



Sutherland Shire Football Association Child Safety Policy

As of February 2022, the NSW Child Safety Scheme was released with the purpose of providing an additional layer of protection to make organizations safer for children. The purpose of this policy is to protect the safety and wellbeing of children and young persons that interact with Sutherland Shire Football Association (SSFA).

Purpose Statement

- We are committed to providing a safe and inclusive place for children and young people.
- We use the Child Safe Standards to underpin how we keep children safe.
- We uphold the rights of all children to participate to their full capacity.
- This policy includes guidance for people who interact with children and young people on how to appropriately act when engaging with them from the sport discipline.
- We encourage and support the participation of children, young people and their families in the development and ongoing review of this policy and all our child safe documentation.
- Our leadership team promotes and is committed to a child safe culture and encourages reporting any breach of our policies, procedures or codes of conduct and will act to ensure the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children are upheld.
- Failing to comply with the SSFA child safety policy and supporting documentation may lead to disciplinary action or in severe cases in the event of a breach of the law, the matter will be reported to NSW Police or the other relevant government agency.
- In the event of an urgent situation, SSFA members should contact the Member Protection Information Officer (MPIO) as listed on the current club contacts link on the SSFA webpage, as well as the relevant authorities.

Scope

Children's safety should be the most important focus of any child-related organisation (paramountcy principle). As such, all paid and unpaid staff of SSFA have the responsibility of following this policy in the best interest of the children and young people that are associated with our organisation. This includes all committee members, coaches, managers and paid staff over the age of 18.

Responsibilities

Having a leadership team committed to providing safe environments means children are less likely to be exposed to harm and abuse. It is the responsibility of all volunteers and employees of the SSFA to uphold the rights of children and champion a child safe culture.

The executive committee is responsible for upholding the Child Safety policy and using the relevant documents when recruiting or screening new volunteer committee members.

At SSFA, our leadership team will be led by our Member Protection Information Officers as the committee members trained in handling member or child protection enquiries or complaints. The MPIO's do not mediate or investigate complaints. Serious matters can be referred to Football NSW.


Definition of Child Abuse and Harm

Children and young persons can be exposed to different kinds of harm. These are identified in the OCG's handbook *Risk Management and the Child Safe Standards - Part 2: Identifying risk*. For a summary of the different types of abuse, see Figure 1.

Figure 1: Different types of abuse that can cause harm as identified by the OCG (*Risk Management and the Child Safe Standards - Part 2: Identifying risk*).

Risks to children which can cause harm, or leave them vulnerable to harm*

Physical abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Physical punishment▪ Pushing, shoving, punching, slapping, kicking resulting in injury, burns, choking or bruising▪ Threatening to physically harm a child▪ Genital mutilation▪ Peer-to-peer violence.
Neglect	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Lack of supervision▪ Not providing adequate nourishment▪ Not providing adequate medical care, clothing or shelter▪ Lack of education.
Emotional abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Bullying▪ Threatening and abusive language▪ Intimidation▪ Shaming and name calling▪ Ignoring and isolating a child▪ Exposure to domestic and family violence.
Sexual abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Sexual touching of a child▪ Grooming▪ Production, distribution or possession of child abuse material (pornography)▪ Descriptions of sexual acts without a legitimate reason.
Sexual misconduct	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Sexual comments, conversations or communications▪ Comments to a child that express a desire to act in a sexual manner towards them or another child.



Cultural Safety in this context is ensuring that people involved within our organization know the expectations of how to interact with children and young people when engaging with them from the sport discipline. Having this awareness, being committed to a child safe culture and encouraging the reporting of any breach of our policies, procedures or codes of conduct will ensure the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children in our organization.

Supporting Documentation

Supporting this document are other policies, procedures and codes of conduct that aim to identify and prevent behaviour that may be harmful to children and young people. This documentation has been developed to guide appropriate behaviours and encourage all club members to create, maintain and improve a child safe environment.

- Public Statement of Commitment to Child Safety
- Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Reporting Policy
- Recruitment Policy
- Online Code of Conduct/Social Media Policy
- Risk Management Plan

Content

Our organisation provides a safe culture by supporting children and young people, their families and communities and by ensuring all volunteers and staff who work with SSFA are committed to safeguarding children and young people.

The following subsections have been identified as areas that require additional guidance for people interacting with children and young people that are not exclusively covered by our Child Safe Code of Conduct, Reporting Policy or Recruitment Policy.

Supervision of children

All coaches and managers require a Working with Children Check (WWC) which is validated at the beginning of each season. As such, if a coach or manager is unable to attend a training session and another parent needs to fill in, they too should have a registered WWC. At no time should the children be left with a parent or other team volunteer unless they have fulfilled the obligations outlined in the SSFA Recruitment Policy.

Managing drop offs and pick ups

A coach or manager should remain with all children or young people from the team until the identified parent or carer has returned to pick-up their child. If this becomes an issue of concern, please consult the MPIO for further advice.

Online communication

We have developed the Sutherland Shire Football Association (SSFA) Communication Policy (2017). Of significance is the following section:

What we ask our members to do:

We expect our members to conduct themselves appropriately when using electronic communication to share information with other members.

Electronic communication:

- Should be restricted to SSFA matters.
- Must not offend, intimidate humiliate or bully another person.
- Must not be misleading, false or injure the reputation of another person.
- Should respect and maintain the privacy of members.
- Must not bring the association into disrepute.

Coaches and others who work with children and young people (under the age of 18) must direct electronic communication through the child's parents.

<https://shirefootball.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/SSFA-Communication-Policy.pdf>

Social media use

We have developed the Sutherland Shire Football Association (SSFA) Social Media Policy.

<https://shirefootball.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/SSFA-Social-Media-Policy-June-2022.pdf>

Photography and the use of images

SSFA have adopted the Football NSW and Australian Sports Commission policies for Acquiring and Displaying Images of Children. For more information:

<https://aofc.com.au/juniorfiles/2015%20Acquiring%20Displaying%20Images%20Of%20Children%20V2.pdf>

Legal Requirements

This policy is supported by legislation relevant to child safety and includes:

Children's Guardian Act 2019

Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012

Child Protection (Working with Children) Regulation

2013 Children and Young Persons (Care and

Protection) Act 1998 Crimes Act 1900

Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Regulation 2012

Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) (Child Employment)

Regulation 2015 Disability Inclusion Act 2014

Anti-Discrimination Act 1977

Publication

This policy will be made readily available on the Sutherland Shire Football Association webpage, under the About SSFA/ Child Safeguarding section. Our commitment to child safety and supporting documentation will also be made clear on our social media pages.

All documentation and codes of conduct will be emailed to new volunteers to ensure compliance and understanding of the child safety standards, as well as SSFAs commitment to upholding child safety within the organisation.

Evaluation and Review

This policy is a work in progress and will be reviewed through the season and formally reviewed before December 2024. This is the responsibility of the MPIO's, as well as other SSFA executive committee members with experience and training in implementation of the child safety standards. The next phase of review will welcome feedback from new and returning families to the organisation in 2024 to encourage children, young people and their parents or carers to have a say in the policy development.

Created: February 2024