



Child Protection Code of Conduct, Policy and NewHope Safe Organisation Policy

Summary

Blackburn NewHope Football BNFC (BNFC) and NewHope Baptist Church are committed to promoting and protecting the best interests of children involved in their programs at all times.

All children, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation, family or social background, have equal rights to protection from abuse.

BNFC has zero tolerance for child abuse. Everyone working or volunteering at BNFC is responsible for the care and protection of the children entrusted to us and for reporting information about suspected child abuse.

This document lays out our Child Protection Code of Conduct and Child Protection Policy.

BNFC operates under the NewHope Safe Organisation Policy (Appendix 1).

**If any person believes a child is in immediate risk of
abuse, telephone 000.**

Code of Conduct - Child Safety

Introduction

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to promote child safety within all BNFC environments. Any form of abusive, derogatory, discriminatory, offensive or intimidating behaviour or language by adults towards minors, or minors towards other minors, is not acceptable. Any action that may be hurtful or risk being interpreted by a reasonable observer as grooming behaviour is unacceptable. Comments or actions that are negatively and unreasonably critical of a person's culture, ethnicity, language, gender identity, disability, sexuality or age, are unacceptable. Committee members, volunteers, employees, coaches, managers, players and parents/guardians of players at BNFC are bound by, and required to abide to, this Code.

Unacceptable behaviour

The following matters are derived from the Victorian Government's Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority.

These actions are prohibited and may, depending on the specific circumstances, constitute misconduct leading to suspension or removal from BNFC:

- A. ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse;
- B. put a minor at risk of abuse;
- C. speak to a minor in a way that is or could be construed by any observer as overly harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. Some examples are: offensive swearing in the presence of a minor, intimidatory language and gestures directed at a minor;
- D. express inappropriate personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of a minor (unless the minor is a member of your family and you are not at BNFC events)
- E. discuss sexual activities with a minor (unless it is a specific job requirement and the person is trained to discuss these matters, or the minor is a member of your family), or engaging in any sexually-oriented conversations with a minor;
- F. have contact with a minor outside of BNFC activities or events without BNFC's knowledge and/or consent;
- G. have any online contact with a minor (including by social media, email, instant messaging etc) or their family without BNFC's or their Team's knowledge and/or consent;
- H. exchange personal contact details such as phone number, social networking sites or email addresses with a minor (unless the minor is a member of your family) without BNFC's or the Team's knowledge and/or consent;
- I. using, possessing, or being under the influence of illegal drugs while in the presence of a minor;

- J. using, possessing, or being under the influence of alcohol while supervising a minor (unless the minor is a member of your family or your contact with the minor is accidental/incidental and you are not performing your BNFC obligations);
- K. providing or allowing a minor to consume illegal drugs;
- L. discriminate against any minor, including because of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity or disability;
- M. engage in rough physical games (outside of what is reasonably considered appropriate in a BNFC training session), hold, massage, kiss, cuddle or touch a minor in an inappropriate and or/culturally insensitive way (unless the minor is a member of your family and you comply with all relevant legislation);
- N. take a minor to their home or encourage meetings outside BNFC activities or events (unless the child is a member of your family or parental permission has been provided) without BNFC's or the Team's knowledge and/or consent;
- O. photograph or video a minor inappropriately, or in circumstances where you have been requested to cease;
- P. being naked in the presence of a minor (unless the minor is a member of your family);
- Q. possess sexually oriented or morally inappropriate printed materials (magazines, cards, videos, films, messages, clothing, etc.) in the presence of a minor;
- R. sleep in the same bed, sleeping bag or tent with a minor (unless the minor is a member of your family);
- S. engage in sexual contact with a minor.

Any violation of this Code of Conduct by a committee member, volunteer, employee, coach, manager, player, parent or guardian or other Associate at BNFC may be dealt with as a disciplinary matter by BNFC Management.

Physical contact / touching

Committee members, volunteers, employees, coaches, managers and players are prohibited from using physical discipline in any way for behaviour management of minors. This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behaviours by minors. Physical contact may be required in an emergency situation to remove minors quickly from danger or threat of danger. Appropriate contact between committee members, volunteers, employees, coaches, managers and players and minors is part of normal human relationships.

