



SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

ANU Women's Football Club Safeguarding Policy and Procedure

Endorsed September 2026

Purpose

ANU Women's Football Club is committed to providing a safe, respectful, supportive and inclusive environment for everyone participating in our club. Safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone involved with ANUWFC.

This Policy explains:

- our safeguarding commitments
- the responsibilities of members, coaches, volunteers and committee members
- how safeguarding concerns can be raised
- what ANUWFC will do when a concern is received
- when matters should be referred or escalated to Capital Football, Football Australia, police or another appropriate authority.

ANUWFC adopts and operates consistently with Football Australia's Member Protection Framework, including its Safeguarding Policy and National Complaints Procedure, as amended from time to time. Where there is any inconsistency between this document and a mandatory Football Australia, Capital Football or legislative requirement, the higher requirement applies.

Our safeguarding commitment

ANUWFC wants everyone involved in our club to feel: Safe. Respected. Supported. Heard.

We are committed to:

- providing an environment free from abuse, harassment, bullying, discrimination, exploitation and other harmful behaviour
- promoting respectful and appropriate relationships
- encouraging members to speak up when something does not feel right
- providing clear and accessible reporting pathways
- taking concerns seriously
- prioritising immediate safety and wellbeing
- protecting privacy as far as reasonably possible
- complying with applicable safeguarding and Working with Vulnerable People requirements
- referring serious matters to the appropriate authority rather than attempting to manage matters beyond the club's role or expertise
- continually improving our safeguarding practices.

Who this policy applies to

This Policy applies to:

- players
- coaches
- team managers

- committee members
- volunteers
- supporters where their behaviour relates to ANUWFC activities
- anyone representing ANUWFC.

It applies during:

- matches and training
- club events and functions
- tournaments and travel
- meetings
- online communications and team chats
- social media activity connected with the club
- other activities undertaken in connection with ANUWFC.

Children, young people and adults at risk

ANUWFC primarily operates senior football programs. However, people under 18 and adults who may be considered at risk can participate in or interact with the club. Football Australia's Safeguarding Policy provides specific protections for Children, Young People and Adults at Risk. ANUWFC will comply with those requirements and relevant ACT legislation whenever they apply.

Where a role requires Working with Vulnerable People registration under ACT law, the person must hold the appropriate current registration before undertaking that activity.

The club will not attempt to make its own determination about whether alleged abuse of a child or Adult at Risk is sufficiently serious to warrant external action where reporting obligations apply.

Expected behaviour

Everyone involved with ANUWFC is expected to:

- treat others with dignity and respect
- follow the ANUWFC Values and Club Behaviours Framework
- maintain appropriate personal and professional boundaries
- avoid bullying, harassment, discrimination, abuse and intimidation
- respect privacy and confidentiality
- avoid sexualised, exploitative or otherwise inappropriate behaviour
- communicate appropriately in person and online
- take reasonable action if they become aware of a safeguarding concern
- cooperate with legitimate safeguarding processes
- prioritise participant safety over reputation, competitive outcomes or personal relationships.

Safeguarding concerns must never be ignored because the person involved is a valued player, coach, volunteer or club leader.

Safeguarding contact

ANUWFC will nominate a Safeguarding and Member Welfare Contact, ordinarily the Player Welfare Officer or another appropriately appointed club officer.

The contact person's details will be made available on the ANUWFC website and through relevant member information.

The Safeguarding and Member Welfare Contact may:

- listen to concerns
- provide information about available options
- help members understand reporting pathways
- receive safeguarding reports
- identify immediate safety considerations
- help refer matters to the appropriate club or external process
- maintain appropriate safeguarding records.

The Safeguarding and Member Welfare Contact is not expected to act as a counsellor, investigator or legal adviser.

Where appropriate, ANUWFC will encourage the person undertaking this role to complete Member Protection Information Officer or equivalent safeguarding education.

How to raise a concern

A safeguarding concern may be raised by:

- the person affected
- someone who witnessed behaviour
- a teammate
- a coach or manager
- a committee member
- a supporter
- another person with a genuine concern.

