



GIRLS SPORT VICTORIA (GSV) CHILD SAFE POLICY

Last Review: February 2018	Constructed/Reviewed by: Harrick Lawyers/GSV Committee of Management
Next Review: October 2020 or subject to changes in legislation	Approval Required: GSV Committee of Management
	Sign Off Date: 21 February 2018

1. ABOUT THIS POLICY

1.1. Who this Policy Applies To

- 1.1.1. This Policy applies to GSV, and all GSV Officials, being any person engaged by or on behalf of GSV, including staff, volunteers, coaches, contractors, officials, umpires, referees, conveners and GSV management.

1.2. Purpose

- 1.2.1. This Policy sets out GSV's guiding principles relating to the safety and wellbeing of Children and seeks to ensure that protecting Children from Child Abuse forms part of the culture at GSV by providing a process of understanding, identifying, reporting and responding to Child Abuse or allegations of Child Abuse.

1.3. Related Documents

This Policy must be read in conjunction with the law of Victoria:

- 1.3.1. Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic);
- 1.3.2. Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic);
- 1.3.3. Crimes Act 1958 (Vic);
- 1.3.4. Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic); and

GSV policies and procedures, including but not limited to:

- 1.3.5. Statement of Commitment to Child Safety;
- 1.3.6. GSV Reporting and Obligation Policy;
- 1.3.7. Privacy Policy;
- 1.3.8. Constitution;
- 1.3.9. Code of Conduct;
- 1.3.10. Participant Protection Policy;
- 1.3.11. Grievance and Discipline Procedures; and
- 1.3.12. Child Incident Report Form

2. DEFINITIONS

Child and **Children** means a person or persons who is under the age of 18;

Child Abuse has the meaning set out in part 4 of this Policy;

DHHS means the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services

GSV Official means any person engaged by or on behalf of GSV including staff, volunteers, coaches, contractors, officials, umpires, referees, conveners and GSV management.

GSV means Girl Sport Victoria, an incorporated entity under the *Associations Incorporation Act 1981 (Vic)*.

Member School means a school participating in a sporting program organised or facilitated by GSV

Student means a Child enrolled as a student at a Member School.

3. OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES

- 3.1. The health, safety and wellbeing of Children, and protecting Children from Child Abuse, is GSV's paramount consideration.
- 3.2. GSV aims to promote the inclusion and empowerment of girls in sport in a safe and supportive environment and to further the health of girls through participation in sport.
- 3.3. GSV is also committed to providing the highest level of service to its Member Schools by promoting positive behaviours and attitudes, protecting the health, safety and wellbeing of Students, and acting in the best interests of Children.
- 3.4. GSV has a zero-tolerance approach to Child Abuse and is committed to protecting Children from Child Abuse to the greatest extent possible. All children have equal rights to protection from Child Abuse, regardless of their sex, race, cultural background, religion, disability, gender diversity or sexual orientation.
- 3.5. GSV encourages all people to gain an understanding of what constitutes Child Abuse and how to identify it, and to report instances of Child Abuse. The protection of Children is a shared responsibility between GSV, Member Schools, GSV Officials, parents/guardians, spectators, and the broader community. Everyone that participates in GSV's activities is responsible for the care and protection of Children, and reporting information about Child Abuse.
- 3.6. GSV supports the active participation of all Children and will listen to and respect their views and involve them when making decisions when appropriate, especially about matters that will directly affect them and their safety.
- 3.7. GSV is 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.

4. WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

4.1. Child Abuse includes;

- 4.1.1. **Physical violence:** which occurs when a Child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm from a non-accidental injury inflicted by another person;
- 4.1.2. **Sexual offences:** which occurs when a person involves the Child in sexual activity, or deliberately puts the Child in the presence of sexual behaviours that are exploitative or inappropriate to his/her age and development. Sexual

abuse may include fondling, masturbation, penetration, voyeurism, exhibitionism, or the exploitation of a Child for sexual gratification or sexual arousal, or for that of others;

- 4.1.3. **Serious emotional and psychological abuse:** occurs when harm is inflicted on a Child through repeated rejection, isolation, or by threats or violence, and can include derogatory name-calling and put downs, or persistent and deliberate coldness which may cause the behaviour of the Child to be disturbed, or a serious risk that the emotional development of the child may be imparted. It also includes conduct that exploits a Child without necessarily being criminal, such as encouraging a Child to engage in inappropriate or risky behaviours; and
- 4.1.4. **Serious neglect:** may result from the continued failure to provide a Child with the basic necessities for life, such as food, clothing, shelter, hygiene, medical attention or adequate supervision, to the extent that the Child's health, safety and/or development is, or is likely to be, jeopardised.
- 4.1.5. 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.

