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# A screenshot of a video game Description automatically generated with medium confidenceChild Safe Standards

**CHILD SAFE POLICY**

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| **Date created:** | 17th AUGUST 2022 |
| **Audience:** | Merinda Calisthenic College |
| **Version:** | 2021:2 |
| **Purpose of Document:** | To provide |
| **Actions:** | * understand the indicators and risks of child abuse. * appropriately act on any concerns raised by children; and * understand and follow all applicable laws in relation to the protection of children and reporting or management of child safety concerns. |
| **Review:** | August 2023 |
| **Merinda Calisthenic College Contact:** | Sue Harding |
| **Contents:** | **Document(s) Page**  Child Safe Policy 3 |
| **Resources:** | ACF Member Protection Policy  Codes of Conduct  Social Media Policy  Child Safe Standards |

**Merinda Calisthenic College**

**CHILD SAFE POLICY**

1. **INTRODUCTION**
   1. Merinda Calisthenic College is committed to ensuring that children and young people who participate in its activities have a safe and happy experience. Merinda Calisthenic College supports and respects children, young people, staff, volunteers, and participants.
   2. The aim of Merinda Calisthenic College 's Child Safe Policy is to protect the safety of children in our care and prevent abuse from occurring, and in the event that allegations are raised in relation to child abuse, to ensure that the allegations are properly addressed. All complaints will be treated seriously and fully investigated and handled with maximum confidentiality and discretion.
   3. Should a person wish to make any enquiries in relation to this Policy, please contact the President of Merinda Calisthenic College, Sue Harding 0412113160.
2. **POLICY STATEMENT**
   1. Merinda Calisthenic College is committed to providing the highest level of safety for all involved with Calisthenics. This includes protecting members' privacy, promoting positive behaviours and attitudes, protecting the health safety and wellbeing of members, particularly children and delivering the Merinda Calisthenic College 's activities while acting in the best interests of children in the sport.
   2. Specifically, Merinda Calisthenic College considers that the health, safety and well-being of children take priority over all other competing considerations. Merinda Calisthenic College considers that this is necessary to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all members and protect the image and reputation of the sport, Merinda Calisthenic College, and its members.
   3. Merinda Calisthenic College has a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and is committed to promoting and protecting children from abuse and neglect to the greatest extent possible. All children have equal rights to protection from child abuse, regardless of their sex, religion, disability or sexual orientation etc.
   4. Child protection is a shared responsibility between Merinda Calisthenic College, its Principals, Committee, Coaches, parents/guardians, spectators, volunteers, and members of the Merinda Calisthenic College community. Everyone that participates in Merinda Calisthenic College’s activities is responsible for the care and protection of children, and reporting information about child abuse.
   5. Merinda Calisthenic College supports the active participation of all children. It listens to their views, respects their views and involves them when making decisions, where appropriate, especially about matters that will directly affect them (including their safety). Some of the ways in which Calisthenics empowers children are:

* Surveys
* Discussions in classes
  1. Merinda Calisthenic College is also committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, and those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children living with a disability.
  2. Merinda Calisthenic College promotes fairness and consideration for all staff, volunteers, and participants. For further details please refer to the Merinda Calisthenic College Member Protection Policy.

1. **SCOPE**
   1. This Policy applies to everyone involved in or connected to Calisthenics, including (but not limited to) participants, parents, spectators, contractors, officials, coaches, judges and staff throughout all Merinda Calisthenic College events and activities.
   2. This Policy will continue to apply retrospectively to a person or Member following the cessation of their association or employment with Merinda Calisthenic College.
2. **RELATED DOCUMENTS & LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS**
   1. This Policy must be read in conjunction with:
      1. the laws of the Commonwealth and Victoria (as amended from time to time) including but not limited to:
         1. Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)
         2. Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Act 2015 (Vic)
         3. Crimes Act 1958 (Vic); and
         4. Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic)

**4.1.1.5.** Merinda Calisthenic College policies and procedures,

including but not limited to:

