



Central Murray & Golden Rivers Leagues **MEMBER PROTECTION POLICY**

The protection of members of clubs in the CM & GR Leagues is a core policy which sets the framework for our clubs and their members to participate in netball and football, free from harassment, discrimination, abuse and other harmful behaviours. For club administrators, it's also an effective risk management tool that protects against the loss and harm of participants and their members.

**How we support
and treat our
members.**

This policy and other policies form part of the By-Laws are binding on our clubs (members), their members and other relevant persons. The leagues, its members and its officers will be bound by each of these policies. Each Club agrees that all of its members will also be bound by each of these policies.

- The Constitution constitutes a contract between each of them and the leagues and that they are bound by this Constitution, the By-Laws, the policies and rules attached to these By-Laws,
- They shall comply with and observe this Constitution and the By-Laws and any determination, resolution or policy which may be made or passed by the Board or any duly authorised committee,
- By submitting to this Constitution and the By-Laws they are subject to the control and jurisdiction of the leagues,
- The Constitution and the By-Laws are necessary and reasonable for promoting the Objects and particularly the advancement and protection of football and netball,
- They are entitled to all benefits, advantages, privileges and services of Leagues membership, and
- They will not become a party to any suit at law or equity, against the leagues any Board member or any other Member or any other person subject to this Constitution, until all remedies and avenues of appeal allowed by this Constitution have been exhausted, save with the written consent of the leagues.

This policy has drawn on elements from the Australian Football League Member Protection Policy, the Australian Sports Commission Member Protection Policy and VICSPORT Child Safe Standards.

CONTENTS

CONTENTS	1
1. RATIONALE	2
2. PURPOSE	2
3. WHO OUR POLICY APPLIES TO	2
4. EXTENT OF OUR POLICY	2
5. LEAGUES AND CLUB RESPONSIBILITIES	2
6. INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITIES	3
7. PROTECTION OF CHILDREN	3
7.1 CHILD PROTECTION	3
7.2 SUPERVISION	4
7.3 TRANSPORTATION	4
7.4 TAKING IMAGES OF CHILDREN	4
8. DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT AND BULLYING	4
8.1 DISCRIMINATION	5
8.2 HARASSMENT	5
8.3 BULLYING	5
9. INCLUSIVE PRACTICES	6
9.1 PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY	6
9.2 PEOPLE FROM DIVERSE CULTURES	6
9.3 SEXUAL & GENDER IDENTITY	6
9.4 PREGNANCY	6
9.5 GIRLS PLAYING IN BOYS TEAMS	7
10. RESPONDING TO COMPLAINTS	7
10.1 COMPLAINTS	7
10.2 COMPLAINT HANDLING PROCESS	7
10.3 DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS	8
10.4 APPEALS	8

1. RATIONALE

The Central Murray & Golden Rivers Leagues (leagues) regards violence, unlawful discrimination, sexual harassment, bullying and abuse in any form as intolerable. The leagues believe that all people have the right to work, play and socialise in an environment which is safe and inclusive. Any reports of inappropriate behaviour as defined in this document will be treated seriously, sympathetically and confidentially by the leagues, and if necessary will be investigated thoroughly. The leagues will ensure that complainants and witnesses are not victimised in any way. This policy aims to promote ethical and informed decision-making and responsible behaviours. Although certain kinds of undesirable conduct are contemplated under various provisions of State and Commonwealth legislation, the CM & GR leagues seeks through this policy to formally record its commitment to upholding the right of our members, clubs and their members and spectators to be treated with respect, dignity and to be safe and protected from abuse. The policy seeks to achieve this objective by setting out the standards of behaviour that the CM & GR leagues require of all individuals associated with our leagues.

2. PURPOSE

The main objective of the leagues' Member Protection Policy ("policy") is to maintain responsible behaviour and the making of informed decisions by members (clubs) and other participants in our leagues. It outlines our commitment to a person's right to be treated with respect and dignity, and to be safe and protected from discrimination, harassment and abuse. Our policy informs everyone involved in our leagues of his or her 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 leagues' activities.

