

Member Protection Policy

of

Little Athletics Association of Victoria Inc

Version 1.0

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SECTION 1 – MEMBER PROTECTION POLICY SCOPE

1.1 Introduction

(a) Little Athletics Victoria's ("LAVic") Mission Statements:

- (i).** To develop children of all abilities by promoting positive attitudes and a healthy lifestyle through family and community involvement in athletics activities.
- (ii).** Through the enjoyment of athletics develop positive attitudes and a healthy lifestyle for our children, families and community.

(b) LAVic's Vision

To be an innovative champion of junior athletics and a prominent and respected leader in Victorian sport.

(c) LAVic Purpose

Through participation in athletics, develop positive attitudes and a healthy lifestyle for our children, families and the community.

(d) LAVic's Motto

Family Fun and Fitness.

(e) LAVic's Core Values:

We will always:

- (i).** Provide leadership
- (ii).** Be open, honest, transparent and accountable
- (iii).** Value diversity and inclusivity
- (iv).** Act with respect and integrity
- (v).** Be innovative
- (vi).** Promote fun

1.2 Purpose of Our Policy

(a) The main objective of the LAVic ("our", "us" or "we") Member Protection Policy ("policy") is to maintain responsible behaviour and the making of informed decisions by members and other participants at Club, Centre Region and State levels of the Association. It outlines our commitment to a person's right to be treated with respect and dignity, and to be safe and protected from discrimination, harassment and abuse. Our policy informs everyone involved at all levels of the Association of his or her legal and ethical rights and responsibilities and the standards of behaviour that are expected of them. It also covers the care and protection of children participating in Club, Centre, Region and/or State level activities.

1.3 Who Our Policy Applies To

- (a) This policy applies to everyone involved in the activities of our Association whether they are in a paid or unpaid/voluntary capacity and including:
- (i). Affiliated Centre ("Centre") committee members and those of their Clubs;
 - (ii). Region committee members;
 - (iii). Coaches;
 - (iv). Officials at Centre, Region and State levels;
 - (v). Volunteers;
 - (vi). Personnel participating in events and activities, including camps and training sessions;
 - (vii). Support personnel, including managers, physiotherapists, sport trainers, first aid officers and others;
 - (viii). Registered Athletes inclusive of Trial Athletes;
 - (ix). Parents, guardians and carers;
 - (x). Honorary Members, such as Life Governors/Distinguished Service/Meritorious/Jeff Crouch Award recipients of LAVic, or Life Members of Centres or Regions;
 - (xi). Employees;
 - (xii). Directors of the LAVic Board;
 - (xiii). Spectators.

1.4 Extent of Our Policy

- (a) Our policy covers all matters directly and indirectly related to the Association and its activities.

SECTION 2 – RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 Association Responsibilities

- (a) LAVic will nominate a Member Protection Information Officer ('MPIO') to be primarily responsible on behalf of the Association for the following:
- (i). to provide advice on the options open to the complainant;
 - (ii). adopt, implement and comply with this policy;
 - (iii). ensure that this policy is enforceable;
 - (iv). publish, distribute and promote this policy and the consequences of any breaches of this policy;
 - (v). promote and model appropriate standards of behaviour at all times;
 - (vi). deal with any complaints made under this policy in an appropriate manner;
 - (vii). deal with any breaches of this policy in an appropriate manner;
 - (viii). recognise and enforce any penalty imposed under this policy;
 - (ix). ensure that a copy of this policy is available or accessible to all Members to whom this policy applies;
 - (x). seek legal advice in the first instance, for unlawful behaviour that involves or could lead to significant harm and includes criminal behaviour (e.g. physical assault, sexual assault) and any other issues that Little Athletics Australia request to be referred to them.

2.2 Region Responsibilities

- (a) Regions will nominate a Member Protection Information Officer ('MPIO') to be primarily responsible on behalf of the Region for the following:
- (i). to provide advice on the options open to the complainant;
 - (ii). adopt, implement and comply with this policy;
 - (iii). promote and model appropriate standards of behaviour at all times;
 - (iv). refer serious issues to LAVic in the first instance, such as unlawful behaviour that involves or could lead to significant harm and includes criminal behaviour (e.g. physical assault, sexual assault) and any other issues that LAVic or Little Athletics Australia request to be referred to them.

2.3 Centre Responsibilities

- (a) Each Affiliated Centre will nominate a Member Protection Information Officer ('MPIO') to be primarily responsible on behalf of the Centre for the following:
- (i). to provide advice on the options open to the complainant;

- (ii). adopt, implement and comply with this policy;
- (iii). publish, distribute and promote this policy and the consequences of any breaches of this policy;
- (iv). promote and model appropriate standards of behaviour at all times;
- (v). ensure that a copy of this policy is available or accessible to all Members to whom this policy applies;
- (vi). refer serious issues to LAVic in the first instance, such as unlawful behaviour that involves or could lead to significant harm and includes criminal behaviour (e.g. physical assault, sexual assault, child abuse) and any other issues that LAVic or Little Athletics Australia request to be referred to them.

