



## ***Child Safe Environments Policy***

**Club Name:** Blackwood Community Recreation Association Inc.

**Address:** 1 Northcote Road

**CITY:** Eden Hills                      **Postcode:** 5050

**Approved by BCRA Inc.:** GARRY DOLMAN

**Position held:** PRESIDENT

**Signed:** 

**Date of Approval:** 26 / 9 / 24

**Last Date of Review:** \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

**Next Date of Review:** \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

## **INTRODUCTION**

Blackwood Community Recreation Association Inc. (BCRAI) is committed to promoting and protecting the interests and safety of children. We have zero tolerance for child harm.

Everyone working at Blackwood Community Recreation Centre (BCRC) is responsible for the care and protection of children and reporting information about child harm and risk of harm.

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is

1. To facilitate the prevention of the risk of harm to children occurring within Blackwood Community Recreation Centre.
2. To work towards an organisational culture of child safety.
3. To prevent risk of harm to children within Blackwood Community Recreation Centre.
4. To ensure that all parties are aware of their responsibilities for identifying possible occasions for harm to a child and for establishing controls and procedures for preventing such harm and/or detecting such harm when it occurs.
5. To provide guidance to staff/volunteers/contractors as to action that should be taken where they suspect any risk of harm within or outside of the organisation.
6. To provide a clear statement to staff/volunteers/contractors forbidding any such risk of harm.
7. To provide assurance that any and all suspected risk of harm will be reported and fully investigated.

## **SCOPE**

This policy, from the date of endorsement by the BCRAI Board of Management, applies to all, coaches, managers, workers, contractors and volunteers (collectively referred to as staff) as well as members, parents, care givers, guardians and any other individuals involved in the administration or management of the Centre and its programs.

## **COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY**

BCRAI is committed to promoting and protecting at all times the best interests of children and young people involved in its programs. Our policy complies with the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017, the Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016 and aligns with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

All children, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation, or family or social background, have equal rights to protection from any risk of harm.

BCRAI has zero tolerance for any harm to children. Everyone working at Blackwood Community Recreation Centre is responsible for the care and protection of the children within our care and reporting information about suspected risk of harm to children.

Child protection is a shared responsibility between the BCRAI all staff and members of the BCRAI community.

BCRAI supports and respects all children, staff and volunteers and 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.

If any person believes a child is in immediate risk of harm, telephone 000.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Board of BCRAI has ultimate responsibility for supporting staff in providing child safe environments contributing to the detection and prevention of risk of harm to children and is responsible for ensuring that appropriate and effective internal control systems are in place.



The Board is also responsible for ensuring that appropriate policies and procedures and a Code of Conduct are in place.

The Centre Manager is responsible for:

- Ensuring that all staff are aware of relevant laws, organisational policies and procedures, and the organisation's Code of Conduct;
- Ensuring that all adults within the BCRAI community are aware of their obligation to report suspected risk of harm of a child in accordance with these policies and procedures;
- Ensuring that all staff, contractors and volunteers are aware of their obligation to observe the Code of Conduct (particularly as it relates to child safety);
- Providing support for staff, contractors and volunteers in undertaking their child protection responsibilities.

All Program Coordinators must ensure that they:

- Promote child safety at all times;
- Assess the risk of harm to children within their area of control and eradicate / minimise any risk to the extent possible;
- Educate employees about the prevention and detection of any risk of harm; and
- Supported mandated reporters if required, to report to authorities any inappropriate behaviour or suspected activities that could create a risk of harm to children.

Management should be familiar with the types of harm that might occur within their area of responsibility and be alert for any indications of such conduct.

All staff/volunteers/contractors share in the responsibility for the prevention and detection of child abuse, and must:

- Familiarise themselves with the relevant laws, the Code of Conduct, and BCRAI's policy and procedures in relation to child protection, and comply with all requirements;
- Report any reasonable belief that a child's safety is at risk of harm to the relevant authorities (such as the South Australia police on 000. If the child or young person is at immediate risk, and/or the Child Abuse Report Line on 13 14 78) and fulfil their obligations as mandatory reporters;
- Report any suspicion that a child's safety may be at risk of harm to their supervisor (or, if their supervisor is involved in the suspicion, to a responsible person in the organisation); and
- Provide an environment that is supportive of all children's emotional and physical safety.

