



CHILD SAFE POLICY

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Croquet Victoria is committed to ensuring that children and young people who participate in its activities have a safe and happy experience. Croquet Victoria supports and respects children, young people, staff, volunteers and participants.
- 1.2 The aim of Croquet Victoria's Child Safe Policy (the Policy) is to protect the safety of children in our care 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 Secretary, Croquet Victoria.

2 POLICY STATEMENT

- 2.1 Croquet Victoria is committed to providing the highest level of membership service. This includes protecting members' privacy, promoting positive behaviours and attitudes, protecting the health safety and wellbeing of members, particularly children and delivering Croquet Victoria's activities while acting in the best interests of children in the sport.
- 2.2 Specifically, Croquet Victoria considers that the health, safety and well-being of children take priority over any competing considerations. Croquet Victoria considers that this is necessary to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all members and protect the image and reputation of the sport, Croquet Victoria and its affiliate members.
- 2.3 Croquet Victoria 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.
- 2.4 Child protection is a shared responsibility between Croquet Victoria, its employees, workers, contractors, associates, parents/guardians, coaches, spectators, volunteers and members of the Croquet Victoria community. Everyone who participates in Croquet Victoria's activities is responsible for the care and protection of children, and reporting information about child abuse.
- 2.5 Croquet Victoria 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).
- 2.6 Croquet Victoria 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 Croquet Victoria promotes fairness and consideration for all staff, volunteers and participants. For further details please refer to the Croquet Australia Member Protection Policy.

3 SCOPE

- 3.1 This Policy applies to participants, parents, spectators, contractors, officials, coaches, judges and staff throughout all Croquet Victoria events and activities.
- 3.2 This Policy will continue to apply retrospectively to a person or member following the cessation of their association or employment with Croquet Victoria.
- 3.3 Croquet Victoria is supported by a wide network of affiliated clubs across Victoria. Affiliation with Croquet Victoria is conditional on an affiliated club implementing, and complying with this Policy. Failure to implement and comply with this Policy may cause Croquet Victoria 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 law of the Commonwealth and Victoria 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 Croquet Victoria policies and procedures, including but not limited to:
- 4.1.2.1 Constitution;
 - 4.1.2.2 Croquet Australia Member Protection Policy and codes of behaviour;
 - 4.1.2.3 Privacy Policy;
 - 4.1.2.4 Electronic Communication Policy (currently under development)
 - 4.1.2.5 Grievance and Discipline procedures;

5 DEFINITIONS

- 5.1 **Child** means a person involved in the activities of Croquet Victoria (including athletes) and under the age of 18 years unless otherwise stated under the law applicable to the child.
- 5.2 **Child protection** means any responsibility, measure or activity undertaken to safeguard children from harm.
- 5.3 **Sexual offence** means a criminal offence involving sexual activity or actions of indecency or any act which exposes a child to, or involves a child in, sexual activity or matters beyond his or her understanding or contrary to accepted community standards. This includes child grooming, which includes actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child (or the child's carer, family or supervisor) to lower the child's inhibitions and prepare them for engagement in a sexual offence.
- 5.4 **Contact with children** means directly working with a child as part of a role or responsibility, eg coaching or teaching. It does not include incidental contact with children where this is not part of the person's role - eg a plumber undertaking repair work on club premises.

6 RECOGNISING AND REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

- 6.1 A person may, in the course of participating in the sport or other activities of Croquet Victoria or carrying out their work, form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from child abuse.
- 6.2 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 or DHHS.
- 6.3 If a person is concerned about an immediate risk to a child's safety, the person must phone '000' as soon as practicable.
- 6.4 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 imprisonment.
- 6.5 **Child abuse** can be divided into four categories:
 - 6.5.1 **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.
 - 6.5.2 **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.
 - 6.5.3 **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
 - 6.5.4 **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.
- 6.6 Child abuse includes any actions that result in actual or potential harm to a child, in circumstances where the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child.
- 6.7 **Reasonable grounds for belief**
 - 6.7.1 A reasonable belief is formed if a reasonable person believes that:
 - 6.7.1.1 the child is in need of protection;
 - 6.7.1.2 the child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of physical or sexual injury; and
 - 6.7.1.3 the child's parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.
 - 6.7.2 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.