3. WHO OUR POLICY APPLIES TO

This policy applies to everyone involved in the activities of our leagues whether they are in a paid or unpaid/voluntary capacity and including:

- Board members, league administrators and other league officials,
- Club committee members, club administrators and other club officials,
- Coaches and assistant coaches and other personnel participating in events, trips and activities, including interleague training sessions and other clinics,
- Support personnel, including team managers, sport trainers, others,
- Umpires and other officials,
- Players, members, parents, spectators and any other person to whom this policy may apply.

4. EXTENT OF OUR POLICY

Our policy covers all matters directly and indirectly related to the leagues and its activities. In particular, the policy governs unfair selection decisions and actions, breaches of our Codes of Conduct and behaviour that occurs at training sessions, in clubs' venues, at social events organised or sanctioned by the leagues or club (or netball and/or football), and on away and overnight trips. It also covers private behaviour where that behaviour brings our leagues or sports into disrepute or there is suspicion of harm towards a child or young person.

5. LEAGUES AND CLUB RESPONSIBILITIES

We will:

- Adopt, implement and comply with this policy,
- Ensure that this policy is enforceable,
- Publish, distribute and promote this policy and the consequences of any breaches of this policy,
- Promote and model appropriate standards of behaviour at all times,
- Deal with any complaints made under this policy in an appropriate manner,
- Deal with any breaches of this policy in an appropriate manner,
- Recognise and enforce any penalty imposed under this policy,
- Ensure that a copy of this policy is available or accessible to all people and clubs to whom this policy applies,

- Regularly review this policy, and
- Seek advice from and refer serious issues to AFL Vic Country or Netball 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 governing bodies request to be referred to them or the police.

6. INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Everyone associated with our leagues must:

- Make themselves aware of the contents of this policy,
- Comply with all relevant provisions of this policy, including the standards of behaviour outlined in this policy and in our Code of Conduct,
- Consent to the screening requirements set out in this policy, and any state or territory Working with Children checks if the person holds or applies for a role that involves regular unsupervised contact with a child or young person under the age of 18, or where otherwise required by law,
- Treat other people 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, bullying or other inappropriate behaviour, and
- Comply with any decisions and/or disciplinary measures imposed under this policy.

7. PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

7.1 Child Protection

The CM & GR leagues are committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people who participate in our leagues' activities or use our services. We support the rights of the child and will act at all times to ensure that a child safe environment is maintained. We also support the rights and wellbeing of our staff and volunteers and encourage their active participation in building and maintaining a secure and safe environment for all participants. The leagues acknowledges the valuable contribution made by our staff, clubs, members and volunteers and we encourage their active participating in providing a safe, fair and inclusive environment for all participants.

a. Identifying and Analysing Risks of Harm

The leagues will develop and implement a risk management strategy, which includes a review of our existing child protection practices, to determine how child-safe our leagues are and to identify any additional steps we can take to minimise and prevent the risk of harm to children because of the action of an employee, volunteer or another person.

b. Developing Codes of Conduct for Adults and Children

We will promote our Code of Conduct that specifies standards of conduct and care we expect of adults when they deal and interact with children, particularly those in our care. We will also implement a Code of Conduct to promote appropriate behaviour between children. The codes will clearly describe professional boundaries, ethical behaviour and unacceptable behaviour.

c. Choosing Suitable Employees and Volunteers

The leagues and its clubs will ensure that we take all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children, especially those in positions that involve regular unsupervised contact with children. This may be achieved using a range of screening measures. Such measures will aim to minimise the likelihood of engaging (or retaining) people who are unsuitable to work with children. The leagues will ensure that Working-with-Children Checks and criminal history assessments are conducted for employees and volunteers working with children, where an assessment is required by law. If a criminal history report is obtained as part of the

screening process, the leagues will ensure that the criminal history information is dealt with confidentially and in accordance with relevant legal requirements.

d. Support, Train, Supervise and Enhance Performance

The leagues will ensure that all employees and volunteers who work with children have ongoing supervision; support and training. Our goal is to develop their skills and capacity and to enhance their performance so we can maintain a child-safe environment in our leagues.

e. Report and Respond Appropriately to Suspected Abuse and Neglect

The leagues will ensure that employees and volunteers are able to identify and respond appropriately to children at risk of harm and that they are aware of their responsibilities under state laws to make a report if they suspect on reasonable ground that a child has been, or is being, abused or neglected (See Attachment 4).

