

Child Safe Standards

PARENTS AND GUARDIANS GUIDE

Date created:	May 2023
Audience:	Parents and Guardians of Members and Participants who are under the age of 18 years.
Version:	2021:2
Purpose of Document:	(a) To summarise and simplify what parents and guardians need to know about all of our responsibilities to keep children and young people in Meadow Park Soccer Club safe; and (b) To ensure that parents and guardians have oversight of the information that Meadow Park Soccer Club distributes to its members under the age of 18 years.
Actions:	• Read and understand our child safe standards • Ask and ensure that Parents and Guardians acknowledge that they have read and understand this guide • Encourage others to read and understand
Review:	May 2024 if not prior
Meadow Park Soccer Club Contact:	Dale Foulkes
Contents:	Child Safe Parents and Guardians Guide Page 2
Other relevant resources see Meadow Park Soccer Club website	• Child Safe User Guide • Summary of the Code of Conduct for dealing with Children & Young People • Kids Guide • eSafety Guide • Guidance to deal with Child Safe Concerns • Tips and Scripts for Complaint Management • Form – Confidential Record of Child Safe Concern



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PARENTS AND GUARDIANS GUIDE

The Child Safe Framework sets out the responsibilities that all participants within our organisation (including parents) must keep our kids safe. It consists of:

- **Meadow Park Soccer Club's Commitment Statement for Safeguarding Children and Young People**
- **Meadow Park Soccer Club's Policy for Safeguarding Children & Young People and**
- **Meadow Park Soccer Club's Code of Conduct for dealing with Children & Young People**

WHY YOUR CHILDREN'S SAFETY IS OUR PRIORITY:

1. We love soccer. We also love your kids playing soccer with us and want them to keep participating. Yet we realise that they have to FEEL safe to enjoy soccer and want to keep coming back.
2. All kids have a right to feel safe, be involved and have a voice in decisions that affect them*.
3. Society has changed, and with it, higher standards of behaviour are now expected – of all of us. Sometimes, even though we have good intentions, others' *perception* of behaviour is different. So we want to help you to understand how we will work with you to protect your children.

WHAT WE'RE TRYING TO DO:

We're here to help. Victoria has legislative requirements and mandatory standards in place about child safety. We can't ignore those. But we want to make it as simple as possible for you, your kids and all of our Meadow Park Soccer Club volunteers, coaches and members to keep children safe.

We've developed simple resources for you to explain how we keep children and young people safe in our sport. This Guide also includes links to our other child safe resources that we hope are helpful for you to summarise and simplify the key commitments, messages and boundaries that we adhere to and practice in soccer when they are part of our community.

SOME CHILD SAFETY GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS:

You know your children best. Also, our schools now often teach their students about safety, boundaries with adults and that it's OK to speak up if they don't feel comfortable or safe. You can also help us to reinforce the key messages we have for children about child safety in soccer, just as in life.

The **three key messages** we have in our Child Safe "Teens Guide" are:

1. Soccer should be fun, safe and enjoyable.
2. You should never feel uncomfortable around others in our soccer community, particularly adults.
3. If you don't feel safe or comfortable, it's OK to speak up. We want you to **tell an adult that you trust** – whether that's your Mum or Dad, guardian, coach or another member of your club or family.

We know that children are more likely to speak up if they **feel valued** and are **listened to** in an **authentic** and

genuine way. So please help us to **keep the conversations open with your kids** about how they are feeling.

SOME CONVERSATION TIPS TO TALK ABOUT SAFETY WITH YOUR CHILDREN:

It's not always comfortable talking to kids about how they are feeling in our soccer community or other environments. The delivery of conversations is just as important as the message or content itself. You're more likely to engage with children about tricky topics if the conversation is calm, non-judgmental and open. That is, you're listening carefully to them and open to hearing more – showing empathy and letting them know that they're doing the right thing by talking.

To open up a conversation with your child about safety in soccer, first of all, choose the right time. Sometimes, you may get more information in casual interactions, such as when driving in the car or going for a walk together. You could try using an example that you have heard of with another kid and whether they had seen or heard anything similar. For example, *"another parent at the club told me that they were worried about how the coach is talking to their child. Have you seen or heard anything similar?"*.

