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## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

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### INTRODUCTION

This policy is based on the *Bushwalking NSW* draft child protection policy. It contains the procedures to be followed after a notification of alleged child abuse is received.

### OBJECTIVES

Through the development of this policy, the SBC's objectives are to:

1. provide information to assist members in dealing with all forms of child abuse
2. provide comprehensive guidelines relating to risk minimisation and reporting / notification procedures
3. provide direction to all members regarding their legal responsibilities under child protection legislation
4. promote the adoption of SBC principles for child protection and intervention amongst members and parents of children participating in SBC's activities.

### POLICY

The *Springwood Bushwalking Club* (SBC) is committed to ensuring that the safety, welfare and well-being of children are maintained at all times during their participation in activities run by the Club.

The SBC also aims to promote a safe environment for all children and to assist members to recognise abuse and neglect and follow the appropriate notification procedures when reporting alleged abuse.

This policy is applicable to all members of the SBC.

In order to implement this policy the SBC will undertake to:

1. implement strategies and procedures that focus on the best interests of children and meet the requirements of child protection legislation;
2. promote a safe and supportive environment for all children and young people participating in activities which come under the umbrella of SBC;
3. increase awareness and emphasise the importance of child protection issues in a physically active environment to all those involved with the activities of SBC.
4. ensure that all members of SBC are aware of their responsibilities arising from child protection legislation.

# NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES FOR ALLEGATIONS OF CHILD ABUSE

The SBC acknowledges that issues regarding child abuse and the reporting of allegations of child abuse is highly sensitive and should be dealt with in a confidential manner.

The SBC has adopted these notification procedures to ensure that confidentiality is maintained throughout the process and that consistent procedures for reporting are encouraged.

The SBC will be proactive in its role to protect children and encourage an open environment that allows members to be aware of their rights and responsibilities.

## Child Protection Officer/

To deal appropriately with these issues and to ensure that the confidentiality of all parties involved is maintained, the Vice President will be designated as *Child Protection Officer*.

The Child Protection Officer is responsible for reporting any allegations of child abuse that occur in the SBC to the local branch of the Department of Family and Community Services (FACS) and the NSW Police Service.

The appointed Child Protection Officer will advise Bushwalking NSW's Child Protection Officers of any allegations and confirm those allegations have been referred to the local branch of the Department of Family and Community Services (FACS) and the NSW Police Service.

## What Should Be Reported

Some incidents **may seem minor**, however, they may in fact reveal more serious concerns of misconduct or a pattern of behaviour that requires further scrutiny. Indicators for child abuse and sexual abuse are available on sites, such as that of the Department of Family and Community Services, so that SBC members may make an informed decision on what to report.

If you have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child participating in any organised activities conducted by SBC is at risk, report the matter to the *Child Protection Officer*.

## Investigation

If an incident of child abuse occurs in the SBC it is not the responsibility of persons within the Club to take it upon themselves to determine whether the allegation is true or false. This responsibility belongs with the NSW Department of Family and Community Service and the Judiciary.

Depending on the nature of the allegations and the extent of the situation, the NSW Department of Family and Community Service will determine the manner in which the matter will be investigated. This may involve the NSW Police Service.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

All matters regarding allegations of child abuse are to be treated as confidential. The person designated as the child protection officer is the contact person for any incident involving allegations of child abuse. This is essential for confidentiality. Confidentiality protects all individuals involved:

- the alleged victim
- the alleged offender, and
- the person making the notification.

## **POLICY REVIEW**

The SBC Child Protection Policy will be reviewed annually and updated in line with any legislative changes that have significant impact on the manner in which child protection and intervention issues are to be dealt with.