



## **COOROY TENNIS CLUB INC.**

# **CHILD AND YOUNG PERSONS PROTECTION POLICY**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Cooroy Tennis Club is committed to providing an environment that is safe for children and young people to participate in tennis and tennis related activities. The Club will not tolerate child abuse and /or neglect.

This policy provides a message to all involved that coaches, officials, committee members, Club members, volunteers and all other people who may have contact with children who are involved with Club activities, have a responsibility to provide a safe environment to those children.

The abuse and or neglect of such children by those either within the Club or those external to it is not acceptable and the Club encourages any incident of abuse and or neglect to be reported to authorities.

This policy applies to all Club members, the professional coach and all his staff/assistants, volunteers, parents, carers, children, players, spectators, contractors entering Club premises and anyone else who has contact with children who are involved with tennis or tennis related activities at the Cooroy Tennis Club, or other place under the auspices of the Club.

This policy became effective immediately it was ratified by the Management Committee on 16 March 2010. The policy will be posted on the Club's web site, and a copy kept at the Clubhouse. Reference to the policy will be included on the Club's notice board and in the Club's newsletter. Any adult who has dealings with children at the Club will be advised to familiarise themselves with the policy. All future contracts that the Club may enter into will include reference to this policy. In this policy references to child and children include young person(s).

## **CHILD PROTECTION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **Introduction**

Child abuse is a criminal offence.

The nature of child abuse is often one involving the manipulation and abuse of a child by someone known to the children. When children chose to disclose abuse it is usually to someone known to the children – someone they trust and who they believe can help.

When a child comes to an adult for assistance it is therefore imperative that the adult handle the disclosure sensitively and maintain confidentiality.

Unless otherwise necessary, an adult should only discuss allegations of abuse with one of our contact persons. In most instances the matter will be referred to the Queensland Police. It is not the policy of the Club to conduct investigations into the veracity of allegations of child abuse.

### **Child Abuse Indicators**

Suspensions of child abuse and/or neglect can be raised in a number of ways. These may include but are not limited to:

#### Physical abuse

- Bruising or other injuries, which could be consistent with rough handling or being struck
- Burns or scalds on a child, particularly to the soles, palms or back. Cigarette burns are particularly significant
- Fractures, particularly where any explanation for the injuries is inconsistent with medical findings
- Excessive layering of clothing (can hide injuries)
- Wary of adult contact, frightened of parents. Behavioural extremes: aggressiveness – withdrawl

#### Neglect

- Children attending activities with little or no food or not having had breakfast
- Consistent hunger, poor hygiene, inappropriate dress
- Children consistently being left late with little or no explanation
- Underweight, poor growth patterns, failure to thrive
- Begging or stealing of food
- Constant fatigue
- Assuming adult responsibilities and concerns

#### Sexual abuse

- Difficulty in walking or sitting
- Pain, swelling or itching in genital area
- Discharge/venereal diseases
- Excessive masturbation
- Sleeping/eating disorders
- Aggressive acting out
- Sexual acting out on younger children
- Bizarre, sophisticated or unusual sexual behaviour or knowledge.

No two children will act the same in response to abuse situations. Some show no observable effects, whilst some show quite obvious and quite a range of indicators.

In addition, it should be noted that in some cases a child may disclose directly to a club member the nature of the abuse, whilst in others someone else may disclose to a club member that another is being abused.

## Procedures for handling disclosures

If a child discloses to a club member that they are the victim of abuse and/or neglect it is crucial that the initial response is handled with sensitivity. It is important that the person receiving the disclosure:

- Find a private place to talk to the child which is not threatening
- Not question the child or elicit detailed information about the abuse and/or neglect. Questions rather should be limited to, “what happened then?” and “tell me about that”
- Not say to the child “I won’t tell” with regard to the allegation. Rather be honest with the child and explain to them that other people may need to be told too, in order to help the child
- Believe the child and reassure them that it is right for them to tell
- Determine the child’s safety
- Take notes of what is said and what you observe.

If you are the first person the child tells regarding their abuse you will be required to provide a statement to police as evidence of **Preliminary Complaint**. This is evidence only of what the child told you, and goes to the credibility of the child. This is extremely important evidence and you may later be required to give evidence in court. It is important for you to write down or keep a diary of things you are told by the child or any indicators that you may observe.

All observations should be accurately recorded in the first person i.e. “I said...” “she said...”.

For the purposes of accuracy these notes should be made as soon after the conversation as possible, and kept in a place where strict confidentiality can be maintained.

In all cases, except those of an emergent nature, the Club contact person is to be informed of the nature of the allegations to enable the matter to be reported to the trained authorities.

