



MEMBER PROTECTION POLICY

Last Review: March 2024

Next Review: March 2026

1. INTRODUCTION

La Trobe University Hockey Club (the Club) is a community-based club focused on providing a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment for all members and visitors. Our aim is to grow participation in the game and involvement in the Club and for everyone to have a positive experience.

2. LA TROBE UNIVERSITY HOCKEY CLUB POLICIES

In conjunction with this policy, the Club adopts and implements the following policies:

- [Code of Conduct](#)
- [Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy](#)
- [Complaints, Disputes, and Discipline Policy](#)
- [Selection Policy](#)
- [Alcohol Management Policy](#)
- [Smoke Free Policy](#)
- [Safe Transport Policy](#)
- [Social Media Policy](#)
- [Finance Policy](#)
- [Fee Policy](#)

The Club is governed by its [Constitution](#).

3. PURPOSE

The main objective of the Club Member Protection Policy (the Policy) is to provide rules and guidance on how the Club will:

- Deliver on its commitment to providing a safe, inclusive and respectful environment which is free from all forms of harassment, discrimination, vilification, victimisation, bullying, abuse, cheating and sports fixing/wagering (together, known as 'prohibited conduct')
- Set expectations on responsible behaviour

- Ensure Club participants make informed decisions by advising members of their legal and ethical rights and responsibilities.

Our policy for the care and protection of children participating in Club activities is set out in [Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy](#).

Our policy for the resolution of complaints is set out in the [Complaints, Disputes and Discipline Policy](#).

4. WHO THIS POLICY APPLIES TO

The Policy applies to all people involved directly or indirectly with the Club. This includes, but is not limited to, committee members, administrators, coaches, officials (e.g. umpires/referees/judges), players, parents and spectators.

5. EXTENT OF THIS POLICY

The Member Protection Policy sets out expectations and behaviours to ensure everyone involved in our sport is treated with respect and dignity. The policy deals with prohibited conduct that is defined as abuse, bullying, harassment, sexual misconduct and discrimination, and includes examples of what may constitute such conduct.

The Policy, in addition to other relevant policies developed by the Club, also covers breaches of the [Code of Conduct](#), and behaviour that occurs during games and at practice, in the club rooms, at social events organised or sanctioned by the Club, and on away and overnight trips, that bring the Club into disrepute.

The Policy may also cover private behaviour where that behaviour brings the Club into disrepute, or where there is suspicion of harm towards a child or young person. See further the [Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy](#).

6. DEFINED TERMS

Complainant means a person or group of persons who make a complaint under this Policy, the [Code of Conduct](#) or other relevant policies.

Complaint means one or more allegations made by a Complainant involving a potential breach of Policy behavioural standards, procedures or policies or other legislation (for example assault or sexual harassment), for which a complainant wishes to seek redress.

Respondent means a person or group of persons who are the subject of a complaint under this Policy, the [Code of Conduct](#) or other relevant policies.

Confidentiality means respecting someone's privacy and abstaining from sharing personal information, information related to the complaint and the contents of conversations, unless express consent has been given.

Anonymity means being unknown to most people.

Witness means a person who is not the Complainant or Respondent but may be a witness to the alleged Complaint.

7. CLUB RESPONSIBILITIES

Under the Policy, the Club will:

- Implement and comply with this Policy;
- Ensure the Policy is enforceable;
- Communicate the Policy to those involved with the Club and make it accessible via the Club's website;
- Appoint a Member Protection & Information Officer (MPIO) (see Section 12);
- Appoint an Inclusion Coordinator;
- Appoint a Complaint Manager where possible (see [Complaints, Disputes, and Discipline Policy](#));
- Appoint a Child Safety Officer where possible (see [Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy](#));
- Promote and model appropriate standards of behaviour at all times;
- Respond to breaches or complaints made under the Policy promptly, fairly and confidentially, and in accordance with the [Complaints, Disputes, and Discipline Policy](#);
- Review the Policy every two years; and
- Seek advice from, and refer serious issues to, Hockey Victoria, Hockey Australia or the Police.

"Serious issues" include, but are not limited to, criminal behaviour (e.g. physical assault, sexual assault, child abuse, bullying, match-fixing, sports wagering, cheating), other unlawful behaviour that involves, or could lead to, significant harm, and any other issue that Hockey Victoria or Hockey Australia request be referred to them or the Police.

8. INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITIES

All those to whom this Policy applies must:

- Make themselves aware of the contents of this Policy;
- Comply with the standards of behaviour outlined in the Club policies;
- Treat others with respect;
- Always place the safety and welfare of children above other considerations;
- Be responsible and accountable for their behaviour;
- Follow the guidelines outlined in the Policy and the [Complaints, Disputes, and Discipline Policy](#) if they wish to make a complaint or report a concern about possible discrimination, harassment or other inappropriate behaviour (see [Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy](#) for the process of reporting allegations of child abuse); and
- Comply with any decisions and/or disciplinary measures imposed under this Policy and the [Complaints, Disputes, and Discipline Policy](#).

8.1 If someone raises a complaint with you about your behaviour

If a person raises a complaint directly with you about your behaviour, you should appreciate that they are letting you know they find your behaviour unacceptable. They

are giving you an opportunity to reflect on and change your behaviour, and possibly prevent a formal complaint from being made against you. You must not victimise the person making the complaint.

9. PROHIBITED CONDUCT

The Club opposes all forms of abuse, bullying, harassment, sexual misconduct, discrimination, cheating, match-fixing or sports wagering.

All those to whom this Policy applies commits a breach when they, either alone or in conjunction with another or others, engage in any of the following conduct against one or more persons:

- 1 Abuse;
- 2 Bullying;
- 3 Harassment;
- 4 Sexual Misconduct;
- 5 Unlawful Discrimination;
- 6 Victimisation;
- 7 Vilification; or
- 8 Cheating, match-fixing or sports wagering.

The Club takes all claims of prohibited conduct seriously. We encourage anyone who believes they have been abused, harassed, discriminated against, been the victim of sexual misconduct, vilified, victimised or bullied to raise the issue with the Club.

9.1 Abuse

Abuse means any type of abuse, including (including physical, emotional, psychological, sexual, and inappropriate use of power) that has caused, is causing or is likely to cause harm to a person's wellbeing, whether in person or as the result of a publication viewable by any other person by any means.

Child Abuse is the specific mistreatment of a Child or Young Person that has Harmed, is Harming or is likely to Harm or endanger that Child or Young Person's physical or emotional health, development or wellbeing and the Child has not, or is not likely to be protected by the parent(s) or guardian(s).

Abuse and Child Abuse includes, but is not limited to:

- (a) physical abuse and assault including hitting, slapping, punching, kicking, destroying property, sleep, and food deprivation, forced feeding, unreasonable physical restraint, spitting at another person or biting;
- (b) sexual abuse including rape and assault, using sexually degrading insults, forced sex or sexual acts, deliberately causing pain during sex, unwanted touching or exposure to pornography, sexual jokes, using sex to coerce compliance;

- (c) emotional abuse such as repeated and intentional embarrassment in public, preventing or excluding someone from participating in sport activities, stalking, humiliation, or intimidation;
- (d) verbal abuse such as repeated or severe insults, name calling, criticism, swearing and humiliation, attacks on someone's intelligence, body shaming, or aggressive yelling;
- (e) neglect of a person's needs; or
- (f) Grooming - a term used to describe what happens when a perpetrator of Abuse builds a relationship with a Child with a view to abusing them at some stage. Grooming can take place in any setting where a relationship is formed, such as leisure, music, sports and religious activities, or in internet chatrooms, in social media or by other technological channels.

9.2 Bullying

Bullying means a person or group of people repeatedly and intentionally using words or actions, or the inappropriate use of power, against someone or a group of people to cause distress and risk to their wellbeing. Bullying includes, but is not limited to:

- (a) keeping someone out of a group (online or offline);
- (b) verbal or written abuse (e.g. being sworn at, threats, insults, continual unconstructive criticism, name calling, practical jokes, unjustified threats of dismissal, demeaning language)
- (c) acting in an unpleasant way near or towards someone;
- (d) abusive emails or posts on social media website
- (e) direct violence including physical assault and harassment
- (f) giving nasty looks, making rude gestures, calling names, being rude and impolite, constantly negative and teasing;
- (g) spreading rumours or lies, or misrepresenting someone (i.e. using their social media account to post messages as if it were them);
- (h) 'fooling around', 'messaging about' or other random or supposedly playful conduct that goes too far;
- (i) inappropriate interference with personal belongings or equipment
- (j) threatening body language
- (k) harassing someone based on their race, sex, religion, gender, or a disability;
- (l) intentionally and repeatedly hurting someone physically;
- (m) intentionally stalking someone; and
- (n) taking advantage of any power over someone else,