#### **CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION**

BCRAI encourages members, coaches, managers, volunteers, parents, care givers, guardians and any other individuals involved in the administration or management of the centre or its programs, to express their views and make suggestions, especially on those matters that directly affect children. We listen to and act upon any concerns that children, young people or their families raise with us.

We value diversity and do not tolerate any discriminatory practices.

#### **RECRUITMENT PRACTICES**

BCRAI undertakes a comprehensive recruitment and screening process for all workers and volunteers which aim to:

- Promote and protect the safety of all children under the care of the organisation;
- Identify the safest and most suitable people who share BCRAI's values and commitment to protect children; and
- Prevent a person from working at BCRAI if they pose a risk to children.

BCRAI requires all workers/volunteers to pass through the organisation's recruitment and screening processes prior to commencing their engagement with BCRAI.

In accordance with the Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016, our organisation is registered with the DHS Screening Unit and we link all Working with Children Checks (WWCC). All workers in the organisation over the age of 14 years, even if not providing services directly to children or young people, must hold a current, not prohibited WWCC issued by the Screening Unit of the Department of Human Services. All workers must provide evidence of their WWCC prior to employment and renew the WWCC every 5 years. We will verify the accuracy of all WWCCs in the DHS Screening unit portal as required by law. BCRAI will determine a person's suitability for employment by providing a position description, undertaking thorough reference checks, a review of the criminal history assessment, job observations and a probationary period.

We will immediately contact the Department of Human Services Screening Unit when we become aware of assessable information regarding any person involved with our organisation, including any serious criminal offence, child protection information, or disciplinary or misconduct information.

BCRAI will determine a person's suitability for employment by providing a position description, undertaking thorough reference checks, job observations and a probationary period.

Relevant information on screening documents such as reference number, issue date and type of screening assessment will be recorded but documents will not be kept by the BCRAI either electronically or in hard copy.

Once engaged, workers/volunteers must review and acknowledge their understanding of this Policy.

#### **CODE OF CONDUCT**

All members are made aware of, and must abide by, our Code of Conduct. Our Code of Conduct was developed in collaboration with all our employees, volunteers, the children who use our services and their parents.

Our Code of Conduct can be found on our website [www.blackwoodrec.com.au](http://www.blackwoodrec.com.au)

#### **SUPPORT FOR EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS**

BCRAI will provide support and supervision so people feel valued, respected and fairly treated. We ensure that members, coaches, managers, volunteers, parents, care givers, guardians and any other individuals involved in the administration or management of the centre or our programs who work with children, have ongoing supervision, support and training. This ensures their performance is developed and enhanced to promote the establishment and maintenance of a child safe environment.

#### **RISK MANAGEMENT**

BCRAI will ensure that child safety is a part of its overall risk management approach and included in the Risk Management Policy located in the Centre Policy Manual.

BCRAI will have a risk and compliance sub-committee committed to identifying and managing risks at BCRAI. The Risk and compliance sub-committee members will receive regular training in relation to child safety.

The specific risks (both physical and general wellbeing) to be monitored are as followed:



