

**Upper Ferntree Gully Cricket Club (UFTGCC) Child Safe Policy**

1. **Purpose**

This policy has been developed to:

* Demonstrate Upper Ferntree Gully Cricket Club’s commitment to child safety
* Support the ongoing development of a child safe culture
* Prevent the occurrence of child abuse within the club
* Provide guidelines for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse – including to authorities as appropriate (refer [Appendix 1](#Appendix1))
* Provide assurance that reports of suspected child abuse will be treated seriously and investigated fully – including by authorities as appropriate
1. **Regulatory Context**

This policy has been developed to support the club in meeting the requirements of the Victorian Child Safe Standards. The Standards were introduced in response to the Betrayal of Trust Report (2013) to help protect children from harm and abuse. They consist of minimum requirements that apply to all organisations providing services to children (including sporting clubs), which include having practices, procedures and policies in place to prevent and respond to allegations of child abuse.

1. **Scope**

This policy applies to club members, coaches, team managers, players (junior and senior), parents of junior players and volunteers of Upper Ferntree Gully Cricket Club.

1. **Policy Statement**

Upper Ferntree Gully Cricket Club recognises that children are vulnerable members of our community.  The club is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and in providing a child safe and child friendly environment.  The club has zero tolerance of child abuse and is committed to having measures and initiatives in place to support children’s welfare and protection.

1. **Child Safe Measures and Initiatives**

The club is committed to the following measures and initiatives to provide a child safe environment:

* Child Safe Policy (this document), incorporating guidelines for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse (refer [Appendix 1](#Appendix1))
* Code of Conduct for all members, coaches, team managers, players (junior and senior), parents of junior players and volunteers
* Child safety awareness training for all committee members, coaches and team managers
* Working With Children (WWC) check for all committee members, coaches and team managers
* Child Safe Officer Role
* Complaints process
* Disciplinary action process
1. **Definitions**

**Child** means a person involved in the activities of Upper Ferntree Gully Cricket Club and is under the age of 18 years.

**Child Abuse** refers to actions/behaviour causing a child to suffer or be likely to suffer significant harm.

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

1. **Related Documents**
* UFTGCC Constitution
* UFTGCC Code of Conduct
* UFTGCC Complaints Process
* UFTGCC Disciplinary Action Process
1. **Approvals**

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| **Initial Approved Date:** | 16/07/2018 |
| **Approved By:****(name & role)** | Rob Birnie, President |
| **Reviewed:** | Aug 2022; Oct 2023 |
| **Review Completed By:** | Kath Mackay, Child Safe Officer |

**Appendix 1**

**Responding to and Reporting Suspected Child Abuse**

A person, in the course of participating in the sport or other activities of Upper Ferntree Gully Cricket Club, may form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from child abuse.

**Note:** If a person is concerned about an immediate risk to a child’s safety, they must phone ‘000’as soon as practicable.

There are four categories of child abuse:

**Physical abuse:** occurs when a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of a physical injury, such as a non-accidental physical injury.

**Sexual abuse:** occurs when a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of sexual abuse, such as when a child is exploited, or used by another for his or her sexual gratification or sexual arousal, or for that of others.

**Emotional and psychological abuse:** occurs when a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, emotional or psychological harm of such a kind that the child’s emotional or intellectual development is or is likely to be significantly damaged.

**Neglect:** occurs when a child’s physical development or health has been, or is likely to be significantly damaged. It refers to an omission, such as depriving a child of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults, or medical care.

Child abuse includes any actions that results in actual or potential harm to a child, in circumstances where the child’s parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child.

 **Mandatory Reporters**

Select classes of people in the community (including teachers, nurses and doctors) are required by law to report to the Child Protection Unit of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) where they have formed a belief, on reasonable grounds, that a child is in need of protection because they have suffered (or are likely to suffer) significant harm due to physical or sexual abuse.

This report must be made as soon as practicable, and after each occasion where he or she becomes aware of a further reasonable grounds for belief.

**Reasonable grounds for belief**

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

The child is in need of protection

The child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of physical or sexual injury

The child’s parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child

To form a reasonable belief, you should consider and objectively assess all the relevant facts, such as 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’ or a ‘belief on reasonable grounds’ is not the same as having proof, but is more than mere rumour or speculation.

You will have reasonable grounds to notify if:

A child states they have been physically or sexually abused

A child states they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves)

Someone who knows a child states that the child has been physically or sexually abused

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

Signs of abuse lead to a belief that a child has been physically or sexually abused

**Voluntary Reporters**

In addition to the mandatory reporting obligations above, any person who believes on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from any form of child abuse, *may* disclose that information to the police or DHHS.

**Reporting Child Sexual Abuse**

If a person receives information that leads them to form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria against a child (under the age of 16 years) by another person (of or over the age of 18 years), the person has a legal obligation to disclose that information to the Police as soon as it is practicable. Individuals who fail to comply with this obligation under the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) may be subject to a penalty of 3 years imprisonment.

**UFTGCC Approach to Reports of Abuse**

UFTGCC supports and encourages a person to make a report to the Police or DHHS if they form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection, or if they are concerned about the safety, health or wellbeing of a child.

Any person that makes a report in good faith in accordance with their reporting obligations (whether mandatory or discretionary) will be supported by the club.

If a person is uncertain as to whether they should make a report to an external authority in relation to the safety of a child, they can speak to the club Child Safe Officer for guidance and information.

If an allegation is made against a member, coach, team manager, senior player, parent of a junior player or volunteer, the club will instigate an investigation. The investigation will be conducted with procedural fairness and confidentiality to the greatest extent possible.

During the investigation process child safety will remain paramount and appropriate action will therefore be undertaken in accordance with the seriousness of the allegation, as per the club Disciplinary Action Process e.g. suspension.

The club will cooperate with the directions of the Police and/or DHHS in relation to any investigation conducted by these authorities.

The club will keep a record of any allegations regarding inappropriate conduct.