



## Collingwood Harriers Athletic Club Inc.

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George Knott Athletic Field, Heidelberg Rd Clifton Hill VIC  
Mail: PO Box 365, Clifton Hill, 3068  
Clubrooms Phone: (03) 9482 2371

# **MEMBER PROTECTION POLICY**

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# MEMBER PROTECTION POLICY

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## 1. Introduction

Collingwood Harriers 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 Our Policy

The main objective of our Member Protection Policy (policy) is to maintain responsible behaviour and the making of informed decisions by participants in this club. It 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 his or her 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 club’s activities.

## 3. Who Our Policy Applies To

Our policy applies to everyone involved in the club including committee members, administrators, coaches, officials (umpires/referees/judges), players, parents and spectators.

## 4. Extent of Our Policy

Our policy covers unfair decisions (e.g. team selection) and actions, breaches of our code of behaviour and behaviour that occurs at practice, in the club rooms, at social events organised or sanctioned by the club (or our sport), and on away and overnight trips. It also covers private behaviour where that behaviour brings our club or sport into disrepute or there is suspicion of harm towards a child or young person.

## 5. Club Responsibilities

We will:

- implement and comply with our policy;
- promote our policy to everyone involved in our club;
- promote and model appropriate standards of behaviour at all times;
- respond to breaches or complaints made under our policy promptly, fairly, and confidentially;
- review this policy at least every 2 years; and
- seek advice from and refer serious issues to our State Body, 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 our state or national body request to be referred to them.

## 6. Individual Responsibilities

Everyone associated with our club must:

- comply with the standards of behaviour outlined in our 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 Protection**

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**

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 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.

Our club takes 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 in accordance with the Club's Constitution.

### **9.4 Appeals**

The complainant or respondent may lodge an appeal in accordance with the Club Constitution against any decisions of, or disciplinary measures imposed by, the Club.

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**Attachment : MEMBER PROTECTION DECLARATION**

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Our club has a duty of care to all those associated with our club. As a requirement of our Member Protection Policy, we must enquire into the background of those who undertake any work, coaching or regular unsupervised contact with people under the age of 18 years.

I ..... (name) of .....

..... (address) born ...../...../.....

sincerely declare:

1. I do not have any criminal charge pending before the courts.
2. I do not have any criminal convictions or findings of guilt for sexual offences, offences related to children or acts of violence.
3. I have not had any disciplinary proceedings brought against me by an employer, sporting organisation or similar body involving child abuse, sexual misconduct or harassment, other forms of harassment or acts of violence.
4. To my knowledge there is no other matter that the club may consider to constitute a risk to its members, employees, volunteers, athletes or reputation by engaging me.
5. I will notify the President of the club immediately upon becoming aware that any of the matters set out in clauses 1 to 4 above has changed.

Declared in the State of Victoria.....

on ...../...../.....(date) Signature .....

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**Parent/Guardian Consent (in respect of a person under the age of 18 years)**

I have read and understood the declaration provided by my child. I confirm and warrant that the contents of the declaration provided by my child are true and correct in every particular.

Name:.....

Signature:.....

Date: .....

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