



***VICTORIAN SKATEBOARD
ASSOCIATION INC CODE OF CONDUCT
MEMBER PROTECTION POLICY***



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PREFACE

The Victorian Skateboard Association (VSA) is committed to providing safe environments that is free from harassment, discrimination and abuse for everyone, and promotes respectful and positive behaviour and values. This policy provides a code of behaviour forming the basis of appropriate and ethical conduct which everyone must abide by.

The VSA understands our obligations in relation to harassment, discrimination and child protection. The VSA has established various standards and expectations of behaviour to provide safe and respectful sporting environments.

The VSA President and executive committee is committed to ensuring that everyone associated with the organisation complies with the policy.

Member Protection Policy adopted by the VSA Board Executive Committee:

Date: 16/9/2010

Sue Kirk
President

Nick Buskens
Vice President

PART A: NATIONAL MEMBER PROTECTION

1. Introduction

Vision,

All young people in Victoria have the opportunity to formally participate in skate related programs and skate parks safely.

Mission

Foster, Encourage and Promote the sport of skateboarding throughout Victoria

Purpose

The VSA aims to partner with education providers, government, businesses and other organisations to provide opportunities for young people to participate in skateboarding

The VSA will be known for:

- The development and contribution to the Victorian League of Skateboarding
- Providing support and assistance to organisations and local government contributing to the development grass roots skateboarding programs in Victoria
- Promoting skateboarding as a legitimate alternative to main stream sports
- Developing education programs and systems that provide young people with the fundamental skills to enter the sport safely
- Provide pathways for entry level participants to progress to a higher levels

2. Purpose of this policy

This Victorian Skateboard Association (VSA) Member Protection Policy aims to maintain ethical and informed decision-making and responsible behaviours within our sport. It outlines our commitment to a person's right to be treated with respect and dignity and to be safe and protected from abuse. This policy informs everyone involved in our sport of his or her legal and ethical rights and responsibilities and the standards of behaviour that are required.

The policy attachments outline the procedures that support our commitment to eliminating discrimination, harassment, child abuse and other forms of inappropriate behaviour from our sport. As part of this commitment, the VSA will take disciplinary action against any person or organisation bound by this policy if they breach it.

This policy has been endorsed by VSA executive board and has been incorporated into our Constitution. The policy starts on 1/10/2010 and will operate until replaced. Copies of the current policy and its attachments can be obtained upon request.

3. Who this Policy Applies To

This policy applies to the following people, *organisations, business, government associations and partnering bodies who receive financial assistance from or partner with the VSA*, whether they are in a paid or unpaid/voluntary capacity.

- 3.1 Persons appointed or elected to boards, committees and sub-committees;
- 3.2 Employees and volunteers of VSA
- 3.3 Members of the Executive committee
- 3.4 Coaches and assistant coaches
- 3.5 athletes / skateboarders

- 3.6 Local Governments, business and organisations that partner with the VSA to conduct activities.
- 3.7 Athletes, coaches, officials and other personnel participating in events and activities, including camps, road trips, training sessions and competitions held or sanctioned by the VSA
- 3.8 Any other person including spectators, parents/guardians, sponsors and media who or which agrees in writing (whether on a ticket, entry form or otherwise) to be bound by this policy

This policy also applies to partnering bodies such as Local Governments, business, organisations and associations that conduct VSA sanctioned activities.

Local government, business, organisations, partnering bodies and associations are required to adopt and implement this policy and to provide proof to the VSA of the approval of the policy by the relevant board and management in accordance with its constitution. Partnering bodies must also undertake to ensure that they are bound by this policy and are made aware of this policy and what it says.

4. Responsibilities of the Organisation

Partnering bodies such as Local governments, business, organisations and associations that conduct VSA sanctioned activities must:

- 4.1 Adopt, implement and comply with this policy;
- 4.2 Make such amendments to their Constitution, Rules or Policies necessary for this policy to be enforceable;
- 4.3 Publish, distribute and promote this policy and the consequences of breaches;
- 4.4 Promote and model appropriate standards of behaviour at all times;
- 4.5 Promptly deal with any breaches or complaints made under this policy in a sensitive, fair, timely and confidential manner;
- 4.6 Apply this policy consistently;
- 4.7 Recognise and enforce any penalty and or procedural requirement imposed under this policy;
- 4.8 Ensure that a copy of this policy is available or accessible to the persons and associations to whom this policy applies;
- 4.9 Use appropriately trained people to receive and manage complaints and
- 4.10 Monitor and review this policy at least annually.
- 4.11 Provide friendly, welcoming, safe and hazard free environments for all persons.

