



Child Safe Reporting Policy

Purpose of the policy

This policy sets out our organisation's policy on child safe reporting and complaint handling.

Everyone in our organisation must:

- know **what** to report, **who** to report to and **how** to report
- report any concerns about the safety or welfare of a child or young person immediately
- ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child is paramount when responding to a disclosure or allegation about a child being harmed or at risk.

Our reporting practices will be regularly reviewed and updated to make sure they remain effective and comply with legislation.

Definitions of harm and abuse

General definitions

Psychological abuse (also known as emotional abuse)

This includes bullying, threatening and abusive language, intimidation, shaming and name calling, ignoring and isolating a child, and exposure to domestic and family violence.

Physical abuse

This includes behaviours such as pushing, shoving, punching, slapping, kicking and unauthorised use of restraint.

Sexual abuse

This includes the sexual touching or sexual assault of a child, grooming, and production, distribution or possession of child abuse material.

Grooming

This is a process where a person manipulates a child or group of children and sometimes those looking after them, including parents, carers, teachers and leaders. They do this to establish a position of 'trust' so they can then later sexually abuse the child.

Misconduct

This is inappropriate behaviour that may not be as severe as abuse but could indicate that abuse is

occurring and would often be in breach of an organisation's Child Safe Code of Conduct. This could include showing a child something inappropriate on a phone, having inappropriate conversations with a child or an adult sitting with a child on their lap.

Lack of appropriate care

This includes not providing adequate and proper supervision, nourishment, clothing, shelter, education or medical care.

Reportable conduct definitions

Children's Guardian Act 2019 defines reportable conduct as:

- a sexual offence
- sexual misconduct
- ill-treatment of a child
- neglect of a child
- an assault against a child
- an offence under s 43B (failure to protect) or s 316A (failure to report) of the Crimes Act 1900
- behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child.

The definitions of harm and abuse listed below are based on those in part 4, section 20 of the *Children's Guardian Act 2019*.

Sexual offence

A sexual offence is an offence of a sexual nature under a law of QLD, another state/territory, or the Commonwealth committed against, with or in the presence of a child, such as:

- sexual touching of a child
- a child grooming offence
- production, dissemination or possession of child abuse material.

An alleged sexual offence does not have to be the subject of criminal investigation or charges for it to be categorised as a reportable allegation of a sexual offence.

Sexual misconduct

Sexual misconduct of a child means any conduct with, towards or in the presence of a child that is sexual in nature (but is not a sexual offence). The following are examples of sexual misconduct:

- descriptions of sexual acts without a legitimate reason to provide the descriptions
- sexual comments, conversations or communications
- comments to a child that express a desire to act in a sexual manner towards the child, or another child.

Ill-treatment

Ill treatment of a child means conduct towards a child that is:

- unreasonable, and
- seriously inappropriate, improper, inhumane or cruel.

Ill-treatment can include a range of conduct such as making excessive or degrading demands of a child; a pattern of hostile or degrading comments or behaviour towards a child; and using inappropriate forms of behaviour management towards a child.

Neglect

Neglect of a child means a significant failure to provide adequate and proper food, supervision, nursing, clothing, medical aid or lodging for the child that causes or is likely to cause harm to the child, by:

- a person with parental responsibility for the child
- an authorised carer or an employee if the child is in the employee's care.

Neglect can be an ongoing situation of repeated failure by a caregiver to meet a child's physical or psychological needs, or a single significant incident where a caregiver fails to fulfil a duty or obligation, resulting in actual harm to a child or where there is the potential for significant harm to a child.

Examples of neglect include failing to protect a child from abuse or exposing a child to a harmful environment.

Assault

An assault can occur when a person intentionally or recklessly:

- applies physical force against a child without lawful justification or excuse - such as hitting, striking, kicking, punching or dragging a child, or
- causes a child to apprehend the immediate and unlawful use of physical force against them, such as threatening to physically harm a child through words and/or gestures.

