

**PEDAL POWER ACT INC
CHILD PROTECTION STRATEGY**

Adopted as a Strategy by the Pedal Power Council at its meeting on 1 October 2009.

In accordance with Pedal Power Rule 106:

- the Procedures in this Strategy are presented to Council for formal adoption as Pedal Power Procedures at its meeting scheduled for 10 November 2009; and
- The Policy in this Strategy is to be circulated to all members for formal adoption at a General Meeting, that being the Annual General Meeting planned for February 2010.

COUNCIL STATEMENT

The issue of child abuse is a complex problem that has an impact on all areas of society, including participation in sport and recreation activities.

Protecting children from abuse is a responsibility that we must all undertake. Through the implementation of strategies that assist in preventing child abuse from occurring, Pedal Power has taken a pro-active role in relation to child protection and intervention. These strategies will help to foster a safe and positive environment for children and young people to participate in physical activities.

In addition, development of Child Protection and Intervention Policy and Guidelines provides Pedal Power with an excellent risk management tool for developing prevention strategies and for the effective management of child abuse issues within sport.

Information contained in this document will create a framework and provide direction for staff, officials, trainers, volunteers, members and parents of children and young people involved in Pedal Power. It will help deliver a consistent approach to child abuse prevention.

POLICY STATEMENT

Pedal Power is committed to ensuring that the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children are maintained at all times during their participation in activities run by Pedal Power. Pedal Power aims to promote a safe environment for all children and to follow the appropriate notification procedures when reporting alleged abuse.

RATIONALE

The focus of the policy and guidelines is the prevention of child abuse in activities undertaken by Pedal Power.

This policy and guidelines promote the care and protection of children participating in Pedal Power activities and provide information and direction for staff, officials, trainers, members, volunteers and members of Pedal Power.

This policy and guidelines will assist Pedal Power in establishing coordinated strategies for preventing and dealing with child abuse and neglect in a responsible, effective and consistent manner.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of Pedal Power in relation to this policy are to:

1. Provide information when required to assist staff, members and volunteers on how to report and deal with perceived child abuse during Pedal Power activities;

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3. Provide advice to all staff, members and volunteers when requested in respect to their legal responsibilities under child protection legislation; and
4. Promote and adopt Pedal Power's principles for child protection amongst staff, officials, trainers, volunteers and members and parents of children participating in Pedal Power activities.

SCOPE OF POLICY

This Child¹ Protection Policy is applicable to all staff, officials, trainers and volunteers (paid, voluntary, permanent or casual) of Pedal Power.

IMPLEMENTATION

Pedal Power will, as far as practicable:

1. Implement strategies and procedures that focus on the best interests of children and meet the requirements of child protection legislation;
2. Promote a safe and supportive environment for all children and young people² participating in activities conducted by Pedal Power;
3. Increase awareness of child protection issues to all relevant people involved with the activities of Pedal Power that include children;
4. Ensure that all staff of Pedal Power (paid, voluntary, permanent or casual) are aware of their responsibilities to inform Pedal Power if they have been convicted of a serious sex offence;
5. Require a parent or guardian to approve the participation of any person under 18 years old in all Pedal Power activities and include such requirements in documentary advice relating to participation in Pedal Power activities;
6. Require that any person under 12 years old involved in a Pedal Power activity is accompanied by a parent or guardian and include such requirements in documentary advice relating to participation in Pedal Power activities;
7. Not knowingly employ a person in a child-related position without first requiring them to disclose whether or not they have been convicted of a serious sex offence, a child-related personal violence offence, murder of a child, an indecency offence punishable by imprisonment of 12 months or more, kidnapping (unless the offender is or has been the child's parent or carer), an offence connected with child prostitution, possession, distribution or publication of child pornography; or attempt, conspiracy or incitement to commit any of the above offences.
8. Not knowingly employ, or continue to employ, in child-related employment, a person that has been convicted of a serious sex offence, a child-related personal violence offence, murder of a child, an indecency offence punishable by imprisonment of 12 months or more, kidnapping (unless the offender is or has been the child's parent or carer), an offence connected with child prostitution, possession, distribution or publication of child pornography; or attempt, conspiracy or incitement to commit any of the above offences.

¹ The ACT Children and Young People Act 2008 (<http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/2008-19/current/pdf/2008-19.pdf>, accessed 2 October 2009) defines a *child* as "a person who is under 12 years old."

² The ACT Children and Young People Act 2008 (<http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/2008-19/current/pdf/2008-19.pdf>, accessed 2 October 2009) defines a "young person" as "a person who is 12 years old or older, but not yet an adult."

The ACT Legislation Act 2001 (<http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/2001-14/default.asp>, accessed 2 October 2009) defines an "adult" as "an individual who is at least 18 years old."

9. Minimise the likelihood of occurrences where staff, members and volunteers are supervising children without a parent or guardian being present;

POLICY REVIEW

Pedal Power Child Protection Policy will be reviewed bi-annually and updated in line with any legislative changes that have significant impact on the manner in which child protection and intervention issues are to be dealt with.

PROCEDURES FOLLOWING ALLEGATIONS OF CHILD ABUSE

RATIONALE

Pedal Power:

1. Acknowledges that issues regarding child abuse and the reporting of allegations of child abuse are highly sensitive, and should be dealt with in a confidential manner;

and
2. will, as far as practicable, be proactive in its role to protect children and encourage an open environment that allows employees and members to be aware of their rights and responsibilities within Pedal Power.

CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER

To deal appropriately with these issues and to ensure that the confidentiality of all parties involved is maintained, one person within Pedal Power will be designated as the Child Protection Officer.

The Child Protection Officer is responsible for reporting any allegations of child physical abuse, sexual abuse or emotional abuse (including psychological abuse) to the appropriate local authorities (the chief executive of the ACT Office for Children, Youth and Family Support) with the child's name or description and the details of the alleged abuse.

Unless otherwise determined by the Council, the Child Protection Officer is the person currently designated as the Executive Officer of Pedal Power.

If the Child Protection Officer is not available or is a party to the allegations being made then the most senior person available within the Council should be notified.

WHAT SHOULD BE REPORTED?

Some incidents may seem minor. However, they may in fact reveal more serious concerns of misconduct or a pattern of behaviour that requires further scrutiny. All people associated with Pedal Power should be aware of the indicators for child abuse so that they may make an informed decision on what to report.

If there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a child participating in any activities conducted by Pedal Power has been subjected to physical abuse, sexual abuse or emotional abuse (including psychological abuse) or is at risk the matter should be reported to the Child Protection Officer.

WRITTEN NOTIFICATION

Oral notification of alleged child abuse must be followed up in writing.

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A record of such notification is to be placed in the Pedal Power official records.

INVESTIGATION

If an incident of child abuse occurs in Pedal Power it is not the responsibility of persons within Pedal Power to take it upon themselves to determine whether the allegation is true or false. This responsibility belongs with the Office for Children, Youth and Family Support (within the ACT Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services) and the judiciary.

All matters regarding allegations of child abuse are to be treated as confidential. The person designated as the child protection officer is the contact person for any incident involving allegations of child abuse. This is essential for confidentiality.

Confidentiality protects all individuals involved, including:

- the alleged victim
- the alleged offender, and
- the person making the notification.