



Golden Grove Football Club

Member Protection Policy

GGFC is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children, young people and adults participating in, officiating or associated in any way with football at our club.

GGFC is committed to providing a safe, fair & inclusive environment for all participants that is free from harassment, discrimination and abuse, and promotes respectful and positive behaviour and values.

GGFC is committed to ensuring that everyone associated with GGFC complies with the policy.

Purpose of Our Policy

The main objective of our Member Protection Policy is to maintain responsible behaviour and ethical and informed decision-making by participants in this club. This policy outlines our commitment to a person's right to be treated with respect and dignity, and to be safe and protected from abuse. Our policy informs everyone involved in our club of their legal and ethical rights and responsibilities and the standards of behaviour that are required. It also covers the care and protection of children participating in our clubs activities.

Who Our Policy Applies To

Our policy applies to everyone involved in the club whether in paid or unpaid positions including committee members, administrators, coaches, officials, volunteers, players, parents and spectators.

Extent of Our Policy

Our policy covers:-

- Member Protection Policy
- Child Protection
- Complaints Policy
- Codes of Behaviour

Club Responsibilities

We will:

- appoint Player Advocates as contact points within the club for any player or parent to approach regarding mental health and other issues which may not constitute a child safety situation. These player advocates are a resource as to the steps to follow to seek appropriate help.
- appoint Child Safe Officer/s to assist with all matters relating to child safe environments and reporting requirements as required by law
- implement and comply with our policy;
- promote our policy to everyone involved in our club;
- always promote and model appropriate standards of behaviour;
- respond to breaches or complaints made under our policy promptly, fairly, and confidentially;



Golden Grove Football Club

- apply this policy consistently
- use appropriately trained people to receive and manage complaints and allegations e.g. Member Protection Information Officers (MPIOs)
- seek advice from, and if necessary or appropriate, refer serious issues to the relevant affiliated bodies.

Individual Responsibilities

Everyone associated with our club must:

- always place the safety and welfare of children above other considerations;
- comply with our screening requirements including completion of a South Australian Working with Children check;
- comply with the standards of behaviour/ codes of conduct outlined in our policy;
- be responsible and accountable for their behaviour;
- follow the guidelines outlined in this policy if they wish to make a complaint or report a concern about possible child abuse, discrimination, harassment or other inappropriate behaviour;
- comply with any decisions and/or disciplinary measures imposed under this policy

Child Protection

GGFC is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people participating in, officiating or associated in any way with football at our club. We support the rights of the child and will act without hesitation to ensure a child safe environment is always maintained. We also support the rights and wellbeing of our staff and volunteers and encourage their active participation in building and maintaining a secure environment for all participants.

GGFC acknowledges that our staff, members and volunteers provide a valuable contribution to the positive experiences of children involved in our sport. GGFC aims to continue this and to take measures to protect the safety and welfare of children participating in our sport through the following mechanisms:

a. Identify and Analyse Risk of Harm

GGFC will continually review its child protection practices, to determine how child-safe and child-friendly the organisation is and to determine what additional strategies are required to minimise and prevent risk of harm to children

b. Develop Codes of Conduct

GGFC will ensure it has codes of conduct that specify standards of conduct and care when dealing and interacting with children, particularly those in the organisation's care.

The code(s) of conduct will set out professional boundaries, ethical behaviour and unacceptable behaviour and can be found at the end of this document.

c. Choose Suitable Volunteers

GGFC will conduct Working with Children checks for all persons associated with the club as required by law, to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children.



Golden Grove Football Club

If a criminal history report is obtained as part of their screening process, GGFC will ensure that the criminal history information is dealt with in accordance with the standards developed by the Chief Executive, Department for Families and Communities.¹

d. Support, Train, Supervise and Enhance Performance

GGFC will ensure that volunteers who work with children have ongoing supervision, support and training such that their performance is developed and enhanced to promote the establishment and maintenance of a child-safe environment. The child safe officer role will be established to support this statement and the appointment of the person to this role will be reviewed annually.

e. Empower & Promote the Participation of Children in Decision-Making & Service Development

GGFC will endeavour to involve children and young people in developing and maintaining child-safe environments.

f. Report and Respond Appropriately to Suspected Abuse and Neglect

GGFC will ensure that volunteers are able to identify and respond to children at risk of harm.

