



**AFL MASTERS SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE COMPLAINTS AND REPORTING
PROCEDURE**

Effective 10 January 2025

Effective from

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Applicable to

This Complaints and Reporting Procedure is applicable to all people associated with AFL Masters Inc (AFLM) throughout Australia including all AFL Masters State or Territory Affiliates and their clubs.

Purpose of the Safeguarding Children and Young People Complaints and Reporting Procedure

The purpose of this Complaints and Reporting Procedure is to set out the steps that all AFLM People must follow to meet their responsibilities in relation to identifying, reporting, and responding to any concerns about, or incidents of, child abuse or other inappropriate behavior towards children or young people in our sport. The Complaints and Reporting Procedure was issued in connection with the *AFL Masters Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable People Policy* (Policy). The definitions set out in the Policy apply to this Complaints and Reporting Procedure.

Immediate Response

Overriding any practical requirements outlined through this procedure, if a child or young person is at imminent risk of harm or in immediate danger, all AFL People are required to report the situation directly to the Police - CALL '000' (within Australia).

What is to be reported

The following types of behaviours, including observed or suspected abuse, in relation to any child or young person involved in AFLM activities, programs or services must be reported in the manner described in this Complaints and Reporting Procedure:

- child abuse, harm, neglect or any other form of inappropriate behaviour such as grooming or bullying to a child or young person (emotional or psychological, physical or sexual, racial or religious); and
- any breaches of the Policy or Code of Conduct

Minimum requirements when responding to disclosures of child abuse

When a disclosure of (suspected) child abuse or harm is made, the following points should be considered and utilised.

LISTEN	REASSURE	RESPECT
DO	DO NOT	
Actively listen to the child or young person	Ask leading questions	
Reassure the child or young person that they have done the correct thing by reporting	Make your own judgement or assessment	

Respect the child or young person may only reveal some details	Press for detail, a minimal account will suffice
Let the child or young person use their own words in their own time - be patient	Make promises you cannot keep
Ask open ended questions	Make your own enquiries/investigations in relation to the allegations made
Explain to the child or young person that other people may need to be told	Share information with others <i>*Excl. Police, Child Protection, AFL ISD, Manager</i>

How to make a report and obligations - Overview

AFLM People must report child abuse and other inappropriate behaviour in relation to a child or young person that they are informed of, observe or suspect. A summary of the Incident Reporting Process that all AFLM People must follow is set out at Appendix 1 to this Complaints and Reporting Procedure.

Immediate action will be taken in relation to any matter reported to AFLM. AFLM will act with integrity, provide strong leadership and make decisions that are child-centred, trauma-focused, legal, ethical, accountable and transparent whilst meeting national legislative requirements.

Reporting Person's Obligations

Step 1: If the child or young person is in imminent risk of harm or immediate danger, the reporting person is required to report the situation directly to the police - CALL '000'.

Step 2: Regardless of whether the matter is reported to the police, it is imperative that the reporting person immediately contacts their AFL Manager.

Step 3: When practical, the reporting person must make a report on the AFL's online reporting platform. In some circumstances, the reporting person's AFLM Officer may take a statement and formally record the statement on the online reporting platform. The online reporting platform can be accessed via this link:

<https://eaf1.austfoot.com.au/afl-makeareport/en/#/home>

Further information in relation to the AFL's on-line reporting platform is set out later in this Complaints and Reporting Procedure. All AFLM People retain the right to report directly to relevant authorities, such as police or child protection, any concerns they may have in relation to the safety and welfare of a child or young person, regardless of whether or not they have also reported the matter internally.

AFLM People Reporting Obligations

When an AFLM officer is notified by a reporting person (subject to Step 2 of the previous section) of an incident, they must:

- ensure the reporting person makes an online report as per Step 3 of section 5.2;
- provide advice and guidance as per the step-by-step process detailed in section 5.2, being mindful of requirements set out in section 4 of how to respond to a disclosure;
- provide general advice and guidance on 'what' to report and the Policy's purpose;
- notify the AFL Integrity & Security Department by email of the notification as soon as possible to ensure the report is received by the AFL Integrity & Security Department; and
- not provide investigative advice to the reporting person unless consent is provided from the AFL Head of the Integrity & Security Department or nominated delegate.

In taking a report or disclosure of an incident from others, the reporting person or AFLM Officer is not to assess the validity of such allegations or concerns, but to report all allegations as described in the step-by-step process outlined in the previous section.

Reporting timeframes

Reports and notifications must be made as soon as practicable and no later than before ending that person's shift or session of work.

