



Child Protection Policy

1.0 Introduction

Springwood Seals is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people who participate in our clubs activities and use our services. We support the rights of the child and will act at all times to ensure that a child safe environment is maintained. We also support the rights and wellbeing of our volunteers and encourage their active participation in building and maintaining a secure and safe environment for all participants.

2.0 Purpose

The main objective of this policy is to maintain responsible behaviour and the making of informed decisions by members and other participants in this club. It outlines our commitment to a child's right to be safe and protected from abuse. Our policy informs everyone involved in our club of their legal and ethical rights and responsibilities and the standards of behaviour that are expected of them in the instance where child abuse and/or neglect may have occurred or be suspected. It has been developed on behalf of Springwood Seals Netball Club, after review of most up to date Queensland Government and Netball Queensland guidelines in relation to child protection. Information is also provided on how members can identify and effectively and efficiently report concerns relating to a child's safety.

3.0 Who Our Policy Applies To

This policy applies to everyone involved in the activities of our club whether in a paid or unpaid/voluntary capacity including:

- club committee members, administrators and other club officials;
- coaches and assistant coaches and other personnel participating in events and activities, including training sessions, games, carnivals and fundraisers
- umpires and other officials;
- players;
- parents or guardians;
- spectators associated with Springwood Seals; and
- general members



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4.0 Implementing the Policy

This policy will be effective from the date upon which it is adopted by the Springwood Seals Netball Club's Committee. All committee members and volunteers who work with children and young people will receive a copy of this policy upon its adoption and are expected to familiarise themselves with it. All members will be notified of the policy.

5.0 Monitoring Compliance

Compliance with this policy will be monitored by the committee via regular liaison with club members and volunteers.

6.0 Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed and adjusted (as required) annually by the committee to align with state and federal child protection guidelines. In the instance where state and federal guidelines are changed, the committee will review and update this policy to reflect such changes within 28 days of notice.

7.0 Responsibilities

7.1 Individuals

Everyone associated with our club must:

- make themselves aware of the contents of this policy;
- comply with all relevant provisions of this policy, including the standards of behaviour outlined in this policy;
- consent to the screening requirements set out in this policy, and Queensland Government's Working with Children checks if the person holds or applies for a role that involves regular unsupervised contact with a child or young person under the age of 18, or where otherwise required by law;
- treat other people with respect;
- always place the safety and welfare of children above other considerations;
- be responsible and accountable for their behaviour;
- follow the guidelines outlined in this policy if they wish to make a complaint or report a concern about possible child abuse or other inappropriate behaviour; and
- comply with any decisions and/or disciplinary measures imposed under this policy



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3.2 Club

Our committee will:

- adopt, implement and comply with this policy;
- ensure this policy is enforceable;
- publish, distribute and promote this policy and the consequences of any breaches of this policy;
- promote and model appropriate standards of behaviour at all times;
- deal with complaints made under this policy in an appropriate manner;
- deal with any breaches of this policy in an appropriate manner;
- recognise and enforce any penalty imposed under this policy;
- ensure that a copy of this policy is made available or accessible to all people and organisations to whom this policy applies;
- review this policy every 12-18 months; and
- seek advice from and refer serious issues to Department of Communities (Child Safety Services) and/or Queensland Police Service (PoliceLink on 131 444)

Serious issues include failure to report or any other unlawful criminal behaviour that involves or could lead to significant or further harm and any other issues that state or national bodies request be referred to them.

8.0 Working with Children Check Requirements

Springwood Seals will ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to engage the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children, especially those in positions that involve regular unsupervised contact with children. This may be achieved using a range of screening measures. Such measures will aim to minimise the likelihood of engaging (or retaining) people who are unsuitable to work with children.

Springwood Seals will ensure that Working with Children Checks are conducted for volunteers working with children, where an assessment is required by law. Working with Children Checks aim to create child-safe environments and to protect children and young people involved in our sport from physical and sexual harm.

They assess the suitability of people to work with children and young people and can involve:

- criminal history checks;
- signed declarations;
- referee checks; and
- other relevant background checks to assess a person's suitability to work with children and young people.



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If a criminal history report is obtained as part of the screening process, Springwood Seals will ensure that the criminal history information is dealt with confidentially and in accordance with relevant legal requirements.

Working with Children Check requirements vary across Australia. All volunteers within Springwood Seals Netball Club who directly and/or individually deal with children under the age of 18 will undergo the Working with Children Check and will hold a positive notice Blue Card (where exemptions do not apply), as required by Queensland law. Those relevant volunteers who do not undergo a Working with Children Check or hold a Blue Card will not be permitted to deal with children or young people. If a volunteer's application for a Blue Card is refused, Springwood Seals Netball Club will refuse that person's involvement with children and young people registered with the club. For further information on Blue Cards, please contact Queensland Government Blue Card Services.