* + - 1. Constitution.
      2. Codes of behaviour.
      3. Member Protection Policy.
      4. Grievance and Discipline procedures; and
      5. Social Media Policy

1. **DEFINITIONS**
   1. **Child** means a person involved in the activities of (Merinda Calisthenic College) (including athletes) and under the age of 18 years unless otherwise stated under the law applicable to the child (eg, for the purposes of child sexual offences in Victoria, a “child” refers to a person under the age of 16 years).
   2. **Child Abuse** is the mistreatment of a Child or Young Person that has Harmed, is Harming or is likely to Harm or endanger that Child or Young Person’s physical or emotional health, development or wellbeing and the Child has not, or is not likely to be protected by the parent(s) or guardian(s). For the avoidance of doubt, this includes but is not limited to Emotional or Psychological Abuse, Bullying, Grooming, Sexual Exploitation, Neglect and Harassment.
   3. **Child protection** means any responsibility, measure or activity undertaken to safeguard children from Harm.
   4. **Grooming** is a term used to describe what happens when a perpetrator of Abuse builds a relationship with a Child with a view to abusing them at some stage. There is no set pattern in relation to the Grooming of Children. For some perpetrators, there will be a lengthy period of time before the Abuse begins. The Child may be given special attention and what starts as an apparently normal display of affection, such as cuddling, can develop into sexual touching or masturbation and then into more serious sexual behaviour. Other perpetrators may draw a Child in and abuse them relatively quickly. Some abusers do not groom Children but Abuse them without forming a relationship at all. Grooming can take place in any setting where a relationship is formed, such as leisure, music, sports, and religious activities, or in internet chatrooms, in social media or by other technological channels.
   5. **Harm** means Harm to a person, or a Child is any detrimental effect of a significant nature to the person or Child’s physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. It is immaterial how the harm is caused. Harm can be caused by:

* Physical, Psychological or Emotional Abuse or Neglect.
* Sexual Abuse or Exploitation.
* a single act, omission, or circumstance; and
* a series or combination of acts, omissions, or circumstances.
  1. **Sexual offence** (in Victoria) means a criminal offence involving sexual activity or actions of indecency or any act which exposes a child under the age of 16 years to or involves a child under the age of 16 years in, sexual activity or matters beyond his or her understanding or contrary to accepted community standards. Sexually offence behaviours can include the fondling of genitals, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger, or any other object, fondling of breasts, voyeurism, exhibitionism, and exposing the child to or involving the child in pornography. It includes grooming, which includes actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child under the age of 16 years (or their carer, family, or supervisor) to lower their inhibitions and prepare them for engagement in a sexual offence.
  2. **Mandatory reporter** means a person who is legally required to make a report to the Department of Health and Human Services or the Police if they form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child needs protection. It includes (but is not limited to) teachers, principals, registered psychologists, nurses, doctors, and midwives.

1. **RECOGNISING AND REPORTING CHILD ABUSE** 
   1. A person may, while participating in the sport or other activities of or carrying Merinda Calisthenic College out their work, form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from child abuse.
   2. If a person is concerned about an immediate risk to a child’s safety, the person must phone Victoria Police on “000” as soon as practicable.
   3. Specific types of **Child abuse** include:
      1. **Physical abuse**: occurs when a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant Harm because of a physical injury, such as a non-accidental physical injury.
      2. **Sexual abuse**: occurs when a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant Harm because of sexual abuse, such as when a child is exploited, or used by another for his or her sexual gratification or sexual arousal, or for that of others.
      3. **Emotional and psychological abuse**: occurs when a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, emotional or psychological Harm of such a kind that the child’s emotional or intellectual development is or is likely to be significantly damaged; and
      4. **Neglect**: occurs when a child’s physical development or health has been or is likely to be significantly damaged. It refers to an omission, such as depriving a child of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults, or medical care.
   4. **Mandatory Reporters**
      1. Select classes of people in the community (including teachers, nurses and doctors – amongst others) are required by law to report to the Child Protection Unit of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) where they have formed a belief, on reasonable grounds, that a child is in need of protection because they have suffered (or are likely to suffer) significant harm due to physical or sexual abuse.
      2. This report must be made as soon as practicable, and after each occasion where he or she becomes aware of a further reasonable grounds for the belief.
   5. **Reasonable grounds for belief**
      1. A reasonable belief is formed if a reasonable person believes that:
         1. the child needs protection.
         2. the child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm because of physical or sexual injury; and
         3. the child’s parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.
         4. To form a reasonable belief, you should consider and objectively assess all the relevant facts, such as the source of the allegation and how it was communicated, the nature of and details of the allegation, and whether there is any other related matters known regarding the alleged perpetrator.
         5. A ‘reasonable belief’ or a ‘belief on reasonable grounds’ is not the same as having proof but is more than mere rumour or speculation.
      2. You will have reasonable grounds to notify if:
         1. a child states that they have been physically or sexually abused.
         2. a child states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves).
         3. someone who knows a child states that the child has been physically or sexually abused.
         4. professional observations of the child’s behaviour or development leads a professional to form a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused or is likely to be abused; or
         5. signs of abuse lead to a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused.
   6. **Voluntary Reporters**

