

# 5.4 Working with Children Check and Police Check

Reference: SOA\_5.4PP – Working with Children Check and Police Check Policy and Procedure

## 1. POLICY STATEMENT

Special Olympics Australia is committed to the safety and well-being of children, young people and vulnerable people who are involved in our programs. Our athletes have the right to reach their potential in a caring, nurturing and safe environment.

Special Olympics Australia considers all forms of abuse, including emotional, physical, sexual and neglect as unacceptable. We take this responsibility to safeguard our athletes seriously and set expectations on volunteer screening as part of an overall risk management strategy.

The requirement of working with children checks (including state/territory equivalents) and/or police checks for coaches, officials and volunteers reaffirms Special Olympics Australia's commitment to recruiting and selecting the right people to support the organisation.

## 2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to support the objectives of:

- reaffirming Special Olympics Australia's commitment to screening volunteers appropriately to the level of responsibility and risk prior to them starting.
- meeting and/or exceeding the requirements of relevant state/territory child protection legislation where informed by risk management reviews.
- attaining screening practices that are consistent with national standards developed by Volunteering Australia.

## 3. SCOPE

The policy is applicable to all staff and volunteers of Special Olympics Australia.

## 4. DEFINITIONS

Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC)

ACIC's role is to manage the system that Australian police agencies and Accredited Organisations submit police checks through.

Child

A child is a person under the age of 16 years (The Children and Young Persons Act 1998 No 157).

National Police History Check (Police Check)

A police check is the process of running a person's details through a central database of names to match people who have police history information. The police then determine what information can be released, subject to spent conviction legislation and/or information release policies (Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission).

Special Olympics Australia Board

Directors acting as a Board of Directors

Vulnerable Person

A child or an adult who may be unable to take care of themselves, or is unable to protect themselves against harm or

Special Olympics Australia

Building 1, Level 3, 3 Richardson Place, North Ryde NSW 2113

Phone 1300 225 762 | Email [info@specialolympics.com.au](mailto:info@specialolympics.com.au) | [www.specialolympics.com.au](http://www.specialolympics.com.au)

exploitation by reason of age, illness, trauma or disability, or any other reason (Department of Social Services).

#### Working with Children Check (WWCC)

Each state/territory has a different child protection screening procedure and is known under various terms. Within Special Olympics Australia, working with children checks will include the following terms: state working with children checks, blue card, and working with vulnerable person check. Please refer to the Club Leadership Handbook for additional information.

#### Young Person

A young person is defined as a person who is aged 16 years or above but who is under the age of 18 years (The Children and Young Persons Act 1998 No 157).

## 5. RESPONSIBILITIES

### **Chief Executive Officer**

The Chief Executive Officer is accountable to the board for ensuring the principles of a child safe organisation are implemented across the organisation. This includes having appropriate policies and procedures in place, monitored and evaluated on a regular basis.

Where allegations are received, respond in a timely manner and report to relevant state/territory child protection authorities where required. Full cooperation will be given to all relevant state/territory child protection authorities or other recognised bodies in their investigations of child abuse.

### **Special Olympics Australia Board**

The Special Olympics Australia board is responsible for promoting child safe best practice by ensuring appropriate policies and procedures are in place that minimize the risk of harm to a child and have adequate safeguards established to respond and deal appropriately to allegations.

### **Staff and Volunteers**

All staff and volunteers are responsible for ensuring they comply with relevant screening requirements prior to starting their involvement and renewing the checks for the duration of their involvement.

### **Club Leadership Team**

Club Leadership Teams are responsible for ensuring compliance to this policy and proactively checking to ensure all volunteers are registered and comply with relevant screening requirements for their role.

The Club Leadership Team will additionally play a central role in promoting and educating all volunteers on the commitment to creating a safe environment for all athletes.

## 6. PROCEDURE

### **6.1 Working with Children Check**

All staff or volunteers who have contact with athletes as part of their role will be responsible for ensuring they have a valid state/territory working with children check and provide this information prior to and for the duration of their involvement. This includes but is not limited to committee members, coaches/assistants, sport coordinators/managers, officials and any other volunteer with contact to athletes.

### **6.2 Police Check**

Special Olympics Australia's Board has determined that a police check in addition to a working with children check is required for high risk roles such as coaches and executive committee members (e.g. Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and Membership Officer). The police check forms part of the overall screening process to determine the suitability of the person for the role.

To facilitate this, Special Olympics Australia is an accredited agency with ACIC and can conduct police checks on behalf of staff and volunteers. Alternatively, valid police checks that are less than 3 years from date of issue are accepted provided a copy of the police check certificate is given to Special Olympics Australia.

### **6.3 Compliance**

Any staff member or volunteer who fails to keep their working with children check or police check current with Special Olympics Australia may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal.

Staff members and volunteers are required to disclose any subsequent convictions or changes to their working with children check status to Special Olympics Australia immediately.

### **6.4 Police Check Disclosable Court Outcomes**

Where a police check identifies a criminal record, an internal escalation process must be initiated. A criminal record does not automatically preclude a staff member or volunteer from engaging with Special Olympics Australia.

All criminal records will be reviewed and handled confidentially by two Special Olympics Australia staff members (General Manager, People and Culture and Chief Operating Officer). The escalation process is informed by the Australian Human Rights Commission and due care will be provided to the person during the assessment process.

The assessment is made based on whether the 'inherent requirements' of the role will be properly met when considered against the person's criminal record. Should an individual be prohibited from engaging in their specified role, consideration will be given as to whether there is an alternative role within Special Olympics Australia.

### **6.4 Record Keeping**

Working with children check information and police check numbers are recorded in the Special Olympics Australia database in compliance with the privacy policy. All hard copy information will be scanned into a secure drive held in Special Olympics Australia servers and hard copy records securely destroyed.

Special Olympics Australia will not store any police check history information beyond the reference number and expiry date. Paperwork collected as part of the police check process will be handled and destroyed as required by ACIC.

### **6.5 Education and Training**

Staff and volunteers will be required to attend appropriate training and development relating to the working with children check and police check policy. Training and development will be about continuing to educate staff and volunteers on the reason for the checks, the role it plays in the overall screening process and how it supports the commitment to building a safe organisation for all athletes. Membership officers within each club are required to understand and act in line with the policy.

### **6.6 Prohibited Person**

Special Olympics Australia will not engage a staff member or volunteer who is prohibited from working with children in a role that involves contact with athletes.

## **RELATED DOCUMENTS**

Club Leadership Handbook

SOA\_5.2PP - Recruitment, Selection and Screening

SOA\_5.3PP - Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults

SOA\_5.5PP - Induction

SOA\_6.5PP - Member Protection Policy

SOA\_6.9PP - Privacy

## **DOCUMENT CONTROL**

Version number: SOA\_5.4PP v1.0

Owner: General Manager, People and Culture

Approved Date: 9 October 2017  
Next scheduled review: 31 December 2021