

AUSTRALIAN FEDERATION OF BRASILIAN JIU JITSU

MEMBER PROTECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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Every person involved in AFBJJ is entitled to participate free from discrimination, harassment, bullying and abuse. Every child in our sport is entitled to a safe environment. This policy sets AFBJJ's standards of behaviour, its commitment to child safety, and the process for raising and resolving a concern. AFBJJ has not formally joined Sport Integrity Australia's National Integrity Framework, but this policy is informed by the Framework's Member Protection Policy, Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Complaints, Disputes and Discipline Policy templates, by the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, and by Play by the Rules guidance.

Version history

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PART A: STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR AND MEMBER PROTECTION

1. Purpose

This policy sets out the Australian Federation of Brazilian Jiu Jitsu's (AFBJJ) commitment to providing a safe, fair and inclusive environment for everyone involved in Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu (BJJ) under its affiliation. It sets the standards of behaviour expected of every member, coach, official, volunteer, board member, contractor, parent and guardian. This document sets out AFBJJ's approach to child safety, and describes how a concern or complaint is raised, assessed and resolved.

This policy applies alongside AFBJJ's other policies, in particular the AFBJJ Concussion and Head Injury Management Policy and Procedure, the AFBJJ Blood Rule, Infection Control and Mat Hygiene Policy and Procedure, and the AFBJJ Event Emergency Management Plan and Risk Assessment, which this policy cross-references rather than repeats.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- all AFBJJ Board members, staff and contractors
- all AFBJJ-affiliated clubs, academies and their committees
- all coaches, instructors and assistant instructors
- all referees, mat officials, event organisers and volunteers
- all athletes, of every age and belt rank, training or competing under AFBJJ affiliation
- parents and guardians of junior athletes (under 18 years), in their interactions with AFBJJ.

It applies to conduct at training, gradings, seminars, camps, trials and competitions conducted or affiliated with the AFBJJ and to related conduct outside those settings where it affects the safety, dignity or wellbeing of a person connected with AFBJJ including online and social media conduct.

3. Definitions

Term	Meaning
Discrimination	Treating, or proposing to treat, a person unfavourably because of a personal characteristic protected by law (a protected attribute), either directly or indirectly.
Protected attribute	A personal characteristic protected under Australian discrimination law, including sex, pregnancy, marital or relationship status, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, colour, national or ethnic origin, disability, age, religion, political belief and carer or family responsibilities.
Harassment	Unwelcome behaviour that a reasonable person would anticipate would offend, humiliate, intimidate or distress another person.
Sexual harassment	Unwelcome sexual advances, unwelcome requests for sexual favours, or other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that a reasonable person would anticipate would offend, humiliate or intimidate.
Bullying	Repeated, unreasonable behaviour directed at a person or group that creates a risk to health, safety or wellbeing.

Term	Meaning
Vilification	A public act that incites hatred, serious contempt or severe ridicule of a person or group because of a protected attribute.
Victimisation	Subjecting, or threatening to subject, a person to a detriment because they have made, or are believed to have made or intend to make, a complaint under this policy.
Child abuse	Any act, or failure to act, by a person with a duty of care, that results in harm to a child. Includes physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, neglect, and grooming behaviour directed at preparing a child for abuse.
Grooming	A pattern of behaviour used to build trust with a child, and often their family, in order to gain inappropriate access to that child.
Reportable conduct	Conduct defined by a state or territory reportable conduct scheme, generally including sexual offences, sexual misconduct, physical violence, and significant neglect involving a child, which certain organisations must notify to an oversight body.
Natural justice / procedural fairness	The right of a person facing an allegation to know the substance of the case against them, to respond to it, and to have the matter decided by an unbiased decision maker.
MPIO	Member Protection Information Officer: a designated, trained contact who provides confidential information about rights, options and this policy's process to a person considering raising a concern. An MPIO does not investigate or decide complaints.
Complainant / Respondent	The complainant is the person who raises a concern or complaint. The respondent is the person the complaint is about.
Vexatious complaint	A complaint made without genuine belief in its truth, or for an improper purpose such as to harass or disadvantage another person.

