



DRAFT

MEMBER PROTECTION POLICY

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1. Introduction

The Arabian Horse Society of Australia welcomes people of all ages, backgrounds, and cultures to participate in any of the activities sanctioned by the Society. The AHSA aims to promote and foster the highest ideals of horsemanship and sportsmanship within a culture that aligns with the general laws, beliefs and principles of the Australian community.

2. Purpose of Our Policy

The main objective of the AHSA Member Protection Policy is to maintain responsible behaviour and the making of informed decisions by members and other participants in this Society. It outlines our commitment to a person's right to be treated with respect and dignity, and to be safe and protected from discrimination, harassment and abuse. Our policy informs everyone involved in our Society of his or her legal and ethical rights and responsibilities and the standards of behaviour that are expected of them. It also covers the care and protection of children participating in our Society's activities.

3. Who Our Policy Applies To

This policy applies to everyone involved in the activities of our Society whether they are in a paid or unpaid/voluntary capacity and including:

- all riders and handlers
- event organisers
- support personnel
- event officials;
- volunteers
- members, including any life members;
- parents;
- spectators

4. Extent of Our Policy

Our policy covers all matters directly and indirectly related to AHSA and its activities. In particular, the policy governs breaches of our Rule Book, Social Media Code of Conduct and behaviour that occurs at any AHSA events including shows, seminars, education events and social events organised or sanctioned by the AHSA or any of its Affiliates. It also covers private behaviour where that behaviour brings our Society into disrepute or there is suspicion of harm towards a child or young person.

5. AHSA Responsibilities

The AHSA will:

- adopt, implement and comply with this policy;
- ensure that this policy is enforceable;
- publish, distribute and promote this policy and the consequences of any breaches of this policy;
- promote and model appropriate standards of behaviour at all times;
- deal with any complaints made under this policy in an appropriate manner;
- deal with any breaches of this policy in an appropriate manner;
- recognise and enforce any penalty imposed under this policy;
- ensure that a copy of this policy is available or accessible to all people and organisations to whom this policy applies;

- review this policy every 12-24 months;
- identify and report serious issues which may include unlawful behaviour that involves or could lead to significant harm and includes criminal behaviour (e.g. physical assault, sexual assault, child abuse).

6. Individual Responsibilities

Everyone associated with our Society must:

- make themselves aware of the contents of this policy;
- comply with all relevant provisions of this policy, including the standards of behaviour outlined in this policy;
- consent to the screening requirements set out in this policy, and any state or territory Working with Children checks if the person holds or applies for a role that involves regular unsupervised contact with a child or young person under the age of 18, or where otherwise required by law;
- treat other people with respect;
- always place the safety and welfare of children above other considerations;
- be responsible and accountable for their behaviour; and
- follow the guidelines outlined in this policy if they wish to make a complaint or report a concern about possible child abuse, discrimination, harassment, bullying or other inappropriate behaviour; and
- comply with any decisions and/or disciplinary measures imposed under this policy.

7. Protection of Children

7.1 Child Protection

The AHSA is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people who participate in our Society's activities or use our services. The AHSA supports the rights of the child and will act at all times to ensure that a child safe environment is maintained.

The AHSA also supports the rights and wellbeing of our members and volunteers and encourage their active participation in building and maintaining a secure and safe environment for all participants.

The AHSA acknowledges the valuable contribution made by our members and volunteers and we encourage their active participating in providing a safe, fair and inclusive environment for all participants.

7.1.1 : Identifying and Analysing Risks of Harm

The AHSA will implement a risk management strategy, which includes a regular review of our existing child protection practices, to determine how child-safe our organisation is and to identify any additional steps we can take to minimise and prevent the risk of harm to children.

7.1.2 : Developing Codes of Conduct for Adults and Children

The AHSA will promote a code of conduct that specifies standards of conduct and care we expect of adults when they deal and interact with children.

7.1.3 : Choosing Suitable Members and Volunteers

The AHSA will ensure that working with Children Checks and criminal history assessments are conducted for volunteers working with children, where an assessment is required by law. If a criminal history report is obtained as part of the screening process, The AHSA will ensure that the criminal history information is dealt with confidentially and in accordance with relevant legal requirements. (See Attachment 1.3)

7.1.4 : Support, Train, Supervise and Enhance Performance

The AHSA will ensure that all our employees and volunteers who work with children have available ongoing supervision, support and training. Our goal is to develop their skills and capacity and to enhance their performance so we can maintain a child-safe environment in our Society.

