



# Balmain & District Football Club Member Protection Policy

## 1. Purpose of Our Policy

The main objective of the Balmain & District Football Club (the Club) Member Protection Policy (the Policy) is to maintain responsible behaviour. The Policy outlines the Club's commitment to a person's right to be treated with respect and dignity, to be safe and to be protected from discrimination harassment and abuse. In particular, it covers the care and protection of children participating in the Club's activities.

## 2. Who the Policy Applies To

The Policy applies to everyone involved in the activities of the Club, whether in a paid or voluntary capacity. Specifically, this includes but is not necessarily limited to all employees, members, volunteers, parents and spectators, as well as sponsors or other guests attending Club events.

## 3. Extent of the Policy

The Policy covers all matters directly and indirectly related to the Club and its activities. It also covers private behaviour where that behaviour brings the Club or sport into disrepute or there is suspicion of harm towards a child.

## 4. Club Responsibilities

The Club will:

- adopt, implement and comply with the Policy;
- publish the Policy;
- promote appropriate standards of behaviour at all times;
- deal with any breaches of or complaints made under the Policy appropriately;
- enforce any penalty imposed under the policy;
- review the Policy every three years; and
- where appropriate, seek advice from or refer serious issues to the Regional Sporting Organisation (RSO), State Sporting Organisation (SSO) or police.

Serious issues include unlawful behaviour and any other issues that the RSO or SSO request be referred to them.

## 5. Individual Responsibilities

Everyone associated with the Club must:

- make themselves aware of the contents of the Policy;
- comply with all relevant provisions of the Policy;
- consent to the screening requirements set out in the Policy, and New South Wales (NSW) Working with Children checks (WWCC) when required by the Club;
- treat other people with respect;
- place the safety and welfare of children above other considerations;
- follow the guidelines outlined in this policy if they wish to make a complaint or report a concern; and
- comply with any decisions and/or disciplinary measures imposed.

## 6. Protection of Children

### 6.1. Child Protection

The Club is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children who participate in the Club's activities. The Club supports the rights of the

child and will act at all times to ensure that a child safe environment is maintained. The Club also supports the rights and wellbeing of its staff and volunteers and encourages their active participation in building a secure and safe environment for all participants.

#### **6.1.1. Code of Conduct**

The Club has adopted a code of the conduct that specifies standard of conduct and care expected of adults dealing and interacting with children. The Club also has a code of conduct to promote appropriate behaviour between all players including children.

See Attachment 1.

#### **6.1.2. Choosing Suitable Employees & Volunteers**

The Club takes all reasonable steps to ensure that only suitable and appropriate people are engaged to work with children. This is achieved using a range of screening measures, primarily NSW WWCC. The Club has a separate Working With Children Policy which requires that all employees and all coaches, managers and age co-ordinators of teams that include children have a valid NSW WWCC. If the screening measures reveal any area of concern, the club will take appropriate action, including referral to police.

#### **6.1.3. Report & Respond Appropriately to Suspected Abuse & Neglect**

The Club requires all employees and volunteers to be aware of their responsibilities under NSW and Commonwealth laws to make a report if they have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is being abused or neglected.

See Attachments 4 and 5.

In addition to any legal obligations, if any person believes that another person or organisation bound by the Policy is acting inappropriately towards a child or is otherwise in breach of the Policy they may make an internal complaint.

Refer to the complaints procedure in Section 9 of the Policy. Any person who believes that a child is in immediate danger should contact the police.

### **6.2. Supervision**

The Club endeavours to provide an appropriate level of supervision. If a member finds a child under the age of 18 is unsupervised, they should assume responsibility for the child's safety until the child's parent/guardian or supervisor is located.

For reasons of courtesy and safety, parents must collect their children on time.

### **6.3. Taking Images of Children**

Wherever possible, members must obtain permission from a child's parent or guardian before taking an image of a child that is not their own.

Camera phones, videos, cameras and any other recording devices are prohibited from use in changing areas, showers and toilets controlled by or used in connection with the Club.

