



Ringwood Basketball Association Policy

Child Safety Policy

1.0 Purpose

The Ringwood Basketball Association (RBA) is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment for all children and young people. We recognise our responsibility to protect children from harm and uphold the highest standards of child safety and wellbeing in alignment with:

- Basketball Victoria's Child Safeguarding Policy
- Basketball Victoria's Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Basketball Victoria's Codes of Conduct
- Victorian Child Safe Standards (2022)

This policy outlines how we create and maintain a child-safe environment and ensure compliance with Victoria's 11 Child Safe Standards.

We recognise that child safety is a shared responsibility, and we are dedicated to embedding a culture of child safety across all levels of our organisation. This includes proactive risk management, training, reporting procedures, and continuous improvement to safeguard all children and young people under our care.

The purpose of this policy is to promote best practices in child safety, ensuring that children and young people receive appropriate protection and care within the RBA. It also aims to equip officials, staff and volunteers with the knowledge and confidence to make informed decisions and respond effectively to child safety concerns

2.0 Scope

This policy applies to all individuals associated with the RBA, including but not limited to:

- Employees
- Referees
- Officials
- Coaches
- Team managers
- Volunteers
- Committee members
- Players
- Parents and guardians
- Contractors and service providers engaged with RHBA

All members of the RBA community must uphold our commitment to child safety and comply with this policy in all RBA activities, whether at training, games, events, or related functions.



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3.0 Legislative Context

The Victorian Child Safe Standards (2022) provide a comprehensive framework to protect children and young people from harm, including physical violence, sexual offences, emotional or psychological abuse, neglect, and exposure to family violence. These standards set clear expectations for organisations working with children, ensuring they prioritise child safety, wellbeing, and inclusion in all activities.

As a child-related organisation, the RBA is committed to complying with these 11 Child Safe Standards and embedding child safety into our culture, governance, policies, and operations.

Victorian Child Safe Standards (2022)

Standard 1: Organisations must establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued

- RBA is committed to creating a culturally safe space where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people feel respected, heard, and valued.
- We promote cultural safety through inclusive policies, practices, and engagement with Aboriginal families and communities.
- Our programs acknowledge and celebrate Aboriginal culture, ensuring culturally appropriate support is available.

Standard 2: Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance, and culture.

- RBA integrates child safety and wellbeing into all aspects of leadership, decision-making, and operations.
- The Committee demonstrates a strong commitment to child safety.
- We regularly review and update child safety policies and procedures to reflect best practices and compliance requirements.

Standard 3: Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them, and are taken seriously

- RBA ensures that children and young people understand their rights and are encouraged to speak up about their safety and wellbeing.
- We actively seek and respect the voices of children in decision-making processes.
- Children and young people are provided with child-friendly resources to help them recognise unsafe situations and seek help when needed.



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Standard 4: Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.

- RBA values open communication and partnership with families and the wider community.
- Parents, carers, and guardians are informed about child safety policies and encouraged to be involved in their child's participation in basketball.
- We provide accessible information on child safety standards, policies, and reporting processes.

Standard 5: Equity is upheld, and diverse needs are respected in policy and practice.

- RBA ensures that all children have equal access to safe and inclusive participation in basketball.
- We provide additional support for children with diverse needs, including:
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people
 - Children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds
 - Children and young people with disabilities
 - LGBTQIA+ children and young people
 - Children and young people facing social or economic disadvantage
- Our programs, facilities, and communication materials are designed to be accessible and inclusive for all.

Standard 6: People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.

- RBA implements rigorous recruitment and screening processes to ensure all staff, referees, volunteers, and coaches are suitable to work with children.
- Working with Children Checks (WWCC) and background checks are mandatory for all relevant personnel.
- All staff, volunteers, and officials receive ongoing training and support to understand their child safety responsibilities.

Standard 7: Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused.

- RBA provides a clear, accessible, and child-friendly process for reporting concerns, complaints, or allegations of child abuse.
- Reports are taken seriously and responded to appropriately, confidentially, and without retaliation.



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- RBA ensures all members understand mandatory reporting laws and reporting obligations to authorities.

Standard 8: Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and awareness to keep children and young people safe.

- RBA provides regular child safety training for all staff, volunteers, referees, and coaches.
- Training includes identifying risks, responding to disclosures, and upholding child-safe practices.
- Child safety policies and procedures are regularly updated and communicated to all members.

Standard 9: Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.

