

Child Safe Policy



This policy was written to demonstrate the strong commitment of the management, staff and volunteers to child safety and to provide an outline of the policies and practices we have developed to keep everyone safe from any harm, including abuse.

Commitment to child safety

All children who come to Huntingtower Heat Basketball Club have a right to feel and be safe. The welfare of the children in our care will always be our first priority and we have a zero tolerance to child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our policies and procedures. We aim to create a child safe and child friendly environment where children feel safe and have fun.

This policy was developed in collaboration with Basketball Victoria and the Club Committee. We will continue to develop our policy on an ongoing basis with input from all our volunteers and the children who use our services and their parents. It applies to all volunteers, children and individuals involved in the club.

Our club takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. Our committee members and volunteers are trained to deal appropriately with allegations. We will work to ensure families, children and volunteers know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.

We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a **reasonable belief** that an incident took place (*see information about failure to disclose below*). If this occurs then they **MUST** report the incident.

Factors contributing to **reasonable belief** may be

- a child stating that they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves);
- behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed;
- someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it; and/or
- observing suspicious behaviour.

For further examples of behaviour, please see [An Overview of the Victorian child safe standards:](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/word_doc/0005/955598/Child-safe-standards_overview.doc)
<www.dhs.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/word_doc/0005/955598/Child-safe-standards_overview.doc>

Children's rights to safety and participation

Huntingtower Heat Basketball Club volunteers encourage children to express their views. We listen to their suggestions, especially on matters that directly affect them. We actively encourage all children who use our services to 'have a say' about things that are important to them.

We will guide the children on what they can do if they feel unsafe. We listen to and act on any concerns children, or their parents, raise with us.

Risk Management

We recognise the importance of a risk management approach to minimising the potential for child abuse or harm to occur and use this to inform our policy, procedures and activity planning. In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our children.

email: htheat@huntingtower.vic.edu.au

www: ht.heat.com.au

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Valuing diversity

We value diversity and do not tolerate any discriminatory practices. To achieve this we:

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families (including Aboriginal children and their families)
- welcome children with a disability and their families and act to promote their participation and do what we can to ensure they are safe and can participate equally
- seek appropriate volunteers from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Recruiting volunteers

Huntingtower Heat Basketball Club applies the best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of volunteers. We interview and seek background feedback on all volunteers and require Working with Children Checks for relevant positions.

Supporting volunteers

Huntingtower Heat Basketball Club seeks to attract and retain our volunteers. We provide support and supervision so people feel valued, respected and fairly treated. We have a Code of Conduct for coaches, parents and players to provide guidance to our volunteers. New volunteers in particular will be supervised regularly to ensure they understand our organisation's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse, as well as checking that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate – once again referring to the various Codes of Conduct.

To provide children with the best possible experience and opportunities in basketball everyone must operate within an accepted ethical framework such as The Codes of Conduct.

It is not always easy to distinguish poor practice from abuse. It is therefore NOT the responsibility of employees, volunteers or committee members or participants in basketball to make judgements about whether or not abuse is taking place. It is, however, their responsibility to identify poor practice and possible abuse and act if they have concerns about the welfare of any child/ren.

Ongoing training and support is also to be offered to help volunteers in all capacities to:

- Analyse their own practice against what is deemed good practice, and to ensure their practice is likely to protect them from false allegations;
- Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice and/or abuse;
- Respond to concerns expressed by a child or parent; and
- Work safely and effectively with children.

Privacy

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be staff, volunteers, officials, parents or children, unless there is a risk to someone's safety. We have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it and who will have access to it.

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Legislative Responsibilities

Our Club takes our legal responsibilities seriously, including:

- **Failure to disclose:** Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to the police.¹
- **Failure to protect:** People of authority in our organisation will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.²
- Any personnel who are **mandatory reporters** must comply with their duties.³

Fair and Just Procedure

The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern. We are also fair and just to our personnel including parents and volunteers – and will treat all with respect. The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent and based on evidence.

We record all allegations / complaints including investigation notes. All records are securely stored. If an allegation / complaint is raised we provide updates to children and families on progress and any actions we as an organisation take. Such reports will also be updated to the Committee and recorded in our Complaints register.

Reviewing this policy

This policy will be reviewed every two years and following significant incidents if they occur. We will undertake to seek views, comments and suggestions from children, parents, carers, staff and volunteers.

This Child Safe Policy was approved by the Committee of Management on 6 February 2017. It is due to be reviewed on 30 June 2019.

¹ A person will not commit this offence if they have a reasonable excuse for not disclosing the information, including a fear for their safety or where the information has already been disclosed.

Further information about the failure to disclose offence is available on the [Department of Justice and Regulation website](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+disclose+offence) <www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+disclose+offence>.

² Further information about the failure to protect offence is available on the [Department of Justice and Regulation website](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+protect+offence) <www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+protect+offence>.

³ Mandatory reporters (doctors, nurses, midwives, teachers (including early childhood teachers), principals and police) must report to child protection if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse.

See the Department of Health and Human Services website for information about [how to make a report to child protection](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/reports-publications/guide-to-making-a-report-to-child-protection-or-child-first) <www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/reports-publications/guide-to-making-a-report-to-child-protection-or-child-first>.

Child:

The words 'child' and 'children' in this guide refer to children and young people up to the age of 18 years. This definition is consistent with the national framework, Creating Safe Environments for Children – Organisations, Employees and Volunteers, the Commission for Children and Young People Act, the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 and the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005. The term 'child' in this guide is inclusive of anyone under 18 years of age. Not utilising the term 'young people' is not intended to diminish any emphasis on, or acknowledgement of, the safety risks to older children or teenagers.

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Reporting a child safety concern or complaint

The Club will appoint a Child Safety Person with the specific responsibility for responding to any complaints made by volunteers, parents or children. Our complaints processes are outlined on the attached diagram.

Who can report complaint?	Child / player Parent Coach Team Manager Committee member
What to report	Any Child Safety Concerns including: - instances of Breach of Code of Conduct - environmental safety concerns - disclosure of harm or abuse - allegation, suspicion or observations of abuse or harm
Call 000 if a child is in immediate danger	
How to report?	E-mail, Face to face verbal report or telephone call.
Who to?	Child Safety Person --- refer to website for who is nominated to this position e-mail: ht.heat.president.com.au - first contact to be made via e-mail and then further contact details or meeting arrangements can be made from there
What happens next?	The Child Safety Officer will then: * Firstly identify the nature and seriousness of the complaint. Where the complaint can be dealt with immediately this will be done where possible. * Offer support to the child, parents, the person who has made the report and the accused person; * Initiate internal processes to ensure the safety of the child, clarify the nature of the complaint and then commence education or disciplinary processes (as required) * Decides in accordance with legal requirements and duty of care, whether the matter should be/must be reported to the police or Child Protection and make report as soon as possible if required
Outcome	Investigation, outcome decided - relevant volunteers, parent and child notified or outcome of investigation, committee advised and Complaints register updated, policies updated if required

The club's Child Safety Person may also report the incident to the appropriate authority at Basketball Victoria who may assist in ascertaining appropriate disciplinary action.