

Purpose

AFL SportsReady is committed to providing safe, inclusive and supportive environments for children and young people participating in our employment, education and support programs.

This Reporting Guide provides practical procedures and guidance for AFL SportsReady team members to:

- Identify child safety risks and concerns.
- Respond appropriately to disclosures of harm or abuse.
- Report concerns and incidents.
- Manage child safety risks within AFL SportsReady programs and placements.
- Support affected individual/s.
- Comply with child safety obligations.

This Guide should be read in conjunction with the:

- Child Safety Policy
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Employee Code of Conduct
- Child Safety Incident, Concern and Disclosure Form
- Relevant workplace policies and procedures.

Scope

This Guide applies to all AFL SportsReady workers, including Board members, employees, trainees, apprentices, consultants, contractors, volunteers, service providers, and work experience students across all locations.

For the purpose of this Guide, all of the above are referred to as **team members**.

This Guide also supports children, young people, students, trainees, apprentices, parents, guardians, carers and other stakeholders who wish to raise a child safety concern relating to AFL SportsReady programs, services, placements or learning environments.

Definitions

Term	Definition
AFL SportsReady	Includes AFL SportsReady Ltd, SportsReady Education Ltd and The Ready Foundation Ltd.

Term	Definition
Child or (plural) Children	A child or young person under the age of 18 years.
Child Abuse	Includes physical abuse, psychological and emotional abuse, sexual abuse, grooming, neglect, exploitation, and any behaviour that results in harm or risk of harm to a child.
Child Safety	The actions taken to protect children and young people from harm and promote their wellbeing. Child safety also includes the processes, supports and protections put in place for children and young people who report or disclose risk, harm, neglect or abuse.
Child Safety Officer	The People & Culture Manager, appointed by AFL SportsReady as the designated Child Safety Officer responsible for coordinating child safety reporting, compliance, risk management and organisational responses to child safety concerns.
Reasonable Belief	A belief formed on reasonable grounds that a child has experienced, or is at risk of experiencing, harm or abuse. See below for detailed definition.

Guiding Principles

When responding to child safety concerns and disclosures, AFL SportsReady will:

- Prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.
- Take all concerns seriously.
- Act promptly and appropriately.
- Support children and young people to be heard.
- Respect privacy and confidentiality.
- Comply with legal obligations.
- Provide procedural fairness;
- Seek continuous improvement in child safety practices.

Roles and Responsibilities in Child Safe Reporting

Board

The Board is responsible for:

- Overseeing child safety governance including team member education and compliance against the Child Safety Reporting Procedures.

- Setting an organisational culture where child safe reporting and responding to child welfare concerns is supported and encouraged.
- Ensuring team members responding to child safety and welfare concerns are provided adequate psychological and professional supports and expertise to manage reports without risk of harm.
- Ensuring appropriate resources are available to support effective child safety reporting requirements.
- Reviewing of deidentified Child Safe risk and incidents reports including trends analysis.

Chief Executive Officer

The CEO is responsible for:

- Establishing the Child Safety Policy, Processes and Reporting Framework and Code of Conduct.
- Ensuring organisational compliance with this reporting procedure.
- Promoting a child-safe culture and environment where raising concerns and mandated reporting is supported and encouraged.
- Identifying and understanding child safe risks and ensuring risks are proactively identified, assessed and mitigated across all operational and support service areas.
- Managing significant child safety incidents and escalations.

Child Safety Officer

The Child Safety Officer is responsible for:

- Acting as the authority in Child Safety at AFL SportsReady and being the first point of call for all child safe matters.
- Receiving and managing child safety reports, including coordinating targeted supports or counselling to team members impacted by a disclosure or reporting a child safety welfare concern.
- Supporting mandatory reporting obligations.
- Coordinating responses to concerns.
- Maintaining confidential records.
- Supporting investigations.
- Providing advice and guidance to team members.
- Engaging and managing third party child safe experts and legal counsel where specialised expertise is necessary.

Managers

Managers must:

- Promote compliance with child safety reporting requirements.

- Manage risks within their areas of responsibility including psychosocial risks impacting team members who have received a disclosure or identified a child welfare concern.
- Escalate concerns immediately.
- Ensure staff attend required training and education on reporting obligations and best practice.