7.1.5 : Empower and Promote the Participation of Children in Decision-Making and Service Development

The AHSA will promote the involvement and participation of children and young people in developing and maintaining a child-safe environment in our Society.

7.1.6 : Report and Respond Appropriately to Suspected Abuse and Neglect

The AHSA will ensure that volunteers are able to identify and respond appropriately to children at risk of harm and that they are aware of their responsibilities under state laws to make a report if they suspect on reasonable ground that a child has been, or is being, abused or neglected (See Attachment 4).

In addition to any legal obligations, if any person believes that another person or organisation bound by this policy is acting inappropriately towards a child or is in breach of this policy they may make an internal complaint.

Please refer to our complaints procedure in section 10 of this policy.

Any person who believes a child is in immediate danger or in a life threatening situation, should contact the police immediately.

7.2 Supervision

Children under the age of [18] must be supervised at all times by a responsible adult, which would normally be their parent/guardian. If a responsible adult, volunteer or official finds a child under the age of [18] is unsupervised, they should assume responsibility for the child's safety until the child's parent/guardian or supervisor is located

7.3 Taking Images of Children

It can be illegal or inappropriate to take images of children without permission from a child's parent or guardian, which must be obtained before taking an image of a child that is not their own. The parent or guardian must be informed so that they understand how the image will be used.

Camera phones, videos and cameras must not be used inside changing areas, showers and toilets which we control or which are used in connection with The Society.

When The Society uses a photo of a child, we will not name or identify the child or publish personal information, such as residential address, email address or telephone number,

without the consent of the child's parent or guardian. The Society will not provide information about a child's hobbies, interests, school or the like, as this can be used by pedophiles or other persons to "groom" a child.

The Society will only use images of children that are relevant to The Society's activities and will ensure that they are suitably clothed in a manner that promotes The Society in a positive way.

8. Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying

The AHSA is committed to providing an environment in which people are treated fairly and equitably and that is, as far as practicable, free from all forms of discrimination, harassment and bullying.

The Society recognises that people may not be able to enjoy themselves or perform at their best if they are treated unfairly, discriminated against, harassed or bullied.

8.1 Discrimination

Unlawful discrimination involves the less favourable treatment of a person on the basis of one or more of the personal characteristics protected by State or Federal anti-discrimination laws.

Discrimination includes both direct and indirect discrimination:

- **Direct discrimination** occurs if a person treats, or proposes to treat, a person with a protected personal characteristic unfavourably because of that personal characteristic.
- **Indirect discrimination** occurs if a person imposes, or proposes to impose, a requirement, condition or practice that will disadvantage a person with a protected personal characteristic and that requirement, condition or practice is not reasonable.

For the purpose of determining discrimination, the offender's awareness and motive are irrelevant.

8.2 Harassment

Harassment is any unwelcome conduct, verbal or physical, that intimidates, offends or humiliates another person and which happens because a person has a certain personal characteristic protected by State or Federal anti-discrimination legislation.

The offensive behaviour does not have to take place a number of times; a single incident can constitute harassment.

Sexual harassment is one type of harassment. Sexual harassment involves unwelcome conduct, remarks or innuendo of a sexual nature. It covers a wide range of behaviours and can be verbal, written, visual or physical. Sexual harassment is not limited to members of the opposite sex.

Every person is covered by the anti-discrimination laws that apply in their State as well as the Federal anti-discrimination laws.

The following is a list of all the personal characteristics that apply throughout Australia:

- gender;
- race, colour, descent, national or ethnic origin, nationality, ethno-religious origin, immigration;
- national extraction or social origin;
- marital status, relationship status, identity of spouse or domestic partner;
- pregnancy, potential pregnancy, breastfeeding;
- family or carer responsibilities, status as a parent or carer;
- age;
- religion, religious beliefs or activities;
- political beliefs or activities;
- lawful sexual activity;
- sexual orientation and gender identity;
- profession, trade, occupation or calling;
- irrelevant criminal record, spent convictions;
- irrelevant medical record;
- member of association or organisation of employees or employers, industrial activity, trade union activity;
- physical features;
- disability, mental or physical impairment;
- defence service; and
- personal association with someone who has, or is assumed to have, any of these personal characteristics.