The Club will only use images of children that are appropriate and relevant to the Club's activities. When using a photo of a child, the Club will not name or identify the child or publish personal information without the consent of the child's parent/guardian.

## 7. Discrimination, Harassment & Bullying

The Club is committed to providing an environment in which people are treated fairly and equitably and that is free from discrimination, harassment and bullying.

### 7.1. Discrimination

Unlawful discrimination is the less favourable treatment of a person on the basis of one or more of the personal characteristics protected by State or Commonwealth anti-discrimination laws. Discrimination includes both direct and indirect discrimination:

- **Direct Discrimination** occurs if a person treats, or proposes to treat, a person with a protected personal characteristic unfavourably because of that personal characteristic.
- **Indirect Discrimination** occurs if a person imposes, or proposes to impose, a requirement, condition or practice that will disadvantage a person with a protected personal characteristic and that requirement, condition or practice is not reasonable.

The offender's awareness and motive are irrelevant in determining whether discrimination has occurred.

### 7.2. Harassment

Harassment is any unwelcome conduct, verbal or physical, that intimidates, offends or humiliates another person and which happens because a person has a certain personal characteristic protected by State or Commonwealth anti-discrimination legislation.

Harassment includes, but is not limited to, sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is not limited to members of the opposite sex.

The following is a list of all the personal characteristics that apply in Australia:

- gender;
- race, colour, descent, national or ethnic origin, nationality, ethno-religious origin, immigration;
- national extraction or social origin;
- marital status, relationship status, identity of spouse or domestic partner;
- pregnancy, potential pregnancy, breastfeeding;
- family or carer responsibilities, status as a parent of carer;
- age;
- religion, religious beliefs or activities;
- political beliefs or activities;
- lawful sexual activity;
- sexual orientation and gender identity;
- profession, trade, occupation or calling;
- irrelevant criminal record, spent convictions;
- irrelevant medical record;
- member of association or organisation of employees or employers, industrial activity, trade union activity;
- physical features;
- disability, mental or physical impairment;
- defence service; and
- personal association with someone who has, or is assumed to have, any of these personal characteristics.

Legislation also prohibits:

- racial, religious, homosexual, transgender and HIV/AIDS vilification; and

- victimisation resulting from a complaint.

### **7.3. Bullying**

Bullying is characterised by repeated, unreasonable behaviour directed at a person, or a group of persons, that creates a risk to health and safety. Bullying behaviour is that which a reasonable person in the circumstances would expect to victimise, humiliate, undermine, threaten, degrade, offend or intimidate a person. Bullying behaviour can include actions of an individual or group.

One off instances can also amount to bullying.

The following types of behaviour, where repeated or occurring as part of a pattern of behaviour, would be considered bullying:

- verbal abuse including shouting, swearing, teasing, making belittling remarks or persistent unjustified criticism;
- excluding or isolating a group or person;
- spreading malicious rumours; or
- psychological harassment such as intimidation.

Bullying includes cyber-bullying. The Club does not tolerate abusive, discriminatory, intimidating or offensive statements being made online.

If any person believes they are being, or have been, bullied by a person or organisation bound by the Policy, they may make a complaint. See Section 9.

## **8. Inclusive Practices**

### **8.1. Diversity**

The Club is welcoming of members from all areas of the community, including, but not limited to people with a disability, people from diverse cultures, people of all genders and sexual identities and pregnant women.

### **8.2. Girls Playing in Boys Teams**

Where requested, the Club will support girls who wish to play in boys' teams, subject to competition regulations imposed by external agencies.

### **8.3. Transgender Players & Players of Indeterminate Gender**

Where requested, the Club will facilitate the placement of transgender players and players of indeterminate gender into teams of the gender with which they most closely identify, subject to adherence with competition regulations imposed by external agencies.

## **9. Complaints**

### **9.1. Treatment of Complaints**

The Club takes all complaints seriously. Complaints will be handled according to the principles of procedural fairness.

