

Safe Clubs 4 Kids



Department of
Sport and Recreation



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A MESSAGE FOR CLUBS

Children should be given the opportunity to grow and develop in a safe environment and to be protected from the risk of harm and/or abuse. The Department of Sport and Recreation, Department for Child Protection, Working with Children Screening Unit, WA Police, WA Sports Federation and Surf Life Saving WA support initiatives that minimise the risk of harm to children in our community. We are also committed to providing programs and services which contribute to the development of a safer community for our children.

The overwhelming majority of people who volunteer or work with children are safe, and do so to help children develop to their full potential. They make a positive contribution to the lives of children in the community and should be recognised and valued for their work.

The reality is a small minority of people target children's organisations in order to access children.

We all therefore need to be aware of the indicators of abuse and neglect, and know what to do if we suspect or are told that abuse or neglect has occurred. Early identification and reporting of child abuse and neglect to authorities is important to keeping children and young people safe.

In Western Australia, some sectors of the community are legally required to report all reasonable beliefs of child sexual abuse to the Department for Child Protection. These are doctors, nurses, midwives, teachers and police officers.

However, any person, including people in the sport and recreation industry, who has a belief that a child is being abused or neglected should report these concerns to the Department for Child Protection or the police.

Keeping children safe from abuse is the responsibility of individuals, families, communities and the society as a whole.

The WA Government also requires a Working with Children Check, a criminal check for certain people who work with children under the age of 18. It is administered by the Working with Children Screening Unit (WWCSU), Department for Child Protection.

With education and understanding of our role in the community, we can make our sport and recreation organisations safer places for our children and young people.

The Safe Clubs 4 Kids manual and education program has been adapted from the successful Nippersafe program that was developed and implemented by Surf Life Saving WA. It is provided to assist your organisation in becoming child safe and child friendly.

We thank you for your participation in the Safe Clubs 4 Kids program.



Hon Terry Waldron
Minister for Sport and Recreation



Rob Thompson
Executive Director
WA Sports Federation



Paul Andrew
Chief Executive Officer
Surf Life Saving WA

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Department of Sport and Recreation Working with Children Screening Unit, WA Police, Working with Children Screening Unit, Department for Child Protection, WA Sports Federation and Surf Life Saving WA would like to acknowledge the following organisations:

- Surf Life Saving South Australia for their permission and assistance in developing this manual for WA.
- The South Australian Police Force.

DISCLAIMER

This publication contains comments of a general nature only and is not intended to be relied upon as a substitute for professional advice. No responsibility will be accepted by the Department of Sport and Recreation, WA Sports Federation, Surf Life Saving WA, WA Police, Working with Children Screening Unit or Department for Child Protection for loss occasioned to any person doing anything as a result of any material in this resource.

All opinions, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed herein are guidelines only and should not be expressly relied on by project proponents.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the completion of this training the following learning outcomes should have been met:

CREATING CHILD

SAFE ENVIRONMENTS

Outcome 1

Increased understanding of how to create child safe environments through organisational risk management practices, background checking and criminal record checking.

UNDERSTANDING CHILD ABUSE

Outcome 2

Increased understanding of what is child abuse, the effects it can have on a child and some common indicators.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Outcome 3

Increased understanding of what to do when child abuse is suspected or alleged, including how to deal with the child involved, who to report the incident to, and what club procedures need to be followed.

REPORTING OFFICER/MEMBER

PROTECTION INFORMATION OFFICER'S ROLE

Outcome 4

Understand the role of Reporting Officer and have the ability to act in this role.

CREATING CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENTS

Outcome 1

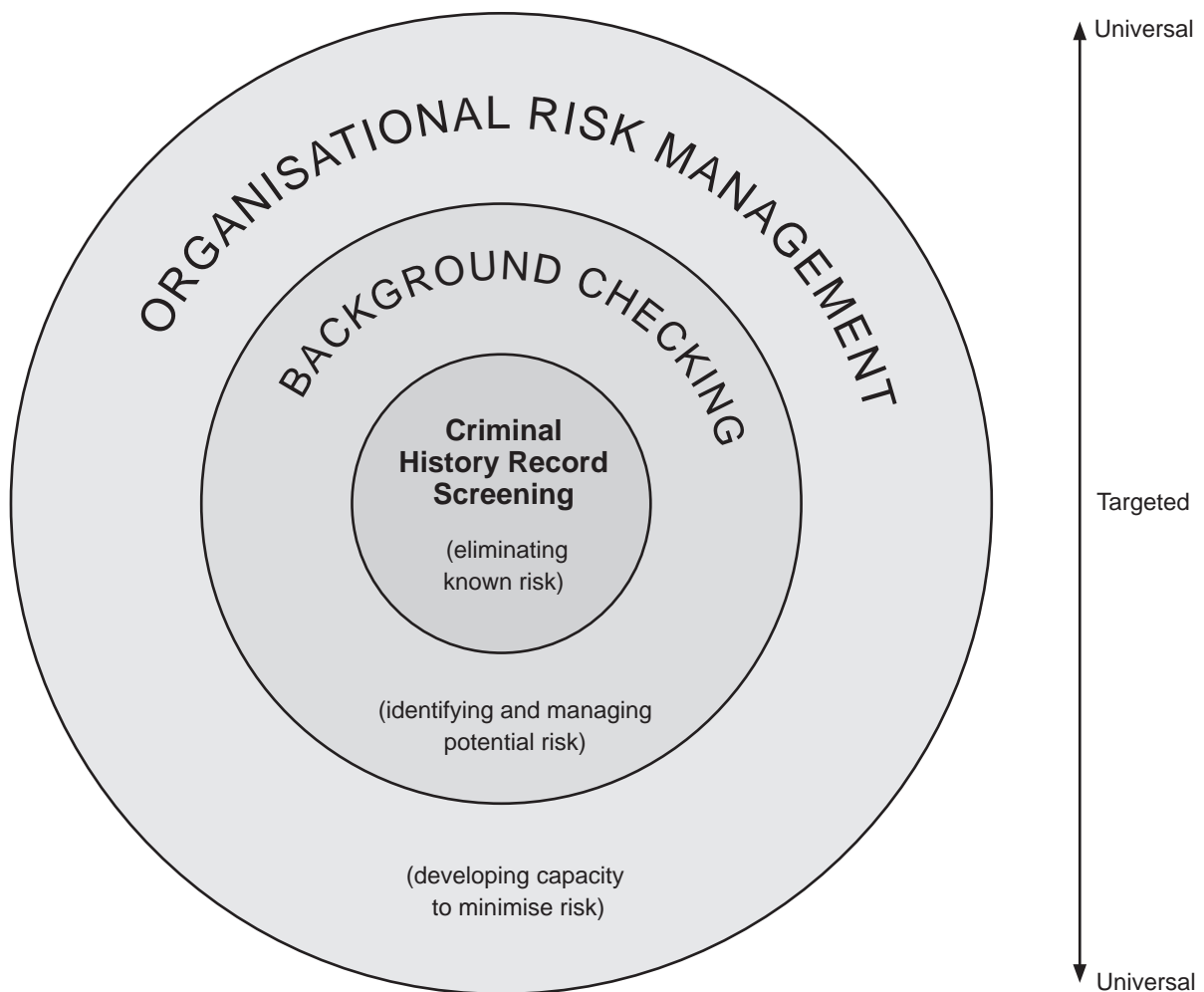
Increased understanding of how to create child safe environments through organisational risk management practices, background checking and criminal record checking.

INTRODUCTION

Various strategies and practices contribute to an environment that is safe for, and welcoming to children.

Clubs and organisations should take a comprehensive approach to child protection and creating child safe environments as shown below. Responsible organisations should ensure that they have employees or volunteers undergo criminal record screening and background checking, and also have implemented a range of other organisational risk management strategies that create safe environments for children.

WORKING WITH CHILDREN — A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH



ORGANISATIONAL RISK MANAGEMENT

There are a number of strategies that each organisation can implement to reduce the risk of child abuse occurring within the organisation and which will support a child-safe environment. These include:

- child protection policies
- child safe procedures
- appropriate recruitment procedures – including the support of new employers and volunteers
- background checks – referee and credentials
- criminal record screening – including Working with Children Checks, National Police Checks for Volunteers, National Police Certificates

These are discussed in more detail below.

It is important to note that criminal record checking and background checking are only part of an overall strategy that responsible organisations can implement to ensure children are kept safe.

POLICIES (INCLUDING COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES)

Research has shown that organisations which do not have adequate child protection policies in place are more likely to experience incidences of abuse. It is therefore imperative that organisations have policies in place outlining their commitment to child safety and have procedures supporting these policies.

Child Protection policies can stand alone, however they are more likely to be part of a broader Member Protection Policy. This Policy is a statement of an organisation's commitment to providing a safe environment that is fair, respectful and free from harassment, discrimination and abuse. It is sometimes also referred to as a Member Welfare Policy or a Member Safety and Wellbeing Policy.

Member Protection Policies should include the following:

- core policies
- state/territory child protection requirements – screening requirements
- complaints handling procedures
- role – specific codes of conduct
- reporting documents

It is also important that these policies are communicated to ALL members. Some ideas on how this can easily be achieved are:

- distribution at registration days

- information/orientation days
- club websites
- club newsletters
- annual general meetings

Clubs are encouraged to adopt their State Sporting Association's Member Protection Policy.

CHILD SAFE GUIDELINES FOR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Organisations should have procedures or guidelines in place to support their policies relating to child protection. All people working with children in an organisation should be educated on these and they should be enforced.

