

Child Safe Policy

Bendigo East Swimming Club (BESC)

Effective: 1 July 2025

Review Date: 30 June 2026

1. Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

Bendigo East Swimming Club (BESC) is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. We have zero tolerance for child abuse and harm. Our club supports and respects all children, as well as our staff, volunteers, and families.

We are committed to:

- The cultural safety of Aboriginal children
- The cultural and linguistic diversity of all children
- Providing a safe and inclusive environment for children with disability
- Upholding the rights of all children to feel heard, safe, respected, and empowered

2. Purpose of this Policy

This policy outlines how BESC will comply with the Child Safe Standards under the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) and foster a safe environment for children and young people participating in our swimming club activities.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all:

- Committee members and officials
- Coaches and assistant coaches
- Volunteers
- Parents and carers involved in club activities
- Children and young people participating in any club program

BESC is committed to creating a culturally safe environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, respecting their cultural identity, and fostering inclusion.

4. Our Child Safety Principles

- The best interests of the child are always paramount
- All children have the right to be heard, feel safe, and be safe
- Child safety is everyone's responsibility

- Families and communities play a vital role in promoting child wellbeing
- Diversity and inclusion are integral to our values
- We are committed to continuous improvement in child safety

5. Embedding a Child Safe Culture (Standard 2)

BESC embeds child safety through:

- Clear leadership commitment
- Ongoing training for all staff and volunteers
- A publicly available Code of Conduct
- Risk management practices
- Regular monitoring by the Committee

The Committee appoints a Child Safety Officer responsible for implementation, record-keeping, and responding to safety concerns.

6. Involving Families and Communities (Standard 4)

BESC acknowledges the role of families and the broader community in keeping children safe.

We:

- Provide parents with child safety information during enrolment and at the beginning of each season
- Invite families to attend annual briefings on club policies and expectations
- Encourage family input into reviews of child safety procedures
- Communicate clearly about our governance, complaints handling, and risk management

BESC will invite families to provide feedback through annual surveys and community forums. A summary of the club's governance structure and contact pathways will be made available on the website and in club welcome packs.

7. Equity and Inclusion (Standard 5)

BESC recognises and celebrates the diversity of all children, including:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
- Children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- LGBTIQ+ children
- Children with disability
- Children with mental health concerns or complex needs

We are committed to:

- Making reasonable adjustments so all children can participate safely
- Avoiding discrimination in any form
- Promoting an inclusive culture through language, representation, and practice
- Providing inclusive programming and culturally appropriate support for children from all backgrounds
- Making information accessible in multiple formats if required

8. Recruitment, Screening and Supervision (Standard 6)

We ensure child safety in recruitment and supervision by:

- Requiring Working with Children Checks (WWCCs) for all staff, volunteers, and committee members working with children
- Conducting reference checks and screening interviews
- Maintaining a register of WWCCs, reviewed quarterly by the Child Safety Officer
- Removing or investigating individuals who do not meet our standards
- Including child safety responsibilities in advertisements and role descriptions
- Providing formal inductions and supervising all new volunteers

9. Empowering Children and Young People (Standard 3)

BESC empowers children by:

- Encouraging them to speak up if they feel unsafe
- Providing child-friendly information about their rights and the club's safety processes
- Seeking their input through feedback surveys, suggestion boxes, and informal conversations
- Creating a culture where children are listened to and respected

10. Complaints and Concerns (Standard 7)

Our complaints handling process is:

- Clear and accessible to children and families
- Child-focused and respectful of confidentiality
- Supported by multiple reporting pathways, including direct reporting to the Child Safety Officer, anonymous suggestions, or via email

All reports are taken seriously, documented, and responded to within 48 hours.

11. Education and Training (Standard 8)

All staff will receive annual training on:

- Identifying signs of abuse and neglect
- Responding to disclosures
- The Child Safe Standards
- Trauma-informed and culturally responsive practice

Training records are maintained by the Child Safety Officer.

12. Safe Physical and Online Environments (Standard 9)

BESC provides safe environments by:

- Ensuring active supervision at all training sessions and events
- Minimising one-on-one contact between adults and children
- Requiring all one-on-one coaching to occur within line of sight of others
- Establishing rules for communication:
 - No private messaging between coaches/volunteers and children
 - Club-approved communication channels only
 - Parental consent required for all photography or videography
 - Monitoring of all online club communications

13. Continuous Improvement (Standard 10)

The Committee will complete an annual review of this Child Safe Policy and related procedures.

This will include:

- A Child Safe Standards Self-Assessment
- Review of any incidents, feedback, or complaints
- Updates to reflect changes in law or club operations
- Feedback actively sought from children and families as part of the review cycle

14. Documentation and Related Policies (Standard 11)

All child safety policies and procedures are documented, accessible to all members, and reviewed annually to ensure effectiveness and compliance with current standards.

This policy is supported by the following documents:

- Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Member Protection Policy
- Complaint Handling and Incident Reporting Procedure
- Working with Children Check Register and Screening Guidelines
- Risk Management Plan (Child Safety Focus)
- Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

- Photography and Social Media Policy
- Inclusion and Equity Policy
- Training Register and Induction Checklist
- Annual Child Safe Self-Assessment Report Template

All policies are available upon request or via the club's website.

15. Review Schedule

Version	Date Adopted	Next Review	Approved By
1.0	1 July 2025	30 June 2026	BESC Committee