- The complainee will be given full details of the allegation against them and have the opportunity to respond to those allegations;
- irrelevant matters will not be taken into account;
- decisions will be unbiased; and
- penalties imposed will be reasonable.

More serious complaints may be escalated to the RSO or SSO.

If the complaint relates to suspected child abuse, sexual assault or other criminal activity, the Club may report the behaviour to the police and/or relevant authority.

## **9.2. Complaint Handling Process**

When a complaint is received, the person receiving the complaint will:

- listen carefully and ask questions to understand the nature and extent of the concern;
- explain the options available to help resolve the complainant's concern;
- offer appropriate support;
- maintain confidentiality (but not necessarily anonymity) where possible and appropriate; and
- inform the Club Member Protection Officer and, if required by law to do so, the police and other relevant authorities.

In the instance of complaints by a player, or the parent/guardian of a player, we recommend that the first point of contact be the relevant team manager or coach (unless this is inappropriate ie the complaint is against the team manager and coach). The Club encourages all players and coaches to maintain a respectful and open relationship to avoid misunderstandings.

Once the complainant decides on their preferred option for resolution, the Club will assist where appropriate and necessary with the resolution process. This may involve:

- facilitating communication between the complainant and complainee, including external mediation if appropriate;
- gathering more information;
- seeking advice from the RSO, SSO or other relevant external agency; and/or
- referring the complaint to the RSO or SSO or other relevant external agency.

Where a complaint is referred to the RSO or SSO and an investigation is conducted, the Club will:

- co-operate fully with the investigation
- where applicable, ensure the complainant is not placed in an unsupervised situation with the complainee; and
- respond to and act appropriately on the RSO's or SSO's recommendations.

At any stage, a person can seek advice from an appropriate external agency such as an anti-discrimination commission and, if the matter is within their jurisdiction, may lodge a complaint with that agency.

## **9.3. Summary Complaint Handling Procedure**

1. Communication: Raise the issue with the relevant person (eg manager or coach) to be addressed or passed onto the correct person.
2. First Escalation: If the issue is not resolved, submit a complaint in writing to the relevant Age Co-Ordinator.
3. Second Escalation: If the issue is not resolved, submit a complaint to the Member Protection Officer.
4. Response: Your complaint will be responded to within 10 working days of receipt, including outlining steps and timelines for resolution.

Note that in some circumstances, steps 1 and 2 will not apply and the initial complaint should be made straight to the Member Protection Officer (eg allegation of child abuse).

In some instances, if the Club is unable to resolve the complaint, the issue may be referred to the RSO, SSO or other relevant external agency.

## **9.4. Disciplinary Sanctions and Appeals**

If disciplinary action is required, this will be handled in line with the Club's Disciplinary Policy.

**10. Member Protection Officer**

The Club appoints a Member Protection Officer to ensure that the principles in the Policy are upheld, provide member support and advice, receive member complaints and ensure appropriate procedures are followed.

## **Attachment 1: Code of Conduct**

The Football Federation Australia (FFA) National Member Protection Policy (<https://www.ffa.com.au/sites/ffa/files/2017-09/National%20Member%20Protection%20Policy.pdf>) applies to all members and governs:

- bringing the FFA or football into disrepute, including through discriminatory behaviour, offensive behaviour and incitement of hatred or violence;
- liability for spectator and supporter conduct;
- betting, match-fixing and corruption; and
- disparaging public or media statements.

### **Players**

- Play by the Rules.
- Play with respect, integrity and fairness.
- Be modest in victory and gracious in defeat.
- If you win, don't rub it in.
- If you lose, don't make excuses.
- Control your temper.
- Don't use bad language or make derogatory remarks.
- Treat your opponent the way you would like to be treated.
- Thank the opposition at the end of the game.
- Accept and respect the officials' decisions.
- Thank the officials at the end of the game.

