.1. This policy will be made available to all members via AASCF website, under information heading, forms.
- 12.2. This policy will be communicated to all staff, Management, and Committee members via staff meeting & a hard copy for all staff will be distributed.
- 12.3. References to this policy will be included in documentation provided to all team officials that represent AASCF.

13. REVIEW PROCESS

- 13.1. **Annual Review:** This policy will be reviewed by AASCF Management on an annual basis.
- 13.2. If you would like to provide AASCF with any feedback or suggestions to improve this policy, please contact Kerry Perry, Managing Director.
- 13.3. In addition to the regular review of this policy, recommendations for changes to the policy may be submitted to the Directors for consideration at any time. In the event that changes are accepted, the policy will be updated and circulated to all stakeholders via the webpage, bulletin and other appropriate communication channels.
-