



OLD XAVERIANS' ATHLETIC CLUB

CHILD SAFETY and WELL BEING POLICY

Child Safety Standards

STANDARD 1 A culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people are respected and valued.

- 1.1 A child's ability to express his/her cultures and enjoy his/her cultural rights is encouraged and actively supported.
- 1.2 OXAC acknowledges and appreciates the strengths of Aboriginal culture and understand its importance to the well being and safety of Aboriginal children and young people. This is manifest in its support for the Indigenous Marathon Foundation.
- 1.3 OXAC does not tolerate racism. Any instances of racism will be addressed with appropriate consequences.
- 1.4 OXAC actively supports and facilitates participation and inclusion within it by Aboriginal children, young people and their families.
- 1.5 OXAC's policies, procedures, systems and processes together create a culturally safe and inclusive environment and meet the needs of Aboriginal children, young people and their families.

STANDARD 2 Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.

- 2.1 OXAC makes its commitment to child safety publicly available on its web site. At the next AGM child safety will be added to the Club's purposes.
- 2.2 OXAC endorses a child safe culture at all levels of the Club's organisation. If there is any concern about the safety of a child in the Club, members are expected to bring this to the attention of the Committee. Incidents are expected to be reported to the relevant authorities in accordance with the *Wrongs Act 1958 (Vic)* and the *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)*.
- 2.3 Governance arrangements facilitate implementation of the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy at all levels. The issue of child safety is reviewed regularly by the Committee. The Committee places child safety as the top priority of the Club, and certainly greater than considering the reputation of the Club. The Committee will listen to any concerns

that children in the Club may have about safety, and implement changes suggested by children if these are realistic.

- 2.4 The OXAC Code of Conduct provides guidelines for volunteers on expected behavioural standards and responsibilities.
- 2.5 OXAC has a focus on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks to children and young people. At the next AGM child abuse will be included as a reason for cessation of membership.
- 2.6 OXAC volunteers are made aware of their obligations with respect to information sharing and record keeping. With respect to incidents and suspected incidents of abuse, advice will be obtained from the relevant authorities about what information can be shared and with whom, such as parents and guardians, perpetrators, members of the Club and other organizations in which the child is involved. All concerns and incidents will be documented contemporaneously. Club members will be informed of any steps taken to deal with child abuse taking into consideration confidentiality requirements.

STANDARD 3: Children and young people are empowered with respect to their rights, to participate in decisions affecting them and that they are taken seriously.

- 3.1 Children and young people are informed about all of their rights, including to safety, information and participation.
- 3.2 The importance of friendships is recognised and support from peers is encouraged to help children and young people feel safe and be less isolated.
- 3.3 If relevant, children and young people are offered access to sexual abuse prevention programmes and to relevant related information in an age-appropriate way. Xavier College has links to such a programme. The Club also has a Member Protection Information Officer who is independent of the Committee.
- 3.4 OXAC volunteers are attuned to signs of harm and facilitate child friendly ways for children and young people to express their views, participate in decision making and raise their concerns.
- 3.5 OXAC has a culture that facilitates participation and is responsive to the input of children and young people. Social functions are designed to be appropriate for involvement by children.
- 3.6 OXAC has opportunities for children and young people to participate in its activities. The Club has a focus on competition opportunities specifically for underage athletes. The Club responsive to their contributions strengthening confidence and engagement. The achievements of underage athletes are recognized and celebrated with awards, recognition at the Annual Dinner, and with the Club's Elite Athlete Grants.

STANDARD 4: Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and well being

- 4.1 Families participate in decisions affecting their children. Family members who are not OXAC members are welcome to discuss relevant issues at the Club's Committee meetings and General meetings. Family members who are not competing, can be become social members of the Club, or they can still be involved in social activities, and in volunteering roles without joining the Club. Attempts to arrange transport to the Club's activities will be made if needed. Costs of the Club's activities are kept to a minimum to encourage wide participation. Members and their families who have financial difficulties may have costs reduced or waived.
- 4.2 OXAC engages and openly communicates with families about its child safety approach; any relevant information is accessible. To facilitate communication, dates and times, and the locations of the Club's meetings are flexible to enhance participation. If needed, remote involvement via electronic means is also possible. Communication channels outside of meetings are also available not only to members, but also to their families. These include emails and WhatsApp.
- 4.3 Families and communities involved in the Club have a say in the development and review of the organisation's policies and practices. These will be distributed to all members when they are updated, and when any changes are approved by the Committee. They will also be available on the Club's web site.
- 4.4 Families, carers and the community involved with the Club are informed about the organisation's operations and governance.

