



# Balgownie Junior Football Club

## Job description for: MEMBER PROTECTION INFORMATION OFFICER (MPIO)

### OVERVIEW:

An MPIO is responsible for providing information about a person's rights, responsibilities and options to an individual making a complaint or raising a concern. They can also provide information and advice to sport administrators and complaint handlers with regard to the Member Protection Policy of that sport. MPIO's are generally impartial and don't mediate or investigate complaints. There are MPIO's in every club, association, branch, referee branch and Football NSW.

### RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Keep up-to-date with the latest legislation regarding child protection through training, seminars and bulletins
- Ensure that all activities within the BJFC framework are safe, fair and inclusive.
- Effectively communicate to all club people and administrators their individual rights and responsibilities towards the people in their care
- Ensure policies and processes are followed
- Convey to players and coaches that poor behaviour is not acceptable and provide training and counselling to achieve better outcomes
- Maintain a focus and emphasis on enjoying the game, not necessarily "winning"
- Familiarise themselves and apply the requirements of the FFA National Member Protection Policy
- Maintain utmost confidentiality and personal information
- Write unbiased/factual incident reports for submission to FSC/Ombudsman
- Liaise with and provide counsel/assistance to Club members regarding personal issues (injuries, personality clashes, complaints etc)
- Confirm all coaches have completed and lodged a Member Declaration Form
- Confirm relevant coaches requiring a WWC check have been certified by the Club

### RELATIONSHIPS:

- General Committee and FSC

### ACCOUNTABILITY:

- The MPIO is accountable to the President, General Committee and the FSC.

### COMMITMENT LEVEL:

The estimated time commitment is 1-2 hours per week during the season.

### ESSENTIAL SKILLS:

- Good listening ability.
- Effective communicator.
- Clear thinker and positive attitude.
- Good negotiator, encourager and good people skills.
- Empathetic and non-judgemental.

There are some common issues that arise and which MPIOs need to be aware of:

**1. Insufficient Game Time** - This is not a child protection issue and can be resolved through mediation. It is a decision for the coach of a team to determine how much game time players receive however some clubs do have policies relating to amateur football game time. Contact your local club to enquire whether they have a game time policy.

Football is a team sport and time on the bench is an accepted part of being in a football team. The strategies used by coaches are many and varied in their efforts to try and provide players with fair game time but equal time is not always possible particularly where the games are closely contested and where player fitness, endurance, ability and team cohesion are factors in player selection, rotation and positioning.

**2. Non-selection in team or squad** - This is not a child protection issue. The selection of players is a decision for selectors. Players are generally selected into teams and squads based on skill, strength, stamina, physique, fitness, sportsmanship, teammannship, commitment and a willingness and ability to learn and improve. A good behaviour record both on and off the field, is also beneficial.

**3. Our team is not winning or my child is not scoring goals.** It is interesting to note that a study on children's sport found that the top 3 reasons children play amateur sport are: To make friends; To have fun; and To play the game.

Winning is not always a priority for children and just playing with their friends, having fun and kicking the ball is often what they base their good experience on. Parents should support their children and encourage good sportsmanship no matter the outcome of the game - win, lose or draw.

Sport is often the only outlet a child has from the pressures of school and life in general so it is important to ensure they are allowed to enjoy their football and have a good experience.

**4. Behaviour of the Coach.** Inappropriate behaviour in football is unacceptable and clubs and associations are responsible for taking appropriate action where they consider the behaviour of their team officials to be in breach of the Coaches Code of Conduct. Associations also have a level of jurisdiction over coaches and team officials which can result in those persons appearing before the tribunal and sanctions applied.

Penalties imposed for serious breaches of the Code of Conduct can include a lifetime ban from football.

The following are options which clubs may consider when responding to breaches of the Coaches Code of Conduct:

- Speaking with the coach about their behaviour;
- Monitoring the coach to observe the reported behaviour;
- Mentoring the coach on how to improve his/her behaviour;
- Mediation between the aggrieved parties;
- Required to complete the Play By The Rules on-line training;
- Required to complete an accredited coaching course at Football NSW;
- Issuing a written warning to the coach about their behaviour;
- Taking disciplinary action;
- Suspending the coach from his/her duties for a period of time;
- Dismissing the coach;
- or a combination of these.

Any action taken is at the discretion of the club or tribunal. The complainant DOES NOT determine the penalty. An offender should also consider offering an apology as this can often result in a favourable outcome.

**5. Failure to release a player from a contract** - This is not a child protection issue and is a matter for resolution between the club and the player involved.

## **COMPLAINT PROCESSES**

It is up to a complainant to decide if they wish to proceed with a complaint. If a person is unsure what to do then they may consider the following options:

### **- Do nothing**

Consider what may happen if nothing is done.

### **- Direct Approach**

Consider whether speaking to the person directly may resolve the matter. If the person knows about the concerns they may recognise the error of their ways and alter their behaviour. In most cases it is only fair that the person is provided with an opportunity to resolve the problem themselves.

### **- Seek mediation**

This is where a club official or another person may act as a mediator between two parties involved. For example: If a parent is having a problem with a coach, a meeting may be arranged between the parent and the coach with a club official acting as mediator. This way the problem can be discussed and resolved politely.

### **- Verbal Complaint**

The matter could be discussed with the MPIO, Secretary, President or another official of the club. This may provide the club an opportunity to monitor the situation. A club may request that a written complaint be lodged before they take any further action.

### **- Complaint by a child**

Where a verbal complaint is made by a child to an adult then the adult is obliged to note and report the complaint. A complaint by a child should never be ignored.

### **- Official Complaint**

An official complaint should be in writing and addressed to the Club Secretary. The person who signs the complaint must be able to be identified and be contactable. It is important to note that the person being complained about will be informed of the complaint and may be provided with a copy of the complaint as it is their right to be notified of any complaint made against them. An unsigned complaint, anonymous complaint or a rumour cannot be acted upon.

## **COMPLAINT HANDLING**

Clubs have a duty to respond to all complaints and follow appropriate complaint handling procedures. Clubs should always endeavour to act in the best interests of all parties involved and respond to a complaint as quickly and effectively as possible. Clubs should manage all complaints fairly and effectively, within a brief period of time.