Legislation also prohibits:

- racial, religious, homosexual, transgender and HIV/AIDS vilification; and
- victimisation resulting from a complaint.

8.3 Bullying

The AHSA is committed to providing an environment that is free from bullying. We understand that bullying has the potential to result in significant negative consequences for an individual's health and wellbeing, and we regard bullying in all forms as unacceptable to The Society.

Bullying is characterised by repeated, unreasonable behaviour directed at a person, or group of persons, that creates a risk to health and safety. Bullying behaviour is that which a reasonable person in the circumstances would expect to victimise, humiliate, undermine, threaten, degrade, offend or intimidate a person. Bullying behaviour can include actions of an individual or group.

Whilst generally characterised by repeated behaviours, one off instances can amount to bullying.

The following types of behaviour, where repeated or occurring as part of a pattern of behaviour, would be considered bullying:

- verbal abuse including shouting, swearing, teasing, making belittling remarks or persistent unjustified criticism;
- excluding or isolating a group or person;
- spreading malicious rumours; or
- psychological harassment such as intimidation.

Bullying includes cyber-bullying which occurs through the use of technology. New technologies and communication tools, such as smart phones and social networking

websites, have greatly increased the potential for people to be bullied through unwanted and inappropriate comments. The AHSA will not tolerate abusive, discriminatory, intimidating or offensive statements being made online.

If any person believes they are being, or have been, bullied by another person or organisation bound by this policy, he or she may make a complaint. (Refer to Item 10 of this policy.)

9. Access/Inclusion

Our Association is welcoming and we will seek to include members from all areas of our community.

The following are examples of some of our inclusive practices.

9.1 People with a disability

The AHSA will not discriminate against any person because they have a disability. Where it is necessary, we will make reasonable adjustments to enable safe participation.

9.2 People from diverse cultures

The AHSA will support, respect and encourage people from diverse cultures and religions to participate in our Society and where possible we will accommodate requests for flexibility.

9.3 Sexual & Gender Identity

All people, regardless of their sexuality or gender identity, are welcome at our Society. We strive to provide a safe environment for participation and will not tolerate any form of discrimination or harassment because of a person's sexuality or gender identity.

9.4 Pregnancy

The AHSA is committed to treating pregnant women fairly and to removing any unreasonable barriers to their full participation in our Society's activities. We will not tolerate any discrimination or harassment against pregnant women.

The AHSA will take reasonable care to ensure the continuing safety, health and wellbeing of pregnant women. We will advise pregnant women that there may be risks involved with their continuing participation in some activities, and we will encourage them to obtain medical advice about those risks. Pregnant women should be aware that their own health and wellbeing, and that of their unborn child, is of utmost importance in their decision-making about the extent they choose to participate in our Society's activities.

We encourage all pregnant women to talk with their medical advisers, make themselves aware of the facts about pregnancy in sport and ensure that they make informed decisions about their participation in our activities. Pregnant women should make these decisions themselves, in consultation with their medical advisers and in discussion with The AHSA or Affiliates.

10. Responding to Complaints

10.1 Complaints

The AHSA takes all complaints about behaviour seriously. The AHSA will handle complaints based on the principles of procedural fairness, and ensure:

- all complaints will be taken seriously;
- irrelevant matters will not be taken into account;
- decisions will be unbiased; and
- any penalties imposed will be reasonable.
- The procedure for handling complaints will followed as prescribed in the Rule Book, the AHSA Regulations and Constitution

If the complaint relates to suspected child abuse, sexual assault or other criminal activity, then The AHSA may need to report the behaviour to the police and/or relevant government authority.

10.2 Complaint Handling Process

When a complaint is received by The AHSA, the person receiving the complaint will:

- listen carefully and ask questions to understand the nature and extent of the concern;
- ask the complainant how they would like their concern to be resolved and if they need any support;
- explain the different options available to help resolve the complainant's concern;
- inform the relevant government authorities and/or police, if required by law to do so; and
- where possible and appropriate, maintain confidentiality but not necessarily anonymity.