Some considerations and guidelines include the following:

- A. consider the minor's age, developmental level, maturity and level of care required, for example, touching a minor to gain their attention, guiding or comforting a distressed minor;
- B. work in an open environment; for example, in one-to-one discussions indoors the door should be open with visual access to others ;
- C. be alert to cues from minors about how comfortable they are in your proximity and respect their need for personal space;
- D. be sensitive when interacting with minors who may misinterpret your actions, such as those who may have been traumatised by abuse or adolescents seeking attention from a member of the opposite sex;
- E. be aware of cultural norms that may influence the interpretation of your behaviour;
- F. be cautious about physical contact in training or during matches. If you need to make physical contact for demonstrations, explain the activity and what you will do beforehand, maintain a safe and appropriate distance;
- G. physical contact should be made in a way that makes minors feel comfortable, for example, shaking hands, a congratulatory pat on the back or rub on the side of their arm for reassurance. Massaging a minor if you are not trained to do so or allowing a child to massage you is inappropriate physical contact.

Transportation and off-site events

Other than in an emergency or other abnormal situation where no other option could be reasonably foreseen, it is unwise to transport children without permission of their parent, carer or guardian. It is prohibited to have unnecessary and/or inappropriate physical contact with minors while in vehicles. Minors should be transported directly to their destination. No stops should be made other than those that are reasonably scheduled for meals or comfort stops. It is prohibited to have minors spend the night at the residence of a committee member, volunteer, employee, or contractor without parental/guardian prior approval. Changing and showering facilities or arrangements for adults must be separate from facilities or arrangements for children (unless the child is a member of your family).

Confidentiality

Disclosing information to committee members and SOC.

The privacy of the child should be respected at all times. When considering breaching the privacy who and how many people told, should be based on what is believed to be in the best interests of the child. Information in relation to abuse or suspected abuse of a minor should be disclosed to BNFC Management or SOC, in order to limit the potential dissemination of confidential information.

Disclosing information to people external to the organisation

Committee members, volunteers, employees, coaches, managers and players should not discuss confidential matters about children with people outside the organisation in a way that identifies that child except when they have the express permission of the child or it complies with BNFC's Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct. In circumstances where committee members, volunteers, employees, coaches, managers and players believe that there is not enough knowledge within BNFC to provide the best possible assistance to a child, they are able to seek expertise external to BNFC after consultation internal to BNFC. When communicating with people outside BNFC the child's identity should be protected.

Informing children

It is the responsibility of BNFC to communicate the limits of confidentiality in BNFC's policy to children who are likely to have an ongoing relationship with BNFC. These guidelines should be published in an accessible place for children.

Child Protection Policy

Blackburn NewHope Football BNFC (BNFC) is committed to promoting and protecting at all times the best interests of children involved in its programs.

All children, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation, or family or social background, have equal rights to protection from abuse.

BNFC has zero tolerance for child abuse. Everyone working or volunteering at BNFC is responsible for the care and protection of the children entrusted to us and reporting information about suspected child abuse.

Child protection is a shared responsibility between BNFC, all employees, contractors, associates, volunteers and members of the BNFC community.

BNFC will consider the opinions of children and use their opinions to develop child protection policies.

BNFC supports and respects all children, parents, staff and volunteers. BNFC is committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, and those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children living with a disability.

Procedures

Responsibilities

The Management Team of BNFC has ultimate responsibility for the detection and prevention of child abuse and is responsible for ensuring that appropriate and effective internal control systems are in place. The Management Team is also responsible for ensuring that appropriate policies and procedures and a Child Protection Code of Conduct are in place.

The Safe Organisation Concerns (SOC) Team at NewHope Baptist Church is responsible for:

- Dealing with and investigating reports of child abuse
- Providing advice on legal, moral and pastoral requirements in response to allegations
- Ensuring Child Safe policies at NewHope are relevant and up to date

The President of BNFC is responsible for:

- Ensuring that all staff, contractors, and volunteers are aware of relevant laws, organisational policies and procedures, and the organisation's Code of Conduct;
- Ensuring that all adults within the BNFC community are aware of their obligation to report suspected sexual abuse of a child in accordance with these policies and procedures;
- Ensuring that all staff, contractors and volunteers are aware of their obligation to observe the Code of Conduct (particularly as it relates to child safety);
- Educate employees about the prevention and detection of child abuse; and
- Providing support for staff, contractors and volunteers in undertaking their child protection responsibilities.