Concerns can be raised with:

- the ANUWFC Safeguarding and Member Welfare Contact
- an appropriate committee member
- a coach or team manager, who should escalate safeguarding matters appropriately
- Capital Football
- Football Australia through the appropriate Member Protection or safeguarding reporting pathway.

A person does not need to be certain that misconduct has occurred before raising a genuine concern.

Where possible, reports should include:

- what happened
- when and where it happened
- who was involved
- whether anyone witnessed the incident
- whether there is an immediate safety concern
- any relevant supporting information.

A person may ask someone they trust to support them when making a report.

Immediate danger

If someone is in immediate danger or there is an immediate threat to life or safety: contact emergency services first. The priority is making the person safe.

ANUWFC should then be notified when it is safe and appropriate to do so.

The club's internal reporting process must never delay contacting police, emergency services or another authority where urgent action is required.

ANUWFC safeguarding response procedure

When ANUWFC receives a safeguarding concern, we will use the following simple process:

Step 1: LISTEN

The person receiving the concern should:

- listen calmly
- take the concern seriously
- avoid blaming or judging
- avoid promising absolute confidentiality
- avoid asking unnecessary or leading questions
- explain that information may need to be shared with people who need to act to protect someone's safety.

If someone discloses abuse, the role of the person receiving the disclosure is to listen and report, not investigate.

Step 2: MAKE SAFE

Consider whether anyone is at immediate risk. Where necessary, ANUWFC may take reasonable interim measures, such as:

- separating people involved
- arranging alternative supervision
- asking someone not to attend a particular activity temporarily
- adjusting team arrangements
- ensuring an affected member has a support person
- escalating immediately to emergency or statutory authorities.

Interim action is intended to manage risk and does not constitute a finding that misconduct occurred.

Step 3: RECORD

A factual record should be made as soon as reasonably possible. The record should include:

- the date the concern was received
- the person making the report
- the nature of the concern
- relevant dates, locations and people
- any immediate action taken
- any referral or escalation

- who is responsible for follow-up.

Records should distinguish between what was reported or observed and any opinion or interpretation.

Safeguarding records will be stored securely and access limited to people who reasonably require the information.

Step 4: REFER OR ESCALATE

The Safeguarding and Member Welfare Contact and/or an appropriate Committee representative will identify the correct pathway. Depending on the issue, this may include:

- addressing a minor club behaviour matter through ANUWFC processes
- referring a Member Protection matter through the applicable complaints process
- referring the matter to Capital Football
- referring the matter through Football Australia's Safeguarding or Member Protection Framework
- contacting police
- making a report required under ACT child protection legislation
- referring the person to appropriate professional support.

ANUWFC will not conduct its own investigation into suspected criminal conduct or abuse where the matter should properly be handled by an external authority.

Step 5: SUPPORT AND FOLLOW UP

Where appropriate, ANUWFC will:

- check in with the person affected
- explain what process will occur next
- provide reasonable updates
- consider practical measures that may help them continue participating safely
- provide information about relevant external support services
- monitor whether any further safeguarding issues arise.

The club will also consider whether the incident identifies a broader issue requiring changes to policies, education, communications or club practices.

Choosing the right pathway

Not every concern is managed in the same way.

Immediate danger or suspected criminal conduct

Priority: safety and external authorities.

Contact emergency services or police where appropriate and comply with any legal reporting requirements.

Abuse or safeguarding concerns involving a child, young person or Adult at Risk

Priority: Football Australia's Safeguarding Policy and relevant legal requirements. The matter should be referred through the appropriate safeguarding pathway. ANUWFC should not attempt to informally mediate or resolve allegations of abuse.

Discrimination, bullying, harassment or abuse that does not fall within the specific child/Adult at Risk safeguarding pathway

Priority: Relevant Member Protection and complaints processes. This may involve ANUWFC, Capital Football or Football Australia depending on the circumstances.

Lower-level interpersonal or behavioural concerns

Examples may include:

- disrespectful communication
- minor team conflict
- isolated inappropriate comments
- behaviour inconsistent with ANUWFC's Values and Behaviours Framework.

