



**Little
Athletics**
Victoria

Child Safe Policy

of

Little Athletics Association of Victoria Inc

Version 1.0

Registration Number: A0003260D

RELEASED: September 2022

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.1	INTRODUCTION	3
1.2	POLICY STATEMENT	3
1.3	SCOPE	3
1.4	RELATED DOCUMENTS & LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS.....	4
1.5	DEFINITIONS	4
1.6	RECOGNISING AND REPORTING CHILD ABUSE	5
1.7	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PERSONNEL PROTECTING CHILDREN	7
1.8	RECRUITMENT AND SCREENING.....	7
1.9	SUPPORTING PERSONNEL	8
1.10	RISK MANAGEMENT APPROACH	8
1.11	POLICY BREACHES	8
1.12	POLICY PROMOTION	8
1.13	RECORD KEEPING	9
1.14	REVIEW PROCESS	9

SECTION 2 - DOCUMENT HISTORY

2.1	VERSION CONTROL	10
2.2	OTHER RELEVANT SOURCES	10

SECTION 3 - APPENDICES

3.1	FLOWCHART CHILD SAFETY REPORTING PROCESS	11
-----	--	----

1.1 INTRODUCTION

- (a) Little Athletics Victoria ('LAVic') is committed to ensuring that children and young people who participate in its activities have a safe and happy experience. LAVic supports and respects children, young people, staff, volunteers, and participants.
- (b) The aim of LAVic's Child Safe Policy (the Policy) is to protect the safety of children and prevent abuse from occurring, and in the event that allegations are raised in relation to child abuse, to ensure that the allegations are properly addressed. All complaints will be treated seriously and fully investigated and handled with maximum confidentiality and discretion.
- (c) Should a person wish to make any enquiries in relation to this Policy, please contact the LAVic Child Safe Officer via email: childsafe@lavic.com.au or phone: 03 9960 8600.

1.2 POLICY STATEMENT

- (a) LAVic is committed to providing the highest level of safety for all involved with Little Athletics. This includes protecting individual's privacy, promoting positive behaviours and attitudes, protecting the health safety and wellbeing of individuals, particularly children and delivering the LAVic's activities while acting in the best interests of children in the sport.
- (b) Specifically, LAVic considers that the health, safety, and well-being of children take priority over all other competing considerations. LAVic considers that this is necessary to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all individuals and protect the image and reputation of the sport, LAVic and its members
- (c) LAVic has a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and is committed to promoting and protecting children from abuse and neglect to the greatest extent possible. All children have equal rights to protection from child abuse, regardless of their sex, religion, disability, or sexual orientation etc.
- (d) Child protection is a shared responsibility between LAVic , its affiliated Centre, Clubs, Region, its employees, Directors, parents/guardians, coaches, officials, spectators, volunteers, contractors and members of the LAVic community. Everyone that participates in LAVic's activities is responsible for the care and protection of children, and reporting information about child abuse.
- (e) LAVic supports the active participation of all children. It listens to their views, respects their views, and involves them when making decisions, where appropriate, especially about matters that will directly affect them (including their safety).
- (f) LAVic is also committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, and those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children living with a disability.
- (g) LAVic promotes fairness and consideration for all staff, volunteers, and participants. For further details please refer to the LAVic Member Protection Policy and Volunteer Management Policy.

1.3 SCOPE

- (a) This Policy applies to everyone involved in or connected with all Little Athletics events and activities at Club, Centre, Region, and State levels, including (but not limited to) athletes, parents/guardians, spectators, contractors, officials, coaches, volunteers, and staff.
- (b) This Policy will continue to apply retrospectively to a person or Member following the cessation of their association or employment with LAVic.