4.2. What might suggest that Child Abuse has occurred?

- 4.2.1. **Physical violence (physical indicators):** unexplained bruises, burns and/or fractured bones.
- 4.2.2. **Physical violence (behavioural indicators):** showing wariness or distrust of adults, wearing long sleeved clothes on hot days (to hide bruising or other injury), fear of specific people, or unexplained absences.
- 4.2.3. **Sexual offences (physical indicators):** Presence of sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy or vaginal or anal bleeding or discharge.
- 4.2.4. **Sexual offences (behavioural indicators):** Displaying sexual behaviour or knowledge that is unusual for the child's age, difficulty sleeping, being withdrawn, complaining of headaches or stomach pains, fear of specific people, showing wariness or distrust of adults, or displaying aggressive behaviour.
- 4.2.5. **Serious emotional and psychological abuse (physical indicators):** delays in emotional, mental, or even physical development, or signs of self-harming.
- 4.2.6. **Serious emotional and psychological abuse (behavioural indicators):** Exhibiting low self-esteem, exhibiting high anxiety, displaying aggressive or demanding behaviour, being withdrawn, passive and/or tearful, or self-harming.
- 4.2.7. **Serious neglect (physical indicators):** Frequent hunger, malnutrition, poor hygiene, or inappropriate clothing.
- 4.2.8. **Serious neglect (behavioural indicators):** Stealing food; staying at school outside of school hours, aggressive behaviour; misusing alcohol or drugs; or academic issues.

- 4.3. In addition to the physical and behavioural indicators set out above, matters which would lead a person to believe that Child Abuse has occurred include;

4.3.1. Being told by a Child that they (or someone that they know) has been abused, either expressly or by describing conduct which would suggest Child Abuse has occurred; or

4.3.2. Being advised by any person that a child has been the victim of Child Abuse.

5. PREVENTING CHILD ABUSE

5.1. Interaction with Children

5.1.1. General

5.1.1.1. GSV Officials must ensure that their interaction with Children is appropriate at all times.

5.1.1.2. Inappropriate conduct includes unwarranted or unsolicited touching, obscene language or gestures, discussions of topics not appropriate for the age or development of a Child, excessive discipline, name-calling, put-downs, and derogatory comments. Inappropriate conduct also includes insensitivity towards Aboriginal heritage and culture, Children from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and Children with disabilities.

5.1.1.3. GSV Officials must avoid physical contact with Children unless that contact is appropriate and necessary for the Child's wellbeing or safety.

5.1.1.4. If physical contact between a GSV Official and a Child is necessary, the GSV Official should explain to the Child that contact is required for their wellbeing or safety and obtain consent from the Child prior to physical contact occurring.

5.1.1.5. GSV Officials must avoid being alone with a Child.

5.1.1.6. If, to protect the health, safety or wellbeing of a Child, it is necessary for a GSV Official to be alone with a Child, the GSV Official must notify a GSV Team Manager or GSV Management prior to being alone with the Child.

5.1.1.7. It is strongly recommended that GSV Officials ensure that there are other adults present during GSV activities and events.

5.1.1.8. GSV Officials, regardless of gender, should only enter change rooms used by Children if accompanied by another adult. Prior to entering change rooms, GSV Officials should announce to the people in the change room that they intend to enter.

5.1.2. Travel

5.1.2.1. GSV Officials will ensure that any mode of transport for Children which has been organised or facilitated by GSV is safe and appropriate.

5.1.2.2. GSV officials will ensure that accommodation used by a Child in respect of a GSV event or activity is safe and appropriate. If it is necessary for a Child to share a room with another Child, GSV Officials must ensure that this is appropriate given the age and sex of the Children, or any other relevant consideration. GSV Officials must not share a room with a Child.

5.1.2.3. GSV Officials must not be alone with a Child in the Child's room or other accommodation.

5.1.3. Sexual Conduct and Relationships

5.1.3.1. GSV Officials must not under any circumstances engage in conduct of a sexual nature with a Child or form or seek to form a relationship of a sexual nature with a Child.

