

Leongatha Table Tennis Club- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

2024

Leongatha Table Tennis Club Inc. is a local sporting club that provides table tennis for children up to the age of 18. All races and abilities are accepted at the Leongatha Table Tennis Club.

This Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy was approved by the Management Committee on 05/12/2023. It demonstrates the strong commitment of management, staff and volunteers to child safety and wellbeing, and how our organisation keeps children safe from harm, including child abuse.

Commitment to Child Safety

All children who come to Leongatha Table Tennis Club have a right to feel and be safe. The welfare of the children in our care will always be our first priority and we have a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and harm. We aim to create a child safe and child-friendly environment where children feel safe and have fun playing table tennis.

Purpose

This Policy outlines how Leongatha Table Tennis Club prioritises the safety and wellbeing of children and what steps we will take to do this.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, Management Committee members, children and other individuals involved in our organisation. This policy applies to all activities – practice, coaching and competitions conducted by Leongatha Table Tennis Club.

Definitions

Management Committee means:

- The President, Secretary, Treasurer and the whole committee.

Child abuse means:

- a sexual offence committed against a child
- an offence committed against a child under section 49M(1) of the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) such as grooming
- physical violence against a child
- causing serious emotional or psychological harm to a child
- serious neglect of a child.

Harm means:

- damage to the health, safety or wellbeing of a child or young person, including as a result of child abuse by adults or the conduct of other children. It includes physical, emotional, sexual and psychological harm. Harm can arise from a single act or event and can also be cumulative, that is, arising as a result of a series of acts or events over a period of time.

Child/Children means:

- a person who is under the age of 18 years.

Concerns and complaints means:

A *concern* - refers to any potential issue that could impact negatively on the safety and wellbeing of children.

A *complaint* - is an expression of dissatisfaction to Leongatha Table Tennis Club related to one or more of the following:

- our services or dealings with individuals
- allegations of abuse or misconduct by a staff member, a volunteer or another individual associated with Leongatha Table Tennis Club
- disclosures of abuse or harm made by a child or young person
- the conduct of a child or young person at Leongatha Table Tennis Club
- the inadequate handling of a prior concern
- general concerns about the safety of a group of children or activity.

Role of the Management Committee

The Management Committee has the role of making sure Leongatha Table Tennis Club prioritises children's safety and that action is taken when anyone raises concerns about children's safety.

The Management Committee will champion and model a child safe culture at Leongatha Table Tennis Club. We encourage anyone involved with the organisation to report a child safety concern.

The Management Committee will work to create a positive culture around reporting so that people feel comfortable to raise concerns.

Everyone at Leongatha Table Tennis Club has a role in identifying and managing risks of child abuse and harm. The Management Committee will make sure that staff and volunteers are conducting risk assessments and taking action to manage risks in accordance with this policy. They will also ensure that appropriate child safety knowledge for staff and volunteers is paramount.

The Management Committee will conduct an annual review of how effectively Leongatha Table Tennis Club is delivering child safety and wellbeing. The input of people involved with Leongatha Table Tennis Club will be sought as part of this review.

Children's Empowerment and Participation

Leongatha Table Tennis Club is a sporting organisation which encourages children's participation. We actively seek to include children's views and ideas in our organisational planning, delivery of services including training, coaching, competition and management of facilities.

We want children to develop new friends through Leongatha Table Tennis Club and encourage children to be supportive of each other. We do not tolerate bullying or abusive behaviour between children and will take action if this occurs.

We respect the rights of children and provide them with information about their rights including the right to be safe at Leongatha Table Tennis Club. We actively seek to understand what makes children feel safe in our organisation. We will communicate with children about what they can do if they feel unsafe.

Leongatha Table Tennis Club values the voices of children and will act on safety concerns raised by children or their families.

Leongatha Table Tennis Club supports children's participation in the following ways:

- Discussions with children, including child-led conversations on what makes them feel safe and unsafe.
- Consultation with children about any proposed significant changes to the physical environment, policies, procedures, programs or staffing which may impact them. Children's views are collected by management and considered in the decision-making process.
- Information is made available to children and families about Leongatha Table Tennis Club operations, staffing and programs and is made suitable for different age groups and diversity of the children.

Families and Communities

Leongatha Table Tennis Club recognises the important role of families and involves parents and carers when making significant decisions about their child. Parents, families and communities are welcome to provide feedback at any time through our contact email address and are encouraged to raise any concerns they have with us.

At the annual general meeting each year, we appoint committee members to be the Child Safety representatives on the Management Committee and provide opportunity to all members to share their thoughts on the direction of Leongatha Table Tennis Club for the next year.

Leongatha Table Tennis Club provides information to families and community about our child safe policies and practices including through:

- publishing this Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Code of Conduct on our website
- including information about our child safety approach, our operations and Management Committee and management structure, in a Leongatha Table Tennis Club parent and carer information brochure

Creating Culturally Safe Environments for all Children and their Families

Leongatha Table Tennis Club is committed to creating environments where all children, families and community members are welcomed and included. Strategies to embed cultural safety for children include:

- all nationalities and races are welcome.
- providing opportunities for all children to share their cultural identity and express their culture, including through performance and during Leongatha Table Tennis Club activities
- seeking feedback from all children, families and communities on their experience at Leongatha Table Tennis Club, particularly how safe they feel expressing their identity including their culture.

Valuing Diversity

We value diversity and equity for all children.

