



# **MEMBER PROTECTION POLICY**

VERSION 1

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The objectives of the BCTA are:

1. To foster and develop the playing of touch football by churches in the Brisbane area;
2. To encourage and support Christian principles in all aspects of the game and Association;
3. To promote fellowship, cooperation, good sportsmanship and a sense of friendly competition between all concerned;
4. To keep participation within the financial reach of all people;
5. To foster the growth of the Association and the development of its players;
6. To maintain responsible and effective processes for managing the Association and its affairs;
7. To maintain financial viability.

## **2. PURPOSE OF OUR POLICY**

The main objective of our Member Protection Policy is to maintain responsible behaviour and ethical and informed decision-making. This policy outlines our commitment to a person's right to be treated with respect and dignity, and to be safe and protected from abuse. Our policy informs everyone involved in our Association of their legal and ethical rights and responsibilities and the standards of behaviour that are required. It also covers the care and protection of children participating in our Association's activities.

## **3. WHO OUR POLICY APPLIES TO**

Our policy applies to everyone involved in the Association including committee members, administrators, coaches, referees and officials, players, employees, parents and spectators.

## **4. EXTENT OF OUR POLICY**

Our policy covers breaches of our codes of conduct, unfair decisions and any inappropriate behaviour that that brings or is likely to bring our Association or sport into disrepute. It also covers behaviour where there is suspicion of harm towards a child or young person. It includes behaviour in competition, at meetings, and at social events or trips organised the Association.

## **5. ASSOCIATION RESPONSIBILITIES**

We will:

- implement and comply with our policy
- promote our policy to everyone involved in our Association
- promote and model appropriate standards of behaviour at all times
- respond to breaches or complaints made under our policy promptly, fairly, and confidentially
- review this policy every 12–18 months

## 6. INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Everyone associated with our Association must:

- comply with the standards of behaviour outlined in our Code of Conduct
- treat others with respect
- always place the safety and welfare of children above other considerations
- be responsible and accountable for their behaviour
- follow the guidelines outlined in this policy if they wish to make a complaint or report a concern about possible child abuse, discrimination, harassment or other inappropriate behaviour.

## 7. PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

### 7.1 Child protection

Child abuse involves conduct which puts children at risk of harm and takes a number of different forms, including:

- physical abuse (e.g., deliberately hurting [hitting, punching], providing alcohol or drugs, or training that exceeds child's development or maturity)
- sexual abuse (e.g., sexual acts or threats, inappropriate touching or conversations)
- emotional abuse (e.g., ill-treating by threats, humiliation or intimidation)
- neglect (e.g., not providing child with basic necessities [food, drink, clothing], failing to protect a child from foreseeable risk of harm or injury).

Abuse is usually against the law. We will take measures to protect children involved in our Association from harm. We will do this by:

- responding to all reports of abuse promptly, seriously and confidentially
- complying with Queensland protection laws and Working with Children requirements
- carefully selecting and screening people over the age of 16 years who will have regular supervisory contact with children
- promoting and enforcing our codes of behaviour, particularly for roles associated with children
- making information about child protection available, particularly for roles associated with children
- adopting practices that provide the maximum opportunity for a child-safe environment.

Anyone who reasonably suspects that a child has been or is being abused must report their concerns to the police or relevant government agency and advise the Association that you have reported your concerns.

### 7.2 Supervision

Members under the age of 15 must be supervised at all times by a responsible adult. Our Association will provide a level of supervision adequate and relative to all members' age, maturity, capabilities, level of experience, nature of activity and nature of venue. If a member finds a member under the age of 15 is unsupervised, they should assume responsibility for the member's safety until the parent/guardian or supervisor can be found.

Parents must turn up on time to collect their child for reasons of courtesy and safety. If it appears a member will be left alone at the end of a training session with just one child, they will ask another member to stay until the child is collected.

### **7.3 Transportation**

Parents/guardians are responsible for transporting their children to and from Association activities (e.g. practice and games). Where the Association makes arrangements for the transportation of children (e.g. for away or overnight trips), we will conduct a risk assessment that includes ensuring vehicles are adequately insured, the driver has a current and appropriate licence for the vehicle being used, and appropriate safety measures are available (e.g. fitted working seatbelts).

### **7.4 Taking images of children**

Images of children can be used inappropriately or illegally. Our Association requires that members, wherever possible, obtain permission from a child's parent/guardian before taking an image of a child that is not their own and ensure that the parent knows the way the image will be used. Our Association also requires the privacy of others to be respected and disallows the use of camera phones, videos and cameras inside changing areas, showers and toilets.

