

Child Safety Code of Conduct

Purpose

We seek to provide a safe, fair and inclusive environment for everyone involved in Pony Club.

This includes providing everyone involved in Pony Club, including children and young people, with a positive and enriching sporting environment that promotes their participation and development in the sport.

We are committed to safeguarding everyone involved in our organisation and in our sport including children and young people in our care and ensuring that they feel and are safe. Accordingly, we wish to ensure that our staff, members and volunteers strive for the highest possible standards with respect to safeguarding children and young people from abuse. To that end we have developed this Code of Conduct to identify and prevent behaviour that may be harmful to the children and young people in our sport.

Part of this commitment to children and young people in our sport means that we are inclusive of those from a range of different backgrounds. This includes but is not limited to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, children and young people with a disability, LGBTI children and young people, and children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Developed to protect children and young people engaged in Pony Club, these guidelines have been formally approved and endorsed by our Board of Directors.

As part of your commitment to observing these codes of behaviour you will be required to abide by this Code.

We consider a failure to observe these guidelines as misconduct, and will take appropriate disciplinary action. In addition to any internal disciplinary proceedings, we will report to the police all instances in which a breach of the law has or may have occurred.

Who is bound by this Code

All persons involved in our organisation and in our sport, including boards and committees of management, staff and executives, coaches, parents and volunteers, are required to observe this Code of Conduct.



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All people involved with Pony Club Australia are responsible for promoting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people by:

- Adhering to our Child Safe Policy, this Code of Conduct and other Pony Club Australia policies
- Taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- Treating everyone with respect, including listening to and valuing their ideas and opinions
- Welcoming all children and their families and carers and being inclusive
- Respecting cultural, religious and political differences and acting in a culturally sensitive way, particularly when interacting with children who are Aboriginal or otherwise culturally or linguistically diverse and those with a disability
- Modelling appropriate adult behaviour
- Listening to children and responding to them appropriately
- Reporting and acting on any breaches of this Code of Conduct, complaints or concerns appropriately and treat them seriously and with respect.
- Complying with our guidelines on physical contact with children
- Working with children in an open and transparent way – other adults should always know about the work you are doing with children
- Respecting the privacy of children and their families, and only disclosing information to people who have a need to know.

Pony Club Australia staff and volunteers **MUST NOT**:

- Seek to use children in any way to meet the needs of adults
- Ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse
- Use prejudice, oppressive behaviour or language with children
- Engage in rough physical games
- Discriminate on the basis of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability or sexuality
- Initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or do things of a personal nature that children can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- Develop 'special' relationships with specific children or show favouritism
- Have unauthorised contact with children and young people online or by phone.

By observing these standards you acknowledge your responsibility to immediately report any breach of this code to the Pony Club Australia Chief Executive Officer. Please refer to the reporting policy.

This Code of Conduct will be reviewed by Pony Club Australia annually.

Key Requirements

We require certain standards of behaviour of **all persons involved** in our organisation and in our sport.

Our codes of behaviour are underpinned by the following core values:

- To act within the rules and spirit of our sport.
- To display respect and courtesy towards everyone involved in our sport and prevent discrimination and harassment.
- To prioritise the safety and well-being of children and young people involved in our sport.
- To report any behaviour that is in breach of this code to help prevent the abuse of children and young people in our sport.
- To encourage and support opportunities for participation in all aspects of our sport.

Sexual misconduct

Under no circumstances is any form of 'sexual behaviour' to occur between, with, or in the presence of, children or young people. Engaging in sexual behaviour while participating in our sport is prohibited even if the young persons involved may be above the legal age of consent.

'Sexual behaviour' needs to be interpreted widely, to encompass the entire range of actions that would reasonably be considered to be sexual in nature, including but not limited to:

- 'contact behaviour', such as sexual intercourse, kissing, fondling, sexual penetration or exploiting a child through prostitution
- 'non-contact behaviour', such as flirting, sexual innuendo, inappropriate text messaging, inappropriate photography or exposure to pornography or nudity.

Positive guidance [Discipline]

We strive to ensure that children and young people participating in our sport are aware of the acceptable limits of their behaviour so that we can provide a positive experience for all participants. However, there are times when personnel may be required to use appropriate techniques and behaviour management strategies to ensure:

- an effective and positive environment;
- the safety and/or wellbeing of children, young people or personnel participating in sport.

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We require **all persons** to use strategies that are fair, respectful and appropriate to the developmental stage of the children or young people involved. The child or young person needs to be provided with clear directions and given an opportunity to redirect their misbehaviour in a positive manner.

Under no circumstances are **any persons involved** to take disciplinary action involving physical punishment or any form of treatment that could reasonably be considered as degrading, cruel, frightening or humiliating.

Use of language and tone of voice

Language and tone of voice used in the presence of children and young people should:

- provide clear direction, boost their confidence, encourage or affirm them
- not be harmful to children – in this respect, avoid language that is:
 - discriminatory, racist or sexist
 - derogatory, belittling or negative, for example, by calling a child a ‘loser’ or telling them they are ‘too fat’
 - intended to threaten or frighten
 - profane or sexual.

Supervision

All persons are responsible for supervising the children and young people engaged in sport to ensure those participants:

- engage positively with our sport,
- behave appropriately toward one another,
- are in a safe environment and are protected from external threats.

All persons are required to avoid one-to-one unsupervised situations with children and young people, and (where possible) to conduct all activities and/or discussions with members in view of other personnel.

Use of electronic or online communications

Wherever possible, email and text messages sent to a child or young person should be copied to their parent or guardian.