In addition to any legal obligations, if any person believes that another person or club bound by this policy is acting inappropriately towards a child or is in breach of this policy they may make an internal complaint.

Please refer to our complaints procedure in section 10 of this policy.

Any person who believes a child is in immediate danger or in a life threatening situation, should contact the leagues or the police immediately.

7.2 Supervision

Children under the age of 18 must be supervised at all times by a responsible adult. We endeavour to provide an appropriate level of supervision at all times. If a member finds a child under the age of 18 is unsupervised, they should assume responsibility for the child's safety until the child's parent/guardian or supervisor is located.

For reasons of courtesy and safety, parents must collect their children on time. If it appears a member will be left alone with just one child at the end of any club activity, they will ask another member to stay until the child is collected.

7.3 Transportation

Parents and or guardians are responsible for organising the transportation of their children to and from league/club activities (e.g. training and games). Where we make arrangements for the transportation of children (e.g. umpire transportation, club away matches, interleague games, overnight trips), we will conduct a risk assessment that includes ensuring vehicles are adequately insured, the driver has a current and appropriate licence for the vehicle being used and the appropriate safety measures are in place.

7.4 Taking Images of Children

Images of children can be used inappropriately or illegally. We require that members, wherever possible, obtain permission from a child's parent or guardian before taking an image of a child that is not their own. We will also make sure that the parent or guardian understands how the image will be used.

To respect people's privacy, we do not allow camera phones, videos and cameras to be used inside changing areas, showers and toilets which we control or are used in connection with our leagues.

When using a photo of a child, we will not name or identify the child or publish personal information, such as residential address, email address or telephone number, without the consent of the child's parent or guardian. We will not provide information about a child's hobbies, interests, school or the like, as this can be used by paedophiles or other persons to "groom" a child.

We will only use images of children that are relevant to our leagues' activities and we will ensure that they are suitably clothed in a manner that promotes our leagues. We will seek permission from a child's parent or guardian before using their images.

8. DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT AND BULLYING

Our leagues are committed to providing an environment in which people are treated fairly and equitably and that is, as far as practicable, free from all forms of discrimination, harassment and

bullying. We recognise that people may not be able to enjoy themselves or perform at their best if they are treated unfairly, discriminated against, harassed or bullied.

8.1 Discrimination

Unlawful discrimination involves the less favourable treatment of a person on the basis of one or more of the personal characteristics protected by State or Federal anti-discrimination laws. Discrimination includes both direct and indirect discrimination:

- **Direct discrimination** occurs if a person treats, or proposes to treat, a person with a protected personal characteristic unfavourably because of that personal characteristic.
- **Indirect discrimination** occurs if a person imposes, or proposes to impose, a requirement, condition or practice that will disadvantage a person with a protected personal characteristic and that requirement, condition or practice is not reasonable. For the purpose of determining discrimination, the offender's awareness and motive are irrelevant.

8.2 Harassment

Harassment is any unwelcome conduct, verbal or physical, that intimidates, offends or humiliates another person and which happens because a person has a certain personal characteristic protected by State or Federal anti-discrimination legislation.

The offensive behaviour does not have to take place a number of times; a single incident can constitute harassment.

Sexual harassment is one type of harassment. Sexual harassment involves unwelcome conduct, remarks or innuendo of a sexual nature. It covers a wide range of behaviours and can be verbal, written, visual or physical. Sexual harassment is not limited to members of the opposite sex.

Every person is covered by the anti-discrimination laws that apply in their State as well as the Federal anti-discrimination laws.