If the Association uses an image of a child it will avoid naming or identifying the child or it will, wherever possible, avoid using both the first name and surname. We will not display personal information such as residential address, email address or telephone numbers without gaining consent from the parent/guardian. We will not display information about hobbies, likes/dislikes, school, etc., as this information can be used as grooming tools. We will only use appropriate images of a child relevant to our sport, and ensure that the child is suitably clothed in a manner that promotes the sport, displays its successes, etc.

## **8. ANTI-HARASSMENT, DISCRIMINATION AND BULLYING**

Our Association opposes all forms of harassment, discrimination and bullying. This includes treating or proposing to treat someone less favourably because of a particular characteristic; imposing or intending to impose an unreasonable requirement, condition or practice which has an unequal or disproportionate effect on people with a particular characteristic; or any behaviour that is offensive, abusive, belittling, intimidating or threatening — whether this is face-to-face, indirectly, or via communication technologies such as mobile phones and computers.

Our Association takes all claims of harassment, discrimination, bullying and cyber bullying seriously. We encourage anyone who believes they have been harassed, discriminated against or bullied to raise the issue with the Association (see 10. *Responding to complaints*). Some forms of harassment, discrimination and bullying are against the law and will be referred to the to the police and/or relevant government authority.

## **9. INCLUSIVE PRACTICES**

Our Association is welcoming and we will seek to include members from all areas of our community.

### **9.1 People from diverse cultures**

We will support and respect people from diverse cultures to participate in our Association and where possible will accommodate reasonable requests for flexibility (e.g., modifications to uniforms).

## 9.2 Pregnancy

Pregnant women should be aware that their own health and wellbeing, and that of their unborn children, should be of utmost importance in their decision-making about the way they participate in our sport. We recommend that pregnant women consult their medical advisers, make themselves aware of the facts about pregnancy in sport, and ensure that they make informed decisions about participation.

## 9.3 Girls playing in boys teams

If there is not a separate sex competition, our Association will support girls playing in boys teams up to and including the age of 12 years.

# 10. RESPONDING TO COMPLAINTS

## 10.1 Complaints

Our Association takes all complaints about on and off-field behaviour seriously. We will handle complaints based on the following principles of procedural fairness (natural justice):

- All complaints will be taken seriously.
- Both the person making the complaint (complainant) and the person the complaint is against (respondent) will be given full details of what is being said against them and have the opportunity to respond.
- Irrelevant matters will not be taken into account.
- Decisions will be unbiased and fair.
- Any penalties imposed will be fair and reasonable.

If the complaint relates to suspected child abuse, sexual assault or other criminal activity, then our Association will need to report the behaviour to the police and/or relevant government authority.

## 10.2 Complaint-handling process

When a complaint is received by our Association, the person receiving the complaint (e.g., president, member protection information officer, complaint officer) will:

- listen carefully and ask questions to understand the nature and extent of the problem
- ask what the complainant would like to happen
- explain the different options available to help resolve the problem
- take notes
- maintain confidentiality but not necessarily anonymity.

Once the complainant decides on their preferred option for resolution, the Association will assist, where appropriate and necessary, with the resolution process. This may involve:

- supporting the complainant to talk to the respondent
- bringing all the people involved in the complaint together to talk objectively through the problem (this could include external mediation)
- gathering more information (e.g., from other people who may have seen the behaviour)
- seeking advice from our district, regional, state and/or national body or from an external agency (e.g., state department of sport or anti-discrimination agency), and/or

- referring the complainant to an external agency such as a community mediation centre, the police or the anti-discrimination agency.

### **10.3 Disciplinary measures**

Our Association will 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:

- be applied consistent with any contractual and employment rules and requirements
- be fair and reasonable
- be based on the evidence and information presented and the seriousness of the breach
- be determined by our constitution, by-laws and the rules of the game.

Possible measures that may be taken include:

- verbal and/or written apology
  - counselling to address behaviour
  - withdrawal of any awards, placings, records or achievements bestowed in any tournaments, activities or events held or sanctioned by our Association
  - suspension or termination of membership, participation or engagement in a role or activity
  - deregistration of accreditation for a period of time or permanently
  - a fine, or
  - any other form of discipline that our Association considers reasonable and appropriate.
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