Supporting Children and Young People and their Families Through the Complaints Process

Information obtained as part of a complaints process should be kept confidential. It should only be disclosed if required by law or where it is otherwise appropriate in the circumstances for it to be shared to promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people, and to keep relevant parties appropriately informed throughout the complaints process.

A complaints process can be a stressful and anxious time for the child or young person and their parents or carers, regardless of how well an organisation seeks to support them through the process. So it is critical that, from the outset:

- any questions the child or young person asks are answered as far as possible
- they are given clear advice about what will happen next and going forward
- they are given information about how they will be supported.

However, it is important that AFLM People continue to comply with their obligations regarding confidentiality and privacy.

AFLM People should seek guidance from the ISD regarding the status of the report and any information that is appropriate to be shared with relevant stakeholders.

AFL Integrity & Security Department's Obligations

The AFL Integrity & Security Department (ISD) will:

- receive the online report through its secure Incident Management System (IMS);
- contact the reporting person;
- conduct an assessment of the disclosed information;
- ensure adequate support services are provided to all relevant persons; and
- notify the relevant Law Enforcement agencies if criminality has been identified, pursuant to mandatory reporting compliance.

Mandatory Reporting Provisions

In Australia, each State and Territory have child safety laws that set out mandatory reporting responsibilities and timelines for both organisations and individuals who work or have contact with children and young people.

The following link will direct you to the responsibilities associated with each State and Territory - [Mandatory reporting of child abuse and neglect | Child Family Community Australia \(aifs.gov.au\)](https://www.aifs.gov.au/child-family-community-australia/mandatory-reporting-child-abuse-neglect)

Who investigates the report

Complying with legislative and policy requirements, the ISD are bound to ensure that one (1) or more of the following entities will investigate the report or disclosure:

- State or Federal Law Enforcement Agency (i.e. Police) *Where Required
- Child Protections Services or State equivalent *Where Required
- AFL Integrity & Security Department
- Relevant regulatory/oversight bodies in states and territories that administer mandatory reporting schemes
- (Where the report or disclosure does not relate to the AFL or AFL People) Independent League / Administration through the engagement of independent investigative and welfare services.

NOTE: At no stage will the ISD investigate in parallel to a State or Federal Law Enforcement Agency (i.e. Police) investigation. The ISD will only investigate once they have received confirmation and permission in writing from the relevant Law Enforcement Agency (i.e. Police) that their investigation is completed.

The investigation reporting process is set out in Appendix 2 to this Complaints and Reporting Procedure.

Reporting platforms

As part of the AFL's procedures for responding to reports or allegations of child abuse and other inappropriate behaviour, the AFL has developed an online reporting platform for reports in relation to children and young people safeguarding matters. This platform is to be used by all AFLM People to document and report any allegation, disclosure, incident or concern regarding Child Abuse or other inappropriate behaviour in relation to a child or young person.

To prevent access by unauthorised persons to any documents or reports, the ISD will oversee the creation of a secure case entry on the IMS that will contain:

- the completed online report and its particulars; and
- any other documentation (physical or electronic) relating to the allegation.

The ISD will be responsible for maintaining and regularly monitoring the relevant records using the IMS (Case Management) processes to ensure that they are responded to effectively in accordance with this procedure and that requirements for reporting to external authorities are complied with.

Confidentiality and privacy

The ISD maintains the confidentiality and privacy of all concerned (including the alleged perpetrator), except if doing so would compromise the welfare of the child or young person and/or investigation of the allegation.

The AFL Head of Integrity & Security will be responsible for the authorisation of the disclosure and sharing of any information relating to any incident reported pursuant to this procedure.

Monitoring

All reports recorded on the IMS will be reviewed by the AFL Head of Integrity & Security. As part of the AFL's commitment to continuous improvement in child safety practices, incident data will be reviewed on a regular basis to identify any trends and act accordingly.

The AFL Head of Integrity & Security (or a nominated delegate) is the only person authorised to close a case and will ensure all relevant persons have been informed of the outcome.

Debrief

It is acknowledged that disclosures of harm and/or abuse can be traumatic for every person involved. If an AFLM person requires assistance or support to debrief about an incident, allegation and/or disclosure they are encouraged to discuss this confidentially with an AFLM Officer.

Review of Safeguarding Children and Young People Complaints and Reporting Procedure

The Board will review this Complaints and Reporting Procedure annually to ensure it remains consistent with AFL Masters' values.

