

Team Sports 4 All Child Safe Policy

Date created:	June 2021								
Audience:	Employees and Volunteers irrespective of their involvement in child related work								
Version:	2021:1								
Purpose of Document:	<p>Team Sports 4 All (TS4A) is committed to creating and maintaining a child safe organisation where protecting children and preventing and responding to child abuse is educated to all employees and volunteers of TS4A. The policy provides information and guidance to all levels of our organisation and requires that all employees and volunteers maintain a child safe culture.</p> <p>We pro-actively take measures to protect all children from abuse, particularly those at higher risk including children with a disability, Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.</p>								
Actions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure TS4A has a culture that puts the best interests of children and young people first • TS4A creates environments that reduce the likelihood of harm to children and young people • Ensure all employees and volunteers are aware of TS4A Child Safe Standards • Ensure that all families we work with are aware of our organisations Child Safe Standards as well as the Child Safe Standards of the community sporting clubs they are engaged with • Ensure TS4A Child Safe Standards are published and accessible to all internal and external stakeholders 								
Review:	June 2022 if not prior								
Team Sports 4 All Contact:	Director Team Sports 4 All								
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Related Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Privacy Policy • Child Safe code of conduct • TS4A Terms of Reference • Risk Management Policy • Volunteer Recruitment Policy • New Family Referral Policy • Child Safe Incident Reporting Procedure 								

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Team Sports 4 All (TS4A) is committed to ensuring that children and young people who participate in its activities have a safe and happy experience. TS4A supports and respects children, young people, staff, volunteers and participants.
- 1.2. The aim of TS4A's Child Safe Policy (the Policy) is to protect the safety of children we sponsor to play sport 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.
- 1.3. Should a person wish to make any enquiries in relation to this Policy, please contact the Director TS4A at hello@teamsports4all.com.au

2. POLICY STATEMENT

- 2.1. TS4A is committed to providing the highest level of safety for all involved with our organisation. This includes protecting families privacy, promoting positive behaviours and attitudes, protecting the health safety and wellbeing of our employees, volunteers and families we work with, particularly children and delivering the TS4A's support while acting in the best interests of children in the sport.
- 2.2. Specifically, TS4A considers that the health, safety and well-being of children take priority over all other competing considerations. TS4A considers that this is necessary to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all our children and protect the image and reputation of TS4A and its employees and volunteers.
- 2.3. TS4A 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.
- 2.4. Child protection is a shared responsibility between TS4A, its employees, volunteers, sporting association partners, parents/guardians, coaches, spectators, and members of the community. Everyone involved in working or volunteering with TS4A is responsible for the care and protection of children, and reporting information about child abuse.
- 2.5. TS4A 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). Some of the ways in which TS4A empowers children are:
 - TS4A does a family visits to meet each child (with parent/guardian present) to discuss what sport they wish to become involved in
 - TS4A makes contact monthly with the family to see how the child/children are enjoying the sport and enable feedback if there are any issues
 - Empower the children to try new sports each school term
 - Discussion the many positive outcomes of becoming part of a team
- 2.6. TS4A 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.
- 2.7. TS4A promotes fairness and consideration for all staff, volunteers and participants.

3. SCOPE

- 3.1. This Policy applies to everyone involved in or connected to TS4A, including (but not limited to) participants, parents/guardians, spectators, community sporting clubs, officials, coaches, and all staff throughout all TS4A supported activities.
- 3.2. This Policy will continue to apply retrospectively to a person or member following the cessation of their association or employment with TS4A.
- 3.3. TS4A is affiliated with many sporting clubs across regions.. Affiliation with TS4A is conditional on an affiliated club implementing and complying with this Policy. Failure to implement and comply with this Policy may cause TS4A 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 laws of the Commonwealth and Victoria (as amended from time to time) 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) Act 2015 (Vic)

4.1.1.3. Crimes Act 1958 (Vic); and

4.1.1.4. Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic)

4.1.2. TS4A policies and T procedures.

5. DEFINITIONS

- 5.1. **Child** means a person involved in the activities of TS4A 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).
- 5.2. **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.
- 5.3. **Child protection** means any responsibility, measure or activity undertaken to safeguard children from Harm.
- 5.4. **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.

5.5. **Harm** means Harm to a person or a Child 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:

- Physical, Psychological or Emotional Abuse or Neglect;
- Sexual Abuse or Exploitation;
- a single act, omission or circumstance; and
- a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances.

5.6. **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. Sexually 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.

5.7. **Mandatory reporter** means a person who is legally required to make a report to the Department of Health and Human Services 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.

6. RECOGNISING AND REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

6.1. A person may, in the course of participating in delivering services for TS4A 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 Victoria Police on "000" as soon as practicable.

6.3. Specific types of **Child abuse** include:

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. Mandatory Reporters

- 6.4.1. 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 Health and Human Services (DHHS) 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.
- 6.4.2. 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.

