



SAFE GUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

APRIL 2020

Policy Statement

Bowls South Africa (Bowls SA) is committed to providing a safe environment for all children who participate, officiate or in any other manner are involved in the sport of bowls. Bowls SA aims to protect those who are dependent on adults for their protection and well-being.

Bowls SA will enforce a zero tolerance policy against any form of abuse of children at any occasion or event organised under its auspices or those organisations directly affiliated to Bowls SA and will treat all incidents seriously and promptly investigate all allegations of such abuse. Any person found to have abused or harassed any child will face disciplinary action in terms of the provisions of the Constitution, which could lead up to and including termination of membership of Bowls SA.

All complaints of child abuse will be treated with respect and in confidence. No one will be victimised for making such a complaint.

Any breach of this policy will be construed as a breach of the Code of Conduct policy and subject to the provisions of such policy.

1. Scope of Policy

- 1.1 This policy will be applicable to all children regardless of gender, racial origin, religious belief, sexual identity and any disability.
- 1.2 Affiliated members, event organisers, volunteers and parents and any other official.

2. Aims

- 2.1 Provide clear guidelines to prevent harm
- 2.2 Provide clear guidelines to follow in the event of an accusation or suspicion of abuse

3. Definitions

- 3.1 A child is defined as anyone under the age of eighteen (18) at the time of transgression.
- 3.2 Child abuse is defined as any form of physical or mental abuse including negligence, maltreatment, exploitation and sexual abuse.
- 3.3 An event is any competition / social event that is organised with the objective of children participating therein or where children may be present as a consequence of such occasion.
- 3.4 Affiliated members are those as determined in accordance with the provisions of the Bowls SA constitution.

4. The Rights of the Child

Bowls SA adheres to the child's rights as contained in the Children's Act 38 of 2005 and all its Amendments as well as those rights as stated in the Bill of Rights in South Africa's Constitution.



SAFE GUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

APRIL 2020

These are summarised as follows:

- The right not to be hurt.
- The right to be protected from physical, sexual and emotional harm.
- The right to speak and to be taken seriously.
- To be treated equally irrespective of race, gender, language or religion.
- The right to privacy and to respect the privacy of others.
- To be protected from harmful addictive products such as alcohol, drugs and cigarettes.
- The right to proper care.

5. What constitutes abuse?

- 5.1 **Physical Abuse** – any physical injury inflicted deliberately or as a result of neglect.
- 5.2 **Emotional Abuse** – any act that has the effect on the behavioural development of a child and may include abuse via electronic or social media.
- 5.3 **Verbal Abuse** – Speaking to a child in a manner that includes a raised voice, teasing, insulting, threatening or taunting.
- 5.4 **Sexual Abuse** – Involving or exposing a child to sexual activity or pornographic material with or without the child's consent. This includes exposure through electronic or social media.
- 5.5 **Neglect** – Neglect occurs when care-giving fails to meet the basic needs of a child.

The person/s designated to deal with reported incidents of child abuse shall be the sole arbiter in determining the extent, if any, of what abuse has occurred.

6. Responsibilities of adults within this policy

- 6.1 Observe and implement rules established for the safety of children at all times.
- 6.2 Exhibit appropriate behaviour that acts as a comfort to children.
- 6.3 Recognise their responsibilities in dealing with children.
- 6.4 Follow the procedures following any incidents that they believe may be in contravention of this policy.

7. Procedure to be followed in attending to an alleged incident of child abuse

- 7.1 Any allegation or suspicion of abuse no matter how insignificant they might seem must immediately be reported to the Bowls SA representative or such person having authority designated to him by Bowls SA present at such time.
- 7.2 Such Bowls SA representative shall immediately contact the President or failing him / her the Vice-President of such allegation.



SAFE GUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

APRIL 2020

- 7.3 The parent or legal guardian of such child must be contacted immediately and all inquiries regarding the alleged incident may only be conducted in the presence of the parent or legal guardian.
- 7.4 Access to the child by the alleged perpetrator must be stopped with immediate effect.
- 7.5 At all times the child's welfare must be of primary concern.