Team Members

All team members must:

- Comply with the Child Safety Policy, Child Safety Reporting Procedure and Child Safety Code of Conduct.
- Report a child safety concern immediately.
- Report if they become aware that an adult associated with AFL SportsReady poses a risk of sexual abuse to a child.
- Participate in training and education on reporting obligations and best practice.
- Cooperate with investigations.
- Raise with the Child Safety Officer or a leader, if being involved in a child safe concern or investigation presents a risk to your health and welfare or if further supports are required.
- Place the safety of children and young people at the centre of decision making and behaviour.

Identifying Child Safety Concerns

A child safety concern may arise where a child or young person:

- Discloses abuse, neglect or exploitation.
- Appears fearful, distressed or unsafe.
- Displays significant behavioural changes.
- Reports inappropriate conduct.
- Experiences bullying or harassment.
- Is exposed to unsafe workplace practices.
- Appears inadequately supervised.
- Is exposed to online risks or inappropriate content.

Concerns may also arise through:

- Observations.
- Information received from parents, carers or guardians.
- Information received from a host employer.
- Concerns raised by Mentors, Educators or Employment Coaches.
- Reports from another child or young person.
- Reports from an anonymous member of the public.

Online Learning and Digital Safety Concerns

Child safety concerns may also arise through:

- Online learning platforms.
- Virtual classrooms.
- Electronic communications.
- Social media interactions connected to AFL SportsReady programs.
- Cyberbullying.
- Inappropriate online conduct.
- Sharing of inappropriate images, content or materials.
- Unauthorised communications with children and young people.

Concerns relating to online environments must be reported and managed in the same manner as concerns arising in physical environments.

Child Safe Teaching and Assessment

AFL SportsReady is committed to ensuring teaching, learning and assessment environments are safe, inclusive and age-appropriate for children and young people.

Learning resources, assessment materials, online learning platforms and digital technologies used with students under 18 years of age will be reviewed to ensure they:

- Are age-appropriate.
- Support child safety and wellbeing.
- Promote respectful and inclusive participation.
- Comply with legislative and regulatory requirements.
- Support safe online engagement.
- Do not expose children and young people to inappropriate content, imagery or communications.

Understanding Reasonable Belief

If any team member has a belief based on reasonable grounds that a child has been subject to harm or abuse, or is informed of an allegation of harm or abuse, then they have a responsibility to report the incident or allegation to the Child Safety Officer, who will then report to the relevant authorities.

A 'reasonable belief' or a 'belief on reasonable grounds' is not the same as having proof, but is more than suspicion upon which there is some objective basis for the belief. However, the belief that someone may have committed reportable conduct does not require certainty or initial proof.

A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds.

A report should be made whenever a team member forms a **reasonable belief** that a child or young person:

- Has experienced harm.
- Is experiencing harm.
- May be at risk of harm; or
- Is exposed to conduct that creates an unacceptable risk of harm.

A reasonable belief may arise from:

- A direct disclosure by a child.
- Information provided by another person.
- Observations of the child's behaviour.
- Observations of injuries.
- Suspicious conduct by an adult or another young person.

It is important to note, that when a reasonable belief of child abuse occurs, it is a legal requirement to report the situation immediately. The duty applies to all people, not just people in mandated reporter roles. Failure to report may result in serious consequences including criminal and civil proceedings against individuals and AFL SportsReady, so team members should report at the very first occasion a concern is known.

Team members will not be held liable for reporting reasonable belief concerns, provided that the report was made with genuine care and in good faith.

Responding to a Disclosure

If a child or young person discloses abuse, neglect or another safety concern:

Do

- Remain calm.
- Listen carefully.
- Allow the child to speak freely.
- Treat the disclosure seriously.
- Reassure the child they have done the right thing by telling you.
- Explain that you may need to share the information with people who can help keep them safe.
- Make accurate notes as soon as possible.

Examples

You may say:

"Thank you for telling me."

"I am glad you told me."

"What happened is not your fault."

"I will need to share this information with people who can help keep you safe."

