SOUTH AUSTRALIAN LITTLE ATHLETICS ASSOCIATION

South Australian Child Safety Compliance Guide

Little Athletics SA is committed to providing a safe, welcoming and child-safe environment for all children and young people participating in Little Athletics.

Little Athletics SA has adopted the Australian Athletics Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy as the overarching child safeguarding policy for our sport. This guide provides additional South Australian information for Clubs, members, volunteers, officials, coaches, parents and guardians.

It is intended to help Clubs understand their practical obligations in South Australia, including Working with Children Checks, mandatory reporting, Child Safe Environments compliance and escalation pathways.

This guide does not replace the Australian Athletics Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy or Australian Athletics Code of Conduct. It is a local South Australian guide to help Clubs apply those policies in practice.

1. Overarching policy framework

The following policies and frameworks apply to child safeguarding in Little Athletics:

- Australian Athletics Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy;
- Australian Athletics Code of Conduct;
- Australian Athletics National Integrity Framework policies;
- South Australian child protection and child safe environment laws;
- Little Athletics SA operational guidance and Club requirements.

Where there is any inconsistency between a local LASA document and the Australian Athletics or National Integrity Framework policies, the Australian Athletics and National Integrity Framework position will apply.

2. Working with Children Checks

In South Australia, people who work or volunteer with children are generally required to hold a valid Working with Children Check.

A Working with Children Check is required for people aged 14 years and over who undertake child-related work as an employee or volunteer for more than 7 days in a year, any child-related work involving overnight stays, or close personal contact with a child with disability.

For Little Athletics Clubs, this may include, depending on the role and level of contact with children:

- committee members;
- coaches;
- age group managers;
- officials;

- team managers;
- regular volunteers;
- staff;
- Board members or others involved in child-related services or activities.

A South Australian Working with Children Check is valid for five years. Volunteers can apply for a volunteer Working with Children Check at no cost.

Clubs should ensure that relevant volunteers and personnel have a current Working with Children Check before commencing child-related duties and should maintain appropriate records of checks.

3. If a person does not hold a valid Working with Children Check

A person who needs a Working with Children Check must not start or continue in a child-related role until a valid check has been confirmed.

If a Club becomes aware that a person's Working with Children Check has expired, been refused, suspended or cancelled, or that the person is not allowed to work with children, the Club must immediately remove that person from any child-related role or activity.

The Club should notify Little Athletics SA as soon as possible and seek guidance on any further action required.

4. Mandatory reporting

Any person who forms a reasonable suspicion that a child or young person is, or may be, at risk of harm should report the concern.

If there is an immediate threat to a child or young person, call 000.

In South Australia, suspected child abuse or neglect should be reported to the Child Abuse Report Line.

> **Child Abuse Report Line: 13 14 78**
> Availability: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Reporting to LASA, Australian Athletics or Sport Integrity Australia does not replace any legal obligation to report suspected harm to the Department for Child Protection or Police.

5. Child Safe Environments compliance

South Australian organisations that work with children and young people must provide child-safe environments.

This means Clubs may need to have appropriate child-safe policies and procedures, meet Working with Children Check requirements, and lodge a Child Safe Environments Compliance Statement with the Department of Human Services where required.

Clubs should make sure they understand their own obligations and keep any required compliance statement up to date.

Child-safe policies and procedures should be reviewed at least every five years, and a new compliance statement should be lodged when they are reviewed and updated.

Lodging a Child Safe Environments Compliance Statement is free.

Little Athletics SA will continue to provide Clubs with practical guidance and links to relevant South Australian Government information.

6. Club responsibilities

Little Athletics Clubs play an important role in keeping children and young people safe.

Clubs should:

- make sure relevant volunteers and personnel have current Working with Children Checks;
- follow the Australian Athletics Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy;
- treat children and young people with respect;
- avoid unsupervised one-on-one situations where possible;
- notify LASA of child safety matters where appropriate;
- keep records of any concerns and actions taken.

7. Child safe conduct expectations

All Clubs, volunteers, officials, coaches, parents, guardians and members are expected to follow the Australian Athletics Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Australian Athletics Code of Conduct.