GGFC will make all volunteers aware of their responsibilities under the *Children's Protection Act 1993* if they have suspicion on reasonable grounds that a child has been or is being abused or neglected.

We require that any child who is abused or anyone who reasonably suspects that a child has been or is being abused by someone, report it immediately to the police or relevant government agency and the President.

If any person feels another person or organisation bound by this policy is acting inappropriately towards a child or is breaching the code' (s) of practice set out they may make an internal complaint.

g. Supervision

Members under the age of 18 in the absence of a parent/guardian will be provided with a level of supervision adequate and relative to the members' age, maturity, capabilities, level of experience, nature of activity and nature of venue.

h. Transportation

Parents/guardians are responsible for transporting their children to and from club activities (e.g. practice and games) unless the child is a licenced driver themselves.

Taking Images of Children

GGFC acknowledges that in South Australia under the Summary Offences Act 1953 a person must not engage in indecent filming. Images of children and adults should not be used inappropriately or illegally.

Our club requires that members, wherever possible, obtain permission from a child's parent/guardian before taking an image of a child that is not their own and ensure that



Golden Grove Football Club

the parent knows the way the image will be used. Our club also requires the privacy of others to be respected and disallows the use of camera phones, videos and cameras inside changing areas, showers and toilets.

We will only use appropriate images of a child, relevant to our sport and ensure that the child is suitably clothed in a manner that promotes the sport, displays its successes, etc.

Anti-harassment, Discrimination and Bullying

Our club opposes all forms of harassment, discrimination and bullying.

This includes treating or proposing to treat someone less favourably because of a particular characteristic; imposing or intending to impose an unreasonable requirement, condition or practice which has an unequal or disproportionate effect on people with a particular characteristic; or any behaviour that is offensive, abusive, belittling, intimidating or threatening - whether this is face-to-face, indirectly or via online communication technologies including social networking websites.

Social media postings, blogs, status updates and tweets in reference to the club or associated leagues must not use offensive, provocative or hateful language, must not be misleading, false or injure the reputation of another person, should respect and maintain the privacy of others and should promote the sport in a positive way.

Some forms of harassment, discrimination and bullying are against the law.

No person in his/her capacity as a spectator or participant in the club while carrying out his/her duties or functions of being a participant in the League shall engage in conduct that offends, humiliates, intimidates, ridicules, incites, threatens, disparages, vilifies or insults another person based on that person's race, religion, colour, gender identity, sexual orientation, descent or national or ethnic origin.

Intimate Relationships

Our club takes the view that intimate relationships (whether or not of a sexual nature) between coaches/officials and adult players, while not necessarily constituting harassment, can have harmful effects on the player, on other players and on the sport's public image. Such relationships may be perceived to be exploitative because there is usually a disparity between coaches/officials and players in terms of authority, maturity, status, influence and dependence.

Given there is always a risk that the relative power of the coach/official has been a factor in the development of such relationships, they should be avoided or if such a relationship does exist then the coach/official is expected to ensure that the relationship is appropriate and that it does not compromise impartiality, professional standards or the relationship of trust the coach or official has with the player and/or other players.

If a player attempts to initiate an intimate relationship, the coach must take personal responsibility for discouraging such approaches, explaining the ethical basis for such actions.



Golden Grove Football Club

Intimate relationships between any other members are considered strictly personal and the member protection policy will not apply.

Sexual & Gender Identity

All people, regardless of their sexuality or gender identification, are welcome at our club. Participation in teams by transgender persons will be as per the relevant affiliated bodies rules.

Pregnancy

Pregnant women should be aware that their own health and wellbeing, and that of their unborn children, should be of utmost importance in their decision making about the way they participate in our sport. We recommend pregnant women to consult with their medical advisers, make themselves aware of the facts about pregnancy in sport, and ensure that they make informed decisions about participation.