**6.6.1** In addition to the mandatory reporting obligations above, any person who believes on reasonable grounds that a [child i](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/cyafa2005252/s3.html#child)s in need of protection from any form of child abuse, *may* disclose that information to the Police, DHHS or the Commissioner for Children & Young People (**CCYP**).

* 1. **Reporting Child Sexual Abuse**

* + 1. If a person receives information that leads them to form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria against a child (under the age of 16 years) by another person (of or over the age of 18 years), the person has a legal obligation to disclose that information to the Police as soon as it is practicable. Individuals who fail to comply with this obligation under the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) may be subject to a penalty of imprisonment.
  1. **Merinda Calisthenic College** **Approach to Reports of Abuse**
     1. Merinda Calisthenic College supports and encourages a person to make a report to the Police, CCYP or DHHS if they form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child needs protection, or they are concerned about the safety, health or wellbeing of a child.
     2. Any person that makes a report in good faith in accordance with their reporting obligations (whether mandatory or voluntary) will be supported by Merinda Calisthenic College, and will not be penalised by Merinda Calisthenic College for making the report.
     3. If a person is uncertain as to whether they should make a report to an external authority in relation to the safety of a child, they may speak to the Principal or President of Merinda Calisthenic College or the MPIO for guidance and information. If in doubt, ask for assistance.
     4. If an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer, Merinda Calisthenic College will follow the reporting procedure outlined in Merinda Calisthenic College Constitution and take all steps to ensure that the safety of the child and other children is paramount.
     5. Merinda Calisthenic College will investigate allegations of inappropriate conduct against a child in accordance with procedural fairness and will handle the allegations in a confidential and sensitive manner to the greatest extent possible.
     6. Merinda Calisthenic College will cooperate with the directions of the Police, CCYP and/or DHHS in relation to any investigation conducted by these authorities.
     7. Merinda Calisthenic College will keep a register of any allegations regarding inappropriate conduct.

1. **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PERSONNEL PROTECTING CHILDREN**
   1. Personnel involved in protecting children include the board, management, staff, and volunteers within the Organisation. Those people have responsibilities in relation to protection of children and are expected to:  
      1. understand the rights of children, as appropriate to their role.
      2. respect the cultural and religious practices of families who access Merinda Calisthenic College’s services, programs or events.
      3. understand and appropriately respond to the needs of children with developmental delays or disabilities.
      4. appropriately act on any concerns raised by children.
      5. understand the definitions, indicators and impact of child abuse.
      6. at all times, know and follow regulations in relation to the care of children and follow the Code of Conduct.
      7. co-operate with police and/or other formal investigations to the best of their ability; and
      8. not harm or exploit children who access Merinda calisthenic College's services.
   2. Merinda calisthenic College will appoint a Child Safety Officer or equivalent role that will be the primary point of contact for all concerns related to child safety.