- RBA ensures that all venues, training spaces, and online interactions are safe and appropriately monitored.
- Supervision guidelines are in place to prevent one-on-one situations between adults and children.
- Social media, electronic communication, and digital interactions are carefully managed to prevent grooming, cyberbullying, or inappropriate contact.

Standard 10: Implementation of child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures is regularly reviewed and improved.

- RBA is committed to ongoing review and improvement of child safety policies and procedures.
- Annual audits and risk assessments are conducted to ensure child safety compliance.
- Feedback from children, families, staff, and external experts is used to refine our child safety approach.

Standard 11: Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

- RBA maintains clearly documented child safety policies, including:
 - Child Safety Policy
 - Basketball Victoria's Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct
 - Basketball Victoria's Child Safeguarding Policy
- These policies are publicly available, regularly reviewed, and updated to reflect best practices and legal requirements



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4.0 Policy Statement

Child Safety Commitment Statement

At RBA, the safety, wellbeing, and empowerment of children and young people are our highest priorities.

We are committed to building a child-safe culture where all children feel safe, included, respected, and protected from harm.

Our Commitment Includes:

- Embedding a strong child-safe culture across all levels of the RBA, led by our leadership team, officials, and volunteers.
- Promoting a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment that values diversity, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, children and young people with disabilities, children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and LGBTQIA+ children and young people.
- Preventing and responding to child abuse, neglect, misconduct, and harmful behaviour through robust policies, procedures, screening, recruitment, and training practices.
- Ensuring continuous compliance with the Victorian Child Safe Standards (2022), Basketball Victoria policies, and child protection legislation.

Leadership and Culture

All RBA Committee members, leaders, staff, referees, officials, and volunteers are responsible for upholding child safety as a core value of our Association.

Child safety is a shared responsibility — every member has a role to play in creating a culture where children are protected and empowered.

Responsibility for Child Safety

Every RBA member must act if they witness, suspect, or are informed of potential child abuse or misconduct. All disclosures, allegations, suspicions, and concerns must be taken seriously and reported immediately to the appropriate authorities. It is not the role of staff or volunteers to investigate concerns, but it is their duty to report.

Child Safety and Wellbeing Officers

RBA has appointed Child Safety and Wellbeing Officers to oversee child safety concerns, reports, and compliance.

The Officers ensure all reports are managed confidentially and in line with legal and policy requirements.

Any reasonable belief about a risk to a child must be reported immediately to a Child Safety and Wellbeing Officer.



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Reporting Obligations

All RBA members must report any concerns regarding suspected child abuse, neglect, or inappropriate behaviour.

Reports may be escalated to Basketball Victoria, Victoria Police, Child Protection, or other relevant authorities, depending on the nature and urgency of the concern.

Mandatory reporting and the Failure to Disclose laws apply to all adults involved with RBA activities.

This commitment reflects RBA's ongoing dedication to providing a safe, inclusive, and positive basketball environment for all children and young people.

5.0 Child Safety Policies and Procedures

The RBA has a legal and moral responsibility to always provide a child safe environment. To meet this responsibility, the Association has established clear policies and procedures that reflect our strong commitment to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children involved in our programs.

In acknowledging and complying with this Child Safe Policy, all Association Management, Officials, Staff, and Volunteers must adhere to the following expectations:

- **Physical and Sexual Contact:**
Physical or sexual contact with children is strictly prohibited under all circumstances. This includes, but is not limited to, massaging, pinching, punching, pushing, sitting on laps, or any form of assault or inappropriate touching, as determined by the child.
- **Use of Physical Force:**
Physical force is only permitted when necessary to prevent immediate physical harm (e.g., separating players engaged in a physical altercation).
- **Verbal and Psychological Safety:**
Staff and volunteers must not verbally or psychologically abuse, denigrate, intimidate, or attempt to control or manipulate children, whether publicly or privately.
- **Information Sharing:**
Children must not be discouraged from sharing information or conversations with their parents, carers, or trusted adults. Staff and volunteers must never instruct children to "keep secrets" from their families.
- **Grooming Behaviours:**
Staff and volunteers must not display any behaviours associated with grooming, as outlined in this policy.
- **Supervision Standards:**
Staff and volunteers must avoid being alone with a child (excluding one's own child) in any secluded space where they cannot be seen or easily observed by another adult.
- **Respectful Communication:**
Staff and volunteers must not display, distribute, or share any material that is demeaning, suggestive, objectionable, or pornographic.