Below are some good practice procedures that are recommended for those in contact with children. At training or games, organisations should:

- ensure there is enough supervision appropriate to the age of the children
- avoid one on one situations with children
- always meet with a child in an open and clearly visible area
- not invite children to their home or drive them home unless accompanied by the child's guardian or with the consent of the guardian
- ensure children have access to an adult of the same gender
- foster an environment of friendship, cooperation, tolerance and good sportsmanship (see www.playbytherules.net.au for more information about this)
- ensure that all physical contact with a child is appropriate to the skill being taught or the situation
- be aware and quick to act on games that are physically rough or sexually provocative or involve inappropriate language or contact
- never enter a change room with children in it without first knocking or loudly announcing that you are entering. Only gender appropriate persons should enter
- adults should sleep separately to children on overnight camps
- adults of both genders should attend overnight camps
- if publishing photos of children, do not name them in an attached article or with the photo, and seek permission from guardians about publishing

APPROPRIATE RECRUITMENT, SELECTION AND SUPPORT OF NEW EMPLOYEES/VOLUNTEERS

Not only should organisations ensure that they have potential staff undergo criminal record checks and background checking, they should also conduct interviews, include statements regarding child protection in job advertisements, and have clear position descriptions outlining roles and responsibilities.

Organisations should ensure that staff and volunteers are appropriately supported, supervised and inducted when commencing a position.

The information below describes sound recruitment, selection and support of new employees and volunteers.

INTERVIEWS

Interviewing potential employees or volunteers is one way that organisations can ensure they are recruiting the best people for the task.

Interviews are designed to identify preferred applicants for positions. It is important that a face-to-face interview is conducted to determine the appropriate person for the position.

Questions during the interview

The scope of questions to be asked during the interview should be aimed at obtaining information on the applicant's work performance and good character.

Behaviour during the interview

It is important that the interviewer observes and documents the behaviour of the applicant in areas such as:

- appearance
- reactions to questions
- manner
- interpersonal skills

Responsibility for interviews

Interviews are an important part of the employment checking process. Because of its importance, and the necessity to maintain the integrity and confidentiality of the checking process, interviews should be conducted by those responsible for the employment/appointment of the individual, preferably with appropriate training.

Structuring interviews

Interviews can increase reliability by focusing on specific job related questions. All information gained during an interview should be clearly documented and stored by the appointing body. The interviewer should ensure all questions directed at the applicant relate directly to the position.

Steps in conducting interviews

The following steps are suggested for conducting interviews:

- it is preferable that the recruiter/member of the selection panel contacts the applicant to organise a convenient time to conduct the interview
- only questions that relate specifically to the position and the applicant's work performance and good conduct, as well as special qualifications and aptitude for the discharge of the duties should be asked
- all relevant information gained during the interview should be documented

ONGOING EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF STAFF

It is an aim of this manual and a responsibility of organisations to ensure that employees/volunteers are sufficiently educated on how to identify and appropriately respond to suspected cases of child abuse. As an ethical obligation, reporting should be encouraged and therefore employees and volunteers need to be adequately trained.

INCLUDING CHILDREN IN DECISION MAKING

Children should be included in the development of policies and other decision making processes. They should also be empowered to recognise, avoid and report situations in which they feel unsafe. It is widely accepted that a central dynamic in the abuse of children is the exploitation of power to gain submission or silence. By including and empowering children, this exploitation can be minimised.

BACKGROUND CHECKING

Background checking involves identifying and managing risks and is more targeted than organisation risk management. Organisations can employ the following systems to ensure adequate background checking of employees and volunteers.

REFERENCE CHECKS

Referee checks are a collection of employment related information concerning past work performance (volunteer or paid), obtained from supervisors or other people with a direct personal knowledge of current or previously held positions.

Referees should be able to provide information about the applicant's work performance and good character. At least one referee should be the applicant's current supervisor, unless acceptable reasons are provided for not nominating that person.

Questions of referees

The scope of questions to be asked of referees would be aimed at confirming information gained during the interview, and obtaining information on the applicant's work performance and good character.

Responsibility for referee checks

Referee checking is an important part of the employment/appointment checking process. Because of its importance, and the necessity to maintain the integrity and confidentiality of the checking process, referee checks should be conducted by those responsible for the employment of the individual, preferably with appropriate training.

Methods of obtaining references

It is preferable that references be obtained orally. Telephone references are the most effective way of obtaining information from referees. Written references provided from an applicant with the resume are of limited value since they provide general information not specific to the position and the comments are usually favourable or vague.

Structuring reference checks

Structured reference checks can increase reliability by focusing on specific job related questions. Structured questions may be similar to the questions asked of the applicant at an interview, and should seek behavioural examples of past situations similar to those likely to be experienced in the new position.

Subjectivity

It is important to note that the reliability and effectiveness of references may be diminished by:

- faulty recollection by referee(s) due to passage of time or lack of preparation
- the subjective basis upon which the reference is given
- incomplete assessments where past positions did not require the level of behaviour or performance of all skills required for the advertised position
- the difficulty of comparing performance based on different levels of skills or behaviour in past positions
- the selection committee should ensure all information collected about the applicants relates directly to the position

Steps in conducting the reference check

The following steps are suggested for conducting reference checks:

- after the interviews have been completed, determine the most competitive applicants under consideration
- it is preferable the recruiter/member of the selection panel contacts the referees, clearly identifying him/herself to the nominated referees and outlining the reason for the enquiry
- the capacity in which the referee is acting – the position the referee holds and current or previous relationship(s) with the recommended applicant – should be established at the beginning of the reference process and any conflicts of interest declared
- only questions that relate to the selection criteria, the applicant's work performance and good conduct, as well as special qualifications and aptitude for the discharge of the duties, should be asked
- a written record of all relevant information provided by the referee should be retained
- information obtained from referees must be discussed with the other members of the selection panel to enable informed decisions

CREDENTIAL CHECKS

It is important that if a person states they have formal qualifications such as coaching or officiating qualifications, the organisation checks to ensure the qualifications are authentic and current. This can be done by contacting the relevant State Sporting Association or qualifying body.

CRIMINAL RECORD SCREENING

Criminal record screening aims to eliminate known offenders from working with children. It is a targeted approach that can take many forms as outlined below.

WORKING WITH CHILDREN

(WWC) CHECKS

The Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004 commenced in Western Australia on 1 January, 2006. The legislation makes it compulsory for certain people in child-related work to apply for a Working with Children Check. This is a check that assesses all criminal history information including charges and convictions. The decision made is whether a WWC Card can be issued or whether the criminal history indicates a child may be harmed, in which case a Negative Notice is issued. A WWC Card does not indicate general good character.

Employees and volunteers are required to undergo a WWC Check if their usual duties of work or volunteering involve, or are likely to involve, contact with children in connection with one of the categories in the Act, provided that no exemptions apply.

Both organisations and individuals have obligations under the Act. Employers of people in child-related work must:

- keep records showing that all employees and volunteers in child-related work have a WWC Card or have applied for one
- check periodically that all employee and volunteer cards are current and have not been cancelled. This can be done by visiting the www.checkwwc.wa.gov.au website and entering the card number
- check the cards of new employees and volunteers if they already have a card upon starting work
- remember to register or deregister as a person's employee/volunteer coordinator on the www.checkwwc.wa.gov.au website to ensure you are kept up-to-date about any relevant changes in a person's status
- keep adequate records that demonstrate compliance with the WWC legislation ensuring that if asked by the WWC Screening Unit, you will be able to provide this information. You can see a list of audit questions on the WWC website
- notify the WWC Screening Unit in writing if any employees or volunteers tell you they have had a relevant change in their criminal record

- not employ someone if you are aware that they hold a current Negative Notice or Interim Negative Notice
- have strategies in place to ensure employees and volunteers renew their WWC Card every three years

For a full list of your obligations that apply to your organisation visit www.checkwwc.wa.gov.au.

Individuals in child-related work must apply for the WWC Check and also have obligations. Individuals must:

- not start or continue in child-related work for more than 5 days in a calendar year unless they have applied for or hold a current WWC Card, or a receipt for an application that is pending
- stop child-related work immediately if issued with an Interim Negative Notice or Negative Notice

Further obligations exist under the legislation and can be viewed at www.checkwwc.wa.gov.au.

HOW TO APPLY

Application forms are available and must be submitted by the individual in person at an Australia Post Office. A representative from the organisation employing the person must also sign the application form to confirm that they employ that person in child-related work or in a volunteer activity. It is important that the person who signs the form is someone in a position of authority within the club, as this person will receive any correspondence from the WWC Screening Unit about any changes to a person's status. This information is sensitive and needs to be dealt with accordingly.

The cost of the three year check is \$10 for volunteers or \$50 for paid persons*.

This is a summary only and does not constitute legal advice. Please refer to the Department of Sport and Recreation website, www.dsr.wa.gov.au or the Working with Children Screening Unit's website www.checkwwc.wa.gov.au for further information about child related work, exemptions, your obligations, and how to apply.

*Accurate at time of printing – August 2009.

NATIONAL POLICE CHECK FOR VOLUNTEERS (NPCV)

The NPCVs are conducted through the Department for Communities in conjunction with the WA Police. It enables volunteers to be checked for disclosable convictions and pending charges. It is designed to

assist organisations to adequately screen volunteers who provide services to vulnerable people, work in positions of financial trust, or are involved in driving or other special duties. It is also a good means of getting those persons who are exempt from applying for a WWC screened.

The NPCV is not a legislative requirement and does not override the WWC legislation. See the differences between the WWC Check and the NPCV below.