6.7.3 A 'reasonable belief' or a 'belief on reasonable grounds' is not the same as having proof, but is more than mere rumour or speculation.

6.7.4 You will have reasonable grounds to notify if:

6.7.4.1 a child states that they have been physically or sexually abused;

6.7.4.2 a child states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves);

6.7.4.3 someone who knows a child states that the child has been physically or sexually abused;

6.7.4.4 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

6.7.4.5 signs of abuse lead to a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused.

6.8 Croquet Victoria's Approach to Reports of Abuse

6.8.1 Croquet Victoria supports and encourages a person to make a report to the Police 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 discretionary) will be supported by Croquet Victoria, and will not be penalised by Croquet Victoria for making the report.

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 Secretary, Croquet Victoria, 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, Croquet Victoria will follow the reporting procedure outlined in the Member Protection Policy and take all steps to ensure that the safety of the child is paramount.

6.8.4.1 An initial step will involve the withdrawal of the accused person from active duty, which could entail standing down, reassignment to a role without direct contact with children, working under closer supervision during an investigation, working from home, or any other measures deemed appropriate depending on the seriousness of the allegation.

6.8.4.2 Croquet Victoria will investigate allegations of inappropriate conduct against a child in accordance with procedural fairness and will handle the allegations in a confidential manner to the greatest extent possible.

6.8.5 Croquet Victoria will cooperate with the directions of the Police and/or DHHS in relation to any investigation conducted by these authorities.

6.8.6 Croquet Victoria will keep a register of any allegations regarding inappropriate conduct.

7 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PERSONNEL PROTECTING CHILDREN

Personnel involved in protecting children include the Council, management, staff,

members and volunteers within Croquet Victoria. These people have responsibilities in relation to protection of children and are expected to:

- 7.1 understand the rights of children, as appropriate to their role;
- 7.2 respect the cultural and religious practices of families who access Croquet Victoria's services, programs or events;
- 7.3 understand and appropriately respond to the needs of children with developmental delays or disabilities;
- 7.4 appropriately act on any concerns raised by children;
- 7.5 understand the definitions, indicators and impact of child abuse:
- 7.6 know and follow regulations in relation to the care of children;.
- 7.7 co-operate with police and/or other formal investigations to the best of their ability; and
- 7.8 not harm or exploit children who access Croquet Victoria's services.

8 CHILD SAFE AND CHILD FRIENDLY GUIDELINES TO PREVENT AND MANAGE RISKS OF CHILD ABUSE

8.1 Change rooms in use by children

Adult officials, regardless of gender, should only enter change rooms in use by children if accompanied by another adult. Prior to entering change rooms, officials should notify the people in the change room of their intended entrance. For the avoidance of doubt this requirement does not apply to parents/legal guardians when in a room with their child.

8.2 Hotel rooms and other accommodation used by children

No official should be alone in the room of a child athlete without the presence of another adult. The doors should always be open. Should it be necessary for an official to be alone in the room of a child athlete, the Team Manager or other responsible official must be informed. For the avoidance of doubt this requirement does not apply to parents/legal guardians when in a room with their child.

8.3 Travel - General

All team members over 18 years of age retain an overriding responsibility for the welfare of all under 18 athletes they accompany during team travel activities. They have a 'duty of care' for athletes and they must meet that duty and avoid unaccompanied and unobserved activities with persons less than 18 years of age wherever possible. For the avoidance of doubt this requirement does not apply to parents/legal guardians when in a room with their child.

8.4 Sexual Relationships while on tour.

During all team travel activities officials must not, under any circumstances engage in conduct of a sexual nature with an athlete under 18.

