



# *Mercantile Rowing Club Inc.*

BOATHOUSE 5  
BOATHOUSE DRIVE  
MELBOURNE 3004  
TEL/FAX: 9650 3044

## **CHILD SAFE POLICY**

### **Purpose**

This policy is written to provide an outline of the policies and practices the Club has developed to keep all those involved with the Club safe from any harm, including abuse.

### **Commitment to Child Safety**

All children who are part of the Club have a right to feel and be safe. The welfare of the children in our care will always be our first priority and the Club has zero tolerance for child abuse. The Club aims to create a child safe and child friendly environment where children feel safe and have fun and the Club's activities are always carried out in the best interests of the children.

### **Application of this Policy**

This policy applies to all individuals involved in our organisation (paid or volunteer) including but not limited to:

- Members
- Coaches
- Office Bearers
- Volunteers
- Parents

All of the people to whom this policy applies have a role and responsibility in relation to child protection. They must all:

- 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.

### **Child Abuse**

Child abuse can take a broad range of forms including physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional or psychological abuse and neglect. People to whom this policy applies need to be aware that child abuse can occur whenever there is actual or potential harm to a child, and these are circumstances that the Club is committed to reducing the risk of occurrence.

### **Children's Rights to Safety and Participation**

The Club encourages children to express their views about their safety. We will listen to their suggestions, especially on matters that directly affect them. We actively encourage all children who use our Club to 'have a say' about things that are important to them.

We will listen to and act on any concerns children or their parents raise with us. These will be immediately investigated and addressed by the Executive Committee of the Club.

### **Valuing Diversity**

We value diversity and do not tolerate any discriminatory practices. To achieve this we:

- Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children and their families;

- Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and / or linguistically diverse background and their families;
- Welcome children with a disability and their families and act to promote their participation; and

### **Recruiting Staff and Volunteers**

The Club takes the following steps to ensure best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of staff and volunteers:

- Interview and conduct referee checks on all staff and volunteers
- Require police checks and Working with Children Checks for relevant positions
- Our commitment to Child Safety and our screening requirements are included in all advertisements and as part of the induction process for new staff or volunteers

### **Supporting Staff and Volunteers**

The Club seeks to attract and retain the best staff and volunteers. We provide support and supervision so people feel valued, respected and fairly treated. We have developed a Code of Conduct to provide guidance to our staff and volunteers, all of whom are advised of the requirements of the Code.

### **Reporting a Child Safety Concern or Complaint**

Any concerns or complaints should be reported to the Captain. The Captain can be contacted at [captain@mercantile.org.au](mailto:captain@mercantile.org.au)

### **Risk Management**

We recognise the importance of a risk management approach to minimising the potential for child abuse or harm to occur and use this to inform our policy, procedure and activity planning. In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risk of abuse to our children. To reduce the risk of child abuse occurring, adults to whom this policy applies should avoid direct, unsupervised contact with children. For example, this should be a consideration when:

- Using change room facilities;
- Using accommodation or overnight stays;
- Travel;
- Physical contact when coaching or managing children.

### **Reviewing this Policy**

This policy will be reviewed every two years and we undertake to seek views, comments and suggestions from children, parents, carers, staff and volunteers involved in the Club.

**Approved By: Executive**

**Endorsed and Adopted by the Executive: (1 August 2017)**