

MAITLAND TRIATHLON CLUB (MTC)

CHILD SAFETY POLICY & PROCEDURES

Policy: 001	Version : 2
Written by: Melissa Boucher	Approved by Committee on: 30 August 2022
Responsible person: Child Safety Officer	Scheduled Review Date: August 2025

INTRODUCTION

Maitland Triathlon Club (MTC) is committed to promoting and protecting the interests and safety of children. We have zero tolerance for child abuse.

Everyone volunteering with MTC is responsible for the care and protection of children and reporting information about child abuse.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is:

1. To facilitate the prevention of child abuse occurring within MTC.
2. To work towards an organisational culture of child safety.
3. To prevent child abuse within MTC.
4. To ensure that all parties are aware of their responsibilities for identifying possible occasions for child abuse and for establishing controls and procedures for preventing such abuse and/or detecting such abuse when it occurs.
5. To provide guidance to staff/volunteers/contractors as to action that should be taken where they suspect any abuse within or outside of the organisation.
6. To provide a clear statement to staff/volunteers/contractors forbidding any such abuse.
7. To provide assurance that any and all suspected abuse will be reported and fully investigated.

POLICY

MTC is committed to promoting and protecting the best interests of children involved in its programs.

All children, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation, or family or social background, have equal rights to protection from abuse.

MTC has zero tolerance for child abuse. Every member or person volunteering with or participating with MTC is responsible for the care and protection of the children within our care and reporting information about suspected child abuse.

Child protection is a shared responsibility between the MTC, all volunteers, contractors, associates, and members of the MTC community.

MTC will consider the opinions of children and use their opinions to develop child protection policies.

MTC supports and respects all children, members and volunteers. MTC is committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, and those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children living with a disability.

If any person believes a child is in immediate risk of abuse, telephone 000.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Committee of MTC has ultimate responsibility for the detection and prevention of child abuse and is responsible for ensuring that appropriate and effective internal control systems are in place. The Committee is also responsible for ensuring that appropriate policies and procedures and a Child Safety Code of Conduct are in place.

The Executive Committee of MTC is responsible for:

- Dealing with and investigating reports of child abuse;
- Ensuring that all members, contractors, and volunteers are aware of relevant laws, organisational policies and procedures, and the organisation's Code of Conduct;
- Ensuring that all adults within the MTC community are aware of their obligation to report suspected sexual abuse of a child in accordance with these policies and procedures;
- Ensuring that all members, contractors and volunteers are aware of their obligation to observe the Code of Conduct (particularly as it relates to child safety);
- Providing support for members, contractors and volunteers in undertaking their child protection responsibilities.

All committee members must ensure that they:

- Promote child safety at all times;
- Assess the risk of child abuse within their area of control and eradicate or minimise any risk to the extent possible;
- Facilitate the reporting of any inappropriate behaviour or suspected abusive activities.

MTC committee members should be familiar with the types of abuse that might occur within their area of responsibility and be alert for any indications of such conduct.

All members/volunteers/contractors share the responsibility for the prevention and detection of child abuse, and must:

- Familiarise themselves with the relevant laws, the Code of Conduct, and MTC's policy and procedures in relation to child protection, and comply with all requirements;
- Report any reasonable belief that a child's safety is at risk to the relevant authorities (such as the police and/or the state-based child protection service) and fulfil their obligations as mandatory reporters;
- Report any suspicion that a child's safety may be at risk to MTC's child safety officer (or other committee members); and
- Provide an environment that is supportive of all children's emotional and physical safety.

DEFINITIONS

Child means a person below the age of 18 years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.

Child protection means any responsibility, measure or activity undertaken to safeguard children from harm.

Child abuse means all forms of physical abuse, emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse and exploitation, neglect or negligent treatment, commercial (e.g. for financial gain) or other exploitation of a child and includes any actions that results in actual or potential harm to a child.

