**Child Safety Code of Conduct**

**Purpose and Scope**

* **Purpose:**  
  The BFNL is committed to promoting the safety, wellbeing, and inclusion of all children and young people involved in our competitions, programs, and events. This Code of Conduct outlines expected behaviours for all adults in child-connected roles and reinforces our zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and harm.
* **Scope:**  
  This Code applies to all BFNL staff, volunteers, coaches, umpires, team managers, committee members, contractors, and any other adult involved in League-sanctioned activities where children or young people are present. This includes physical, digital, and community environments, both during and outside scheduled events.

**Acceptable Behaviours**

As BFNL representatives in child-connected work, we are expected to:

* Uphold our commitment to child safety at all times, actively supporting the BFNL Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.
* Treat all children and families with respect, fairness, and empathy, both during League activities and in the wider community.
* Listen to and value the opinions and concerns of children, particularly if they report abuse or feel unsafe.
* Actively promote inclusion, ensuring the participation and cultural safety of:
  + Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children,
  + Children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds,
  + Children with disability,
  + LGBTIQA+ children,
  + Children who are unable to live at home or are otherwise vulnerable.
* Maintain appropriate professional boundaries—including physical, emotional and digital.
* Ensure physical contact is limited, explained, and appropriate, such as for coaching purposes, and always done respectfully.
* Communicate appropriately with children, using respectful and age-appropriate language and tone, including in digital communications.
* Avoid one-on-one situations with children where possible. Interactions must occur in open, visible spaces or in line of sight of another responsible adult.
* Report any child safety concerns or breaches of this Code immediately, including suspected abuse, misconduct, or boundary violations.

**Unacceptable Behaviours**

As BFNL representatives, we must never:

* Ignore or dismiss child safety concerns or disclosures of abuse.
* Develop special relationships or show favouritism towards individual children, including through personal gifts or special treatment.
* Engage in behaviours that could be seen as grooming.
* Communicate privately with children via personal devices or social media accounts (e.g., private messages, friend requests, or Snapchat).
* Use sexualised or inappropriate language or behaviour, including jokes or innuendo.
* Photograph or film children without the explicit permission of a parent/guardian and the league.
* Consume alcohol or be under the influence of drugs during activities involving children.
* Contact children outside of official League activities unless for child safety, team communication with parental/guardian knowledge, or in accordance with BFNL policies.
* Treat a child unfairly based on gender, sexuality, disability, race, religion, or cultural background.

**Reporting and Accountability**

* **Mandatory Reporting:** All adults must report child safety concerns, suspicions, or disclosures of abuse to the BFNL Child Safety Officer immediately and follow the BFNL Mandatory Reporting Procedures.
* **No Retaliation:** Any person who raises a concern or complaint in good faith will be supported and protected from retaliation.
* **Documentation:** All incidents or breaches must be recorded in line with BFNL procedures and relevant legislation.
* **Confidentiality:** All reports will be handled sensitively and confidentially.

**Training and Development**

* All BFNL representatives must complete **mandatory child safety training** and annual refreshers.
* Regular reflection and open discussion about child-safe practices are encouraged among BFNL clubs and teams.
* The BFNL will provide support to individuals seeking clarity on child safety obligations or best practices.

**Breaches of the Code**

Breaches of this Code of Conduct will result in disciplinary action appropriate to the nature and severity of the breach. This may include:

* Removal from BFNL duties or roles
* Suspension or expulsion from BFNL competitions
* Notification to Victoria Police or relevant authorities where criminal conduct is suspected

**Declaration**

All individuals involved in child-connected work must sign and adhere to this Code of Conduct as a condition of participation in BFNL activities. Together, we commit to creating a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment for all children and young people in the Ballarat Football Netball League.

**Declaration of Commitment:**  
I, the undersigned, confirm that I have read, understood, and agree to abide by the BFNL Child Safety Code of Conduct. I commit to maintaining a safe environment for all children and young people associated with the League and to upholding the highest standards of integrity and responsibility.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name:** |  |
| **Role/Position:** |  |
| **Signature:** |  |
| **Date:** | / / |

This Code, together with our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, forms the cornerstone of our commitment to a secure, respectful, and empowering environment for every child. Should you have any questions or require further clarification, please contact the Child Safety Officer at the details provided in the policy.

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