Identified risk	Actions to minimise risk
Physical contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• any physical contact must be appropriate to the delivery of services being provided</li> <li>• where physical contact is required, this is undertaken in a safe way by explaining why contact is required and what will happen, and asking the child/young person for their permission (or their family if this is more appropriate) before proceeding</li> <li>• unnecessary physical contact is not allowed</li> </ul>
Online communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cyber safety and social media guidelines are in place and provided to all workers</li> <li>• appropriate supervision is provided for all online activities</li> <li>• workers must not communicate with children or young people via social media</li> </ul>
Supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• children and young people are to be supervised by parents/guardians at all times</li> <li>• if child/young person not collected by parent/guardian at end of class/training, two adults are to stay with child/young person until they are collected</li> <li>• if providing one to one consultation with a child or young person, it will be in line of sight of another adult</li> </ul>
Taking images of children and young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consent of child young person and their parent/guardian required</li> <li>• disclosure will be made as to how the image is to be used and consent must be provided by the child, young person and parent/guardian</li> <li>• images must be presented in a way that de-identifies the child or young person</li> </ul>
Physical environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• maintain a risk register that is reviewed annually to ensure effectiveness</li> <li>• conduct risk assessments for all activities</li> <li>• ensure all equipment is in good working order</li> </ul>
Privacy and confidentiality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• all documents containing confidential information will be stored privately in a locked filing cabinet (or similar place with restricted access)</li> <li>• digital files containing confidential information shall be protected electronically by restricting the access to only those requiring it to perform their duties</li> <li>• workers must not disclose information regarding any child or young person without written consent of the child, young person and their parent/guardian</li> </ul>
Change room requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a minimum of two adults of the same gender as the children or young people must be present</li> <li>• supervision will be provided ensuring the child or young person's right to privacy</li> <li>• adults must not shower or change whilst supervising children or young people</li> <li>• phones, cameras and recording devices must not be used in change room</li> </ul>

## PRIVACY

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved unless there is a risk to someone's safety. BCRAI will ensure that all information is stored securely in a locked filing cabinet to ensure any personal information is protected.

Everyone is entitled to know how the personal information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will be able to access it.

#### **HARASSMENT/BULLYING**

BCRAI opposes all forms of harassment, discrimination and bullying. We take this issue seriously and encourage anyone who believes that they or another person, has been harassed, discriminated against or bullied to raise this issue with management.

#### **COMMUNICATION**

This child safe policy and related documents are available on our website and on request.

This child safe policy and related documents are provided to all workers as part of their induction following recruitment.

We encourage and respect the views of children and young people and involve them in decision making as appropriate. We provide clear age-appropriate or developmentally appropriate explanations to children and young people including their right to safety, their right to be listened to and that they can provide feedback or make a complaint if they have a concern, to any worker or ask their parent/guardian to do this on their behalf. We will listen to and act upon any complaints or concerns that a child or young person raises with us.

#### **REVIEWING**

Every two years, and following every reportable incident, a review shall be conducted to assess whether our child protection policies or procedures require modification to better protect the children under our care.

We will lodge a new child safe environments compliance statement with the Department of Human Services each time we review and update this policy.

Policy Date: 26-Sept-24

Review Date: 26-Sept-26

#### **RELATED DOCUMENTS**

- Privacy Policy
- Risk Management Policy
- Staff Recruitment Policy
- Harassment & Bullying Policy
- This policy must be read in conjunction with:
  - The law of the Commonwealth or of the relevant state or territory;
  - The organisation's Code of Conduct;
- Gymnastics Australia Child Safe Policies
- Gymnastics South Australia Child Safe Policies



## **CHILD SAFETY PROCEDURES**

### **REPORTING**

We aim to ensure that children and young people are safe from harm and risk of harm. Section 17 of the Safety Act defines 'harm' to mean physical or psychological harm (whether caused by an act or omission), including harm caused by sexual, physical, mental or emotional abuse or neglect.

Mandated reporters in our organisation are workers who:

- provide services to children and young people
- hold a management position in the organisation the duties of which include direct responsibility for, or direct supervision of, the provision of those services to children and young people.

Mandated reporters have a legal obligation to notify the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) on 13 14 78 as soon as practicable if they have a suspicion that a child or young person has been harmed or may be at risk of harm. If the child or young person is at immediate risk, report to South Australia Police (SAPOL) on 000 (triple zero).

Even if not a mandated reporter, any person can report harm or risk of harm to a child or young person. The individual who identifies the harm or risk of harm is encouraged to make the report to authorities and can request the support from another worker to do so if required. All adult staff (even if not a mandated reporter) have a legal obligation to report child sexual abuse by another staff member to the police and to protect a child from sexual abuse by another staff member. Failure to meet these obligations may be considered a criminal offence.

