

Bairnsdale Rowing Club

CHILD SAFE POLICY

Date created:	21 November 2022 (reviewed 24 June 2023)	
Audience:	All members of Bairnsdale Rowing Club and volunteers, parents, guardians, coaches, visitors, contractors and employees involved with the Club	
Version:	2022:2	
Purpose of Document:	To ensure the members, coaches, parents and other supporters, volunteers of and any persons employed or contracted by Bairnsdale Rowing Club are aware of the club's responsibilities, and their own, in creating a child safe sport, and protecting children and young people from harm.	
Actions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read and understand. • Use the Bairnsdale Rowing Club membership process to ensure that members and parents/guardians acknowledge that they have read and understand this guide • Encourage others to read and understand 	
Review:	June 2024	
BRC Contact:	President	
Contents:	Document(s) Child Safe Policy	Page 2
Other relevant resources (see BRC website and Rowing Victoria website)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Safe Standards • CCYP Guide for Creating a Child Safe Organisation • Rowing Victoria Child Safe Parents and Guardians Guide • Rowing Victoria eSafety Guide • Rowing Victoria Child Safe Guide for Teens • Bairnsdale Rowing Club Child Safety Code of Conduct • Bairnsdale Rowing Club Child Safety Incident Report Form 	

BAIRNSDALE ROWING CLUB

CHILD SAFE POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

1. Bairnsdale Rowing Club is committed to ensuring that children and young people who participate in its activities have a safe and happy experience. Bairnsdale Rowing Club supports and respects children, young people, employees, volunteers and participants.
2. The aim of Bairnsdale Rowing Club's Child Safe Policy (the Policy) is to protect the safety of children in our care and prevent abuse from occurring, and in the event that allegations are raised in relation to child abuse, to ensure that the allegations are properly addressed. All complaints will be treated seriously and fully investigated and handled with maximum confidentiality and discretion.
3. Should a person wish to make any enquiries in relation to this Policy, please contact the Bairnsdale Rowing Club President via bairnsdalerc@gmail.com

2. POLICY STATEMENT

- 2.1. Bairnsdale Rowing Club is committed to providing the highest level of safety for all involved with rowing. This includes protecting members' privacy, promoting positive behaviours and attitudes, protecting the health safety and wellbeing of members, particularly children and delivering our activities while acting in the best interests of children in the sport.
- 2.2. Specifically, Bairnsdale Rowing Club considers that the health, safety, and well-being of children take priority over all other competing considerations. Bairnsdale Rowing Club considers that this is necessary to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all members and protect the image and reputation of the sport, Bairnsdale Rowing Club and its members.
- 2.3. Bairnsdale Rowing Club has a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and is committed to promoting and protecting children from abuse and neglect to the greatest extent possible. All children have equal rights to protection from child abuse, regardless of their sex, religion, disability, or sexual orientation etc.
- 2.4. Bairnsdale Rowing Club recognises gender identity and the appearance or mannerisms or other gender-related characteristics of a person. This includes the way people express or present their gender and recognises that a person's identity may be an identity other than male or female. Some terms used to describe a person's gender identity include trans, transgender and gender diverse.
- 2.5. Child protection is a shared responsibility between Bairnsdale Rowing Club, its employees, workers, contractors, associates, parents/guardians, coaches, spectators, volunteers and members of the rowing community. Everyone that participates in our activities is responsible for the care and protection of children, and reporting information about child abuse.
- 2.6. Bairnsdale Rowing Club supports the active participation of all children. It listens to their views, respects their views, and involves them when making decisions, where appropriate, especially about matters that will directly affect them (including their safety).
- 2.7. Bairnsdale Rowing Club is also committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, and those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children living with a disability.

2.8. Bairnsdale Rowing Club promotes fairness and consideration for all volunteers and participants. For further details please refer to the Bairnsdale Rowing Club Member Protection Policy.

3. SCOPE

- 3.1. This Policy applies to all Members of Bairnsdale Rowing Club, and all participants, parents, spectators, contractors, officials, coaches, and judges throughout all Bairnsdale Rowing Club events and activities.
- 3.2. This Policy will continue to apply retrospectively to a person or Member following the cessation of their association or employment with Bairnsdale Rowing Club.

