



WAVERLEY

Gymnastics Centre

Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

August 2024

Authorisation

Version	Author	Date	Approved By	Approval Date	Review Date
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1 Purpose

Waverley Gymnastics Centre ('WGC') is committed to promoting and protecting the interests and safety of gymnasts. The *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy* ('this Policy') aims to:

- Demonstrate WGC's commitment to providing an environment where gymnast's safety, health and happiness is at the centre of the organisation
- Prevent child abuse and harm occurring at WGC
- Foster a strong culture of child safety and wellbeing at WGC
- Outline the safeguarding responsibilities of WGC staff, the Committee and third parties
- Embed Victoria's Child Safe Standards into everyday practices and operations.

2 Scope

This Policy extends to all aspects of activities and programs provided by WGC, which involve, result in or relate to contact with children (including those in the physical and online environments). This Policy applies to all individuals who conduct work for, or are connected to WGC in a paid or unpaid capacity, including:

- WGC Committee, including the Risk Committee
- Club Director
- Staff
- Spectators
- Members
- Contractors and sub-contractors, including sports medicine physicians and physiotherapists

3 Terms and Definitions

For the purposes of this Policy:

Table 1: Terms and Definitions

Term	Meaning
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse.
Child	Refers to a person under the age of 18 years, unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier. Reference to child in this Policy includes young person, and reference to children includes young people.
Child abuse	Refers to acts or omissions (neglect) that result in, or have the likelihood to result in, harm to a child. The forms of child abuse are: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Physical abuse• Sexual abuse• Emotional abuse• Neglect• Exposure to family or domestic violence.

Child-related work	Refers to work (paid or unpaid) at or for, a service, body, or place, involving an activity that usually involves direct contact with a child (under 18 years).
Child Safe Organisation	Refers to an organisation that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consciously and systematically creates conditions that reduce the likelihood of harm to children • Creates conditions that increase the likelihood of identifying and reporting harm • Responds appropriately to disclosures, allegations, or suspicions of harm, and • Implements all of the Child Safe Standards.
Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing Manager	Refers to the individual appointed by WGC responsible for matters relating to child safety and wellbeing, including the management of child safety complaints.
Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing Committee Officer	Refers to the volunteer committee member responsible for overseeing child safety matters at WGC and supporting the Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing Manager in responding to child safety complaints.
Cultural safety	Refers to a child being provided with a safe, nurturing and positive environment where they are comfortable with being themselves, expressing their culture, spiritual and belief systems, and they are supported by the organisation. ¹
GA	Gymnastics Australia.
Gymnast	Refers to an individual who participates in WGC's programs (includes children and young people).
LGBTQIA+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual.
Members	Refers to individuals who are a member of the Association (i.e. WGC). Members include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gymnasts who are over 18 years • Parents/guardians of gymnasts who are under 18 years.
SIA	Sports Integrity Australia.
Spectator	Refers to an adult (who is not staff) who visits the facility, such as a responsible adult who accompanies a gymnast to a WGC class or program.
Staff	Refers to any person who is employed by WGC (paid and unpaid).
The Victorian Child Safe Standards	Refers to the mandatory framework in Victoria that requires child-related organisations to implement policies and strategies to protect children from abuse. In Victoria, there are 11 Child Safe Standards.
WGC	Waverley Gymnastics Centre.
Working with Children Check (WWCC)	Refers to the legislative requirement for individuals who work or volunteer in child-related work in Victoria to obtain a WWCC.

¹ Australian Human Rights Commission, *Cultural Safety Background Paper*, January 2018, page 8.

4 The Victorian Child Safe Standards

This Policy is underpinned by Victoria's 11 Child Safe Standards. The Standards are as follows:

1. Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued
2. Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture
3. Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously
4. Families and communities are informed, and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing
5. Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice
6. People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice
7. Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused
8. Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training
9. Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed
10. Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved
11. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

5 WGC's Commitment to Child Safety and Wellbeing

WGC is strongly committed to the care and wellbeing of gymnasts, staff, and families. We have a zero-tolerance approach to any form of child abuse or harm. We are 100% behind ensuring that child safety and wellbeing is at the centre of everything we do.