Do Not

- Promise secrecy.
- Ask leading questions;
- Investigate the matter yourself.
- Confront the alleged offender.
- Challenge or criticise the child.
- Speculate about what happened.

Immediate Risk of Harm

Where a child or young person appears to be in immediate danger:

1. Call **000**.
2. Take reasonable steps to ensure the immediate safety of the child.
3. Notify the Child Safety Officer immediately.
4. Complete an incident report as soon as practicable.

The safety of the child or young person takes priority over all other considerations.

Reporting Pathways for Children and Young People

Children, young people, students, trainees, apprentices and their parents, carers or guardians may raise concerns directly with:

- The Child Safety Officer.
- An Educator.
- Employment Coach.
- First Nations Mentor.
- Student Administration Team.
- Manager or Team Leader.
- AFL SportsReady's Feedback, Compliments and Complaints process.

Where a child or young person raises a concern with any AFL SportsReady representative, that person must ensure the concern is reported to the Child Safety Officer as soon as practicable.

Child Safety Reporting Process

When in doubt, report.

If a team member is unsure whether a matter constitutes a child safety concern, they should seek immediate guidance from the Child Safety Officer and err on the side of reporting.

Step 1 - Record the Concern

Document:

- Date and time.
- Location.
- Names of people involved.
- What you saw, heard or observed.
- Actions already taken.
- Names of any witnesses.

Use the child's own words wherever possible.

Avoid assumptions or opinions.

AFL SportsReady team members must complete a Child Safety Incident, Concern and Disclosure Form as soon as practicable after becoming aware of a child safety concern, incident, allegation or disclosure. The form must be used to accurately document the concern, actions taken, reporting undertaken and any immediate risk management measures.

Completed forms must be submitted to the Child Safety Officer and stored in accordance with AFL SportsReady's record keeping and confidentiality requirements.

Step 2 - Notify Internally

Immediately report the concern to:

- The Child Safety Officer; or
- Your manager.

If the concern involves either of those individuals, escalate directly to the CEO.

Step 3 - External Reporting

The Child Safety Officer will determine whether a report is required to:

- Police;
- Child Protection authorities;
- Working with Children authorities;
- relevant State or Territory child safety regulators;
- other government agencies.

Nothing in this procedure prevents an individual from making a mandatory report where legislation requires them to do so.

Types of reporting

There are two types of reports – Child Safety and Mandatory Reporting.

a) Child Safety Concern

If a reasonable belief is formed by a team member that a child is in need of protection and that they have been subjected to physical abuse, psychological and emotional abuse, sexual abuse, grooming, neglect, exploitation, and any behaviour that results in harm or risk of harm to a child, then a Child Safety Concern report is made. This report should be made to the Child Safety Officer as soon practicable after a reasonable belief is established.

The Chief Executive Officer must also be informed immediately upon a team member or Child Safety Officer becoming aware of allegations or incidents of child harm or abuse. Any report of allegations or incidents of abuse or harm of a child must be made or recorded in line with this procedure.

Forms of harm and abuse against children are complex and varied.

If a report of child harm or abuse involves suspected criminal behaviour, the delegated representative must notify police. At AFL SportsReady the delegated representative is the Child Safety Officer, Company Secretary or Chief Executive Officer. The delegated representative may also contact Police or the relevant State and Territory government child safety authorities for advice and assistance.

b) Mandatory Reporting

Across Australia, there are different mandatory reporting obligations which are applicable with regards to child safety,

Those who hold a position of authority within AFL SportsReady and become aware that an adult associated with AFL SportsReady poses a risk of sexual abuse to a child under its care, authority or supervision, must take all reasonable steps to remove or reduce the risk. Failure to take reasonable steps may amount to a criminal offence.

Any AFL SportsReady team member who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed or there is a risk posed of such an offence being committed, must inform the Child Safety Officer, Chief Executive Officer or Company Secretary (delegated representatives) immediately.

Child Safety Concerns Involving Host Employers

AFL SportsReady places significant importance on ensuring host employers provide safe environments for children and young people.

Child safety concerns may arise from:

- Inappropriate supervision.