4. RELATED DOCUMENTS & LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

4.1. This Policy must be read in conjunction with:

4.1.1. the laws of the Commonwealth and Victoria (as amended from time to time) including but not limited to:

4.1.1.1. Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Act 2015 (Vic)

4.1.1.2. Crimes Act 1958 (Vic); and

4.1.1.3. Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic)

4.1.2. Bairnsdale Rowing Club policies and procedures and those of Rowing Victoria that Bairnsdale Rowing Club members, parents of members and spectators are bound to, including but not limited to:

4.1.2.1. Privacy Policy;

4.1.2.2. Rules of an Incorporated Association;

4.1.2.3. Code of Conduct;

4.1.2.4. Member Protection Policy; and

4.1.2.5. Grievance and Discipline procedures.

5. DEFINITIONS

5.1. Child means a person involved in the activities of Bairnsdale Rowing Club (including athletes) and under the age of 18 years unless otherwise stated under the law applicable to the child (eg, for the purposes of child sexual offences in Victoria, a “child” refers to a person under the age of 16 years).

5.2. Child Abuse is the 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). For the avoidance of doubt, this includes but is not limited to

Emotional or Psychological Abuse, Bullying, Grooming, Sexual Exploitation, Neglect and Harassment.

5.3. **Child protection** means any responsibility, measure or activity undertaken to safeguard children from Harm.

5.4. **Grooming** is 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. There is no set pattern in relation to the Grooming of Children. For some perpetrators, there will be a lengthy period of time before the Abuse begins. The Child may be given special attention and what starts as an apparently normal display of affection, such as cuddling, can develop into sexual touching or masturbation and then into more serious sexual behaviour. Other perpetrators may draw a Child in and Abuse them relatively quickly. Some abusers do not groom Children but Abuse them without forming a relationship at all. 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.

5.5. **Harm** means Harm to a person or a Child is any detrimental effect of a significant nature to the person or Child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. It is immaterial how the harm is caused. Harm can be caused by:

- Physical, Psychological or Emotional Abuse or Neglect;
- Sexual Abuse or Exploitation;
- a single act, omission or circumstance; and
- a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances.

5.6. **Sexual offence** (in Victoria) means a criminal offence involving sexual activity or actions of indecency or any act which exposes a child under the age of 16 years to, or involves a child under the age of 16 years in, sexual activity or matters beyond his or her understanding or contrary to accepted community standards. Sexually offence behaviours can include the fondling of genitals, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or any other object, fondling of breasts, voyeurism, exhibitionism, and exposing the child to or involving the child in pornography. It includes grooming, which includes actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child under the age of 16 years (or their carer, family or supervisor) to lower their inhibitions and prepare them for engagement in a sexual offence.

5.7. **Mandatory reporter** means a person who is legally required to make a report to the Department of Health and Human Services or the Police if they form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection. It includes (but is not limited to) teachers, principals, registered psychologists, nurses, doctors and midwives.

6. RECOGNISING AND REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

6.1. A person may, in the course of participating in the sport or other activities of Bairnsdale Rowing Club or carrying out their work, form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from child abuse.

6.2. If a person is concerned about an immediate risk to a child's safety, the person must phone Victoria Police on "000" as soon as practicable.

6.3. Specific types of **Child abuse** include:

6.3.1. **Physical abuse**: occurs when a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant Harm as a result of a physical injury, such as a non-accidental physical injury.

- 6.3.2. **Sexual abuse:** occurs when a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant Harm as a result of sexual abuse, such as when a child is exploited, or used by another for his or her sexual gratification or sexual arousal, or for that of others.
- 6.3.3. **Emotional and psychological abuse:** occurs when a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, emotional or psychological Harm of such a kind that the child's emotional or intellectual development is or is likely to be significantly damaged; and
- 6.3.4. **Neglect:** occurs when a child's physical development or health has been, or is likely to be significantly damaged. It refers to an omission, such as depriving a child of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults, or medical care.
- 6.4. Child abuse includes any actions that results in actual or potential harm to a child, in circumstances where the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child.

6.5. Mandatory Reporters

- 6.5.1. Select classes of people in the community (including teachers, nurses and doctors – amongst others) are required by law to report to the Child Protection Unit of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) where they have formed a belief, on reasonable grounds, that a child is in need of protection because they have suffered (or are likely to suffer) significant harm due to physical or sexual abuse.
- 6.5.2. This report must be made as soon as practicable, and after each occasion where he or she becomes aware of a further reasonable grounds for the belief.

6.6. Reasonable grounds for belief

- 6.6.1. A reasonable belief is formed if a reasonable person believes that:
- 6.6.1.1. the child is in need of protection;
 - 6.6.1.2. the child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of physical or sexual injury; and
 - 6.6.1.3. the child's parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.
- 6.6.2. To form a reasonable belief, you should consider and objectively assess all the relevant facts, such as the source of the allegation and how it was communicated, the nature of and details of the allegation, and whether there are any other related matters known regarding the alleged perpetrator.
- 6.6.3. A 'reasonable belief' or a 'belief on reasonable grounds' is not the same as having proof but is more than mere rumour or speculation.
- 6.6.4. You will have reasonable grounds to notify if:
- 6.6.4.1. a child states that they have been physically or sexually abused;
 - 6.6.4.2. a child states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves);
 - 6.6.4.3. someone who knows a child states that the child has been physically or sexually abused;

6.6.4.4. professional observations of the child's behaviour or development leads a professional to form a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused or is likely to be abused; or

6.6.4.5. signs of abuse lead to a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused.

