

1 April, 2019

RE: Child Safety Policy

### **Purpose**

This policy was written to demonstrate the strong commitment of the management, staff and volunteers of HWATT/LOOPS TT ("the Organisation") to child safety and to provide an outline of the policies and practices the Organisation has developed to keep everyone safe from any harm, including abuse.

### **Commitment to Child Safety**

All children who are a part of the Organisation have a right to feel and be safe. The welfare of the children in our care will always be our first priority and the Organisation has a zero tolerance to child abuse. The Organisation aims to create a child safe and child friendly environment where children feel safe and have fun while the Organisation's activities are always carried out in the best interests of the children.

### **Application of this Policy**

This policy applies to all individuals involved in our organisation (paid and volunteer) including, but not limited to:

- Administrators
- Coaches
- Contractors and Sub-Contractors.
- Officials
- Participants
- Parents
- Spectators

All of the people to whom this policy applies have a role and responsibility in relation

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to child protection. They must all:

- Understand the indicators and risks of child abuse;
- Appropriately act on any concerns raised by children; and
- Understand and follow all applicable laws in relation to the protection of children and reporting or management of child safety concerns.  
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## **With Children Check**

Anyone (employees, volunteers, contractors or sub-contractors) who has contact with children (including online) must have an up-to-date Working with Children Check. It is not only the responsibility of the individual but also HWATT/LOOPS TT to ensure all required persons have one.

## **Child Abuse**

Child abuse can take a broad range of forms including physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional or psychological abuse and neglect. People to whom this policy applies need to be aware that child abuse can occur whenever there is actual or potential harm to a child, and these are circumstances that the Club is committed to reducing the risk of occurrence.

## **Children's Rights to Safety and Participation**

The Organisation encourages children to express their views about their safety. We listen to their suggestions, especially on matters that directly affect them. We actively encourage all children who use our services to 'have a say' about things that are important to them.

We teach children about what they can do if they feel unsafe. We listen to and act on any concerns children, or their parents, raise with us.

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## **Valuing Diversity**

We value diversity and do not tolerate any discriminatory practices. To achieve this we:

- Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children and their families;
- Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families;
- Welcome children with a disability and their families and act to promote their participation; and
- Seek appropriate staff from diverse cultural backgrounds.

## **Recruiting staff and volunteers**

The Organisation takes the following steps to ensure best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of staff and volunteers:

- Interview and conduct referee checks on all staff and volunteers
- Require police checks and Working with Children Checks for relevant positions.
- Our commitment to Child Safety and our screening requirements are included in all advertisements and as part of the induction process for new staff or volunteers.

## **Supporting staff and volunteers**

The Organisation seeks to attract and retain the best staff and volunteers. We provide support and supervision so people feel valued, respected and fairly treated. We have developed a Code of Conduct to provide guidance to our staff and volunteers, all of whom receive training on the requirements of the Code.

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## **Reporting a child safety concern or complaint**

The Organisation has appointed Simon Gerada as Child Safety Person with the specific responsibility for responding to any complaints made by staff, volunteers, parents or children. That person can be contacted by email at [simon@tabletennis.net.au](mailto:simon@tabletennis.net.au) or 0415359541. Our complaints process is outlined below.

The Organisation has appointed Melissa Tapper as Child Safety Person with the specific responsibility for responding to any complaints made by staff, volunteers, parents or children. That person can be contacted by email at [millytapper@hotmail.com](mailto:millytapper@hotmail.com) or 0439387251. Our complaints process is outlined below.

## **Risk Management**

We recognise the importance of a risk management approach to minimising the potential for child abuse or harm to occur and use this to inform our policy, procedures and activity planning. In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our children. To reduce the risk of child abuse occurring, adults to whom this policy applies should avoid direct, unsupervised contact with children. For example, this should be a consideration when:

- Using change room facilities;
- Using accommodation or overnight stays;
- Travel; or
- Physical contact when coaching or managing children.

## **Complaints Process**

Step 1: Clarify basic details of the allegation

- Listen and be Supportive
  - Reassure the child that what has occurred is not their fault
  - Be honest and explain that other people may need to be told in order to stop what is happening
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- Avoid suggestive or leading questions – ask the child “What happened?” and “Then what happened?”
- If another person makes the complaint ask the person to:
- Explain their reasons for suspecting abuse (observation, injury or other)
- Provide the names and contact details of all people involved, including witnesses.

## Step 2: Report allegations of a serious or criminal nature

- Report any incident of a serious or a criminal nature to the police or child protection authority immediately.
- If the child’s parent/s are suspected of committing the abuse, report the allegation to the relevant government agency.

## Step 3: Protect the child and make sure the alleged offender is not victimized

- Take action to ensure the child’s/children’s safety (e.g., move the alleged offender to a non-child related position, supervise the alleged offender or remove/suspend them from their duties while the matter is being investigated).
- Make sure the individual accused of the offence is not victimised. If they’re stood down make it clear that this does not mean the person is guilty and that a proper investigation will be undertaken before decisions are made.

## Step 4: Follow the child protection authority or police requirements

Further clarify but do not investigate the allegation unless requested to do so by the authorities. Provide information and assist in investigations as appropriate.

- The police or child protection agency may undertake an investigation. They may also request that the state sporting organisation undertake their own investigation (this should be done by an independent person with appropriate investigative expertise).
- The Organisation should provide information and assist with the investigation as appropriate.

Individuals/organisations should not try to investigate the incident themselves

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## Step 5: Manage the situation

You must manage the situation while an investigation is being conducted (internal or external)

Support should be provided to the victim and their family. This may include seeking professional counselling support if appropriate;

- If an investigation is being conducted it is recommended that you do not talk to the alleged victim, their family or the alleged perpetrator about the complaint. If you are asked for information, your response should be confined to the complaint process and timeline;
  - Take action to ensure the ongoing safety of members, particularly children, until the authorities and / or the state sport or recreation organisation have completed the investigation and any court or tribunal hearings. This may involve providing extra supervision or removal of a person from their position pending the outcome of the investigation. If the person is in a paid position, seek advice from your state sporting organisation or a lawyer;
  - Consider carefully what other members and their families are told about the situation. If there are enquiries, they should be handled by one person such as the club president. Discussion should focus on the process rather than the people.
  - If an alleged perpetrator has been removed from their position it is important that those impacted are provided appropriate information to minimise gossip and concern. This may also be important if there is a risk that other children may have been harmed. (For example an email/letter that states that a coach in the Organisation has been suspended pending an investigation into an alleged breach of the member protection policy. If they have been charged by the police you may be able to provide information regarding the charge and the contact details of the police officer, dealing with the case, who can be contacted if they have further information. (check with the police regarding this)
  - In all cases they should be asked to not speak about or post any information on social media. Do not name the alleged perpetrator unless the police AND the appropriate Court have given permission to the name being released.
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## Step 6: Implement disciplinary action as required

- Implement any disciplinary action recommended by the police, child protection authority or state sporting organisation. The action should be immediate.
- Check with the relevant state government authority to see if you need to forward a report.

[This document was developed by incorporating information from: <https://vicsport.com.au/child-safe-sport>, and from <https://www.playbytherules.net.au/complaints-handling/suspicion-of-harm-against-a-child>]