

## Football Northern Territory Child Safety in NT Football

NT Football is committed to supporting its member clubs to create safe and inclusive environments for all children in football across the Territory.

Football Northern Territory policies are focussed on ensuring that the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children is always maintained during their participation in activities run by the Football Northern Territory and its member Clubs. Football NT is committed to assisting all staff, officials, coaches, trainers, managers, members and volunteers to ensure our sport is child safe. The focus of the Child Safety in Football NT Guidelines is to ensure our children play in a safe sporting environment. Administrators, coaches, managers, trainers and officials have a high contact with children in the sporting environment and play a major part in the successful operation of NT Football activities. These volunteers can have significant influence on children they come in contact with and therefore have significant responsibilities. Child Safety in NT Football expects all administrators, coaches, managers, trainers and officials whether paid or unpaid, who participate in organised sport under the Football Northern Territory banner, to commit to implementing the strategies developed by the Football Northern Territory for child protection and intervention.

In the Northern Territory, key child safeguarding responsibilities for sport and recreation relate to working with children check and mandatory reporting.

### Working with Children Checks

#### **What are the screening requirements for sporting organisations?**

Since 1 July 2011, it is mandatory for people who have contact or potential contact with children in certain specified areas of employment to hold a Working with Children Clearance Notice. The screening process has been established under the Northern Territory's Care and Protection of Children Act and is conducted by [SAFE NT](#), a unit of the Northern Territory Police.

#### **What does the screening assess?**

The Working with Children Clearance screening is a criminal and employment record check that ensures there is nothing in the candidate's history which may constitute a serious risk of harm to children. Some candidates who apply for a Working with Children Clearance will have a criminal history. However, this does not automatically mean they will be disqualified from obtaining a Clearance.

#### **Who must hold a Clearance Notice?**

Any person over the age of 15 years already working in, or who wants to work or volunteering, "child-related" work must hold a Clearance Notice. Any person whose employer or volunteer organisation requires them to work with children as part of their employment or volunteering role must hold a Clearance Notice.

## Who is exempt?

There are a few limited circumstances where a person may be exempt from having to apply for a Clearance Notice, such as where the person provides babysitting or child minding in a private capacity to family or friends.

## Are there penalties for not having a Working with Children Clearance Notice?

Yes. It is the responsibility of the person who wants to work or volunteer with children to apply for the Clearance Notice and ensure that it remains valid. Penalties and fines can be located on the [Safe NT site](#).

## How can I get a Working with Children Clearance?

SAFE NT is responsible for coordinating the screening process. Application forms and identification requirements are available from the Working with Children website, Northern Territory Police Stations and Territory Business Centres.

## What happens if someone does not pass the screening?

SAFE NT will advise the person that they will not have a Clearance Notice issued and will not be able to work in child-related employment. If they do not agree with the decision, they can ask for it to be reviewed in the Local Court of the Northern Territory.

## How much will it cost?

The cost of a Working with Children Clearance (including the Ochre Card) is detailed on the [Safe NT site](#).

## How long is the Working with Children Clearance valid for?

A Working with Children Clearance is valid for two years from the date of issue (unless revoked). If a person wishes to continue to work or volunteer with children after this time they will need to apply again.

## What if I have a volunteer card and then start paid employment?

If a person who holds an Ochre Card marked with a 'V' for Volunteer enters paid child-related employment, their card remains valid until expiry. If that person continues in child-related employment, they must renew their Working with Children Clearance, pay the necessary fee and will then be issued with an Ochre Card marked with an 'E' for Employment.

## Where can I get further information or resources?

At the [Northern Territory Government – Working with Children](#) site.

## Mandatory reporting

### Who is required to report?

In the Northern Territory, any person who believes that a child is being, or has been, abused or neglected is required by law to report their concerns. This includes paid employees and volunteers who are involved with children in sport. You don't have to have proof. You only need to report your concerns.

