



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY & GUIDELINES (January 2017)

All sporting clubs that make provision for children and young people must ensure that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount;
- All children whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity, have a fundamental right to protection from any form of abuse and neglect which applies to their involvement in sport;
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately; and
- All club officials, coaches, members and volunteers have a responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate club official.

Our Child Protection Policy Statement

At the Gracedale Park Tennis Club we align ourselves with the Child Protection policies as outlined by the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) to ensure the welfare, safety and protection of all children involved with the club.

Child safety will be achieved through adherence to the Child Protection Guidelines adopted by the Gracedale Park Tennis Club as detailed throughout this document.

A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 years.

Policy aims

The aim of the Gracedale Park Tennis Club Child Protection Policy is to promote good practice by:

- Providing children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of the club.
- Allowing all club officials, members, coaches and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

Promoting good practice

Child abuse, particularly sexual abuse can arouse strong emotions in those facing such a situation. It is important to understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with your judgment about the appropriate action to take.

Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and the sporting environment. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with young children in order to harm them. A coach, instructor, teacher, official or volunteer will have regular contact with young people and be an important link in identifying cases where they need protection. All suspicious cases of poor practice should be reported following the guidelines in this document.

When a child enters the club having been subjected to abuse outside the sporting environment, sport can play a critical role in improving the child's self-esteem. In such circumstances, the club must work with the appropriate agencies to ensure the child receives the required support.

Good practice guidelines

All club members, officials, coaches and volunteers should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect themselves from false allegations. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate:

- Always working in an open environment avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication;
- Treating all young people/disabled adults equally with respect and dignity;
- Always putting the welfare of each young person first;
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with players e.g. it is not appropriate for members or coaches to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them;
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust and empowering children to share in decision making;
- Making sport fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play;
- Ensuring that if any form of manual or physical support is required, it should be provided openly and according to guidelines contained within the new Victorian Child Safety Legislation that came into effect on 1st January, 2017. If it is difficult to maintain hand positions when the child is constantly moving, young people should always be consulted and their agreement gained. Some parents are becoming increasingly sensitive about manual support and their views should always be carefully considered;
- Keeping up to date with technical skills, qualifications and insurance;
- Involving parents and carers wherever possible. For example, encouraging them to take responsibility for their children while around the club;
- Ensuring that if mixed teams are taken away for the day or night, they should always be accompanied by a male and female volunteer. However, remember that same gender abuse can occur;
- Ensuring that at tournaments or residential events, adults should not enter children's rooms or invite children into their rooms;
- Being an excellent role model – this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people;
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism;

- Recognising the development needs and capacity of young people and disabled adults –avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will;
- Securing parental consent in writing to act, if the need arises to administer emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment;
- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with details of any treatment given; and
- Requesting written parental consent if club officials are required to transport young people in their cars;

Practices to be avoided

The following should be avoided except in emergencies, If a case arises where these situations are unavoidable (e.g. the child sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital or a parent fails to arrive to pick up a child at the end of a session), it should be with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge at the club or the child’s parents.

Otherwise avoid:

- Spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others; and
- Taking or dropping off a child to a competition match or event alone.

Practices never to be sanctioned

Club officials, members, volunteers and coaches should never;

- Engage in rough physical or sexually provocative games including horseplay;
- Share a room with a child;
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching;
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged;
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun;
- Reduce a child to tears as a form of control;
- Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon;
- Do things of a personal nature for children or disabled adults that they can do for themselves; and
- Invite or allow children to stay with you at your home unsupervised.

NB: In certain circumstances, it may be necessary for members, coaches or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are young or disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents and the players themselves. There is a need to be responsive to a person’s reactions. If a person is fully dependent on you, talk with him/her about what you are doing and give choices where possible. This is particularly so if you are involved in any dressing or undressing of outer clothing, or where there is physical contact, lifting or assisting a child to carry out particular activities. Avoid taking on the responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained.

Incidents that must be reported/recorded

If any of the following were to occur, you should report this immediately to another colleague and record the incident. You should also ensure the parents of the child are informed;

- If you accidentally hurt a player;
- If he/she seems distressed in any manner;
- If a player appears to be sexually aroused by your actions; and
- If a player misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

Use of photographic/filming equipment at sporting events

There is evidence that some people have used sporting events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young and disabled sportspeople in vulnerable positions. All clubs should be vigilant and any concerns should be reported to a club official.

Video as a coaching aid

There is no intention to prevent club coaches using video equipment as a legitimate coaching aid. However, players and their parents/carers should be made aware that this is part of the coaching programme and such videos should be stored safely and not posted on social media or coaching websites.

Recruitment and training of coaches, officials and volunteers

The Gracedale Park Tennis Club recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and that all reasonable steps must be taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with or having an involvement with children and junior members of the tennis club.

