



## **1. Objective**

The objective of the Abbotsford Juniors Football Club (AJFC) Member Protection Policy (Policy) is to uphold and ensure responsible behaviour by members of AJFC. The Policy outlines AJFC's commitment to everyone's right to be safe and to be protected from discrimination, harassment and abuse and to be treated with respect and dignity. The Policy also defines the care and protection of children who participate in AJFC activities.

## **2. Scope**

The Policy applies to anyone involved in the Club's activities, whether they are purely a participant, a volunteer or in a paid role. This includes but is not limited to all volunteers, employees, members, parents, relatives, spectators and other guests attending Club events.

The Policy covers all matters directly and indirectly related to the Club's activities. It also covers private behaviour where that behaviour brings the Club or sport into disrepute or there is suspicion of harm towards a child.

## **3. AJFC Responsibilities**

Abbotsford Juniors Football Club commits to:

- the adoption, implementation and compliance with this Policy
- publish the Policy on its Club website
- always ensuring appropriate standards of behaviour
- act on any breaches of or complaints made under the Policy
- enforce penalties imposed under the Policy
- undertake a review the Policy every three years; and
- where appropriate, seek advice from or refer serious issues to the Football Canterbury Association, Football NSW or other Government body. Serious issues include unlawful behaviour and any other issues that under these bodies request be referred to them.

## **4. Personal Responsibilities**

Everyone associated with AJFC must:

- ensure they are aware of, and comply with the contents of the Policy
- consent to participate in the Policy's screening requirements and NSW Government Working with Children Checks (WWCC) when required by AJFC;
- treat all people with respect
- place the safety and welfare of children above other considerations
- follow the Policy guidelines when making a complaint or reporting a concern; and



- comply with any decisions and/or disciplinary measures imposed

## **5. Football Australia Member Protection Framework**

The Football Australia Member Protection Framework works to ensure that every person involved in football in Australia is treated with respect and dignity, and is kept safe and protected from abuse, bullying and harassment and discrimination.

Information about the Football Australia Member Protection Framework can be found on the Football Australia website at <https://www.footballaustralia.com.au/member-protection-framework>.

## **6. Child Protection**

AJFC is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children who participate in the club's activities. AJFC supports the rights of the child and will always act to ensure that a child safe environment is maintained. AJFC also supports the rights and wellbeing of volunteers, staff and other participants and encourages their active participation in building a secure and safe environment for all participants.

### **6 A. Codes of Conduct**

AJFC Codes of Conduct specify the standard of conduct and care expected of adults dealing and interacting with children along with appropriate behaviour between all players including children. Members who register with AJFC agree to abide by Codes of Conduct relevant to their membership.

AJFC Codes of Conduct can be viewed and downloaded from the AJFC website at [www.abbotsfordjuniorsfc.com.au/ajfc-codes-of-conduct](http://www.abbotsfordjuniorsfc.com.au/ajfc-codes-of-conduct).

### **6 B. Club Volunteers and Employees**

AJFC takes all reasonable steps to ensure that only suitable and appropriate people undertake work or interact with children. The Club achieves this through a number of screening measures including requirements for all adults over the age of 18 who seek to undertake any role at AJFC to have a valid and current NSW Government Working With Children Check.

Where screening reveals any area of concern, AJFC will take appropriate action, including but not limited to referral to appropriate Government bodies and the police.

### **6 C. Reporting and Responding to Suspected Abuse or Neglect**

AJFC requires all volunteers and employees to be aware of their responsibilities under State and Commonwealth law to make a report if they have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is being abused or neglected.

*See Attachment*

In addition to any legal obligations, if anyone believes that another person or organisation bound by the Policy is acting inappropriately towards a child or is



otherwise in breach of the Policy, they can make an internal complaint using the procedure in Section 9 C of this Policy.

Any person who believes that a child is in immediate danger should contact the NSW Police on 000.

