



## Victorian Weightlifting Association Procedure for handling allegations of child abuse

**If you believe a child is in immediate danger or a life-threatening situation, contact the Police immediately on 000.**

The Victorian Weightlifting Association (VWA) will treat any allegation of child abuse or neglect promptly, seriously and with a high degree of sensitivity.

All people working with the VWA in a paid or unpaid capacity have a duty to report any concerns to the appropriate authorities, following the steps outlined below.

### Step 1: Receive the allegation

If a child or young person raises with you an allegation of child abuse or neglect that relates to them or to another child, it is important that you listen, stay calm and be supportive.

Do	Do not
Make sure you are clear about what the child has told you.	Do not challenge or undermine the child.
Reassure the child that what has occurred is not his or her fault.	Do not seek detailed information, ask leading questions nor offer an opinion.
Explain that other people may need to be told in order to stop what is happening.	Do not discuss the details with any person other than those detailed in this procedure.
Promptly and accurately record the discussion in writing.	Do not contact the alleged offender.

### Step 2: Report the allegation

- (a) Immediately report any allegation of child abuse or neglect, or any situation involving a child at risk of harm, to the police and/or the relevant child protection agency. You may need to make a report to both.
- (b) Contact the relevant child protection agency or police for advice if there is **any** doubt about whether the allegation should be reported

(c) If the allegation involves a person associated with the VWA or a VWA affiliated club (e.g. an employee, coach, technical official, volunteer, athlete, member etc.) then you must also report the allegation to the VWA Operations Manager so that they can manage the situation.

(a) If the allegation involved the VWA Operations Manager, then you must report the allegation to the VWA Board of Directors who will carry-out Steps 3 and 4.

### **Step 3: Protect the child and manage the situation**

(b) The VWA Operations Manager will assess the immediate risks to the child and take interim steps to ensure the child's safety and the safety of any other children. This may include redeploying the alleged offender to a position where there is no unsupervised contact with children, supervising the alleged offender or removing/suspending him or her until any investigations have been concluded. Legal advice should be sought before any interim steps are made if the person is in paid employment.

(c) The VWA Operations Manager will consider what services may be most appropriate to support the child and his or her parent(s)/guardian(s).

(d) The VWA Operations Manager will consider what support services may be appropriate for the alleged offender.

(e) The VWA Operations Manager will put in place measures to protect the child and the alleged offender from possible victimisation and gossip.

### **Step 4: Take internal action**

(a) Up to three different investigations could be undertaken to examine allegations that are made against a person to whom the AWF Member Protection Policy applies, including:

(i) a criminal investigation (conducted by the police);

(ii) a child protection investigation (conducted by the relevant child protection agency); and/or

(iii) a disciplinary or misconduct inquiry/investigation (conducted by the VWA).

(b) Regardless of the findings of the police and/or child protection agency investigations, the VWA will assess the allegations to decide whether the alleged offender should return to his or her position, be dismissed, be stood down pending the outcome of an investigation, be banned or face any other disciplinary action.

(c) The VWA will consider all information relevant to the matter, including any findings made by the police, the child protection authority and/or court, and then set out a finding, recommending actions and the rationale for those actions.

(d) If disciplinary action is recommended, the VWA will follow any relevant procedures set out in the AWF Member Protection Policy in accordance with the VWA Constitution.

(e) The VWA will provide the relevant government agency with a report of any disciplinary action it takes, where this is required.

## Contact details for advice or to report an allegation of child abuse

Contact	When to contact?	
Victoria Police Emergency police attendance	000 <a href="https://www.police.vic.gov.au/contact-us">https://www.police.vic.gov.au/contact-us</a>	Child is in immediate danger or life-threatening situation
Victoria Police Non-urgent police assistance	131 444 <a href="https://www.police.vic.gov.au/contact-us">https://www.police.vic.gov.au/contact-us</a>	Child abuse or neglect has allegedly happened  OR
Department of Health and Human Services After-hours Child Protection Emergency Service	13 12 78 <a href="https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/reporting-child-abuse">https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/reporting-child-abuse</a>	For advice if there is any doubt whether or not an allegation should be reported
Victorian Weightlifting Association Operations Manager	(03) 9819 5599 <a href="mailto:office@vicweightlifting.com">office@vicweightlifting.com</a>	When an allegation of child abuse involved a person associated with the VWA or VW affiliated club