

SSCT Code of Conduct relating to child safety and wellbeing

All employees, contractors and volunteers (together, known as 'staff members') of the State Sport Centres Trust (SSCT) are responsible for the safety, wellbeing and empowerment of children and young people who we employ, have contact with, deliver services to, or are visitors to our venues and facilities. All staff members are expected to act in accordance with all relevant legislation, the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and the SSCT Code of Conduct.

The SSCT Code of Conduct describes a common set of expectations for SSCT staff members. This section of the SSCT Code of Conduct relating to child safety and wellbeing addresses the requirements when staff members might interact with children and young people within the State Sport Centres (SSC). It has been developed to help staff members safeguard those children and young people from physical or emotional harm and neglect.

1. Positive guidance and discipline

The SSCT strives to ensure that children and young people attending SSC are aware of the acceptable limits of their behaviour so that a positive experience can be provided for all participants. Children are encouraged to feel safe, be safe and to have positive relationships and friendships with their peers and others attending SSC.

There are times however when staff members may be required to use appropriate techniques and behaviour management strategies to ensure:

- an effective and positive environment for all participants
- the safety and/or wellbeing of other children, young people or personnel participating in any of the programs, school excursions and/or sporting activities.

We require our staff members to use strategies that are fair, respectful and appropriate to the developmental stage of the children or young people involved. The child or young person needs to be provided with clear direction and given an opportunity to redirect their misbehaviour in a positive manner.

Under no circumstances are our staff members to take disciplinary action involving physical punishment or any form of treatment, verbal or otherwise, that could reasonably be considered as degrading, cruel, frightening or humiliating. This kind of behaviour may result in a formal investigation being undertaken. Appropriate disciplinary action may follow and may result in termination of employment.

2. Use of language and tone of voice

Language and tone of voice used in the presence of children and young people should provide clear direction, boost their confidence, encourage or affirm them. It should not be harmful to children. In this respect, staff members must avoid language that is:

- discriminatory, racist, sexist or sexual
- derogatory, belittling or negative, for example, calling a child a 'loser' or telling them they are 'too fat'
- intended to threaten or frighten.

3. Use of electronic and online communications

The SSCT prohibits all personal electronic communication between staff members and the children and young people who visit the SSC and to whom we provide service, except when authorised with the express permission of a member of the Executive Team and the child's parent or guardian.

4. Adhering to professional role boundaries

SSCT staff members should not, of their own volition or at the request of a service user, act outside the confines of their duties (as specified in their position description) when helping to deliver customer service, lessons, activities or schools' programs, unless reasonably deemed appropriate, such as a child or young person asking for information from administrative support staff.

SSCT staff members:

- must not provide unauthorised transportation, for example, driving children between sites in a personal vehicle, or offering an unaccompanied child a ride on a work buggy or vehicle
- must not engage in activities with children or young people who are visitors to our organisation outside school excursions, family activities or schools' programs, such as usage of facilities usually closed to the public, unless reasonably expected in offering onsite assistance
- must not provide any form of support to a child or young person or their family unrelated to general visitation or our family activities and schools' programs, for example, offering swimming or sports lessons at the child's home or babysitting
- must not seek contact with children or young people outside visits to the SSC venues, family activities or schools' programs, unless authorised and through approved workplace channels of communication
- must not accept an invitation to attend any private social function at the request of a child or young person who has participated, or is participating, in SSC activities, family activities or schools' programs – or at the request of their family
- must not develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (for example, through gift giving, special treatment or inappropriate attention for specific children)
- must not engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example, out of work hours social activities).

If any staff member becomes aware of a situation in which a child or young person requires assistance that is beyond the confines of that person's role, or beyond the scope of the SSCT's usual service, they should, at the earliest opportunity; contact the child or young person's parent or guardian, refer the matter to an appropriate support agency, refer the child or young person to an appropriate support agency, and/or seek advice from management.

5. Physical boundaries and contact

Any physical contact with children and young people who are attending SSC venues must be appropriate to the delivery of programs, school excursions and/or sporting activities, such as when demonstrating swimming strokes, helping children to climb down from equipment, providing first aid treatment, etc. If physical contact is required, it must be based on the needs of the child or young person (such as to assist or comfort a distressed young person). Under no circumstances should any SSCT staff member have physical contact with children or young people visiting SSC or participating in any SSCT activities and schools' programs that:

- would appear to a reasonable observer to have a sexual connotation
- involves intentional touching of genitals
- is intended to cause pain or distress to the child or young person – for example corporal punishment
- is overly physical – for example, wrestling, horseplay, tickling or other roughhousing
- is unnecessary – for example, assisting with toileting when a child does not require assistance
- is initiated against the wishes of the child or young person, except if such contact may be necessary to prevent injury to the child/young person or to others, in which case:
 - physical restraint should be a last resort,
 - the level of force used must be appropriate to the specific circumstances and aimed solely at restraining the child or young person to prevent harm to themselves or others,
 - the incident must be reported to the line manager and Child Safety Officer immediately, and
 - if first aid is administered as part of injury prevention with a child, this must be documented within an Incident Report as per normal protocol.

6. Public and staff toilets

No child or young person is to be accompanied to a public or staff toilet without their carer, teacher or guardian. Staff members should avoid one-to-one situations with a child or young person in any toilet or change facilities. Staff members should not do anything of a personal nature for a child or young person that the child or young person can do for themselves, such as toileting and changing clothes.

7. Sexual misconduct

Under no circumstances is any form of sexual behaviour to occur between, with, or in the presence of, children or young people visiting or participating in any of the programs, school excursions or sporting activities being undertaken at the SSC. Engaging in sexual behaviour while on SSC premises or while representing SSCT is prohibited even if the young persons involved may be above the legal age of consent. 'Sexual behaviour' needs to be interpreted widely, to encompass the entire range of actions that could reasonably be regarded as sexual in nature, including but not limited to:

- 'non-contact behaviour', such as flirting, sexual innuendo, inappropriate text messaging, inappropriate photography or exposure to pornography or nudity
- 'contact behaviour', such as sexual intercourse, kissing, fondling, sexual penetration or exploiting a child or young person through prostitution.

8. Reporting obligations

All personnel **MUST** make an Incident Report as soon as possible if:

- they become aware of any child safety concerns or allegations
- they observe any SSCT staff member whose practice or behaviour is
- contrary to the expectations of behaviour set out in this Code of Conduct
- any physical contact is initiated by a child or young person that is sexual and/or inappropriate, for example, acts of physical aggression, to enable the situation to be managed in the interests of the safety of the child or young person, our personnel and any
- other participants.

*SSCT staff members, visitors to the SSC and members of the community can report any breach of the SSCT Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and the SSCT Code of Conduct relating to child safety and wellbeing to the SSCT Child Safety Officer.

***The privacy of all personal information related to child safety reporting for all involved parties will be protected throughout any reporting process – in person and in records management.**