In planning, decision making, operations, and coaching, WGC is committed to the following:

- Taking a preventative, proactive, and participatory approach to child safety and wellbeing
- Respecting and supporting the diverse needs of all gymnasts and their families including those who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, are from CALD backgrounds, have a disability, or identify as LGBTQIA+
- Educating gymnasts on who to speak to if they are worried or feel unsafe, and ensuring that they are comfortable, encouraged, and empowered to raise such issues

- Fostering a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm or abuse to gymnasts
- Providing our staff, Director and Committee members with ongoing education and supervision on best practice conduct and behaviour towards gymnasts
- Ensuring absolute diligence is undertaken to engage only the most suitable people to work and volunteer at WGC
- Reporting any suspected child abuse promptly to the appropriate authorities
- Valuing the input of all gymnasts, families, and staff and ensuring multiple opportunities are provided in a safe space to share their thoughts, feelings, and insights
- Communicating regularly with gymnasts, families, staff and spectators about child safety and wellbeing at WGC.

6 Gymnast Participation and Empowerment

All gymnasts have the right to feel safe and protected from abuse and harm. WGC is committed to listening to the voices of our gymnasts, and we encourage their involvement in the continued development of our child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures.

WGC empowers gymnasts and promotes their participation by:

- Providing age-appropriate information to gymnasts about:
 - Rights to speak up
 - Appropriate and inappropriate behaviours
 - How to raise safety concerns at WGC.
- Supporting gymnasts to develop and maintain healthy friendships with their peers during WGC programs
- Encouraging gymnasts to tell us what makes them feel safe at WGC
- Supporting staff through ongoing education and training on how to empower gymnasts and promote their participation.

7 Engaging with Parents and Families

We actively engage with parents and families about our approach to child safety and recognise the important role of parents and families in keeping their child safe. WGC is committed to:

- Communicating information about WGC's child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, and practices to parents through the WGC website, parent manual, newsletters, squad information sessions and squad parent meetings.
- Encouraging feedback from parents and families about our child safety and wellbeing approach through squad parent check-ins and surveys.
- Communicating to parents and families on who to speak to and how to raise a child safety concern at WGC.

8 Providing a Culturally Safe Environment

We are committed to providing an environment where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander gymnasts and families feel valued, respected, and celebrated. At WGC, we are committed to:

- Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander gymnasts to feel proud of their identity and culture, by:
 - Displaying the Australian Aboriginal flag
 - Displaying a poster identifying the Traditional Owners of WGC's area and the language they speak
 - Providing an opportunity for children and families to share their cultural identity at enrolment to WGC's programs
 - Celebrating and acknowledging National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day.
- Promoting awareness amongst staff by commencing all quarterly staff meetings and committee meetings with an Acknowledgement of Country.
- Seeking feedback from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander gymnasts and families on their experiences at WGC, and what makes them feel safe through WGC's annual child wellbeing survey.
- Engaging in continuous learning opportunities to ensure WGC builds awareness and understanding across the organisation, by providing information on the Traditional Owners of WGC's area and their culture.

9 Diversity and Inclusion

WGC welcomes and respects diverse identities and backgrounds. We have zero tolerance of racism and other forms of discrimination and promptly respond when instances of discrimination or exclusion is identified. WGC respects the diversity of children and families and promotes equity by:

- Welcoming and supporting the participation of all children, including those with a disability, children from CALD backgrounds, LGBTQIA+ children and children from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds
- Providing an opportunity at enrolment for parents to share information as to whether their child has any specific or additional needs
- Supporting staff to identify, understand and respond to the diverse needs of children through training and education.

10 Recruitment and Screening

WGC adopts stringent recruitment and selection procedures to ensure only appropriate individuals are engaged to work with children. WGC requires all applicants for child-related work to undergo an extensive screening process prior to

appointment, including WWCC clearances, referee checks and structured interviews. For detailed guidance, refer to WGC's *Recruitment and Screening Procedure*.

11 Complaints Handling

WGC takes all child safety complaints, concerns, and allegations seriously and will respond promptly in accordance with the *Child Safe Complaints Handling Procedure*. The Procedure provides detailed guidance regarding:

- How WGC responds to and manages child safety complaints
- Child safe legal reporting obligations
- External reporting obligations to the Police, Child Protection Authorities, GA and SIA.