Following a report to authorities, an internal report must be made to the Supervisor. In situations where the supervisor is suspected of involvement in the activity, or if the person having the suspicion does not believe that the matter is being appropriately addressed or dealt with, the matter should be reported to the next highest level of supervision.

If a staff member is reported to CARL or SAPOL for causing harm or risk of harm to a child or young person, they will be removed from any role that involves working with any child or young person until authorities have concluded their investigation.

Following a report to CARL or SAPOL we will support the child or young person by:

- referring the child, young person or their family to other appropriate services
- continuing to provide a service to the child, young person and their family and monitor their circumstances.

We will document all information received regarding the report and store this securely in a separate file.

A mandated reporter must make a report if:

They have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child has been or is being harmed or risk of harm; and

The suspicion is formed in the course of the person's work (whether paid or voluntary) or carrying out of their official duties

NB: exceptions may apply.

### **INVESTIGATING**

If the appropriate child protection service or the police decide to conduct an investigation of a report, all employees, contractors or volunteers must co-operate fully with the investigation.

Whether or not the authorities decide to conduct an investigation, the Centre Manager will consult with the authorities to determine whether an internal investigation is appropriate. If it is decided that such an investigation will not conflict with any proceeding of the authorities, the Centre Manager may decide to conduct such an investigation. All employees, contractors and volunteers must co-operate fully with the investigation.

Any such investigation will be conducted according to the rules of natural justice.

The Centre Manager will make every effort to keep any such investigation confidential; however, from time to time other members of staff may need to be consulted in conjunction with the investigation.

After an initial review and a determination that the suspected risk of harm warrants additional investigation, the Centre Manager shall coordinate the investigation with the appropriate investigators and / or law enforcement officials. Internal or external legal representatives will be involved in the process, as deemed appropriate.

#### **RESPONDING**

If it is alleged that a member of staff, contractor or a volunteer may have committed an offence or have breached our policies or Code of Conduct the person concerned may be stood down (with pay, where applicable) while an investigation is conducted.

If the investigation concludes that on the balance of probabilities an offence (or a breach of the organisation's policies or Code of Conduct) has occurred then disciplinary action may follow, up to and including dismissal or cessation of involvement with the organisation. The findings of the investigation will also be reported to any external body as required.

#### **DEFINITIONS**

**Child** means a person below the age of 18 years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.

**Child protection** means any responsibility, measure or activity undertaken to safeguard children from harm.

**Child abuse** means all forms of physical abuse, emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse and exploitation, neglect or negligent treatment, commercial (e.g. for financial gain) or other exploitation of a child and includes any actions that results in actual or potential harm to a child.

**Child sexual assault** is any act which exposes a child to, or involves a child in, sexual processes beyond his or her understanding or contrary to accepted community standards. Sexually abusive behaviours can include the fondling of genitals, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or any other object, fondling of breasts, voyeurism, exhibitionism, and exposing the child to or involving the child in pornography. It includes child grooming, which refers to actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child to lower the child's inhibitions in preparation for sexual activity with the child.

**Reasonable grounds for belief** is a belief based on reasonable grounds that child abuse has occurred when all known considerations or facts relevant to the formation of a belief are taken into account and these are objectively assessed. Circumstances or considerations may include the source of the allegation and how it was communicated, the nature of and details of the allegation, and whether there is any other related matters known regarding the alleged perpetrator.

A reasonable belief is formed if a reasonable person believes that:

- (a) The child is in need of protection,
- (b) The child has suffered or is likely to suffer "significant harm as a result of physical injury",
- (c) The parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.

A 'reasonable belief' or a 'belief on reasonable grounds' is not the same as having proof, but is more than mere rumour or speculation.

A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds. For example, a 'reasonable belief' might be formed if: -

- a) A child states that they have been physically or sexually abused



- b) A child states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves);
- c) Someone who knows a child states that the child has been physically or sexually abused;
- d) Professional observations of the child's behaviour or development leads a professional to form a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused or is likely to be abused; and/or
- e) Signs of abuse lead to a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused.