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- **Inappropriate Invitations:**
Staff and volunteers must not directly or indirectly invite children to engage in inappropriate, suggestive, or sexual activities. This includes offers of rewards for participation or threats of reprisal for non-compliance.
- **Sexualised Conduct and Remarks:**
Staff and volunteers must refrain from making any sexualised comments, jokes, or innuendos about a person's body, clothing, or appearance, and from making any threats of such behaviour.
- **Compliance and Reporting:**
Staff and volunteers must always comply with this Child Safety Policy and immediately report any allegations, concerns, or complaints relating to child safety or suspected child abuse to the appropriate internal and external authorities.

In addition to this Basketball Victoria under their Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct outlines the expectations including:

Sexual Misconduct

Under no circumstances is any form of 'sexual behaviour' to occur between, with, or in the presence of children or young people. '*Sexual behaviour*' needs to be interpreted widely, to encompass the entire range of actions that would reasonably be considered to be sexual in nature, including but not limited to:

- *contact behaviour*, such as sexual intercourse, kissing, fondling, sexual penetration or exploiting a child through prostitution; and
- *'non-contact behaviour'*, such as flirting, sexual innuendo, inappropriate text messaging, online interaction on social media, inappropriate photography or exposure to pornography or inappropriate nudity.

Physical Contact

Physical contact with a child may be appropriate in limited circumstances related to wellbeing or medical needs. Any physical contact must be consistent with this policy, respectful of the child's boundaries, and only occur in public settings where possible.

If comforting a distressed child, a side hug may be used instead of a full front embrace. When demonstrating a basketball technique or skill, staff and volunteers must avoid physical contact and should ask another adult to demonstrate where necessary. If a child initiates contact, the adult must assess the situation to ensure the contact remains appropriate and that the child understands the nature and limits of such interaction.

Transporting Children

The Association recognises that, while not encouraged, there may be instances where a child must travel alone with a staff member or volunteer. In these cases:

- Written permission must be obtained from the child's parent or guardian in advance, acknowledging the specific reason or ongoing transport arrangement (e.g., travel to a game).



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- Communication with parents or carers should occur prior to transport, ideally via text or email for documentation.
- Children must be seated in the back seat and must always wear a seatbelt.

Change Room Arrangements

Wherever possible, children and young people should be asked to arrive at basketball activities already dressed in uniform. Where this is not possible officials, staff, and volunteers may be required to supervise children in change rooms. This must always be managed in a way that upholds the child's right to privacy and safety:

- Staff and volunteers must never be alone with a child in a change room.
- Children should be supervised in change rooms whilst ensuring their right to privacy.
- A minimum of 2 employees or volunteers of the same gender as the group should always be present. Male staff are not permitted in female change rooms and female staff are not permitted in male change rooms.
- Staff and Volunteers must not shower or change at the same time as children or young people.
- Ensure adequate safety in 'public' change rooms when they are used, while also respecting privacy.
- Phones, cameras and recording devices are not to be used in changing rooms. This includes by children and young people to ensure everyone's privacy.

Giving Gifts

Gifts from staff or volunteers to children are only permitted where they are given openly as a prize or recognition and in a way that is transparent and appropriate. There must be no secrecy around the gift or the reason for giving it.

Use, Possession, or Supply of Alcohol or Drugs

Officials, staff, and volunteers must not possess, supply, or be under the influence of alcohol, illicit drugs, or tobacco while participating in or supervising association activities involving children.

Child Supervision

Officials, staff, and volunteers are responsible for the active supervision of children at association games, training, programs, and events. Supervision must ensure children are participating safely and are protected from harm, including external threats and intruders.

Officials must always remain vigilant and intervene where necessary to address inappropriate behaviour, such as bullying or harassment. Under no circumstances should a child be left unsupervised outside of a stadium or training venue until a responsible adult has taken over supervision.

Appropriate Language



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Officials, staff, and volunteers must use clear, positive, and respectful language in the presence of children. Language must never be harmful, discriminatory, racist, sexist, derogatory, demeaning, threatening, or psychologically abusive.

