



ELTHAM WILDCATS BASKETBALL CLUB

Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

Written By: Rachel Morgan
Approved By: Peter Meehan
Date for Review: September 2020

Purpose

This policy was written to demonstrate the strong, ongoing commitment by the management, staff and volunteers of the Eltham Wildcats Basketball Club (**our Club**) to child welfare, wellbeing and safety, and to provide an outline of the policies and practices the Club has developed to keep everyone safe from any harm, including abuse.

With this policy, our Club aims to provide children and young people with safety and protection whilst in the care of our Club, to promote high standards of care and safe practices, and to assist staff and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child safety issues.

Commitment to Child Safety

All children who are a part of the Club have a right to feel safe and to be safe. The wellbeing of the children in our Club will always be our first priority and our Club has a zero tolerance to child abuse. Our Club aims to create a child safe and child friendly environment where children feel safe and have fun and our Club's activities are always carried out in the best interests of the children.

At our Club, everyone must operate within our accepted ethical framework, including Basketball Victoria's Codes of Conduct, Basketball Victoria's Member Protection Declaration, Victorian Working with Children Checks and our Clubs Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Code of Conduct.

Application of this Policy

This policy was developed by our Club's Child Safety and Welfare committee, and in collaboration with our Club's staff, volunteers and the children who use our services and their parents.

This policy applies to **all** individuals involved in our organisation (paid and volunteer) including, but not limited to:

- Management (Executive and General committee members)
- Administrators
- Coaches
- Officials
- Players
- Parents
- Spectators.

Our Club takes very seriously our commitment to reducing the risk of abuse and poor practice. All of the people to which this policy applies have a role and responsibility to safeguard children from harm and abuse. They must all:

- understand the various types of harm, indicators and risks of child abuse;
- appropriately act on any concerns raised by children; and
- understand and follow all applicable laws in relation to the protection of children and reporting or management of child safety concerns.

Child Abuse

Child abuse can take a broad range of forms including physical abuse, sexual abuse, verbal abuse, bullying, emotional or psychological abuse and neglect. People to whom this policy applies need to be aware that child abuse can occur whenever there is actual or potential harm to a child, and these are circumstances that our Club is committed to reducing the risk of occurrence.

Our Club acknowledges that child abuse includes:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional and psychological abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Grooming
- Verbal abuse
- Bullying
- Neglect
- Family violence

Unreported abuse in childhood can cause long term trauma and adverse effects that have been linked to increased risks such as mental illness and physical disorders, homelessness, post-traumatic stress disorders, depression, anxiety, suicide, eating disorder and substance abuse.

Our Club upholds that all members have the duty of care to protect the children in our Club and community. If you have a reasonable belief that a child is at risk of abuse or is being abused, please refer to the section below – *Reporting a child safety allegation, concern or complaint.*

Children’s Rights to Safety and Participation

Our Club encourages children to express their views about their safety. We listen to their suggestions, especially on matters that directly affect them. We actively encourage all children to ‘have a say’ about things that are important to them.

In conjunction with formal school-based education, our Club encourages children to consider available options if they feel unsafe or they notice harmful behaviours.

We listen to and act on any concerns children, or their parents, raise with us.

Valuing Diversity

We value diversity and do not tolerate any discriminatory practices. To achieve this we:

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children and their families;
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families;
- welcome children with a disability and their families and act to promote their participation;
- seek people from diverse cultural backgrounds to become members of our Club.

Recruiting staff and volunteers

The Club takes the following steps to ensure best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of staff and volunteers:

- Interview and conduct referee checks on all staff and volunteers
- Require police checks and Working with Children Checks (WWCC) for relevant positions within our Club

Our commitment to Child Safety and our screening requirements are included in all advertisements and as part of the induction process for new staff or volunteers.

Supporting staff and volunteers

Our Club seeks to attract and retain the best staff and volunteers. We provide support and supervision so people feel valued, respected and fairly treated. We have developed various Codes of Conduct to provide guidance to our staff and volunteers, all of whom receive training on the requirements of the Codes.

Please refer to Eltham Wildcats *Child Safe Code of Conduct* and also to Basketball Victoria's Codes of Conduct, Basketball Victoria's Member Protection Declaration, Victorian Working with Children Checks and our Clubs Child Safe Policy and Child Safe Procedures.

Reporting a child safety allegation, concern or complaint

It is not the responsibility of anyone involved in our Club to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place, however there is a responsibility for all adults involved in our Club to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate Child Safety and Wellbeing Officers and/or with the appropriate authorities. They will then make the inquiries and take necessary actions to protect the child. This applies to both allegations and suspicions of abuse occurring in our Club, and to allegations that abuse is taking place elsewhere.

The Club has appointed *Rachel Morgan, Leanne Sheehan, Leanne Giardina and Kristy Dodwell* as Child Safety and Wellbeing Officers with the specific responsibility for responding to any allegations, concerns and complaints made by staff, volunteers, parents or children. These people can be contacted via email welfare@elthambasketball.net.au or 9439 5686.

Our complaints process is outlined in the Eltham Wildcats *Grievance policy*

Risk Management

We recognise the importance of a risk management approach to minimising the potential for child abuse or harm to occur and use this to inform our policy, procedures and activity planning. In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively reduce the risks of abuse to our children. To reduce the risk of child abuse occurring, adults to whom this policy applies should avoid direct, unsupervised contact with children. For example, this should be a consideration when:

- using change room facilities;
- travelling to training or games; or
- using accommodation or overnight stays; or
- making physical contact when coaching or managing children; or
- using electronic forms of communication directly with children.

Reviewing this policy

This policy will be reviewed every two years and we undertake to seek views, comments and suggestions from children, parents, carers, staff and volunteers involved in the Club.