

# Creating a culture of child safety at Little Athletics

Child Safe Standards 2023



## Having member protection policies and procedures in place is not enough. It's about creating a culture and environment within sport that is supportive and protective of children.

This means:

- All LAVic Centre's are required to comply with Victoria's 11 Child Safe Standards.
- The Standards outline minimum the requirements that LAVic, our Centre's and our sport must take to keep children and young people safe from all forms of abuse.
- Child safety is not an add-on or one-off exercise. It is a legal requirement that your Centre must be compliant with.
- Everyone has a role to play in ensuring the safety of children and young people at Little Athletics.

Note: From 1 January this year, regulators of the Child Safe Standards have increased powers to monitor, enforce and share information so they can respond to risks of child abuse and breaches of the Standards.



## Things that your Centre can do immediately to better address the Standards:

1. Promote your Child Safety Officers and their roles at your Centre.
2. Keep up to date with and utilise resources in the Child Safe section of the LAVic website.
3. Prioritise Child Safety; it should be a consideration in all decisions.



## **Standard 1: Establish a culturally safe environment so all cultures are respected and valued including Aboriginal children and young people.**

This Means:

- Children and young people are encouraged and supported to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights.
- Measures are adopted to ensure racism is identified, confronted and not tolerated.
- Actively supporting and facilitating participation and inclusion of cultural groups including Aboriginal children, young people and their families.

Examples:

- Be visible about your Centre's commitment to a culturally safe environment i.e. acknowledgement of country, display of the Aboriginal flag and use of Indigenous location names.
- Seek out cultural education opportunities for your committee and volunteers so you can create a culturally safe environment at your Centre.
- Reach out to local Aboriginal communities and other cultural groups in your area.



## Standard 2: Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in your leadership, governance and culture.

This Means:

- A child safe culture is championed and modelled at all levels of our sport – Committees, coaches, officials, parents and guardians etc.
- Child Safety is on the agenda at every Committee Meeting.
- Codes of Conduct provide guidelines for Committee and volunteers on expected standards and responsibilities (refer to LAVic's Child Safe Code of Conduct).

Examples:

- Update Centre policies to ensure they align with LAVic's Child safe Policy, Child Safe Code of Conduct, Social Media Policy and statement of commitment to child safety.
- Promote your Centre's commitment to Child Safety on your website, newsletters, social media pages and at events.
- Include child safety material in Centre induction/information packs to create awareness of LAVic's child safe policies and practices.



## Standard 3: Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.

This Means:

- Recognising the importance of encouraging friendships and support from peers to help children and young people feel safe and less isolated.
- Committees and volunteers are aware of signs of harm and facilitate appropriate, channels for children and young people to express their views and raise their concerns.
- Adopting strategies to develop a culture that facilitates participation and is responsive to the input of children and young people.

Examples:

- Ensure your athletes and families know who they can speak to if they feel unsafe or unsure of something and that their concerns will be listened to.
- Promote access to LAVic's child safe pages with resources and links to assist your committee and volunteers in their understanding of child safety.



## Standard 4: Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.

This Means:

- Engaging with and openly communicating with families and the community about our child safe approach and access to relevant child safety information and resources.

Examples:

- Provide families, carers and communities with easy access to information about child safety measures in place at your Centre.
- Encourage people to learn more about what child safety means and to utilise free online training and resources like VicSports Child Safe Education Program and Play by Rules Child Protection and Safeguarding course.



## Standard 5: Equity is upheld, and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.

This Means:

- Seeking to understand children and young people's diverse circumstances and provides support and responds to those who are vulnerable.
- Paying particular attention to the needs of children and young people with special needs, disability, and from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Examples:

- Celebrating diversity through days of significance and events of importance (i.e. Diwali, Pride Month or International Children's Day).
- Listen seriously to athletes when they raise concerns or express their feelings about an issue.
- Provide information in a variety of formats (i.e. Written, visual, different languages, imagery and fonts).
- Seek out training and education opportunities to understand the diverse needs of your athletes and members.





## Standard 6: People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.

This Means:

- Committees and relevant volunteers have current working with children checks or equivalent background checks (VIT, serving Police Officers). Recruitment involves referee checks and screening, with an emphasis on child safety and wellbeing.
- All volunteers receive an appropriate induction checklist and are aware of their responsibilities to children and young people.
- Ongoing supervision and people management is focused on child safety and wellbeing.

Examples:

- Undertake a risk assessment to identify potential risks at your Centre.
- Ensure child safety questions are included as part of the recruiting process for every role.
- Encourage all volunteers to have provide an up-to-date working with children check in addition to those roles which require a WWCC.



## Standard 7: Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused.

This Means:

- Understanding the Complaints Handling process as it relates to Child Safety.
- Ensuring the Child Safe Reporting Flowchart is understood by children and young people, families, committee and volunteers.
- Complaints are taken seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly while adhering to reporting, privacy, and employment law obligations.

Examples:

- Make sure the Complaints Handling process is easily accessible and regularly communicated via Centre communications i.e. emails or newsletters.
- Refer to and promote the Child Safe Reporting Flowchart which clearly outlines what should be reported to authorities and by when (available via the Child Safe section on the LAVic website).



## Standard 8: Committee and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe.

This Means:

- All volunteers have access to education and training, and they are supported to effectively comply with LAVic's child safety and wellbeing policies.
- Committees and volunteers know how to respond effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing.
- All volunteers understand how to help build a culturally safe environment for children and young people.

Examples:

- Encourage regular discussion and training opportunities on recognising the indicators of harm or abuse, how to respond to issues, who to report to and what cultural safety is.
- Ensure new Committee members and all volunteers are aware of LAVic's child safe policies, where they are and how they work.
- Make child safety a priority in all your Centre decisions.



## Standard 9: Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.

This Means:

- Identify and mitigate risks in the online and physical environments without compromising a child's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities.
- The online environment is used in accordance with the LAVic's Child Safe Code of Conduct, Child Safe Policy, Social Media Policy and practices.
- Contracted facilities and services from third parties (i.e. First Aid, Coaches etc.) have policies and practices in place that ensure the safety of children and young people.

Examples:

- Ask athletes and families where or when they do or don't feel safe at your Centre.
- Utilise a two-deep, open and transparent communication practice online (i.e. ensure parents/guardians and/or other Centre representatives are included in all online communication).



## Standard 10: Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.

This Means:

- Regularly reviewing, evaluating and improving your child safe practices.
- Ensuring complaints, concerns and safety incidents are analysed to identify causes and systemic failures.
- Maintain confidential records on the findings of relevant reviews.

Examples:

- Schedule a yearly review of your Centre's child safe practices.
- Seek diverse input for a broader understanding of child safety at your Centre.
- When an incident occurs at your Centre, always review what led to it happening and identify ways to prevent it from reoccurring.



## Standard 11: Policies and procedures document how little athletics is safe for children and young people.

This Means:

- All policies and procedures must address the Child Safe Standards.
- Centre Committees, Child Safety Officers, Coaches and Officials etc. champion and model compliance with policies and procedures.
- All volunteers understand and practice child safety as a priority.

Examples:

- Encourage feedback from athletes, families and your communities on Child Safety.
- Have a dedicated page on your website or link to the Child Safe section of the LAVic website where child safe information, policies and procedures are stored.
- Ensure your Centre leaders (Committee members, Child Safe Officers, Coaches, Age Group Managers) talk about and promote child safety within your Centre.



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