Where a parent is not included in the communication:

- Restrict such communication to issues directly associated with delivering our sport, such as advising that a scheduled event is cancelled.
- Limit the personal or social content in such communications to what is required to convey the service-related message in a polite, friendly manner. In particular, do not communicate anything that a reasonable observer could view as being of a sexual nature.
- Do not use such communication to promote unauthorised 'social' activity or to arrange unauthorised contact.
- Do not request a child or young person to keep a communication a secret from their parents.

Giving gifts

Giving of gifts by **all persons** to children and young members of Pony Club is subject to parents or other responsible adults being made aware of any gift given.

Photographs of children and young people

Note that the general rule is that where a sport or sporting activity is taking place in public it is legal for anyone (including parents) to take pictures of sporting activities without permission. There are some exceptions to this rule depending on the state or territory law where the photo is deemed indecent or offensive and it may constitute an offence. For private property the general rule is permission is required and restrictions on photography can be imposed (for sporting grounds for example). Please refer to the appropriate state, territory and national legislation for specifics and incorporate as necessary into your sport's policy.

Pony Club permits photography under these guidelines:

- children and young members are to be photographed while involved in Pony Club only if:
 - the member's parent or guardian has given prior approval. This may be an annual consent;
 - the context is directly related to participation in our sport;
 - the child is appropriately dressed and posed;

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- the image is taken in the presence of other personnel.
- Images are not to be distributed to anyone outside Pony Club without the consent of the parent.
- Images (digital or hard copy) are to be stored in a manner that prevents unauthorised access by others
- Images are not to be exhibited on our websites or in publications without parental knowledge and approval (through a signed image consent form), or such images must be presented in a manner that de-identifies the child or young person. Any caption or accompanying text may need to be checked so that it does not identify a child or young person if such identification is potentially detrimental.

Physical contact with children and young people

Any physical contact with children and young people must be appropriate to the delivery of Pony Club such as positioning the rider in the saddle, assisting mounting and based on the needs of the child or young person rather than on the needs of our personnel.

Under no circumstances should any of our personnel have contact with children or young people participating in our sport that:

- involves touching:
 - of genitals;
 - of buttocks;
 - of the breast area;
 - that is other than as part of delivering medical or allied health services
- would appear to a reasonable observer to have a sexual connotation;
- is intended to cause pain or distress to the child or young person – for example corporal punishment;
- is overly physical (for example, wrestling, horseplay, tickling or other roughhousing);
- is unnecessary (for example, assisting with toileting when a child does not require assistance);
- is initiated against the wishes of the child or young person, except if such contact may be necessary to prevent injury to the child/young person or to others, in which case:
 - physical restraint should be a last resort;
 - the level of force used must be appropriate to the specific circumstances, and aimed solely at restraining the child or young person to prevent harm to themselves or others; and
 - the incident must be reported to management as soon as possible.

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All persons are required to report to management (state, zone, club management as appropriate) any physical contact initiated by a child or young person that is sexual and/or inappropriate, for example, acts of physical aggression, as soon as possible, to enable the situation to be managed in the interests of the safety of the child or young person, our personnel and any other participants.

Overnight stays and sleeping arrangements

Overnight stays are to occur only with the authorisation of the relevant Executive or President and of the parents/guardians of the children or young people involved. Such approval needs to be prior written approval. This can be by electronic messaging formats such as email or SMS

Practices and behaviour by **all persons involved** during an overnight stay must be consistent with the practices and behaviour expected during delivery of Pony Club at other times.

Standards of conduct that must be observed by **all persons involved** during an overnight stay include:

- providing children and young people with privacy when bathing and dressing;
- observing appropriate dress standards when children and young people are present – such as no exposure to adult nudity;
- not allowing children or young people to be exposed to pornographic material, for example, through movies, television, the Internet or magazines;
- not leaving children under the supervision or protection of unauthorised persons such as hotel staff or friends;
- not involving sleeping arrangements that may compromise the safety of children and young people such as unsupervised sleeping arrangements, or an adult sleeping in the same bed as a child or young person;
- the right of children to contact their parents, or others, if they feel unsafe, uncomfortable or distressed during the stay;
- parents expecting that their children can, if they wish, make contact.

Change room arrangements

All persons involved are required to supervise children and young people in change rooms while balancing that requirement with a child or young person's right to privacy. In addition:

- avoid one-to-one situations with a child or young person in a change room area;
- all persons need to ensure adequate supervision in 'public' change rooms when they are used;
- all persons need to provide the level of supervision required for preventing abuse by members of the public, adult service users, peer service users, or general misbehaviour, while also respecting a child's privacy;
- female personnel are not to enter male change rooms and vice versa.

Use of, possession or supply of alcohol or drugs

While on duty, **all persons** must not:

- use, possess or be under the influence of an illegal drug;
- use or be under the influence of alcohol;
- be incapacitated by any other legal drug such as prescription or over-the-counter drugs;
- supply alcohol or drugs (including tobacco) to children and young people participating in our sport.

Transporting children

Children and young people are to be transported only in circumstances that are directly related to Pony Club activities. Children are to be transported only with prior authorisation from the child's parent/guardian. Such approval needs to be in writing, which can be by email or SMS.

Gaining approval involves providing information about the proposed journey, including:

- the form of transport proposed, such as private car, taxi, self-drive bus, bus with driver, train, plane or boat;
- the reason for the journey;
- the route to be followed, including any stops or side trips;
- details of anyone who will be present during the journey other than Pony Club personnel.



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Communication

We communicate our Code of Conduct requirements to **all persons** in our organisation, including updates or alterations to our Code and behaviour requirements.

Monitoring and Review

This document will be reviewed annually, in consultation with stakeholders. Some circumstances may trigger an early review, this includes but not limited to legislative changes, organisational changes, incident outcomes and other matters deemed appropriate by the Board and/or Chief Executive Officer. We retain records of each review undertaken. Such records may include minutes of meetings and documentation of changes to policies and procedures that result from a review.