The program provides basic emailed information to the organisation about whether a person has a criminal record or pending charge of any sort. It does not list offences, but rather indicates whether the person has serious, minor and/or traffic offences, or is on the Fines Enforcement Registry.

Unlike the WWC Check, organisations need to decide in accordance with their risk management policies if a person who has a criminal record should be allowed to work or continue working in their organisation. This may involve the person applying for a full National Police Certificate to list all offences.

The cost is \$11.00 per person screened. It does not provide a portable certificate.

This program is only available to incorporated organisations or those with relevant legal status, and must be coordinated by the State body. Clubs cannot undertake the process independently.

Please refer to the Department for Communities website, www.communities.wa.gov.au for further information about NPCV.

NATIONAL POLICE CERTIFICATE

This form of criminal record screening is conducted through the WA Police. It enables all persons to be checked for disclosable convictions and pending charges. It is recommended for people who are in paid positions or whose NPCV indicates a criminal record that needs further assessment by an organisation.

The Certificate costs \$51 per person checked, and must be applied for in person by the individual at a participating Australia Post Office.

Please refer to the WA Police website, www.police.wa.gov.au for further information about National Police Certificates.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO ORGANISATIONS

Check	Volunteer/Unpaid Staff	Paid Staff	Cost
Working with Children (WWC) Check	Volunteers in 'child-related work' are legally required to apply. There are some exemptions under the WWC Act, including volunteers under 18, who cannot apply. Most volunteers who undertake less than 5 days child-related work per calendar year are not required to (but can) apply*.	Paid employees in 'child related work' are legally required to apply. Those subject to exemptions under the WWC Act cannot apply. Most employees who undertake less than 5 days child related work per calendar year are not required to (but can) apply*.	\$10 for volunteers/ unpaid staff \$50 for paid staff*
National Police Check for Volunteers (NPCV)	Volunteers who are not in child related work including those exempt from applying for a WWC Check*.	Cannot apply	\$11
National Police Certificate	Volunteers whose NPCV indicates a criminal record that needs further assessment.	Paid staff who are exempt from applying for a WWC Check or do duties other than those in child-related work.	\$51

* See www.checkwwc.wa.gov.au for a full definition of child related work, information on exemptions, and situations where the '5 day threshold' does not apply.

UNDERSTANDING CHILD ABUSE

Outcome 2

Increased understanding of what is child abuse, the effects it can have to a child and some common indicators.

INTRODUCTION

Children and young people have the right to be emotionally and physically safe at all times.

Most people who volunteer or work with children are safe and do so to help children develop to their full potential. They make a positive contribution to the lives of children in the community and should be recognised and valued for their work. It is known however, that a small minority of people target children's organisations in order to access children.

An important component of minimising the risk of child abuse occurring is the education of community members. Everyone should know what child abuse is, what the possible indicators of abuse are, and the damaging effects it may have on a child.

Child abuse and neglect rarely stop without intervention and help.

WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

In general, child abuse is categorised in four ways:

1. Physical abuse

Physical abuse occurs when a child has experienced severe ill-treatment such as beating, shaking, attempted suffocation or excessive punishment, which results in a non-accidental trauma or physical injury.

In 2007/08 there were 1,100 allegations of physical abuse made to the Department for Child Protection.

2. Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is exposed or subjected to sexual behaviours that are exploitive or inappropriate to his/her age and development. Examples include sexual penetration, inappropriate touching, and exposure to sex acts or pornographic materials. Sexual abuse also includes sexual behaviour where the child is bribed or coerced into participating, where the child has less power than another person involved, or where there is significant difference in the developmental levels of the child and the other person involved in the behaviour.

In 2007/08 there were 1,024 allegations of child sexual abuse made to the Department for Child Protection.

3. Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the chronic failure to provide the support and affection necessary for a child to develop a healthy self esteem and social competence. Emotional abuse may include behaviors such as threatening, belittling, teasing, humiliating, bullying, ignoring and inappropriate encouragement.

In 2007/08 there were 650 allegations of child emotional abuse made to the Department for Child Protection.

4. Neglect

Neglect is the failure to provide for the child/young person's basic needs, such as food, medical care, education and supervision. Neglect can be acute, chronic or episodic. This can occur through direct and deliberate inaction for the child/young person.

In 2007/08 there were 1,366 allegations of child neglect were made to the Department for Child Protection.

Statistics

- one child is reported abused or neglected every three minutes in Australia
- one in four girls and one in five boys in Australia report being sexually abused by the time they are 18 years of age

Research relating to sport and recreation and child abuse in Australia is lacking. However a study of 370 elite and club athletes by the Australian Sports Commission in 2001 found the following:

- of the female respondents, 30% had reported being sexually abused in their life. Of these, 40% indicated that this abuse occurred in a sporting environment
- of the male respondents, 20% had reported being sexually abused in their life. Of these, 30% indicated that this abuse occurred in a sporting environment

EFFECTS OF CHILD ABUSE

The effects of child abuse on a child/young person should not be underestimated. Physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect all affect the physical, intellectual and emotional development of the child/young person. With early identification and an appropriate response, children can recover from episodes of abuse and neglect.

If allowed to continue, it can result in a number of problems such as low self esteem and withdrawn

behaviour, depression and/or suicidal thoughts, learning disorders, behavioural problems, developmental delay, eating ailments or delinquency including violent or aggressive behaviour.

INDICATORS OF CHILD ABUSE

You can help prevent children from being harmed by noticing the signs or indicators of harm, and taking appropriate action early.

The possible indicators of abuse described in each of the following child abuse categories should be viewed as 'red flags' – a sign that something is worrying the child. It should not be automatically assumed that abuse is occurring, and talking to a child may reveal something quite innocent.

It is important not to dismiss significant changes in a child's behaviour. If you are sufficiently concerned, you should report it to the appropriate person as outlined later in this manual.

Possible indicators of abuse

Physical abuse:

- unexplained bruises, burns or welts
- the child or young person is unable to explain an injury
- arms or legs are kept covered by inappropriate clothing or hidden injuries
- lack of medical attention or delay between injury and obtaining medical assistance
- broken bones
- the child reports intentional injury by an older person, parent or carer

Emotional abuse:

- the child exhibits extremes in behaviour from overly aggressive to overly passive
- high levels of anxiety
- feelings of worthlessness about life and themselves
- reverting to younger behaviour
- nervousness
- sudden under achievement
- attention seeking
- reluctant to go home or running away
- compulsive lying and/or stealing

Sexual abuse:

- preoccupation with sexual matters (evident in words, play, drawings)
- being sexually provocative or inappropriate
- difficulties in sleeping and/or nightmares
- starts regressive behaviour like bedwetting, speech loss or biting
- secretive relationships with adults or children

Neglect:

- frequently hungry or steals food
- unsupervised for long periods
- stays at school outside school hours
- appearing ill cared for
- being withdrawn or aggressive
- medical needs not attended to
- failure to thrive

Remember, one sign on its own may not suggest abuse or neglect.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Outcome 3

Increased understanding of what to do when child abuse is suspected or alleged, including how to deal with the child involved, who to report the incident to and what club procedures need to be followed.

INTRODUCTION

The responsibility of protecting children lies with each individual. All cases of suspected child abuse or neglect should be reported to the Department for Child Protection or the Police.

Organisations also need to take a lead role to ensure that they create child safe environments for their junior members.

RESPONDING TO A DISCLOSURE OR SUSPICION OF ABUSE

Disclosure

If a child/young person tells you that they have been abused, they may feel scared, guilty, ashamed, angry and powerless. You in turn, may feel a sense of outrage, disgust, sadness, anger and sometimes disbelief.

It is important for you to remain calm and in control, and to reassure the child/young person that something will be done to keep him/her safe.

You can show your care and concern for the child/young person by:

- listening carefully
- telling the child/young person
 - that you believe them
 - it is not their fault and he or she is not responsible for the abuse
 - that telling you is the right thing to do
- letting the child use his/her own words
- as soon as you form the view that abuse or neglect may have occurred, seek professional input
- explain that the information will need to be shared with the appropriate people who will be able to help
- try not to leave the child in a distressed state
- don't make promises you cannot keep, such as promising that you will not tell anyone
- don't force the child into giving you details of the abuse – asking direct or leading questions of the child might prejudice any subsequent investigations
- don't dismiss anything a child/young person has to tell you

- don't dismiss any report made to you by any adult – it is not your right to dismiss any information that is given to you
- don't discuss the circumstances of the child/young person with others not directly involved
- as soon as possible after the conversation, record exactly what the child said, using their own words

It is recommended that your club has a Child-Safe Officer or Reporting Officer who can document the information and pass it on to the authorities. This information could be part of a jigsaw that makes a stronger case in the courts against a perpetrator.

Suspicion

If you suspect abuse but the child/young person has not told anyone, it is important to be aware of the emotional distress that the child/young person may be experiencing.

You could approach the child/young person in a caring and sensitive manner and assure him/her that you are willing to listen and help if needed. Alternatively you could notify your Child-Safe Officer or Reporting Officer at your club. If you require further advice or support, you can contact the Member Protection Information Officer (MPIO) at your State Sporting Association.

REPORTING A DISCLOSURE OR SUSPICION

All reports can be made directly to the WA Police Child Protection Squad on **9428 1666** or the Department for Child Protection on **9222 2555** or refer to the White Pages or www.childprotection.wa.gov.au for the office closest to where the child lives.

A report can also be made to your Child-Safe Officer or Reporting Officer at your club or the MPIO at your State Sporting Association.