5. Individual Responsibilities

Individuals bound by this policy are responsible for:

- 5.1 Making themselves aware of the policy and complying with its standards of behaviour;
- 5.2 Complying with our screening requirements and any state/territory Working with Children checks;
- 5.3 Placing the safety and welfare of children above other considerations;
- 5.4 Being accountable for their behaviour;
- 5.5 Following the procedures outlined in this policy if they wish to make a complaint or report a concern about possible child abuse, discrimination, harassment or other inappropriate behaviour; and
- 5.6 Complying with any decisions and/or procedures imposed under this policy.

6. Position Statements

6.1 Child Protection

The VSA acknowledges that our staff, members, volunteers and partners provide a valuable contribution to the positive experiences of children involved in our sport. The VSA aims to continue this and to take measures to protect the safety and welfare of children participating in our sport by:

- Prohibiting any form of abuse against children;
- Ensuring people have completed a satisfactory Working with Children Check where the relevant state/territory law requires this [state/territory requirements are summarised in Part B of this policy];
- Carefully selecting and screening people over the age of 16 years who work, coach or have regular unsupervised contact with children;
- Promoting and enforcing our codes of behaviour, particularly for roles associated with juniors;
- Responding to all reports and complaints of abuse promptly, seriously and confidentially;
- Making information about child protection available, particularly for roles associated with children;
- Adopting practices that reduce risks and provide the greatest opportunity of having a child safe environment.

Anyone who reasonably suspects that a child has been or is being abused by someone within our sport, is to report it immediately to the police or relevant government agency and VSA president or member of the executive committee. Descriptions of the sorts of activity which may be abuse are in the Dictionary at clause 10. If anyone suspects that a child is being abused by his or her parent/s, they are advised to contact the relevant government department for youth, family and community services in the state

A person will not be victimised for reporting possible child abuse and the privacy of all persons concerned will be respected. Our procedures for handling allegations of child abuse are outlined in attachment [B4].

6.2 Taking Images of Children

Images of children can be used inappropriately or illegally. The VSA requires that individuals and partnering bodies wherever possible, obtain permission from a child's parent/guardian before taking an image of a child that is not their own and ensure that the parent knows the way the image will be used. We also require the privacy of others to be respected and disallow the use of camera phones, videos and cameras inside changing areas, showers and toilets.

If the VSA uses an image of a child it will avoid naming or identifying the child or it will, wherever possible, avoid using both the first name and surname. We will not display personal information such as residential address, email address or telephone numbers without gaining consent from the parent/guardian. We will not display information about hobbies, likes/dislikes, school, etc as this information can be used as grooming tools by pedophiles or other persons. We will only use appropriate images of a child, relevant to our sport and ensure that the child is suitably clothed in a manner that promotes the sport, displays its successes, etc.

We require our members, staff, volunteers and partnering bodies to do likewise.

6.3 Anti-Discrimination and Harassment

The VSA opposes all forms of harassment, discrimination and bullying. This includes treating or proposing to treat someone less favourably because of a particular characteristic; imposing or intending to impose an unreasonable requirement, condition or practice which has an unequal or disproportionate effect on people with a particular characteristic; or any behaviour that is offensive, abusive, belittling, intimidating or threatening – whether this is face-to-face, indirectly or via communication technologies such as mobile phone and computers. Some forms of harassment, discrimination and bullying, based on personal characteristics such as those listed in the Dictionary at [clause 10], are against the law.

If any person feels they are being harassed or discriminated against by another person or organisation bound by this policy, please refer to our complaints procedure outlined in attachment [B1] of this policy. This will explain what to do about the behaviour and how the VSA will deal with the problem.

