

MEMBER PROTECTION POLICY

1. Introduction

Box Hill Athletic Club (“the Club” or “we”) is committed to providing an environment that is safe for children and free from harassment and abuse for all athletes, officials, coaches and volunteers.

This Member Protection Policy has been developed to assist in that regard. It also supports the development of an environment which is conducive to the development, enjoyment and appreciation of athletics. We are committed to the health, safety and general well-being of all our members and we aim to ensure that everyone associated with the Club complies with this policy.

2. Purpose of this policy

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. This policy informs everyone involved in our Club of their legal and ethical rights and responsibilities and the standards of behaviour that are expected of them. It also covers the care and protection of children participating in our Club’s activities.

3. Who this policy applies to

This policy applies to everyone involved in the Club including members, coaches, officials, parents and spectators.

4. Extent of the policy

This policy covers activities at Hagenauer Reserve, competitions, training, social events organised or sanctioned by the Club and on trips organised by the Club. It also covers private behaviour where that behaviour brings our Club or sport into disrepute or where there is suspicion of harm towards a child or young person.

5. Club responsibilities

The Club will:

- implement and comply with this policy;
- promote this policy to everyone involved in the Club;
- promote and model appropriate standards of behaviour at all times;
- respond to breaches or complaints made under this policy promptly, fairly, and confidentially, in accordance with this policy;
- review this policy at least every two years; and
- seek advice from, and refer serious issues to, Athletics Victoria.

Serious issues include unlawful behaviour that involves or could lead to significant harm and includes criminal behaviour (e.g. physical assault, sexual assault, child abuse) and any other issues that external government authorities or Athletics Victoria request to be referred to them.

6. Individual responsibilities

Everyone associated with our Club must:

- comply with the standards of behaviour outlined in this policy;
- treat others with respect;
- always place the safety and welfare of children above other considerations;
- 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.

7. Protection of children

7.1 Child safety and welfare

The Club is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people at the Club. We will act without hesitation to ensure a child-safe environment is maintained at all times. We also support the rights and wellbeing of our members and volunteers and encourage their active participation in building and maintaining a secure environment for all participants.

The Club aims to take measures to protect the safety and welfare of children participating in our sport by implementing the following actions.

- We will endeavour to minimise and prevent risk of harm to children because of the action of another person at the Club.
- We will take all reasonable steps to engage the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children in prescribed positions, such as coaching. Where required by law, this may include a working with children check. If a criminal history report is obtained as part of the screening process, we will ensure that the criminal history information is dealt with in accordance with relevant legal requirements.
- In addition to any legal obligation, if any person feels that another person bound by this policy is acting inappropriately towards a child, they should raise the matter with the Club President or another office bearer.

7.2 Supervision of children

We will provide a level of supervision that is adequate and relative to a member's age, maturity, capabilities, level of experience, nature of activity and nature of venue. If an adult member finds a child is unsupervised, we expect them to assume responsibility for the child's safety until the parent/guardian or supervisor can be found.

7.3 Taking images of children

The Club requests members, wherever possible, to obtain permission from a child's parent/guardian before taking an image of a child who is not their own, and, where practical, to ensure that the parent knows the way the image will be used. We also require the privacy of others to be respected and disallow the use of camera phones, videos and cameras inside changing areas, showers and toilets.

The Club's Privacy Policy addresses the use of photographs and videos taken by an Athletics Australia or Athletics Victoria official, staff member or endorsed representative. Parents / guardians are requested to notify the Club if they do not wish any image of their child to be used in Club documents or on the Club's website.

8. Anti-harassment, discrimination and bullying

We seek to include members from all areas of our community. We oppose 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 a disproportionate effect on people with a particular characteristic; and
- any behaviour that is offensive, abusive, belittling, intimidating or threatening – whether this is face-to-face, indirectly or via communication technologies such as mobile phone and computers.

Some forms of harassment, discrimination and bullying are against the law and are based on particular characteristics such as age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, pregnancy, political or religious beliefs, race and marital status.

We take all claims of harassment, discrimination, bullying and cyber bullying seriously. We encourage anyone who believes they have been harassed, discriminated against or bullied to raise the issue with the Club.

9. Responding to complaints

9.1 Complaints

We take all complaints about unacceptable behaviour seriously. We will handle complaints based on the principles of procedural fairness (natural justice), that is:

- 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 have the opportunity to respond (ie. give their side of the story);
- decisions of the Committee will be fair and reasonable.

If the complaint relates to suspected child abuse, sexual assault or other criminal activity, then we will report the behaviour to the police and/or relevant government authority.

Other complaints may be escalated to Athletics Victoria.

9.2 Complaint handling process

When a complaint is received by us, the person receiving the complaint will refer the complaint to the Club President (or another Club office bearer if the complaint involves the Club President) who shall:

- endeavour to understand the full nature of the complaint;
- explain the different options available to help resolve the problem; and
- ask the complainant what they would like to happen.

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

- 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;
- gathering more information (e.g. from other people that may have seen the behaviour);
- seeking advice from Athletics Victoria or from an external government agency;
- referring the complaint onto Athletics Victoria; and/or
- 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 onto Athletics Victoria and an investigation is conducted, we will:

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

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

9.3 Disciplinary Measures

We may take disciplinary action against anyone found to have breached this policy. Any disciplinary measure imposed under this policy will be fair and reasonable, based on the evidence and information presented and the seriousness of the breach.

9.4 Appeals

The complainant or respondent may lodge an appeal to Athletics Victoria against any decisions of, or disciplinary measures imposed by, the Club. Appeals should be based on either a denial of natural justice, because of unjust or unreasonable disciplinary measure(s) being imposed, or on the grounds that the decision was not supported by the information/evidence presented and available to the decision-maker or the Club.