**8 CHILD SAFE AND CHILD FRIENDLY GUIDELINES TO PREVENT AND MANAGE RISKS OF CHILD ABUSE**

**Training and Event Management**

To ensure the safety and support of all children and young people participating in training and comp day activities it is the responsibility of the coach, team secretary, officials, or any volunteer to ensure:

* All training and comp day activities are conducted in an open environment in clear view of any parent, guardian or College member who may wish to observe.
* One-on-one discussions with children and young people should also be conducted in an open environment in clear view of others. If a discussion occurs indoors, all doors must remain open with visible access.
* Any individual observed acting in a suspicious manner or taking unauthorised photos of children or young people while training is to be approached (if safe to do so) and requested to leave the area. Such an incident must be immediately reported to the College Principal who will determine the requirement for any further action.
* Be reasonable in your demands of children and young people. Consider their age, developmental level and maturity. Provide an environment and facilities that will enable them to feel comfortable and confident to participate. Children and young people are not elite athletes and all coaches, team Secretaries, officials and any volunteer are to provide a supportive and nurturing environment.
* Language used by all coaches, team secretaries, officials and any volunteer should:
  + Provide clear direction, be encouraging and boost the child or young person’s confidence.
  + Not be harmful, aggressive, threatening, frightening, profane or of a sexual nature.
  + Not be discriminatory, racist or sexist, derogatory, belittling or negative, such as calling a child or young person a ‘loser’ or telling them that that they are too fat.
* Be alert to cues from children and young people about how comfortable they feel in the presences of any coach, team secretaries, officials or any volunteer and respect their need to personal space.
* Be cautious about physical contact during training and costume fittings. Physical contact should be made in a way that makes a child or young person feel comfortable, for example, shaking hands, a congratulatory pat on the back for reassurance or when fitting costumes, the child should be made aware of the required touching before it occurs. Massaging a child or young person if you are not trained to do so or allowing a child to massage you is inappropriate physical contact.
* If physical contact is required for demonstrations, explain the activity and what you will do, maintain a safe and appropriate distance. Never conduct demonstrations with a child or young person alone, always ensure it is conducted in an open environment in clear view of others.
* Never use the change-room or shower in the presence of children or young people.
* Observe appropriate dress standards when children and young people and ensure that there is no exposure to nudity.
* Be aware of cultural norms that may influence the interpretation of your behaviour.
  1. **Change-Rooms**

Coaches, team secretaries, and volunteers at Merinda Calisthenic College, are required to supervise children and young people in change-rooms, whilst balancing their right to privacy. To ensure children and young people feel safe and their right to privacy is observed the following strategies will be implemented:

* Adults including coaches must avoid one-on-one situations with children and young people in change-rooms.
* Adults and coaches are not permitted to use the change-room or shower in the presence of children or young people.
* Adequate supervising must be arranged when using ‘away’ or ‘public’ change-rooms. It is suggested that an official for each team be nominated to facilitate this duty. Supervision must always ensure children and young people’s right to safety and privacy.

**8.2 College Events**

When an event is held at Merinda Calisthenic College, such as registration and presentation days, final celebrations and showcases the following Child Safety Strategies will be implemented:

* The College Principal will be present at these events and will ensure that an appropriate level of supervision is provided. In the absence of a principal, a committee members or suitable nominee will assume this role.
* Attending College members will be reminded at the commencement of the event about their responsibility to ensure the safety of all children and in the event of alcohol being served, reminded attendees of responsibilities outlined in the Colleges Alcohol Management Policy.
* Attendees’ attention will be drawn to the College’s Child Safety Code of Conduct which should be displayed on the wall of the College studio for reference.
* For the duration of the event and where practical, the College’s Principal or nominee will regularly patrol areas of the venue out of the immediate view of attendee to ensure the safety of children. This includes, but is not limited to the toilets, the foyer, backstage, the exterior of the venue and car park etc.
* Where practical all areas not required for use during the event such as change rooms, storerooms, prop bay or costume room will be locked.
* All areas will be sufficiently always lit.