6.7. Voluntary Reporters

6.7.1. In addition to the mandatory reporting obligations above, any person who believes on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from any form of child abuse, *may* disclose that information to the Police, DHHS or the Commissioner for Children & Young People (CCYP).

6.8. Reporting Child Sexual Abuse

6.8.1. If a person receives information that leads them to form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria against a child (under the age of 16 years) by another person (of or over the age of 18 years), the person has a legal obligation to disclose that information to the Police as soon as it is practicable. Individuals who fail to comply with this obligation under the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) may be subject to a penalty of imprisonment.

6.9. Bairnsdale Rowing Club's Approach to Reports of Abuse

6.9.1. Bairnsdale Rowing Club supports and encourages a person to make a report to the Police, CCYP or DHHS if they form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection, or they are concerned about the safety, health or wellbeing of a child.

6.9.2. Any person that makes a report in good faith in accordance with their reporting obligations (whether mandatory or voluntary) will be supported by Bairnsdale Rowing Club and will not be penalised by Bairnsdale Rowing Club for making the report.

6.9.3. If a person is uncertain as to whether they should make a report to an external authority in relation to the safety of a child, they may speak to a member of the Bairnsdale Rowing Club Committee, the Bairnsdale Rowing Club Child Safety Officer or the Bairnsdale Rowing Club MPIO for guidance and information. If in doubt, ask for assistance.

6.9.4. If an allegation is made against an employee, member or volunteer, Bairnsdale Rowing Club will follow the reporting procedure outlined below and take all steps to ensure that the safety of the child and other children is paramount.

Reporting a child safety concern or complaint

Bairnsdale Rowing Club has appointed two people as Child Safety Persons with the specific responsibility for responding to any complaints made by members, volunteers, parents, carers or children. Contact details for these people are advertised on the Club noticeboard and website.

If you have a concern about your own (child) safety or the safety of someone else, you should contact one of the two nominated Child Safety Persons to discuss your concerns. They will document your concern on an Incident Report Form and advise the Club President that a concern has been reported. They will contact the Police immediately if the report is about sexual or physical abuse to a child or if they believe the child is at immediate risk of such abuse. They may also disclose that information to the Department of Health and Human Services and the CCYP. The Club will handle concerns and allegations in a confidential manner to the greatest extent possible.

Initial steps to ensure the ongoing safety of the child and other children while the concern is investigated may include all or some of the following, depending on the seriousness of the allegation:

- withdrawal of the accused person from active duty
- reassignment to a role without direct contact with children
- working under closer supervision

6.9.5. Bairnsdale Rowing Club will investigate allegations of inappropriate conduct against a child in accordance with procedural fairness and will handle the allegations in a confidential and sensitive manner to the greatest extent possible.

6.9.6. Bairnsdale Rowing Club will cooperate with the directions of the Police, CCYP and/or DHHS in relation to any investigation conducted by these authorities.

6.9.7. Bairnsdale Rowing Club will keep a confidential register of any allegations regarding inappropriate conduct.

7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PERSONNEL PROTECTING CHILDREN

7.1. Personnel involved in protecting children include the Committee of management, officers, members and volunteers within the Organisation. Those people have responsibilities in relation to protection of children and are expected to:

7.1.1. understand the rights of children, as appropriate to their role;

7.1.2. respect the cultural and religious practices of families who access Bairnsdale Rowing Club's services, programs or events;

7.1.3. understand and appropriately respond to the needs of children with developmental delays or disabilities;

7.1.4. appropriately act on any concerns raised by children;

7.1.5. understand the definitions, indicators and impact of child abuse;

7.1.6. at all times, know and follow regulations in relation to the care of children and follow the Bairnsdale Rowing Club policies and procedures in relation to child safety, including the Bairnsdale Rowing Club Child Safe Code of Conduct.

7.1.7. co-operate with police and/or other formal investigations to the best of their ability; and

7.1.8. not harm or exploit children who access Bairnsdale Rowing Club's services.

7.2. Bairnsdale Rowing Club will appoint a Child Safety Officer or equivalent role that will be the primary point of contact for all concerns related to child safety.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT APPROACH

To reduce the risk of child abuse occurring in our Club and to protect adult members and volunteers from allegations of abuse, we will do the following things:

General

- All adult Bairnsdale Rowing Club members and volunteers retain an overriding responsibility for the welfare of all children during club activities, including overnight and away regattas and other events. They will exercise a 'duty of care' for children. They will avoid unaccompanied and unobserved activities with children wherever possible.