Codes of Conduct

Club House

- Strictly no BYO alcohol into GGFC grounds or clubhouse
- All players, officials and members are always expected to behave in a manner which brings credit to them and the club (both on and off the field)
- Member and visitor attire is to be clean and tidy. No football boots. No shirt, no shoes, no service.
- Strictly no smoking
- No running
- No footballs
- Club approved sponsors only are to be displayed or promoted
- All players, officials & visitors are to treat the clubrooms and the facilities with respect and will be responsible for any damage to the club's facilities if deliberately caused.
- Players and officials need to abide by the club rules and regulations.
- Members and visitors are to follow the directive of appointed committee persons

All Coaches

- Hold the relevant coaching accreditation.
- Role model appropriate behaviour by acting with integrity and professionalism as you are likely to have the greatest influence on the behaviour of players and spectators.
- Place the safety and welfare of the participants above all else.
- Be reasonable in your demands on your player's time, energy and enthusiasm.
- Be aware of and support the sport's injury management plans and return to play guidelines.
- Help each person (player, official, etc.) to reach their potential. Respect the talent, developmental stage and goals of each person and encourage them with positive and constructive feedback.
- Encourage and support opportunities for people to learn appropriate behaviours and skills.
- Always operate within the rules and spirit of the game.



Golden Grove Football Club

- Be responsible for decisions and the consequence of actions having utmost regard for high standards.
- Ensure your decisions and actions contribute to a harassment-free environment.
- Avoid unaccompanied and unobserved one-on-one activity (when in a supervisory capacity or where a power imbalance exists) with people under the age of 18.
- Ensure that any physical contact with another person is appropriate to the situation and necessary for the person's skill development.
- Never advocate or condone the use of illicit drugs or other banned performance enhancing substances or methods.
- Respect the rights and worth of every person, regardless of their age, race, gender, ability, cultural background, sexuality or religion.
- Do not tolerate abusive, bullying or threatening behaviour.
- Promote fair play over winning at any cost.
- Respect the decisions of officials, coaches and administrators.
- Show respect and courtesy to all involved with the sport.
- Display responsible behaviour in relation to alcohol and other drugs.
- Display control, respect and professionalism to all involved with the sport. This includes opponents, coaches, officials, administrators, parents, friends and supporters. Encourage your players and support staff to do the same.
- Do not tolerate behaviour that may incite players and spectators against any on field official or public display of displeasure.

Junior Coaches - Additional

- Have due consideration for the varying maturity and ability levels of players when designing practice schedules, practice activities and involvement in competition.
- Adhere to the guidelines provided in the junior coaching manual.
- Strive to ensure all players gain equal playing time during the regular season. Avoid overplaying the talented players, aiming to maximise participation, learning and enjoyment for all players regardless of ability.
- Use drills to develop fitness, not as a punishment
- Work within sight of others at all times
- Do not socialise with athletes via social media
- Do not isolate yourself and a child and avoid being alone with any child
- If a child approaches you and wants to talk to you privately about a matter, do so in an open area and in sight of other adults (e.g. other coaches, officials or parents/guardians)
- Before going into change rooms knock or announce that you will be coming in. Try to have at least one adult with you in a change room with children

Players

- Team First Football
- Play by the rules (of both the laws of the game and the rules of the club).
- Do not engage in off the ball or behind the play violence.
- Accept the umpires decision.
- Verbal abuse of officials or other players, or provoking an opponent is not acceptable.



Golden Grove Football Club

- Treat the opposition and your teammates with respect.
- Take responsibility for your actions, remember you are a representative of GGFC.

Parents, Supporters & Officials

- Remember that you are there for the participants to enjoy the game
- Recognise all volunteers who are giving up their valuable time
- Lead by example and respect all players, coaches, umpires and spectators - physical or verbal abuse will not be tolerated
- Refrain from using bad language, making inappropriate comments, harassing or ridiculing others or behaving in a threatening or violent manner.
- If you are aware of inappropriate spectator behaviour, advise your team Ground Marshall or club official. Do not engage or retaliate.
- Call the police or a club official if you are concerned for your safety or the safety of others.

Complaint Handling

Our club takes all complaints about on and off-field behaviour seriously. Our club will handle complaints based on the principles of procedural fairness (natural justice), that is:

- all complaints will be taken seriously;
- both the person making the complaint (complainant) and the person the complaint is against (respondent) will be given full details of what is being said against them and can respond (give their side of the story);
- matters not relevant to the matter at hand will not be considered;
- decisions will be unbiased and fair; and
- any penalties imposed will be fair and reasonable.