Electronic Communication

Staff and volunteers must always act in accordance with this policy and maintain appropriate, professional boundaries when using electronic communication with children. Specifically:

- Officials, staff, and volunteers must not initiate social media contact with children or invite children to connect with them as “friends” or followers.
- If a child initiates a friend request or similar contact, staff must not accept without obtaining prior approval from the Association President.
- Adults must never engage in private social media messaging with children.
- Electronic communication with children must be strictly limited to matters related to Association activities. Permission from the Association President must be sought for any non-Association-related communication.
- Formal communications to parents and children must be conducted through official Association email addresses or mobile phone accounts.
- Personal email addresses and personal mobile phones must not be used to communicate with children one-on-one.
- Text messaging is only permitted when urgent communication is required.
 - A copy of any text sent to or received from a child must be retained on the staff member’s or volunteer’s device.
 - Details must be reported to the immediate supervisor or relevant committee member.

Codes of Conduct

To provide children with the best possible experience and opportunities in basketball, all participants must uphold a shared commitment to ethical behaviour and respectful interactions by following the RBA Codes of Conduct.

The RBA ensures that all adults are aware of and consistently uphold the Association’s Codes of Conduct, which outline expected standards of behaviour when engaging with children and young people. These guidelines also promote respectful relationships among peers and safe participation in all activities.

In addition, all participants are required to adhere to Basketball Victoria’s Code of Conduct, which provides a comprehensive framework for conduct and integrity across the sport. This includes expectations for coaches, referees, players, parents, and spectators. The full Basketball Victoria Code of Conduct is available here:

[Basketball Victoria Code of Conduct](#)



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All officials, staff, volunteers, children, and their families are encouraged to contribute to the development and review of these Codes to ensure they remain inclusive, relevant, and aligned with our commitment to child safety and wellbeing.

Recruitment

Attracting and recruiting the right people is critical to maintaining a child-safe environment. The RBA is committed to ensuring that all recruitment practices reflect our duty of care and align with Basketball Victoria's Code of Conduct, as well as relevant child safety legislation and standards.

We develop clear role descriptions, selection criteria, and advertising materials that highlight our commitment to child safety. All officials, staff, and volunteers must meet both ethical and legal obligations during the recruitment process.

We actively encourage applications from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and people with disability.

To ensure rigorous screening of all officials, staff, and volunteers, the Association undertakes the following steps:

- Review of application forms, including disclosure of criminal history and declarations relevant to working with children and young people.
- Structured interviews conducted according to child-safe standards and appropriate behavioural protocols.
- Verification of qualifications, including direct contact with educational providers or sighting of original certification documents.
- Clear explanation of job responsibilities and expectations, particularly in relation to child safety and respectful conduct.
- At least two reference checks from independent referees (not family members), with specific focus on the applicant's suitability to work with children and uphold the values of the Association and Basketball Victoria's Code of Conduct.

This approach ensures that every person involved in our Association is aligned with our child safety values and is committed to upholding a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment for all children and young people.

Screening

RBA is committed to taking all reasonable steps to engage safe, appropriate, and child-safe individuals to work, coach, volunteer, or supervise within our Association. We follow robust screening processes to reduce the risk of engaging individuals who may pose a risk to children and young people.

In alignment with Basketball Victoria's Member Protection By-Laws, all individuals aged 18 years or older who work or volunteer in roles that involve regular contact with children—such as coaching, supervising, refereeing, or support roles—must:

- Hold a valid Victorian Working with Children Check (WWCC) that is linked to the Ringwood Basketball Association; and



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- Submit evidence of their WWCC to the Association prior to commencing their role.

To support this, the Association will:

- Identify all roles that require direct or regular contact with children under the age of 18.
- Collect a completed Member Protection Declaration (MPD) from all individuals engaged in these roles.
- Where an MPD is not submitted, or it raises concerns, the individual will be given an opportunity to provide further explanation.
- In consultation with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Officer and Association President, the Association may conduct a risk assessment. If the individual is deemed unsuitable, they will not be appointed to the role.
- Verify that the individual holds a current WWCC linked to our organisation via the Victorian Department of Justice system. We recognise two exemptions:
 - Victoria Police officers
 - Registered teachersThese professionals are already screened through their employment and accreditation processes and are not required to obtain an additional WWCC for the identified roles.

Further information and access to the Working with Children Check process can be found here:

[Obtaining and recording a Victorian Working with Children Check](#)

All committee members, referees, referee advisors, coaches, trainers, and any other volunteers who participate in basketball matches involving children must hold a valid Victorian Working with Children Check (WWCC). This is a legal requirement and a critical component of our commitment to providing a child-safe environment.