A Reporting Manual needs to be completed. Once this is completed, the Police need to be contacted and the information passed onto them. All reports that are made to the Police, Child-Safe Officers, Reporting Officer or MPIO are confidential.

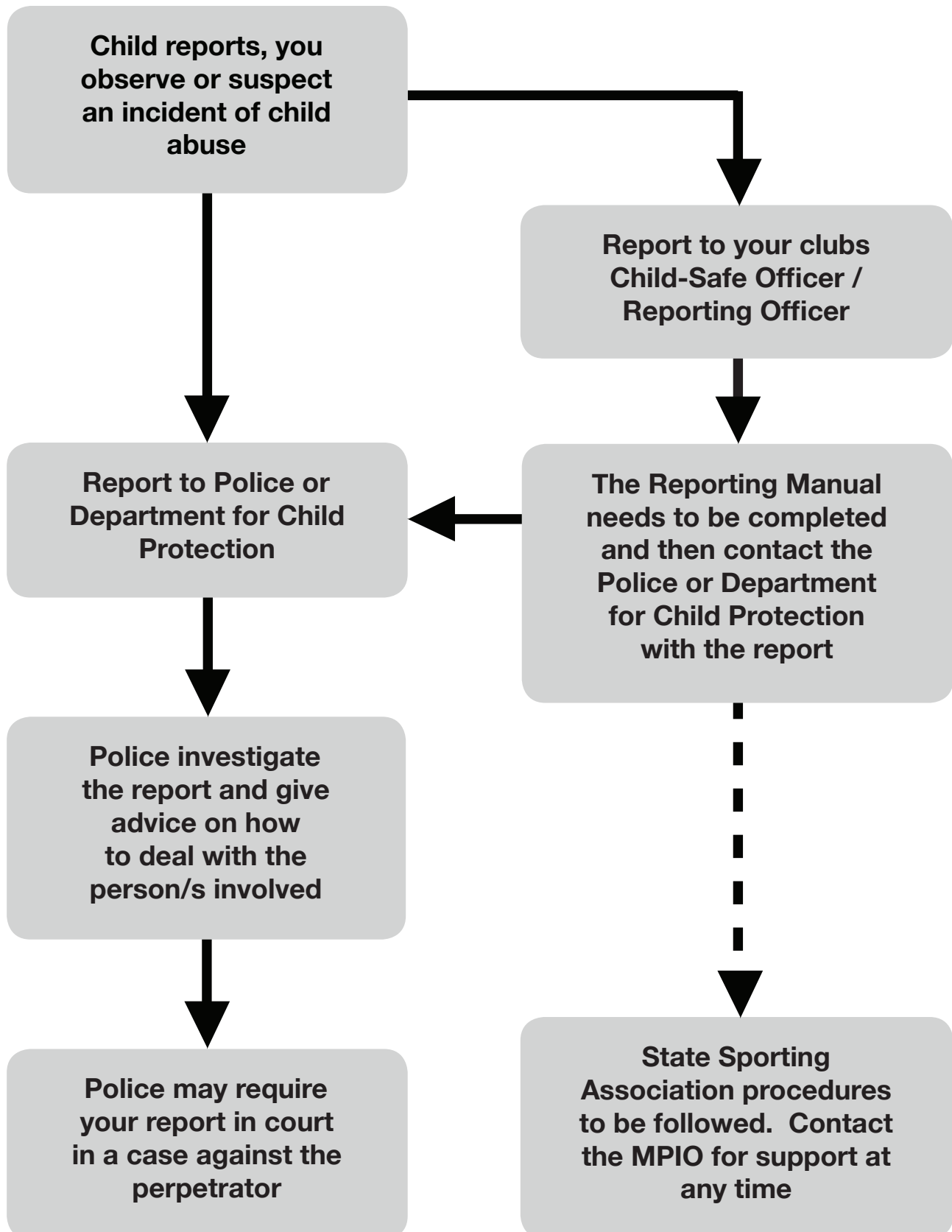
You do not need proof of abuse to make a report – you can act on a suspicion of abuse.

"It's just awful to think that happened, and the people who could have stopped it... I can't believe that they couldn't, you know what I mean? They, they just saw things that were wrong, and they didn't do anything about it... I lost so much... I could have saved a few years of my life..."

- An athlete who was sexually abused for many years by a coach

Leahy, T., 2001. *Preventing sexual abuse of young people in Australian sport*: Australian Institute of Sport (Accessed 23 October 2007, www.ausport.gov.au)

NOTIFICATION AND REPORTING PROCESS



OTHER IMPORTANT CONTACT NUMBERS

Kids Help Line	1800 551 800
Police Assistance Centre	131 444
Department for Child Protection	9222 2555
or refer to the White pages or www.child.protection.wa.gov.au for the local office	
Crisis Care – 24 hours service for people in crisis	9223 1111
	or 1800 199 008 (freecall STD)
Princess Margaret Hospital – Child Protection Unit	9340 8646
Mandatory reporting website	www.mandatoryreporting.dcp.wa.gov.au

CASE STUDY – SURF LIFE SAVING WA

Surf Life Saving WA and the WA Police have conducted training sessions to clubs on how to use Reporting Manuals to report any incidences of abuse within their organisation. The manuals were developed in conjunction with the WA Police Child Abuse Unit.

Since its implementation, there has been one occasion in which the Reporting Manual has been used to document a suspected case of abuse. In this case, the club member who reported the incident successfully filled out the Reporting Manual with the assistance of the Reporting Officer. It was then provided to the Police.

REPORTING OFFICER/MEMBER PROTECTION INFORMATION OFFICER'S ROLE

Outcome 4

Understand the role of Reporting Officer and have the ability to act in this role.

INTRODUCTION

The Reporting Officer or Child-Safe Officer position is an important function within a club's structure. Not all clubs refer to this person as the 'Reporting Officer' or 'Child-Safe Officer', but this position acts as the point of contact within a club for anyone who wishes to report an incident or suspected incident of abuse. Although a person can report alleged or suspected incidences of abuse directly to the Police or Department for Child Protection, they may feel more comfortable talking to the Reporting Officer.

ROLE

The Reporting Officer or Child-Safe Officer is a point of contact within the club for a person wishing to report an incident of alleged or suspected abuse. Their role is to:

- listen to the person
- record information accurately
- report all allegations or suspicions to the WA Child Abuse Squad or Department for Child Protection
- maintain confidentiality

The Reporting Officer does not:

- investigate the complaint
- dismiss any information given to them by a child or an adult
- need to notify the child's parents or a representative of the club or association before reporting the allegation or suspicion

REPORTING MANUAL

If a person reports an allegation or suspicion of abuse, it is imperative to the success of subsequent investigations that the information is recorded correctly and accurately. The Reporting Manual will help the Reporting Officer or Child-Safe Officer and the person making the complaint do this.

The Reporting Officer or Child-Safe Officer should:

- have the complainant talk through the incident first. Please see 'Responsibilities' in this manual for information on how to respond to a disclosure or suspicion of child abuse
- get the complainant to fill out the Reporting

Manual themselves (where possible)

- ensure that all pages are signed and dated by both parties to show they are true and correct
- report the incident to the Police while the complainant is still with you (if practical)
- fill out the notes section after complainant has left
- ensure the Reporting Manual is filled out correctly as it may be used as evidence many years later
- store the Reporting Manual in a safe and secure place and in-line with your club or association's procedures

PROMOTION

It is important that the people involved in your club or association know who the Reporting Officer or Child-Safe Officer is so they know who to make a report to if required. Therefore the person who acts as the Reporting Officer or Child-Safe Officer within the club should be promoted widely. Some suggestions on how to do this include:

- display information on the website
- posters
- distribute information via email
- hand out contact details to parents, coaches, players etc with codes of conduct cards
- club newsletters

FURTHER INFORMATION

Topic	Agency	Links to resources	Content
Organisational Risk Management			
Policies	DSR	www.dsr.wa.gov.au	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member Protection • Child Protection • Member Screening • Risk Management • Other relevant policies and templates
	SLSWA	www.mybeach.com.au	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member Safety and Wellbeing Policy • Risk Management
	ASC	www.ausport.gov.au	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member Protection • Child Protection • Risk Management • Other relevant policies and templates
Interviews	SLSWA	www.mybeach.com.au	• How to conduct (See Member Wellbeing Policy)
Child Safe Environments	DSR	www.dsr.wa.gov.au	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidelines • Information
	PBTR	www.playbytherules.net.au	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online tutorials • Downloadable DVD scenarios • Guidelines • Policies • Resources
	WWCSU	www.checkwwc.wa.gov.au	• General information about the WWC Check
	DPC	www.dcp.wa.gov.au	• Child protection information
	DFC	www.communities.wa.gov.au/DCP	• General information
Background Checking			
Reference Checks	SLSWA	www.mybeach.com.au	• How to conduct (See Member Well-being Policy)
Criminal Record Checking			
Working with Children Checks	WWCSU	www.checkwwc.wa.gov.au	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed information • Factsheets
	DSR	www.dsr.wa.gov.au	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary information • Club resources • Policy templates
	SLSWA	www.mybeach.com.au	• SLSWA policies
National Police Checks for Volunteers (NPCV)	DFC	www.communities.wa.gov.au	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed information • Application forms
	DSR	www.dsr.wa.gov.au	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary information • Policy templates
	SLSWA	www.mybeach.com.au	• SLSWA policies
National Police Checks	WA Police	www.police.wa.gov.au	• Detailed information
	DSR	www.dsr.wa.gov.au	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary information • Policy templates
	SLSWA	www.mybeach.com.au	• SLSWA policies
Other Relevant Topics			
Harrassment and Discrimination	EOC	www.eoc.wa.gov.au	• Detailed information on Equal Opportunity Act
	DSR	www.dsr.wa.gov.au	• Member Protection information and templates
	SLSWA	www.mybeach.com.au	• SLSWA policies
	ASC	www.ausport.gov.au	• Member Protection information and templates
	PBTR	www.playbytherules.net.au	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online tutorials • Downloadable DVD scenarios • Guidelines • Policies

ASC Australian Sports Commission DCP Department for Child Protection DFC Department for Communities
DSR Department of Sport and Recreation EOC Equal Opportunity Commission SLSWA Surf Life Saving WA
WAP WA Police WASF WA Sports Federation WWCSU Working with Children Screening Unit

TRAINING COURSES

Courses for training in member protection issues are available through the Department of Sport and Recreation.