Once the complainant decides on their preferred option for resolution, The AHSA will assist, where appropriate and necessary, with the resolution process. This may involve:

- supporting the person complaining to talk to the person being complained about;
- bringing all the people involved in the complaint together to talk objectively through the problem (this could include external mediation);
- gathering more information (e.g. from other people that may have seen the behaviour);
- seeking advice from an external agency (e.g. State Department of Sport or anti-discrimination agency);
- referring the complainant to an external agency such as a community mediation centre, police or anti-discrimination agency.
- At any stage, a person can seek advice from an anti-discrimination commission or other external agency and, if the matter is within their jurisdiction, may lodge a complaint with the anti-discrimination commission or another external agency

In situations where a complaint is referred directly to an external agency and an investigation is conducted, The Society will:

- co-operate fully with the investigation;
- where applicable, ensure the complainant is not placed in an unsupervised situation with the respondent(s); and
- act on recommendations from the external agency

10.3 Disciplinary Sanctions

The AHSA may take disciplinary action in accordance with the Constitution and the Society's Disciplinary Regulations against anyone found to have breached our policy or made false and malicious allegations.

Possible sanctions that may be taken include:

- a direction that the individual makes verbal and/or written apology;
- counselling of the individual to address behaviour;
- withdrawal of any awards, placings, records, achievements.
- suspension or termination of membership, participation or engagement in a role or activity;
- de-registration of accreditation for a period of time or permanently;
- any other form of discipline that The AHSA considers reasonable and appropriate.

10.4 Appeals

The complainant or respondent may be entitled to lodge an appeal against a decision made in relation to a complaint (including a decision where disciplinary sanctions are imposed by The Society). Appeals must be based on any right of appeal provided for in the relevant constituent documents, rules, regulations or by laws.

Attachment 1.2: WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK REQUIREMENTS WHERE APPLICABLE

Working with Children Checks aim to create a child-safe environment and to protect children and young people involved in our sport from physical and sexual harm.

They assess the suitability of people to work with children and young people and can involve:

- criminal history checks;
- signed declarations;
- referee checks; and
- other relevant background checks to assess a person's suitability to work with children and young people.

Working with Children Check requirements vary across Australia. Fact Sheets for each state and territory are available on the Play by the Rules website.

Detailed information, including the forms required to complete a Working with Children Check, are available from the relevant agencies in each state and territory.

Queensland

Contact the Queensland Government Blue Card Services

Website: www.bluecard.qld.gov.au

Phone: 1800 113 611

New South Wales

Contact the Office of the Children's Guardian

Website: www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/check

Phone: 02 9286 7276

<p>Nature of complaint (category/basis/grounds)</p> <p>Can tick more than one box</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Harassment or <input type="checkbox"/> Discrimination</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sexual/sexist methods <input type="checkbox"/> Selection dispute <input type="checkbox"/> Coaching</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sexuality <input type="checkbox"/> Personality clash <input type="checkbox"/> Verbal abuse</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Race abuse <input type="checkbox"/> Bullying <input type="checkbox"/> Physical</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Religion <input type="checkbox"/> Disability <input type="checkbox"/> Victimisation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy decision <input type="checkbox"/> Child Abuse <input type="checkbox"/> Unfair</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other</p>
<p>What they want to happen to fix issue</p>	
<p>Information provided to them</p>	
<p>Resolution and/or action taken</p>	
<p>Follow-up action</p>	

PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING ALLEGATIONS OF CHILD ABUSE

If you believe a child is in immediate danger or a life-threatening situation, contact the Police immediately on 000.

Fact sheets on reporting allegations of child abuse in different states and territories are available at www.playbytherules.net.au

We will treat any allegation of child abuse or neglect promptly, seriously and with a high degree of sensitivity.

All people working with *The AHSA* in a paid or unpaid capacity have a duty to report any concerns to the appropriate authorities, following the steps outlined below.

Step 1: Receive the allegation

If a child or young person raises with you an allegation of child abuse or neglect that relates to them or to another child, it is important that you listen, stay calm and be supportive.