In Victoria, some bullying behaviours may also be subject to criminal charges, for example:

- a) making threats to another Club participant;

- b) using abusive or offensive words to, or in the presence of, another Club participant;
- c) performing abusive or offensive acts in the presence of another Club participant;
- d) directing abusive or offensive acts towards another Club participant;
- e) acting in any other way that could reasonably be expected to cause physical or mental harm to another Club participant, including self-harm; and
- f) acting in any other way that could reasonably be expected to arouse apprehension or fear in the victim for his or her own safety or that of another person.

9.2.1 What is not bullying

Bullying does not include legitimate and reasonable:

- a) management action;
- b) management processes;
- c) training and playing instruction
- d) setting reasonable expectation about conduct and/or performance
- e) disciplinary action; or
- f) allocation of activities in compliance with agreed systems

9.3 Harassment

Harassment means any type of behaviour towards a person that they do not want and that is offensive, abusive, belittling or threatening and is reasonably likely to cause harm to the person who is the subject of the harassment. Harassment can be verbal, non-verbal or physical.

Harassment is unwelcome, uninvited behaviour which is offensive from the viewpoint of the person being harassed. It does not matter that the offender did not mean or intend to harass the other person. In other words, an offender's 'innocent intent' is irrelevant.

Harassment includes, but is not limited to:

- (a) racist comments or jokes;
- (b) spreading rumours
- (c) offensive and obscene language
- (d) belittling someone's contributions in a public arena
- (e) sending explicit or sexually suggestive emails or text messages;
- (f) displaying or distributing sexist or racist images, cartoons or literature;
- (g) excluding a person from meetings or social groups (in-person or online)
- (h) asking intrusive questions about someone's personal life, including his or her sex life;
- (i) physical assault

- (j) sexual harassment or any of the above conduct within the context of the Club by persons to whom this policy applies;
- (k) any of the above conduct within the context of the Club, based on or linked to a person's disability or the disability of an associate; and
- (l) offensive behaviour based on race or racial hatred, such as something done in public that offends, insults, or humiliates a person or group of people because of their race, colour or nationality or ethnicity.

9.4 Sexual Misconduct

Sexual Misconduct means:

- (a) Sexual Harassment, which is any unwanted or unwelcome sexual behaviour where a reasonable person would anticipate the possibility that the person being harassed would feel offended, humiliated, or intimidated; and
- (b) Sexual Offences, which include any criminal offence involving sexual activity or actions of indecency.

Sexual Misconduct is behaviour including, but not limited to:

- (a) unwelcome touching;
- (b) sexually suggestive behaviour, such as staring or leering;
- (c) suggestive comments or jokes, such as smutty or sexist jokes;
- (d) showing or sharing sexually explicit images or pictures;
- (e) sexual propositions or repeatedly asking someone out, especially after a prior refusal,
- (f) unnecessary familiarity, such as deliberately brushing up against a person;
- (g) insults or taunts based on sex;
- (h) sexually explicit physical contact such as patting, pinching or touching in a sexual way, or unnecessary familiarity such as deliberately brushing against a person;
- (i) sending sexually explicit or suggestive emails, texts, or other electronic/social media messages;
- (j) innuendo, including sexually provocative remarks, suggestive or derogatory comments about a person's physical appearance, inferences of sexual morality or tales of sexual performance
- (k) displaying or storing of offensive screen savers, photos, calendars or objects;
- (l) asking intrusive questions about someone's personal life, including about a person's sex life, body or sexuality; and
- (m) criminal offences such as rape, indecent or sexual assault, sexual penetration, or relationship with a child under the age of 16 and possession of child pornography.

9.5 Discrimination

Unlawful Discrimination includes:

- (a) Direct Discrimination, when a person or group of people is treated less favourably than another person or group, because of a personal characteristic; and
- (b) Indirect Discrimination, when an unreasonable rule or policy applies to everyone but has the effect of disadvantaging some people because of a personal characteristic they share, where such personal characteristic is protected by applicable anti-discrimination legislation.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- (a) treating or proposing to treat someone less favourably because of a particular characteristic(s), including;
 - o age;
 - o disability;
 - o race, colour, nationality, ethnicity, or migrant status;
 - o sex, pregnancy, marital or relationship status, family responsibilities or breastfeeding; and
 - o sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status.
- (b) imposing, or intending to impose, an unreasonable requirement, condition or practice which has an unequal or disproportionate effect on people with a particular characteristic.

