

WORKING WITH CHILDREN POLICY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 AIM OF THE POLICY

Orienteeing Tasmania (OT) is committed to ensuring that the safety, welfare, and well-being of children, young people and other vulnerable persons are maintained at all times during their participation in activities conducted by OT and its member clubs. Children are defined as young people yet to attain the age of 18.

1.2 SCOPE OF THE POLICY

OT's Working with Children Policy applies to all its members, non-member participants and volunteers, and to any employees.

1.3 REVIEW OF THE POLICY

OT's Working with Children Policy and implementation strategies will be updated as issues are identified, and will be reviewed at least annually.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 TASMANIAN LAW

Adults have a moral responsibility to protect children and other vulnerable people. This is made explicit in the provisions of the *Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997*. In addition to identifying specific 'prescribed persons' such as nurses, doctors, teachers, who are required to report their concern about suspected child harm, maltreatment or neglect, the Act [Part 3 section 13(1)] states that:
... An adult who knows, or believes or suspects on reasonable grounds, that a child is suffering from, has suffered or is likely to suffer abuse or neglect has a responsibility to take steps to prevent the occurrence or further occurrence of the abuse or neglect.

The *Registration to Work with Vulnerable People Act 2013* and its *Regulations* (hereinafter called "*The Act*") mandates registration for certain groups of individuals who come into contact with children during their activities. Legal entities such as sporting clubs have a duty under the Act to ensure that relevant persons, such as members, volunteers and employees are registered.

In any relationship with a child, the adult is responsible for protecting the child from abuse or other harm.

OT aims to promote a safe environment for all participating children and to assist all officials, coaches, members, and volunteers, and any employees, to recognise situations in which harm might occur and to follow the appropriate notification procedures when reporting harm.

2.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILD ABUSE

The most common characteristic of all forms of abuse against children is an abuse of power or authority, or a breach of trust.

Child abuse includes:

- physical abuse – can result in non-accidental injuries;
- emotional abuse – can cause psychological or emotional damage;
- neglect – can result in ill health;
- sexual abuse (includes a range of sexual activity and exploitation of children) – can result in physical or psychological damage, or both.

Examples of child abuse include:

- Inappropriate training techniques that give extra physical loads to children as ‘punishment’. (Dangerous to the health of children who are already physically tired; children should be emotionally prepared for any activity in order to perform it confidently, safely and without anxiety.)
- Giving children illegal or inappropriate drugs that may affect their physical or psychological development.
- Talking to children in a derogatory way or demeaning their performance in front of others.
- Inappropriate touching at any time, e.g. when demonstrating techniques or treating injuries.
- Physical aggression.

This list is not exhaustive – merely some examples.

3.0 IMPLEMENTATION

3.1 MANDATORY REGISTRATION

OT will ensure that all persons required to be registered under the Act, or who fill positions deemed required by OT to be registered, complete their registration prior to commencing their child-related activities.

Specifically the Act requires the following persons to be registered:

- **Coaches**, with a defined coaching role, including the Schools Team Coaches, coaches attending the schools camps, coaches involved in Sporting Schools activities, and coaches involved in any other school-based orienteering activity;
- **Managers** of schools teams, including team vehicle drivers travelling with the team even if they are if not in a specific managerial role;
- **Member Protection Officers;**
- **Board Members of Orienteering Tasmania;**
- **Officials** at orienteering events run primarily for children (e.g. Course Planner and Event Controller at specific Schools events such as the regional and state Schools Championships);
- **Volunteers** working at junior development camps

3.2 PREVENTIVE STRATEGIES

OT will seek to implement best practice by employing a range of preventive strategies appropriate to the environments in which children participate in orienteering and its associated activities.

OT will use its most significant resource – informed people – by fostering adults' sense of responsibility to protect children and by increasing their awareness of how abuse and harm can happen and what to look for.

- 3.2.1 **Communication.** Keep members, other participants, and parents of child orienteers informed of OT's Working with Children Policy and preventive strategies and of adults' legal responsibilities. Publish the policy on the OT website, and offer copies of this document on request.
- 3.2.2 **Member protection information officers (MPIOs).** Appoint nationally accredited Member Protection Information Officers (one per club). Publish MPIOs' contact details each year in the e-bulletin and on the OT website.
- 3.2.3 **Incident Reporting.** Continue provision of training in child protection issues for OT's MPIOs. Provide information to those who work with children about how to recognise possible child abuse and their responsibilities under the Act. Ensure procedures are in place and known, so that any allegation of abuse of children would be dealt with appropriately and effectively.
- 3.2.4 **OT Code of Conduct.** Continue publication on the OT website and in other communications with members.
- 3.2.5 **Officials.** Alert coaches and other officials to their position as role models and their significant influence and moral and legal obligations in protecting children, and to their responsibility to commit to implementing risk management strategies developed by OT for child protection.
Coaches: Wherever possible, accredited coaches (who are required to sign Coaches' Code of Conduct) shall be used and OT shall endeavour to maintain an adequate number of such coaches.
- 3.2.6 **Locality selection.** Inform those planning courses for children about any known places, streets or roads to be avoided for safety of children.
- 3.2.7 **Junior Training Camps and Junior and Schools Team Travel - specific provisions:**
 - i) Registration under the Act for adults travelling with teams or sharing accommodation at camps.
 - ii) Compliance with interstate regulations, e.g. if the national junior championships are in NSW or QLD, have the relevant checks done and forms signed by the coaches, managers and other people over the age of 18 who are travelling with the junior team, prior to the teams arriving in QLD or NSW.
 - iii) Appropriate accommodation. For example, privacy for males and females.
 - iv) Gender representation: Team Managers, Coaches and Helpers. Ensure both male and female adults travel with juniors.
 - v) Information to Juniors. Incorporate child protection issues in written and verbal communications with juniors who will travel.
 - vi) Code of Conduct. Manager to continue to ensure OT Code of Conduct and Parental Agreement are signed by junior and parent before team travel; provide copy for parent to keep, together with OT's Working with Children Policy.

3.3 REVIEW OF REGISTRATION

- 3.3.1 The Board of Orienteering Tasmania will ensure that all persons required to register under the Act for the purpose of participating in child-related orienteering activities specified in Clause 3.1 have either completed Registration or have signed the relevant Statutory Declaration prior to taking part in the regulated activity.
- 3.3.2 The Board of Orienteering Tasmania will conduct a regular review of the status of all persons who are required to register under the Act for the purpose of participating in child-related orienteering activities specified in Clause 3.1.
- 3.3.3 Maintain a record of people within Orienteering Tasmania who have *Registration to Work with Vulnerable People*. This record will include registration identification numbers and registration expiry dates.

3.4 FUNDING OF REGISTRATION APPLICATIONS

Where a person involved in Orienteering is required to be registered under the Act as a volunteer in order to fully participate in specific activities, Orienteering Tasmania agrees to reimburse the cost of registration as a volunteer.

3.5 RELATED POLICY INFORMATION

Orienteering Tasmania will apply and enforce this Working with Children Policy in a consistent manner that conforms to policy frameworks of Orienteering Australia.

As a locally developed policy, the Orienteering Tasmania Working with Children policy operates as a complementary policy to Orienteering Australia’s Member Protection Policy.

Breaches or failure to comply with this policy will be managed in accordance with the relevant sections set out in Orienteering Australia’s Member Protection Policy.

Serious breaches will be subject to criminal justice proceedings that could result in fines or other penalties imposed under the act.

A link to Orienteering Australia’s Member Protection Policy can be found on the [Orienteering Tasmania Operational Manual](#) .