Where appropriate and safe, these matters may initially be managed through:

- a conversation
- clarification of expectations
- coaching or education
- facilitated resolution
- another proportionate club response.

A matter should be escalated if it is serious, repeated or indicates a broader safeguarding risk.

Confidentiality and privacy

Safeguarding matters will be handled sensitively. Information will only be shared where there is a legitimate reason to do so, including:

- protecting someone's safety
- obtaining appropriate advice
- complying with a legal requirement
- referring the matter to an appropriate authority
- ensuring procedural fairness.

ANUWFC cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality where a report raises serious safety concerns or legal reporting obligations. Members should avoid discussing safeguarding matters unnecessarily with teammates or other club members.

No victimisation or retaliation

ANUWFC will not tolerate retaliation against someone because they:

- raised a genuine safeguarding concern
- made a report in good faith
- supported someone to raise a concern
- provided information about an incident
- participated in a safeguarding or complaint process.

Victimisation or retaliation may itself constitute misconduct.

Conflicts of interest

A person must not manage a safeguarding matter where they have an actual or reasonably perceived conflict of interest.

For example, a committee member should step aside where:

- the concern relates to them
- they have a close personal relationship with someone involved
- their involvement may reasonably undermine confidence in the process.

Where necessary, ANUWFC may refer the matter directly to Capital Football or another appropriate body.

Recruitment and screening

ANUWFC will take reasonable steps to ensure people undertaking roles involving safeguarding responsibility or vulnerable participants are suitable for those roles. This may include, where appropriate:

- clear role descriptions
- relevant registration or screening requirements
- checking qualifications
- referee or background checks for particular roles
- induction
- communicating behavioural expectations
- ensuring required Working with Vulnerable People registrations are current.

The level of screening should be proportionate to the responsibilities and risks associated with the role.

Education and awareness

ANUWFC will keep safeguarding practical and visible. At a minimum, the club will:

- make this Policy available to members
- publish or communicate safeguarding contact information
- include safeguarding expectations in relevant coach and committee induction
- provide players with information about how to raise concerns
- periodically promote Football Australia and Capital Football safeguarding resources
- encourage relevant club officers to undertake appropriate safeguarding or Member Protection training.

ANUWFC does not require every member to become a safeguarding expert. Our expectation is that members understand what appropriate behaviour looks like, how to identify a concern, who to tell and when something needs to be escalated.

Committee oversight

The ANUWFC Committee is responsible for ensuring reasonable safeguarding arrangements are maintained. Safeguarding will be considered as part of the Committee's normal governance responsibilities. At least annually, the Committee will confirm that:

- a Safeguarding and Member Welfare Contact is appointed
- contact and reporting information is current
- relevant policies remain accessible
- required registrations or checks are in place where applicable

- relevant coaches and volunteers have received appropriate information
- any systemic safeguarding issues identified during the previous year have been considered.

Safeguarding matters may be reported to the Committee in a de-identified form where appropriate to protect confidentiality.

Relationship with other ANUWFC documents

This Policy should be read alongside the below, available [on our website](#):

- ANUWFC Values and Club Behaviours Framework
- ANUWFC Respect and Anti-Racism Framework
- ANUWFC Inclusive Communications Guide
- relevant Player Welfare information
- complaint and grievance processes
- relevant Codes of Conduct
- other policies adopted by the club.

It should also be read alongside the current policies and procedures of Football Australia and Capital Football.

Review

This Policy will be reviewed:

- at least every three years
- following a significant safeguarding incident
- when Football Australia or Capital Football materially changes its safeguarding requirements
- when relevant legislation changes.

Minor updates to contact details, external links or role titles may be made administratively without requiring full redevelopment of the Policy.

Our commitment

Safeguarding does not need to be complicated to be effective. At ANUWFC, it means creating a culture where respectful behaviour is expected, concerns can be raised safely, people know where to go for help and serious matters are referred to the people best equipped to deal with them.

Everyone has a role in keeping ANUWFC safe. Speak up. Listen. Act appropriately. Support one another.

Version control

Version 1.0 drafted August 2026.