- Bullying, discrimination or harassment.
- Unsafe work practices.
- Inappropriate conduct by host employer personnel; or
- Failure to provide a safe environment for children and young people.

Where concerns arise regarding a host employer:

1. Notify the Child Safety Officer immediately.
2. Assess the risk to the participant.
3. Determine whether the participant can safely remain in the placement.
4. Liaise with the host employer regarding corrective actions.
5. Consider temporary suspension or removal from the placement.
6. Notify external authorities where required.

If participant safety cannot be reasonably assured, AFL SportsReady may immediately remove the participant from the placement.

Investigations

Where allegations involve actual or suspected misconduct, abuse or breaches of child safety requirements, AFL SportsReady may conduct an investigation or support an investigation by the Police or relevant State or Territory government child safety authority. It is important that team members **do not** conduct their own investigation as this could put the child at further risk or impeded/ contaminate a Police investigation.

Should the Child Safety Officer deem an investigation is appropriate, investigations will:

- Be conducted impartially.
- Follow principles of procedural fairness.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Consider all relevant evidence.
- Make findings on the balance of probabilities.

Where criminal conduct is suspected, AFL SportsReady will cooperate fully with police and relevant authorities.

Reporting Flowchart

AFL SportsReady is committed to ensuring child safety concerns are identified, reported and managed promptly. The flowchart provides an overview of the reporting and escalation process that must be followed when a concern is raised or a disclosure is made.

Child Safety Risk Register

AFL SportsReady maintains a Child Safety Risk Register to identify, assess, control and

monitor risks to children and young people participating in education, employment and support programs.

Child safety incidents, emerging risks, trends and corrective actions may inform updates to the Child Safety Risk Register and broader organisational risk management processes.

Record Keeping

AFL SportsReady will maintain confidential and secure records relating to:

- Reports.
- Disclosures.
- Incident notifications.
- Risk assessments.
- Investigations.
- Findings.
- Corrective actions.

Records relating to child safety concerns must be retained in accordance with AFL SportsReady's Records Management requirements and any applicable legislative obligations. Child Safety Incident, Concern and Disclosure Forms form part of AFL SportsReady's official child safety records and must be maintained securely and confidentially by the Child Safety Officer.

Privacy and Confidentiality

Information relating to child safety concerns will only be shared with individuals who have a legitimate need to know.

All team members must:

- Maintain confidentiality.
- Comply with privacy obligations.
- Store information securely.
- Avoid discussing matters unnecessarily.

Confidentiality may be limited where disclosure is necessary to:

- Protect a child.
- Comply with legal obligations.
- Support an investigation.
- Respond to requests from authorities.

Training and Awareness

AFL SportsReady will provide child safety training appropriate to each role.

Training may include:

- Induction training.
- Refresher training.
- Mandatory reporting obligations.
- Recognising indicators of harm.
- Responding to disclosures.
- Cultural safety.
- Maintaining professional boundaries.

Participation in required child safety training is mandatory.

Support

AFL SportsReady recognises that child safety matters can be distressing.

Support may be provided to:

- Children and young people.
- Families and carers.
- Reporting team members.
- Witnesses.
- Individuals subject to allegations.
- Others affected by the matter.

Support may include:

- Employee Assistance Program.
- Counselling.
- Wellbeing services.
- Culturally appropriate supports.
- Disability support services.

Students, trainees and apprentices may also access support through:

- Student Support Services.
- Educators.
- Employment Coaches.
- First Nations Mentors.
- External support and wellbeing services where appropriate.

Key Contacts

Contact	Details
Emergency Services	000
Child Safety Officer - Catherine O'Mahony	catherine.omahony@aflsportsready.com.au
Chief Executive Officer - Sally Powell	sally.powell@aflsportsready.com.au
Company Secretary - Chris Earl	chris.earl@aflsportsready.com.au
People & Culture	pc.help@aflsportsready.com.au
Student Services	studentsupport@sportsready.com.au
Employee Assistance Program	1300 687 327

Reporting Guide Review Details

AFL SportsReady will review this Reporting Guide annually to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness.

Version	Effective	Review Approved By	Next Review
1.0	October 2026	AFL SportsReady Chief Executive Officer	October 2027