1.4 RELATED DOCUMENTS & LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

- (a) This Policy must be read in conjunction with:
- (i) the laws of the Commonwealth and Victoria (as amended from time to time) including but not limited to:
 - (1) Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)
 - (2) Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Act 2015 (Vic)
 - (3) Crimes Act 1958 (Vic); and
 - (4) Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic)
 - (ii) LAVic policies and procedures, including but not limited to:
 - (1) Privacy Policy;
 - (2) Constitution;
 - (3) Codes of Conduct;
 - (4) Member Protection Policy;
 - (5) Disputes and Complaints Handling Policy;
 - (6) Social Media Policy
 - (7) Volunteer Management Policy; and
 - (8) Code of Conduct for Dealing with Children & Young People
 - (9) Role Description – Centre Child Safety Officer
 - (10) Working With Children Check Policy Handout
 - (11) Flowchart Child Safety Reporting Process

1.5 DEFINITIONS

- (a) **Child** means a person involved in the activities of LAVic (including athletes and spectators) and under the age of 18 years unless otherwise stated under the law applicable to the child (eg, for the purposes of child sexual offences in Victoria, a “child” refers to a person under the age of 16 years).
- (b) **Child Abuse** is the mistreatment of a child or young person that has harmed, is harming or is likely to harm or endanger that child or young person's physical or emotional health, development or wellbeing and the child has not, or is not likely to be protected by the parent(s) or guardian(s). For the avoidance of doubt, this includes but is not limited to emotional or psychological abuse, bullying, grooming, sexual exploitation, neglect and harassment.
- (c) **Child protection** means any responsibility, measure or activity undertaken to safeguard children from harm
- (d) **Grooming** is a term used to describe what happens when a perpetrator of abuse builds a relationship with a child with a view to abusing them at some stage. There is no set pattern in relation to the grooming of children. For some perpetrators, there will be a lengthy period of time before the abuse begins. The child 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 behaviour. Other perpetrators may draw a child in and abuse them relatively quickly. Some abusers do not groom children but abuse them without forming a relationship at all. grooming can take place in any setting where a relationship is formed, such as leisure, music, sports, and religious activities, or in internet chatrooms, in social media or by other technological channels.

- (e) **Harm** means harm to a young person or a child. Harm is any detrimental effect of a significant nature to the person or child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. It is immaterial how the harm is caused. Harm can be caused by:
 - (i) physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect;
 - (ii) sexual abuse or exploitation;
 - (iii) a single act, omission, or circumstance; and
 - (iv) a series or combination of acts, omissions, or circumstances.
- (f) **Sexual offence** (in Victoria) means a criminal offence involving sexual activity or actions of indecency or any act which exposes a child under the age of 16 years to, or involves a child under the age of 16 years 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 grooming, which includes actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child under the age of 16 years (or their carer, family, or supervisor) to lower their inhibitions and prepare them for engagement in a sexual offence.
- (g) **Mandatory reporter** means a person who is legally required to make a report to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing or the Police if they form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection. It includes (but is not limited to) teachers, principals, registered psychologists, nurses, doctors, and midwives.

1.6 RECOGNISING AND REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

- (a) A person may, in the course of participating in the sport or other activities of Little Athletics, form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from child abuse.
- (b) If a person is concerned about an immediate risk to a child's safety, the person must phone Victoria Police on "000" as soon as practicable.
- (c) Specific types of **Child abuse** include:
 - (i) **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.
 - (ii) **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.
 - (iii) **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
 - (iv) **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.
- (d) **Mandatory Reporters**
 - (i) Select classes of people in the community (including teachers, nurses, and doctors – amongst others) are required by law to report to the Child Protection Unit of the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) where they have formed a belief, on reasonable grounds, that a child is in need of

protection because they have suffered (or are likely to suffer) significant harm due to physical or sexual abuse.