### **Parents/Guardians**

- The National Code of Conduct applies to all parents at any playing level.
- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of others.
- Remember that your child participates in sport for their own enjoyment, not yours.
- Focus on your child's efforts and performance rather than winning or losing.
- Never ridicule or yell at children for making a mistake or losing a game.
- Applaud good performance and effort by all players. When watching a game, congratulate both teams upon their performance regardless of the outcome.
- Show respect for your team's coach, manager, the match officials and opponents. Without them there would be no game.
- Demonstrate appropriate behaviour by not using foul language and not harassing administrators, coaches, players, match officials or volunteer. Condemn the use of violence at all times.
- Teach your child that an honest effort is more important than victory so that the result of each game is accepted without undue disappointment.
- Be a model of good behaviour for children to copy.
- Respect officials' decisions and teach children to do likewise.
- Let the coach do the coaching. Refrain from directing players.
- Stay calm on the sidelines and refrain from constant calling out.
- Do not physically or verbally abuse or harass anyone associated with the sport.
- IT IS JUST A GAME.

### **Spectators**

A spectator at a match or otherwise involved in any activity sanctioned or staged by, or held under the auspices of FFA, a member federation, a district association or a club must:

- respect the decisions of match officials and teach children to do the same;
- never ridicule or unduly scold a child for making a mistake;
- respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person regardless of their gender, ability, race, colour, religion, language, politics, national or ethnic origin;
- not use violence in any form, whether it is against other spectators, team officials (including coaches), match officials or players;

- not engage in discrimination, harassment or abuse in any form, including the use of obscene or offensive language or gestures, the incitement of hatred or violence or partaking in indecent or racist chanting;
- comply with any terms of entry of a venue, including bag inspection, prohibited and restricted items such as flares, missiles, dangerous articles and items that have the potential to cause injury or public nuisance;
- not, and must not attempt to, bring in to a venue national or political flags or emblems (except for the recognised national flags of any of the competing teams) or offensive or inappropriate banners, whether written in English or a foreign language;
- not throw missiles (including on to the field or play or at other spectators) and must not enter the field of play or its surrounds without lawful authority; and
- conduct themselves in a manner that enhances, rather than injures, the reputation and goodwill of FFA and football generally.
- ANY PERSON WHO DOES NOT COMPLY WITH THE SPECTATOR CODE OF BEHAVIOUR OR WHO OTHERWISE CAUSES A DISTURBANCE MAY BE EVICTED FROM A VENUE AND BANDED FROM ATTENDING FUTURE MATCHES.





<p>Nature of complaint (category/basis/grounds)</p> <p>Can tick more than one box</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Harassment or <input type="checkbox"/> Discrimination</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sexual/sexist      <input type="checkbox"/> Selection dispute      <input type="checkbox"/> Coaching methods</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sexuality      <input type="checkbox"/> Personality clash      <input type="checkbox"/> Verbal abuse</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Race      <input type="checkbox"/> Bullying      <input type="checkbox"/> Physical abuse</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Religion      <input type="checkbox"/> Disability      <input type="checkbox"/> Victimisation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy      <input type="checkbox"/> Child Abuse      <input type="checkbox"/> Unfair decision</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other .....</p>
<p>What they want to happen to fix issue</p>	
<p>Information provided to them</p>	
<p>Resolution and/or action taken</p>	
<p>Follow-up action</p>	

## Attachment 3: Procedure for Handling Allegations of Child Abuse

**If you believe a child is in immediate danger or a life-threatening situation, contact the police immediately on 000.**

Fact sheets on reporting allegations of child abuse in different state and territories are available at [www.playbetherules.net.au](http://www.playbetherules.net.au).

The Club will treat any allegation of child abuse or neglect promptly, seriously and with a high degree of sensitivity.

All people working with the Club in a paid or volunteer capacity have a duty to report any concerns to the appropriate authorities, following the steps outlined below.

### Step 1: Receive the Allegation

- If a child raises with you an allegation of child abuse or neglect that relates to them or another child, it is important that you listen, stay calm and be supportive.

