

Child Safety and Wellbeing

AFL SportsReady is committed to providing a safe, inclusive and supportive environment where children and young people are protected from harm and abuse, their wellbeing is promoted, and their voices are heard.

Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

This policy explains how AFL SportsReady and SportsReady Education (SRE) support the safety, wellbeing and rights of children and young people who engage with our education, training, employment and support services.

Our Commitment

We have zero tolerance for child abuse and neglect. We take all concerns, allegations and disclosures seriously and act in the best interests of children and young people.

- embed child safety and wellbeing in our leadership, culture and everyday practices
- identify, assess and manage risks of harm in face-to-face, workplace and online environments
- create culturally safe, accessible and inclusive environments
- support children and young people to understand their rights, participate in decisions and raise concerns
- maintain appropriate recruitment, screening, training, reporting, information-sharing and recordkeeping practices
- continually review and improve our child safety systems.

Scope

This policy applies to all AFL SportsReady and SRE employees, trainers and assessors, contractors, volunteers, consultants, governing persons, executive staff, students and anyone acting on our behalf.

It applies whenever a person under 18 participates in activities connected with us, including:

- training and assessment
- school-based apprenticeships and traineeships
- VET Delivered to Secondary Students programs
- work placements and employer or industry activities
- student support, excursions, events and online learning.

Safety, Culture, Diversity and Inclusion

We recognise that children and young people have different identities, experiences and support needs. We work to provide an environment where every child and young person is respected, valued and able to participate safely.

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people are supported to express and enjoy their culture, and racism is not tolerated.
- Children and young people with disability are supported through accessible practices and reasonable adjustments where appropriate.
- Children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are respected and supported.
- LGBTQIA+ children and young people, and children who may experience vulnerability because of their circumstances, are treated with dignity and included.

Participation and Voice

Children and young people have the right to be heard, receive information in a way they can understand, participate in decisions that affect them, and raise concerns without fear of retaliation. We seek and consider their feedback when reviewing our services and child safety practices.

Professional Conduct

Everyone working for or on behalf of AFL SportsReady and SRE must follow our Child Safety Code of Conduct, maintain professional boundaries and report concerns promptly.

Unacceptable conduct includes grooming, bullying, harassment, intimidation, favouritism, inappropriate physical contact, unsafe private meetings, inappropriate digital communication, discrimination and disrespectful behaviour. Breaches may result in action, including ending a person's employment or engagement.

Recruitment, Screening and Training

We use child-safe recruitment and suitability processes for relevant roles. These may include identity, qualification and reference checks, interview questions about child safety, and Working with Children Checks where required by the role and applicable law.

Staff receive child safety information during induction, training on reporting obligations, annual refresher training and additional training when risks or responsibilities require it.

Managing Child Safety Risks

We identify and manage risks associated with training, student support, work placements, employer engagement, transport, social media, digital communication and one-to-one interactions. Risk assessments and controls are documented, monitored and reviewed.

Raising or Reporting a Concern

Students, parents, carers, staff, host employers and partners are encouraged to report any concern, allegation or disclosure involving the safety or wellbeing of a child or young person.

- If there is an immediate danger or emergency, call 000.
- Raise the concern with the AFL SportsReady Child Safety Officer or an appropriate manager.
- AFL SportsReady may notify police, child protection, a regulator or another statutory authority when required or appropriate.

Concerns will be taken seriously, responded to promptly, handled as confidentially as possible and documented under our incident reporting and child safety procedures. Privacy will be protected, but information may be shared when authorised or required by law or when necessary to protect a child or young person.

Roles and Responsibilities

The CEO and Executive Management provide leadership, resources and oversight for child safety and compliance. Managers implement this policy, monitor risks, respond to concerns and support staff training. All staff and personnel must follow this policy and the Child Safety Code of Conduct, maintain professional boundaries and report concerns immediately.

Continuous Improvement

We review this policy at least annually and consider incidents, complaints, feedback, identified risks and changes to legal or regulatory requirements. We update our systems, training and practices where improvements are identified.

Related Documents

- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Student Protection Procedure
- Child Safety Incident and Reporting Procedure
- Complaints and Appeals Policy
- Risk Management Framework
- Staff Recruitment and Screening Procedure
- Privacy Policy

Standards and Principles

This policy is informed by the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and, where applicable, the Victorian Child Safe Standards and relevant child safety legislation. Legal and reporting requirements may differ between states and territories.

Need to raise a concern? Contact AFL SportsReady through the contact details published on our website. If someone is in immediate danger, call 000.