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## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

### POLICY STATEMENT

The Australian Oztag (AO) has an obligation to ensure that the health, safety and welfare is maintained for all children participating in Oztag related competitions and tournaments. AO aims to provide a safe environment for all junior participants and to educate conveners, coaches, referees and volunteers on child abuse and how any such abuse should be reported.

### KEY OBJECTIVES

- Provide information to assist Associations, Referees and coaches in identifying and dealing with all forms of child abuse
- Provide education to all Associations, Referees and coaches regarding their legal responsibilities under child protection legislation and the working with children check
- Identify and outline procedures for raising concerns or complaints.

### OVERVIEW

Children have the right to be safe from any form of abuse whilst involved in sport. Child protection involves legal as well as moral obligations. In AO it is also governed by policy requirements applicable to all parties involved with Oztag. Every person bound by this policy must always place the safety and welfare of children above all other considerations.

### WHAT IS CHILD PROTECTION?

Child protection is about keeping children safe from abuse and protecting them from people who are unsuitable to work with children. Under current child protection legislation, a child is generally defined as a person less than 18 years of age. Child protection is a responsibility of AO and all parties involved with Oztag. It is particular responsibility of people whose work involves a direct relationship with children.

### WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

Child abuse relates to children at risk of harm. This could be due to:

- Physical abuse including non-accidental injury and/or harm to a child
- Sexual abuse/sexual misconduct comprises any sexual act or sexual threat imposed on a child, including suggestive behaviour and inappropriate touching
- Emotional abuse comprises behaviours that may psychologically harm a child, including severe verbal abuse, and threats of abuse or excessive and unreasonable demands



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- Neglect including situations where a child is harmed by the failure to provide them with the basic physical and emotional necessities of life

### **IS CHILD PROTECTION AN ISSUE FOR AO AND SPORT GENERALLY?**

Sport is a particularly vulnerable area for potential child abuse because it:

- involves a large number of people under the age of 18
- frequently involves overnight trips
- usually involves close relationships between adults and children, where the adults are in positions of trust and are able to assert authority and power over children

While our obligation toward protecting children are universal, there are particular activities conducted by AO that involve one or more of the above situations. These include, but need not be limited to regular season competitions and representative tournaments.

### **POLICY REQUIREMENTS**

AO acknowledges that all our parties provide a valuable contribution to the positive experiences of our juniors. AO aims to ensure this continues and to protect the safety and welfare of its junior participants. Several measures will be used to achieve this such as:

- AO requires all those who have contact with children to obtain a “working with children government check” which ensures they don’t have any previous convictions for sex and violence crimes against children
- Prohibiting any form of abuse against children
- Providing opportunities for our juniors to contribute to and provide feedback on our program development
- Ensuring our codes of conduct, particularly for roles associated with junior sport, are promoted, enforced and reviewed
- Providing procedures for raising concerns or complaints
- AO requires that any child who is abused or anyone who reasonably suspects that a child has been or is being abused by someone with our sport, to report it immediately to the police and to AO.
- All allegations of child abuse will be dealt with promptly, seriously, sensitively and confidentially.



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## **WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK**

To provide any junior tournaments or clinics, venue managers and development staff must possess a “working with children check”. A copy of each staff members “working with children check” must be kept as a reference by AO.

## **TAKING OF IMAGES OF CHILDREN**

There is a risk that images of children may be used inappropriately or illegally. AO requires that individuals and associations, wherever possible, obtain permission from a child’s parent/guardian before taking an image of a child that is not their own. They should also make sure the parent/guardian understands how the image will be used.

To respect people’s privacy, we do not allow camera phones, videos and cameras to be used inside changing areas, showers and toilets which we control or are used in connection with our sport.

When using a photo of a child, we will not name or identify the child or publish personal information, such as residential address, email address or telephone number, without the consent of the child’s parent/guardian. We will not provide information about a child’s hobbies, interests, school or the like, as this can be used by paedophiles or other persons to “groom” a child.

We will only use images of children that are relevant to our sport and we will ensure that they are suitably clothed in a manner that promotes participation in the sport. We will seek permission from the parents/guardians of the children before using images. We require our member associations and clubs to do likewise.