In the situation where a person feels that to delay the report to the authorities would place the child at risk, that person should immediately notify the authorities and then notify the Club contact person.

## Screening of members

All committee members, the professional coach and any of his employees or sub-contractors who work at the club are required to obtain and hold a Blue Card.

The Committee has appointed one of its members as the volunteer coordinator for Blue Cards.

The coordinator must ensure that all those who are required to hold a Blue Card, do so. The coordinator must process all applications, approvals for and renewals of Blue Cards, and ensure that a record of the card holders is maintained.

Should the status of a Blue Card holder change at any time regarding their criminal history the volunteer coordinator must be notified

## **Standards of conduct**

Standards of conduct include:

- no offensive language being used in the hearing of children;
- not accepting offensive language from others, particularly children;
- no inappropriate physical contact with children;
- maintaining professional relationships in all dealings with children;
- providing a proper level of discipline over children for which you have responsibility;
- being on the lookout for and taking action on any evidence of bullying that is noted, and
- ensuring that children, spectators, officials and onlookers maintain appropriate standards of behaviour.

## **Expectations of children**

Children should:

- show respect for other children and young adults;
- keep themselves safe, and
- report inappropriate behaviour, unsafe situations or harm.

Children will be supported by the Club and all associated with it to meet these expectations.

## **Strategies to minimise harm**

Anyone who has responsibility for or contact with children for whom the Club has responsibility should employ strategies that include:

- teaching them to say “no” to anything that makes them feel unsafe in a manner appropriate for their age, understanding and the activity;
- teaching them to ask questions if they are unsure about anything;
- teaching them that nothing is so bad that they can’t talk to someone about it;
- teaching them that they make decisions about who is allowed to touch them;
- teaching them about what is safe and unsafe conduct;
- encouraging them to tell you of any suspicious activities or people;
- talking through issues with them;
- monitoring their activities;
- allowing them to be part of decision making processes, and
- taking anything a child or young person says seriously and following up their concerns.

## **Parents and carers**

Club members, tennis professional and staff, and others responsible for children’s Club activities should:

- know who has parental responsibility for each child in their care;
- have a record of the name, address and contact numbers of the parent or carer, as well as those of an additional person in the event of an emergency;
- know how to contact the parent or carer as quickly as possible – for example, by home or work phone, mobile or through neighbours;

- inform parents, carers and children of what they can do if they are unhappy about anything which has occurred in the Club, and
- facilitate contact between children and young people and their parents/carers.

## **Rights and responsibilities of parents and carers**

Parents and carers trust our Club to provide appropriate services and activities for their children.

Parents and carers:

- are welcome visitors to our Club;
- can take part, as appropriate, in planning, managing, developing and delivering activities;
- can have their cultural, religious, disability and language requirements respected and catered for to the best extent possible by the Club;
- will be advised of the Club's programs and activities as possible;
- will have opportunities to give regular feedback to the Club;
- will receive feedback about their child or young person's involvement in activities;
- will have access to the Club's Child and Young Persons Protection Policy;
- will have their concerns listened to, and their views considered, and
- have any personal information treated confidentially and their privacy respected.

## **Expectations of parents and carers**

The Club expects parents and carers to:

- work with the Club to support its Child and Young Persons Protection Policy;
- provide their children with required support, for example, clothes, equipment, travel as needed to participate in various activities;
- inform the Club of:
  - any bullying, intimidation or harassment experienced by their child, and
  - any suspicion that children or young people in the Club are being harmed.
- give positive and negative feedback on the Club's policies and procedures, and be involved in the Club, but not be judged for little or no involvement.

## **Club contact persons:**

Volunteer coordinator: Carol Christensen

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|---------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Club contact persons: Rhonda Prescott | 07 5442 5657 | 0403 737 183 |
| Carol Christensen                     | 07 5447 6018 | 0412 135 686 |
| Helene Charles                        | 07 5447 6945 | 0418 159 289 |
| Dorelle Goldsworthy                   | 07 5447 6674 | 0403 737 183 |

## **Policy implementation**

Policy first approved at committee meeting of 17 September 2007

This Child and Young Persons' Protection Policy approved at committee meeting of 16 March 2010

**Other useful contacts:**

Queensland Police Service Juvenile Aid Bureau:

Sexual Crimes Investigation Unit 07 3364 6430

Gympie 07 5482 8627

Maroochydore 07 5475 2437

Noosa 07 5447 5888

Department of Child Safety Service Centre:

Sunshine Coast Zone: Caboolture 07 5490 1000

Gympie 07 5482 4177