



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY & GUIDELINES

Understanding Child Abuse:

Child protection does not mean that coaches and others involved in sport and recreation cannot physically contact children in any way. There are a number of sports where instruction and coaching involves physical contact. It would be impossible to teach a youngster to swim without helping the child to float in the water or holding their arms or feet to demonstrate movement. Likewise it would be unsafe for coaches not to provide physical support to gymnasts during the learning phase of a new skill.

Physical contact in sport is about appropriate touch and knowing what is acceptable behaviour.

1. Child abuse can take many forms. Children may be harmed by both verbal and physical actions. Child abuse could include:
 - a. Sexual abuse/sexual misconduct – Any sexual act or sexual threat imposed on a child, including suggestive behaviour and inappropriate touching.
 - b. Physical abuse – Non-accidental injury or harm to a child caused by any person responsible for the safety of the child.
 - c. Emotional abuse – Behaviours that may psychologically harm a child, including severe verbal abuse and threats of abuse or excessive and unreasonable demands.
 - d. Neglect – Where a child is harmed by the failure to provide the child with the basic physical and emotional necessities of life.

General Guidelines:

1. The Committee of Management, all representative coaches, assistant coaches, managers, competition supervisors, referee supervisors, administrator and the Child Protection Officer will undertake an annual, compulsory Child Protection seminar. The seminar shall be organised by the CHBA Committee of Management.
2. The Committee of Management, all representative coaches, assistant coaches, managers, parents and the child protection officer will sign a "Working with Children" form annually. The collection of these forms, and their retention, is the responsibility of the association's Child Protection Officer.
3. The competition supervisors will distribute "Working with Children" forms to all coaches and managers in their junior competitions. The collection of these forms is the responsibility of the competition supervisor, while their retention is the responsibility of the Child Protection Officer.
4. All coaches, parents, players and staff will be provided with written copies of the CHBA Codes of Conduct and this Child Protection Policy. Representative coaches, assistant coaches and managers will be required to sign a declaration agreeing to abide by the CHBA Codes of Conduct and that they have read and understood the Child Protection Policy. The collection of these declarations and their retention is the responsibility of the Child Protection Officer.
5. All coaches, assistant coaches, managers, referee supervisors and committee of management member must be prepared to discuss their actions and decisions with parents or players in a fair and non-aggressive manner. Parents and players must approach the coach/assistant coach/manager or committee of management member in a fair and non-aggressive manner at an appropriate time.

CHBA's Policy for Dealing with an Allegation involving a Child:

1. An allegation of complaint must be dealt with swiftly and confidentially
2. A complaint may be received verbally, but must be put in writing and signed before the Association can act on the allegation.
3. The written complaint, if received by the association staff, should be forwarded immediately to the Associations' Child Protection officer. In the absence of the Child Protection Officer, the complaint should be forwarded to the Association President. If the accused is the Association President or the Child Protection Officer, the allegation must be forwarded to the next level of executive members of the association (normally the Vice President and the Secretary)
4. Once the complaint is received the Child Protection Officer informs the Association President immediately that a child protection complaint has been received, and investigative action is taken immediately. The name of the child is only disclosed to the Child Protection Officer at this point.
 - a. The Child Protection Officer and one other Committee of Management member (as determined by the Child Protection Officer and the President) shall investigate the allegation by:
 - i. Interviewing the person making the complaint to ascertain the facts of the case.
 - ii. Interview the accused, without revealing the name of the complainant.
 - iii. Interview the child involved to determine their understanding of the allegation. A parent /guarding/support person may accompany the child at this interview if the child requests this.
 - iv. Interview parents or other witnesses to the alleged misconduct, if appropriate.
5. The Child Protection Officer and the Management Committee member shall present their written findings to the Committee of Management for determination as quickly as possible, and should include:
 - i. Their recommendation that the allegation is true or false.
 - ii. Their recommendation for action against the accused if they believe the case to be true; or action against the complainant if they believe the case to be fictitious.
6. The Committee of Management discusses the case and determines if the case is proven or not, and what future action is to be taken.
 - i. The Committee of Management, via the Child Protection Officer, must inform the Department of Community Services or the Coffs Harbour Police if the allegation is proven to be substantive.
 - ii. The Committee of Management must determine internal levels of discipline should the allegation be regarded as misconduct. In all cases, allegations of previous misconduct must be taken into account as these establish a pattern of inappropriate behaviour.
 - iii. It is appropriate that in the case of three proven allegations of inappropriate behaviour against an adult involved with the Association, that person be removed from any roles of responsibility within the association, and expulsion from the Association if appropriate.
7. Once a determination is made it must be presented in writing and signed by both the complainant and the accused (separately).
8. The records of the incident are to remain the custody of the Child Protection Officer until they resign their position, upon which time all the files become the property of the Coffs Harbour Basketball Association and are to be retained under lock and key in the CHBA office until another Child Protection Officer is appointed.
9. At the discretion of the Committee of Management, copies of the investigation, including the interviews and outcomes, can be sent to NSW Basketball's Child Protection Officer.
10. NSW Sport & Recreation advises that volunteers in a sporting organisation are not mandatory reporters.
11. Proven allegations of Child Abuse can be reported to the Department of Community Services hotline on 132 111