6.4 Sexual Relationships (version one – possible disciplinary action can be taken)

The VSA takes the position that sexual relationships between coaches and the adult athletes that they coach should be avoided as these relationships can have harmful effects on the individual athlete involved, on other athletes and coaches, and on the sport's public image. Such relationships may be intentionally or unintentionally exploitative due to a disparity between coaches and athletes in terms of authority, power, maturity, status, influence and dependence.

Should a sexual relationship exist between an athlete and coach, the VSA will consider whether any action is necessary. Factors that may be relevant in this consideration are the age and maturity of the athlete relative to the coach, the financial or emotional dependence of the athlete on the coach, and the likelihood of the relationship having any adverse impact on the athlete and/or other athletes. If it is determined that the sexual relationship is inappropriate, action may be taken to stop the coaching relationship with the athlete. Action may include transfer, a request for resignation or dismissal from coaching duties.

In the event that an athlete attempts to initiate an intimate sexual relationship, the coach must take personal responsibility for discouraging such approaches, explaining the ethical basis for such action. The coach or athlete may wish to approach the VSA executive or partnering body management if they feel harassed. Our complaints procedure is outlined in Attachment [B1] of this policy.

6.4 Sexual Relationships (version two – no disciplinary action)

The VSA takes the view that intimate relationships (whether or not of a sexual nature) between coaches and or event and programming staff, while not necessarily constituting harassment, can have harmful effects on the athlete, program patrons and partnering bodies, or the sport's public image. Such relationships may be perceived to be exploitative because there is usually a disparity between coaches and athletes in terms of authority, maturity, status, influence and dependence. Given there is always a risk that the relative power of the coach has been a factor in the development of such relationships, they should be avoided by coaches at all levels. In the event that an athlete attempts to initiate an intimate relationship, the coach must take personal responsibility for discouraging such approaches, explaining the ethical basis for such actions.

The coach or athlete may wish to approach the VSA President or Vice president if they feel harassed. Our complaints procedure is outlined in Attachment [B1] of this policy.

6.5 Pregnancy

Everyone bound by this policy must treat pregnant women with dignity and respect and any unreasonable barriers to participation by them in our sport should be removed. We will not tolerate any discrimination or harassment against pregnant women.

While many sporting activities are safe for pregnant women, there may be particular risks that apply to some women during pregnancy. Those risks will depend on the nature of the sporting activity and the particular pregnant woman's circumstances. Pregnant women should be aware that their own health and wellbeing, and that of their unborn children, should be of utmost importance in their decision making about the way they participate in our sport.

The VSA recommends that pregnant women wanting to participate in our sport consult with their medical advisers, make themselves aware of the facts about pregnancy in sport, and ensure that they make informed decisions about participation. We will only require pregnant women to sign a

disclaimer if we require other participants to sign one in similar circumstances. We will not require women to undertake a pregnancy test.

7. Complaints Procedures

7.1 Complaints

The VSA aims to provide a simple procedure for complaints based on the principles of procedural fairness (natural justice). Any person (a complainant) may report a complaint about a person/s or organisation bound by this policy (respondent). Such complaints should be reported to the VSA President or Vice President or partnering body program management. If the complaint relates to a breach of the Rules, this will be handled by the head judge or event management

In all cases, the lowest level at which a matter can be dealt with shall always be preferred (e.g. if the head judge can deal with the complaint, then it should; if not, the event manager can deal with the complaint, then it should). Only in the most serious cases should the matter be referred to the VSA, unless the matter has arisen at or relates to the State level. Therefore, if a complaint relates to:

- Behaviour or an incident that occurred at a local event or program involves people attending the event, then the complaint should be reported to and handled by the relevant event organisers in the first instance; or
- Behaviour or an incident that occurred at the event or involves people operating and managing the event, then the complaint should be reported to and handled by the VSA in the first instance.

A complaint may be dealt with informally or formally. The complainant usually decides this unless President or Vice president considers that the complaint falls outside this policy and would be better dealt with another way and/or the law requires the complaint/allegation to be reported to an appropriate authority.

All complaints will be dealt with promptly, seriously, sensitively and confidentially. Our complaint procedures are outlined in attachment [B1].

Individuals and organisations may also pursue their complaint externally under anti-discrimination, child protection, criminal or other relevant legislation.