All **Key Volunteers** must ensure that they:

- Promote child safety at all times;
- Assess the risk of child abuse within their area of control and eradicate / minimise any risk to the extent possible; and
- Facilitate the reporting of any inappropriate behaviour or suspected abusive activities.

Key Volunteers should be familiar with the types of abuse that might occur within their area of responsibility and be alert for any indications of such conduct.

All **staff/volunteers/contractors** share in the responsibility for the prevention and detection of child abuse, and must:

- Familiarise themselves with the relevant laws, the Code of Conduct, and BNFC's policy and procedures in relation to child protection, and comply with all requirements;
- Report any reasonable belief that a child's safety is at risk to the relevant authorities (such as the police and / or the state based child protection service) and fulfil their obligations as mandatory reporters;
- Report any suspicion that a child's safety may be at risk to their supervisor (or, if their supervisor is involved in the suspicion, to a responsible person in the organisation); and
- Provide an environment that is supportive of all children's emotional and physical safety.

Definitions

Child means a person below the age of 18 years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.

Child protection means any responsibility, measure or activity undertaken to safeguard children from harm.

Child abuse means all forms of physical abuse, emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse and exploitation, neglect or negligent treatment, commercial (e.g. for financial gain) or other exploitation of a child and includes any actions that results in actual or potential harm to a child.

Child sexual assault is any act which exposes a child to, or involves a child in, sexual processes beyond his or her understanding or contrary to accepted community standards. Sexually abusive behaviours can include the fondling of genitals, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or any other object, fondling of breasts, voyeurism, exhibitionism, and exposing the child to or involving the child in pornography. It includes child grooming, which refers to actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child to lower the child's inhibitions in preparation for sexual activity with the child.

Key Volunteer is either a Coach, Team Manager, Age group Coordinator or someone with leadership responsibilities.

Reasonable grounds for belief is a belief based on reasonable grounds that child abuse has occurred when all known considerations or facts relevant to the formation of a belief are taken into account and these are objectively assessed. Circumstances or considerations may include the source of the allegation and how it was communicated, the nature of and details of the allegation, and whether there are any other related matters known regarding the alleged perpetrator.

A reasonable belief is formed if a reasonable person believes that:

- (a) The child is in need of protection,
- (b) The child has suffered or is likely to suffer "significant harm as a result of physical injury",
- (c) The parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.

A 'reasonable belief' or a 'belief on reasonable grounds' is not the same as having proof, but is more than mere rumours or speculation.

A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds. For example, a 'reasonable belief' might be formed if:

- a) A child states that they have been physically or sexually abused;
- b) A child states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves);
- c) Someone who knows a child states that the child has been physically or sexually abused;
- d) Professional observations of the child's behaviour or development leads a professional to form a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused or is likely to be abused; and/or
- e) Signs of abuse lead to a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused.

Working/Worker is classed as anybody that is engaged to provide a service to BNFC either paid or unpaid. This includes and is not limited to President, Age Group Coordinators, Coaches, Team Managers and Canteen Staff

Employment of New Personnel

BNFC undertakes a comprehensive recruitment and screening process for all workers and volunteers which aims to:

- Promote and protect the safety of all children under the care of the organisation;
- Identify the safest and most suitable people who share BNFC's values and commitment to protect children; and
- Prevent a person from working at BNFC if they pose a risk to children. BNFC requires all workers/volunteers to pass through the organisation's recruitment and screening processes prior to commencing their engagement with BNFC.

BNFC may require applicants to provide a police check in accordance with the law and as appropriate, before they commence working at BNFC and during their time with BNFC at regular intervals. BNFC will undertake thorough reference checks as per the approved internal procedure. Once engaged, workers/volunteers must review and acknowledge their understanding of this Policy.

BNFC requires all key volunteers to hold a valid Working with Children's Check.

Key volunteers include but are not limited to:

President

Treasurer

Seniors Team Lead

Juniors Team Lead

Coaches

Team Managers

Volunteers leading a group of people

Regular Volunteers in regular contact with our young people

Referees

Risk Management

BNFC will ensure that child safety is a part of its overall risk management approach. The Management Team are committed to identifying and managing risks at BNFC and will receive regular training in relation to child safety.

Reporting

Any staff member, volunteer, parent or contractor who has grounds to suspect abusive activity must immediately notify the appropriate child protection service or the police. They should also advise the BNFC President or Child Protection Officer about their concern. If the incident needs to be taken further then they will raise it with SOC who can advise on the best course of action.

