



## **MANAGING RISKS: PARENTS INFORMATION SHEET**

### **Get involved in your child's club**

A good way to ensure your child's safety and well being is to get involved with your club. Consider:

- becoming an assistant coach, scorer or team manager
- getting to know your child's coach and maintaining open and honest communication with them about things that concern you
- attending games and practices whenever you can

### **Be a good role model**

It is important that you remember your child is not playing for sheep stations. Make sure you:

- support coaches, umpires and officials and expect your child to be the same
- focus on your child's efforts and performance: never ridicule or put your child down for making a mistake or losing
- acknowledge instances of good sportsmanship or good technique irrespective of when/where it occurs.

If you disagree with a decision e.g. your child has not been selected for a team—make sure you deal with the issue appropriately:

- ask yourself who has the issue – you or your child?
- don't make a fuss in front of the child, other team members and parents
- make a time to talk privately with the coach
- check your club's policy on the matter.

### **Help your child recognise personal safety**

Given that you can't be with your children all the time it's important that you help them recognise the need to ensure their personal safety. Some actions to keep your child safe include:

- talking to your child about keeping safe
- encourage them to tell you if they feel uncomfortable or have worries about an adult's behaviour
- telling your child that he or she always has the right to say 'no' if an adult tries to persuade them to do something they feel is wrong, or which makes them feel frightened or uncomfortable
  - let them know that you'll support them with this

- making sure your child understands their right to privacy
  - help them recognise acceptable and unacceptable behaviour by an adult
- developing an emergency plan for your child to follow in situations where they may be at risk of harm - for example, when going on overnight or away trips.

## **Be aware of the danger signs**

While the likelihood of someone harming your child is remote, it is important that you are aware of the danger signs. Be wary of a club where coaches or other personnel:

- run private, closed practices on a regular basis, and operate independently of the club
- spend time with your child beyond the training session and show favouritism
- discourage parents from watching or becoming involved in training or other activities
- practice rough play, use sexual innuendo or humiliating punishments
- allow inappropriate physical contact, excessive discipline and rough language
- invite children to spend time alone with them outside of scheduled sport or recreation activities
- have poor communication with parents and discourage parental involvement.

Be concerned if one or more children drop out of their sport or recreation activities for no apparent reason.

## **Respond to concerns**

If your child tells you about abuse, discrimination or harassment, respond calmly and stay in control. Ask a few short questions about whether they are worried or distressed, such as: 'Tell me what happened?', 'Then what happened?' Avoid questions that have only a yes/no answer. Listen very carefully and take what your child says seriously. Do not add to their distress. Remember to:

- react calmly and remain in control
- find a private place to talk
- tell them you believe them and will support them
- listen to what your child says without interrupting
- tell your child that they have done the right thing by telling you
- tell them they are not to blame
- ask open questions such as 'Tell me what happened?' 'Then what happened?'
- be caring and understanding



- encourage open communication: ensure that they are aware they can talk to you about anything
- get support, consult with someone and get advice.

Talk to a Member Protection Information Officer, or another person in authority in the club, and tell them exactly what your child has told you.