9.6 Victimisation

Victimisation means subjecting a person, or threatening to subject a person, to any unfair treatment because the person has made, or intends to pursue their right to make, a complaint or lawful disclosure, including under applicable legislation or this Policy, or for supporting another person to take such action.

Victimisation includes, but is not limited to:

- (a) dismissal of an employee/volunteer or disadvantage to their employment/involvement in sport;
- (b) alteration of an employee's position or duties to his or her disadvantage;
- (c) discrimination between an employee and other employees;
- (d) repeated failure to select an individual on merit;
- (e) a reduction in future contract value; and
- (f) removal of coaching and other financial and non-financial support.

The Club does not permit retaliation against a person just because they propose to, have, or are believed to have made a complaint of unacceptable behaviour under this policy.

9.7 Vilification

Vilification means a public act, conduct or behaviour that incites hatred, serious contempt for, or revulsion or severe ridicule of, a person or group of people because of a particular characteristic they hold, as covered by applicable legislation, including their race or religion, or sexual orientation, gender identity, or HIV/AIDS status.

Vilification can take many forms, including hate-speech, graffiti, websites and other types of written material. It is an act which happens publicly, as opposed to privately.

Vilification includes, but is not limited to:

- (a) speaking about a person's race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender and/or sex, sex characteristics, or disability in a way that could make other people dislike, hate, or ridicule them;
- (b) publishing claims that a racial or religious group is involved in serious crimes without any evidence in support;
- (c) repeated and serious verbal or physical abuse about the race or religion of another person;
- (d) encouraging violence against people who belong to a particular race or religion, or damaging their property; and
- (e) encouraging people to hate a racial or religious group using flyers, stickers, posters, a speech, or publication, or using websites or email.

9.8 Cheating, match-fixing or sports wagering

Cheating or Match-fixing means changing the result (or the course) of a sporting event in order to remove the unpredictable nature of the event for your own benefit, or the benefit of others. For example, deliberately losing the first half of a game to win a bet.

Sports wagering includes, but is not limited to:

- a) Betting on any event in your sport, regardless of whether you are competing or participating in that specific event.
- b) Disclosing inside information which is not publicly available that could influence a person's decision to bet on the sporting event.
- c) Providing or attempting to provide a benefit for a breach of policy. For example: offering to pay a sum of money to commit fouls on purpose
- d) Failing to promptly report any information in relation to competition manipulation, including approaches to fix an event, bribe offers, or blackmail threats.
- e) Being complicit in any Prohibited Conduct, including not reporting any reasonable suspicions about others.

Any activities relating to the [National Integrity Framework Competition Manipulation and Sport Gambling Policy](#) will be referred to Hockey Australia.

10. INCLUSIVE PRACTICES

The Club is welcoming to all and we seek to include members from all areas of our community.

10.1 People with a disability

The Club welcomes people with a disability (PWD) including members, visitors, participants and spectators. The Club will ensure club facilities and social functions are accessible and welcoming for PWD. Where practicable, the Club will make reasonable adaptations, (e.g modifications to equipment and rules), to facilitate active participation of PWD in on field activities.

10.2 People from diverse cultures

We will support and respect people from diverse cultures and religions to participate in our club and, where possible, will accommodate requests for flexibility (e.g. modifications to uniforms).

10.3 Sexual and gender identity

All people, regardless of their sexuality and gender identity, are welcome at the Club. We strive to provide a safe environment for participation and will take action over any discriminatory behaviour.

10.4 Pregnancy

Pregnant women should be aware that their own health and wellbeing, and that of their unborn children, should be of utmost importance in their decision making about the way they participate in our sport. We recommend pregnant women consult with their medical advisers, make themselves aware of the facts about pregnancy in sport, familiarise themselves with the coverage specifics of their hockey insurance, and ensure they make informed decisions about participation.

11. RAISING A CONCERN OF MAKING A COMPLAINT

The Club strongly encourages any member who believes they have been discriminated against, bullied, harassed, vilified or victimised to take appropriate action in accordance with the Club's [Complaints, Disputes and Discipline Policy](#).

