



# Watsonia Warriors Junior Basketball Club

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President: Sarah Davies

Secretary: Kirsty Thomas

## **Watsonia Warriors Child Protection and Child Safety Policy**

### **Statement of Commitment to Child Safety**

Watsonia Warriors is committed to child safety.

We want children to be safe, happy, and empowered. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers.

We are committed to the safety, participation, and empowerment of all children.

We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures.

We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously.

Watsonia Warriors is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early and removing and reducing these risks.

Watsonia Warriors is committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.

We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.

We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

### **Child Safe Standards**

All Victorian organisations that provide services or facilities to children are required by law to comply with the following Child Safe Standards:

1. Strategies to embed a culture of child safety through effective leadership arrangements.
2. A child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety.
3. A code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children.

4. Screening, supervision, training, and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing staff.
5. Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse.
6. Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse.
7. Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children.

## **POLICY STATEMENT 1.**

### **1. RATIONALE**

This policy is adapted from the Basketball Victoria Child Protection Policy Template.

This policy is intended to empower children, who are vital and active participants in the Watsonia Warriors Junior Basketball Club. The Club involves children when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them. Their views are listened to and respected.

Watsonia Warriors promotes diversity and tolerance: people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome.

Watsonia Warriors:

- promotes the cultural safety, participation, and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children;
- promotes the cultural safety, participation, and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds;
- ensures that children with a disability are safe and can participate equally.

### **2. SCOPE**

Everyone who participates in the Watsonia Warriors Junior Basketball Club activities is entitled to do so in an enjoyable and safe environment. Watsonia Warriors has a moral and legal obligation to ensure that when coaches, officials, volunteers, staff members and parents/carers are given responsibility for children, they provide them with the highest possible standard of care.

Watsonia Warriors is committed to devising and implementing policies so that everyone in sport accepts their responsibilities to safeguard children from harm and abuse. This means to follow procedures to protect children and report any concerns about their welfare to the appropriate authorities.

The aim of this policy is: to promote good practice and provide children with appropriate safety/protection whilst in the care of the Watsonia Warriors; to allow volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

### **3. DEFINITION**

Child: The terms 'child' and 'children' in this policy refer to children and young people up to the age of 18 years. This definition is consistent with the national framework, Creating Safe Environments for Children – Organisations, Employees and Volunteers, the Commission for Children and Young People Act, the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 and the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005. The term 'child' in this policy is inclusive of anyone under 18 years of age. Not utilising the term 'young people' is intentional to avoid diminishing any emphasis on, or acknowledgement of, the safety risks to older children or teenagers

### **4. IMPLEMENTATION**

Watsonia Warriors is committed to the following:

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- All children, whatever their age, culture, ability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity should be able to participate in basketball in a fun and safe environment.
- Taking all reasonable steps to protect children from harm, discrimination, and degrading treatment and to respect their rights, wishes and feelings.
- All suspicions and allegations of poor practice or abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All Watsonia Warriors volunteers who work with children will be recruited with regard to their suitability for that responsibility, and will be provided with guidance and/or training in good practice and child protection procedures.
- Working in partnership with parents/carers and children is essential for the protection of children.

#### **i) Promoting Good Practice**

To provide children with the best possible experience and opportunities in basketball, everyone must operate within an accepted ethical framework such as The Codes of Conduct. It is not always easy to distinguish poor practice from abuse. It is therefore **NOT** the responsibility of the club, volunteers or participants in basketball to make judgements about whether or not abuse is taking place. It is, however, their responsibility to identify poor practice and possible abuse and act if they have concerns about the welfare of the child. (See Appendix 1: Promoting Good Practice, DVBA Child Safe Environment Policy)

#### **ii) Children's Rights to Safety and Participation**

Watsonia Warriors is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children accessing its services. Watsonia Warriors supports the rights of the child and will act without hesitation to ensure that a child safe environment is maintained at all times.

Watsonia Warriors also promotes the involvement and participation of children and young people in developing and maintaining child-safe environments. Watsonia Warriors involves children when making

decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them. Children's views are heard and what they have to say is respected.

Watsonia Warriors promotes diversity and tolerance within the Association and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome.

Watsonia Warriors:

- promotes the cultural safety, participation, and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children;
- promotes the cultural safety, participation, and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds;
- ensures that children with a disability are safe and can participate equally.

### **iii) Identify and Analyse Risk of Harm**

Watsonia Warriors will review its existing child protection practices to determine how child-safe and child-friendly the organisation is and to determine what additional strategies are required to minimise and prevent risk of harm to children because of the action of an employee, volunteer, official, parent/carer, player, or another person.

### **iv) Ensure that Adults and Children**

Watsonia Warriors will ensure that all adults are aware of and agree to the Watsonia Warriors Child Code of Conduct as well as the Basketball Victoria Codes of Conduct that specify standards of conduct and care when dealing and interacting with children, particularly those in the organisation's care. Watsonia Warriors will also ensure that children (players) are aware of the Code of Conduct that addresses appropriate behaviour between children.