4. Policy statement and guiding principles

- Every person involved in AFBJJ is entitled to participate free from discrimination, harassment, bullying, abuse and victimisation, regardless of belt rank, role or seniority.
- Child safety is a foundational value. It is everyone's responsibility, not only the responsibility of a designated officer or role.
- Concerns and complaints are taken seriously and handled promptly, fairly and, so far as possible, confidentially.
- No one is disadvantaged for raising a concern in good faith, even where the concern is not ultimately substantiated.
- Natural justice applies to every person against whom an allegation is made.
- Interim measures to protect safety may be put in place before a complaint is finally resolved. An interim measure is a precaution, not a finding of wrongdoing.
- AFBJJ cooperates with police and statutory child protection authorities. An internal process under this policy never delays or substitutes for a legally required report.

5. Legislative and standards framework

This policy has been developed with reference to the following.

Legislation / standard	Relevance to this policy
Sex Discrimination Act 1984, Disability Discrimination Act 1992, Age Discrimination Act 2004 and Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)	Set the national baseline protections against discrimination and sexual harassment that inform sections 8 and 9.
Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth)	Establishes the national complaints and inquiry function for discrimination and human rights matters, an avenue available to a person in addition to this policy.
State and territory equal opportunity or anti-discrimination legislation	Provides equivalent protections at state and territory level, with local variation. See AFBJJ-POL-EMP-01 Appendix A for the regulator in each jurisdiction.
Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)	Provides an anti-bullying jurisdiction at the Fair Work Commission for eligible workers, relevant where AFBJJ or a club engages paid staff.
National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (2019)	The nationally consistent standard for child safe organisational culture that Part B of this policy is built around. See section 14.
State and territory reportable conduct schemes, working with children screening and mandatory reporting laws	Differ by jurisdiction. See section 17 and AFBJJ-POL-EMP-01 Appendix A.
Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) and state health or privacy records legislation	Governs the collection, use, storage and disclosure of personal information gathered under this policy. See section 27.
Sport Integrity Australia's National Integrity Framework and Play by the Rules	AFBJJ has not formally joined the National Integrity Framework. This policy is informed by the Framework's Member Protection Policy, Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Complaints, Disputes and Discipline Policy templates, and by Play by the Rules guidance, adapted for AFBJJ.

6. Roles and responsibilities

Role	Key responsibilities
AFBJJ Governance Committee	Adopt, resource and review this policy. Appoint the MPIO and any Complaints Handling Panel. Make final decisions on serious sanctions. Ensure affiliated clubs apply this policy.
Member Protection Information Officer (MPIO)	First point of contact for a person considering raising a concern. Provides confidential information about rights, options and process. Does not investigate or decide complaints. Escalates urgent child safety concerns immediately.
Head coach / club committee	Model and enforce the standards of behaviour in this policy at club level. Act as local point of contact where an MPIO is not readily available. Act immediately on any child safety concern.
Complaints Handling Panel / investigator	Appointed to investigate formal complaints under Part C. Applies natural justice. Reports findings and a recommendation to the Board.
All members, coaches, officials, volunteers, members and contractors	Comply with the standards of behaviour in this policy. Report genuine concerns. Cooperate with a properly conducted investigation.
Parents and guardians	Familiarise themselves with this policy. Support children to raise concerns. Report concerns promptly.

7. Standards of behaviour

Everyone involved in AFBJJ is expected to:

- treat others with courtesy, respect and fairness regardless of belt rank, role or seniority
- act as a positive role model, particularly around junior athletes
- respect the physical and emotional boundaries of training partners, recognising the close-contact nature of BJJ and the trust that requires
- use touch only as needed for legitimate technique instruction or spotting and explain what is being done and why, particularly with junior athletes
- follow the reasonable direction of coaches, referees and officials
- never use a position of authority, such as a coaching role or seniority in belt rank, to pursue an inappropriate personal or romantic relationship with someone in a vulnerable or subordinate position
- report genuine concerns about the behaviour of others promptly, using this policy.