If you have a child safety concern or would like to make a complaint, contact WGC's Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing Manager (childwellbeing@wgc.org.au) or WGC's Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing Committee Officer (childprotection.committee@wgc.org.au).

If you have a concern for the immediate safety of a child, contact the Police on 000.

12 Risk Management

We acknowledge that risk is present in the activities and programs provided by WGC. The identification and mitigation of these risks is fundamental to ensuring we provide an environment that is safe for all children at WGC. For guidance on our child safe risk management approach, refer to WGC's *Risk Management Framework* and supporting documents.

13 Responsibilities

Parties or Persons	Responsibilities
All Staff	<p>All Staff are responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upholding a duty of care for all children at WGC facilities • Complying with this Policy and the <i>Child Safe Code of Conduct</i> • Adhering to Gymnastics Victoria and GA codes of conduct, codes of ethics, rules, policies and procedures • Maintaining a current WWCC • Completing child safe training during induction, and on an ongoing basis • Responding appropriately to children if they raise a concern

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting child safety concerns in accordance with WGC's <i>Child Safe Complaints Handling Procedure</i>, and their child safe legal reporting obligations • Recognising and addressing child safety risks in their areas of responsibility.
WGC Committee	<p>The Committee is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversight of the implementation of WGC's child safety framework across the organisation • Implementing a comprehensive risk management framework that minimises child abuse risks • Ensuring that sufficient resources, knowledge and reporting structures are in place to ensure that child safety risk identification, analysis and mitigation strategies can be carried out efficiently across the organisation.
Risk Committee	<p>The Risk Committee is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining child safety and wellbeing as part of WGC's risk profile • Reviewing and assessing the effectiveness of WGC's child safety risk management processes • Reporting to the Committee on the above.
Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing Committee Officer	<p>The Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing Committee Officer is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting to the Committee on child safeguarding matters • Providing support to the Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing Manager in the management of child safety complaints • Ensuring WGC's compliance with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Child safety legislation and regulation ○ GA child safeguarding membership obligations. • Supporting the Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing Manager, and the Director in conducting regular reviews of WGC's child safety policies and procedures.
Club Director	<p>The Director is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing WGC's child safety policies and procedures • Providing assistance to the Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing Manager in responding to and handling child safety complaints • Overseeing the investigation process into child safety complaints • Overseeing WGC's day-to-day child safety risk management approach • Overseeing continuous improvement through regular reviews of WGC's child safety policies and procedures.
Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing Manager	<p>The Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing Manager is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing information, advice and support to staff on the application of WGC's child safety policies and procedures • Communicating child safe policies and procedures to WGC stakeholders including staff, children and parents

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring child safety legislative and regulatory updates • Delivering child safety training to staff at induction and on an ongoing basis • Monitoring compliance of the <i>Employment Document Checklist</i> document in particular child safety induction, training and WWCC information • Responding to and managing child safety complaints • Escalating child safety complaints to relevant external authorities in accordance with the <i>Child Safe Complaints Handling Procedure</i> • Leading investigations into child safety complaints • Providing support to a child, parent or individual who reports a child safety complaint • Communicating with the affected parties regarding the progress and outcome of child safety complaints • Conducting regular reviews of WGC’s child safety policies and procedures.
The Head Coach, Department Leaders, Educational Mentors, Coordinators and Team Leaders	<p>The Head Coach, Educational Mentors, Coordinators and Team Leaders are responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modelling appropriate child safety behaviours in accordance with the <i>Child Safe Code of Conduct</i> • Communicating key child safety updates at team meetings • Fostering an open complaints culture which supports and encourages staff, children and parents to raise any safety concerns • Supporting staff in meeting their child safe responsibilities.
Contractors and Sub-contractors	<p>Third parties and contractors are responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complying with this Policy and the <i>Child Safe Code of Conduct</i> • Maintaining a current WWCC if required by law.

14 Confidentiality and Privacy

WGC complies with the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) and relevant privacy legislation as applicable in Victoria. Access to confidential c concerning child abuse or harm is strictly controlled by WGC. Information regarding complaints will be kept confidential, unless it is necessary for WGC to:

- Uphold WGC’s duty of care to protect children from harm
- Ensure relevant parties are appropriately informed regarding a complaint
- Comply with legislation in Victoria which requires WGC to share information with the Police or other prescribed bodies.

