Child Safe Policy

Purpose

All children at Kurnell Catamaran Club have a right to feel safe, protected and included.

This policy is part of our organisation's ongoing commitment to protecting the children in our care from harm and abuse. It:

- outlines the child safe practices our organisation has put in place to minimise the risks to child safety
- sets out what is required from staff, including volunteers and others who interact with our organisation, so they know what is expected from them to keep children safe.

Our commitment to child safety

At Kurnell Catamaran Club we commit to the safety and wellbeing of every child in our care. Please read our Statement of Commitment to Child Safety, which is available on our website and is displayed at the entrance to the main clubhouse.

Our organisation ensures services and activities are inclusive of all children, including children with diverse needs.

Scope and audience for this policy

The policy describes what is required from all staff and volunteers in the organisation when taking part in any activities, services and events that involve children.

Responsibilities for children's safety

Everyone in our organisation is expected to carry out the requirements specific to their role to keep children safe. This includes:

- upholding our organisation's commitment to child safety
- reading, signing and upholding the behaviours set out in our Child Safe Code of Conduct
- meeting requirements across all other child safe policies and procedures, including child safe recruitment practices and risk management
- taking part in our regular reviews of our child safe documents
- reporting all breaches of our policies or any allegations of child harm or abuse, and meeting all external reporting obligations

- completing all child safe training.

Please contact the Club President with any of your child-safety related questions or concerns.

Active participation of children, families and communities

- All our child-related policies and procedures are easily accessible on our website and offline for everyone who accesses our services and events, including children, parents, carers and community members.
- Children, parents and carers from diverse backgrounds and circumstances are encouraged to provide feedback on our child-related policies and procedures, including our Child Safe Code of Conduct that describes acceptable and non-acceptable behaviours and our Child Safe Risk Management Plan.
- We provide opportunities for children to provide feedback to our management, board or committee on what makes them feel safe, supported and included.

Definitions of harm and abuse

General definitions

Psychological abuse (also known as emotional abuse)
This includes bullying, threatening and abusive language, intimidation, shaming and name calling, ignoring and isolating a child, and exposure to domestic and family violence.

Physical abuse
This includes physical punishment, such as pushing, shoving, punching, slapping and kicking, resulting in injury, burns, choking or bruising.

Sexual abuse
This includes the sexual touching of a child, grooming, and production, distribution or possession of child abuse material.

Grooming
This is a process where a person manipulates a child or group of children and sometimes those looking after them, including parents, carers, teachers and leaders. They do this to establish a position of 'trust' so they can then later sexually abuse the child.

Misconduct
This is inappropriate behaviour that may not be as severe as abuse, but could indicate that abuse is occurring and would often be in breach of an organisation's Child Safe Code of Conduct. This could include showing a child something inappropriate on a phone, having inappropriate conversations with a child or an adult sitting with a child on their lap.

Lack of appropriate care
This includes not providing adequate and proper supervision, nourishment, clothing, shelter, education or medical care.

What the policy covers

Interactions with children

At Kurnell Catamaran Club, we expect parents or a responsible caregiver to provide primary care for their children when on the club premises or when undertaking any activities connected with the club.

Primarily, children are to be supervised by their parents or caregivers, or another responsible adult who has been organised by the parents or caregivers to be responsible for that child during activities. Volunteers provide instruction and support to undertake specific activities, but this does not replace the importance of parents and caregivers.

All interactions with children must be safe and respectful. No person is to undertake any activity that makes a child feel unsafe or unwelcome. All activities must be explained to children in a way that they understand. Children have the right to make the decisions about the activities that they are willing to undertake and every child has the right to refuse to undertake any activity.

Parents and caregivers must provide direct consent for other adults to undertake activities with their children, and any such activity must occur in public. For example, a parent can consent to another sailor taking their child on a boat for a sail, as this is a public activity. It is expected that a parent or caregiver remains on the shore to resume supervision and care of the child directly following that activity.

Volunteers should not be alone with a child, other than their own, at any time. There should always be two adults present, if a child is not with their parent or caregiver. If a circumstance arises where a volunteer is alone with a child, they must remain in a public setting. It is not acceptable for a volunteer to be alone with a child in a private setting.