8. Discrimination

AFBJJ does not tolerate discrimination on the basis of a protected attribute in any aspect of participation, including selection, grading, coaching opportunities, event access or club membership.

- Direct discrimination occurs where a person is treated less favourably than someone else would be in similar circumstances because of a protected attribute, for example refusing to grade or select an athlete for reasons unrelated to merit or readiness.
- Indirect discrimination occurs where a rule or requirement that applies to everyone has the effect of disadvantaging people with a particular protected attribute, without reasonable justification.

Genuine competition and safety exceptions

Organising competition divisions by sex, age or weight category, or applying age-based or belt-based restrictions on high-risk techniques for safety reasons, is not unlawful discrimination provided the distinction is reasonable and necessary for fair or safe competition. This reflects standard exceptions recognised under Australian discrimination law for sport.

9. Harassment and sexual harassment

Harassment is not tolerated in any AFBJJ setting. Examples relevant to a close-contact sport include unwanted or inappropriate touching beyond what is needed for legitimate instruction, repeated unwelcome comments about a person's body or appearance, and persistent unwelcome contact or attention.

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, or other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, whether in person, in writing or online. A single serious incident can amount to sexual harassment; it does not need to be repeated.

10. Bullying and vilification

Bullying includes repeated belittling or humiliating comments, exclusion from training or team activities without good reason, and any hazing or initiation-style treatment of newer or junior members. A single incident can still be a serious breach of this policy even where it does not meet the definition of bullying.

Vilification, a public act inciting hatred, serious contempt or severe ridicule of a person or group because of a protected attribute, is not tolerated in any AFBJJ setting, including online.

11. Abuse

Abuse includes physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, and neglect by a person with a duty of care. Some forms of abuse are criminal offences. Where an allegation may involve a criminal offence or a child's safety, AFBJJ's process under this policy operates alongside, and never in place of, a report to police or the relevant statutory child protection authority. See sections 16 and 17.

12. Victimisation and reprisals

A person who makes a complaint in good faith, supports someone else to make a complaint, or participates in an investigation as a witness, must not be subjected to any detriment or reprisal as a result. Victimisation is treated as a serious breach of this policy, separate from the outcome of the original complaint.

PART B: CHILD SAFEGUARDING

13. Commitment to child safety

AFBJJ has zero tolerance for child abuse. Every child who trains, grades or competes under AFBJJ affiliation is entitled to a safe environment and every adult involved in AFBJJ shares responsibility for that safety, whether or not they hold a designated child safety role.

This commitment applies in addition to any duty a club or coach has under working with children screening laws, reportable conduct schemes or mandatory reporting laws in their state or territory.

14. National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

AFBJJ applies the ten National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, endorsed nationally in 2019 following the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, adapted to a BJJ training and competition setting.

Principle	How AFBJJ applies it
1. Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in leadership, governance and culture	This policy, Board oversight of child safety and induction of new clubs and coaches.
2. Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously	Age-appropriate avenues for junior athletes to raise concerns, including directly or through a parent or guardian.
3. Families and communities are informed and involved	This policy is made available to parents and guardians; clubs communicate child safety arrangements at enrolment.
4. Equity is upheld and diverse needs are respected	Standards of behaviour and complaint handling apply equally regardless of a child's background, disability or other protected attribute.
5. People working with children are suitable and supported	Working with children screening (section 15) and coach education on child safety.
6. Complaint processes are child focused	Age-appropriate, accessible ways to raise a concern, described in section 16 and Appendix A.
7. Staff and volunteers are equipped through ongoing education	Coaches and officials complete child safety induction and refresher training.
8. Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for harm	Supervision requirements in section 15, including no adult alone with a child without another adult present.
9. Implementation is regularly reviewed and improved	This policy is reviewed at least every 24 months and after any child safety incident (section 29).
10. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is child safe	This Part B, together with AFBJJ-POL-EMP-01 section 12 and Appendix A.