Please note that under no circumstances is ANY individual from our club permitted to complain in writing or verbally to the relevant affiliated body. All complaints are to be actioned in terms of this policy.

Making a Complaint

Step 1: Before Making a Formal Complaint

In many situations the most appropriate step is to discuss the issue with the person who is the cause of the complaint. If the problem cannot be resolved by a direct personal approach it should then be raised with an appropriate person to discuss the issue and attempt a resolution as below:-

Junior players/parents - team manager or coach, then age coordinator, then football director



Golden Grove Football Club

Senior players - team manager or coach, then football director.

Alternatively, the matter can be raised directly with a player advocate, MPIO or child safe officer.

If the approaches above have been exhausted, then the complaint can be directed to the Club President.

NB: Where a complaint relates to an allegation of child abuse the matter will immediately be referred to the police or relevant state government authority.

Step 2: Making a Formal Complaint

If the direct approach has not resulted in a satisfactory outcome, then a formal complaint can be made. The initial formal complaint must be introduced to the relevant Football Director in writing. If you make a complaint, it will be investigated in a fair and impartial manner. No judgements or assumptions will be made, and no action taken until the investigation is complete unless the matter relates to child abuse. If a complaint is made against you, you will be given the opportunity to tell your side of the story. Confidentiality will always be maintained. Each complaint will be dealt with in as short a time as possible, ideally no more than one month.

Step 3: The Process

Once you have made a formal complaint in writing to the relevant Football Director, they will firstly ensure there is no conflict of interest before dealing with the complaint. If such a conflict exists, then the complaint will be referred to another appropriate person. The delegated person will then interview all parties and witnesses in relation to the complaint, with a view of having a resolution to the satisfaction of all parties and the club.

During these interviews the parties will be advised what will happen if the complaint is upheld or if the complaint is not supported by the evidence. All interviews will be recorded in writing.

Step 4: Review

If the complaint remains unresolved the President will review the complaint and make a final decision with the agreement of the majority of the Club's Executive Committee.

Step 5: Outcomes

If a complaint is upheld the following are possible outcomes depending on the nature of the complaint:

- supporting the person complaining to talk to the person being complained about
- bringing all the people involved in the complaint together to talk objectively through the problem (this could include external mediation);
- seeking advice from the relevant affiliated body;



Golden Grove Football Club

- referring the complaint to the relevant affiliated body;
- referring the complainant to an external agency such as a community mediation centre, police or anti-discrimination agency.

In situations where a complaint is referred to the relevant affiliated body and an inquiry is conducted, the club will:

- co-operate fully;
- ensure the complainant and respondent are not victimised;
- where applicable, ensure the complainant is not placed in an unsupervised situation with the respondent(s); and
- act on the relevant affiliated body recommendations.

At any stage of the process, a person can seek advice from or lodge a complaint with an anti-discrimination commission or other external agency.

If the complaint relates to suspected child abuse, sexual assault or other criminal activity, then our club will need to report the behaviour to the police and/or relevant government authority and our state/national body.

Disciplinary Measures

GGFC will take disciplinary action against anyone found to have breached our policy or made false and malicious allegations. Any disciplinary measure imposed under our policy must:

- Be applied consistently.
- Be fair and reasonable.
- Be based on the evidence and information presented and the seriousness of the breach.
- Be determined by our Constitution, Policies and the rules of the game.

If a complaint is upheld the following are possible disciplinary measures depending on the nature of the complaint:

- verbal and/or written apology;
- written warning;
- counselling to address behaviour;
- withdrawal of any awards, placings, records, achievements bestowed in any tournaments, activities or events held or sanctioned by our club;
- suspension or termination of membership, participation or engagement in a role or activity;
- de-registration of accreditation for a period or permanently;
- a reduction/loss of match day payments, a fine; or
- any other form of discipline that our committee considers reasonable and appropriate.

Appeals

The complainant or respondent can lodge one appeal against decisions or disciplinary measures imposed by our club to the relevant league. Appeals must be based on either a denial of natural justice, because of unjust or unreasonable disciplinary measure(s) being



Golden Grove Football Club

imposed, or on the grounds that the decision was not supported by the information/evidence presented and available to the decision maker/club.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains relevant to Club operations and reflects both community expectations and legal requirements.

Approval Date	June 2023
Review Date	June 2025
Responsible Officer	President