<https://basketballvictoria.com.au/resources/> for the Basketball Victoria Codes of Conduct for Administrators, Coaches, Parents and Players (one document)

### **v) Training, Professional Development and Supervision**

Training, education, and professional development are important to ensure that everyone working and volunteering for Watsonia Warriors understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

The organisational culture aims for all volunteers (in addition to parents/carers and children) to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train our volunteers to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

Watsonia Warriors also supports its staff and volunteers, through ongoing supervision and education, to develop their skills to protect children from abuse; to promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children; to promote the cultural safety of children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds and to ensure the safety of children with a disability.

New volunteers will be provided with information/training to ensure they understand Watsonia Warriors commitment to child safety. All volunteers must understand that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse, as well as checking that their own behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate (please refer to Basketball Victoria's Code of Conduct to understand appropriate behaviour further).

The Child Safety Officer is the individual to whom reports of suspected child abuse should be made by DVBA staff and volunteers. Reporting channels that will be utilised by the Child Safety Officer may include the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing; Child Protection Offices and Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

The DVBA's Child Safety Officer will also advise Basketball Victoria of any reports related to Child Protection.

**vi) Club Name Child Safety Officer**

It is not the responsibility of anyone at Watsonia Warriors to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities so that they can then make inquiries and take necessary action to protect the child. This applies **BOTH** to allegations/suspicions of abuse occurring within the Watsonia Warriors activities and to allegations/suspicions that abuse is taking place elsewhere.

Watsonia Warriors will ensure that a Child Safety Officer is appointed to oversee matters pertaining to child safety and abuse. The Child Safety Officer will be nominated member of the committee of Watsonia Warriors.

Watsonia Warriors expects its members and staff or volunteers to discuss any concerns that they may have about the welfare of a child **IMMEDIATELY** with the nominated Child Safety Officer.

The Child Safety Officer will ensure that the concerns/incident reported to them remain confidential and that the identity of the person reporting the concern/incident is not revealed. The Child Safety Officer is required to report all the incidents noted by them to the appropriate authority at Basketball Victoria (BV). BV will assess the report and determine the appropriate steps, in relation to any disciplinary action required. BV will also factor in any reports made to Human Services, Victoria Police or other agencies.

**vii) Screening and Recruitment**

Watsonia Warriors ensures that all reasonable steps are taken in order to engage the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children. This is achieved using a range of screening measures. Such measures help to minimise the likelihood of engaging (or retaining) people who are unsuitable to work with children.

Watsonia Warriors actively encourages applications from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with a disability.

All people engaged in child-related work, including volunteers, are required to hold a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this Check. Please see the Working with Children Check website for further information.

Please see Appendix 1 Screening Processes, DVBA Child Safe Environment Policy

#### **viii) Training and Induction for Volunteers**

- A check will be made that all required documentation has been completed in full, including sections on criminal records and self-disclosures.
- A check will be made that all relevant policies have been read and acknowledged, including Codes of Conduct and Member Protection Declaration.
- A check will be made that a copy of a valid Working with Children Check (or equivalent) has been received.
- Qualifications will be substantiated.
- The role requirements and responsibilities will be clarified.
- Child Protection Procedures will be explained, and further professional development needs will be identified.

In addition, or Personnel will require volunteers to

- Analyse their own practice against what is deemed good practice, and to ensure their conduct is likely to protect them from false allegations.
- Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice and/or abuse.
- Respond to concerns expressed by a child.
- Work safely and effectively with children.

#### **iv) Fair and Just Procedures for Personnel**

The safety and wellbeing of children is Watsonia Warriors primary concern. The Club also respects the rights of all volunteers. The decisions made when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent, and based on evidence.

Watsonia Warriors records all allegations of abuse and safety concerns, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored and managed by the Child Safety Officer, a nominated member of the committee of Watsonia Warriors

If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, Watsonia Warriors will follow the process of reporting to Basketball Victoria and adhere to any reporting obligations deemed necessary by other authorities such as Victoria Police or the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing: Child Protection

Watsonia Warriors will liaise with DVBA and Basketball Victoria to provide updates, to children and families, regarding reports and ongoing investigations.

## **ix) Privacy**

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be, volunteers, officials, parents/carers, or children, unless there is a risk to someone's safety.

Watsonia Warriors has safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded and stored, what will be done with it and who will have access to it.

## **x) Legislative Responsibilities**

Watsonia Warriors takes its legal responsibilities seriously, including:

- Failure to disclose: Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to the police.
- Failure to protect: People of authority in Watsonia Warriors will be committing an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.
- Any personnel who are mandatory reporters must comply with their duties.

**xii) Risk Management In Victoria**, organisations are required to protect children when a risk is identified (see information about failure to protect above). In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, the DVBA proactively manages risks of abuse to the children participating in the Association's competitions and activities via its risk management strategies.

## **xiii) Allegations, Concerns and Complaints**

Watsonia Warriors takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. Watsonia Warriors works to ensure that all children, families, staff, and volunteers know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse, or are victims, or if they notice inappropriate behaviour.

All adults have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if they have a reasonable belief that an incident took place (see information about failure to disclose above). If an adult has a reasonable belief that an incident has occurred, then they must report the incident. Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be:

- a child states that they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may, in fact, be referring to themselves even if not explicating saying so);
- behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed.
- someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it.

- observing suspicious behaviour. (See Appendix 3 Procedures for responding to suspicions and allegations of DVBA Child Safe Environment Policy).

## **5. EVALUATION**

This Policy will be reviewed every 2 years or as relevant legislation requires

Review Date: September 2024