### What gets reported?

Any reasonable suspicion of harm against a child (e.g. neglect, physical, sexual and emotional abuse).

### Where to make a report

- Reports should be made to the Territory Families Child Protection Branch 24 hour Centralised Intake Service free-call ph:1800 700 250
- If you believe a child is in immediate danger or in a life-threatening situation, contact the Police immediately by dialing 000.

### Current legislation

The Department of Children and Families Child Protection Branch has primary responsibility for implementing the Care and Protection of Children Act 2007. This Act provides for the protection and care of children and the promotion of family welfare.

### Reporting child abuse

In addition, since 1 July 2011, it is mandatory for people who have contact or potential contact with children in certain specified areas of employment to hold a Working with Children Clearance Notice. More information is available from [Safe NT website](#) .

### Child safe environments

It is everybody's responsibility to implement and maintain child-safe environments. We all have a role to play in keeping children safe and promoting wellbeing.

It is good practice to put strategies in place to prevent offenders from gaining access to your organisation and reducing opportunities for abuse. Child-safe environment strategies are put in place to prevent and minimise opportunities for child abuse within your organisation, including preventing offenders from gaining access to children through your organisation.

An important strategy in developing child-safe environments is staff development:

- Ensuring that all staff (paid and volunteers) understand their mandatory and/or ethical reporting obligations for suspected child abuse and/or neglect
- Ensuring all staff have a clear understanding of what is acceptable/unacceptable behaviour and know who to contact about concerns they may have
- Organisations working to create child-safe environments and strengthen their environment are committed to and understand the importance of children's safety.

### **Child Safety in NT Football**

It is very important that Clubs, volunteers, FNT staff and others in football don't simply associate Child Safety in NT Football with employment screening and the legal requirement of working with children checks. While working with children checks are a key way, they are only one of many ways to help keep children safe while part of the football community. Child safe organisations embed child safety into leadership and culture, actively involve children and families and have many measures in place to safeguard children.

As a guide Clubs should inform and ensure that coaches do not provide one on one training without another adult present and that this training is always approved by the Club President or Club Child Safety Officer.

Clubs should inform and ensure that coaches do not seek their own preseason or end of season activities outside of the Club. Any team bonding activity must have 2 adults and a parent representative in attendance.

Clubs should inform and ensure that coaches do not seek to train at venues that are not Club venues.

Clubs should inform and ensure that coaches must not drive children anywhere on their own at any time and for any reason.

### **10 ways to help create a child safe organisation**

Australia held a Royal Commission into Institutional Response to Child Sexual Abuse from 2013-2017, which included sport and recreation organisations. The Commission identified 10 elements of a child safe organization for sporting Clubs to follow.

The first step for your Club is to familiarize yourself with the legal requirements of mandatory reporting and working with children checks and the NT Care and Protection of Children Act as outlined above in this FNT Child Safety in NT Football policy.

## 1. Child safety is embedded in sport club leadership, governance and culture

- Develop a child safety commitment statement – champion a child safety culture
- Have staff and volunteers comply with codes of conduct that set out behavioural standards towards children (see FFA and FNT Codes of Conduct)
- Regularly discuss child safety - include child safety on all meeting agendas, club inductions, training and information
- Develop a risk plan – identify and mitigate risks to children at your club
- Appoint a person at your club who is the person to go to if a child related issue occurs.

## 2. Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously

- Set up a youth advisory group at your club – get input from children and young people often
- Allow kids to provide feedback in a way that's friendly to them e.g., a suggestions box, social media survey
- Talk to kids about safety at your club, let them know how you keep them safe
- It is key to [involve and listen to children](#) for example.....

To help safeguard children your club must ensure they participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.