Do	Don't
Make sure you are clear about what the child has told you	Do not challenge or undermine the child
Reassure the child that what has occurred is not his or her fault	Do not seek detailed information, ask leading questions or offer an opinion.
Explain that other people may need to be told in order to stop what is happening.	Do not discuss the details with any person other than those detailed in these procedures.
Promptly and accurately record the discussion in writing.	Do not contact the alleged offender.

Step 2: Report the allegation

- Immediately report any allegation of child abuse or neglect, or any situation involving a child at risk of harm, to the police and/or the relevant child protection agency. You may need to make a report to both.
- Contact the relevant child protection agency or police for advice if there is **any** doubt about whether the allegation should be reported.
- If the allegation involves a person to whom this policy applies, then also report the allegation to the *Board of the AHSA* so that they can manage the situation.

Step 3: Protect the child and manage the situation

- A responsible event official will assess the immediate risks to the child and take interim steps to ensure the child's safety and the safety of any other children. This may include redeploying the alleged offender to a position where there is no unsupervised contact with children, supervising the alleged offender or removing/suspending him or her until any investigations have been concluded.
- The responsible official will consider what services may be most appropriate to support the child and his or her parent/s.
- The responsible official will consider what support services may be appropriate for the alleged offender.
- The responsible official will seek to put in place measures to protect the child and the alleged offender from possible victimisation and gossip.

Step 4: Take internal action

- At least three different investigations could be undertaken to examine allegations that are made against a person to whom this policy applies, including:
 - a criminal investigation (conducted by the police)
 - a child protection investigation (conducted by the relevant child protection agency)
 - a disciplinary or misconduct inquiry/investigation (conducted by The AHSA).
- The AHSA will assess the allegations and determine what action should be taken in the circumstances. Depending on the situation, action may include considering whether the alleged offender should return to his or her position, be dismissed, banned or suspended or face other disciplinary action.
- If disciplinary action is undertaken, The Society will follow the procedures set out in Clause 9 of our Member Protection Policy.
- Where required The Society will provide the relevant government agency with a report of any disciplinary action we take.
- **Contact details for advice or to report an allegation of child abuse**

Australian Capital Territory	
ACT Police Non-urgent police assistance Ph: 131 444 www.afp.gov.au	Office for Children, Youth and Family Services http://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/ocyfs/reporting-child-abuse-and-neglect Ph: 1300 556 729
New South Wales	
New South Wales Police Non-urgent police assistance Ph: 131 444 www.police.nsw.gov.au	Department of Family and Community Services www.community.nsw.gov.au Ph: 132 111
Northern Territory	
Northern Territory Police	Department of Children and Families

Non-urgent police assistance Ph: 131 444 www.pfes.nt.gov.au	www.childrenandfamilies.nt.gov.au Ph: 1800 700 250
Queensland	
Queensland Police Non-urgent police assistance Ph: 131 444 www.police.qld.gov.au	Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services www.communities.qld.gov.au/childsafety Ph: 1800 811 810
South Australia	
South Australia Police Non-urgent police assistance Ph: 131 444 www.sapolice.sa.gov.au	Department for Education and Child Development www.families.sa.gov.au/childsafes Ph: 131 478
Tasmania	
Tasmania Police Non-urgent police assistance Ph: 131 444 www.police.tas.gov.au	Department of Health and Human Services www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/children Ph: 1300 737 639
Victoria	
Victoria Police Non-urgent police assistance Ph: (03) 9247 6666 www.police.vic.gov.au	Department of Human Services www.dhs.vic.gov.au Ph: 131 278
Western Australia	
Western Australia Police Non-urgent police assistance Ph: 131 444 www.police.wa.gov.au	Department for Child Protection and Family Support www.dcp.wa.gov.au Ph: (08) 9222 2555 or 1800 622 258

Police contacted	Who: When: Advice provided:
Government agency contacted	Who: When: Advice provided:
President and/or MPIO contacted	Who: When:
Police and/or government agency investigation	Finding:
Internal investigation (if any)	Finding:
Action taken	
Completed by	Name: Position: Signature: / /
Signed by	Complainant (if not a child)

This record and any notes must be kept in a confidential and safe place and provided to the relevant authorities (police and government) should they require them.

Review

- The Member Protection Policy will be reviewed regularly.
- The Policy was last updated on
- Next review: 2.