### 6 D. Child Supervision

AJFC endeavours to provide an appropriate level of supervision for child including maintaining registers of children attending Club events. If an AJFC member finds a child under the age of 18 is unsupervised, they should undertake the following until the child's parent/guardian or supervisor is located.

- assume responsibility for the child's safety
- attempt to locate the child's parent/guardian; and
- contact an AJFC official or representative who will attempt to contact or locate the child's parent/guardian.

For reasons of courtesy and safety, parents must collect their children from venues on time.

### 6 E. Taking Images of Children

Wherever possible, AJFC members must obtain permission from a child's parent or guardian before taking an image of a child that is not their own.

Camera phones, videos, cameras and any other recording devices are prohibited from use in changing areas, showers and toilets controlled by or used in connection with AJFC.

AJFC will only use images of children that are appropriate and relevant to the Club's activities. When using a photo of a child, the Club will not name or identify the child or publish personal information without the prior consent of the child's parent/guardian.

## 7. Discrimination, Harassment & Bullying

AJFC is committed to providing an environment in which people are treated fairly and equitably and that is free from discrimination, harassment and bullying.

### 7 A. Discrimination

Unlawful discrimination is the less favourable treatment of a person based on one or more of the personal characteristics protected by State or Commonwealth anti-discrimination laws.

Discrimination includes both direct and indirect discrimination:

- **Direct Discrimination** occurs if a person treats, or proposes to treat, a person with a protected personal characteristic unfavourably because of that personal characteristic



- **Indirect Discrimination** occurs if a person imposes, or proposes to impose, a requirement, condition or practice that will disadvantage a person with a protected personal characteristic and that requirement, condition or practice is not reasonable

A person's awareness and motive are irrelevant in determining whether discrimination has occurred.

## 7 B. Harassment

Harassment is any unwelcome conduct, verbal or physical, that intimidates, offends or humiliates another person and which happens because a person has a certain personal characteristic protected by State or Commonwealth anti-discrimination legislation.

Harassment includes, but is not limited to, sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is not limited to members of the opposite sex.

The personal characteristics covered by State and Commonwealth anti-discrimination legislation include, but are not limited to:

- age
- disability, mental or physical impairment
- sex or gender
- gender identity or intersex status
- family or carer responsibilities
- race, colour, descent, national or ethnic origin, nationality
- religion, religious beliefs or activities
- irrelevant criminal record
- irrelevant medical record
- national extraction or social origin
- marital status
- pregnancy, potential pregnancy, breastfeeding
- political beliefs or activities
- sexual orientation and gender identity
- profession, trade, occupation or calling
- member of association or organisation of employees or employers, industrial activity, trade union activity
- physical features
- defence service; and



- personal association with someone who has, or is assumed to have, any of these personal characteristics.

Legislation also prohibits victimisation resulting from a complaint.

If anyone believes they are being, or have been, the subject of harassment by a person or organisation bound by the Policy, they may make a complaint. See Section X of the Policy.

### 7 C. Bullying

Bullying is characterised by repeated, unreasonable behaviour directed at a person, or a group of persons, that creates a risk to health and safety. Bullying behaviour is that which a reasonable person in the circumstances would expect to victimise, humiliate, undermine, threaten, degrade, offend or intimidate a person. Bullying behaviour can include actions of an individual or group.

A one-off instance can also amount to bullying.

The following types of behaviour, where repeated or occurring as part of a pattern of behaviour, would be considered bullying:

- verbal abuse including shouting, swearing, teasing, making belittling remarks or persistent unjustified criticism
- excluding or isolating a group or person
- spreading malicious rumours; or
- psychological harassment such as intimidation

Bullying includes cyber-bullying. AJFC does not tolerate abusive, discriminatory, intimidating or offensive statements being made online in relation to any Club activity.

If anyone believes they are being, or have been, bullied by a person or organisation bound by the Policy, they may make a complaint. See Section 9 of this Policy.

