



NSWISA Child Protection and Intervention Policy

EXECUTIVE STATEMENT

The issue of child abuse is a complex problem that has an impact on all areas of society, including participation in sport and recreation activities.

The Wood Royal Commission into the NSW Police Service, led to increased community awareness of the significant number of child sexual assaults and incidents of abuse which occur. It also highlighted the need for the development and implementation of strategies to protect children from abusive situations.

Protecting children from abuse is a responsibility that we must all undertake. Through the implementation of strategies that assist in preventing child abuse from occurring, the New South Wales Ice Skating Association, Inc. (NSWISA) has taken a pro-active role in relation to child protection and intervention. These strategies will help to foster a safe and positive environment for children and young people to participate in physical activities.

In addition, development of Child Protection and Intervention Policy Guidelines provides NSWISA with an excellent risk management tool for developing prevention strategies and for the effective management of child abuse issues within sport.

Information contained in this document will create a framework and provide direction for staff, officials, coaches, volunteers, members and parents of children and young people involved in NSWISA, and affiliated clubs. It will help deliver a consistent approach to child abuse prevention at all levels of the sport and recreation industry.

POLICY STATEMENT

NSWISA is committed to ensuring that the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children are maintained at all times during their participation in sport and recreation activities run by the organisation.

NSWISA aims to promote a safe environment for all children and young people and to assist staff, coaches, officials and volunteers in recognising child abuse and neglect and to follow the appropriate notification procedures when reporting alleged abuse.

RATIONALE

The focus of the policy and guidelines is the prevention of child abuse in the sporting environment.

This policy and guidelines promote the care and protection of children participating in figure skating and provide information and direction for employees, officials, coaches, volunteers and members of the organisation.

This policy and guidelines will assist NSWISA in establishing coordinated strategies for dealing with the problem of child abuse and neglect in a responsible, effective and consistent manner.

OBJECTIVES

Through the development of this policy, NSWISA's objectives are to:

1. provide information to assist staff and volunteers in dealing with all forms of child abuse
2. provide comprehensive guidelines relating to risk minimisation and reporting/notification procedures
3. provide direction to all staff and volunteers regarding their legal responsibilities under child protection legislation
4. promote and adopt NSWISA's principles for child protection and intervention amongst staff, volunteers, coaches, members and parents of children participating in the organisation's programs and competitions.

SCOPE OF POLICY

The Child Protection Intervention Policy of NSWISA is applicable to all management, officials, staff (paid, voluntary, permanent or casual) of NSWISA and its affiliated clubs.

IMPLEMENTATION OF LEGISLATION

In order to implement the child protection legislation, NSWISA will undertake to:

1. implement strategies and procedures that focus on the best interests of children and meet the requirements of child protection legislation
2. promote a safe and supportive environment for all children and young people participating in activities which come under the umbrella of NSWISA
3. increase awareness and emphasise the importance of child protection issues in a sporting environment to all those involved with the activities of NSWISA. This includes administrators, coaches, officials, athletes, parents and their children.
4. ensure that all staff of NSWISA are aware of their responsibilities arising from recent child protection legislation, in particular, the requirement under the Child Protection (Prohibited Employment) Act 1998, to inform their employers if they have been convicted of a serious sex crime.

EXPECTATIONS:

Administrators, coaches, officials, members and volunteers often have a high level of contact with children in the sporting environment and play a major part in the successful operation of sporting activities.

Coaches and officials are often seen as role models. They have significant influence on the children they come in contact with and therefore have significant responsibilities.

NSWISA expects that all administrators, coaches and officials whether paid or unpaid, who participate in organised sport under the banner of this Organisation will commit to implementing risk management strategies developed by NSWISA for child protection and intervention.

POLICY REVIEW

NSWISA Child Protection and Intervention Policy and Guidelines will be reviewed annually and updated in line with any legislative changes that have significant impact on the manner in which child protection and intervention issues are to be dealt with.

Notification Procedures for Allegations of Child Abuse

RATIONALE

NSWISA acknowledges that issues regarding child abuse and the reporting of allegations of child abuse are highly sensitive, and should be dealt with in a confidential manner.

NSWISA has developed these notification procedures to ensure that confidentiality is maintained throughout the process and that consistent procedures for reporting are encouraged.

NSWISA will be proactive in its role to protect children and encourage an open environment that allows employees and members to be aware of their rights and responsibilities within the Organisation.

CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER

To deal appropriately with these issues and to ensure that the confidentiality of all parties involved is maintained, one person within NSWISA will be designated as the child protection officer.

NSWISA shall appoint a Child Protection Officer within 6 weeks after the Annual General Meeting. The appointment is dependent on signing a Prohibited Employment Declaration form.

The child protection officer is responsible for reporting any allegations of child abuse that occur at NSWISA events or gatherings to the local branch of the Department of Community Services (DoCS) and the NSW Police Service. If the child protection officer is not available then the most senior person within NSWISA should be notified. They shall maintain secure and confidential records relating to Prohibited Employment Declaration forms and Working With Children checks.

WHAT SHOULD BE REPORTED

Some incidents many seem minor, however, they may in fact reveal more serious concerns of misconduct or a pattern of behaviour that requires further scrutiny. All people associated with NSWISA should be aware of the indicators for child abuse and sexual abuse so that they may make an informed decision on what to report.

If you have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child participating in any organised activities conducted by NSWISA is at risk, report the matter to the child protection officer.

WRITTEN NOTIFICATION

Verbal notification of alleged child abuse must be followed up in writing within 24 hours to the local Department of Community Services using the child protection notification form.

INVESTIGATION

If an incident of child abuse occurs at NSWISA events or gatherings, it is not the responsibility of persons within NSWISA to take it upon themselves to determine whether the allegation is true or false. This responsibility belongs with the NSW Department of Community Service and the Judiciary.

Depending on the nature of the allegations and the extent of the situation, the NSW Department of Community Service will determine the manner in which the matter will be investigated. This may involve the NSW Police Service.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All matters regarding allegations of child abuse are to be treated as confidential. The person designated as the child protection officer is the contact person for any incident involving allegations of child abuse. This is essential for confidentiality. Confidentiality protects all individuals involved:

- the alleged victim
- the alleged offender, and
- the person making the notification

COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ACT 1998

Under the **Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998**, NSWISA is required to:

1. notify the Commission for Children and Young People of the name and other identifying details of any employee against whom relevant disciplinary proceedings have been completed by NSWISA, irrespective of the findings (except where the allegation has been proven to be vexatious, mischievous or false)
2. provide details of child abuse allegations/convictions against employees to the Commission
3. notify the Commission of any applicants for child-related employment, rejected as a result of risks identified through employment screening processes
4. ensure that records of all information required to be submitted to the Commission for Children and Young People are retained by NSWISA.

CHILD PROTECTION (PROHIBITED EMPLOYMENT) ACT 1998

Under the **Child Protection (Prohibited Employment) Act 1998**, NSWISA:

1. **will not** commence employing a person in a child-related position without first requiring them to disclose whether or not they are a “prohibited person”
2. **will not** commence employing, or continue to employ, in child-related employment, a person that has been identified as a “prohibited person”.

As accepted by Council on 25th June 2003