2.4 Individual Responsibilities

- (a) Everyone associated with our Centre/Region/Association must:
 - (i). make themselves aware of the contents of this policy;
 - (ii). comply with all relevant provisions of this policy, including the standards of behaviour outlined in this policy;
 - (iii). consent to the screening requirements set out in this policy, and any state or territory Working with Children checks if the person holds or applies for a role that involves regular unsupervised contact with a child or young person under the age of 18, or where otherwise required by law or LAVic;
 - (iv). treat other people with respect;
 - (v). always place the safety and welfare of children above other considerations;
 - (vi). be responsible and accountable for their behaviour; and
 - (vii). follow the guidelines outlined in this policy if they wish to make a complaint or report a concern about possible discrimination, harassment, bullying or other inappropriate behaviour; and
 - (viii). comply with any decisions and/or disciplinary measures imposed under this policy.

SECTION 3 – DISCRIMINATION, HARRASSMENT, BULLYING

3.1 Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying

- (a) Our sport is committed to providing an environment in which people are treated fairly and equitably and that is, as far as practicable, free from all forms of discrimination, harassment and bullying.
- (b) We recognise that people may not be able to enjoy themselves or perform at their best if they are treated unfairly, discriminated against, harassed or bullied.

3.2 Discrimination

- (a) Unlawful discrimination involves the less favourable treatment of a person on the basis of one or more of the personal characteristics protected by State or Federal anti-discrimination laws.
- (b) Discrimination includes both direct and indirect discrimination:
 - (i). **Direct discrimination** occurs if a person treats, or proposes to treat, a person with a protected personal characteristic unfavourably because of that personal characteristic.
 - (ii). **Indirect discrimination** occurs if a person imposes, or proposes to impose, a requirement, condition or practice that will disadvantage a person with a protected personal characteristic and that requirement, condition or practice is not reasonable.
- (c) For the purpose of determining discrimination, the offender's awareness and motive are irrelevant.

3.3 Harassment

- (a) Harassment is any unwelcome conduct, verbal or physical, that intimidates, offends or humiliates another person and which happens because a person has a certain personal characteristic protected by State or Federal anti-discrimination legislation.
- (b) The offensive behaviour does not have to take place a number of times, a single incident can constitute harassment.
- (c) Sexual harassment is one type of harassment. Sexual harassment involves unwelcome conduct, remarks or innuendo of a sexual nature. It covers a wide range of behaviours and can be verbal, written, visual or physical. Sexual harassment is not limited to members of the opposite sex.
- (d) Every person is covered by the anti-discrimination laws that apply in their State as well as the Federal anti-discrimination laws.
- (e) The following is a list of all the personal characteristics that apply throughout Australia:
 - (i). gender;

- (ii). race, colour, descent, national or ethnic origin, nationality, ethno-religious origin, immigration;
 - (iii). national extraction or social origin;
 - (iv). marital status, relationship status, identity of spouse or domestic partner;
 - (v). pregnancy, potential pregnancy, breastfeeding;
 - (vi). family or carer responsibilities, status as a parent or carer;
 - (vii). age;
 - (viii). religion, religious beliefs or activities;
 - (ix). political beliefs or activities;
 - (x). lawful sexual activity;
 - (xi). sexual orientation and gender identity;
 - (xii). profession, trade, occupation or calling;
 - (xiii). irrelevant criminal record, spent convictions;
 - (xiv). irrelevant medical record;
 - (xv). member of association or organisation of employees or employers, industrial activity, trade union activity;
 - (xvi). physical features;
 - (xvii). disability, mental or physical impairment;
 - (xviii). defence service; and
 - (xix). personal association with someone who has, or is assumed to have, any of these personal characteristics.
- (f) Legislation also prohibits:
- (i). racial, religious, homosexual, transgender and HIV/AIDS vilification; and
 - (ii). victimisation resulting from a complaint.

3.4 Bullying

- (a) Little Athletics Victoria is committed to providing an environment that is free from bullying. We understand that bullying has the potential to result in significant negative consequences for an individual's health and wellbeing, and we regard bullying in all forms as unacceptable in our sport.
- (b) Bullying is characterised by repeated, unreasonable behaviour directed at a person, or group of persons, that creates a risk to health and safety. Bullying behaviour is that which a reasonable person in the circumstances would expect to victimise, humiliate, undermine, threaten, degrade, offend or intimidate a person. Bullying behaviour can include actions of an individual or group.
- (c) Whilst generally characterised by repeated behaviours, one off instances can amount to bullying.

(d) The following types of behaviour, where repeated or occurring as part of a pattern of behaviour, would be considered bullying:

- (i).** verbal abuse including shouting, swearing, teasing, making belittling remarks or persistent unjustified criticism;
- (ii).** excluding or isolating a group or person;
- (iii).** spreading malicious rumours; or
- (iv).** psychological harassment such as intimidation.

(e) Bullying includes cyber-bullying which occurs through the use of technology. New technologies and communication tools, such as smart phones and social networking websites, have greatly increased the potential for people to be bullied through unwanted and inappropriate comments. We will not tolerate abusive, discriminatory, intimidating or offensive statements being made online. For further guidance, see LAVic's Social Media Policy.