7.2 Vexatious Complaints & Victimisation

The VSA aims for our complaints procedure to have integrity and be free of unfair repercussions or victimisation. If at any point in the complaints process the event or program organiser considers that a complainant has knowingly made an untrue complaint or the complaint is *vexatious* or malicious, the matter may be referred to the VSA president or Vice President for appropriate action which may include disciplinary action against the complainant.

VSA will take all necessary steps to make sure that people involved in a complaint are not victimised. Disciplinary measures can be imposed on anyone who harasses or victimises another person for making a complaint.

7.3 Mediation

The VSA aims to resolve complaints with a minimum of fuss. Complaints may be resolved by agreement between the people involved with no need for disciplinary action. Mediation allows those involved to be heard and to come up with mutually agreed solutions.

Mediation may occur before or after the investigation of a complaint. If a complainant wishes to resolve the complaint with the help of a mediator, the VSA Vice President will, in consultation with

the complainant, arrange for a neutral third party mediator where possible. Lawyers are not able to negotiate on behalf of the complainant and/or the respondent. More information on the mediation process is outlined in attachment [B2].

7.4 Tribunals

Currently there are no existing tribunals for skateboarding matters therefore they can not be convened to hear a formal complaint.

In the incidence where the plaintiff or defendant is not happy with a resolution they may wish to pursue their complaint externally under anti-discrimination, child protection, criminal or other relevant legislation.

8. What is a Breach of this policy

It is a breach of this policy for any person or organisation to which this policy applies, to do anything contrary to this policy, including but not limited to:

- 8.1 Breaching the Codes of Behaviour (attachment C1 to this policy);
- 8.2 Bringing the sport *and the* VSA into disrepute, or acting in a manner likely to bring the sport and the VSA into disrepute
- 8.3 Failing to follow VSA policies (including this policy) and procedures for the protection, safety and welfare of children;
- 8.4 Discriminating against, harassing or bullying (including cyber bullying) any person;
- 8.5 Victimising another person for reporting a complaint;
- 8.6 Engaging in a sexually inappropriate relationship with a person that they supervise, or have influence, authority or power over;
- 8.7 Verbally or physically assaulting another person, intimidating another person or creating a hostile environment within the sport;
- 8.8 Disclosing to any unauthorised person or organisation any VSA information that is of a private, confidential or privileged nature;
- 8.9 Making a complaint they knew to be untrue, vexatious, malicious or improper;
- 8.10 Failing to comply with a penalty imposed after a finding that the individual or organisation has breached this policy; or
- 8.11 Failing to comply with a direction given to the individual or organisation during the discipline process.

9. Disciplinary Measures

If an individual, organisation, business or partnering body to which this policy applies breaches this policy, one or more forms of discipline may be imposed. Any disciplinary measure imposed under this policy must:

- Be applied consistent with any contractual and employment rules and requirements;
- Be fair and reasonable;
- Be based on the evidence and information presented and the seriousness of the breach; and
- Be determined in accordance with our Constitution, this policy and/or Rules of the sport.

9.1 Individual

Subject to contractual and employment requirements, if a finding is made that an individual has breached this policy, one or more of the following forms of discipline may be imposed:

- 9.1.1 A direction that the individual make a verbal and/or written apology;
- 9.1.2 A written warning;
- 9.1.3 A direction that the individual attend counselling to address their behaviour;
- 9.1.4 A withdrawal of any awards, placing, records, achievements bestowed in any tournaments, activities or events held or sanctioned by the VSA
- 9.1.5 A demotion or transfer of the individual to another location, role or activity;

- 9.1.6 A suspension of the individual's membership or participation or engagement in a role or activity;
- 9.1.7 Termination of the individual's membership, appointment or engagement;
- 9.1.8 A recommendation that the VSA terminate the individual's membership, appointment or engagement;
- 9.1.9 In the case of a coach or official, a direction that the relevant organisation de-register and or not use the coach or official for a period of time or permanently;

9.2 Organisation or partnering body

If a finding is made that VSA member or partnering body has breached its own or this Member Protection Policy, one or more of the following forms of discipline may be imposed:

- 9.2.1 A direction that any rights, privileges and benefits provided to that organisation by the VSA be suspended for a specified period;
- 9.2.2 A direction that any funding granted or given to it by the VSA cease from a specified date;
- 9.2.3 A direction that the VSA cease to sanction events held by or under the auspices of that organisation;
- 9.2.4 A recommendation to the VSA that its membership/partnership be suspended or terminated in accordance with the relevant constitution or rules;
- 9.2.5 Any other form of discipline that the national body or peak organisation considers to be reasonable and appropriate.