## 8. Diversity and Inclusive Practices

AJFC welcomes members from all areas of the community, including, but not limited to people with a disability, people from diverse cultures, people of all genders and sexual identities.

AJFC implements the following inclusive practices.

### 8 A. Girls Playing in Boys Teams

Where this is requested, AJFC will support girls who wish to play in boys' teams, subject to compliance with all competition regulations imposed by Football's governing bodies and external agencies.



## 8 B. Transgender Players & Players of Indeterminate Gender

Where this is requested, AJFC will work facilitate the placement of transgender players and players of indeterminate gender into a team of the gender with which they most closely identify, subject to compliance with all competition imposed by Football's governing bodies and external agencies.

## 9. Complaints

AJFC takes all complaints it receives seriously. Complaints will be handled carefully to ensure adherence to the principles of procedural fairness.

### 9 A. Treatment of Received Complaints

When a complaint is received under this Policy, AJFC will:

- Provide the person who is the subject of the complaint with full details of the allegation against them and provide them with the opportunity to respond to the substance of the complaint
- Not consider matters that are irrelevant or unrelated to the complaint
- Ensure that decisions taken by AJFC are unbiased; and
- Any penalties imposed are reasonable and in-line with those defined by Football's governing bodies.

More serious complaints may be escalated immediately to the Football Canterbury Association, Football NSW or other Government body.

If a complaint relates to suspected child abuse, sexual assault or other criminal activity, AJFC may report the behaviour to the NSW Police and/or relevant authority.

### 9 B. Complaint Handling Process

When a complaint is received by an AJFC Executive Committee Member or other AJFC representative, the person receiving the complaint will:

- listen carefully and ask questions of the complainant to understand the nature and extent of the complaint
- explain the options available to the complainant help resolve the complaint
- offer appropriate support to the complainant
- maintain confidentiality (but not always anonymity) where possible and appropriate to the complaint; and
- inform the Club Member Protection Officer and, if required by law to do so, the police and other relevant authorities.

In the instance of a complaint by a player, or the parent/guardian of a player, the first point of contact should be the team manager or coach (unless this is inappropriate



because the complaint is against this person). AJFC encourages all players and coaches to maintain a respectful and open relationship to avoid misunderstandings.

Once the complainant decides on their preferred option for resolution, the AJFC will provide every assistance where required with the resolution process. This may include:

- facilitating communication between a complainant and complaine, including external mediation if appropriate
- gathering additional information including from witnesses where appropriate
- seeking advice from the Football Canterbury Association, Football NSW or other Government body; and/or
- referring the complaint to the Football Canterbury Association, Football NSW or other Government body.

Where a complaint is referred to the Football Canterbury Association, or Football NSW and an investigation is conducted, AJFC will:

- co-operate fully with the investigation
- where applicable, ensure the complainant is not placed in an unsupervised situation with the complaine; and
- respond to and act appropriately on the Football Canterbury Association, or Football NSW recommendations.

At any stage, a person can seek advice from an appropriate Government body or external agency and, if the complaint is found to be within their jurisdiction, may lodge a complaint with that body or agency.

## 9 C. Complaint Handling Procedure

*1. Raising a Complaint:* Raise the issue with the relevant person (team manager or coach) to be addressed or where required, passed onto the correct person within AJFC.

Where the complaint involves serious misconduct (e.g. an allegation of child abuse or neglect) it should be made immediately to the Member Protection Information Officer

*2. Response:* Your complaint will be responded to within 10 working days of receipt, including outlining steps and timelines for resolution

*3. Escalation:* If the issue is not satisfactorily resolved, you can submit a complaint in writing to the Member Protection Information Officer

*4. Further Escalation:* If the issue is not satisfactory resolved, you can submit a complaint to the Club President.

In some instances where AJFC is unable to resolve the complaint, the issue may be referred to the Football Canterbury Association, Football NSW or other relevant Government agency.



