

RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OR CONCERNS OF CHILD ABUSE

What do you need to do?

1. Respond where a child is at risk of immediate harm

- Call 000 for medical and/or police assistance where there are urgent health or safety concerns.
- Administer first aid if required.
- Separate at-risk child and any others who pose a risk to their safety (eg an accused person).
- Notify policy@netballnsw.com and an appropriate Affiliate contact person for ongoing liaison with the Police.
- If there is no immediate harm, go to Action 2 - Reporting.

2. Report where you suspect on reasonable grounds a child is at risk

- Report to Police as soon as possible where you suspect, on reasonable grounds that a child is, or is at risk of being abused and/or neglected.
- If you have information about a possible child abuse situation it is a legal requirement that you report this to police.
- The allegation must be documented.
- Notify policy@netballnsw.com and the relevant Affiliate.

3. Contact relevant organisations for further advice

- You must contact the Police and/or the NSW Department of Communities and Justice to determine what information can be shared with parents/guardians, and who should lead this contact (for example the police, child protection department, Affiliate and/or Netball NSW representative).
- The Police and/or the NSW Department of Communities and Justice may advise that the parents/guardians are not to be contacted in circumstances where they are alleged to have engaged in the abuse.

4. Provide support to any child that has experienced abuse

- Put protective mechanisms in place to keep the child safe whilst maintaining routine and keeping them involved in sport as far as possible.
- Ensure the person providing support does so within the scope of their role. For example, appropriate support in the circumstances may include making the child feel safe and assisting them to continue playing netball in a safe environment.
- Maintain a calm and open manner when listening to any allegations and disclosures.
- Avoid seeking detailed information or asking leading questions which should be conducted by the appropriate authorities.

- Further support for the child, relevant adults, and any others involved may be required including a referral to a wellbeing or healthcare professional such as [Sports Chaplaincy Australia](#).

Frequently Asked Questions

What is classified as Child Abuse?

Child Abuse is the mistreatment of a child that:

- Causes, is causing or is likely to cause any detrimental effect to a Child's physical, psychological, or emotional wellbeing; or
- Does, or is likely to, endanger a Child's physical or emotional health, development, or wellbeing, whether through a:
 - Single act, omission, or circumstance; or
 - Series or combination of acts, omissions, or circumstances and includes physical abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, and/or exposure to domestic and family violence.

For further Child Abuse Definitions, see [Schedule 1 of the Netball NSW Child Safeguarding Policy](#).

As a person involved in netball, what should I do?

As a person involved in netball you play a crucial role in protecting children. You must follow the actions set out within this document when responding to any Child Abuse allegations. As a general rule of thumb, if there are instances or suspicions of harm to children, then you should report it. This is the responsibility of the individual, rather than the organisation.

How are these obligations different to mandatory reporting obligations?

Under NSW Child Protection legislation Netball NSW and/or Affiliate staff and volunteers are not mandatory reporters in most cases. This is unless they are providing care for children (for example an overnight camp or trip which is longer than two (2) nights in duration).

However, given Netball NSW and Affiliates provide child-related services, any person who is employed (whether as a paid employee, volunteer, or contractor) and as a result of their position has the ability to reduce or remove a serious risk of Child Abuse they must do so in accordance with Failure to Protect obligations.

What is a Failure to Report?

Failure to Report means the legislative requirement under section 316A of the *Crimes Act 1900* (NSW). This means where an adult knows, believes, or reasonably ought to know that a Child Abuse offence has occurred, and who knows, believes, or reasonably ought to know that they have information that might be of material assistance in securing the apprehension of the offender or the prosecution or conviction of the offender for that offence and who fails to provide that information to a member of the NSW Police Force is guilty of an offence.

Who do Failure to Report obligations apply to?

All adults are subject to Failure to Report obligations. This means that they will have committed an offence if they fail to provide information of a Child Abuse offence to NSW Police without reasonable excuse.

Please contact policy@netballnsw.com for further advice and assistance