

EAST COBURG TENNIS CLUB CHILD
SAFETY AND WELLBEING POLICY



Our commitment to child safety

East Coburg Tennis Club is committed to child safety.

We want children to be safe, happy and empowered.

We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers.

We are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children.

We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures.

We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously.

East Coburg Tennis Club is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.

East Coburg Tennis Club is committed to regularly training and educating our committee members, staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.

We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.

We have specific policies and procedures in place that support our committee members, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

If you believe a child is at immediate risk, phone 000.

Our staff and volunteers

This policy guides our staff and volunteers on how to behave with children at East Coburg Tennis Club.

All of our staff and volunteers must agree to abide by our code of conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children. All staff and volunteers, as well as children and their families, are given the opportunity to contribute to the development of the code of conduct.

Privacy

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be staff, volunteers, families or children, unless there is a risk to someone's safety. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it and who will have access to it. This is intended to protect reporters and to ensure that all members of East Coburg Tennis Club are comfortable to disclose any allegations or concerns in relation to child safety without repercussions.

Legislative responsibilities

East Coburg Tennis Club takes its legal responsibilities seriously, including:

- Failure to disclose: All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to Victoria Police
- Mandatory reporting: Any committee members, staff or volunteers who are mandatory reporters (doctors, nurses, midwives, teacher, principals and police officers) must comply with their duties
- Failure to protect: People of authority in our organisation will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so
- Reportable conduct: The head of our organisation must be made aware of any allegations of physical and sexual abuse, sexual misconduct, significant emotional or psychological harm or significant neglect by an employee or volunteer towards a child. We are also legally required to notify the Commission for Children and Young People of the allegation
- Duty of care: If a child is abused by an individual associated with our organisation, our organisation is presumed to have breached its duty of care unless it can prove that it took 'reasonable precautions' to prevent the abuse in question. For more information, please refer to the [new organisational duty of care to prevent child abuse page](https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/safer-communities/protecting-children-and-families/betrayal-of-trust-fact-sheet-the-new) <<https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/safer-communities/protecting-children-and-families/betrayal-of-trust-fact-sheet-the-new>> on the Department of Justice and Regulation's website.

Tennis Australia Policies

Tennis Australia has two key policies relating to child safety and wellbeing. As a club affiliated with Tennis Australia, East Coburg Tennis Club is bound by and must comply with Tennis Australia Policies.

1. Member Protection Policy

This policy protects the health, safety and well-being of those who participate in the activities of tennis. The overarching policy outlines that all affiliated clubs will not tolerate any form of abuse, neglect, harassment, unlawful discrimination, vilification, victimisation, indecency or violence against any adult or child by personnel.

As a club affiliated with Tennis Australia, ECTC is bound by and must comply with the details of this policy. It applies to committee members, employees and coaches/assistant coaches, members and tennis players. Any other person, eg. Parents or spectators, are bound by the policy if they agree to be in writing (e.g via a competition registration form).

East Coburg Tennis Club Must:

- Adopt the practices and codes of behaviour as set out by Tennis Australia
- Implement Screening measures for people working with children
- Report any abuse or neglect they become aware of wherever it occurred.

- Deal with offending behaviours.

The policy was updated in February 2021 and can be found at:
https://www.tennis.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/1.-Member-Protection-Policy-CLEAN-FINAL-6-Oct-2021_.pdf

2. Safeguarding Children Code of Conduct

The code of conduct focuses on specific obligations under the Member Protection Policy. The code outlines a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse, including reporting the abuse to external authorities responsible for child protection where necessary. This is regardless of whether the abuse is perpetrated by personnel in the organisation or by others in the wider community, including members of a child's family, their extended network or strangers. The code sets out standards in relation to misconduct, positive guidance, adherence to professional boundaries, use of language, supervision, use of electronic communications, giving gifts, photographs or videos, physical contact, change rooms, transport, and alcohol and drug use.

Safeguarding Children Code of Conduct was updated in 2021 and is available at:
<https://www.tennis.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/2.-Safeguarding-Children-Code-of-Conduct-CLEAN-FINAL-6-Oct-2021.pdf>

Risk management

In Victoria, organisations are required to protect children when a risk is identified. In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our children.

We have risk management strategies in place to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks which include risks posed by physical environments and online environments.

Allegations, concerns

East Coburg Tennis Club takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. Our committee members, staff and volunteers are trained to deal with allegations appropriately.

We work to ensure all children, families, committee members, staff and volunteers know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.

We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place. If an adult has a reasonable belief that an incident has occurred then they must report the incident. Factors contributing to reasonable belief may include:

- a child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves)
- behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed
- someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it
- observing suspicious behaviour.

If you are concerned a child is being abused or neglected, or is at risk of that occurring, you must contact the relevant authorities in your state.

Handling disclosures of abuse

Children must often overcome many hurdles in order to disclose their abuse. As a result many children never disclose to anyone about the abuse they are experiencing. The reactions of adults make a major difference to the short and long term effects of abuse on children.

Do:

- Believe the child
- Be calm, supportive and reassuring
- Reassure the child that the abuse is not their fault
- Concentrate on the child's feelings rather than on questions and answers
- Explain what you are going to do now that you have been told.

Don't

- Make promises that you cannot keep
- Promise secrecy
- Push the child to give details of the abuse

2) Report / Seek advice

If you think this policy or Tennis Australia guidelines have been breached please contact one of the following:

East Coburg Tennis Club - eastcoburgtc@hotmail.com

East Coburg Tennis Club Child Safety – ectcchildsafety@gmail.com

Or

Tennis Australia Whistle Blower Service– Stopleftine

<http://stopline.com.au/whistleblowing-program> or via hotline 1800 11 72 33.

Regular review

This policy will be reviewed later in 2023/24 to ensure compliance with Child Safety Standards and following significant incidents if they occur. We will ensure that families and children have the opportunity to contribute. Where possible we will do our best to work with local Aboriginal communities, culturally and/or linguistically diverse communities and people with a disability