Any member, family member, official or visitor may approach any member of the Club Board, Senior Committee or Junior Committee with any concerns or complaints under this Policy or [Code of Conduct](#).

Concerns can be raised if you witnessed an event but were not involved.

Complaints can only be made by the member/s who experienced the conduct.

Members who do not feel safe or confident to make a Complaint may seek assistance

from the Member Protection Information Officer (MPIO).

Any member, family member, official or visitor may also raise a concern via the Club's [Raising a Concern form](#).

Any member, family member, official or visitor wanting to make a Complaint should refer to the [Complaints, Disputes, and Discipline Policy](#).

12. Member Protection & Information Officer (MPIO)

The MPIO is responsible for providing information about a Club member's rights, responsibilities and options to an individual making a complaint or raising a concern, as well as support during the process.

The qualities of the MPIO include, but are not limited to:

- Acting as an independent person who will listen and provide support and options for the member who has a concern or issue they need assistance with;
- Drawing on their knowledge to assist the Club develop strategies ensure a positive and harassment free environment;
- Avoiding conflicts of interests while undertaking their role;
- A commitment to the principles of fair, safe and inclusive sport;
- A commitment to the Club's policies and values.

The role of the MPIO includes, but is not limited to:

- Club contact for any enquiries, concerns or complaints related to matters set out in relevant policies;
- Supporting the Child Safety Officer for questions specifically related to the [Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy](#);
- Liaising with the Complaint Manager if required
- Undertaking briefings with coaches, managers, team and others to emphasise the clubs commitment to providing a positive and harassment free environment for all members;
- Working with the Inclusion Coordinator, where appropriate, to ensure the Club is a safe, fair and inclusive club;
- Assisting the Club in reviewing and updating policies and procedures on a regular basis, where appropriate.

The MPIO does not:

- Participate in the complaint resolution process, other than providing support to the Complainant where required;
- Investigate a complaint;
- Participate in any decisions regarding grievances or hearings;
- Support both parties to a conflict, issue or dispute. Where a Respondent or other individual requires support, the MPIO will assist in locating an appropriate support person.

The Club MPIO commits to:

- Undertake relevant and necessary training and certification within a reasonable time from first appointment;
- Update and maintain training and certification where required;

- Maintain in-depth knowledge of the Club Constitution, policies and procedures;
- Maintain confidentiality where necessary;
- Avoid conflicts of interest, which may include stepping aside from conflicting roles or referring a complainant to another individual or MPIO for specific issues or complaints. Where conflicts of interest exist, they should be declared to all relevant parties;
- Maintain appropriate records; and
- Being open and available to all members and other relevant individuals to discuss complaints, issues and grievances.

Should the MPIO be the subject of the Complaint (or the Complainant), these responsibilities will be undertaken by the Club President (or the Vice President should similar conflicts of interest exist for the Club President) or another MPIO, including an MPIO from another Club or Sport.

13. CONFIDENTIALITY

The MPIO and Complaint Manager commit to maintaining confidentiality in connection with their role wherever possible.

When reporting to the Board, relevant committees or members of the Club, the MPIO Complaint Manager will ensure to remove identifying information regarding the complainant/s, respondent/s and witnesses. Where anonymity is not possible, the Complaint Manager and other persons aware of or involved in the complaint will ensure confidentiality.

Confidentiality or anonymity cannot be guaranteed in serious issues where the MPIO or the Club is required to report behaviour to Hockey Victoria or the Police. The MPIO or the Club may also deem it necessary to remove confidentiality or anonymity on an ad hoc basis, in line with the Club policies and procedures.

14. POLICY REVIEW PROCESS

This Policy is based on the Play by the Rules' (PBTR) policy which was recommended to the Club by Hockey Victoria, and the National Integrity Framework provided by Sport Integrity Australia (SIA).

The Policy will be reviewed by the Club's Board every two years.

Recommendations for change to the Policy may be submitted to the Board for consideration at any time. If any changes are accepted, the Policy will be updated and distributed to all stakeholders via email and other appropriate communication channels as required.

If you would like to provide the Club with any feedback or suggestions to improve this policy, please contact secretary@latrobeunihockey.com.

15. QUESTIONS

If you have any questions regarding this policy, please contact the Member Protection and Information Officer (MPIO@latrobeunihockey.com).