Transporting children

In the first instance, children should be transported by a parent or caregiver. If a volunteer is required to transport a child, the best practice is to have two adults travelling with any children. If this is not possible, a suitable arrangement must be made between the organisation and the parents of the children. If a child is alone with an adult in a car, they must sit on the back seat. Every child must be accounted for at the end of a journey.

Social media use and online communication

Staff and volunteers must never communicate privately with children online or on social media. Any necessary online communication should include the child's parent or carer in the correspondence.

Photography and the use of images

Photos and videos of children can only be taken in public, with the permission of parents or carers. Children and parents should be advised if any photos are intended to be shared online and what platform they are intended to be shared on so they can provide informed consent (For example, if you take a group photo of all the children undertaking a Learn to Sail activity, advise the parents when setting up the photo if you intend to post it on the club Facebook page). It is unacceptable for volunteers to take photos or videos of children, other than their own, in any private setting.

Physical contact

Physical contact with children should be kept to a minimum. Physical contact with a child should only occur in public, in the context of directly ensuring the physical safety of that child. Everyone involved in the organisation is expected to have healthy physical boundaries with children.

Gifts and benefits

Staff and volunteers must never give gifts to children, or bestow benefits of any kind to a child, unless they have direct permission from the child's parents or carers.

Out of hours contact with children

Staff and volunteers must let us know about any out-of-hours contact they have with children in our care. It is unacceptable for staff or volunteers to participate in the lives of children outside the organisation without a valid reason. Professional boundaries with the children in our care must be maintained at all times.

Illness and injury management

Injuries must be reported to the first aid officer on duty and first aid administered in a safe space within lines of sight of other adults.

Working with Children Checks

Volunteer roles who primarily work with children (i.e. Junior president) are required to have a valid Working with Children Check. Volunteers who primarily interact with adults do not require a WWCC but are encouraged to have one. Volunteers who do not have a valid WWCC are not to be given any roles with specific interactions with children.

Child Safe Code of Conduct

All members and volunteers must agree to the Child Safe Code of Conduct. Any volunteers who primarily engage with children must sign the Code of Conduct.

Acceptable and unacceptable behaviours in our organisation

The list of acceptable and unacceptable behaviours below are in relation to interactions of volunteers and members with any children who interact with our organisation's services, locations or activities.

I will:

- treat all children with respect
- uphold the rights of the child and always prioritise their needs and safety
- make sure the needs of all children remain the paramount focus of any decision-making
- listen to and value the ideas and opinions of all children, and respond to them appropriately
- welcome all children and their families and carers, and ask them to participate in decisions around child safety
- actively promote safe and inclusive practices for all children, including those with diverse needs, circumstances and backgrounds, including children with disability
- adhere to the organisation's child safe policies, procedures and practices
- take all reasonable steps to protect children from harm and abuse, and report and act on any concerns or allegations (see reporting obligations below)
- include a child's parent or carer in any direct online communication or correspondence.
- seek the consent of the child and a parent or caregiver prior to undertaking any activity with a child and only undertake these activities in a public setting

- when transporting a child, take all reasonable steps to ensure at least two adults are travelling with the child at all times or put in place a suitable arrangement between my organisation and the parents or carers of the child. If the child is alone, they must sit in the back seat of the vehicle.
- report any conflicts of interest such as a relationship with a child that is outside the organisation
- raise concerns with the President or Committee Member if risks to child safety are identified
- take a child seriously if they disclose harm or abuse and follow the correct procedures for responding to a disclosure
- make sure breaches of the Child Safe Code of Conduct and any instances of concerning behaviour from adults are reported immediately
- respect the privacy of children, and their families, and keep all information about child protection concerns confidential.