The College Principal or nominee will take immediate action in the event of inappropriate or suspected inappropriate behaviour. The immediate action will be to ensure the safety of the child or young person. Where deemed necessary, Victoria Police will be contacted.

**8.3 Overnight Stays and Sleeping Arrangements**

Where a team or group of Merinda Calisthenic College individuals are participating in a competition or event that required an overnight stay, all practices and behaviours must be consistent with those expectation at all other sanctioned events. To further support the safety of children and young people attending the following strategies will be implemented:

* All overnight stays must be authorised by the College Principal’s.
* Prior to being authorised the College Principal’s, in consultation with the relevant coach and team secretary, will conduct a risk assessment to determine potential exposures to child safety. Appropriate control measure will be identified and communicated to all attending adults.
* All supervising adults including coaches, team secretaries and volunteers must hold a current Working With Children Check (WWCC), within 5 years of issue, have read and signed the College’s Child Safety Code of Conduct and Volunteer Duty Statement.
* Where practical children and young people should share accommodation with their parents or guardians. Where this is not possible arrangements must be made to ensure that the safety children and young is not compromised.

Arrangements include but should not be limited to the following:

* + Adults must not be in a room with a child or young person alone.
  + Adults must not share or sleep in a room with a child or young person alone. Where possible children and young people should share rooms and sleep in groups.
  + Adults must not share a bed, sleeping bag or tent with a child or young person.
  + Children and young people must never be left under the supervision or protection of unauthorised individuals such as hotel staff or friends.
  + Children and young people should be provided with privacy when dressing and bathing.
  + Appropriate dress standards must be observed when children and young people are present ie. Not exposing them to adult nudity.
  + Children and young people must not be exposed or have access to pornographic material through access to television, movies, phones and social media sites, the internet or magazines.
  + Children and young people have the right to contact their parents or guardians if they feel unsafe, uncomfortable or distressed during the stay;
  + Parents can expect that their child or young person can, if they wish, make contact.

Merinda Calisthenic College will take immediate action upon becoming aware of any breach of the above-mentioned Child Safety Strategies. The College Principal’s will implement measures to ensure the immediate safety of the relevant children and young people. Parents and guardians will be notified and were deemed necessary, the relevant authorities including the Department of Health and Human Services or Victoria Police will be contacted.

**8.4 Transporting Children and Young People**

Where possible, children and young people should be transported to and from Merinda Calisthenic College training, competitions and events by their parents or guardians. Where this is not possible or practical the following Child Safety Strategies are to be implemented:

* Children and young people are only permitted to be transported by another College member with the permission of their parents or guardians.
* Those permitted to transport children and young people must hold a current Working with Children Check (WWCC), within 5 years of issue, have read and signed the College’s Child Safety Code of Conduct and Volunteer Duty Statement.
* Those permitted to transport children and young people must hold a current driver’s licence. In accordance with the *Victorian Road Safety Act 1986 Sect 18,* it is an offence to drive a motor vehicle without holding a current and valid driver’s licence.
* Drivers who hold a learner’s permit are not authorised by Merinda Calisthenic College to transport children and young people to and from training, competitions, and events. Where possible all drivers must hold a ‘full license’. Those holding probationary licences are discouraged from transporting children and young people.
* Drivers must ensure that they maintain annual registration and insurance for any vehicle they intend to transport children and young people in accordance with the *Victorian Road Safety Act 1986 Part 2*.
* Merinda Calisthenic College does not permit the transportation of children or young people that are not immediate family members, on the back of motorbikes or scooters.