If you are currently undertaking one of these roles—whether in a paid or voluntary capacity—you must ensure you have a valid WWCC. Referees and volunteers associated with RBA may hold either a “Volunteer” or “Employee” WWCC, depending on the nature of their role.

To obtain or update your WWCC:

1. Visit the online WWCC system: [Working with Children Check Victoria](#)
2. When prompted, nominate the following details:
 - Occupational Code: “Clubs and Associations - Code 42”
 - Organisation Details:
Ringwood Basketball Association
PO Box 669 Heathmont
Phone: (03)
3. Once obtained or renewed, please submit a copy of your WWCC to the Child Safety and Wellbeing Officer for recordkeeping.



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As part of our compliance requirements, any person aged 18 or older registering for a referee or volunteer role must upload a current photo of their WWCC card. You will not be permitted to participate in your role unless your WWCC has been verified, linked to the Association, and recorded by the Child Safety and Wellbeing Officer.

Maintaining a valid and current WWCC is a non-negotiable requirement for any adult involved in child-related basketball activities at our Association.

Training and Education

Training and ongoing education are essential to ensure that everyone in our organisation understands that child safety is a shared responsibility.

Our organisational culture promotes a safe and supportive environment where all officials, staff, volunteers, and families feel confident raising concerns or reporting suspected harm. We provide ongoing training to help our team identify, assess, and respond to concerns and minimise the risk of child abuse.

Training and education will support all officials, staff, and volunteers to:

- Work safely, respectfully, and effectively with children and young people
- Understand and fulfil their responsibilities to report concerns about inappropriate behaviour, misconduct, or suspected abuse
- Respond to disclosures or concerns from children in a safe, compassionate, and supportive manner
- Reflect on their own practice using established standards to strengthen safety and reduce risk, including protection from false or mistaken allegations

Induction

All officials, staff, and volunteers will participate in a formal induction process, which includes:

- Clear explanation of their role, responsibilities, and expectations in supporting child safety
- Signing of the organisation's Code of Conduct, Child Safety Policy, and Member Protection Declaration
- Overview of child safety principles, including mandatory reporting and ethical conduct
- Identification of training needs, such as child safety fundamentals and behaviour management

Officials, Staff and Volunteers Supervision

The RBA is committed to supporting all officials, staff, and volunteers through ongoing supervision and development to strengthen their ability to protect children from harm.

- All new officials, staff, and volunteers will participate in regular supervision to ensure they understand the Association's commitment to child safety and recognise that everyone shares responsibility for protecting children from abuse and harm.



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- Officials, staff, and volunteers are expected to demonstrate safe, respectful, and appropriate behaviour towards children and young people always. Their conduct and approach to their role will be monitored through regular communication and observation by Association members.
- All individuals will be held accountable for maintaining child-safe practices and behaviours in accordance with the Association's Code of Conduct and Child Safe Policy.

Any inappropriate behaviour that is observed or suspected will be immediately reported through the appropriate channels, including the Child Safety and Wellbeing Officer.

Depending on the nature, severity, and urgency of the concern, reports may also be made to external authorities such as the Department of Health and Human Services (Child Protection) and/or Victoria Police.

For further guidance on expectations for behaviour, staff, officials, and volunteers must refer to the organisation's Code of Conduct.

Managing Allegations and Reports

The Association takes all allegations, concerns, and complaints regarding child safety seriously and has established clear procedures for prompt, thorough, and fair investigation.

All officials, staff, and volunteers are trained to respond appropriately to allegations, disclosures, concerns, or observations relating to child safety and child abuse.

We are committed to meeting our legal obligations and act in accordance with all relevant Victorian and Australian child safety laws, including:

- **Failure to Disclose:**
All adults in Victoria must report to police if they form a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16. Failure to do so is a criminal offence.
- **Failure to Protect:**
Individuals in positions of authority within the organisation must act to prevent the risk of child sexual abuse when they have the power or responsibility to do so. Failure to act is a criminal offence.
- **Mandatory Reporting:**
Teachers (including early childhood teachers), principals, police, doctors, nurses, midwives, and others are legally required to report to child protection if they form a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse.
Mandatory reporters must comply with their legal obligations whether at work or in a volunteer capacity.

Making a Report

All officials, staff, and volunteers must understand their responsibility to act if they observe, suspect, or receive a disclosure of child abuse or inappropriate behaviour.

Everyone has a legal duty to report when a reasonable belief has been formed that an incident may have occurred.

