

MEMBER PROTECTION POLICY

Background

The Western Sydney Academy of Sport is committed to the health, safety and wellbeing of all its members and is dedicated to providing a safe environment for participating in the Academy activities.

Abuse is defined as anything that individuals or organisations do, or fail to do, that directly or indirectly harms people or damages their prospects of a safe and healthy development. This includes physical abuse, emotional abuse, inappropriate training, inappropriate touching, sexual abuse and neglect. **(National Association for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect 2000)**

This Member Protection Policy conveys a message to all Academy members, and prospective members, responsible for the Academy's activities, particularly those involving members under 18 years of **age**, about minimising risk exposure of these members.

All Academy members, particularly age managers, coaches, officials, leaders, trainers and management personnel, have a responsibility to provide safeguards to protect the wellbeing of other members.

The **abuse** of any Academy members, by other members or non-members, is not acceptable and the Academy encourages all incidents of such abuse as described above to be reported immediately to the appropriate authorities.

Code of Conduct

The Academy endorses the Code of Conduct for all Academy members.

The Academy expects all members, supporters, advisors and associates of the Academy to abide by a Code of Conduct which upholds the principles and values of the organisation and this Member Protection Policy.

Members should recognise that at all times they have a responsibility to a duty of care to all members of the Academy. Specifically:

- i) understand the possible consequences if you breach the Academy Member Protection Policy or Code of Conduct;
- ii) Immediately report any breaches of the Academy Member Protection Policy Code of Conduct to the appropriate authority;
- iii) Refrain from any form of abuse towards others;
- iv) Refrain from any form of harassment towards others;
- v) Provide a safe environment for the conduct of the activity in accordance with relevant Academy policy.

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- vi) Show concern and caution towards others who may be sick or injure;
- vii) Be a positive role model.

An Academy Coach or Official will:

- i) Agree to abide by the Code of Conduct.
- ii) Be responsible for matters concerning the coaching, training and development of Academy athletes.
- iii) Maintain a 'duty of care' towards others and accountability for matters relating to training and competition.
- iv) Have a sound working knowledge of Academy policies, rules and regulations and coaching techniques and ensure that the conduct of the affairs of the team is in accordance with these policies and guidelines.
- v) Ensure that any physical contact with others is;
 - a) Appropriate to the situation
 - b) Necessary for the person's skill development
- vi) Provide a safe environment for training and competition.
- vii) Be a positive role model for Academy Athletes.

An Academy Administrator/Director/Officer will:

- i) Agree to abide by the Code of Conduct.
- ii) Be fair, considerate and honest with others.
- iii) Operate within the rules of the Academy.
- iv) Be professional in your actions. Your language, presentation, manner and punctuality should reflect high standards.
- v) Resolve conflicts fairly and promptly through established procedures.
- vi) Maintain strict impartiality.
- vii) Maintain a safe environment for others.
- viii) Show concern and caution towards others.
- ix) Be a positive role model for others.

Protective Measures for Western Sydney Academy Program Staff

Academy Program Staff are those members who undertake the delivery or supervision of Academy activities in their capacity as team managers, coaches, officials and administrators. These are responsible positions in the organization and each staff member must adopt the following risk minimisation measures to protect themselves from any misconceptions about their behaviour in performing their designated roles.

Risk Minimisation Measures

- Do not engage, or allow others to engage, in any of the following:
 - i) Abusive initiation ceremonies
 - ii) Inappropriate undressing/dressing in front of youths

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- iii) Invading the privacy of youths while showering or toileting.
- iv) Photographing youths while undressing/dressing, showering or toileting.
- v) Sleeping in closed quarters with youths without a second adult representative, parent etc.
- vi) Aggressive, physically distressing or sexually provocative activities.
- vii) Sexually suggestive comments about or to a youth.
- viii) Inappropriate or intrusive touching of a youth.
- ix) Joking, ridiculing, rejecting, isolating, or taking the 'Mickey' out of a youth.

While many of the above points may not be legally actionable, they are against the principles and values of the Academy and guarded against in the Code of Conduct.

- Program Staff should maintain an open door policy when conducting briefings, meetings and assemblies of members. Program Staff should invite all athletes, parents, friends and other leaders to participate;
- Particularly when performing interviews, transporting members and conducting camps/training sessions;
- Male and female adults, program staff or parents must accompany athletes when undertaking Academy activities away from home and especially overnight;
- All members should be treated with respect and dignity. Be mindful of your language, tone of voice and body language; address the problem not the person;
- Foster teamwork and group cohesion between staff and athletes by allowing for the ability to point out inappropriate attitudes and behaviour by members of the team. Abusive or inappropriate behaviour cannot be tolerated and should be dealt with immediately;
- Encourage athletes - don't pressure them;
- Respect athlete's privacy. Expect them to respect yours;
- Do not become involved in excessive attention seeking behaviour, physically or sexually, by an athlete. Be mindful of the very needy athlete and redirect their attention to academy activities;
- Maintain your status as a ROLE MODEL to youths and other adults. Be friendly, courteous and kind. Don't abuse your position. Always set a good example in dress, behaviour, language etc;
- Mixed teams of program staff supervising Academy activities provides for a healthier environment for staff and athletes.
- Remember – one program staff member's inappropriate behaviour reflects on all of Academy program staff.