6.5. Reasonable grounds for belief

- 6.5.1. A reasonable belief is formed if a reasonable person believes that:
 - 6.5.1.1. the child is in need of protection;
 - 6.5.1.2. the child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of physical or sexual injury; and
 - 6.5.1.3. the child's parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.
- 6.5.2. 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 is any other related matters known regarding the alleged perpetrator.
- 6.5.3. A 'reasonable belief' or a 'belief on reasonable grounds' is not the same as having proof, but is more than mere rumour or speculation.
- 6.5.4. You will have reasonable grounds to notify if:
 - 6.5.4.1. a child states that they have been physically or sexually abused;
 - 6.5.4.2. a child states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves);
 - 6.5.4.3. someone who knows a child states that the child has been physically or sexually abused;
 - 6.5.4.4. 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
 - 6.5.4.5. signs of abuse lead to a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused.

6.6. Voluntary Reporters

- 6.6.1. 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, DHHS or the Commissioner for Children & Young People (**CCYP**).

6.7. Reporting Child Sexual Abuse

- 6.7.1. 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 imprisonment.

6.8. TS4A Approach to Reports of Abuse

- 6.8.1. TS4A supports and encourages a person to make a report to the Police, CCYP 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.
- 6.8.2. Any person that makes a report in good faith in accordance with their reporting obligations (whether mandatory or voluntary) will be fully supported by TS4A.
- 6.8.3. 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 TS4A Director confidentially for guidance and information. If in doubt, ask for assistance.
- 6.8.4. If an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer, TS4A will follow the reporting procedure outlined in its Child Safety Incident Reporting Procedure and take all steps to ensure that the safety of the child and other children is paramount. An initial step will involve the withdrawal of the accused person from active participation until the allegation has been investigated and an outcome reached. It may be deemed appropriate that the member of staff's relationship with TS4A is terminated.
- 6.8.5. TS4A will cooperate with the directions of the Police, CCYP and/or DHHS in relation to any investigation conducted by these authorities.
- 6.8.6. TS4A will keep a register of any allegations regarding inappropriate conduct (confidentially).

7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PERSONNEL PROTECTING CHILDREN

- 7.1. Personnel involved in protecting children include the board, management, staff and volunteers within our Organisation. Those people have responsibilities in relation to protection of children and are expected to:
- 7.1.1. understand the rights of children, as appropriate to their role;
- 7.1.2. respect the cultural and religious practices of families who access TS4A's services, or programs;
- 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;
and
 - 7.1.8. not harm or exploit children who access TS4A's services.
- 7.2. TS4A will appoint a Child Safety Officer or equivalent role that will be the primary point of contact for all concerns related to child safety.

8. RECRUITMENT AND SCREENING

- 8.1. The minimum standard for background checks of employees, and volunteers of TS4A and its members is the law as it applies in Victoria.
- 8.2. TS4A undertakes a comprehensive recruitment and screening process for all staff and volunteers which aims to:
- 8.2.1. promote and protect the safety of all children who participate in the activities of TS4A;
 - 8.2.2. identify and recruit the safest and most suitable candidates who share TS4A's values and commitment to protect children; and
 - 8.2.3. prevent a person from working at TS4A if they pose an unacceptable risk to children.
- 8.3. TS4A requires staff and volunteers to pass the recruitment and screening process prior to commencing their engagement with TS4A.
- 8.4. 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. TS4A requires that:
- 8.4.1. all TS4A staff and volunteers require a current and valid WWCC and Police check;
 - 8.4.1.1. anyone else who TS4A staff feel requires a WWCC due to the nature of the work that they are undertaking for TS4A.
- An applicant will not be offered a position until they provide the required evidence to TS4A.
- 8.5. TS4A will undertake at least two thorough reference checks prior to engaging any personnel – paid or voluntary.
- 8.6. Once engaged, TS4A will provide staff and volunteers with access to this policy and staff and volunteers must review and acknowledge their understanding of this policy.
- 8.7. TS4A requires that affiliated clubs ensure all staff and volunteers (including coaches and any officials) likely to have contact with the children we support have a current WWCC, which needs to be signed off annually. Clubs which do not comply with their legal obligations will be found to have not complied with the TS4A affiliation requirements and will be disaffiliated.

9. SUPPORTING PERSONNEL

9.1. TS4A is committed to ensuring that all staff and volunteers receive training to ensure that they understand their responsibilities in relation to Child Safety. Mandatory training at TS4A includes:

9.1.1. Online Induction, Play by the Rules Training, Risk Management Training, Team Leader Support

9.2. TS4A assists its 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.

10. RISK MANAGEMENT APPROACH

10.1. Child safety is a part of TS4A's overall risk management approach.

11. POLICY PROMOTION

11.1. This policy will be made available to all new staff via the online induction session, on our website and email (via request)

12. REVIEW PROCESS

12.1. This policy will be reviewed by TS4A Directors on an annual basis.

12.2. If you would like to provide TS4A with any feedback or suggestions to improve this policy, please contact hello@teamsports4all.com.au.

12.3. In addition to the regular review of this policy, recommendations for changes to the policy may be submitted to the management 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, and other appropriate communication channels.