In practice, adults involved in Little Athletics should:

- treat children and young people with respect, fairness and dignity;
- keep appropriate boundaries;
- use positive and age-appropriate language;
- avoid favouritism, humiliation, intimidation, bullying or inappropriate discipline;
- avoid being alone with a child or young person where possible;
- ensure any physical contact is appropriate and necessary for coaching, officiating, first aid, safety or participation;
- ensure online communication with children and young people is appropriate, transparent and includes a parent or guardian wherever possible;
- never engage in secretive, private or inappropriate communication with a child or young person;
- only take, store or share images of children and young people in line with consent requirements and relevant Australian Athletics policies;
- avoid transporting children or young people alone unless there is parent or guardian consent or an unavoidable safety reason;
- report any child safety concern promptly through the appropriate pathway.

Any conduct that may breach child safety requirements should be reported and managed through the appropriate LASA, Australian Athletics, Sport Integrity Australia, Child Abuse Report Line or Police pathway.

8. Club Child Safety Officer

Each Little Athletics Club should appoint a Child Safety Officer or nominated child safety contact.

This person should understand the Australian Athletics Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy, this South Australian Child Safety Compliance Guide, and the Club's reporting process.

The Child Safety Officer should:

- be a first point of contact for child safety concerns at Club level;
- help make sure relevant volunteers and personnel have current Working with Children Checks;
- support the Club to apply child safe practices;
- help escalate concerns to LASA, Australian Athletics, Sport Integrity Australia, the Child Abuse Report Line or Police where required;
- help keep appropriate confidential records of child safety matters.

9. Training and education

Clubs should make sure committee members, coaches, officials, age group managers and regular volunteers understand their child safety responsibilities.

This may include completing child safe environment, safeguarding or Play by the Rules training, and regularly refreshing their knowledge of child safe practices, reporting obligations and escalation pathways.

Child safe environment training is not legally required in South Australia, but it is strongly encouraged as good practice for people working or volunteering with children and young people.

10. Images, travel and direct communication

Clubs should get parent or guardian consent where required for things like photography, video, travel, overnight stays, medical treatment or direct communication with children and young people.

Communication with children and young people should be appropriate, transparent and include a parent or guardian wherever possible.

Images and videos of children and young people should only be taken, stored and used in line with Australian Athletics policies and consent requirements.

11. Practical escalation pathway

If a child safety concern arises, Clubs and members should use the following pathway.

Immediate danger

If a child or young person is in immediate danger, call 000.

Suspected abuse, neglect or risk of harm

If there is a reasonable suspicion that a child or young person is, or may be, at risk of harm, contact the Child Abuse Report Line on 13 14 78.

This should occur even if the matter is also being referred to LASA, Australian Athletics or Sport Integrity Australia.

Child safeguarding or integrity matter within athletics

If the matter relates to Little Athletics or athletics more broadly, it may also need to be reported through Australian Athletics or Sport Integrity Australia.

This may include concerns about:

- child abuse or grooming;
- inappropriate conduct towards a child or young person;
- breaches of child safe practices;
- bullying, harassment or discrimination involving children or young people;
- inappropriate communication or online contact;
- misuse of images of children;
- breaches of the Australian Athletics Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy.

Local Club issue or uncertainty

If a Club is unsure how to manage a concern, or if the issue relates to local Club behaviour or operations, the Club should contact Little Athletics SA for guidance.

> **Little Athletics SA contact:** Steve Baldas, Chief Executive Officer, 08 8352 8133.
>
> **Australian Athletics integrity contact:** https://www.athletics.com.au/info-hub/sportsintegrity/
>
> **Sport Integrity Australia:** complaints and safeguarding reports can be made through Sport Integrity Australia where the matter falls within its jurisdiction.

12. Record keeping

Clubs should keep clear and confidential records of child safety concerns, reports and actions taken.

Records should include:

- the date and time of the concern;
- who was involved, where appropriate;
- what was observed, disclosed or reported;
- what action the Club took;
- whether CARL, Police, LASA, Australian Athletics or Sport Integrity Australia were contacted;
- any follow-up needed.

Records must be kept confidential and only shared with people who need to know to manage the matter appropriately.

