VICTORIAN
ATHLETIC LEAGUE

Code of Conduct - Coaches & Trainers

Mandatory behavioural, safeguarding and professional standards

Purpose and status

This Code of Conduct (the Code) establishes the minimum conduct required of all coaches, trainers, therapists and athlete support personnel involved in Victorian Athletic League (VAL) activities. Compliance is a condition of registration, accreditation and continued involvement in the VAL. It applies at training, competition, travel, treatment, social functions, online activity and any setting connected with the role and VAL.

Primary obligation
Athlete safety, welfare and dignity must be placed ahead of performance, selection, winning, reputation or personal interest.

My duty of care

- I will place athlete safety, welfare and dignity ahead of performance, selection, winning or personal interest.
- I will respond appropriately to injury, illness, distress and disclosures and will not pressure an athlete to train or compete when unsafe.

Respectful behaviour

- I will treat athletes, families, officials, handicappers, stewards, Board members, office bearer(s), competitors / athletes, fellow coaches / trainers, media representatives, spectators, volunteers and any other individual or group associated with the VAL with dignity and respect
- I will not abuse, bully, harass, discriminate, vilify, intimidate, humiliate, threaten, exploit or victimise any person.
- I will use feedback that addresses behaviour and performance, not personal worth or identity.
- I agree to not talk to any handicapper (including the director of handicapping) on race days regarding any athlete, their performances or their handicap, and that any athlete handicapping matter will be formalised through the appropriate VAL channel – val@val.org.au.

Professional competence

- I will work within my qualifications, role and competence, maintain required credentials and seek specialist advice when needed.
- I will use safe, progressive and age-appropriate methods and keep reasonable records.

Boundaries and relationships

- I recognise that I hold a position of trust and will not use authority, access or dependency for personal, financial, emotional or sexual advantage.
- I will not groom an athlete, create secrecy, encourage unhealthy dependency or engage in an inappropriate intimate or sexual relationship with an athlete under my authority.
- I will declare conflicts of interest and relationships that may compromise, or appear to compromise, professional judgment.

Children and young people

- I will comply with the Victorian Child Safe Standards, Working with Children requirements and all reporting obligations.
- I will use observable, interruptible settings for one-to-one work with children and transparent communication channels.
- I will listen to children, respect their rights and take concerns seriously.
- I will adhere to the VAL's Code of Conduct for Dealing with Children and Young People https://val.saal.org.au/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/VAL-Policy-Code-fo-Conduct-Child-Safe-22.23.pdf

Touch, treatment and privacy

- I will explain and seek consent before physical contact, treatment, filming, transport or information sharing, except where emergency action is necessary.
- I will protect privacy in treatment, change rooms, travel and digital environments and will provide a chaperone or guardian option for minors.

Digital and public conduct

- I will communicate professionally, avoid secret or disappearing communications with children, and not publish humiliating, confidential or inappropriate content.
- I will not use my position to abuse officials, spectators or damage the safety and integrity of the sport.

Integrity and substances

- I will comply with anti-doping, medication, supplement, gambling and competition-integrity rules.
- I will not coach or provide treatment while impaired or supply illegal or age-restricted substances to athletes.

Reporting and accountability

- I will report safety and integrity concerns promptly and will not investigate informally, suppress concerns or retaliate against a reporter.

- I will cooperate honestly with authorised processes and accept that breaches may result in restrictions, suspension, removal or referral to authorities.

Prohibited conduct

- abuse, bullying, harassment, discrimination, vilification, intimidation, humiliation or victimisation
- sexual misconduct, grooming, exploitation or inappropriate relationships
- physical punishment, coercive exercise or knowingly unsafe training
- secret or inappropriate communications with children
- unauthorised or inappropriate physical contact, treatment, imagery or information sharing
- retaliation, concealment, destruction of evidence or failure to report serious concerns
- anti-doping, medication, drug, gambling or competition manipulation misconduct

Reporting

1. Protect immediate safety and call 000 where necessary.
2. Listen and record; do not promise secrecy or investigate the incident yourself.
3. Notify the VAL Safeguarding / Protection Officer: **Craig Burnett** - **0428 436 114**.
4. Make any required external report. Internal reporting does not replace legal obligations.

Consequences

A breach may result in the following (but not be limited to):

- Education
- Written warning
- Supervision
- Restriction or exclusion from an event or ground entry
- Monetary fine
- Suspension
- Removal from an event (either athletic or social)
- Deregistration
- Bans including lifetime exclusion
- Referral to a governing body or notification to police
- Regulators or integrity agencies
- Interim protective measures may be imposed before a final finding.

Coach's commitment

My commitment
As a VAL Coach or Trainer, I recognise that every interaction I have with the sport shapes the experience of others in our sport. I commit to leading with integrity, treating every person with dignity and respect, prioritising athlete welfare above performance, and contributing to a culture that is safe, inclusive and worthy of the trust placed in me. I understand that coaching and athlete support are both a privilege and a responsibility, and I accept the standards set out in this Code.

Declaration	Details
Full name	_____
Club / organisation	_____
Role	[ ] Coach [ ] Trainer [ ] Other: _____
Working with Children Check (if appropriate)	Number: _____ Expiry: _____
Qualifications / accreditation	_____
Email	_____
Mobile / phone	_____
Signature	_____ Date: _____
VAL witness / verifier	_____ Date: _____

By signing, I confirm that I have read and understood this; agree to comply; will report concerns; will disclose any matter affecting my suitability; and understand that compliance is a condition of involvement.