

WESTSIDE GYMNASTICS

Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

Westside Gymnastics is committed to promoting and protecting the safety, health and happiness of every child and young person involved in our club. This Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy ('this Policy') aims to:

- Demonstrate our commitment to a child safe and child-friendly club, where every gymnast's safety, health and happiness is at the centre of everything we do;
- Prevent child abuse and harm from occurring at Westside Gymnastics;
- Foster a strong, visible culture of child safety and wellbeing across our club;
- Set out the safeguarding responsibilities of the Owner/Director, staff, coaches, volunteers, contractors, parents/guardians and members; and
- Embed all 11 of Victoria's Child Safe Standards into our everyday practices and operations.

This Policy works together with our Member Protection Policy, which continues to govern general discrimination, harassment and bullying matters. Where the two documents overlap on a child safety matter, this Policy applies.

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Scope

This Policy applies to all aspects of activities and programs run by Westside Gymnastics that involve, result in, or relate to contact with children — including in physical locations and online. It applies to everyone connected with our club in a paid or unpaid capacity, including:

- The Owner/Director;
- The Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing Officer;
- The Independent MPIO (Gymnastics Australia Integrity);
- Coaches, judges and other staff (paid and unpaid);
- Volunteers, contractors and sub-contractors (including any sports medicine or allied health providers);
- Parents, guardians, spectators and other members; and
- Gymnasts themselves.

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Terms and Definitions

Term	Meaning
Child	A person under the age of 18 years. References to 'child' include 'young person', and references to 'children' include 'young people'.
Child abuse	Acts or omissions (including neglect) that result in, or are likely to result in, harm to a child. This includes physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional/psychological abuse, neglect, grooming, and exposure to family or domestic violence.
Child Safe Organisation	An organisation that consciously and systematically creates conditions that reduce the likelihood of harm to children, increases the likelihood of identifying and reporting harm, responds appropriately to disclosures or suspicions of harm, and implements all of the Child Safe Standards.
Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing Officer (CSWO)	The person appointed by the Owner/Director to lead day-to-day child safety and wellbeing matters at Westside Gymnastics, including the management of routine child safety complaints (see section 13).
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse.
Cultural safety	A child being provided with a safe, nurturing and positive environment where they are comfortable being themselves, expressing their culture and beliefs, and are supported by the organisation to do so.

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Owner/Director	The owner and/or director of Westside Gymnastics, a privately owned club. As there is no member-elected Committee, the Owner/ Director holds ultimate governance accountability for this Policy, including resourcing, adoption and significant amendments.
GA / GV	Gymnastics Australia and Gymnastics Victoria, our sport's national and state governing bodies.
LGBTQIA+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/ questioning, intersex, asexual, and other diverse sexualities and gender identities.
Gymnastics Australia Integrity Department (GA Integrity)	The GA Integrity department sit outside Westside Gymnastics' day-to-day management and provide a conflict-of-interest-free contact point for members — in particular for any complaint involving the Owner/Director or senior staff.
Staff	Any person engaged by Westside Gymnastics, paid or unpaid, including coaches, judges, administrators and contractors.
The Victorian Child Safe Standards	The 11 mandatory standards under the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) that Victorian organisations working with children must implement.
WWCC	Working with Children Check — the legislative screening requirement for people who work or volunteer in child-related work in Victoria.

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The Victorian Child Safe Standards

This Policy is underpinned by, and structured around, Victoria's 11 Child Safe Standards:

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

Our Commitment to Child Safety and Wellbeing

Westside Gymnastics is strongly committed to the care and wellbeing of every gymnast, staff member and family. We have a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse in any form. Child safety and wellbeing is at the centre of our planning, decision-making, operations and coaching, and is a standing item at every club leadership and staff meeting.

In everything we do, Westside Gymnastics is committed to:

- Taking a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety and wellbeing;
- Respecting and supporting the diverse needs of all gymnasts and families, including those who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, from CALD backgrounds, living with disability, or who identify as LGBTQIA+;
- Listening to children and taking their concerns seriously;
- Selecting, training and supervising our people carefully; and
- Responding to every concern promptly, fairly and confidentially.