- Dealing with Conflict and Difficult People Seminar
- Play by the Rules Workshop
- Presenters Course
- Certificate IV in Training and Assessment
- Member Protection Information Officer (MPIO) course

See www.dsr.wa.gov.au for further information.

Surf Life Saving WA also conducts a training course for Reporting Officers. This course gives clear instructions on how to receive a report and complete a Reporting Manual. Training is given on the importance of filling out the booklet correctly, dealing with people who make a report, and the necessity to abide by confidentiality issues.

See www.mybeach.com.au for further information.

REFERENCES

Brown, D. and Zoran Endekov. 2005. *Childhood abuse: The pandemic nature and effects of child abuse and domestic violence on children in Australia*. (Accessed 23 October 2007: www.amf.org.au)

Leahy, T., 2001. *Preventing sexual abuse of young people in Australian sport*. Australian Institute of Sport (Accessed 23 October 2007, www.ausport.gov.au)

CREATING CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENTS

Outcome 1

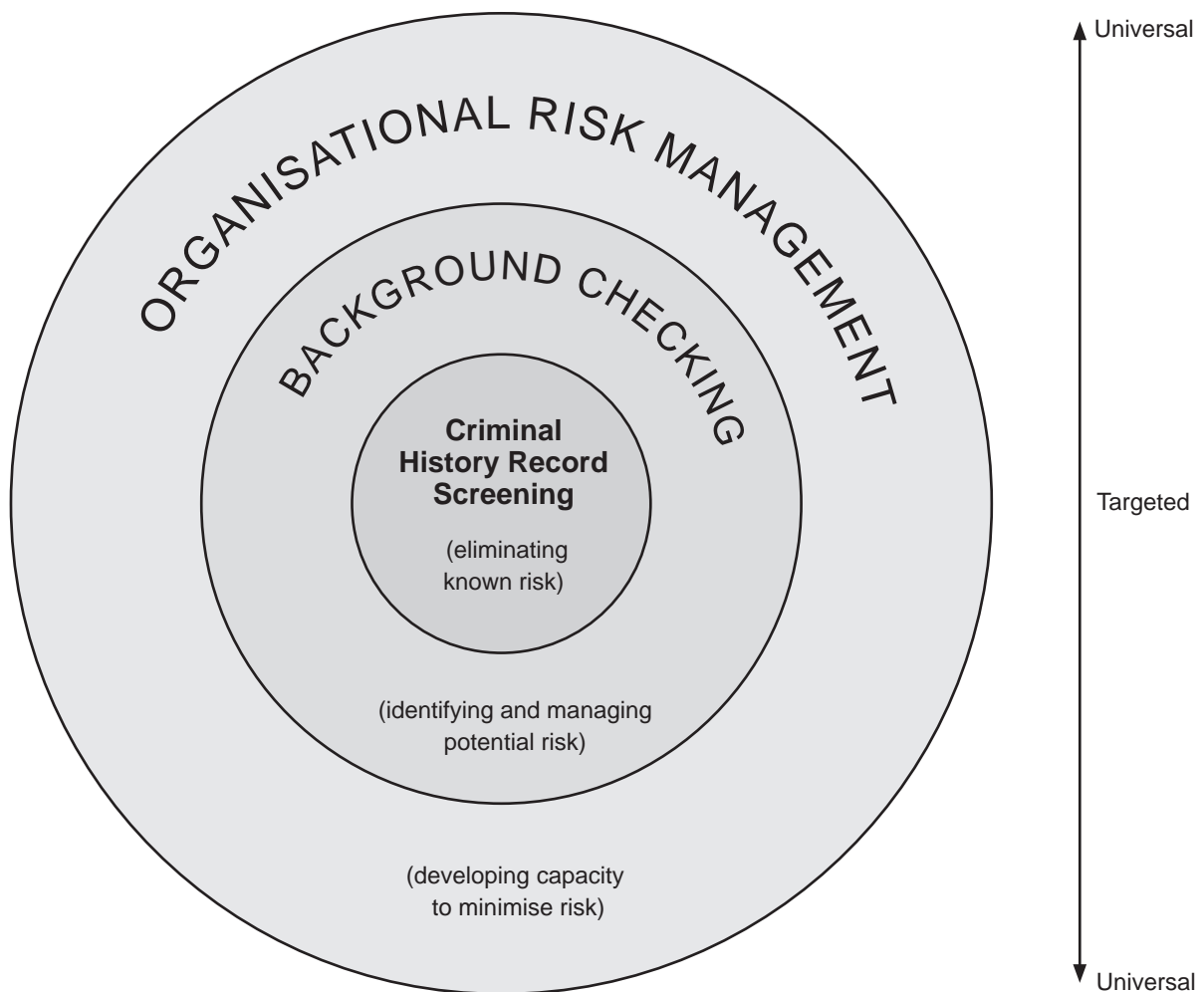
Increased understanding of how to create child safe environments through organisational risk management practices, background checking and criminal record checking.

INTRODUCTION

Various strategies and practices contribute to an environment that is safe for, and welcoming to children.

Clubs and organisations should take a comprehensive approach to child protection and creating child safe environments as shown below. Responsible organisations should ensure that they have employees or volunteers undergo criminal record screening and background checking, and also have implemented a range of other organisational risk management strategies that create safe environments for children.

WORKING WITH CHILDREN — A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH



ORGANISATIONAL RISK MANAGEMENT

There are a number of strategies that each organisation can implement to reduce the risk of child abuse occurring within the organisation and which will support a child-safe environment. These include:

- child protection policies
- child safe procedures
- appropriate recruitment procedures – including the support of new employers and volunteers
- background checks – referee and credentials
- criminal record screening – including Working with Children Checks, National Police Checks for Volunteers, National Police Certificates

These are discussed in more detail below.

It is important to note that criminal record checking and background checking are only part of an overall strategy that responsible organisations can implement to ensure children are kept safe.

POLICIES (INCLUDING COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES)

Research has shown that organisations which do not have adequate child protection policies in place are more likely to experience incidences of abuse. It is therefore imperative that organisations have policies in place outlining their commitment to child safety and have procedures supporting these policies.

Child Protection policies can stand alone, however they are more likely to be part of a broader Member Protection Policy. This Policy is a statement of an organisation's commitment to providing a safe environment that is fair, respectful and free from harassment, discrimination and abuse. It is sometimes also referred to as a Member Welfare Policy or a Member Safety and Wellbeing Policy.

Member Protection Policies should include the following:

- core policies
- state/territory child protection requirements – screening requirements
- complaints handling procedures
- role – specific codes of conduct
- reporting documents

It is also important that these policies are communicated to ALL members. Some ideas on how this can easily be achieved are:

- distribution at registration days

- information/orientation days
- club websites
- club newsletters
- annual general meetings

Clubs are encouraged to adopt their State Sporting Association's Member Protection Policy.

CHILD SAFE GUIDELINES FOR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Organisations should have procedures or guidelines in place to support their policies relating to child protection. All people working with children in an organisation should be educated on these and they should be enforced.

Below are some good practice procedures that are recommended for those in contact with children. At training or games, organisations should:

- ensure there is enough supervision appropriate to the age of the children
- avoid one on one situations with children
- always meet with a child in an open and clearly visible area
- not invite children to their home or drive them home unless accompanied by the child's guardian or with the consent of the guardian
- ensure children have access to an adult of the same gender
- foster an environment of friendship, cooperation, tolerance and good sportsmanship (see www.playbytherules.net.au for more information about this)
- ensure that all physical contact with a child is appropriate to the skill being taught or the situation
- be aware and quick to act on games that are physically rough or sexually provocative or involve inappropriate language or contact
- never enter a change room with children in it without first knocking or loudly announcing that you are entering. Only gender appropriate persons should enter
- adults should sleep separately to children on overnight camps
- adults of both genders should attend overnight camps
- if publishing photos of children, do not name them in an attached article or with the photo, and seek permission from guardians about publishing

APPROPRIATE RECRUITMENT, SELECTION AND SUPPORT OF NEW EMPLOYEES/VOLUNTEERS

Not only should organisations ensure that they have potential staff undergo criminal record checks and background checking, they should also conduct interviews, include statements regarding child protection in job advertisements, and have clear position descriptions outlining roles and responsibilities.

Organisations should ensure that staff and volunteers are appropriately supported, supervised and inducted when commencing a position.

The information below describes sound recruitment, selection and support of new employees and volunteers.

INTERVIEWS

Interviewing potential employees or volunteers is one way that organisations can ensure they are recruiting the best people for the task.

Interviews are designed to identify preferred applicants for positions. It is important that a face-to-face interview is conducted to determine the appropriate person for the position.

Questions during the interview

The scope of questions to be asked during the interview should be aimed at obtaining information on the applicant's work performance and good character.