Improper conduct of a sexual nature by an official towards a child athlete includes any form of child sexual abuse (defined within the Croquet Victoria Member Protection Policy) as well as but not limited to the following:

- 8.4.1 inappropriate conversations of a sexual nature;
- 8.4.2 obscene language of a sexual nature;
- 8.4.3 suggestive remarks or actions;
- 8.4.4 jokes of a sexual nature;

- 8.4.5 obscene gestures;
- 8.4.6 unwarranted and inappropriate touching;
- 8.4.7 sexual exhibitionism;
- 8.4.8 use of any device to show/watch offensive material; and
- 8.4.9 any other action that could lead to an athlete being physically, emotionally or psychologically harmed.

8.5 Adults under investigation

Adults under investigation in relation to a matter involving child abuse, or any matter which has the potential to jeopardise their Working With Children Check (WWCC) (or if based in another State the equivalent requirement) status may be prohibited, by the Croquet Victoria Council, from participating in Croquet Victoria activities.

8.6 Coach Assistance to players under 18

8.6.1 All coaches must ensure that all physical contact with athletes under 18 which occurs when coaching is appropriate for the situation and necessary for the athlete's safety. It is strongly recommended that:

- 8.6.1.1 coaches ensure that there are other adults present whenever coaching;
- 8.6.1.2 coaches take care to explain the procedure to the child prior to beginning any physical contact; and
- 8.6.1.3 coaches obtain consent from the athlete prior to beginning any physical contact.

9 ENGAGING NEW PERSONNEL

- 9.1 Croquet Victoria will implement current legal requirements for the minimum standard for background checks of its employees, members and volunteers.
- 9.2 Croquet Victoria will adopt a comprehensive recruitment and screening process for all staff and volunteers in roles which involve contact with children, so as to
 - 9.2.1 promote and protect the safety of all children who participate in the activities of Croquet Victoria;
 - 9.2.2 identify and recruit safe and suitable candidates who share Croquet Victoria's values and commitment to protect children; and
 - 9.2.3 prevent a person from working at Croquet Victoria if they pose an unacceptable risk to children.
- 9.3 Where a role involves contact with children, Croquet Victoria requires a prospective staff or volunteer appointee to pass the recruitment and screening process prior to commencing their engagement.
- 9.4 As part of the screening and recruitment process, an applicant for a position involving contact with children 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.
- 9.5 Event personnel must have a valid WWCC if they are likely to be in contact with a child as part of their duties. This may include but is not restricted to:
 - 9.5.1 employees
 - 9.5.2 volunteers;
 - 9.5.3 organisers.
- 9.6 Croquet Victoria will undertake thorough reference checks prior to engaging any personnel.

- 9.7 Once engaged, staff and volunteers will be provided with access to this policy and asked to review and acknowledge their understanding of it.

10 EXPECTATIONS OF CLUBS AND REGIONS

- 10.1 All clubs and regions are expected to develop, endorse and implement a local Child Safety policy consistent with this policy and with the Child Safe Standards.
- 10.2 Croquet Victoria will provide clubs and regions with appropriate templates as a starting point for policy development.
- 10.3 Where an individual member is likely to have contact with children as part of their role at a club, the club is expected to require the member to provide detail of a current WWCC.
- 10.4 Clubs which do not comply with their legal obligations will be found to have not complied with the Croquet Victoria affiliation requirements and will be disaffiliated.

11 RISK MANAGEMENT APPROACH

Child safety is a part of Croquet Victoria's overall risk management approach.

12 POLICY BREACHES

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 Croquet Victoria's disciplinary processes.

13 POLICY PROMOTION

- 13.1 This policy will be notified to members on approval via Malletsports..
- 13.2 This policy will be communicated to clubs, regions and Council members via email. A current version maintained on the Croquet Victoria website.
- 13.3 References to this policy will be included in documentation provided to selection committees, team captains and coaches of teams that represent Croquet Victoria.

14 REVIEW PROCESS

- 14.1 This policy will be reviewed by the Croquet Victoria Council within 12 months of initial approval and every two years thereafter.
- 14.2 If you would like to provide Croquet Victoria with any feedback or suggestions to improve this policy, please contact the Secretary.
- 14.3 In addition to the regular review of this policy, recommendations for changes to the policy may be submitted to Council 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, Malletsports and other appropriate communication channels.

AUTHORISATION



16 October 2017
Victorian Croquet Association Inc