Factors that may contribute to forming a reasonable belief include:



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- A child discloses abuse (directly or indirectly).
- A child's behaviour or physical appearance is consistent with that of a victim of abuse.
- Another person raises a concern about possible abuse.
- Observing suspicious behaviour by another adult or child.

If a child discloses abuse, or an adult observes or suspects abuse, the matter must be reported without delay.

Reporting Pathways

The RBA Child Safety and Wellbeing Officers are the primary contact for allegations, disclosures, concerns, or complaints about child safety and abuse.

If you receive an allegation or disclosure, or have a concern or complaint relating to child safety or abuse, please contact:

Matthew Swansson

Child Safety and Wellbeing Office (VBRA)

Phone: 0400 339 902

Email: ringwoodreferees@gmail.com

Leah du Plooy

Child Safety and Wellbeing Officer (VJBL/BIGV)

Phone: 0403 685 785

Email: wellbeing@ringwoodbasketball.com

The Child Safety and Wellbeing Officers, in consultation with Association President will manage all reports to authorities. However, authorities such as Child Protection and the Police may need to speak directly to the person whom the disclosure was made.

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of harm or an offence is occurring, call 000 (Triple Zero) immediately.

Other reports can also be made to

- Victorian Child Protection Eastern Region: 1300 360 452)
- Victorian Child Protection After Hours: 131278
- Crime Stoppers Victoria: 1800 333 000

Please advise Child Safety and Wellbeing Officers immediately following any report that has been made to authorities.

Information to Include When Making a Report

When making a report to the Child Safety and Wellbeing Officers, provide as much detail as possible, without interrogating the child. Key information includes:

- The child's name, approximate age, and team.
- Date, time, and location of the alleged abuse (if known).



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- Name of the suspected perpetrator (if known).
- Type of abuse suspected (physical, emotional, sexual, neglect).
- Notes or observations made by the child or discloser.
- Relevant history, physical signs, or behaviours observed.
- Immediate safety concerns or risks to the child.
- Any physical evidence (e.g., photographs of injuries), if appropriate and safe to obtain.

The Child Safety and Wellbeing Officers will discuss with you the next steps and decision around reporting to authorities.

Victimisation and Retaliation

The RBA does not tolerate victimisation or retaliation.

Disciplinary action will be taken against any individual who harasses, intimidates, victimises or retaliates against another person for:

- Raising a concern about child safety
- Making a complaint
- Supporting another person's disclosure or complaint
- Participating in an investigation or reporting process

All complaints and disclosures will be managed respectfully, and the safety and wellbeing of the reported will be prioritised and always protected.

Improper and Vexatious Complaints

The RBA recognises that making complaints is a critical part of a safe environment.

However, if a complaint is found to be knowingly false, vexatious, frivolous, malicious, or intended to cause distress, disciplinary action may be taken against the individual(s) responsible for the false complaint.

All complaints will be assessed on their merits in a fair and impartial manner.

Fair and Just Processes

The safety and wellbeing of children is the RBA's highest priority.

We are committed to fair, just, transparent and confidential processes for all personnel when receiving, assessing incidents, managing concerns, and undertaking disciplinary action.

All decisions regarding incidents and concerns are based on evidence and handled in a thorough, impartial, timely and respectful manner.

We record all allegations of child abuse and safety concerns, including investigation steps and outcomes. All records are securely stored.



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Where an allegation or safety concern is raised, we provide timely updates to affected children and families on the progress and actions taken by the Association.

Privacy

We are committed to meeting all obligations under the Commonwealth Privacy Act, Information Privacy Principles, and the Victorian Privacy and Data Protection Act.

All personal information gathered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individual, whether they are a staff member, volunteer, child, parent, or carer — unless a disclosure is required to protect someone's safety.

Personal information is protected, used appropriately, and always stored securely. Our safeguarding practices ensure that personal information is only shared on a strict need-to-know basis, and we maintain secure systems for data protection and compliance with privacy legislation.

Support for all Parties

The RBA is committed to providing appropriate support to all parties involved in a child safety matter. Support will be offered to children, young people, families, staff, volunteers and any person who raises a concern or is involved in an allegation. Support options may include information about counselling services, e.g. Eastern Centre Against Sexual Assault, referral to support agencies, guidance throughout the reporting and investigations process and adjustments to participation in activities if needed to ensure wellbeing.

The needs of the impacted child or young person will always be prioritised when considering support arrangements.

All support will be facilitated by the Child Safety and Wellbeing Officers.