15. Screening, recruitment and supervision

- Every coach and official engaged in child-related work at an AFBJJ-affiliated club or event holds a current working with children check or equivalent screening clearance for the state or territory in which they are working, consistent with AFBJJ-POL-EMP-01 section 12 and Appendix A.
- Clubs seek at least one reference before appointing a person to a coaching or supervisory role involving regular contact with junior athletes.
- No AFBJJ staff member, coach, official or volunteer is to be alone with a child under 18 without another adult present, consistent with AFBJJ-POL-EMP-01 section 12.
- Change rooms, travel to and from events, and one-on-one private lessons involving a junior athlete follow a documented supervision arrangement agreed with a parent or guardian in advance.
- Physical contact with a junior athlete for coaching or spotting purposes is limited to what is necessary for safe technique instruction, is appropriate to the technique being taught, and is explained to the athlete.

16. Recognising and responding to a child safety concern

Anyone, adult or child, can raise a concern about a child's safety. A concern does not need to be certain or fully investigated by the person raising it. If in doubt, raise it.

Behaviour that should raise concern

No single sign proves abuse is occurring, but a pattern is worth acting on. Concerning behaviour by an adult can include seeking unsupervised or unofficial contact with a particular child outside training, favouritism or excessive gift-giving toward one child, contacting a child through personal social media or messaging outside official club channels, or persistently disregarding the supervision arrangements in section 15.

If a child discloses abuse, or you suspect it

1. Stay calm, listen without interrupting, and reassure the child they were right to tell you. Do not promise complete confidentiality, since you may need to report what you are told.
2. Do not question the child in detail yourself and do not confront the person the concern is about. A detailed interview can affect a later police or statutory investigation.
3. If the child is in immediate danger, or a crime may have occurred, call 000 immediately.
4. Where there is no immediate danger, contact your state or territory child protection authority or police to discuss the concern, and notify the AFBJJ MPIO and the Board as soon as practicable.
5. Write down objectively what was seen, said or disclosed, in the child's own words where possible, as soon as you can after the event.
6. Keep the information confidential, sharing it only with those who need to know to keep the child safe or as required by law.

This is not a decision AFBJJ makes internally

A concern that a child may be at risk of harm, or that a criminal offence may have occurred, is reported to police or the relevant statutory child protection authority. AFBJJ's internal complaint process under Part C runs alongside that report and never delays or replaces it.

17. Mandatory reporting and reportable conduct obligations

Mandatory reporting laws require certain people, often defined by their profession or role, to report a reasonable suspicion of child abuse to a statutory child protection authority. The categories of mandatory reporter and the threshold for reporting, differ by state and territory.

Separately, reportable conduct schemes in some states and territories require certain organisations to notify an independent oversight body of specified allegations against an employee, contractor or volunteer and to investigate them to a particular standard. Thresholds and the relevant oversight body differ by jurisdiction.

The event organiser or club confirms the current mandatory reporting and reportable conduct position for the state or territory in which they operate, consistent with AFBJJ-POL-EMP-01 Appendix A. Where AFBJJ or a club is uncertain whether a matter is reportable, it is treated as reportable and the relevant authority is contacted for guidance.

PART C: COMPLAINTS, DISPUTES AND DISCIPLINE

18. Principles for handling complaints

- Safety comes first. Where there is any risk to a child or to a person's immediate safety, that risk is addressed before and regardless of, the outcome of a complaint process.
- Natural justice applies. A respondent is told the substance of the allegation and given a genuine opportunity to respond before any adverse finding is made.
- Complaints are handled confidentially, on a need-to-know basis, and without unreasonable delay.
- No one is disadvantaged for raising a genuine concern, whether or not it is ultimately substantiated.
- The response is proportionate to the seriousness of the concern.

19. Member Protection Information Officer (MPIO)

The MPIO is a confidential first point of contact for anyone considering raising a concern. The MPIO explains the options available, including informal resolution, a formal complaint, or referral to an external body such as police or an anti-discrimination agency, and explains what to expect from this process. The MPIO does not investigate or decide a complaint and is not an advocate for either party.

AFBJJ's current MPIO contact details are held by the AFBJJ Board and communicated to affiliated clubs. Where a club does not have easy access to the MPIO, the head coach or club committee is the initial point of contact and escalates to the MPIO or Board as needed.