Behaviour that causes emotional or psychological harm to a child

Behaviour that causes significant psychological or emotional harm is conduct that is intentional or reckless (without reasonable excuse), obviously or very clearly unreasonable and which results in significant emotional harm or trauma to a child.

For a reportable allegation involving psychological harm, the following elements must be present:

- an obviously or very clearly unreasonable or serious act or series of acts that the employee knew or ought to have known was unacceptable, and
- evidence of psychological harm to the child that is more than transient, including displaying patterns of 'out of character behaviour', regression in behaviour, distress, anxiety, physical symptoms or self-harm, and
- an alleged causal link between the employee's conduct and the significant emotional or psychological harm to the child.

Unacceptable behaviours under our Code of Conduct

Our Child Safe Code of Conduct provides a list of unacceptable behaviours around children and young people that breach our Child Safe Code of Conduct.

Many of these behaviours may not meet the threshold of 'reportable allegations' under the Reportable Conduct Scheme but may indicate a pattern of concerning behaviour.

Types of complaints (what to report)

All complaints should be reported. This includes:

- criminal conduct
- disclosures or reports of abuse
- risk of significant harm
- reportable allegations (an allegation that an employee has engaged in conduct that may be reportable conduct)*
- unacceptable behaviour around children and young people that breaches our Child Safe Code of Conduct.

Making an external complaint/ report

Who must make an external report

It can be a criminal offence for adults not to report to police if they know, believe or ought reasonably believe that a child abuse offence has been committed against another person. In addition, it can be a criminal offence for people employed in an organisation that provides child-related services if they fail to reduce or remove the risk of a child becoming a victim of child abuse.

How to make an external complaint/report

Reporting criminal conduct to the police

It is of the utmost importance that criminal allegations be reported to police at the earliest opportunity and that entities obtain guidance from police before taking any action that could compromise a criminal response.

Sometimes, it will be very clear that a report to police is required. For example, if you receive a report about sexual assault of a child, or a serious physical assault. At other times, it may be less clear. The QLDPF encourages all matters to be reported. It is critical that criminal allegations be reported immediately to police, as taking risk management action or commencing investigative steps before consulting with police may jeopardise a police investigation.

It is important to note that some failures to report criminal allegations to police will constitute a criminal offence. For example, s316A of the Crimes Act 1900 sets out an offence for concealing child abuse in relation to a failure to report a child abuse offence to Police. A failure to report allegations of criminal abuse of a child may also constitute reportable conduct in some circumstances.

Contact Birdsville Police on 07 4744 1666 for anything you consider could be a criminal offence.

This includes sexual assault, physical assault, grooming offences, and producing, disseminating or possessing child abuse material.

For general enquiries, please contact QLD Police on 131 444.

Reporting risk of significant harm (ROSH)

Any person in the community who has reasonable grounds to believe that a child or young person is at risk of significant harm (ROSH) can report to the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) on 132 111 (this is a 24-hour service).

Making an internal complaint/ report

Who must make an internal report

Everyone engaged to work or volunteer in Birdsville Race Club Inc. must make an internal report about any child abuse or misconduct concerns they either observe or are told about.

The person making the internal report will not be penalised. A failure to report, or preventing another person from reporting, will be considered misconduct.

How to make an internal report

Internal reporting by employees, contractors and volunteers

When a child safety concern, incident, allegation, or complaint is identified, the following reporting process must be followed:

- 1. Report the Incident**

The incident, concern, or disclosure must be reported immediately to a Birdsville Race Club (BRC) staff member, volunteer supervisor, or designated event representative.

- 2. Immediate Escalation**

The BRC staff member who receives the report must immediately refer the matter to Ginnie Hope-Johnstone, BRC Event Manager, for assessment and appropriate action.

- 3. Completion of Complaint Documentation**

The Event Manager will ensure an official complaint report is completed by the person making the report and, where appropriate, the child involved. The report must accurately document all relevant information, including the nature of the concern, persons involved, date, time, location, and any immediate actions taken.

- 4. Assessment and Notification of Authorities**

The Event Manager will assess the complaint and determine the required response. Where the matter involves a suspected child safety concern, allegation of harm, or reportable offence, the Event Manager will notify Birdsville Police and Queensland Police through both verbal and electronic reporting channels as required.