13. Important reminder

Child safety is everyone's responsibility.

Clubs, volunteers, officials, coaches, parents and guardians all have a role to play in keeping children and young people safe.

Where there is any doubt, Clubs and members should prioritise the safety and wellbeing of the child or young person, report concerns promptly, and seek guidance from LASA, Australian Athletics, Sport Integrity Australia or the relevant South Australian authority.

Appendix 1 — Step-by-step process for Club Child Safety Officers

If a child safety concern arises, the Club Child Safety Officer or nominated Club child safety contact should follow these steps.

1. Ensure immediate safety

If a child or young person is in immediate danger, or urgent medical help is needed, call 000 immediately.

Where it is safe to do so, remove the child or young person from harm and stay with them until help arrives.

2. Stay calm and support the child

Stay calm, listen carefully and reassure the child or young person that they have done the right thing by speaking up.

Use neutral language and avoid leading questions.

Do not promise secrecy, as some matters may need to be reported.

3. Report to the appropriate authority

If there is a reasonable suspicion that a child or young person is, or may be, at risk of harm, contact the Child Abuse Report Line on 13 14 78.

If the matter involves immediate danger, contact 000.

If the matter relates to Little Athletics or athletics more broadly, it may also need to be reported to Little Athletics SA, Australian Athletics or Sport Integrity Australia.

Reporting to Little Athletics SA, Australian Athletics or Sport Integrity Australia does not replace any legal obligation to report suspected harm to the Department for Child Protection or Police.

4. Record factual notes

Make clear, factual and confidential notes as soon as possible.

Record:

- the date and time;
- who was involved;
- what was said, observed or reported;
- where it happened;
- any witnesses;
- what action was taken;
- who was contacted;
- any follow-up required.

Do not include assumptions, opinions or rumours.

5. Preserve evidence

Preserve any relevant evidence, such as messages, photos, screenshots or physical items.

Do not alter, delete, forward or share evidence except with authorised authorities or investigators.

6. Do not investigate or confront

The Club Child Safety Officer or nominated Club contact may gather enough basic information to understand what has been reported, ensure the child's immediate safety, and decide which reporting pathway is required.

However, Clubs should not investigate child safety concerns themselves.

This means Clubs should not:

- repeatedly question the child or young person;
- interview witnesses;
- test whether the concern is true;
- confront the alleged person involved;
- attempt to mediate or resolve serious child safety concerns internally.

The Club's role is to listen, support, record the facts, preserve any relevant information, and report or escalate the matter through the appropriate pathway.

Investigations should be left to the appropriate authorities, such as Police, the Department for Child Protection, Australian Athletics, Sport Integrity Australia or another authorised body.

7. Notify the appropriate Club and LASA contacts

After immediate safety and reporting obligations have been addressed, notify the appropriate Club contact and Little Athletics SA.

This may include the Club President, Club Secretary or another nominated Club contact.

> **Little Athletics SA contact:**
> Steve Baldas, Chief Executive Officer
> 08 8352 8133

Only factual information should be shared, and only with people who need to know.

8. Speak with parents or carers where appropriate and safe

Parents or carers should usually be informed where it is appropriate and safe to do so.

If the concern involves a parent, carer or family member, seek guidance from CARL, Police or another appropriate authority before contacting the family.

9. Provide welfare support

Where needed, help the child, family, volunteer or Club access appropriate support.

This may include medical support, counselling, crisis support, Club support or referral to appropriate services.

10. Maintain confidentiality

Child safety matters must be treated confidentially.

Information should only be shared with people who need to know in order to manage the matter safely and appropriately.

Records must be kept secure.

11. Follow up and debrief

Confirm whether any further action is required by CARL, Police, Australian Athletics, Sport Integrity Australia or Little Athletics SA.

Complete any required Club or LASA incident records.

Offer debriefing or support to staff, volunteers or Club personnel involved, while maintaining confidentiality.

12. Review and improve

After the matter has been resolved or referred to the appropriate pathway, the Club and Little Athletics SA may review the response process.

This should be done carefully and confidentially, with the aim of improving prevention, education and future responses.