APPENDIX 1 – INCIDENT REPORTING PROCESS

AFLM Safeguarding Children and Young People – Incident Reporting Process

WHAT to report

- Observed abuse, harm or neglect – (Emotional, Physical, Sexual)
- Potential abuse, harm or neglect – (Emotional, Physical, Sexual)
- Any suspicion of abuse, harm or neglect – (Emotional, Physical, Sexual)
- Breaches of the AFL Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing Policy and/or Code of Conduct



HOW to make a report

STEP 1 – If a Child or a Young Person is in any imminent risk of harm or in immediate danger – call “000”

STEP 2 – Immediately consult your AFL Manager

STEP 3 – When practicable, make a report on the AFL’s online reporting platform – No later than the end of the reporting persons shift

<https://eafl.austfoot.com.au/afl-makeareport/#/landing>



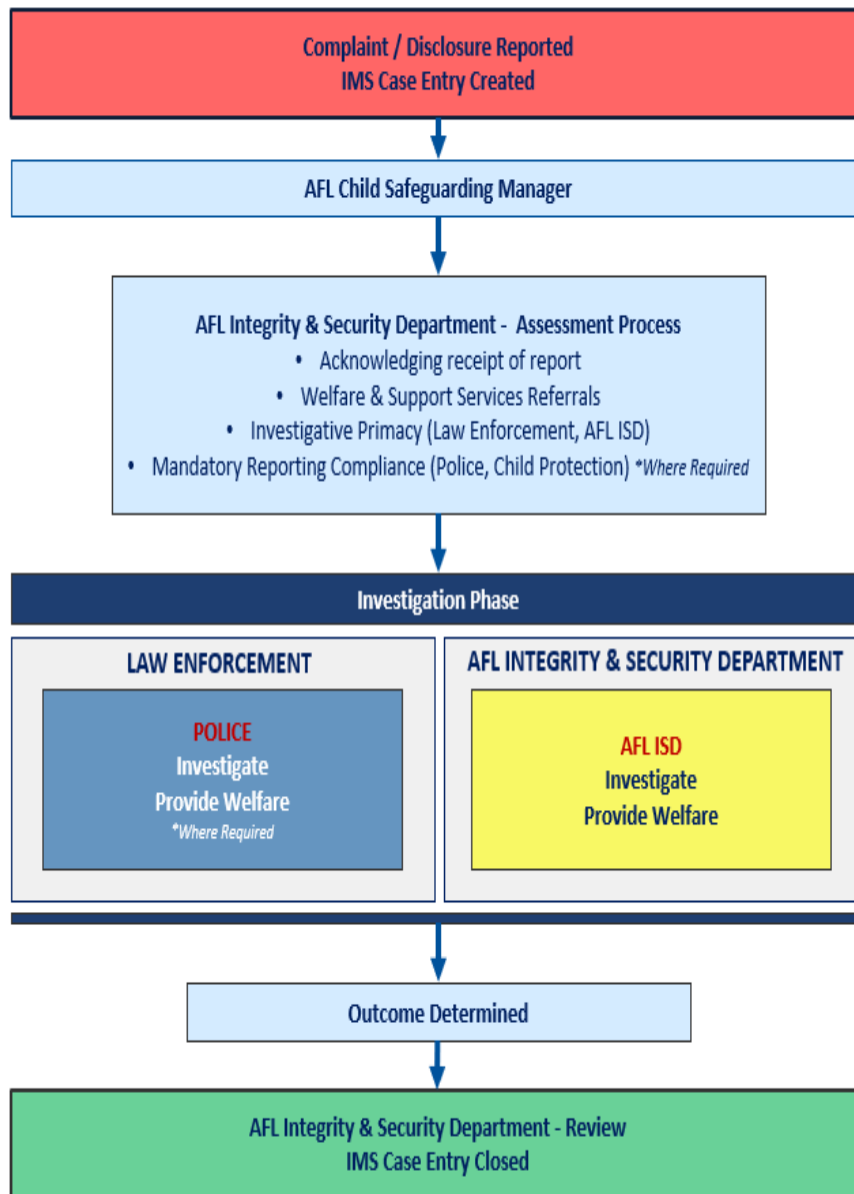
WHAT HAPPENS to the report

AFL Integrity and Security Department

- Conduct an assessment of the report for investigation allocation (Police, AFL Integrity Team)
- Provide welfare and support service referrals
- Consider mandatory reporting requirements (Police, DFFH, other)
**where required*

APPENDIX 2 – INVESTIGATION REPORTING PROCEDURE

AFL Safeguarding Children & Young People Policy
Investigation Process



If a Child or Young Person is in any imminent risk of harm or in immediate danger - CALL '000'