UNDERSTAND ACADEMY POLICIES on member protection and grievances, and respect them.

CHECKLIST for Academy staff where abuse is suspected

Use the following guidelines should you or any other member suspect abuse or you have suspicion on reasonable grounds:

- i) When an athlete tells you they have been abused.
- ii) When someone else tells you an athlete has been abused.
- iii) An athlete tells you they know someone who has been abused (often they are referring to themselves)
- iv) You observe an athlete's behaviour and/or injuries etc., and your knowledge of athletes, leads you to suspect abuse.
- v) You observe a member's abuse of another member.

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If you suspect an athlete has been abused follow these procedures:

- i) Ensure the athlete is safe (if they are in your care).
- ii) Maintain the safety of other athletes in accordance with Academy Code of Conduct.
- iii) Obtain and document the following information to provide to the Academy Chief Executive Officer or appointed representative designated as liaison on member protection issues:
 - a) *The athletes name, age and address*
 - b) *Your reason for suspecting abuse (ie. observation, injury, information)*
 - c) *Your assessment of danger posed to the athlete including information pertaining to the alleged perpetrator.*
 - d) *What arrangements, if any, exist for the immediate protection of the athlete?*
 - e) *What involvement, if any, other agencies have in dealing with the suspected member protection issues?*

The **Chief Executive Officer** of the Academy or an appointed representative designated as liaison on member protection issues, is tasked with advising you on such issues as parental involvement, police involvement, medical treatment, the Academy's position, and the state authority's role. Remember, if in doubt, seek immediate advice.

In the event that you suspect abuse by someone who is not an Academy member (e.g. family member, club visitor) advise the **Chief Executive Officer** of the Academy to seek appropriate advice.

Procedure for Addressing Accusations of Inappropriate Behaviour by Program Staff/Members

Ensure all **members** are aware of the Academy's Member Protection Policy and Code of Conduct when joining the Academy.

Any person suspected of breaching any of the Member Protection Policy and Code of Conduct is to be reported to the Chief Executive Officer at the Academy office when all known facts and suspicions are to be confided in that officer.

Anonymous claims of abuse or breaches of the above Code and policies are to be taken seriously and immediately reported to the Chief Executive Officer at the Academy office for investigation.

If the issue involves suspected abuse then:

- i) The person reporting the suspected breach (or an advocate) will advise the Chief Executive Officer immediately on being made suspicious and declare all available details.

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- ii) The Chief Executive Officer shall notify the relevant state protection authority and receive advice about the ensuing course of action for addressing the reported breach of the Member Protection Policy. The CEO's first priority is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the victim. This may involve the removal of the alleged offender. The CEO should insure that it is the risk that is removed and not the victim.
- iii) The CEO should make an initial assessment of criminality. If the case is considered to be a criminal act than the CEO should immediately pass this information into the Police.
- iv) Whether the case is considered a criminal act or not the CEO should initiate a Member Protection Team to investigate the matter.
- v) The parents/guardians of any member identified as a suspected victim of abuse will be encouraged to contact the Academy's Executive for advice on professional support services.

Risk Management

Removal of Risk

If upon receipt of the allegation the CEO or the Member Protection Investigation team considers that pending the determination of the matter the person complained about may put at risk the safety and welfare of the complainant or others, it may order that the person complained about be:

- i) Suspended from any role they hold with the Academy, the relevant State or the relevant Affiliated Club; and/or
- ii) Banned from any event or activities held by or sanctioned by the Academy, the States and/or the Affiliated Clubs; and/or
- iii) Required not to contact or in any way associate with the complainant or other person about whom the alleged breach relates, pending the determination of the hearing.

There is no right of appeal of the decision by the CEO.

Management of Risk

Individual Academies are committed to investigating means for implementing member protection specific to their state operations. The tools for implementing member protection vary according to state legislation and guidelines set by government agencies and protection authorities. An example of a member protection vehicle is police screening of Academy program staff as part of recruitment for a variety of Academy roles.

The following guidelines may be used as a measure by the Academy for addressing member protection issues:

- i) Report the matter to the relevant state department of welfare services, children's services or member protection.
- ii) Report the matter to the police and preferably the member protection unit as appropriate in your state.
- iii) The suspected victim and other family members shall be asked to approach their local GP to obtain a referral to professional support services and medical specialists.

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- iv) The GP can contact the Chief Executive Officer for advice of the name of an appropriate specialist known to the Academy.
- v) Inform all other Academies of such action to guard against future application for membership.
- vi) Check periodically to ensure the former member is having no further contact with members of the Academy.
- vii) Periodically follow up on the victim's progress after initial counselling and that they have access to available care.

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