9.3 Factors to consider

The form of discipline to be imposed on individuals, organisations and partnering bodies will depend on factors such as:

- Nature and seriousness of the breach;
- If the person knew or should have known that the behaviour was a breach;
- Level of contrition;
- The effect of the proposed disciplinary measures on the person including any personal, professional or financial consequences;
- If there have been relevant prior warnings or disciplinary action;
- Ability to enforce discipline if the person is a parent or spectator (even if they are bound by the policy); and/or
- Any other mitigating circumstances.

10. Dictionary

This Dictionary sets out the meaning of words used in this policy and its attachments without limiting the ordinary and natural meaning of the words. State/Territory specific definitions and more detail on some of the words in this dictionary can be sourced from the relevant State/Territory child protection commissions or equal opportunity and anti-discrimination commissions.

Abuse is a form of harassment and includes physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, and abuse of power. Examples of abusive behaviour include bullying, humiliation, verbal abuse and insults.

Child means a person who is under the age of 18 years

Child abuse involves conduct which puts children at risk of harm (usually by adults, sometimes by other children) and often by those they know and trust. It can take many forms, including verbal and physical actions and by people failing to provide them with basic care. Child abuse may include:

- Physical abuse by hurting a child or a child's development (e.g. hitting, shaking or other physical harm; giving a child alcohol or drugs; or training that exceeds the child's development or maturity).
- Sexual abuse by adults or other children where a child is encouraged or forced to watch or engage in sexual activity or where a child is subject to any other inappropriate conduct of a sexual nature (e.g. sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, pornography including child pornography or inappropriate touching or conversations).
- Emotional abuse by ill-treating a child (e.g. humiliation, taunting, sarcasm, yelling, negative criticism, name calling, ignoring or placing unrealistic expectations on a child).
- Neglect (e.g. failing to give food, water, shelter or clothing or to protect a child from danger or foreseeable risk of harm or injury).

Complaint means a complaint made under clauses.

Complainant means a person making a complaint.

Complaint Handler/Manager means a person appointed under this policy to investigate a Complaint

Discrimination means treating or proposing to treat someone less favourably because of a particular characteristic in the same or similar circumstances in certain areas of public life (Direct Discrimination), or imposing or intending to impose an unreasonable requirement, condition or practice that is the same for everyone, but which has an unequal or disproportionate effect on individuals or groups with particular characteristics (Indirect Discrimination). The characteristics covered by discrimination law across Australia are:

- Age;
- Disability;
- Family/carer responsibilities;
- Gender identity/transgender status;
- Homosexuality and sexual orientation;
- Irrelevant medical record;
- Irrelevant criminal record;
- Political belief/activity;
- Pregnancy and breastfeeding;
- Race;
- Religious belief/activity;
- Sex or gender;
- Social origin;
- Trade union membership/activity.

(Some States and Territories include additional characteristics such as physical features or association with a person with one or more of the characteristics listed above).

Examples of Discrimination

- **Age:** A club refuses to allow an older person to coach a team simply because of age.
- **Breastfeeding:** A member of the club who is breastfeeding a baby in the club rooms is asked to leave.
- **Disability:** A junior player is overlooked because of mild epilepsy.
- **Family responsibilities:** A club decides not to promote an employee because he has a child with a disability even though the employee is the best person for the job.
- **Gender Identity:** A transgender contract worker is harassed when employees refuse to call her by her female name.
- **Homosexuality:** An athlete is ostracised from her team after it becomes known that she is a lesbian.
- **Marital Status:** A player is deliberately excluded from team activities and social functions because she is single

- **Pregnancy:** A woman is dropped from a squad when she becomes pregnant.
- **Race:** An Italian referee is not permitted to referee games with a high proportion of Italian players on one team because of his race.
- **Sex:** Specialist coaching is only offered to male players in a mixed team.