**Harm** refers to the following:

- (1) For the purposes of this policy, a reference to harm will be taken to be a reference to physical harm or psychological harm (whether caused by an act or omission) and, without limiting the generality of this subsection, includes such harm caused by sexual, physical, mental or emotional abuse or neglect.
- (2) In this section— psychological harm does not include emotional reactions such as distress, grief, fear or anger that are a response to the ordinary vicissitudes of life.

**Risk or at Risk** refers to the following:

- (1) For the purposes of this Act, a child or young person will be taken to be at risk if—
  - (a) the child or young person has suffered harm (being harm of a kind against which a child or young person is ordinarily protected); or
  - (b) there is a likelihood that the child or young person will suffer harm (being harm of a kind against which a child or young person is ordinarily protected); or
  - (c) there is a likelihood that the child or young person will be removed from the State (whether by their parent or guardian or by some other person) for the purpose of—
    - (i) being subjected to a medical or other procedure that would be unlawful if performed in this State (including, to avoid doubt, female genital mutilation); or
    - (ii) taking part in a marriage ceremony (however described) that would be a void marriage, or would otherwise be an invalid marriage, under the Marriage Act 1961 of the Commonwealth; or
    - (iii) enabling the child or young person to take part in an activity, or an action to be taken in respect of the child or young person, that would, if it occurred in this State, constitute an offence against the Criminal Law Consolidation Act 1935 or the Criminal Code of the Commonwealth; or
  - (d) the parents or guardians of the child or young person—
    - (i) are unable or unwilling to care for the child or young person; or
    - (ii) have abandoned the child or young person, or cannot, after reasonable inquiry, be found; or
    - (iii) are dead; or
  - (e) the child or young person is of compulsory school age but has been persistently absent from school without satisfactory explanation of the absence; or
  - (f) the child or young person is of no fixed address; or
  - (g) any other circumstances of a kind prescribed by the regulations exist in relation to the child or young person.
- (2) It is immaterial for the purposes of this Act that any conduct referred to in subsection (1) took place wholly or partly outside this State.
- (3) In assessing whether there is a likelihood that a child or young person will suffer harm, regard must be had to not only the current circumstances of their care but also the history of their care and the likely cumulative effect on the child or young person of that history.
- (4) In this section— female genital mutilation means—
  - (a) clitoridectomy; or
  - (b) excision of any other part of the female genital organs; or

(c) a procedure to narrow or close the vaginal opening; or  
(d) any other mutilation of the female genital organs,  
but does not include a sexual reassignment procedure or a medical procedure  
that has a genuine therapeutic purpose; sexual reassignment procedure means a  
surgical procedure to give a female, or a person whose sex is ambivalent, genital  
characteristics, or ostensible genital characteristics, of a male.

(5) A medical procedure has a genuine therapeutic purpose only if directed at curing or  
alleviating a physiological disability or physical abnormality.

#### COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK

Providing opportunities for complaints and feedback ensures that children, young people and  
their families feel valued and respected and enables us to improve the quality of our service.  
Children, young people and their families are informed that they can provide feedback or make a  
complaint at their first appointment.

Compliments, complaints or feedback can be provided verbally to any worker or direct to  
management either by telephone on 08 8278 8833 or via email at  
contactus@blackwoodrec.com.au.

We will deal with all complaints and feedback received promptly, sensitively and fairly. We will:

- listen to the complaint/feedback
- the person receiving the complaint will make a record of it if received verbally
- advise the time expected for an outcome
- if a worker receives a complaint, they must forward it to management as soon as possible
- management will respond to the complainant with an outcome in a timely manner
- clearly document and securely store decisions and actions taken in response to complaints and feedback
- make sure that procedural fairness is followed at all times.

If the child, young person or their family is not happy with the outcome from the complaints  
process they can contact:

- Gymnastics South Australia. Tel: 8294 8288
- Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner. Tel: 8226 8666
- Australian Human Rights Commission Online: [www.humanrights.gov.au](http://www.humanrights.gov.au) Tel: 1300 656 419
- South Australian Equal Opportunities Commission (for complaints relating to discrimination) Online: [www.eoc.sa.gov.au](http://www.eoc.sa.gov.au) Tel: 08 8207 1977.