The following is a list of all the personal characteristics that apply throughout Australia:

- Gender,
- race, colour, descent, national or ethnic origin, nationality, ethno-religious origin, immigration,
- national extraction or social origin,
- marital status, relationship status, identity of spouse or domestic partner,
- pregnancy, potential pregnancy, breastfeeding,
- family or carer responsibilities, status as a parent or carer,
- age,
- religion, religious beliefs or activities,
- political beliefs or activities,
- lawful sexual activity,
- sexual orientation and gender identity,
- profession, trade, occupation or calling,
- irrelevant criminal record, spent convictions,
- irrelevant medical record,
- member of association or organisation of employees or employers, industrial activity, trade union activity,
- physical features,
- disability, mental or physical impairment,
- defence service, and
- Personal association with someone who has, or is assumed to have, any of these personal characteristics.

Legislation also prohibits:

- racial, religious, homosexual, transgender and HIV/AIDS vilification, and
- Victimisation resulting from a complaint.

8.3 Bullying

The leagues are committed to providing an environment that is free from bullying. We understand that bullying has the potential to result in significant negative consequences for an individual's health and wellbeing, and we regard bullying in all forms as unacceptable in our leagues.

Bullying is characterised by repeated, unreasonable behaviour directed at a person, or group of persons, that creates a risk to health and safety. Bullying behaviour is that which a reasonable person in the circumstances would expect to victimise, humiliate, undermine, threaten, degrade, offend or intimidate a person. Bullying behaviour can include actions of an individual or group. Whilst generally characterised by repeated behaviours, one off instances can amount to bullying.

The following types of behaviour, where repeated or occurring as part of a pattern of behaviour, would be considered bullying:

- verbal abuse including shouting, swearing, teasing, making belittling remarks or persistent unjustified criticism,
- excluding or isolating a group or person,
- spreading malicious rumours, or
- Psychological harassment such as intimidation.

Bullying includes cyber-bullying which occurs through the use of technology. New technologies and communication tools, such as smart phones and social networking websites, have greatly increased the potential for people to be bullied through unwanted and inappropriate comments. Each of our leagues has zero tolerance toward abusive, discriminatory, intimidating or offensive statements being made online.

If any person believes they are being, or have been, bullied by another person or club bound by this policy, he or she may make a complaint. (Refer to Item 10 of this policy.)

9. INCLUSIVE PRACTICES

Our leagues are welcoming and we will seek to include members from all areas of our community. The following are examples of some of our inclusive practices.

9.1 People with a disability

The leagues will not discriminate against any person because they have a disability. Where it is necessary, we will make reasonable adjustments (e.g. modifications to equipment and rules) to enable participation.

9.2 People from diverse cultures

We will support, respect and encourage people from diverse cultures and religions to participate in our leagues and where possible we will accommodate requests for flexibility (e.g. modifications to uniforms).

9.3 Sexual & Gender Identity

All people, regardless of their sexuality or gender identity, are welcome in our league. We strive to provide a safe environment for participation and will not tolerate any form of discrimination or harassment because of a person's sexuality or gender identity.

9.4 Pregnancy

The leagues are committed to treating pregnant women fairly and to removing any unreasonable barriers to their full participation in our activities. We will not tolerate any discrimination or harassment against pregnant women.

We will take reasonable care to ensure the continuing safety, health and wellbeing of pregnant women. We will advise pregnant women that there may be risks involved with their continuing participation in sport, and we will encourage them to obtain medical advice about those risks. Pregnant women should be aware that their own health and wellbeing, and that of their unborn child, is of utmost importance in their decision-making about the extent they choose to participate in our sport.

We encourage all pregnant women to talk with their medical advisers, make themselves aware of the facts about pregnancy in sport and ensure that they make informed decisions about their participation in our sport. Pregnant women should make these decisions themselves, in consultation with their medical advisers and in discussion with their club. We will only require pregnant women to sign a disclaimer in relation to their participation in our sport

whilst they are pregnant if all other participants are required to sign one in similar circumstances. We will not require women to undertake a pregnancy test. If a pregnant woman believes she is being, or has been, harassed or discriminated against by another person bound by this policy, she may make a complaint (see section 10).