IF YOU NEED HELP:

If ever your child tells you that they are not happy, comfortable or safe in our soccer community, **please tell an appropriate senior person in our Meadow Park Soccer Club, such as your club's Child Safety Officer, or a trusted Meadow Park official**. Then we'll make sure that any issue raised is dealt with appropriately and in line with our Child Safe Framework.

If you reasonably believe[^] any child is in immediate danger of a significant nature, please call 000 to speak with police. You can also contact services such as Parent Helpline, NAPCAN, Lifeline, Kids Helpline and the Raising Children Network.

*Australian Government National Child Office for Child Safety Complaint Handling Guide: Upholding the rights of children and young people – A Reference Guide, 2019.

Commission for Children and Young People – Empowerment and Participation of Children Tip Sheet.

[^] A **reasonable belief** is one that a reasonable person in the same position would have formed on the same grounds.

Contact for Kids/Parents/Guardians:

Kerri Cliff
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THREE IMPORTANT MESSAGES

The **three key messages** to always keep in mind are:

4. Soccer should be fun, safe and enjoyable.
5. You should never feel uncomfortable around others in our soccer community, particularly adults.
6. If you don't feel safe or comfortable, **it's OK to speak up**. We want you to **tell an adult that you trust** – whether that's your Mum or Dad, guardian, coach, team manager, Club Child Safety Officer or another member of your Meadow Park club or family.

YOUR RIGHTS

We believe that all kids involved in our sport should:

- Feel comfortable;
- Feel safe;
- Have a right to contact your parents/guardians or others if you feel unsafe, uncomfortable or distressed at any time when you are involved in soccer;
- Be provided with clear directions and given the chance to positively change your behaviour if soccer staff, coaches, volunteers or officials believe that you have broken any rules or policies or you have misbehaved;
- NOT be subject to disciplinary action involving verbal or physical punishment, or any form of treatment that could reasonably be considered cruel, frightening, humiliating or like you are being put down; and
- Contribute suggestions or feedback about our Meadow Park soccer community.

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU IN SOCCER

Soccer now has a **Child Protection Commitment Statement** that aims to make sure you are protected from harm. When involved in soccer, we want it to be enjoyable for everyone. So, we'll try to make sure that activities are suitable for your age and development and are led by qualified people.

Meadow Park Soccer Club commits to:

- Doing our best to make sure that you are protected from harm;
- Supervising your involvement in soccer in Victoria;



- Obtaining parent/guardian permission in writing before we can:
 - take you on an excursion;
 - arrange overnight stays or camps; and/or
 - provide transport to another location.
- Ensuring that **employee/coach/volunteer/official-to-teens ratios are maintained**. (Note - please check with us if you are unsure what is meant by “ratios”);
- Trying to make sure that **you are not alone** with staff, coaches, volunteers or officials where they can’t be seen by other adults;
- Trying to make sure that staff, coaches, volunteers and/or officials stay within their role. This means that they cannot be employed for looking after you or visiting you at your home unless with the permission of your Parent/Guardian. They are not allowed to friend you on Facebook, take photos or footage of you for Instagram, YouTube, Snap Chat or other forms of social media unless they are doing this through official club communication channels with the consent of your parent/guardian.
- **Communication between you and coaches, officials and volunteers** in our sport must be regarding your involvement in soccer unless your Parent/Guardian has given their permission for you to have contact with them at a particular time;
- **Guiding teens fairly, respectfully and appropriate to their age and background;**
- **Reporting and responding to any incidents** of abuse or neglect towards teens involved in soccer.
- Where and when possible, our **staff, volunteers and officials wearing a uniform and/or having an appropriate name badge visible** on when on duty.

What to do if you have concerns:

- If at any stage you feel uncomfortable, unsafe or worried, you should let your parent/guardian or a trusted adult in our Meadow Park Soccer Club community know what has happened – they will want to support you.
- All you need to do is tell someone about what happened and they will do their best to make sure that you feel safe and protected from harm.

WHAT RESPONSIBILITIES OF TEENS IN [SPORT/ACTIVITY]

When you are involved in soccer, you also have some responsibilities. These include:

- Letting a member/parent/guardian know if you are unhappy or you don’t feel safe;
- Treating other participants and adults with respect;
- Following the rules when involved in soccer;
- Remembering that there are others involved in soccer. You are certainly free to choose your own friends.



However, don't stop other teens or younger kids from enjoying and participating in soccer; and

- Listening to others and respecting their opinions.