

Child Protection

Every child has the right to participate in sport and recreation activities without risk to their physical and emotional well-being. Child protection is concerned with keeping children and young people safe from abuse, discrimination and harassment, and protecting them from people who are unsuitable to work with children. This is often a legal requirement, covered by Australian child protection and anti-discrimination laws. It is also an ethical obligation and a very important consideration in meeting 'duty of care' obligations. The Department of Sport and Recreation (DSR) supports initiatives to make sport and recreation safer for children and acknowledges relevant State legislation that supports children's rights.

Background

The *Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act* 2004 was implemented in Western Australia on 1 January 2006. The aim of the Act is to deter and prevent people who may harm children from obtaining positions of trust within organisations. The Act introduces compulsory criminal record checking to ensure a consistent and high standard of checking for persons in child-related work.

DSR recommends that sport and recreation organisations request individuals who may be exempt from obtaining a Working with Children (WWC) check undergo alternative forms of criminal record screening, e.g. National Police Clearance or National Police Check for Volunteers.

DSR acknowledges that criminal record screening is only part of what can be done by sport and recreation organisations to ensure that they create child-safe environments. Policies and procedures that relate to appropriate recruitment, induction and on going training of employees or volunteers should be implemented by sport and recreation organisations.

DSR has provided model Child Protection policies and procedures, as part of broader Member Protection policies, for the use of sport and recreation organisations and recommends their adoption by all relevant industry bodies.

Definitions

- A child is defined as someone under the age of 18 years.
- Child abuse occurs when someone does something sexually, physically or emotionally harmful to, or does not provide for or protect, a child or young person.
- Legal responsibility for the protection of children from abuse rests with both the Department for Community Development and the WA Police Service as defined under the *Child Welfare Act* 1947 and the *Community Services Act* 1972.

Contacts

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Resources

Child Welfare Act 1947

Community Services Act 1972

Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004

Member Protection information: www.dsr.wa.gov.au/scripts/nc.dll?DSR.721090:STANDARD::pc=PC_60003

Play by the Rules: www.playbytherules.net.au