Behaviour during the interview

It is important that the interviewer observes and documents the behaviour of the applicant in areas such as:

- appearance
- reactions to questions
- manner
- interpersonal skills

Responsibility for interviews

Interviews are an important part of the employment checking process. Because of its importance, and the necessity to maintain the integrity and confidentiality of the checking process, interviews should be conducted by those responsible for the employment/appointment of the individual, preferably with appropriate training.

Structuring interviews

Interviews can increase reliability by focusing on specific job related questions. All information gained during an interview should be clearly documented and stored by the appointing body. The interviewer should ensure all questions directed at the applicant relate directly to the position.

Steps in conducting interviews

The following steps are suggested for conducting interviews:

- it is preferable that the recruiter/member of the selection panel contacts the applicant to organise a convenient time to conduct the interview
- only questions that relate specifically to the position and the applicant's work performance and good conduct, as well as special qualifications and aptitude for the discharge of the duties should be asked
- all relevant information gained during the interview should be documented

ONGOING EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF STAFF

It is an aim of this manual and a responsibility of organisations to ensure that employees/volunteers are sufficiently educated on how to identify and appropriately respond to suspected cases of child abuse. As an ethical obligation, reporting should be encouraged and therefore employees and volunteers need to be adequately trained.

INCLUDING CHILDREN IN DECISION MAKING

Children should be included in the development of policies and other decision making processes. They should also be empowered to recognise, avoid and report situations in which they feel unsafe. It is widely accepted that a central dynamic in the abuse of children is the exploitation of power to gain submission or silence. By including and empowering children, this exploitation can be minimised.

BACKGROUND CHECKING

Background checking involves identifying and managing risks and is more targeted than organisation risk management. Organisations can employ the following systems to ensure adequate background checking of employees and volunteers.

REFERENCE CHECKS

Referee checks are a collection of employment related information concerning past work performance (volunteer or paid), obtained from supervisors or other people with a direct personal knowledge of current or previously held positions.

Referees should be able to provide information about the applicant's work performance and good character. At least one referee should be the applicant's current supervisor, unless acceptable reasons are provided for not nominating that person.

Questions of referees

The scope of questions to be asked of referees would be aimed at confirming information gained during the interview, and obtaining information on the applicant's work performance and good character.

Responsibility for referee checks

Referee checking is an important part of the employment/appointment checking process. Because of its importance, and the necessity to maintain the integrity and confidentiality of the checking process, referee checks should be conducted by those responsible for the employment of the individual, preferably with appropriate training.

Methods of obtaining references

It is preferable that references be obtained orally. Telephone references are the most effective way of obtaining information from referees. Written references provided from an applicant with the resume are of limited value since they provide general information not specific to the position and the comments are usually favourable or vague.

Structuring reference checks

Structured reference checks can increase reliability by focusing on specific job related questions. Structured questions may be similar to the questions asked of the applicant at an interview, and should seek behavioural examples of past situations similar to those likely to be experienced in the new position.

Subjectivity

It is important to note that the reliability and effectiveness of references may be diminished by:

- faulty recollection by referee(s) due to passage of time or lack of preparation
- the subjective basis upon which the reference is given
- incomplete assessments where past positions did not require the level of behaviour or performance of all skills required for the advertised position
- the difficulty of comparing performance based on different levels of skills or behaviour in past positions
- the selection committee should ensure all information collected about the applicants relates directly to the position

Steps in conducting the reference check

The following steps are suggested for conducting reference checks:

- after the interviews have been completed, determine the most competitive applicants under consideration
- it is preferable the recruiter/member of the selection panel contacts the referees, clearly identifying him/herself to the nominated referees and outlining the reason for the enquiry
- the capacity in which the referee is acting – the position the referee holds and current or previous relationship(s) with the recommended applicant – should be established at the beginning of the reference process and any conflicts of interest declared
- only questions that relate to the selection criteria, the applicant's work performance and good conduct, as well as special qualifications and aptitude for the discharge of the duties, should be asked
- a written record of all relevant information provided by the referee should be retained
- information obtained from referees must be discussed with the other members of the selection panel to enable informed decisions

CREDENTIAL CHECKS

It is important that if a person states they have formal qualifications such as coaching or officiating qualifications, the organisation checks to ensure the qualifications are authentic and current. This can be done by contacting the relevant State Sporting Association or qualifying body.

CRIMINAL RECORD SCREENING

Criminal record screening aims to eliminate known offenders from working with children. It is a targeted approach that can take many forms as outlined below.

WORKING WITH CHILDREN

(WWC) CHECKS

The Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004 commenced in Western Australia on 1 January, 2006. The legislation makes it compulsory for certain people in child-related work to apply for a Working with Children Check. This is a check that assesses all criminal history information including charges and convictions. The decision made is whether a WWC Card can be issued or whether the criminal history indicates a child may be harmed, in which case a Negative Notice is issued. A WWC Card does not indicate general good character.

Employees and volunteers are required to undergo a WWC Check if their usual duties of work or volunteering involve, or are likely to involve, contact with children in connection with one of the categories in the Act, provided that no exemptions apply.

Both organisations and individuals have obligations under the Act. Employers/volunteer coordinators of people in child-related work must:

- keep records showing that all employees and volunteers in child-related work have a WWC Card or have applied for one
- check periodically that all employee and volunteer cards are current and have not been cancelled. This can be done by visiting the www.checkwwc.wa.gov.au website and entering the card number
- check the cards of new employees and volunteers if they already have a card upon starting work
- remember to register or deregister as a person's employee/volunteer coordinator on the www.checkwwc.wa.gov.au website to ensure you are kept up-to-date about any relevant changes in a person's status
- keep adequate records that demonstrate compliance with the WWC legislation ensuring that if asked by the WWC Screening Unit, you will be able to provide this information. You can see a list of audit questions on the WWC website
- notify the WWC Screening Unit in writing if any employees or volunteers tell you they have had a relevant change in their criminal record

- not employ someone if you are aware that they hold a current Negative Notice or Interim Negative Notice
- have strategies in place to ensure employees and volunteers renew their WWC Card every three years

For a full list of your obligations that apply to your organisation visit www.checkwwc.wa.gov.au.

Individuals in child-related work must apply for the WWC Check and also have obligations. Individuals must:

- not start or continue in child-related work for more than 5 days in a calendar year unless they have applied for or hold a current WWC Card, or a receipt for an application that is pending
- stop child-related work immediately if issued with an Interim Negative Notice or Negative Notice

Further obligations exist under the legislation and can be viewed at www.checkwwc.wa.gov.au.

HOW TO APPLY

Application forms are available and must be submitted by the individual in person at an Australia Post Office. A representative from the organisation employing the person must also sign the application form to confirm that they employ that person in child-related work or in a volunteer activity. It is important that the person who signs the form is someone in a position of authority within the club, as this person will receive any correspondence from the WWC Screening Unit about any changes to a person's status. This information is sensitive and needs to be dealt with accordingly.

The cost of the three year check is \$10 for volunteers or \$50 for paid persons*.

This is a summary only and does not constitute legal advice. Please refer to the Department of Sport and Recreation website, www.dsr.wa.gov.au or the Working with Children Screening Unit's website www.checkwwc.wa.gov.au for further information about child related work, exemptions, your obligations, and how to apply.

*Accurate at time of printing – August 2009.

NATIONAL POLICE CHECK FOR VOLUNTEERS (NPCV)

The NPCVs are conducted through the Department for Communities in conjunction with the WA Police. It enables volunteers to be checked for disclosable convictions and pending charges. It is designed to

assist organisations to adequately screen volunteers who provide services to vulnerable people, work in positions of financial trust, or are involved in driving or other special duties. It is also a good means of getting those persons who are exempt from applying for a WWC screened.

The NPCV is not a legislative requirement and does not override the WWC legislation. See the differences between the WWC Check and the NPCV below.

The program provides basic emailed information to the organisation about whether a person has a criminal record or pending charge of any sort. It does not list offences, but rather indicates whether the person has serious, minor and/or traffic offences, or is on the Fines Enforcement Registry.

Unlike the WWC Check, organisations need to decide in accordance with their risk management policies if a person who has a criminal record should be allowed to work or continue working in their organisation. This may involve the person applying for a full National Police Certificate to list all offences.

The cost is \$11.00 per person screened. It does not provide a portable certificate.

This program is only available to incorporated organisations or those with relevant legal status, and must be coordinated by the State body.

Please refer to the Department for Communities website, www.communities.wa.gov.au for further information about NPCV.

NATIONAL POLICE CERTIFICATE

This form of criminal record screening is conducted through the WA Police. It enables all persons to be checked for disclosable convictions and pending charges. It is recommended for people who are in paid positions or whose NPCV indicates a criminal record that needs further assessment by an organisation.

The Certificate costs \$51 per person checked, and must be applied for in person by the individual at a participating Australia Post Office.

Please refer to the WA Police website, www.police.wa.gov.au for further information about National Police Certificates.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO ORGANISATIONS

Check	Volunteer/Unpaid Staff	Paid Staff	Cost
Working with Children (WWC) Check	Volunteers in 'child-related work' are legally required to apply. There are some exemptions under the WWC Act, including volunteers under 18, who cannot apply. Most volunteers who undertake less than 5 days child-related work per calendar year are not required to (but can) apply*.	Paid employees in 'child related work' are legally required to apply. Those subject to exemptions under the WWC Act cannot apply. Most employees who undertake less than 5 days child related work per calendar year are not required to (but can) apply*.	\$10 for volunteers/ unpaid staff \$50 for paid staff*
National Police Check for Volunteers (NPCV)	Volunteers who are not in child related work including those exempt from applying for a WWC Check*.	Cannot apply	\$11
National Police Certificate	Volunteers whose NPCV indicates a criminal record that needs further assessment.	Paid staff who are exempt from applying for a WWC Check or do duties other than those in child-related work.	\$51

* See www.checkwwc.wa.gov.au for a full definition of child related work, information on exemptions, and situations where the '5 day threshold' does not apply.

