

# Marist Softball Club (Inc): Child Protection Policy

Reviewed: 27 August 2019    Next review date: Start of 2020-2021 season

## 1      **Purpose**

The purpose of this Policy is to create a safe and happy experience for children and young people who participate in softball with our Club.

Our Policy is for guidance for our volunteers and members on how to behave with children and young people within our Club.

It is the collective responsibility of everyone to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children entrusted to our care. Following these guidelines, not only will the child's sporting experience be enhanced, but it may also lead to their lifelong participation in sport.

## 2      **Maintain appropriate boundaries**

Coaches and other personnel in positions of authority should maintain clear:

- Physical boundaries:
  - Use training drills to develop skills and fitness, not as punishment
  - Use physical contact only as necessary for the development of a particular skill
  - Work within sight of others at all times
- Emotional and verbal boundaries:
  - Use positive feedback on performance, not negative feedback about the person
  - Be encouraging and avoid put-downs
- Social boundaries:
  - Attend sports-related events such as sponsorship and fundraising events, club activities, club meetings, but do not socialise outside of sporting functions

## 3      **Minimise physical contact**

Physical contact with players should be to:

- Develop sports skills
- Give sports massage
- Treat an injury
- Prevent, or respond to, an injury
- Meet a specific requirement of the sport

All physical contact should fulfil the following criteria:

- Physical contact should be appropriate for the development of a sports skill
- Permission from a player should always be sought
- A player should be congratulated or comforted in public, not in an isolated setting

#### **4 Avoid being alone with a child**

To protect the Coach or other person in position of authority, and a child, from risk:

- Do not become isolated with any child
- If a child approaches and wants to talk privately, do so in an open area within sight of other adults
- Before going into a changing room, knock and/or announce your presence, and try to have at least one other adult in attendance

#### **5 Maintain control, avoid losing temper**

Adopt positive language and behaviour; avoid bad or aggressive language that could intimidate or set a poor example.

If a coach or other person in position of authority finds that they regularly lose their temper with children, they should seek support or consider whether they have the patience and skills to work with children.

#### **6 Make sure parents are clear about collection of their children**

Parents need to be responsible for the collection of their children from trainings and games. Suggested actions that could help include:

- Have a register of parent contact numbers, and make sure the coach and manager have access to a phone
- Let children and parents know practice and game times, when they can collect their children, and that it is not the coach's and manager's responsibility to transport a child home if the parent is delayed
- Ask the second-to-last child and parent to wait with the coach or manager until the last parent arrives
- Avoid the risk of being alone with a child by having a parent or support person to assist with training. Require that person to wait until all children have left.

#### **7 Avoid transporting players**

Ideally all players should have their own transportation to and from their sporting event and associated social activities. The coach or other person in position of authority should provide transportation only when:

- The driver is properly licensed to carry passengers, and other players or parents are in the vehicle,
- the ride is directly to or from the sports or social event, and
- the vehicle is legal and meets all regulatory and safety laws.

Signed authorisation from parents should be sought at the start of the season saying that they agree to their child being transported by a relevant (specified) person if the parents are unable to provide regular transport.

## **8 Overnight and away trips**

Make sure there is the appropriate level of supervision – generally a ratio of 1 adult per 8 children, with a minimum of two adults. Other considerations include:

- If the team is mixed or an all-girls group, there should be at least adult woman accompanying the group.
- If there are only two adults, they should not be related or spouse/partner.
- At least one adult on the trip should be First Aid qualified.
- Adults should not share rooms with children.

## **9 Qualified person should attend to injuries**

Only personnel who are qualified in administering first aid or treating sports injuries should attempt to treat an injury. Personnel should avoid treating injuries out of sight of others. Other considerations include:

- The comfort level and dignity of the player should always be the priority.
- Uncover only the injured area, or drape something over the player to provide modesty.
- Always report to parents any injury incurred and any treatment provided, and document the incident.
- If necessary, seek medical attention as soon as possible, or recommend the parents seek medical attention.

It is important to have a blood rules policy, and ensure coaches and officials know to remove any bleeding child from the activity, and to stop the flow of blood before allowing the child to re-join the activity.

## **10 Guidelines for photographing children**

It is important that clubs and coaches understand current advice about acquiring and using images of children. Some considerations include:

- Do not allow photographers (whether professional, spectators, fans, coaches or media) unsupervised or individual access to children.
- Ensure the coach informs the team and parents if he/she wants to photograph or film the team or a player as a tool to analyse and improve performance.

- Obtain written consent of parents/guardians, and their agreement to be present, before approving photo/video sessions outside the game venue or at the home of a child. Where possible, have the photo taken at the event venue.
- If photos or films are to be used generally (as teaching tools or for other purposes such as promotional reasons), obtain the consent of parents that the images can be used for those purposes.
- Be alert to the possibility that there are some people who visit sporting events to take inappropriate photographs or films of children. Report any concerns to a responsible person, such as a club official.

## **11 Dealing with complaints**

Occasionally matters arise that give concern and lead to a complaint.

The first point of contact for any complaint is the coach, manager or other team official.

The next point of contact (if the first is inappropriate or unsatisfactory) is the Junior Club Captain, who will deal with the complaint in conjunction with the Club Chairman, President or Secretary.

The Chairman, President or Secretary will decide, if necessary, whether the complaint should be referred to a higher authority.

## **12 Review timetable**

This Policy shall be reviewed annually, at the start of each season.