8. Steps to be taken by Bowls SA representative:

- 8.1 Obtain and record details of the alleged offence noting matters such as dates, time, facts, observations and any statements made by the child in the presence of their parent / guardian.
- 8.2 Record the child's name and contact details.
- 8.3 **Immediately** advise the President or in his/her absence the Vice-President.
- 8.4 In the event such abuse was of a sexual nature or of physical abuse report the matter to Childline or the South African Police Services (SAPS). Note that this is a legal requirement and is not negotiable. The relevant authorities will handle such calls in the appropriate manner they have been trained to do.

Key roles for individuals involved in meeting with the child involved:

- Listen sympathetically. Take seriously any concerns raised.
- Record as much detail as can be attained using the child's record of events as closely as those described by the child.
- It is **not** the duty to investigate.
- Where appropriate contact Childline or SAPS.
- Always ensure that the parent / guardian is present at all times you have contact with the child save in the event where the alleged perpetrator is one of the afore-mentioned persons in which event an accredited Social Worker must be present at all times.
- Re-assure the child as their parents / guardians that they will not be discriminated against in any manner even if the alleged perpetrator may have insinuated such actions. Support children, parents or other person party to the allegation.
- Keep the alleged perpetrator away from any contact with the child and or their parents / guardians or any officials connected to the event or incident. Do not approach the alleged abuser.
- Be guided by the principle that the best interest of the child must be paramount at all times.
- Do not ask questions other than those needed for clarification.
- Do not speculate or make assumptions.



SAFE GUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

APRIL 2020

- Do not make negative comments about the alleged abuser.
- Do not make promises.

9. Steps to be taken by the President / Vice-President of Bowls SA.

- 9.1 Immediately upon the receipt of such alleged claim, call for all information relevant to the event.
- 9.2 Based on the weight of evidence presented to them may call for the suspension of the alleged perpetrator from Bowls SA pending a formal enquiry.
- 9.3 Contact a Social worker from a Child protection organization such as Child Welfare Society, the Department of Social Development or the Child Protection Officer of the SAP. **(Ref contact details)**
- 9.4 The Social worker will arrange to interview the child in the presence of their parents / guardians.
- 9.5 Having conducted such interview, the Social worker will advise whether in their opinion, child abuse has occurred.
- 9.6 In the event that such abuse is confirmed the President or Vice-President will arrange for the necessary disciplinary steps to be taken in accordance with laid out procedures and processes.
- 9.7 The alleged perpetrator shall be afforded all the rights available to them in line with accepted disciplinary procedures and processes as established to deal specifically with matters falling under this policy.
- 9.8 The Chairperson of the disciplinary hearing shall be guided and assisted where necessary by an appropriate Social worker so that proper protocol is observed at all times.
- 9.9 As per agreed principles the outcome of such hearing will become binding on the party subject to the discipline with the normal recourse available through the appeal process as laid out by Bowls SA.
- 9.10 It is possible that the SAP or relevant authorities may institute further legal action and Bowls SA will make available to such authorities all documentation recorded or otherwise pertinent to the event.

11. Confidentiality

The issue of confidentiality is of the utmost importance when dealing with issues and concerns regarding possible abuse. Bowls SA event manager's/volunteers must exercise extreme vigilance in protecting information and must pass on this information via the reporting process as described. Any matters regarding the abuse or the matter in general must only be discussed within the above mentioned reporting structure. The status of the child suspected of being abused should not be disclosed to any persons outside of the reporting structure without the informed written consent of the child.

12. Implementation of this Policy

Bowls SA will ensure that this policy is widely disseminated to all relevant persons.



SAFE GUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

APRIL 2020

It is the responsibility of every manager, official, and event organiser to ensure that they are aware of the policy.

13. Monitoring and Evaluation

Bowls SA recognises the importance of monitoring this policy and will ensure that it is effectively and Impartially applied at all times. It reserves the right to amend this policy as needed and undertakes to advise all stakeholders of such changes.