- An adult (excepting the parent/carer of a child) will not be alone in a room with a child without the presence of another person¹. The door will always be open.
- Any necessary physical contact between an adult and a child will be in public and any private matters will be discussed in an open space, in sight of other persons.
- Bairnsdale Rowing Club will comply with legal and Rowing Victoria requirements in regard to the need for adults working with children to hold a valid Working With Children Check or Police Check.

Communication

- All face-to-face communication will be in public.
- Where a personal or private matter needs to be discussed it will be done in an open space within sight of other persons.
- Adults will not form individual social friendships with children on personal social media sites.
- Parents/carers will be copied into all electronic communication sent to their child.
- Where appropriate, electronic communications will be sent to the whole group (eg. Crew; junior members) rather than individuals, including at least one other adult in an official position in the club eg. President, Vice-president.
- One-to-one telephone calls between adults and children will be avoided wherever possible.

Coaching

- Where practicable coaches will ensure that there are other persons present when coaching.
- Coaches will ensure that all physical contact with children is appropriate for the situation and necessary for their safety.
- Coaches will explain the procedure to the child prior to beginning any physical contact.
- Coaches will obtain consent from the child prior to beginning any physical contact.

Overnight and away regattas (or other trips)

- Parents/carers of children (or a carer nominated by a parent) will need to attend regattas to supervise their child.
- Parents/carers (or carer nominated by a parent) are responsible for transporting their child to and from events and for any overnight accommodation (including supervision at the accommodation) required.

Change Rooms

- All adults and children will use the pavilion change rooms when changing clothing. Changing in the rowing shed will not be tolerated.
- Children will be encouraged to use the change rooms and toilets in groups of two or more.
- Where a child or children are already in the change room, an adult should only enter the change room in the presence of another adult.

Adults under investigation

Adults under investigation in relation to a matter involving child abuse, or any matter which has the potential to jeopardise their Working with Children Check (WWCC) (or if based in another State the equivalent requirement) status may be prohibited, by Bairnsdale Rowing Club, from participating in BRC activities.

9. SUPPORTING PERSONNEL

9.1. Bairnsdale Rowing Club is committed to ensuring that all members, coaches and volunteers receive training to ensure that they understand their responsibilities in relation to child safety. Mandatory training at BRC includes training on:

- 9.1.1. this Policy;
- 9.1.2. identifying indicators of child abuse and harm;
- 9.1.3. how to support a person making a disclosure about harm to a child;

¹ Bairnsdale Rowing Club recognises that a child may not question the authority of an adult as readily as another adult may. The 'person' would therefore preferably be an adult, but may be a child where no other adult is available.

- 9.1.4. how to respond to issues of child safety including internal and external reporting requirements, notifying families and carers, and managing risks to children; and
- 9.1.5. how to support cultural safety.

9.2. Bairnsdale Rowing Club assists its members, coaches, and volunteers to incorporate child safety considerations into decision-making and to promote a culturally safe environment where children are empowered to speak up about issues that affect them.

10. POLICY BREACHES

- 10.1. It is a breach of this policy for any person or organisation to which this policy applies, to have been found to have done anything contrary to this policy. Any person who may breach this policy is subject to the Bairnsdale Rowing Club Member Protection Policy and/or grievance procedure outlined in the Bairnsdale Rowing Club Rules of an Incorporated Association).

11. POLICY PROMOTION

- 11.1. This policy will be made available to all members via the usual Club communication methods, including but not limited to email and the Bairnsdale Rowing Club website.
- 11.2. This policy will be communicated to all members, coaches and volunteers via email and meetings.

12. RECORD KEEPING

- 12.1. Bairnsdale Rowing Club will retain records of reports of child abuse and complaints about child safety.
- 12.2. In maintaining records of reports about child safety, Bairnsdale Rowing Club will maintain confidentiality and privacy for children and families in accordance with legislation.
- 12.3. Bairnsdale Rowing Club will appropriately note identified risks to child safety through the record keeping process and will incorporate those into its risk management processes.

13. REVIEW PROCESS

- 13.1. This policy will be reviewed by the Bairnsdale Rowing Club Committee on an annual basis.
- 13.2. If you would like to provide Bairnsdale Rowing Club with any feedback or suggestions to improve this policy, please contact the President at bairnsdalerc@gmail.com
- 13.3. In addition to the regular review of this policy, recommendations for changes to the policy may be submitted to the BRC committee for consideration at any time. In the event that changes are accepted, the policy will be updated, and circulated to all stakeholders via the usual Club communication methods.