20. Making a complaint

A complaint may be made by a person directly affected, by a parent or guardian on behalf of a junior athlete, or by a witness. Concerns can also be raised anonymously, though an anonymous concern may limit AFBJJ's ability to investigate or act on it.

Informal resolution

Where a concern is low-level, both parties feel safe to participate, and it is appropriate to the nature of the concern, the MPIO may help the parties reach an informal resolution, such as a facilitated conversation or an apology. Informal resolution is never used for an allegation involving a child's safety or a potential criminal offence.

Formal complaint

A formal complaint is made in writing, using the form at Appendix B where practical, and should include: the complainant's name and contact details (unless anonymous), the name of the respondent, what happened, when and where, the names of any witnesses, and the outcome the complainant is seeking. AFBJJ accepts a complaint in another accessible format where a person is unable to complete a written form.

21. Assessing and responding to a complaint

On receiving a complaint, the MPIO or Board first assesses:

- whether there is an immediate safety risk requiring an interim measure (see section 24) or an emergency response
- whether the matter must be reported to police or a statutory authority under section 17, which proceeds regardless of any internal process
- the most appropriate pathway: informal resolution, formal investigation, referral to an external body, or no further action, for example where a complaint is clearly outside the scope of this policy.

The complainant is told which pathway has been chosen and why, within 10 business days of the complaint being received where reasonably possible.

22. Investigation process

Where a formal investigation is warranted, the Board appoints an investigator or panel with no conflict of interest in the matter. This may be a Board member, another suitably experienced person, or an external investigator for a serious or complex matter.

1. The respondent is given written notice of the substance of the allegation and a genuine opportunity to respond before any finding is made.
2. The investigator gathers relevant information, which may include interviewing the complainant, the respondent and witnesses, and reviewing relevant documents or communications.
3. The investigator aims to complete the investigation within 6 to 8 weeks of appointment, extended where the matter is complex, and keeps both parties updated on progress.
4. Findings are made on the balance of probabilities, meaning what is more likely than not to have occurred, based on the information available.
5. The investigator provides a written report of findings and a recommendation to the Board, or to the delegated decision maker.

A person directly involved in the matter, including as a witness, does not take part in deciding the outcome.

23. Outcomes, sanctions and appeals

Depending on the findings, an outcome may include:

- no further action, where the complaint is not substantiated
- an informal resolution already reached, or a facilitated apology
- a formal warning recorded on the person's file
- mandatory education or training as a condition of continued participation
- conditions on participation, such as restricted contact with a particular person or age group
- suspension of membership, accreditation or a coaching role for a defined period
- expulsion or permanent termination of membership or accreditation
- referral to police or another external authority, in addition to any of the above.

The Board or a panel it delegates this authority to, decides the outcome and notifies both parties in writing, including the reasons for the decision.

Appeals

Either party may appeal a decision in writing within 14 days, on the grounds that a fair process was not followed or that significant new information has since become available. An appeal is decided by Board members who were not involved in the original decision, and that decision is final within AFBJJ's internal process.

A person may also have external avenues available in addition to, or instead of, this process, including the Australian Human Rights Commission or a state or territory anti-discrimination agency for a discrimination or harassment matter, the Fair Work Commission for an eligible workplace bullying matter or police for a criminal matter.

24. Interim and precautionary measures

The Board or its delegate, may put an interim measure in place at any point, including before a complaint is finally resolved, where it reasonably considers this necessary to protect someone's safety. Examples include standing a coach down from contact with a particular person or age group, or directing two people to have no contact pending the outcome.

An interim measure is a precaution based on a risk assessment, not a finding that the allegation is true. It is proportionate to the risk, reviewed regularly, and lifted as soon as it is no longer necessary.

25. Vexatious or malicious complaints

A complaint that is not substantiated is not automatically vexatious. Most genuine concerns raised in good faith are protected under section 12, whatever the outcome. A complaint found to have been made without genuine belief in its truth, or for an improper purpose such as to harass or disadvantage another person, is itself treated as a breach of this policy and may lead to a sanction under section 23.

