

CLUB

PORT AUGUSTA TABLE TENNIS ASSOCIATION

Child Safe Environment Policy

The Port Augusta Tabletennis Association acknowledges that children who attend the club's premises, grounds and/or activities as junior members or as invited guests should do so in safety and without any likely harm coming to them.

Our commitment to child safety

Our organisation is committed to child safety.

We want children to be safe, happy and empowered. We support and respect all children, whether they are junior members or visitors to the club.

We are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children.

We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently within our policies and procedures.

We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we will act upon.

Our organisation is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.

Our organisation has robust human resources and recruitment practices for any volunteers working with children.

Our organisation is committed to training and educating any volunteers on child abuse risks.

We support and respect all children, as well any volunteers who may work with children in organised programs at the **Port Augusta Tabletennis Association**. We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.

We have specific policies and procedures in place for handling alleged child abuse claims.

All volunteers and officials working with children must report all serious concerns via the Child Abuse Report Line (13 14 78) or if you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

Our children

This policy is intended to empower children who may become vital and active participants in our organisation. We will involve them when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them. We will listen to their views and respect what they have to say.

We promote diversity and tolerance in our organisation, and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome. In particular we:

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically
- diverse backgrounds
- ensure that children with a disability are safe and assist them to participate equally where practicable.

Our volunteers

This policy guides any volunteers on how to behave with children in our organisation if engaged in specific Tabletennis activities.

Any volunteers must agree to abide by our code of conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children. Any volunteers, as well as children and their families, may seek to amend the code of conduct in relation to Tabletennis activities involving children.

Training and supervision

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone in our organisation understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

Our organisational culture aims for any volunteers (in addition to parents/carers and children) to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. Volunteers are to have training that allows them to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

We also support any volunteers to undertake training to: develop their skills to protect children from abuse; and promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability.

New volunteers will be administered to ensure they understand our organisation's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse, as well as checking that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate and complies with this organisation's code of conduct. Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including the Department of Child Protection and South Australia Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

Recruitment

We take all reasonable steps to engage skilled people to work with children. Any potential volunteers will be advised of our organisation's commitment to child safety and made aware of our social and legislative responsibilities. Our organisation understands that when recruiting volunteers we have ethical as well as legislative obligations.

Applications from Aboriginal peoples, people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with a disability are welcome to apply for any voluntary positions the organisation may offer.

We carry out reference checks and police record checks to ensure that we are recruiting the right people. Police record checks are used only for the purposes of recruitment and are discarded after the recruitment process is complete. We do retain our own records (but not the actual criminal record) if an applicant's criminal history affected our decision making process.

If during the recruitment process a person's records indicate a criminal history then the person will be given the opportunity to provide further information and context.

Fair procedures for all people

The safety and wellbeing of children is a primary concern in relation to any programs that may be run specifically for or include them. We are also fair and just to all people. The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent, and based on evidence.

We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using our incident reporting formⁱ, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored.

If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, we provide updates to children and families on progress and any actions we as an organisation take.

Privacy

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be volunteers, parents or children, unless there is a risk to someone's safety. We have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will have access to it.

Legislative responsibilities

Our organisation takes our legal responsibilities seriously, including:

- Failure to disclose: Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All volunteers and officials working with children must report all serious concerns via the Child Abuse Report Line (13 14 78).ⁱⁱ
- Failure to protect: People of authority in our organisation will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child abuse or neglect and fail to report this.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Any personnel who are mandatory reporters must comply with their duties.^{iv}

Risk management

In South Australia, organisations are required to protect children when a risk is identified (see information about failure to protect above). In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse or neglect to our children.

In relation to activities that are run specifically for or include children, Port Augusta Tabletennis will put in place risk management strategies to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks, which include risks posed by physical environments (for example, any doors that can lock), and online environments (for example, no volunteer is to have direct personal contact with a child in the club on social media).

Regular review

This policy will be reviewed every two years and following significant incidents if they occur. We will ensure that families and children have the opportunity to contribute. Where possible we do our best to work with local Aboriginal communities, culturally and/or linguistically diverse communities and people with a disability.

Allegations, concerns and complaints

Our organisation takes all allegations of child abuse or neglect seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. Our committee members and any relevant volunteers will deal appropriately with allegations.

We work to ensure all children, families, and volunteers know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.

We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if they have a reasonable belief that an incident took place (see information about failure to disclose above).

If an adult has a reasonable belief that an incident has occurred then they must report the incident. Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be:

- a child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves)
- behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed
- someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it
- observing suspicious behaviour.

ⁱ Available from the notice board of the clubhouse.

ⁱⁱ A person will not commit this offence if they have a reasonable excuse for not disclosing the information, including a fear for their safety or where the information has already been disclosed.

ⁱⁱⁱ Further information about the reporting of child abuse or neglect is available on the Department of Child Protection website <https://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/reporting-child-abuse/report-child-abuse-or-neglect>

^{iv} Mandatory reporters (doctors, nurses, midwives, teachers (including early childhood teachers), principals and police) must report to the online Child Abuse Report Line (eCARL) if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from abuse or neglect.