To achieve this, we:

- provide training for all Management Committee members, staff and volunteers on understanding diversity and how to support inclusion and cultural safety
- welcome and support participation of all children, including children with disability, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who are unable to live at home, LGBTIQ children and Aboriginal children and their families
- offer children and families through our enrolment forms the opportunity to provide information about themselves, including any specific needs to participate fully in our programs
- have zero tolerance of racism and other forms of discrimination and take action when discrimination or exclusion is identified
- deliver programming that reflects the diversity of our children, their interests and cultures
- commit to ensuring our facilities and online activities promote inclusion of children of all abilities.

Code of Conduct

Leongatha Table Tennis Club has a Child Safe Code of Conduct. Staff, volunteers and the Committee must comply with the Code of Conduct at all times. Breaches of the Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action including termination of a person's involvement with the organisation.

All third-party contractors are also expected to abide by the Child Safe Code of Conduct, and where they are engaging with children will have to sign an agreement to comply with the code, prior to delivering any services.

Recruiting Staff and Volunteers

Leongatha Table Tennis Club puts child safety and wellbeing at the centre of recruitment and screening processes for staff and volunteers. We require a Working with Children Check for all staff and volunteers who have a role with children or have access to children's personal information.

Supporting Staff and Volunteers

Leongatha Table Tennis Club is committed to ensuring that all leaders, staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in relation to child safety and to support their engagement with children. Leongatha Table Tennis Club assists its leaders, staff and volunteers to incorporate child safety considerations into decisions and to promote a safe environment where children are empowered to speak up about issues that affect them.

Issues or concerns about behaviour with children will be raised immediately and addressed in line with our Code of Conduct, complaint handling policy and disciplinary policy.

Complaints and Reporting

All reports of child abuse and child safety concerns will be treated seriously, whether they are made by an adult or a child and whether they are about the conduct of an adult or a child. All complaints and child safety concerns will be responded to promptly and thoroughly.

Leongatha Table Tennis Club has a complaint handling procedure that includes information for staff and volunteers about how a complaint or child safety concern will be responded to. An easy-to-understand complaints information sheet will be provided for children, families and the community to know about the complaint process and the supports available to those making a complaint and those involved in the complaint process.

If a complaint includes an allegation or incident of child abuse or harm, then staff and volunteers at Leongatha Table Tennis Club must report it in accordance with the complaint handling procedure.

Leongatha Table Tennis Club staff and volunteers are required to prioritise children's safety in any response and to report all potentially criminal conduct to Victoria Police. Under the complaint handling and disciplinary procedures, staff and volunteers may be subject to actions to support child safety including:

- being stood down during an investigation or terminated following an investigation
- having their duties altered so they do not engage with children at Leongatha Table Tennis Club
- not allowing unsupervised contact with children at Leongatha Table Tennis Club
- removing their access to the Leongatha Table Tennis Club IT system and facilities.

Complaints can be made to the Child Safety Person.

If there is concern for the immediate safety of a child, we will immediately call 000.

Child Safety Person

Leongatha Table Tennis Club has child safety persons on its Management Committee with responsibility for responding to any child safety related complaints or concerns.

The Child Safety Person's names and contact detail will be posted on the Club Notice Board so children know and understand who the appointed persons are, and how and when they may contact them.

If a person does not feel comfortable making a report to the child safety person, they may report their concern to the Chair of the Management Committee.

Record Keeping

Leongatha Table Tennis Club is committed to making and keeping full and accurate records about all child-related complaints or safety concerns.

All child safety complaints, concerns, incidents and near misses will be recorded in the incident reporting system.

Records which may assist with the investigation of a complaint or safety concern will be identified and kept as part of the record of an investigation. Records will be kept even if an investigation does not substantiate a complaint.

We will record and keep the outcome of any investigations, and the resolution of any complaints.

This includes findings made, reasons for decisions and actions taken.

Records will be stored securely and kept by Leongatha Table Tennis Club for at least 15 years.

Information Sharing

Leongatha Table Tennis Club may share relevant information to promote the safety and wellbeing of children, where it is appropriate and in their best interests.

Leongatha Table Tennis Club will keep information about complaints confidential, except where it is necessary to share information to respond properly to a complaint or to prioritise child safety.

We may also need to share information about incidents or complaints with external authorities to comply with the law or to prioritise safety.

More information is available in our complaint handling procedure.

Risk Management

We recognise the importance of identifying and managing risks of child harm and abuse in the physical and online environments operated by Leongatha Table Tennis Club.

We conduct regular risk assessments and have a risk management approach to address the risk of child abuse and harm at Leongatha Table Tennis Club.

We will ensure that any risk controls put in place balance the need to manage harm with the benefits of participating at Leongatha Table Tennis Club.

Non-compliance with this Policy and the Code of Conduct

Leongatha Table Tennis Club will enforce this policy, the Code of Conduct and any other child safety and wellbeing policies.

Potential breaches by anyone will be investigated and may result in restriction of duties, suspension or termination of employment or engagement or other corrective action.

Review

Leongatha Table Tennis Club will review all child safe practices and policies at least every two years.

We will also review relevant practices and policies in response to a child safety incident or 'near miss'.

Findings from reviews will be reported to the members of our organisation and also inform our approach to continuous improvement of our child safety practices.

Reviews are overseen by the Management Committee and will be informed by consultation with children, families and staff.

Supporting Documents – Leongatha Table Tennis Club child safety and wellbeing system

The following policies and procedures work together to support child safety and wellbeing across all of our operations:

- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Complaint Handling Procedure

Supporting Legislation

- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) (including Child Safe Standards)
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) (including reporting to Child Protection)
- Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) (including Failure to Protect and Failure to Disclose offences)
- Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 and Model Rules