26. Support for those involved

A complainant, respondent or witness may bring a support person to any meeting under this process. AFBJJ can refer anyone affected to appropriate support, including Lifeline (13 11 14), 1800RESPECT (1800 737 732) for sexual assault or family violence, or Kids Helpline (1800 55 1800) for children and young people. Being named as a respondent is not evidence of wrongdoing and respondents are treated fairly and with dignity throughout the process.

27. Confidentiality and record keeping

Information gathered under this policy is shared only with those who need it to progress the matter or keep someone safe, or as required by law. Records are stored securely, consistent with the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) and any applicable state health or privacy records legislation.

Records are retained for a minimum of seven years. Records relating to a child safety concern are retained for as long as reasonably practicable, reflecting that limitation periods for civil claims relating to child abuse have been removed in most Australian jurisdictions.

28. Related documents and references

- AFBJJ Constitution and disciplinary rules
- AFBJJ Concussion and Head Injury Management Policy and Procedure (AFBJJ-POL-CHI-01)
- AFBJJ Blood Rule, Infection Control and Mat Hygiene Policy and Procedure (AFBJJ-POL-BIC-01)
- AFBJJ Event Emergency Management Plan and Risk Assessment (AFBJJ-POL-EMP-01)
- AFBJJ Risk Management Policy
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984, Disability Discrimination Act 1992, Age Discrimination Act 2004, Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)
- National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (2019)
- Sport Integrity Australia National Integrity Framework and Play by the Rules resources

29. Policy review

This policy is reviewed by the AFBJJ Governance Committee at least every 12 months, immediately following any material change to referenced legislation or the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and after any significant complaint or child safety incident to identify lessons for the policy or its implementation.

Appendix A: Quick reference: recognise, respond, report

A child is in immediate danger

Call 000. Do not wait.

A child discloses abuse, or you suspect it

Stay calm and listen without interrupting. Do not promise complete confidentiality. Do not question the child in detail yourself. Do not confront the person concerned. Contact police or your state or territory child protection authority to discuss the concern. Notify the AFBJJ MPIO and Board. Write down what was seen or said as soon as you can, in the child's own words where possible.

Any other concern about behaviour covered by this policy

Contact the AFBJJ MPIO for confidential information about your options, or speak with your head coach or club committee. You do not need to be certain something is wrong to raise it.

Appendix B: Complaint form

Field	Details
Complainant name	(may be left blank if raising anonymously)
Contact details	
Are you making this complaint on behalf of a junior athlete?	Yes / No, if yes, relationship to the athlete
Respondent name(s)	
What happened	
Date(s) and location(s)	
Witnesses, if any	
Has this been reported to police or another authority?	Yes / No, and details
Outcome you are seeking	
Signature	
Date	

Appendix C: Code of conduct summary card

Everyone at AFBJJ

Treat others with respect regardless of belt rank, role or seniority. Respect physical and emotional boundaries. Never discriminate, harass, bully or vilify. Never use a position of authority to pursue an inappropriate relationship. Report genuine concerns.

Around junior athletes

Never be alone with a child without another adult present. Keep physical contact limited to what is needed for safe instruction, and explain what you are doing. Do not contact a child through personal social media or messaging outside official club channels. Follow the club's supervision arrangements for change rooms, travel and private lessons.

If something feels wrong

Contact your club's head coach or the AFBJJ Board. If a child is in immediate danger, call 000.

Appendix D: Investigation and outcome record

Field	Details
Complaint reference / date received	
Investigator(s) appointed	
Date respondent notified of allegation	
Interim measures applied, if any	
Summary of information gathered	
Findings (balance of probabilities)	
Recommendation to the Board	
Decision and outcome	
Date parties notified	
Appeal lodged?	Yes / No, and outcome
Record completed by	
Date completed	

Appendix E: Complaint / incident register

Maintained by the MPIO or Board. Include every formal complaint, child safety concern and reportable incident.

Date	Nature of concern	Raised by	Pathway	Reported externally?	Outcome date