UNDERSTANDING CHILD ABUSE

Outcome 2

Increased understanding of what is child abuse, the effects it can have to a child and some common indicators.

INTRODUCTION

Children and young people have the right to be emotionally and physically safe at all times.

Most people who volunteer or work with children are safe and do so to help children develop to their full potential. They make a positive contribution to the lives of children in the community and should be recognised and valued for their work. It is known however, that a small minority of people target children's organisations in order to access children.

An important component of minimising the risk of child abuse occurring is the education of community members. Everyone should know what child abuse is, what the possible indicators of abuse are, and the damaging effects it may have on a child.

Child abuse and neglect rarely stop without intervention and help.

WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

In general, child abuse is categorised in four ways:

1. Physical abuse

Physical abuse occurs when a child has experienced severe ill-treatment such as beating, shaking, attempted suffocation or excessive punishment, which results in a non-accidental trauma or physical injury.

In 2007/08 there were 1,100 allegations of physical abuse made to the Department for Child Protection.

2. Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is exposed or subjected to sexual behaviours that are exploitive or inappropriate to his/her age and development. Examples include sexual penetration, inappropriate touching, and exposure to sex acts or pornographic materials. Sexual abuse also includes sexual behaviour where the child is bribed or coerced into participating, where the child has less power than another person involved, or where there is significant difference in the developmental levels of the child and the other person involved in the behaviour.

In 2007/08 there were 1,024 allegations of child sexual abuse made to the Department for Child Protection.

3. Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the chronic failure to provide the support and affection necessary for a child to develop a healthy self esteem and social competence. Emotional abuse may include behaviors such as threatening, belittling, teasing, humiliating, bullying, ignoring and inappropriate encouragement.

In 2007/08 there were 650 allegations of child emotional abuse made to the Department for Child Protection.

4. Neglect

Neglect is the failure to provide for the child/young person's basic needs, such as food, medical care, education and supervision. Neglect can be acute, chronic or episodic. This can occur through direct and deliberate inaction for the child/young person.

In 2007/08 there were 1,366 allegations of child neglect were made to the Department for Child Protection.

Statistics

- one child is reported abused or neglected every three minutes in Australia
- one in four girls and one in five boys in Australia report being sexually abused by the time they are 18 years of age

Research relating to sport and recreation and child abuse in Australia is lacking. However a study of 370 elite and club athletes by the Australian Sports Commission in 2001 found the following:

- of the female respondents, 30% had reported being sexually abused in their life. Of these, 40% indicated that this abuse occurred in a sporting environment
- of the male respondents, 20% had reported being sexually abused in their life. Of these, 30% indicated that this abuse occurred in a sporting environment

EFFECTS OF CHILD ABUSE

The effects of child abuse on a child/young person should not be underestimated. Physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect all affect the physical, intellectual and emotional development of the child/young person. With early identification and an appropriate response, children can recover from episodes of abuse and neglect.

If allowed to continue, it can result in a number of problems such as low self esteem and withdrawn

behaviour, depression and/or suicidal thoughts, learning disorders, behavioural problems, developmental delay, eating ailments or delinquency including violent or aggressive behaviour.

INDICATORS OF CHILD ABUSE

You can help prevent children from being harmed by noticing the signs or indicators of harm, and taking appropriate action early.

The possible indicators of abuse described in each of the following child abuse categories should be viewed as 'red flags' – a sign that something is worrying the child. It should not be automatically assumed that abuse is occurring, and talking to a child may reveal something quite innocent.

It is important not to dismiss significant changes in a child's behaviour. If you are sufficiently concerned, you should report it to the appropriate person as outlined later in this manual.

Possible indicators of abuse

Physical abuse:

- unexplained bruises, burns or welts
- the child or young person is unable to explain an injury
- arms or legs are kept covered by inappropriate clothing or hidden injuries
- lack of medical attention or delay between injury and obtaining medical assistance
- broken bones
- the child reports intentional injury by an older person, parent or carer

Emotional abuse:

- the child exhibits extremes in behaviour from overly aggressive to overly passive
- high levels of anxiety
- feelings of worthlessness about life and themselves
- reverting to younger behaviour
- nervousness
- sudden under achievement
- attention seeking
- reluctant to go home or running away
- compulsive lying and/or stealing

Sexual abuse:

- preoccupation with sexual matters (evident in words, play, drawings)
- being sexually provocative or inappropriate
- difficulties in sleeping and/or nightmares
- starts regressive behaviour like bedwetting, speech loss or biting
- secretive relationships with adults or children

Neglect:

- frequently hungry or steals food
- unsupervised for long periods
- stays at school outside school hours
- appearing ill cared for
- being withdrawn or aggressive
- medical needs not attended to
- failure to thrive

Remember, one sign on its own may not suggest abuse or neglect.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Outcome 3

Increased understanding of what to do when child abuse is suspected or alleged, including how to deal with the child involved, who to report the incident to and what club procedures need to be followed.

INTRODUCTION

The responsibility of protecting children lies with each individual. All cases of suspected child abuse or neglect should be reported to the Department for Child Protection or the Police.

Organisations also need to take a lead role to ensure that they create child safe environments for their junior members.

RESPONDING TO A DISCLOSURE OR SUSPICION OF ABUSE

Disclosure

If a child/young person tells you that they have been abused, they may feel scared, guilty, ashamed, angry and powerless. You in turn, may feel a sense of outrage, disgust, sadness, anger and sometimes disbelief.

It is important for you to remain calm and in control, and to reassure the child/young person that something will be done to keep him/her safe.

You can show your care and concern for the child/young person by:

- listening carefully
- telling the child/young person
 - that you believe them
 - it is not their fault and he or she is not responsible for the abuse
 - that telling you is the right thing to do
- letting the child use his/her own words
- as soon as you form the view that abuse or neglect may have occurred, seek professional input
- explain that the information will need to be shared with the appropriate people who will be able to help
- try not to leave the child in a distressed state
- don't make promises you cannot keep, such as promising that you will not tell anyone
- don't force the child into giving you details of the abuse – asking direct or leading questions of the child might prejudice any subsequent investigations
- don't dismiss anything a child/young person has to tell you
- don't dismiss any report made to you by any adult

– it is not your right to dismiss any information that is given to you

- don't discuss the circumstances of the child/young person with others not directly involved
- as soon as possible after the conversation, record exactly what the child said, using their own words

It is recommended that your club has a Child-Safe Officer or Reporting Officer who can document the information and pass it on to the authorities. This information could be part of a jigsaw that makes a stronger case in the courts against a perpetrator.

Suspicion

If you suspect abuse but the child/young person has not told anyone, it is important to be aware of the emotional distress that the child/young person may be experiencing.

You could approach the child/young person in a caring and sensitive manner and assure him/her that you are willing to listen and help if needed. Alternatively you could notify your Child-Safe Officer or Reporting Officer at your club. If you require further advice or support, you can contact the Member Protection Information Officer (MPIO) at your State Sporting Association.

REPORTING A DISCLOSURE OR SUSPICION

All reports can be made directly to the WA Police Child Abuse Squad on **9428 1666** or the Department for Child Protection on **9222 2555** or refer to the White Pages or www.childprotection.wa.gov.au for the office closest to where the child lives.

A report can also be made to your Child-Safe Officer or Reporting Officer at your club or the MPIO at your State Sporting Association.

A Reporting Manual needs to be completed. Once this is completed, the Police or Department for Child Protection need to be contacted and the information passed onto them. All reports that are made to the Police, Child-Safe Officers, Reporting Officer or MPIO are confidential.