- 5. Child Safe Governance Notification**

The Birdsville Race Club Child Safe Officer will be notified of the complaint to ensure appropriate governance, record keeping, follow-up actions, and compliance with child safeguarding obligations.

All reports will be treated seriously, handled sensitively, and managed in accordance with the Birdsville Race Club Child Safeguarding Policy, applicable legislation, and child safe principles.

Reporting breaches of our Child Safe Code of Conduct

All breaches and disclosures must be reported to Gary Brook (Vice President) or Ginnie Hope-Johnstone (Event Manager) Birdsville Race Club Inc.

Child safeguarding officer(s) in our organisation

Dalene Wray – Birdsville Race Club Child Safe Guard Officer – 0439 224 968

How complaints should be handled

Overview of the complaint-handling process

Once an allegation or complaint has been made, use this step-by-step process to make sure it is appropriately followed up:

1. steps are taken to identify and address any risks
2. the incident is recorded
3. reporting obligations are met, if necessary
4. an investigation is conducted, keeping everyone involved up to date with what is happening
5. ongoing support is offered to the child or young person as needed
6. the incident is reviewed and our child safe documents are updated, if necessary. This includes reviewing our Risk Management Plan.

Risk management on receiving an allegation or disclosure

It is the responsibility of the Birdsville Race Club Inc. to conduct a risk assessment after receiving an allegation, to ensure the safety of all people involved and maintain the integrity of any potential investigation.

Procedural fairness, including privacy and confidentiality

Any allegation of abuse must be treated in a fair, transparent and timely manner.

Workers subject to an allegation will be notified when a disciplinary hearing is to take place and what will occur at the hearing. We follow the obligations defined under the Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth).

Additionally:

- all information is recorded on our reporting form for complaints and allegations (see Appendix for a copy of this form)
- all reporting forms for complaints and allegations are stored securely and only accessed by those in the organisation with responsibility for oversight of the investigation
- our organisation maintains the privacy of those involved in accordance with our obligations under the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998*
- if an incident is found to be substantiated, likely outcomes or responses will be determined from advice given by relevant authorities

Appendix – Template for recording complaints and allegations

The form on the following pages can be adapted and downloaded to record any complaints and allegations that occur in your organisation.



Complaints and allegations record form

This form is to record a suspicion, allegation or disclosure of child abuse, or a complaint of unacceptable behaviour.

Staff name and position officiating this report	
Name of the child or young person involved	
Name of person making complaint	
Name of person who the complaint was made against	

1. Nature of the complaint: include time, date, location, what happened and who was involved (this can include observations of the child's behaviour).

2. Details of any injuries and if the child received medical attention.

3. Accurately record what the child said when describing what happened – use their exact words – or record why you suspect abuse due to an indirect disclosure, such as a drawing or observed behaviour.

(In the case of an allegation of abuse, formal investigations and interviews will be carried out by DCJ and/or QLD Police. You must record what the child has said but unless it is your role to investigate, you should not interview the child.)

4. Details of anyone who saw what happened.

5. Does this complaint indicate the possibility of child abuse, such as physical abuse, psychological or emotional abuse, sexual abuse or neglect?

☐ Yes ☐ No

6. Who did you make a report to?

- ☐ Birdsville Race Club Staff (name the relevant person)
- ☐ Birdsville Races Security
- ☐ Birdsville Police
- ☐ QLD Police
- ☐ Child Safety Services or 1800 177 135
- ☐ Other (name them)

7. People spoken to in relation to the matter (describe who was spoken to and why they were spoken to about the matter – include Police officers, Child Safety Services staff, and anyone else you spoke to).

Date of complaint recorded:

What happens next:

This report will be assessed by the Birdsville Race Club's Child Safety Officer and, where required by law, referred to the Queensland Police Service and/or other relevant statutory authorities for investigation and further action.

Child Safeguard Helplines:

Child Safety Services **1800 177 135**

Australian Childhood Foundation **1300 381 581**