Failure to comply with the abovementioned Child Safety Strategies may result in exclusion from any further permitted transportation of children and young people. Victoria Police may also be informed of any identified breach of the *Victorian Road Safety Act 1986.*

**9.RECRUITMENT AND SCREENING**

* + The minimum standard for background checks of employees, contractors and volunteers of Merinda Calisthenic College and its members is the law as it applies in Victoria.
    - Merinda Calisthenic College undertakes a comprehensive recruitment and screening process for all staff, contractors and volunteers which aims to:
    - promote and protect the safety of all children who participate in the activities of Merinda Calisthenic College.
    - identify and recruit the safest and most suitable candidates who share Merinda Calisthenic College’s values and commitment to protect children; and
    - prevent a person from working at Merinda Calisthenic College if they pose an unacceptable risk to children.
  + Merinda Calisthenic College requires staff, contractors and volunteers to pass the recruitment and screening process prior to commencing their engagement with Merinda Calisthenic College.
  + As part of the screening and recruitment process, an applicant must provide appropriate evidence (e.g., WWCC or other state equivalent and/or Police check) to show that they are suitable to work with children and young people in a recreational setting. Merinda Calisthenic College requires that:
  + all Merinda Calisthenic College coaches and Committee members require a WWCC; and
    - the following key event personnel must have a valid WWCC:
      * those paid by Merinda Calisthenic College for their services (excluding bump in and bump out);
      * volunteers with regular roles in Merinda Calisthenic College.
      * relevant contractors who may have unsupervised access to children; and
      * anyone else who Merinda Calisthenic College Principals feel requires a WWCC due to the nature of the work that they are undertaking for Merinda Calisthenic College.
  + The type of evidence that an applicant is required to provide to Merinda Calisthenic College will vary depending on the type of position that they are applying for. However, an applicant will not be offered a position until they provide the required evidence to Merinda Calisthenic College
  + Merinda Calisthenic College will exercise discretion and may require applicants to provide a Police check in accordance with the law and as appropriate before they commence their engagement and during their time with Merinda Calisthenic College in regular intervals.
  + Merinda Calisthenic College will undertake at least two thorough reference checks prior to engaging any personnel.
  + Once engaged, Merinda Calisthenic College will provide staff and volunteers with access to this policy and staff and volunteers must review and acknowledge their understanding of this policy.

**10 SUPPORTING PERSONNEL**

* + Merinda Calisthenic College is committed to ensuring that all coaches, Committee members, volunteers and contractors receive training to ensure that they understand their responsibilities in relation to child safety. Mandatory training at Merinda Calisthenic College includes:
    1. Play by the Rules Training- Modules include Child Protection and Safeguarding,
  + Merinda Calisthenic College assists its committee members, coaches, contractors, and volunteers to incorporate child safety considerations into decision-making and to promote a culturally safe environment where children are empowered to speak up about issues that affect them.

**11 RISK MANAGEMENT APPROACH**

* 1. Child safety is a part of Merinda Calisthenic College 's overall risk management approach

**11.2** See CCYP Resources and support for the Child Safe Standards.

**12 POLICY BREACHES**

It is a breach of this policy for any person or organisation to which this policy applies, to have been found to have done anything contrary to this policy. Any person who may breach this policy is subject to the appropriate disciplinary actions.

**13 POLICY PROMOTION**

* 1. This policy will be made available to all members via the Club website.
  2. This policy will be communicated to all coaches, Committee members via an internal email and at Committee meetings.
  3. References to this policy will be included in documentation provided to all team officials that represent Merinda Calisthenic College.

1. **RECORD KEEPING**
   1. Merinda Calisthenic College will retain records of reports of child abuse and complaints about child safety.
   2. In maintaining records of reports about child safety, Merinda Calisthenic College will maintain confidentiality and privacy for children and families in accordance with legislation.
   3. Merinda Calisthenic College will appropriately note identified risks to child safety through the record keeping process and will incorporate those into its risk management plan.
2. **REVIEW PROCESS**

15.1 This policy will be reviewed by Merinda Calisthenic College Committee on an annual basis.

* 1. If you would like to provide Merinda Calisthenic College with any feedback or suggestions to improve this policy, please contact the President of Merinda Calisthenic College, Sue Harding [sue@merindacc.com.au](mailto:sue@merindacc.com.au) or on 0412113160.
  2. In addition to the regular review of this policy, recommendations for changes to the policy may be submitted to the Committee for consideration at any time. In the event that changes are accepted, the policy will be updated, and circulated to all stakeholders via the webpage, and internal email .