15 Record Keeping

WGC keeps complete and accurate records of all serious child abuse matters for a period of **40 years**. All other documents are kept for a minimum of **7 years**. WGC ensures that all records are:

- Maintained appropriately in a clear, logical and secure manner
- Dealt with in accordance with the relevant law or policy such as the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth)
- Preserved in a suitable physical and/or digital environment that ensures records are not subject to degradation, loss, alteration, corruption or deletion
- Secure from unauthorised access:
 - In a locked filing cabinet (physical records)
 - In a password-protected file (digital records)
- Available for individuals who have a right to access records which contain their personal information.

16 CCTV and Surveillance

WGC uses surveillance equipment (CCTV) at Oakleigh Recreation Centre to maintain a safe and secure environment for staff, children and families. WGC adopts the following best practice principles in relation to access, storage and use of CCTV footage:

- CCTV footage is stored securely with antivirus and internet security software installed and maintained.
- CCTV footage is stored for a minimum of 30 days. If there is an incident, footage is stored for an additional period of time such as for the purpose of a police or insurance investigation.
- Personal information obtained through CCTV is stored in accordance with the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth). Any personal information recorded through CCTV is destroyed and/or de-identified when it is no longer needed.
- Only authorised persons (i.e. the Director, the Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing Manager, the Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing Committee Officer, Operations Manager or any relevant Department Leader) have access to view CCTV footage, with multiple access controls in place such as passwords and authorisation codes.
- Access and release of CCTV footage is for authorised purposes only, for example, police investigation purposes.

17 Breaches of this Policy and Supporting Procedures

WGC responds promptly to any breach of this Policy. The response will be managed in a fair, unbiased, and supportive manner. WGC will consider the nature of the breach, and may take any of the following actions:

- Facilitate mediation between the parties involved in the incident (where appropriate)
- Provide specific education and training with emphasis on the relevant component of this Policy or supporting procedure that was the subject of the breach
- Impose restrictions on the duties of the person involved in the breach such as a ban or suspension from WGC facilities

- Provide closer supervision of a staff member
- Conduct a review of current policies and procedures, with updates and developments adopted if necessary.

A breach of this Policy may lead to disciplinary action in accordance WGC's disciplinary procedures. Disciplinary action may include, but is not limited to, the suspension or termination of employment.

The details of the breach will be documented, recorded, and kept confidential in accordance with *Section 14: Confidentiality and Privacy* and *Section 15: Record Keeping*.

Gymnastics Australia (GA) and the National Integrity Framework

WGC, its staff and committee members have obligations to comply with GA's *Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy*. Breaches of GA's policy is dealt with in accordance with GA's *Complaints, Disputes and Discipline Policy*.

18 Policy Review

This Policy is reviewed by the Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing Manager (with support from the Director) annually, or earlier as required in accordance with legislative and/or regulatory updates. Any significant changes or significant amendments that could alter the interpretation of this Policy are to be reviewed and approved by the Committee.

WGC acknowledges the importance of involving children and families in the design, implementation, and ongoing improvement of this Policy. Children and families will be consulted for feedback on this Policy and supporting procedures.

19 Related Policies and Procedures

Related policies and procedures listed below are documents directly related to, or referenced in, this Policy:

- [Child Safe Code of Conduct](#)
- [Child Safe Complaints Handling Procedure](#)
- [Gymnastics Australia Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy](#)
- [Gymnastics Australia Complaints, Disputes and Discipline Policy](#)
- *Incident Register*
- [Recruitment and Screening Procedure](#)
- *Risk Management Framework*
- *Risk Register*
- [Social Media Policy](#)
- *Sports Science and Medicine Policy*

20 Relevant Legislation

- [Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 \(Vic\)](#)
- [Child Wellbeing and Safety Regulations 2017 \(Vic\)](#)
- [Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 \(Vic\)](#)
- [Crimes Act 1958 \(Vic\)](#)
- [Privacy Act 1988 \(Cth\)](#)
- [Worker Screening Act 2020 \(Vic\)](#)
- [Wrongs Act 1958 \(Vic\)](#)

21 Version History

The below table provides a summary of changes and amendments to this document.