- Children's views matter – ask children about what would make them feel safe
- Act on children's views and addresses their concerns
- Have a child friendly complaints process – make it easy for children to raise concerns
- Consult children before important decisions are made and tell them how the information they provide will be used
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### Here are some practical ways to involve children and young people in your Club:

- Set up a child/youth advisory group - get regular input from kids on a range of club matters, including safety
- Have in place child friendly complaints processes. Develop these with input from children and families
- Provide child-friendly ways for kids to give feedback or raise concerns eg. suggestion box, social media surveys
- Identify youth leaders - children like talking to friends and peers, so train and support certain young people to be contact points

- Run small group face-to-face chats with children, to talk about safety and other aspects of being involved in your club eg., at the start of each season and then again during, to see how things are going
- Use child-friendly communication eg., venue signs with pictures and simple instructions.
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### **What we hope to hear from children**

If your Club is doing a good job safeguarding children, and involving children and young people well, here's what we'd hope to hear them say:

- *"I get to have a say in what happens to me."*
- *"If I tell the adults who work here that I feel unsafe they will believe me and do something about it."*
- *"Adults and other children should not hurt or bully me and if they do, something will be done about it."*
- *"The adults around me are making sure that I am safe."*
- *"The people who care about me can check that the organisation is doing the right thing."*
- *"Adults in the organisation do the right thing and I can trust them."*

### **3. Families and communities are informed and involved**

- Communicate with families about your child safety approach, often and in a variety of ways e.g., newsletter, website, induction, coach and parent handbooks etc.
- Get input from families on your club policies and practices.

### **4. Equity is promoted, and diversity respected**

- Make sure all children have access to information, support and complaints processes - this could be written, online, signage or pictures
- Give particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with disability, and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

### **5. People working with children are suitable and supported**

- Relevant staff and volunteers have [working with children checks as required by Territory law](#)
- Be aware, when teams travel, working with children check requirements vary between states/territories
- Use accredited coaches and officials



- All staff and volunteers receive an appropriate induction
- Recruitment, paid and voluntary, emphasises child safety
- Supervision and people management has a child safety focus.

## **6. Processes to respond to complaints of child sexual abuse are child focused**

- Have a child focussed complaint handling policy
- FNT's [Complaint Handling processes](#) are understood by children, staff, families and volunteers (FNT Complaint Handling policy is listed on the FNT website under the Resources tab)
- Encourage everyone to come forward and report misconduct by kids or adults
- Complaints are taken seriously, responded to promptly and thoroughly, and reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met. It is important to notify the relevant authorities if there is a suspicion or disclosure of child abuse.

## **7. Staff and volunteers are continually trained and educated**

- Staff and volunteers receive training on child protection and your club's child safe practices
- Relevant staff and volunteers [receive training](#) on the nature and indicators of child abuse.

## **8. Physical and online environments minimise opportunities for abuse to occur**

- Risks in the online and physical environment are identified and mitigated eg. signs, posters and codes of conduct in visible areas
- The online environment is used in accordance with the clubs code of conduct and relevant policies. [Read more on FNT Social Media](#) policy.

## **9. Child safe standards are continually improved and reviewed**

- Your club regularly reviews and improves child safe practices
- Complaints and concerns are reviewed for continuous improvement.

## **10. Policies and procedures document how your sport organisation is child safe**

- Policies and procedures address all child safe organisation elements
- Policies and procedures are accessible and easy to understand
- Leaders champion and model compliance with policies and procedures
- Staff and volunteers understand and implement the policies and procedures.

For more information on Child Safety in NT Football contact in the first instance your Club Member Protection Information Officer then the FNT Member Protection Information

Officer Paula da Costa on [admin@footballnt.com.au](mailto:admin@footballnt.com.au) or phone 08 8928 1006. The CEO of Football NT is also a FNT Member Protection Information Office and can be contacted on [ceo@footballnt.com.au](mailto:ceo@footballnt.com.au)

Remember if you suspect abuse or neglect of a child you must report your concerns to the Police or Safe NT immediately. You are legally compelled to do so.

Thank you to FFA, Safe NT and Play by the Rules