I won't:

- be alone with a child without the parents or caregivers, or at least one other adult present
- condone or participate in unsafe, harmful or abusive behaviour towards children, including psychological, physical and sexual abuse, grooming, misconduct or lack of appropriate care
- ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse
- exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues
- persistently criticise or denigrate a child
- use hurtful, discriminatory or offensive behaviour or language with children
- verbally assault a child, or create a climate of fear
- deliberately prevent a child from forming friendships
- engage in unwarranted and inappropriate touching involving a child
- have contact after hours with children
- encourage a child to communicate with me in a private setting, including online or on social media
- give personal gifts or benefits of any kind to a child unless direct permission has been given from the parent or carer
- share details of sexual experiences with a child
- use sexual language or gestures in the presence of children
- show sexual, violent or other inappropriate images to a child
- take videos or images of children, or share videos and images of children, interacting with the organisation in private or without consent
- fail to report information to police or other relevant authorities if I know a child has been harmed or abused (see reporting obligations below).

Concerning behaviours

Concerning behaviours are behaviours that on their own may not constitute a breach of our Child Safe Code of Conduct but when viewed together may indicate grooming behaviour.

These include:

- Showing favour to one child over others
- Babysitting children without prior consent from the organisation (babysitting outside the organisation is only allowed in exceptional circumstances when the child and their family or carer is known has a pre-existing relationship with the staff member or volunteer outside the organisation)
- Participating in the lives of children outside the club without a valid reason
- Crossing professional boundaries with the children in our care
- Spending time alone with children

- Being ‘child centric’, which means showing a preference for hanging out with children rather than adults.

Reporting requirements for different types of concerns or incidents

All complaints or concerns should be reported. This includes:

- criminal conduct
- disclosures or reports of abuse
- risk of significant harm (ROSH)
- unacceptable behaviour around children and young people that breaches our Child Safe Code of Conduct.

Criminal offences for not acting to protect children

Some breaches of this policy may need to be reported to NSW Police, the Office of the Children’s Guardian or the Department of Communities and Justice.

It is a criminal offence for adults not to report to police if they know or believe that a child abuse offence has been committed.

The adult concerned should reach out to the Club President or another Committee Member within the club if they are unsure of what may need to be reported externally.

Child abuse or neglect

If a person believes a child is at “Risk of Significant Harm” (ROSH) as defined by *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998*, they are to report this to the Department of Communities and Justice, via the Child Protection Helpline (13 21 11).

If a person believes that another person is acting in a way that constitutes child abuse or neglect, this must be reported immediately to the Club President, or another Committee Member if the actions relate to the Club President.

The responsible officer must take all actions lawful and necessary to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child. Any reports of abuse or neglect that involve criminal conduct must be reported to the Police. Reports that involve abuse or neglect, but do not involve criminal conduct, are treated as serious breaches of the Child Safe Policy. Serious breaches of the Child Safe Policy are expected to result in the termination of the membership of the person responsible. The procedure for breaches, including serious breaches, is set out below.

Breaches of the Child Safe Policy

Any adult who becomes aware that any aspect of the Child Safe Policy has been breached must report this immediately to the Club President. If the breach relates to the actions or inactions of the Club President, they must be reported to another Committee Member.

The Club President, or the Committee Member the breach was raised with, is responsible for taking action to address the breach and ensuring the safety and wellbeing of any children involved. All reported concerns, incidents and potential breaches must be clearly documented.

Any breach must be raised at the next Committee Meeting, unless doing so would impede an action that was currently underway in response to that breach (for example, impeding an active criminal investigation). If this is the case, the breach must be raised at the first Committee Meeting following the resolution of the actions required in response to that breach.

A breach of the Child Safe Policy may result in a membership being terminated.

Any ‘concerning behaviours’ as defined by the Code of Conduct must also be reported to the Club

President, or another Committee Member. The responsible officer must document any ‘concerning behaviour’ reported and take appropriate action to address this with the individuals involved. Any subsequent concerns following any ‘concerning behaviours’ constitutes a breach of the Child Safe Policy and must be responded to as above.

Publication, communication and engagement

Our Child Safe Policy and other child safe documents can be found on our website and in the Club House. We also send out a copy with all new registrations. Anyone involved in our community can request a copy via email at any time. We feedback whenever one of our organisation’s child safe documents is up for review.

Related legislation, regulations and standards

Kurnell Catamaran Club has to understand and comply with a number of NSW child protection laws and schemes. These include:

- NSW Child Safe Scheme
- *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*

Next review date

14/09/2029, or earlier if there are any critical incidents