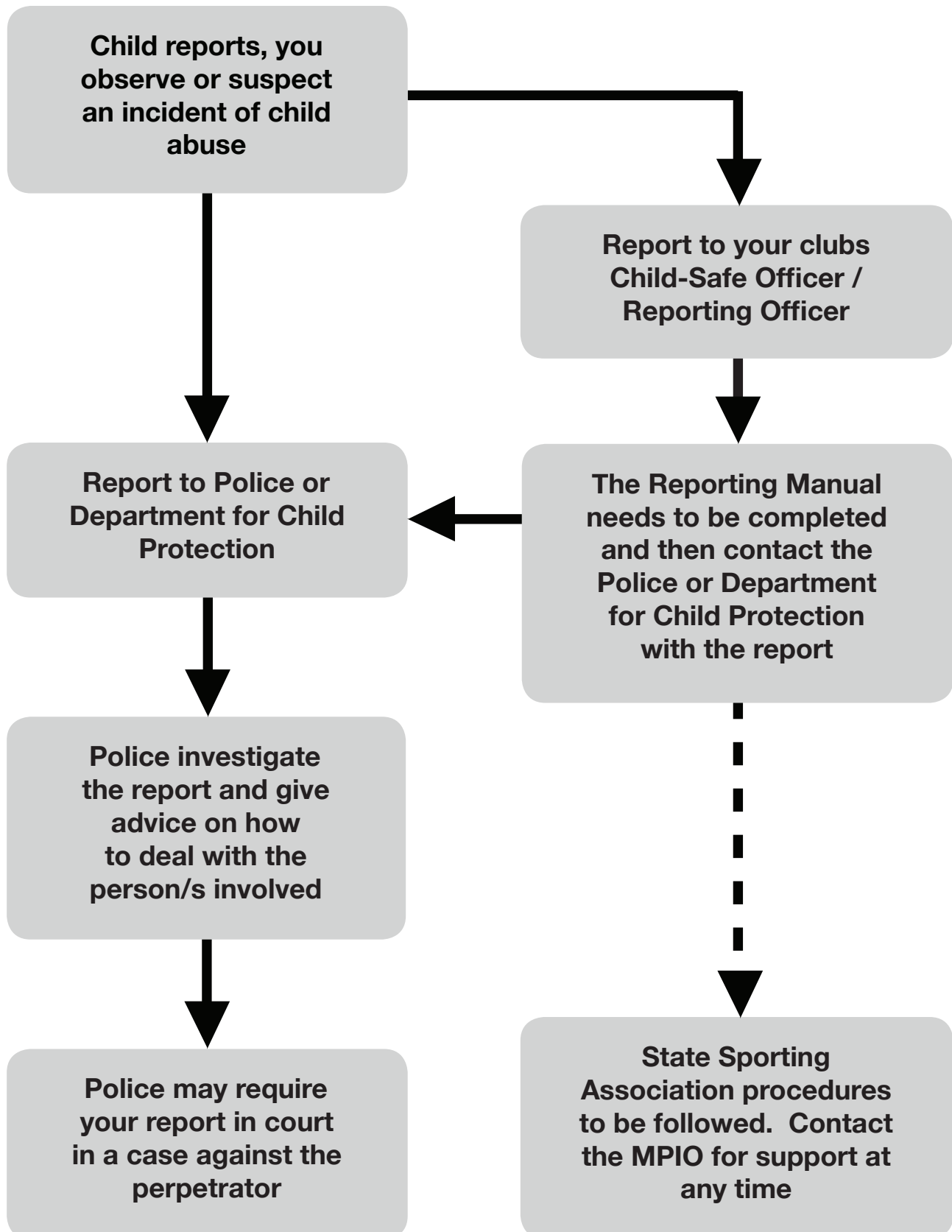
You do not need proof of abuse to make a report – you can act on a suspicion of abuse.

"It's just awful to think that happened, and the people who could have stopped it... I can't believe that they couldn't, you know what I mean? They, they just saw things that were wrong, and they didn't do anything about it... I lost so much... I could have saved a few years of my life..."

- An athlete who was sexually abused for many years by a coach

Leahy, T., 2001. *Preventing sexual abuse of young people in Australian sport*: Australian Institute of Sport (Accessed 23 October 2007, www.ausport.gov.au)

NOTIFICATION AND REPORTING PROCESS



OTHER IMPORTANT CONTACT NUMBERS

Kids Help Line	1800 551 800
Police Assistance Centre	131 444
Department for Child Protection	9222 2555
or refer to the White pages or www.child.protection.wa.gov.au for the local office	
Crisis Care – 24 hours service for people in crisis	9223 1111
	or 1800 199 008 (freecall STD)
Princess Margaret Hospital – Child Protection Unit	9340 8646
Mandatory reporting website	www.mandatoryreporting.dcp.wa.gov.au

CASE STUDY – SURF LIFE SAVING WA

Surf Life Saving WA and the WA Police have conducted training sessions to clubs on how to use Reporting Manuals to report any incidences of abuse within their organisation. The manuals were developed in conjunction with the WA Police Child Abuse Unit.

Since its implementation, there has been one occasion in which the Reporting Manual has been used to document a suspected case of abuse. In this case, the club member who reported the incident successfully filled out the Reporting Manual with the assistance of the Reporting Officer. It was then provided to the Police.

REPORTING OFFICER/MEMBER PROTECTION INFORMATION OFFICER'S ROLE

Outcome 4

Understand the role of Reporting Officer and have the ability to act in this role.

INTRODUCTION

The Reporting Officer or Child-Safe Officer position is an important function within a club's structure. Not all clubs refer to this person as the 'Reporting Officer' or 'Child-Safe Officer', but this position acts as the point of contact within a club for anyone who wishes to report an incident or suspected incident of abuse. Although a person can report alleged or suspected incidences of abuse directly to the Police or Department for Child Protection (DCP), they may feel more comfortable talking to the Reporting Officer.

ROLE

The Reporting Officer or Child-Safe Officer is a point of contact within the club for a person wishing to report an incident of alleged or suspected abuse. Their role is to:

- listen to the person
- record information accurately
- report all allegations or suspicions to the WA Child Abuse Squad or Department for Child Protection
- maintain confidentiality

The Reporting Officer or Child-Safe Officer does not:

- investigate the complaint
- dismiss any information given to them by a child or an adult
- need to notify the child's parents or a representative of the club or association before reporting the allegation or suspicion

REPORTING MANUAL

If a person reports an allegation or suspicion of abuse, it is imperative to the success of subsequent investigations that the information is recorded correctly and accurately. The Reporting Manual will help the Reporting Officer or Child-Safe Officer and the person making the complaint do this.

The Reporting Officer or Child-Safe Officer should:

- have the complainant talk through the incident first. Please see 'Responsibilities' in this manual for information on how to respond to a disclosure or suspicion of child abuse
- get the complainant to fill out the Reporting

Manual themselves (where possible)

- ensure that all pages are signed and dated by both parties to show they are true and correct
- report the incident to the Police or DCP while the complainant is still with you (if practical)
- fill out the notes section after the complainant has left
- ensure the Reporting Manual is filled out correctly as it may be used as evidence many years later
- store the Reporting Manual in a safe and secure place and in-line with your club or association's procedures

PROMOTION

It is important that the people involved in your club or association know who the Reporting Officer or Child-Safe Officer is so they know who to make a report to if required. Therefore the person who acts as the Reporting Officer or Child-Safe Officer within the club should be promoted widely. Some suggestions on how to do this include:

- display information on the website
- posters
- distribute information via email
- hand out contact details to parents, coaches, players etc with codes of conduct cards
- club newsletters

FURTHER INFORMATION

Topic	Agency	Links to resources	Content
Organisational Risk Management			
Policies	DSR	www.dsr.wa.gov.au	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member Protection • Child Protection • Member Screening • Risk Management • Other relevant policies and templates
	SLSWA	www.mybeach.com.au	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member Safety and Wellbeing Policy • Risk Management
	ASC	www.ausport.gov.au	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member Protection • Child Protection • Risk Management • Other relevant policies and templates
Interviews	SLSWA	www.mybeach.com.au	• How to conduct (See Member Wellbeing Policy)
Child Safe Environments	DSR	www.dsr.wa.gov.au	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidelines • Information
	PBTR	www.playbytherules.net.au	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online tutorials • Downloadable DVD scenarios • Guidelines • Policies • Resources
	WWCSU	www.checkwwc.wa.gov.au	• General information about the WWC Check
	DPC	www.dcp.wa.gov.au	• Child protection information
	DFC	www.communities.wa.gov.au/DCP	• General information
Background Checking			
Reference Checks	SLSWA	www.mybeach.com.au	• How to conduct (See Member Well-being Policy)
Criminal Record Checking			
Working with Children Checks	WWCSU	www.checkwwc.wa.gov.au	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed information • Factsheets
	DSR	www.dsr.wa.gov.au	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary information • Club resources • Policy templates
	SLSWA	www.mybeach.com.au	• SLSWA policies
National Police Checks for Volunteers (NPCV)	DFC	www.communities.wa.gov.au	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed information • Application forms
	DSR	www.dsr.wa.gov.au	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary information • Policy templates
	SLSWA	www.mybeach.com.au	• SLSWA policies
National Police Checks	WA Police	www.police.wa.gov.au	• Detailed information
	DSR	www.dsr.wa.gov.au	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary information • Policy templates
	SLSWA	www.mybeach.com.au	• SLSWA policies
Other Relevant Topics			
Harrasment and Discrimination	EOC	www.eoc.wa.gov.au	• Detailed information on Equal Opportunity Act
	DSR	www.dsr.wa.gov.au	• Member Protection information and templates
	SLSWA	www.mybeach.com.au	• SLSWA policies
	ASC	www.ausport.gov.au	• Member Protection information and templates
	PBTR	www.playbytherules.net.au	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online tutorials • Downloadable DVD scenarios • Guidelines • Policies

ASC Australian Sports Commission DCP Department for Child Protection DFC Department for Communities
DSR Department of Sport and Recreation EOC Equal Opportunity Commission SLSWA Surf Life Saving WA
WAP WA Police WASF WA Sports Federation WWCSU Working with Children Screening Unit

TRAINING COURSES

Courses for training in member protection issues are available through the Department of Sport and Recreation.

- Dealing with Conflict and Difficult People Seminar
- Play by the Rules Workshop
- Presenters Course
- Certificate IV in Training and Assessment
- Member Protection Information Officer (MPIO) course

See www.dsr.wa.gov.au for further information.

Surf Life Saving WA also conducts a training course for Reporting Officers. This course gives clear instructions on how to receive a report and complete a Reporting Manual. Training is given on the importance of filling out the booklet correctly, dealing with people who make a report, and the necessity to abide by confidentiality issues.

See www.mybeach.com.au for further information.

REFERENCES

Brown, D. and Zoran Endekov. 2005. *Childhood abuse: The pandemic nature and effects of child abuse and domestic violence on children in Australia*. (Accessed 23 October 2007: www.amf.org.au)

Leahy, T., 2001. *Preventing sexual abuse of young people in Australian sport*. Australian Institute of Sport (Accessed 23 October 2007, www.ausport.gov.au)