Regular Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years or earlier if significant incidents or changes occur.

We welcome feedback from children, families, staff, and volunteers to inform future updates and strengthen our child safety approach.

For further information, or to raise a concern, contact the Child Safety and Wellbeing Officers via email:

wellbeing@ringwoodhawks.com (VJBL)

ringwoodreferees@gmail.com (VBRA)

6.0 Definitions

This policy seeks to ensure that all children in our Association are safe and protected from harm. Child abuse can take many forms, and it is essential that all staff, volunteers, and community members understand the definitions of child abuse to identify, prevent, and respond to concerns appropriately.

The following definitions outline the different forms of child abuse:



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Physical Abuse	<p>Physical abuse occurs when a child suffers or is at risk of suffering non-accidental physical harm. This includes hitting, punching, slapping, shaking, kicking, burning, shoving, grabbing, strangulation, suffocation, and poisoning. Physical abuse can result in bruises, cuts, burns, fractures, or internal injuries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Physical discipline may be considered abuse when it is excessive, unreasonable, or causes harm.• Exposure to dangerous situations (e.g., leaving a child in extreme heat, unsafe physical activities) can also constitute physical abuse.
Emotional or Psychological Abuse	<p>Emotional abuse (also known as psychological abuse) occurs when a child is repeatedly subjected to behaviours that harm their emotional development and sense of self-worth. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Persistent rejection, humiliation, threats, bullying, intimidation, or excessive criticism.• Ignoring, isolating, or terrorising a child to cause emotional distress.• Exposure to hostile, unpredictable, or unsafe environments, leading to emotional harm.• Undermining a child's confidence, self-esteem, or emotional development. <p>Prolonged exposure to emotional abuse can cause long-term psychological harm, including anxiety, depression, and trauma-related disorders.</p>
Sexual Abuse	<p>Sexual abuse occurs when a child is involved in sexual activity by an adult, adolescent, or another child in a position of power or influence. This includes:</p>



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact offences: Sexual touching, penetration, or forcing a child to engage in sexual acts. • Non-contact offences: Exposure to pornography, sexualised grooming, suggestive communication, or indecent exposure. • Grooming behaviours (see below) intended to manipulate and exploit a child into engaging in sexual activity. <p>Any form of sexual interaction with a child under 16 is illegal in Victoria, regardless of consent.</p>
<p>Neglect</p>	<p>Neglect occurs when a caregiver fails to meet a child’s basic needs, significantly impacting their health, development, or wellbeing. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failing to provide adequate food, shelter, clothing, supervision, medical care, or emotional support. • Leaving a child in unsafe or dangerous conditions without appropriate care. • Ignoring a child’s physical, emotional, or medical needs, placing them at risk of harm. <p>Neglect can be chronic (long-term) or situational (due to crisis or circumstances) but always requires intervention to prevent harm.</p>
<p>Family Violence</p>	<p>Family violence is any behaviour that causes physical, emotional, psychological, or financial harm within a family or intimate relationship. It includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exposure to domestic violence, where a child sees, hears, or experiences violence in their home. • Physical, sexual, emotional, or financial abuse between parents, guardians, or caregivers.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coercion, control, or intimidation within a household, impacting a child’s sense of safety. <p>Children who witness family violence are considered direct victims, even if they are not physically harmed.</p>
<p>Grooming</p>	<p>Grooming is a deliberate process used by offenders to manipulate and exploit a child into engaging in sexual activity. This can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building a “special” relationship with a child to gain their trust. • Giving gifts, favouring, or singling out a child for special attention. • Gradually exposing a child to inappropriate content or behaviours (e.g., sexual jokes, pornography). • Manipulating a child into keeping secrets or preventing them from telling others. • Communicating inappropriately via text, social media, or online platforms. <p>Grooming is a criminal offence in Victoria, and any suspected grooming must be reported immediately.</p>

7.0 Version Control and Change History

Ver.	Issue Date	Document Custodian
2	28/04/2025	President, Ringwood Basketball Association

Acknowledgement:

I acknowledge that I have read and understood the contents of this Child Safe Policy and the Association’s commitment to protecting children.

I understand my legal and moral responsibilities and agree to uphold all elements of this policy to promote a safe, inclusive, and child-safe environment at all times.

If I am unsure about any aspect of this policy, I will seek advice from the Association President or the Child Safety and Wellbeing Officer.



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Name

Name of Witness

Signed

Signed by Witness

Date

Date