Pre-selection checks must include the following;

- All coaching staff and volunteers must apply for and hold a current Victorian “Working with Children Check” (WCCC); and
- All coaches must complete an application form including personal details and evidence of identity e.g. WWCC Photo ID.

Training

In addition to pre-selection checks, the safeguarding process includes training after appointment to help coaches, officials and volunteers to:

- Analyse their own practice against established good practice and to ensure their practice is likely to protect them from false allegations;
- Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice or possible abuse;
- Respond to concerns expressed by a child or young person; and
- Work safely and effectively with children.

The Gracedale Park Tennis Club requires;

- Coaching staff to have successfully completed the Australian Sports Commission's on-line training programme "Play by the Rules", specifically modules PBTR -Child Protection and PBTR -Harassment and Discrimination to ensure their practice is exemplary and to facilitate the development of a positive culture towards good practice and child protection;
- Non-coaching staff, officials and volunteers to be provided with this Child Protection Policy & Guidelines;
- Relevant personnel to receive advisory information outlining good practice and informing them about what to do if they have concerns about the behaviour of an adult towards a young person: and
- Relevant personnel to undergo first aid training (where necessary).

Responding to allegations or suspicions

It is not the responsibility of any official, coach, member or volunteer at the East Croydon Kilsyth Tennis Club 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.

The Gracedale Park Tennis Club will ensure all officials, coaches, members and volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone who in good faith reports his/her concerns that a colleague is or may be abusing a child.

Actions

- Any suspicions or allegations of child abuse must be reported to the police who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk;
- The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the police;
- The matter must not be discussed within the Gracedale Park Tennis Club and every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned, Information should be handled and disseminated on a needs to know basis only;
- The Secretary (or President) will document all allegations and the information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people (needs to know), in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure);
- The Gracedale Park Tennis Club will follow the advice of the police and/or child protection services as to the requirements of the organisation;
- The Gracedale Park Tennis Club will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police or child protection services inquiries; and
- Irrespective of the findings of the child protection services or police inquiries, the Gracedale Park Tennis Club committee will assess all individual cases to decide whether an official, coach, member or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision, particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, the Gracedale

Park Tennis Club committee must reach a decision based upon the available information, which could suggest that on a balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child should remain of paramount importance throughout.

Support to deal with aftermath of abuse

- Consideration should be given to the kind of support that children, parents, club officials, coaches and members may need. Use of help lines, support groups and open meetings will maintain an open culture and help the healing process; and
- Consideration should be given to what kind of support may be appropriate for the alleged perpetrator.

Allegations of previous abuse

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (e.g. by an adult who was abused as a child and the accused person is still known to be working with children).

Where such an allegation is made, the club should follow the procedures as detailed previously in this document and report the matter to the police. This is because other children, either within or outside sport, may be at risk from this person. Anyone who has a previous criminal conviction for offences related to abuse is automatically excluded from working with children.

Actions if bullying is suspected

If bullying is suspected, a similar procedure to that set out for “Responding to allegations or suspicions” of abuse should be followed, modified as necessary.

Actions to help the victim and prevent bullying in sport

- Treat all signs of bullying very seriously;
- Encourage all children to speak and share their concerns (It is believed that up to 12 children a year commit suicide as a result of bullying, so if anyone talks about or threatens suicide, seek professional help immediately). Help the victim speak out and tell the person in charge or someone in authority;
- Investigate all allegations of bullying within the tennis club and take immediate action to ensure the victim is safe. Speak with the victim and the bully/bullies separately;
- Reassure the victim that you can be trusted and will help them, although you cannot promise to tell no one else;
- Keep records of what is said (what happened, by whom, when); and
- Report any concerns to the police or child protection services if deemed necessary.

Action towards the bully/bullies

- Talk with the bully/bullies, explain the situation and try to get the bully/bullies to understand the consequences of their behaviour. Seek an apology to the victim;
- Inform the bully/bullies parents;
- Provide support for the victim’s coach;

- Impose sanctions as necessary;
- Encourage and support the bully/bullies to change behaviour;
- Hold meetings with the families to report on progress;
- Inform all club members of action taken; and
- Keep a written record of action taken.

Concerns outside the immediate sporting environment (e.g. a parent or carer)

- Report your concerns to the police or child protection agency if there is any cause to have a suspicion regarding abuse of a child;
- Child protection agency and/or the police will decide how to involve the parents/carers; and
- Maintain confidentiality on a need to know basis.

Club Contacts

President	Leahe Walker	9870 5957
Secretary	Kelly Elward	9733 0361
Treasurer	Manny Vella	9729 5377
Senior Convenor	Scott Harneth	9720 4674
Junior Convenor	Carol Dick	9723 6832
Night Convenor	Brian Cook	98700493

Other useful contacts

Victoria Police	000
Victoria Police SOCIT (Box Hill)	8892 3292
Dept of Human Services Child Protection	1300 360 391
Child Protection Crisis Line (24 hr)	131 278
Child First	1300 369 146