Harassment is any type of behaviour that the other person does not want and that is offensive, abusive, belittling or threatening. The behaviour is unwelcome and a reasonable person would recognise it as being unwelcome and likely to cause the recipient to feel offended, humiliated or intimidated.

Unlawful harassment is sexual or targets a person because of their race, sex, pregnancy, marital status, sexual orientation or some other characteristic (see characteristic list under discrimination).

It does not matter whether the harassment was intended: the focus is on the impact of the behaviour. The basic rule is if someone else finds it harassing then it could be harassment. Harassment may be a single incident but is usually repeated. It may be explicit or implicit, verbal or non-verbal.

Discrimination and harassment are not permitted in employment (including volunteer and unpaid employment); when providing sporting goods and services including access to sporting facilities; when providing education and accommodation; the selection or otherwise of any person for competition or a team (domestic or international); the entry or otherwise of any player or other person to any competition and the obtaining or retaining membership of clubs and organisations (including the rights and privileges of membership).

Some exceptions to state and federal anti-discrimination law apply. Examples include:

- holding a competitive sporting activity for females only who are under 12 years of age or of any age where strength, stamina or physique is relevant or
- not selecting a participant if the person's disability means he or she is not reasonably capable of performing the actions reasonably required for that particular sporting activity.

Requesting, assisting, instructing, inducing or encouraging another person to engage in discrimination or harassment may also be against the law.

It is also a breach of discrimination law to victimise a person who is involved in making a complaint of discrimination or harassment. Example: a player is ostracised by her male coach for complaining about his sexist behaviour or for supporting another player who has made such a complaint.

Public acts of racial hatred which are reasonably likely to offend, insult, humiliate or intimidate are also prohibited. This applies to spectators, participants or any other person who engages in such an act in public. Some states and territories also prohibit public acts that vilify on other grounds such as homosexuality, gender identity, HIV/AIDS, religion and disability – see vilification.

Mediator means an impartial/neutral person appointed to mediate Complaints.

Natural justice (also referred to as procedural fairness) incorporates the following principles:

- both the Complainant and the Respondent must know the full details of what is being said against them and have the opportunity to respond;
- all relevant submissions must be considered;
- no person may judge their own case;
- the decision maker/s must be unbiased, fair and just;
- the penalties imposed must be fair.

Police check means a national criminal history record check conducted as a pre-employment, pre-engagement or current employment background check on a person.

This policy means this Member Protection Policy.

Respondent means the person who is being complained about.

Role-specific codes of conduct means standards of conduct required of certain roles (e.g. coaches).

Sexual harassment means unwanted, unwelcome or uninvited behaviour of a sexual nature which makes a person feel humiliated, intimidated or offended. Sexual harassment can take many different forms and may include unwanted physical contact, verbal comments, jokes, propositions, display of pornographic or offensive material or other behaviour that creates a sexually hostile environment.

Sexual harassment is not behaviour based on mutual attraction, friendship and respect. If the interaction is between consenting adults, it is not sexual harassment.

Sexual offence means a criminal offence involving sexual activity or acts of indecency including but not limited to (due to differences under state/territory legislation):

- Rape
- Indecent assault
- Sexual assault
- Assault with intent to have sexual intercourse
- Incest
- Sexual penetration of child under the age of 16
- Indecent act with child under the age of 16
- Sexual relationship with child under the age of 16
- Sexual offences against people with impaired mental functioning
- Abduction and detention
- Procuring sexual penetration by threats or fraud
- Procuring sexual penetration of child under the age of 16
- Bestiality
- Soliciting acts of sexual penetration or indecent acts
- Promoting or engaging in acts of child prostitution
- Obtaining benefits from child prostitution
- Possession of child pornography
- Publishing child pornography and indecent articles.

Victimisation means subjecting a person or threatening to subject a person to any detriment or unfair treatment because that person has or intends to pursue their rights to make a complaint under government legislation (e.g. anti-discrimination) or under this Policy, or for supporting such a person.

Vilification involves a person or organisation doing public acts to incite hatred towards, serious contempt for, or severe ridicule of a person or group of persons having any of the attributes or characteristics within the meaning of discrimination. Public acts that may amount to vilification include any form of communication to the public and any conduct observable by the public.