5.1.3.2. Inappropriate conduct of a sexual nature includes inappropriate conversations of a sexual nature, nudity, obscene language or gestures of a sexual nature, suggestive remarks or actions, jokes of a sexual nature, inappropriate touching, sexual exhibitionism, use of any device to show/watch offensive material, and any other conduct of a sexual nature that could lead to a Child being physically, emotionally or psychologically harmed.

5.1.4. Screening of GSV Officials

5.1.4.1. GSV Officials will be subject to the screening process set out in the Participant Protection Policy prior to interacting with children.

6. REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

6.1. Who may make a report

6.1.1. A report of Child Abuse may be made by GSV Officials, Member Schools and their staff and principal, parents/guardians, spectators, or any other person.

6.1.2. If a person is concerned about an immediate risk to a Child's safety, the person must phone "000" immediately.

6.2. When should a report be made

6.2.1. A person should make a report of Child Abuse or suspected Child Abuse if they form a view that a Child has been, or is likely to be, the victim of Child Abuse.

6.2.2. If a person is uncertain as to whether they should make a report to GSV, DHHS or the Police in relation to Child Abuse or the safety of a child, they may speak to the GSV Executive Officer for guidance and information. GSV encourages any person to seek assistance from GSV in such an event.

6.2.3. GSV also encourages any person to notify GSV if they become aware of any fact or circumstances which poses a risk to child safety, whether relating to Child Abuse or otherwise.

6.3. How a report of Child Abuse is made

6.3.1. A report may be made to GSV by completing the Child Safe Incident Report form.

6.3.2. A report may be made to DHHS or the Police by contacting those agencies directly.

6.4. Voluntary Reporting

- 6.4.1. Any person who believes on reasonable grounds that a Child has been the victim of Child Abuse or is in need of protection from Child Abuse, may make a report to DHHS, Police and/or GSV.
- 6.4.2. GSV strongly encourages any person who forms any such belief to make a report.

6.5. Mandatory Reporting under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)*

- 6.5.1. In addition to voluntary reporting, select classes of people in the community (including nurses, doctors, police, teachers, and school principals) are required by law to make a report to the DHHS if they have formed a belief on reasonable grounds that a Child is in need of protection because they have suffered (or are likely to suffer) significant harm due to physical injury or sexual abuse and the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type.
- 6.5.2. This report must be made as soon as practicable, and after each occasion where the person becomes aware of a further reasonable grounds for the belief.

6.6. Mandatory Reporting under the *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)*

- 6.6.1. The *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)* also requires any adult that has information which leads them to believe on reasonable grounds 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, to disclose that information to the Police as soon as practicable.
- 6.6.2. Individuals who fail to comply with this obligation may be subject to a penalty of up to 3 years' imprisonment.

7. PROCEDURE FOR ADDRESSING A REPORT OF CHILD ABUSE

- 7.1. If a report of Child Abuse is made in respect of a GSV Official or a GSV activity or event, GSV will firstly take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety and protection of the Child the subject of the report and then address the matters raised in the report pursuant to the Complaint Resolution Procedure set out in the Participant Protection Policy.
- 7.2. Steps which may be taken by GSV pursuant to the preceding clause include the suspension of the accused or implicated person from an active role, (by having that person stood down, reassigned to a role without direct contact with Children, work under closer supervision during an investigation, work from home, or any other measures deemed appropriate depending on the seriousness of the allegation or implication).
- 7.3. If a report is made to GSV but not DHHS or the Police, GSV will refer the matter to DHHS or the Police (as is appropriate) as set out in the GSV Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy or as required by law.
- 7.4. Any person that makes a report in good faith in accordance with their reporting obligations (whether voluntary or mandatory) will be supported by GSV and will not be penalised by GSV for making the report. GSV will investigate allegations of Child Abuse and allegations of inappropriate conduct against Children in accordance

with procedural fairness and will endeavour to keep the identity of the person who makes a report and the identity of any Child named in the report, confidential.

7.5. GSV will cooperate with the directions of DHHS and the Police in relation to any investigation into Child Abuse which they undertake.

7.6. GSV will keep a register of any allegations of Child Abuse or inappropriate conduct towards Children.

8. POLICY BREACHES

8.1. It is a breach of this Policy for any person or organisation to which this Policy applies, to do any act (or omit from doing any act) which is contrary to (or required by) this Policy.

9. POLICY PROMOTION

9.1. This Policy will be made available to all new and existing GSV Officials electronically and via other appropriate means and will be made available generally via the GSV website.

10. REVIEW PROCESS

10.1. This Policy will be reviewed by GSV and may be amended at any time.