

1. Statement of Commitment

Hunter Valley Elite Football Academy (HVEFA) is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people in our care. We support the rights of the child and will act without hesitation to ensure a child-safe environment. Our goal is to foster a culture where children feel safe, supported, and respected.

2. Definitions

- **Child:** Any person under 18 years of age.
- **Child abuse includes:**
 - **Physical abuse:** Non-accidental injury or harm.
 - **Emotional abuse:** Psychological harm through verbal abuse, threats, or rejection.
 - **Sexual abuse:** Any sexual act or threat of sexual act against a child.
 - **Neglect:** Failure to provide necessary care, guidance, or protection.
- **Harm:** Any detrimental effect on a child's physical, psychological, or emotional wellbeing.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

- All staff, coaches, and volunteers must:
 - Act in accordance with this policy at all times.
 - Report any concerns regarding child safety.
 - Complete Working With Children Checks (WWCC).
- The HVEFA Child Safety Officer is responsible for:
 - Receiving and managing child safety concerns.
 - Ensuring child protection training is up to date.
 - Liaising with authorities when required.

4. Recruitment and Training

- All staff and volunteers working with children must:
 - Hold a valid WWCC issued by the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian.
 - Complete child protection training annually.
 - Participate in ongoing professional development regarding child safety.

5. Responding to Concerns and Incidents

If a child discloses abuse, or if abuse is suspected:

- Remain calm and listen carefully.
- Reassure the child they have done the right thing.
- Do not promise confidentiality.
- Record the disclosure using the HVEFA Incident Report Form.
- Report immediately to the Child Safety Officer and relevant authorities.

6. Mandatory Reporting (NSW)

Under the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW):

- Staff members who work with children are mandatory reporters.
- Reports of suspected risk of significant harm must be made to the NSW Child Protection Helpline (132 111) or via the online ChildStory Reporter portal.

7. Code of Conduct

All HVEFA adults must:

- Prioritise child safety and wellbeing in every interaction.
- Maintain appropriate physical and emotional boundaries.
- Not engage in any form of inappropriate or overly familiar behaviour.
- Avoid private or unsupervised interactions with a child.

8. Family and Community Engagement

HVEFA will:

- Communicate regularly with parents/guardians regarding player welfare.
- Provide clear access to this Child Protection Policy via the website and enrolment pack.
- Encourage feedback and concerns to be raised without fear of reprisal.

9. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or in response to significant legislative changes, incident outcomes, or organisational growth.

Appendix: Key Contacts

- NSW Child Protection Helpline: 132 111
- NSW Office of the Children's Guardian: www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au
- HVEFA Child Safety Officer: Luke Lancaster 0425 365 124 - hvelitefootballacademy@outlook.com

References and Sources (Indexed)

1. NSW Office of the Children's Guardian — www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au
2. Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)
3. Child Safe Sport Toolkit – Sport Integrity Australia
4. Australian Child Safety Principles — Australian Human Rights Commission
5. National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (Council of Australian Governments, 2018)
6. NSW Department of Communities and Justice — Mandatory Reporter Guide:
<https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/>