Website: www.bluecard.qld.gov.au

Phone: 1800 113 611

9.0 Creating a Child-safe Environment

As outlined in Netball Queensland's *Child Protection & Working with Children Check Requirements* policy, the following should be considered and enacted by volunteers over the age of 18 at Springwood Seals to minimise harm to children:

- making sure children and young people know it is their right to feel safe at all times;
- making sure children and young people are safe by monitoring their activities and ensuring their environment meets all safety requirements;
- taking anything a child or young person says seriously and following up on their concerns;
- letting children and young people know there is no secret too awful, no story too terrible, that they can't share with someone they trust;
- teaching children and young people about appropriate and inappropriate contact in a manner appropriate to their age and level of understanding;
- teaching children and young people to tell volunteers of any suspicious activities or people; and
- listening to children and young people and letting them know that committee are available to them if they have concerns.

10.0 Defining and identifying harm

It is an adult's duty of care to safeguard and protect a child from harm as per the *Child Protection Act 1999*. Harm to a child is any behaviour or action that results in a child's physical, emotional and/or psychological wellbeing being compromised. Harm can be caused by:



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- physical abuse (e.g. bruising, lacerations and welts, bite marks and scratches, multiple and recurrent injuries, burns and scales, sprains/twists/dislocations)
- psychological and emotional abuse (e.g. severe verbal abuse, persistent hostility and rejection, social isolation, exposure to domestic violence, excessive or unreasonable demands, ignoring/withholding affection, consistent criticism/teasing of a child)
- neglect (e.g. child abandonment, treating child differently to others, depriving or withholding physical contact), or
- sexual abuse or exploitation (e.g. exposure and/or coercion of child to engage in sexual behaviours, verbal threats of sexual abuse, exposure to pornography)

Common indicators of abuse and neglect may include:

- delays between injury and medical intervention/assistance obtained
- frequent occurrences of injury
- child advising that the nature of the injury occurred differently to what was stated
- child disclosing that someone has hurt them
- child discloses that someone they know has been injured/hurt
- someone known to the child advising that the child may have been or exposed to abuse

11.0 Responding to Suspected Abuse and Neglect

11.1 Approaching disclosure of abuse

If confronted with disclosures of harm or suspect harm to a child, a professional response in the best interest of the child is required. Any volunteer confronted with disclosures of harm will:

- Remain calm and find a private place to talk
- Not react in a shocked or critical way
- Reassure the child or young person that they have done the right thing in telling
- Advise the child that you will need to tell someone else who can support them - don't promise to keep it a secret
- Reassure the child or young person that they will only tell someone who will make them safe
- Ultimately believe the child or young person and assume that they are telling the truth
- Ask only non-leading questions - probing questions could cause distress, confusion and interfere with any later enquiries
- Only ask the child or young person enough questions to determine the need to report the matter
- Not attempt to conduct your own investigation or mediate an outcome between the parties involved



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11.2 Reporting

As of 5th July 2021, strengthened child sexual offence reporting and protection laws have come into effect, whereby all adults have a legal and ethical responsibility to report sexual offences against children to police, unless there is reasonable justification not to. This is outlined in *Criminal Code Act 1899 – 229BC Failure to report belief of child sexual offence committed in relation to child*. Department of Communities (Child Safety Services), Queensland Police Service or another regulatory authority must be notified if reasonable suspicion has been formed that a child:

- has suffered,
- is suffering or
- is at unacceptable risk of suffering

significant harm caused by physical, psychological, emotional or sexual abuse and/or neglect.

As per changes on 1st October 2017 to Netball Queensland's *Child Protection & Working with Children Check Requirements* policy in alignment with Queensland Government standards, laws and regulations, it is mandatory for an adult to act to protect a child from harm and respond to allegations where there is reasonable belief that a child is at risk or a victim of abuse and/or neglect. Failure to acknowledge, act and protect a child from, or take action to remove the risk of, sexual abuse and report such abuse, either current or past, will be considered a criminal offence. Penalties for failure to act result in a maximum jail term of five years and up to three years imprisonment for failure to report, unless there is reasonable excuse not to. Reasonable excuses include:

- believing the matter has already been reported;
- if the alleged victim is now an adult and they do not want the matter reported;
- if reporting the matter could endanger the alleged victim

In the instance where you suspect or a child has disclosed abuse and/or neglect, an incident report is required. Please refer to the attached *Confidential Record of Child Abuse Allegation*, adapted from Netball Queensland's *Member Protection Policy – Reporting Forms*, that will need to be completed in the instance that child abuse and/or neglect has been identified by a child or suspected. Always err on the side of caution – if in doubt, report it and if not in doubt, definitely report it.