9.5 Girls playing in boys teams and boys playing in girls teams

If there is not a separate sex competition the leagues will support girls playing in boys teams and boys playing in girls teams up until the age of 12 years. We note that Federal anti-discrimination laws provide that it is not unlawful to discriminate on grounds of sex by excluding persons from participation in any competitive sporting activity in which the strength, stamina or physique of competitors is relevant. If a child is over the age of 12 years our leagues will consider each request on an individual basis by considering the nature of our sport and other available opportunities to compete.

10. RESPONDING TO COMPLAINTS

10.1 Complaints

Our leagues take all complaints about on and off-field behaviour seriously. Our leagues will handle complaints based on the principles of procedural fairness, and ensure:

- All complaints will be taken seriously,
- The person making the complaint (complainant) will be given full details of what is being alleged against them and have the opportunity to respond to those allegations,
- Irrelevant matters will not be taken into account,
- Decisions will be unbiased, and
- Any penalties imposed will be reasonable.

More serious complaints may be escalated to the AFL Victorian Country, Netball Victoria or the police. If the complaint relates to suspected child abuse, sexual assault or other criminal activity, then our club may need to report the behaviour to the police and/or relevant government authority.

10.2 Complaint Handling Process

When a complaint is received by our Board or Operations Manager, the person receiving the complaint (e.g. the Board Chair, Operations Manager or designated Member Protection Information Officer) will:

- Listen carefully and ask questions to understand the nature and extent of the concern,
- Ask what the complainant how they would like their concern to be resolved and if they need any support,
- Explain the different options available to help resolve the complainant's concern,
- Inform the relevant government authorities or police, if required by law to do so, and
- Where possible and appropriate, maintain confidentiality but not necessarily anonymity.

Once the complainant decides on their preferred option for resolution, the leagues 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 (this could include external mediation),
- Gathering more information (e.g. from other people that may have seen the behaviour),
- Seeking advice from the AFL Vic Country, Netball Victoria or from an external agency,
- Referring the complaint to the Independent Tribunal, under a breach of the Code of Conduct or breach of the Member Protection Policy; 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 to the Independent Tribunal an investigation will be conducted by the leagues' Investigation Officer, the leagues and all participants will:

- Co-operate fully with the investigation,

- Where applicable, ensure the complainant is not placed in an unsupervised situation with the respondent(s), and
- Act on the Independent Tribunal's recommendations.

At any stage of the process, a person can seek advice from an anti-discrimination commission or other external agency and, if the matter is within their jurisdiction, may lodge a complaint with the anti-discrimination commission or other external agency.

10.3 Disciplinary Sanctions

The Board may 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 consistent with any contractual and employment rules and requirements,
- Be fair and reasonable,
- Be based on the evidence and information presented and the seriousness of the breach, and
- Be determined by our constituent documents, By-Laws and the rules of our games.

Possible sanctions that may be taken include:

- A direction that the individual make verbal and/or written apology,
- Counselling of the individual to address behaviour,
- Withdrawal of any awards, placings, records, achievements bestowed in any tournaments, activities or events held or sanctioned by our leagues,
- Suspension or termination of membership, participation or engagement in a role or activity,
- De-registration of accreditation for a period of time or permanently,
- a fine, or
- Any other form of discipline that the Board considers reasonable and appropriate.

10.4 Appeals

The complainant or respondent may be entitled to lodge an appeal against a decision made in relation to a complaint (including a decision where disciplinary sanctions are imposed by our leagues) to the Independent Tribunal. Appeals must be based on any right of appeal provided for in the relevant constituent documents, rules, regulations or by laws of our leagues.

The grounds of an appeal should be specific; they may be limited to a denial of procedural fairness, on grounds 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 Board/club.