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Gymnast Participation and Empowerment (Standard 3)

Children have the right to be heard and to participate in decisions that affect them. Westside Gymnastics will:

- Provide age-appropriate information to gymnasts about their rights, our Code of Conduct, and how to raise a concern;
- Seek gymnast feedback through squad check-ins and an annual child wellbeing survey;
- Give gymnasts genuine opportunities to contribute to decisions about training, competitions and club activities where appropriate; and
- Make sure every gymnast knows at least one trusted adult at the club they can talk to if something doesn't feel right.

Engaging with Parents and Families (Standard 4)

Families are our partners in keeping children safe. Westside Gymnastics will:

- Publish a clear, plain-language Child Safety Information Statement on our website (see the companion document to this Policy) so every family knows our commitment, and who to contact;
- Encourage feedback from parents and families about our child safety approach through squad check-ins and surveys;
- Clearly communicate who to speak to and how to raise a child safety concern; and
- Involve children and families in reviewing this Policy and our practices.

Providing a Culturally Safe Environment (Standard 1)

Westside Gymnastics is committed to an environment where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander gymnasts and families feel valued, respected and celebrated. We commit to:

- Displaying the Australian Aboriginal flag and information about the Traditional Owners of the land on which our club operates;
- Opening staff and leadership meetings with an Acknowledgement of Country;
- Providing an opportunity for children and families to share their cultural identity at enrolment;
- Acknowledging National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day; and
- Seeking feedback from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander gymnasts and families on their experience at our club, and building staff awareness through ongoing learning.

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Diversity and Inclusion (Standard 5)

Westside Gymnastics welcomes and respects diverse identities and backgrounds, and has zero tolerance for racism or other discrimination. We promote equity by:

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

Recruitment, Screening, Supervision and Training (Standards 6 & 8)

Westside Gymnastics takes all reasonable steps to engage only suitable people to work with children, and to keep them supported and skilled. This is set out in full in our Recruitment and Screening Policy, and in summary includes:

- Advertising, interviewing and referee-checking that emphasises child safety and wellbeing;
- Requiring a current Working with Children Check and, where required by law, a criminal history check, for all staff and volunteers in child-related roles;
- A structured induction for every new staff member and volunteer, covering this Policy, the Code of Conduct, and reporting obligations;
- Ongoing supervision and people management focused on child safety and wellbeing; and
- Annual Code of Conduct refresher training, and specific training on recognising and responding to signs of grooming, abuse or neglect, with attendance recorded.

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Complaints Handling (Standard 7)

Westside Gymnastics fosters an open complaints culture where everyone feels comfortable raising a concern, and we take every child safety concern seriously. Full detail is set out in our Child Safe Complaints Handling Procedure.

In summary:

- Any person - including a child - can raise a concern with any staff member, the Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing Officer, the Independent MPIO, or the Owner/Director;
- Any concern involving the Owner/Director or a senior staff member must go directly to the GA Integrity;
- Concerns are recorded on a dedicated Child Safety Incident Report Form that captures the child's communication, cultural and disability-related needs;
- Anyone who believes a child is in immediate danger should contact Victoria Police on 000 without delay;
- Where required by law, or where there is a reasonable belief a child has been abused or is at risk, we will report to Victoria Police and/or the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (Child Protection);
- We will support and keep informed the child and family throughout the process, and will not place a complainant in an unsupervised situation with a respondent during an investigation; and
- Following any complaint, we review what happened to identify systemic issues and improve our practices.

Physical and Online Environments (Standard 9)

Westside Gymnastics manages specific physical and online risk points through a suite of supporting policies, which are to be developed and adopted as companions to this Policy:

- Change Room and Toilet Policy — supervision and use of changing and toilet facilities;
- Squad/Locker Room Policy — supervision and conduct in squad training and locker room environments;
- Social Media Policy — rules for staff and coach use of social media and contact with gymnasts;
- Media Policy — consent and use of photos/video of children;
- Written Communication Policy — boundaries for electronic contact between adults and children;
- Child Safe Travel Policy — risk assessment, ratios and provisions for transport and overnight trips; and
- Concussion Policy — duty of care for training and competition injuries.