Child sexual assault is any act which exposes a child to, or involves a child in, sexual processes beyond his or her understanding or contrary to accepted community standards. Sexually abusive behaviours can include the fondling of genitals, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or any other object, fondling of breasts, voyeurism, exhibitionism, and exposing the child to or involving the child in pornography. It includes child grooming, which refers to actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with the child. Policies & Procedures can be established or altered only by the MTC Committee.

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connection with a child to lower the child's inhibitions in preparation for sexual activity with the child.

Reasonable grounds for belief is a belief based on reasonable grounds (see below) that child abuse has occurred when all known considerations or facts relevant to the formation of a belief are taken into account and these are objectively assessed. Circumstances or considerations may include the source of the allegation and how it was communicated, the nature of and details of the allegation, and whether there are any other related matters known regarding the alleged perpetrator.

A reasonable belief is formed if a reasonable person believes that:

- (a) the child is in need of protection,
- (b) the child has suffered or is likely to suffer "significant harm as a result of physical injury," or
- (c) the parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.

A 'reasonable belief' or a 'belief on reasonable grounds' is not the same as having proof, but is more than mere rumour or speculation.

A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds. For example, a 'reasonable belief' might be formed if:

- (d) a child states that they have been physically or sexually abused;
- (e) a child states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves);
- (f) someone who knows a child states that the child has been physically or sexually abused;
- (g) professional observations of the child's behaviour or development leads a professional to form a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused or is likely to be abused; and/or
- (h) signs of abuse lead to a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused.

MTC COMMITTEE MEMBERS

MTC Committee aims to:

- promote and protect the safety of all children under the care of the organisation;
- identify the safest and most suitable people who share MTC's values and commitment to protect children; and
- prevent a person from volunteering with MTC if they pose a risk to children.

MTC requires all volunteers engaged in the following positions to obtain a Working With Children Check (WWCC) and to read and sign the Child Safety Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct, prior to undertaking any work with children:

- Child Safety Officer
- Junior Development Officer/s
- Splash and Dash Coordinator

People appointed to these positions at the AGM, will be required to provide their WWCC and signed Child Safety Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct to the MTC Secretary, by the next meeting. Anyone appointed to one of these positions during the season will be required to provide this documentation to the MTC Secretary, prior to the next race. This will ensure all relevant people have adhered to the MTC Child Safety Policy & Procedure.

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MTC acknowledges that the NSW Government Office of the Children's Guardian states that the following categories do not require a WWCC:

People under 18 years of age

Volunteers who have incidental interaction with children

Parents and close family relatives volunteering in an activity/event that their child is participating in.

REPORTING

Any member, volunteer or contractor who has grounds to suspect abusive activity must immediately notify the Department of Family and Community Services or the police. They should also advise the MTC child safety officer, or an MTC committee member about their concern.

Department of Family and Community Services

General Public line (24 hours) – Phone: 13 21 11

Maitland Police (24 hours) – Phone: 4934-0200

Emergency – Phone: 000

MTC Child Safety Officer

Email: childsafety@mtc.org.au

RESPONDING

If it is alleged that a member, contractor or a volunteer may have committed an offence or have breached the organisation's policies or its Code of Conduct the person concerned may be excluded from their role within MTC committee, while an investigation is conducted.

If the investigation concludes that on the balance of probabilities an offence (or a breach of the organisation's policies or Code of Conduct) has occurred then disciplinary action may follow, up to and including dismissal or cessation of involvement with the organisation. The findings of the investigation will also be reported to any external body as required.

PRIVACY

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved unless there is a risk to someone's safety. MTC will have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected.

Everyone is entitled to know how the personal information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will be able to access it.

REVIEWING

Every three years, and following every reportable incident, a review shall be conducted to assess whether the organisation's child protection policies or procedures require modification to better protect the children under MTC's care.

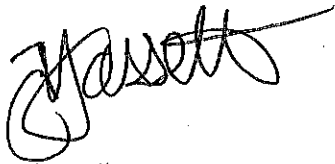
RELATED DOCUMENTS

- This policy must be read in conjunction with:
 - MTC's Child Safety Code of Conduct;

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AUTHORISATION

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hassett', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Jason Hassett

06/09/2022

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