

Child Protection Policy

Commitment

Child protection is about keeping children safe from abuse and harm, and protecting them from people who are unsuitable to work with children. Under current child protection legislation, a child is considered to be a person less than 18 years of age.

SSA has a legal and moral responsibility to ensure an environment where children can participate and be safe from any abuse, neglect, or mistreatment, and where staff and visitors are supported in raising child safety concerns. SSA will not tolerate actions which are not conducive to providing this environment.

SSA staff have a thorough understanding of child protection issues and a working understanding of SSA's systems to ensure the protection of any child within our programs and services. This includes robust reporting and response of any identification of abuse. All organisations hiring an SSA venue for purposes involving children activity shall comply with or exceed the SSA Child Protection Policy.

Conditions of entry/participation include agreeing to commit to ensuring young people are safe at all times. SSA reserves the right to exclude participants or members of the public whose conduct risks the safety of children and young people.

References

From a legal standing, we are guided by the following:

- Children's Services Act (1996)
- Children, Youth and Families Act (2005)
- Children's Services Regulations (2009)
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Act (2005) (Victorian Child Safe Standards)
- Working with Children Check Act (2005)
- Life Saving Victoria Guidelines for safe pool operations

Internally:

- SSA Child Protection Policy
- SSA Code of Conduct

Identification

Indicators of child abuse can include but is not limited to: physical bruising or injury, unusual behaviour, high level of distrust, unexplained absence and high level of anxiety or reference to someone else being abused. The presence of one indicator does not necessarily suggest that a child is the subject of abuse, however if one indicator is present, the child should be monitored to identify repeat indicators. People working with children need to consider the context in which the indicators are observed and raise all concerns early through the appropriate reporting lines.

Appropriate relationships with children

Physical contact is appropriate if it:

- is used to assist in skill development
- is required for the child's safety
- occurs with the player's understanding and permission
- is for the child's benefit, not adult gratification
- occurs in an open environment

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Physical contact may be required within the course of duties, such as:

- providing support while learning to swim
- applying first aid treatment

Physical contact is inappropriate if it:

- includes touching the groin, genital area, buttocks, breasts or any part of the body that may cause distress or embarrassment
- frightens, distresses or embarrasses a child
- destroys a child's trust
- occurs in a private place

Cultural Diversity and Children with a Disability

Cultural, linguistic and disability needs will be met as required to ensure participation in any activity is not compromised. Staff shall ensure that cultural and linguistic needs are addressed in any communication of a message or other information and in the interactions with children.

During program orientation children will be educated on appropriate behaviours and relationships to respect any cultural, linguistic or disability needs.

Reporting

If a staff member suspects or receives a report that a child is the subject of abuse or negative treatment, they are obligated to report it through the appropriate channels. The process is as follows:

- As soon as the abuse is suspected, the concern must be raised with the person in charge/ shift supervisor
- The shift supervisor will consult the Manager who will take the complaint to the DEECD/ Child Protection for further action and ensure an incident report is completed

In the event of an allegation or complaint against a staff member, a full investigation will be conducted with relevant authorities. During such an investigation, the staff member will be assigned to other duties that do not require direct contact with children.

All complaints raised, whether by staff or against staff, will be treated with strict privacy and confidentiality.

What do we do?

SSA offers a family environment that provides programs and services designed to:

- Ensure individuals enjoy their experience
- Cater for individuals at their own ability levels
- Assist participants to develop and achieve optimal levels of performance
- Increase accessibility for multi-cultural, including Aboriginal, and multi-linguistic participation
- Ensure the safety of every participant

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We will make sure that we continue to meet this commitment by doing the following:

- we regularly educate our staff on how we can prevent, identify and report child abuse
- all staff who have direct contact with children are required to obtain a Working With Children Check before working and go through a strict recruitment program

All SSA children's services have robust prevention, training, supervision and reporting activities to ensure child safety.

What can you do?

It is important that if you see something you say something – if you receive a report or believe that you have observed any indicators of child abuse of children at our venue, please report it immediately to the closest staff member so they can raise all concerns through the appropriate reporting lines.

For more information

If you would like to know more about what we do for our programs, please speak to one of our friendly customer service members on 53399911

[Child Safety Standards Summary](#) - State Sport Centres Trust

More information is available on Victorian Government guidelines and legislation regarding child safety on here:

<http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards-resources>