Version.	Date Amended	Author	Change Details
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			•

Appendix A – Identifying the Forms and Possible Signs of Abuse

Child abuse refers to acts or omissions (neglect) that result in, or have the likelihood to result in, harm to a child. There are two different signs of abuse, physical and behavioural. A person should not assess individual signs in isolation, rather signs should be looked at in the context of other potential signs and the personal circumstances or history of the child.

- **Physical signs** are the injuries / visible harms that may occur as a result of abuse.
- **Behavioural signs** are the actions, attitudes, and emotions of an individual that indicate abuse may have occurred.

The signs of abuse noted below are not exhaustive. The presence of these signs does not necessarily mean that abuse has been, or is, occurring.

Physical Abuse

Refers to the use of deliberate physical force against a child that intentionally or unintentionally results, or has the likelihood of resulting, in harm. Examples of physically abusive behaviour includes, but is not limited to, hitting, slapping, shaking, punching, kicking, and harmful training methods or overtraining which may result in damage to a child's physical development.

Physical signs	Behavioural signs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bruising • Fractured bones • Burns / scalds • Lacerations and welts • Sprains and dislocations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covering up injuries • Fear of adults • Unable to explain an injury • Being aggressive towards others • Avoiding physical contact.

Emotional/Psychological Abuse

Refers to inappropriate verbal or symbolic acts by an adult towards a child and/or a pattern of failure over time to provide a child with adequate non-physical nurturing and emotional availability. Such abuse may involve constant criticism, teasing, ignoring, intentional exclusion, bullying and harassment (in person or online), and harmful training methods or overtraining where there is the potential to result in damage to a child's physical, intellectual, or emotional wellbeing and development.

Physical signs	Behavioural signs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical development is delayed Delayed speech Bed-wetting beyond usual age Extreme weight loss Signs of self-harm. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overly compliant behaviour High levels of anxiety or depression Avoids interaction with other children Demonstrating low self-esteem Lack of trust in people Extreme attention seeking behaviour.

Sexual Abuse

Refers to when a person exposes a child to, or involves a child in, sexual activity that the child does not fully comprehend, the child is unable to give informed consent to, the child is not developmentally prepared for and that is contrary to acceptable community standards.

Physical signs	Behavioural signs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pain or bleeding in anal or genital areas Bruises and/or bite marks to breasts, buttocks, lower abdomen Difficulty walking or sitting Bed-wetting beyond usual age. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children describing sexual acts Sexual behaviour beyond healthy development Self-destructive behaviour Withdrawn behaviour Regression in development.

Grooming

Grooming is a form of sexual abuse. It refers to actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child, to lower the child's inhibitions in preparation for sexual activity with the child.

Possible Grooming strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using favouritism, bribes and/or giving gifts to a child Spending inappropriate one-on-one time with a child Actively isolating children from other adults or children Violating personal boundaries in the context of intimate care e.g. toileting and changing clothes. Insisting on physical affection with a child e.g. hugging, tickling even when a child does not appear to want it Communicating privately with a child via social media Forming relationships with parents, and family members of children to build trust and ease their ability to access the child.

Neglect

Refers to the failure to provide a child with conditions that are culturally accepted as being essential for their physical and emotional development and wellbeing, such as food, clothing, shelter, hygiene, medical attention, or adequate supervision. Neglectful behaviours are an act of omission, or by wilful choice.

Physical signs	Behavioural signs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low weight for age • Poor standards of hygiene • Untreated physical problems • Poor complexion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stealing food • Indiscriminately seeks out adult affection • Being constantly tired • Frequently late or absent.

Exposure to Family or Domestic Violence

Refers to any form of abusive behaviour by a person towards another family member. The abuse can be physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, economical, threatening, or coercive type behaviour. It is a form of abuse when a child is exposed to, hears or witnesses any effects of the abusive behaviours.

Physical signs	Behavioural signs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speech disorders • Delays in physical development • Physical symptoms such as headaches and stomach aches • Being easily startled • Injuries as a result of harm. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behavioural signs may include: • Fear of and avoiding going home • Depression, anxiety, or suicidal thoughts • Violent or aggressive behaviour and language • Demonstrated fear of parents.