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Governance, Leadership and Responsibilities (Standard 2)

Westside Gymnastics is a privately owned club and does not have a member-elected Committee. To make sure child safety governance is still robust — and, critically, that no single person can control every stage of a complaint about themselves or someone they manage — responsibility is structured as follows:

Role	Responsibilities
All staff and volunteers	Uphold a duty of care to every child at the club Comply with this Policy and the Code of Conduct Hold a current WWCC and complete child safe training Respond appropriately if a child raises a concern Report child safety concerns and recognise risks in their area
Owner/Director	Hold ultimate accountability for the club's child safety framework, resourcing and culture Champion child safety as a standing priority in all business decisions Approve this Policy and significant amendments to it Make decisions on interim safety measures during a complaint or investigation, except where the complaint concerns the Owner/Director themselves (see below)
Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing Officer	Lead day-to-day implementation of this Policy Manage and record child safety complaints in the ordinary course Report to the Owner/Director on child safeguarding matters Coordinate annual training and the annual self-assessment against the 11 Standards

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GA Integrity	Operate independently of the club's day-to-day management and reporting lines Provide members, staff, families and gymnasts with an alternative, conflict-of-interest-free contact for any concern Receive and manage any complaint that involves the Owner/Director, a member of their family, or a senior staff member, from intake through to outcome Advise the Owner/Director on the club's compliance with the Child Safe Standards and Member Protection Policy Have the authority to escalate a matter directly to Victoria Police, Child Protection, Gymnastics Victoria/ Australia or Sport Integrity Australia without needing the Owner/Director's agreement to do so
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Complaints about the Owner/Director: if a concern involves the Owner/Director (or a person closely connected to them), it must go directly to GA Integrity rather than through the club's normal reporting line. GA Integrity manages that matter independently and reports the outcome to the Owner/Director only to the extent necessary.

Confidentiality and Privacy

Westside Gymnastics complies with the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) and applicable Victorian privacy law. Access to information about a child safety concern is strictly controlled. Information will only be shared where necessary to uphold our duty of care, keep relevant parties appropriately informed, or comply with a legal requirement to share information with Police or another prescribed body.

Record Keeping

Westside Gymnastics keeps complete and accurate records of all serious child abuse matters for 40 years, and other child safety records for a minimum of 7 years. Records are kept securely (locked storage for physical records; password-protected, access-restricted storage for digital records) and are only accessible to authorised persons.

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Breaches of this Policy

Westside Gymnastics responds promptly, fairly and consistently to any breach of this Policy. Depending on the nature of the breach, our response may include mediation, targeted education and training, restrictions on duties, closer supervision, a review of policies and procedures, or disciplinary action under our Member Protection Policy (up to and including suspension or termination of membership, employment or engagement). Any breach is documented and kept confidential in line with sections 14 and 15 above.

Westside Gymnastics, its Owner/Director and staff have obligations under Gymnastics Australia's Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and National Integrity Framework. Serious matters may be referred to Gymnastics Victoria, Gymnastics Australia or Sport Integrity Australia.

Policy Review (Standard 10)

This Policy is reviewed at least annually by the Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing Officer, with input from GV/GA, or earlier if required by legislative or regulatory change. Each review will include a self-assessment against all 11 Child Safe Standards, drawing on complaints and incident data, and feedback from children and families. Significant amendments are reviewed and approved by the Owner/Director.

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Related Policies and Procedures

- Member Protection Policy
- Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Child Safe Complaints Handling Procedure
- Recruitment and Screening Policy
- Change Room and Toilet Policy
- Squad/Locker Room Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Media Policy
- Written Communication Policy
- Child Safe Travel Policy
- Concussion Policy
- Website Child Safety Information Statement
- Gymnastics Australia Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy
- Gymnastics Australia Complaints, Disputes and Discipline Policy

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)