In situations where the Key Volunteer or BNFC Management is suspected of involvement in the activity, or if the person having the suspicion does not believe that the matter is being appropriately addressed or dealt with, the matter should be reported directly to the NewHope SOC Team.

Key Volunteers or BNFC Management must report complaints of suspected abusive behaviour or misconduct to the President and also to any external regulatory body such as the police.

The Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) says that any person 18 years or older is a mandated reporter and must make a report if they form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria against a child by another person of or over the age of 18 years. NB: exceptions may apply. For mandatory reporting a child is considered a person under 16 years old.

The Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (VIC) says any person is a voluntary reporter and may make a report if the person has a significant concern for the wellbeing of a child. For voluntary reporting a child is considered a person under 17 years old.

Investigating

If the appropriate child protection service or the police decide to conduct an investigation of this report, all employees, contractors or volunteers must cooperate fully with the investigation.

Whether or not the authorities decide to conduct an investigation, the NewHope SOC Team will consult with the authorities to determine whether an internal investigation is appropriate. If it is decided that such an investigation will not conflict with any proceeding of the authorities, the NewHope SOC Team may decide to conduct such an investigation. All employees, contractors and volunteers must cooperate fully with the investigation.

Any such investigation will be conducted according to the rules of natural justice.

The NewHope SOC Team will make every effort to keep any such investigation confidential; however, from time to time other members of staff may need to be consulted in conjunction with the investigation.

After an initial review and a determination that the suspected abuse warrants additional investigation, the NewHope SOC Team shall coordinate the investigation with the appropriate investigators and / or law enforcement officials. Internal or external legal representatives will be involved in the process, as deemed appropriate.

Responding

If it is alleged that a member of staff, contractor or a volunteer may have committed an offence or have breached the organisation's policies or its Code of Conduct the person concerned may be stood down while an investigation is conducted.

If the investigation concludes that on the balance of probabilities an offence (or a breach of the organisation's policies or Code of Conduct) has occurred then disciplinary action may follow, up to and including dismissal or cessation of involvement with the organisation. The findings of the investigation will also be reported to any external body as required.

Privacy

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved unless there is a risk to someone's safety. BNFC will have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected.

Everyone is entitled to know how the personal information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will be able to access it.

Reviewing

Every two years, and following every reportable incident, a review shall be conducted to assess whether the organisation's child protection policies or procedures require modification to better protect the children under the organisation's care.

Appendix 1

NewHope Safe Organisation Policy

PREAMBLE

We affirm that all people have the right to be emotionally and physically safe; to be respected; and to have their views and opinions valued at all times. We also acknowledge that our country legislates for people's safety.

God calls his body to minister to vulnerable people. God identified classes of vulnerable people who were to be protected and given special care and treatment in society because of their powerlessness (Ex 22:21-22, Deut 10:17-19, Jer 22:2-4, James 1:27).

The NewHope Safe Organisation Policy enshrines behaviours valued as part of NewHope's Leadership Culture:

- § **We always keep the Lord before us. (Psalm 16:8)**
- § We make it "**safe**" for one another so we can speak the truth in love. We have the honest conversations. We never shame one another.
- § We make every effort to see things from the other person's perspective. We seek first to understand, then to be understood. We **listen** wholeheartedly.
- § We seek to be reconciled rather than to prove we are right. We react in the **opposite spirit**.
- § We recognise gifting, skill, diversity and calling, and we **defer** to one another often.
- § We make certain everyone on every team **knows**: (a) what we are aiming to do together (vision), (b) what we want them to do (responsibility) and (c) who they must answer to (accountability).
- § We speak well of **each other** at all times. We have each other's backs.
- § We learn from failures. We reward personal **growth**.
- § We are always trying to move the ball up the field. Every meeting ends with **actions**. Every week is punctuated with Sabbath. We keep each other accountable.
- § We leave everything **better** than we found it – whether rooms we meet in, kitchen sinks, teams we work with, ministries we lead, people we talk to, etc.
- § We celebrate people added to our **width** and **depth** added to our people.

This policy has been developed to help us live out our Biblical mandate and our responsibilities under Australian legislation.

The NewHope Safe Organisation Policy applies to all Staff Members and Volunteers associated with any of the NewHope Organisations.