<p>Nature of complaint (category/basis/grounds)</p> <p>Can tick more than one box</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Harassment or <input type="checkbox"/> Discrimination <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual/sexist <input type="checkbox"/> Selection dispute <input type="checkbox"/> Coaching methods <input type="checkbox"/> Sexuality <input type="checkbox"/> Personality clash <input type="checkbox"/> Verbal abuse <input type="checkbox"/> Race <input type="checkbox"/> Bullying <input type="checkbox"/> Physical abuse <input type="checkbox"/> Religion <input type="checkbox"/> Disability <input type="checkbox"/> Victimisation <input type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy <input type="checkbox"/> Child Abuse <input type="checkbox"/> Unfair decision <input type="checkbox"/> Other
<p>What they want to happen to fix issue</p>	
<p>Information provided to them</p>	
<p>Resolution and/or action taken</p>	
<p>Follow-up action</p>	

PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING ALLEGATIONS OF CHILD ABUSE

If you believe a child is in immediate danger or a life-threatening situation, contact the Police immediately on 000.

Fact sheets on reporting allegations of child abuse in different states and territories are available at www.playbytherules.net.au

We will treat any allegation of child abuse or neglect promptly, seriously and with a high degree of sensitivity.

All people working with the CM & GR leagues in a paid or unpaid capacity have a duty to report any concerns to the appropriate authorities, following the steps outlined below.

Step 1: Receive the allegation

If a child or young person raises with you an allegation of child abuse or neglect that relates to them or to another child, it is important that you listen, stay calm and be supportive.

Do	Don't
Make sure you are clear about what the child has told you	Do not challenge or undermine the child
Reassure the child that what has occurred is not his or her fault	Do not seek detailed information, ask leading questions or offer an opinion.
Explain that other people may need to be told in order to stop what is happening.	Do not discuss the details with any person other than those detailed in these procedures.
Promptly and accurately record the discussion in writing.	Do not contact the alleged offender.

Step 2: Report the allegation

Immediately report any allegation of child abuse or neglect, or any situation involving a child at risk of harm, to the police and/or the relevant child protection agency. You may need to make a report to both. Contact your club president or designated 'welfare officer' and ensure they make the report.

Contact the relevant child protection agency or police for advice if there is any doubt about whether the allegation should be reported.

If the allegation involves a person to whom this policy applies and is outside your club, then also report the allegation to the Operations Manager of CM & GR leagues so that he or she can manage the situation.

Step 3: Protect the child and manage the situation

The President/Welfare Officer/Operations Manager will assess the immediate risks to the child and take interim steps to ensure the child's safety and the safety of any other children. This may include redeploying the alleged offender to a position where there is no unsupervised contact with children, supervising the alleged offender or removing/suspending him or her until any investigations have been concluded. Legal advice should be sought before any interim steps are made if the person is an employee of the club or leagues.

The Operations Manager or President will consider what services may be most appropriate to support the child and his or her parent/s.

The Operations Manager or President consider what support services may be appropriate for the alleged offender.

The Operations Manager or President will seek to put in place measures to protect the child and the alleged offender from possible victimisation and gossip.

Step 4: Take internal action

At least three different investigations could be undertaken to examine allegations that are made against a person to whom this policy applies, including:

- A criminal investigation (conducted by the police)
- A child protection investigation (conducted by the relevant child protection agency)
- A disciplinary or misconduct inquiry/investigation conducted by the Board

The CM & GR leagues or the Club will assess the allegations and determine what action should be taken in the circumstances. Depending on the situation, action may include considering whether the alleged offender should return to his or her position, be dismissed, banned or suspended or face other disciplinary action.

If disciplinary action is undertaken, we will follow the procedures set out in our Member Protection Policy.

Where required we will provide the relevant government agency with a report of any disciplinary action we take.

- **Contact details for advice or to report an allegation of child abuse**

New South Wales	
New South Wales Police Non-urgent police assistance Phone: 131 444 www.police.nsw.gov.au	Department of Family and Community Services www.community.nsw.gov.au Phone: 132 111
Victoria	
Victoria Police Non-urgent police assistance Phone: (03) 9247 6666 www.police.vic.gov.au	Department of Human Services www.dhs.vic.gov.au Phone: 131 278