### 9 D. Disciplinary Action and Appeal

Where disciplinary action is required against an AJFC member or an associate of an AJFC member, this will be passed to the AJFC Disciplinary Committee for action.

Similarly, any appeal by an AJFC member or associate of an AJFC member will be considered by the AJFC Disciplinary Committee upon application.

## 10. Member Protection Information Officer

AJFC will appoint a Member Protection Information Officer (MPIO) each year to ensure that this Policy and its principles are upheld. The MPIO will provide member support and advice, receive member complaints and ensure appropriate procedures are followed.

The AJFC Member Protection Information Officer can be contacted via email at [mpio@abbotsfordjuniorsfc.com.au](mailto:mpio@abbotsfordjuniorsfc.com.au)

## 11. Complaint Record Keeping

The Member Protection Information Officer (MPIO) is responsible for ensuring a formal record is kept of each complaint received by AJFC. Records may be kept in a document or spreadsheet but must ensure that the following information is captured and recorded as a minimum.

- Date Complaint Received
- Complaint Recipient Full Name
- Complaint Recipient Email Address
- Complaint Recipient Club Role
- Complainant Full Name
- Complainant Age
- Complainant Contact Phone Number
- Complainant Contact Email Address
- Complainant Club Role (where applicable)
- Complainee Name
- Complainee Age (Under or Over 18)
- Complainee Contact Phone Number
- Complainee Contact Email Address
- Complainee Club Role (where applicable)
- Complaint Description
- Complaint Location
- Date(s) of Occurrence





- Complaint Category (as defined under this Policy)
- Complainee Requested Action
- Record of Information provided to Complainee
- Record of Club Action Taken and/or Resolution
- Record of Follow-up Action
- Record of Club Executive Members Involved
- Date of Complaint Closure

A sample Complaint Record Capture Form is provided in Appendix A.

## **12. Changes to this Policy**

AJFC reserves its right to make changes to this Policy at any time.

## **13. Contacting AJFC**

Abbotsford Juniors Football Club welcomes comments, feedback and questions on this Policy. These can be submitted to AJFC by email: [info@abbotsfordjuniorsfc.com.au](mailto:info@abbotsfordjuniorsfc.com.au).

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**Appendix A: Record of Complaint**

<b>Complaint Recipient</b>		Date Received: / /	
Name			
Club Role			
Email Address			
<b>Complainant Information</b>			
Full Name			
Age	<input type="checkbox"/> Under 18	<input type="checkbox"/> Over 18	
Phone Number		Email	
Club Role	(Where Applicable)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Committee Member	<input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent
	<input type="checkbox"/> Coach/Assistant Coach	<input type="checkbox"/> Player	<input type="checkbox"/> Guardian
	<input type="checkbox"/> Team Manager	<input type="checkbox"/> Employee	<input type="checkbox"/> Spectator
	<input type="checkbox"/> Referee/Official	<input type="checkbox"/> Contractor	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
<b>Complainee Information</b>			
Full Name			
Age	<input type="checkbox"/> Under 18	<input type="checkbox"/> Over 18	
Phone Number		Email	
Club Role	(Where Applicable)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Committee Member	<input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent
	<input type="checkbox"/> Coach/Assistant Coach	<input type="checkbox"/> Player	<input type="checkbox"/> Guardian
	<input type="checkbox"/> Team Manager	<input type="checkbox"/> Employee	<input type="checkbox"/> Spectator
	<input type="checkbox"/> Referee/Official	<input type="checkbox"/> Contractor	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
<b>Complaint Detail</b>			
Date(s) of Complaint			
Description			
Location			
Category			
Requested Action			
Record of Information Provided			
Record of Action Taken / Resolution			
Record of Follow-up Action			
Record of Involved Parties			
Complaint Status	<input type="checkbox"/> Open <input type="checkbox"/> Referred <input type="checkbox"/> Closed	Date of Closure: / /	