NewHope Safe Organisation Policy

AIMS

The NewHope Safe Organisation Policy aims to:

- § Ensure that all people are respected and valued.
- § Minimise the risk of abuse, ministry misconduct and the misuse of positional power.
- § Ensure that all cases of suspected abuse and ministry misconduct are handled thoroughly.
- § Ensure that leaders, volunteers and programs are safe.

COMMITMENTS

1. Safe recruitment of Leaders and Volunteers.

NewHope will screen all prospective Leaders and Volunteers before they are appointed.

2. Adequate training of Leaders and Volunteers.

NewHope requires all Leaders and Volunteers to attend role-specific training as required, including Safe Church (or SCTA endorsed) workshops and other external workshops (where appropriate).

3. Continued supervision of Leaders and Volunteers.

- (a) NewHope commits to the supervision and support of Leaders and Volunteers.
- (b) Every Leader and Volunteer will be provided with a role-appropriate Code of Conduct.

4. Responding to allegations of risk of harm (abuse) and serious ministry misconduct.

- (a) Where reporting requirements arise, all Leaders and Volunteers will report disclosures or suspicions of child abuse, according to role-specific procedures and legislative requirements.
- (b) Where an allegation of misconduct is made against a Leader or Volunteer, NewHope will provide support to alleged victims and perpetrators and seek or provide appropriate assistance to ensure a just, fair and timely resolution.
- (c) NewHope will comply with requirements of all State and Federal Government agencies when responding to an allegation of misconduct.

5. Safe environments in our programs.

- (a) Ministry and Program Coordinators will complete a written Ministry/Program Approval Process annually, or so often as is appropriate for the ministry/program.
- (b) All programs will be run in environments assessed as suitable by the Safety Team.
- (c) All Leaders and Volunteers will discharge their duty of care through the use of forms, checklists and templates for establishment and maintenance of Safe Environments in our ministries/programs.
- (d) Where spiritual leadership is exercised, we will serve participants as servants of Christ, commit to the good news of Jesus and lead in spiritually non-abusive ways.
- (e) We will afford participants a say in the programs and the activities in which they participate by fostering and valuing their ideas and encouraging participation.
- (f) We will obtain appropriate information relating to the program participants, including health and family situation, to ensure that we are able to care for their physical and emotional needs.
- (g) We will comply with standards of privacy applicable to equivalent organisations and will publish a separate Privacy Policy for information collected by NewHope.

NewHope Safe Organisation Policy

DEFINITIONS

Child: any person (including Leaders and Volunteers) who is under the age of 18 years.

Code of Conduct: a ministry/program-specific document setting out the minimum expectations of Leaders and Volunteers involved in that ministry/program.

Leader: a Staff Member or Volunteer who is responsible for a ministry/program, including completing safety management plans and recruiting a team to run the ministry/program.

Ministry/Program: an event (or series of events) falling within a certain ministry/program title (for example, "Children's Ministry") that is run by or in the name of NewHope.

Ministry/Program Approval Process: an accountability process whereby Leaders obtain written approval from Ministry/Program Coordinators for a ministry/program to take place in the name of NewHope.

Ministry/Program Coordinator: a person appointed from NewHope's senior leadership group (in recognition of the significant positional power inherent in the role) to oversee a group of ministries/programs (for example, family ministries).

Safe Environment: an environment where those in our care are safe from spiritual, physical, sexual or emotional abuse (including bullying) or neglect and which meets WHS requirements.

Safe Leader/Volunteer: a Leader or Volunteer who has been through a recruitment process, understands and has indicated acceptance of responsibilities, is supervised and is accountable.

Safe Organisation Concerns Team: the team responsible for the Safe Organisation Policy (as well as supporting documentation and processes) and to whom Leaders and Volunteers report breaches of the Safe Organisation Policy.

Safe Program: all foreseeable risks have been assessed (and plans put in place to mitigate against those risks) and all events have been thought through and planned. Safe Programs are approved through an appropriate Ministry/Program Approval Process.

Safety Team: the team responsible for overseeing the drafting and implementation of WHS.

SCTA: Safe Church Training Agreement under the National Council of Churches in Australia.

Staff Member: a person who is remunerated for the services that they provide to NewHope.

Volunteer: a person who provides services to (or on behalf of) NewHope without receiving remuneration for the provision of those services.

WHS: Work Health and Safety; including but not limited to fire safety, building safety, first aid, food safety, transport, incident and emergency procedures.

Appendix 2

Related legislation

- a) Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic);
- b) Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic); and
- c) Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)