



Child Safety Policy

Policy statement

All children who are members of the Townsville Citizens Band Association Children have a right to feel safe and to be safe. We have zero tolerance for child abuse in any form, and the welfare of our child members will always be a primary priority. We are committed to maintaining a child-safe and child-friendly environment where children can feel safe and have fun.

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate the organisation's strong commitment to child safety by the members and management committee (called the 'Committee' in this policy) and to provide a statement of the policies and practices that the Townsville Citizens Band Association has developed to keep everyone safe from harm, including abuse.

2. Scope

This policy applies to the members, volunteer helpers, other individuals involved in our organisation and the Committee of the Townsville Citizens Band Association.

3. Key Principles

- 3.1. We maintain a safe environment to protect children and young people from harm and prevent members from abusing their authority and trust.
- 3.2. The ongoing safety of our child members must be a primary focus of all the Committee's decision-making.
- 3.3. All Committee members should know and understand their legislative obligations.
- 3.4. All Association members must adhere to the following code of conduct:
 - a) Always act in the best interests of the child.
 - b) Treat all children with respect and dignity.
 - c) Refrain from any behaviour that could be perceived as abusive or inappropriate.
 - d) Avoid situations where they are alone with a child under 16 years of age, unless absolutely necessary and appropriate.
 - e) Report any concerns of child sexual abuse to the Queensland Police Service immediately upon forming a reasonable suspicion.

4. Children's rights to safety and participation

We encourage child members to express their views, and we listen to their suggestions, especially on matters that directly affect them. We actively encourage all child members to 'have a say' about things that are important to them. We will listen to and act on any safety concerns they or their parents raise with us.

5. Obligation to protect

- 5.1. Under section 229BB of the *Queensland Criminal Code Act 1899*, it is a criminal offence for an accountable person who knows of a significant risk that an offender associated with the organisation will commit a child sexual offence to fail to take action to remove the risk. The maximum penalty for this offence is five years imprisonment.
- 5.2. In our organisation, an 'accountable person' includes Committee members, adult members, and volunteers.
- 5.3. To mitigate the risk of child sexual offences being committed in connection with our Association, the Committee will:
 - a) ensure this policy is communicated to members and included in orientation materials for incoming Committee members;
 - b) review this child safety policy regularly to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with legal and regulatory requirements;
 - c) seek feedback from members, volunteers and families to inform the ongoing improvement of our child safety practices;
 - d) ensure that all members of the Committee have a Blue Card or valid exemption when they become a Committee member;
 - e) ensure that adults who routinely interact with children under 16 years of age hold a valid Blue Card or valid exemption;
 - f) recognises the importance of a risk management approach to minimising the potential for child abuse or harm to occur and uses this to inform our policy, procedures and activity planning;
 - g) proactively manage the risks of abuse to our children whilst they are involved in Association activities; and
 - h) take action upon becoming aware of suspected child sexual assault or grooming behaviour, regardless of the time or location of that behaviour.

6. Mandatory reporting obligations

- 6.1. All adults in Queensland have mandatory obligations, under the *Criminal Code Act 1899*, to report any reasonable suspicions of child sexual abuse to the Queensland Police Service.
- 6.2. A reasonable belief or suspicion that a child under 16 years of age is being or has been sexually abused by an adult triggers the obligation to report. A reasonable belief does not require proof beyond a reasonable doubt.
- 6.3. Reports can be made verbally or in writing and should include all relevant details about the abuse or suspicion.
- 6.4. Failing to report child sexual abuse when one has a reasonable belief is a criminal offence under the *Criminal Code Act 1899* and may result in criminal charges.
- 6.5. Certain exemptions from the obligation to report apply, including cases where the information has already been reported or where the person is aware that the police already know about the abuse.
- 6.6. Failing to report suspected child sexual abuse is not excused due to concern for the perceived interests of the alleged perpetrator or the organisation. Perceived interests include reputation, legal liability or financial status.

6.7. Persons who make a report of suspected child sexual abuse are protected from civil liability. The reporter's identity is kept confidential unless a Court makes an order for disclosure.

7. Legislation:

7.1. Child Protection Act (Qld) 1999

7.2. Criminal Code Act (Qld) 1899