Standard 5: Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice

- 5.1 OXAC members and volunteers understand children's and young people's diverse circumstances, provide support and respond to those who are vulnerable, so that each underage member has the opportunity to reach his/her athletic potential.
- 5.2 Children and young people have access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand.
- 5.3 OXAC pays particular attention to children and young people with special needs such as disabilities.
- 5.4 OXAC also considers the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people to be able provide a culturally safe environment for them within the Club.

Standard 6: People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and well being values in practice

- 6.1 Recruitment, including advertising, referee checks and staff and volunteer pre-employment screening, emphasise child safety and well being.

- 6.2 Relevant volunteers have current working with children checks or equivalent background checks.
- 6.3 All volunteers receive an appropriate induction and are aware of their responsibilities to children and young people, including record keeping, information sharing and reporting obligations.
- 6.4 Ongoing supervision and people management is focused on child safety and well being.

Standard 7: Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused

- 7.1 OXAC has an accessible, child focused complaint handling policy, “The Member Protection Policy”, which clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of leadership and volunteers, approaches to dealing with different types of complaints, breaches of relevant policies or the Code of Conduct, and obligations to act and report.
- 7.2 Effective complaint handling processes are understood by children and young people, families, and volunteers, and they are culturally safe. Children will be given the opportunity to nominate an adult whom they wish to help them with any complaints.
- 7.3 Complaints are taken seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly.
- 7.4 OXAC has policies and procedures in place that address reporting of complaints and concerns to relevant authorities, whether or not the law requires reporting, and the Club co-operates with law enforcement.
- 7.5 Reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met.

Standard 8: Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training

- 8.1 OXAC volunteers are trained and supported to effectively implement the organisation’s Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.
- 8.2 OXAC volunteers receive training and information to recognise indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and young people.
- 8.3 OXAC volunteers receive mandatory training and information to respond effectively to issues of child safety and well being and support colleagues who disclose harm; to respond to issues of child safety including internal and external reporting requirements, notifying families and carers and managing risks to children. Training information provided is sensitive to the participants’ comfort levels and minimises distress, in a supportive environment built on trust and collaboration. A register is kept of those completing this training.
- 8.4 OXAC volunteers receive training and information on how to build culturally safe environments for children and young people.

Training opportunity: <https://vicsport.com.au/child-safe-sport>

Standard 9: Physical and online environments promote safety and well being while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.

- 9.1 OXAC members and volunteers identify and mitigate risks in the online and physical environments without compromising a child's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities. Members and volunteers, other than each child's own parents or guardians, are not permitted to be alone with a child in the Club; nor are they to contact children in the Club by electronic means except through group messages available to other Club members including each child's parents or guardians; nor are they to have physical contact with children in the Club. Children's images can only be used by the Club, its members and volunteers with the written permission of the children and their parents or guardians.
- 9.2 The online environment is used in accordance with the organisation's Code of Conduct and Child Safety and Well Being Policy and practices.
- 9.3 Risk management plans consider risks posed by organisational setting, activities and the physical environment, including from the perspectives of children. These will be reviewed at least annually, or more often if new risks are identified, or when new activities are undertaken by the Club.
- 9.4 When the Club contracts facilities and services from third parties, steps will be taken ensure the safety of children and young people. Third parties will need to comply with the Club's Child Safety Standards.

Standard 10: Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved

- 10.1 OXAC reviews, evaluates and improves child safe practices. Reviews will occur at least once per year, as well as in response to changes in legislation that are relevant to child safety, incidents in which child safety has been compromised, in response to concerns by members, volunteers or their families, the Club start new child related activities, members and volunteers are not adhering to the child safety policies. As a part of the review, feed-back will be sought from members, volunteers and their families including children.
- 10.2 Complaints, concerns and safety incidents are analysed to identify causes and systemic failures so that there can be continuous improvement in child safety. Records are kept of complaints, concerns and allegations, and the actions taken in response to them.
- 10.3 OXAC will report on the findings of relevant reviews to members, volunteers, families, children and young people.

Standard 11: Policies and procedures document how OXAC is safe for children and young people.

- 11.1 OXAC policies and procedures address all of the Child Safe Standards.
- 11.2 The Club's policies and procedures are documented and easy to understand.
- 11.3 Best practice models and consultation with members, volunteers and their families, particularly children, will contribute to the development of the policies and procedures.
- 11.4 The OXAC Committee monitors compliance with the policies and procedures.
- 11.5 Members and volunteers understand and implement the policies and procedures.

A draft for consideration of the OXAC Committee.

12th January 2024