Do	Don't
Make sure you are clear about what the child has told you.	Do not challenge or undermine the child.
Reassure the child that what has occurred is not their fault.	Do not seek detailed information, ask leading questions or offer an opinion.
Explain that other people may need to be told in order to stop what is happening.	Do not discuss the details with any person other than those detailed in these procedures.
Promptly and accurately record the discussion in writing.	Do not contact the alleged offender.

### Step 2: Report the Allegation

- Immediately report any allegation of child abuse or neglect, or any situation involving a child at risk of harm to the police and/or relevant child protection agency. You may need to make a report to both.
- Contact the relevant child protection agency or police for advice if there is any doubt about whether the allegation should be reported.
- If the allegation involves a person to whom the Policy applies, then also report the allegation to the Member Protection Officer so that they can manage the situation.

### Step 3: Protect the Child & Manage the Situation

- The Member Protection Officer will assess the immediate risks to the child and take interim steps to ensure the child's safety and the safety of any other children. This may include redeploying the alleged offender to a position where there is no unsupervised contact with children, supervising the alleged offender or removing/suspending them until any investigations have been concluded. Legal advice should be sought before any interim steps are made if the person is an employee of the Club.
- The Member Protection Officer will seek advice regarding what services may be most appropriate to support the child and their parents/guardians.
- The Member Protection Officer will seek advice regarding support services may be appropriate for the alleged offender.
- The Member Protection Officer will seek to put in place measures to protect the child and the alleged offender from possible victimisation and gossip.

### Step 4: Take Internal Action

- At least three different investigations could be undertaken to examine allegations that are made against a person to whom this policy applies, including:
  - A criminal investigation (conducted by the police);

- A child protection investigation (conducted by the relevant child protection agency); and/or
  - Disciplinary proceedings (conducted by the Club).
- The Club will assess the allegations and determine what action should be taken in the circumstances. Depending on the situation, action may include considering whether the alleged offender should return to their position, be dismissed, banned or suspended or face other disciplinary action.
- Where required the Club will provide the relevant government agency with a report of any disciplinary action taken.

### **Contact Details for Advice or to Report an Allegation of Child Abuse**

New South Wales Police  
Non-urgent police assistance  
Tel: 131 444  
[www.police.nsw.gov.au](http://www.police.nsw.gov.au)

Department of Family & Community Services  
[www.community.nsw.gov.au](http://www.community.nsw.gov.au)  
Tel: 132 111

#### Attachment 4: Confidential Record of Abuse Allegation

Before completing, ensure the procedures outlined in the Procedure for Handling Allegations of Child Abuse have been followed and advice has been sought from the relevant government agency and/or police.

#### Confidential Record of Abuse Allegation

Complainant's Name (if other than the child)		Date Formal Complaint Received: / /
Role/status in sport		
Child's name		Age:
Child's address		
Person's reason for suspecting abuse (e.g. observation, injury, disclosure)		
Name of person complained about		
Role/status in sport	<input type="checkbox"/> Administrator (volunteer) <input type="checkbox"/> Parent <input type="checkbox"/> Athlete/player <input type="checkbox"/> Spectator <input type="checkbox"/> Coach/Assistant Coach <input type="checkbox"/> Support Personnel <input type="checkbox"/> Employee (paid) <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> Official    .....	
Witnesses (if more than 3 witnesses, attach details to this form)	Name (1): Contact details: Name (2): Contact details: Name (3): Contact details:	
Interim action (if any) taken (to ensure child's safety and/or to support needs of person complained about)		
Police contacted	Who: When: Advice provided:	

Government agency contacted	Who: When: Advice provided:
President and/or MPIO contacted	Who: When:
Police and/or government agency investigation	Finding:
Internal investigation (if any)	Finding:
Action taken	
Completed by	Name: Position: Signature: / /
Signed by	Complainant (if not a child)

This record and any notes must be kept in a confidential and safe place and provided to the relevant authorities (police and government) should they require them.