(f) If any person believes they are being, or have been, bullied by another person or organisation bound by this policy, he or she may make a complaint. The complaints procedure is outlined in LAVic's Complaints Handling and Dispute Resolution Policy.

SECTION 4 – INCLUSION

4.1 Overview

- (a) Little Athletics is welcoming and we will seek to include members from all areas of our community.
- (b) The following are examples of some of our inclusive practices.

4.2 People with a disability

- (a) Little Athletics will not discriminate against any person because they have a disability. Where it is necessary, we will make reasonable adjustments (e.g. modifications to equipment, rules and regulations) to enable participation.

4.3 People from diverse cultures

- (a) We will support, respect and encourage people from diverse cultures and religions to participate in our club and where possible we will accommodate requests for flexibility (e.g. modifications to uniforms).

4.4 Sexual & Gender Identity

- (a) All people, regardless of their sexuality or gender identity, are welcome at our club. We strive to provide a safe environment for participation and will not tolerate any form of discrimination or harassment because of a person's sexuality or gender identity.

SECTION 5 – COMPLAINTS, DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS

5.1 Responding to Complaints

- (a) This section is to be read in conjunction with LAVic's Complaints Handling and Dispute Resolution Policy.

5.2 Complaints

- (a) LAVic takes all complaints about on and off-field behaviour seriously. Centres, Regions and LAVic will handle complaints based on the principles of procedural fairness, and ensure:
- (i). all complaints will be taken seriously;
 - (ii). the person making the complaint (complainant) will be given full details of what is being alleged against them and have the opportunity to respond to those allegations;
 - (iii). irrelevant matters will not be taken into account;
 - (iv). decisions will be unbiased; and
 - (v). any penalties imposed will be reasonable.
- (b) Serious complaints arising at Centre level may be escalated to Region and to LAVic.
- (c) If the complaint relates to suspected child abuse, sexual assault or other criminal activity, then LAVic may need to report the behaviour to the police and/or relevant government authority and Little Athletics Australia.

5.3 Complaint Handling Process

- (a) When a complaint is received, the person receiving the complaint (e.g. President, Member Protection Information Officer) will:
- (i). listen carefully and ask questions to understand the nature and extent of the concern;
 - (ii). ask what the complainant how they would like their concern to be resolved and if they need any support;
 - (iii). explain the different options available to help resolve the complainant's concern;
 - (iv). inform the relevant government authorities and/or police, if required by law to do so; and
 - (v). where possible and appropriate, maintain confidentiality but not necessarily anonymity.
- (b) Once the complainant decides on their preferred option for resolution, the Centre/Region/LAVic will assist, where appropriate and necessary, with the resolution process. See LAVic's Complaints Handling and Dispute Resolution Policy for further guidance.
- (c) In situations where a complaint is referred to LAVic and an investigation is conducted, the Centre/Region will:

- (i). co-operate fully with the investigation;
 - (ii). where applicable, ensure the complainant is not placed in an unsupervised situation with the respondent(s); and
 - (iii). act in accordance with LAVic's Complaints Handling and Dispute Resolution Policy.
- (d) At any stage of the process, a person can seek advice from an anti-discrimination commission or other external agency and, if the matter is within their jurisdiction, may lodge a complaint with the anti-discrimination commission or other external agency.

5.4 Disciplinary Sanctions

- (a) A Club, Centre or LAVic may take disciplinary action against anyone found to have breached our policy or made false and malicious allegations. Any disciplinary measure imposed under our policy must:
- (i). be determined by the Club, Centre of LAVic Constitution and the LAVic Complaints Handling and Dispute Resolution Policy.
 - (ii). be applied consistent with any contractual and employment rules and requirements;
 - (iii). be fair and reasonable;
 - (iv). be based on the evidence and information presented and the seriousness of the breach; and
- (b) Possible sanctions are outlined in LAVic's Complaints Handling and Dispute Resolution Policy, and the Constitutions of Clubs, Centres and LAVic.

5.5 Appeals

- (a) The complainant or respondent may be entitled to lodge an appeal against a decision made in relation to a complaint in accordance with the Club, Centre or LAVic Constitutions, and the LAVic Complaints Handling and Dispute Resolution Policy.
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SECTION 6 – DOCUMENT HISTORY

3.1 VERSION CONTROL

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

Description of alleged issue	
Nature of complaint (category/basis/grounds) Can tick more than one box	<input type="checkbox"/> Harassment or <input type="checkbox"/> Discrimination <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual/sexist methods <input type="checkbox"/> Selection dispute <input type="checkbox"/> Coaching <input type="checkbox"/> Sexuality <input type="checkbox"/> Personality clash <input type="checkbox"/> Verbal abuse <input type="checkbox"/> Race <input type="checkbox"/> Bullying <input type="checkbox"/> Physical abuse <input type="checkbox"/> Religion <input type="checkbox"/> Disability <input type="checkbox"/> Victimisation <input type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy <input type="checkbox"/> Child Abuse <input type="checkbox"/> Unfair decision <input type="checkbox"/> Other

What they want to happen to fix issue	
Information provided to them	
Resolution and/or action taken	

Follow-up action	
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