- (ii) This report must be made as soon as practicable, and after each occasion where he or she becomes aware of further reasonable grounds for the belief.
- (e) Reasonable grounds for belief:
 - (i) A reasonable belief is formed if a reasonable person believes that:
 - (1) the child is in need of protection;
 - (2) the child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of physical or sexual injury; and
 - (3) the child's parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.
 - (ii) 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.
 - (iii) A 'reasonable belief' or a 'belief on reasonable grounds' is not the same as having proof but is more than mere rumour or speculation.
 - (iv) You will have reasonable grounds to notify if:
 - (1) a child states that they have been physically or sexually abused;
 - (2) a child states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves);
 - (3) someone who knows a child states that the child has been physically or sexually abused;
 - (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
 - (5) signs of abuse lead to a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused.
- (f) Voluntary Reporters
 - (i) 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, DFFH or the Commissioner for Children & Young People (**CCYP**).
- (g) Reporting Child Sexual Abuse
 - (i) If an adult 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 report 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 imprisonment.
- (h) Approach to Reports of Abuse
 - (i) LAVic supports and encourages a person to make a report to the Police, CCYP or DFFH 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.
 - (ii) Any person that makes a report in good faith in accordance with their reporting obligations (whether mandatory or voluntary) will be supported by LAVic and will not be penalised by LAVic for making the report.
 - (iii) If a person at a Centre 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

Centre Child Safe Officer for guidance and information. If in doubt, ask for assistance.

- (iv) If an allegation is made against an individual, LAVic will follow the reporting procedure outlined in the LAVic Flowchart Child Safety Reporting Process.
- (v) Take all steps to ensure that the safety of the child and other children is paramount.
- (vi) LAA and LAVic will cooperate with the directions of the Police, CCYP and/or DFFH in relation to any investigation conducted by these authorities.
- (vii) LAVic will keep a register of any allegations regarding inappropriate conduct.

1.7 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PERSONNEL PROTECTING CHILDREN

- (a) Personnel involved in protecting children include all adults within Little Athletics. Those people have responsibilities in relation to protection of children and are expected to:
 - (i) Understand the rights of children, as appropriate to their role;
 - (ii) Respect the cultural and religious practices of families who access Little Athletics' services, programs, or events;
 - (iii) Understand and appropriately respond to the needs of children with developmental delays or disabilities;
 - (iv) Appropriately act on any concerns raised by children;
 - (v) Understand the definitions, indicators, and impact of child abuse;
 - (vi) At all times, know and follow regulations in relation to the care of children and follow the LAVic Child Safe Code of Conduct;
 - (vii) Co-operate with police and/or other formal investigations to the best of their ability; and
 - (viii) Not harm or exploit children who access Little Athletics' services.
- (b) LAVic will appoint a Child Safety Officer or equivalent role that will be the primary point of contact for all concerns related to child safety.

1.8 RECRUITMENT AND SCREENING

- (a) LAVic acknowledges and complies with Victorian legal standard for background checks of employees, contractors, and volunteers.
- (b) LAVic undertakes a recruitment and screening process for all staff, contractors and volunteers which aims to:
 - (i) Promote and protect the safety of all children who participate in the activities of Little Athletics;
 - (ii) Identify and recruit the safest and most suitable candidates who share LAVic's values and commitment to protect children; and
 - (iii) Prevent a person from being involved in Little Athletics activities if they pose an unacceptable risk to children.
- (c) LAVic requires staff, contractors and volunteers to pass the recruitment and screening process prior to commencing their engagement with LAVic.
- (d) 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. LAVic requires that:
 - (i) All LAVic staff and Board members require a WWCC; and
 - (ii) The following key event personnel must have a valid WWCC:

- (1) Those paid by LAVic for their services (excluding bump in and bump out);
 - (2) Volunteers undertaking designated roles identified in Working With Children Check Policy Handout. Any costs associated with gaining a valid WWCC will be dealt with in a manner determined by that Centre or LAVic.
 - (3) Relevant contractors who may have unsupervised access to children; and
 - (4) Anyone else who LAVic staff feel requires a WWCC due to the nature of the work that they are undertaking for Little Athletics.
- (e) The type of evidence that an applicant is required to provide to LAVic 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 LAVic.
- (f) LAVic 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 LAVic in regular intervals.
- (g) LAVic will undertake at least two thorough reference checks prior to engaging any personnel.
- (h) Once engaged, LAVic will provide staff and volunteers with access to this policy and staff and volunteers via the LAVic website.