All allegations should be actioned as soon as possible, preferably within 24 hours, to Springwood Seals' designated responder who can then support you to contact the Department of Communities (Child Safety Services), Queensland Police Service (PoliceLink on 131 444) or another regulatory authority. In an emergency situation, phone Triple Zero (000).



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11.3 Protection for reporters and confidentiality

Strict confidentiality, impartiality, fairness and due process must be maintained at all times. This means the reporter is not obligated to discuss any matters relating to suspected child abuse and/or neglect, outside of discussions with the Springwood Seals' designated responder and relevant authorities. A person will not be victimised for reporting an allegation of child abuse and the privacy of all persons concerned will be respected. The reporter will remain anonymous to the family of the child or young person, or the person against whom the allegation was made.

Under no circumstances will Springwood Seals Netball Club conduct its own investigations into any serious allegations or allegations of a criminal nature. Official documentation and reports completed will be stored in a secure location and provided to relevant authorities (as required).

11.4 Breaches of Child Protection Policy

The club will review any allegations of breaches of the Child Protection Policy and will take steps to minimise the risk of any further breaches. Breaches will be managed in a fair, unbiased and supportive manner. The following will occur:

- all people concerned will be advised of the process;
- all people concerned will be given the opportunity to provide their versions of events;
- the details of the breach including the versions of all parties, and the outcome, will be recorded;
- matters discussed in relation to the breach will be kept confidential; and
- an appropriate outcome will be decided

12.0 Additional Information and Resources

For further information in relation to child safety, definitions of abuse and reporting procedures, please refer to the following resources:

- Australian Institute of Family Studies - <https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/mandatory-reporting-child-abuse-and-neglect>
- Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women - <https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/mandatory-reporting-child-abuse-and-neglect>
- Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs - cyjma.qld.gov.au/about-us/our-department/partners/child-family

This policy is endorsed by Springwood Seals Netball Club and was reviewed and approved at the general committee meeting on 12/04/2022. Should you have any questions, queries or concerns relating to this policy or require support with documenting an incident, please contact Springwood Seals designated Child Safety person:



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Micala Bowman

Phone - 0425 897 295

Email - sealsnetball@gmail.com

13.0 References

Child Protection Act 1999

Netball Queensland, *Member Protection Policy – Part B – Child Protection & Working with Children Check Requirements*

Netball Queensland, *Member Protection Policy – Part H – Member Protection Policy – Reporting Forms*



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Confidential Record of Child Abuse Allegation

Prior to completing, ensure the procedures outlined in the *Child Protection Policy* have been followed and advice has been sought from Springwood Seals designated responder, Micala Bowman (Vice President), to ensure appropriate protocol has been followed upon disclosure and relevant government agencies and/or Police are contacted.

Reporter's name and role (if other than child)	
Date formal complaint received	
Child's name	
Child's address	
Reporter's reason for suspecting abuse (e.g. observation, injury, disclosure)	



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Witnesses (if more than 3, attach details to this form)	Name: Contact details: Name: Contact details:
Interim action (if any) (to ensure child's safety and/or to support needs of person complained about)	
Police contacted	Who: When: Advice provided:
Police and/or government agency investigation	Finding:
Reporter details	Name: Contact details: Signature: Date:
Springwood Seals Designated Responder details	Name: Signature: Date:

This record and any notes must be kept in a confidential and safe place and provided to relevant authorities (if required).



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Approaching notification of child abuse, harm and/or neglect

If confronted with disclosures of harm or suspect harm to a child, a professional response in the best interest of the child is required. Any volunteer confronted with disclosures of harm will:

- Remain calm and find a private place to talk
- Not react in a shocked or critical way
- Reassure the child or young person that they have done the right thing in telling
- Advise the child that you will need to tell someone else who can support them - don't promise to keep it a secret
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- Ask only non-leading questions - probing questions could cause distress, confusion and interfere with any later enquiries
- Only ask the child or young person enough questions to determine the need to report the matter
- Not attempt to conduct your own investigation or mediate an outcome between the parties involved

For further information in relation to child safety, please refer to Springwood Seals *Child Protection Policy*. Should you have any questions, queries or concerns relating to this policy or require support with documenting an incident, please contact Springwood Seals designated Child Safety person:

Micala Bowman

Phone - 0425 897 295

Email - sealsnetball@gmail.com