1.9 SUPPORTING PERSONNEL

- (a) LAVic is committed to ensuring that all staff, Board members, volunteers and contractors receive training to ensure that they understand their responsibilities in relation to child safety. Mandatory training at LAVic includes:
- (i) Induction and Play by the Rules Training.
 - (ii) LAVic assists its Board members, staff, and volunteers to incorporate child safety considerations into decision-making and to promote a culturally safe environment where children are empowered to speak up about issues that affect them.

1.10 RISK MANAGEMENT APPROACH

- (a) Child safety is a part of LAVic's overall risk management approach.
- (b) See [CCYP Guide for Creating a Child Safe Organisation](#).

1.11 POLICY BREACHES

- (a) It is a breach of this policy for any person or organisation 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 the disciplinary process set out in the LAVic Complaints Handling and Dispute Resolution Policy.

1.12 POLICY PROMOTION

- (a) This policy will be made available to all members via the LAVic and OurCentre websites, email, and social media notification.
- (b) This policy will be communicated to all staff, Board, Region and Centre Committee members via internal memo and meetings.

- (c) References to this policy will be included in documentation provided to all team officials that represent Little Athletics.

1.13 RECORD KEEPING

- (a) LAVic will retain records of reports of child abuse and complaints about child safety.
- (b) In maintaining records of reports about child safety, LAVic will maintain confidentiality and privacy for children and families in accordance with legislation.
- (c) LAVic will appropriately note identified risks to child safety through the record keeping process and will incorporate those into its risk management plan.

1.14 REVIEW PROCESS

- (a) This policy will be reviewed by the LAVic Board on a biennial basis.
 - (b) If you would like to provide LAVic with any feedback or suggestions to improve this policy, please contact the Chief Executive Officer in writing at office@lavic.com.au.
 - (c) In addition to the regular review of this policy, recommendations for changes to the policy may be submitted to the Board 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, memo, social media, and other appropriate communication channels.
-

SECTION 2 - DOCUMENT HISTORY

2.1 VERSION CONTROL

Date	Version #	Action Taken / Updates
September 2022	1.0	New document

2.2 OTHER RELEVANT SOURCES

Other relevant resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Privacy Policy;• LAVic Constitution;• Codes of Conduct;• Member Protection Policy;• Complaints Handling & Dispute Resolution Policy;• Social Media Policy• Volunteer Management Policy; and• Code of Conduct for Dealing with Children & Young People• Role Description – Centre Child Safety Officer• Working With Children Check Policy Handout• Flowchart Child Safety Reporting Process• Regulation 6 'Terms of Affiliation (Membership) of Centres'
---------------------------------	---

SECTION 3 - APPENDICES

3.1 FLOWCHART CHILD SAFETY REPORTING PROCESS

Who can report?

Parent

Child

Staff member or volunteer

What to report?

Any child safety concerns, including:

- disclosure of abuse or harm
- allegation, suspicion or observation
- breach of Code of Conduct
- environmental safety issues.

Call 000 if a child is in immediate danger

How?

Face-to-face verbal report, letter, email, telephone call, meeting

Who to?

Child Safety Person, manager, supervisor

What happens next?

The Child Safety Person, manager or supervisor will:

- offer support to the child, the parents, the person who reports and the accused staff member or volunteer
- initiate internal processes to ensure the safety of the child, clarify the nature of the complaint and commence disciplinary process (if required)
- decide, in accordance with legal requirements and duty of care, whether the matter should/must be reported to the police or Child Protection and make report as soon as possible if required.

Outcome

Investigation; outcome decided; relevant staff, volunteers, parents and child notified of outcome of investigation; policies, procedures updated where necessary.

For more information on the Child Safe Standards visit <http://www.cyp.vic.gov.au/> or see A GUIDE FOR CREATING A CHILD SAFE ORGANISATION