**MDLAC POLICIES**

**Introduction**

These policies were reviewed in 2020 and set out the expectations for all Committee Members, Athletes, Family and Carers of athletes and other visitors at the Mildura and District Little Athletics Centre (hereafter referred to as MDLAC).

**Parents and Carers Attendance**

Parents or carers **must not** leave young athletes at the centre and depart during competition or during training sessions. A parent or carer must always stay in attendance.

Parents are expected to contribute to our centre by taking on various roles including Age Group Leaders or supporting age group leaders with measuring, marshalling, raking or retrieval during competition and at our optional training.

Parents must accompany younger children during competition. It is not the responsibility of age group leaders to supervise and discipline children behaving poorly. Parents and carers are responsible for their children's behaviour and supervision at all times. Tiny Tots must be accompanied by an adult.

**Expected Behaviour Policy**

All Officials, Committee Members, Coaches, Athletes, Family or Carers of Athletes and visitors must adhere to the MDLAC Code of Conduct that is always set out in this booklet. MDLAC has a **zero tolerance to poor behaviour**. Unfortunately, some people (both participants and spectators) fail to live up to the traditional values of sport. Young people involved in sport have a right to participate in a safe and supportive environment. There is an appropriate standard of behaviour for Little Athletics which will always be abided by, and this applies to all parents, other adults, spectators, and athletes. Overzealous parents and disrespectful athletes go against this standard of behaviour and will not be tolerated.

When poor behaviour is displayed, the President or Committee Member (appointed by the President) will speak directly with the ‘person’ and provide them with a verbal warning about their behaviour. In the event of an athlete behaving inappropriately, the athlete and their parent or carer will both be addressed.

MDLAC will then provide a written warning to the person via email. This will outline the inappropriate behaviour that was discussed reiterate the expectations that are outlined in the Code of Conduct, as well as the standards of behaviour. Should any inappropriate behaviour continue, MDLAC will advise the individual that they are no longer welcome at events.

If it is an athlete that is no longer welcomed at the centre, MDLAC **will not provide** a refund for membership paid for the remaining of the season.

**Late Arrival during Competition Policy**

Athletes who arrive late for competition must complete a warm-up before commencing competition. It is the individual’s responsibility to ensure they have warmed up correctly to avoid injury. Athletes will forfeit any event missed due to late arrival.

**Hot Weather Policy**

Competition - When the weather forecast on Saturday is predicted to be a maximum of 39ºC or above **for Sunday,** competition will be automatically cancelled.

Training - If the weather is forecast on Thursday to be a maximum of 36 ºC or above for **Thursday,** training will be automatically cancelled.

**Wet Weather Policy**

When significant rain has fallen overnight or in the lead up to competition, the Competition Co-ordinator and/or another designated committee member will inspect the facilities on the morning of competition to assess conditions with respect to safety.

If determined unsafe, competition will be cancelled, and an announcement made on our Facebook page by 8:00am during the Track & Field Season and 12 noon during Cross-country season.

**Injury and Illness Policy**

All competitors who sustain an injury during competition are to complete an incident report available from the First Aid Officer. Injuries requiring medical attention, must on return to competition, present to the First Aid Official an original certificate from a Medical Practitioner, certifying that the child is fit to resume full competition. The certificate will be retained by the Centre and be treated confidentially. Failure to meet these requirements will result in the child being denied access to competition until such time as they are met.

In the event of a serious physical accident or incident the First Aid Officer will call Emergency Services (000).

**Sun Protection Policy**

Where possible, competition and training shall be scheduled outside the hours of 11:00 am and 3:00 pm (daylight saving time). The Centre will maximise the use of natural shade provided by trees, buildings and portable shades. Where possible, portable shade will be provided at field event venues and track marshalling areas. Individuals are encouraged to bring their own shade structures to Centre activities.

Officials promote the wearing of sun protective clothing; shirts with short sleeves and a collar, wide brimmed or legionnaire hats, sunglasses and sunscreen. SPF 15+ or higher sunscreen will be made available by MDLAC and reminders issued over the public address. Athletes are advised to bring umbrellas, drink bottles and sunscreen to events. Hats and sunglasses may be worn during competition.

**Healthy Food Choices Policy**

MDLAC will ensure that a variety of healthy food choices are available for all our activities. This applies to all meetings, competitions, functions and events, and to all members, officials, players, volunteers, spectators, visitors and any others taking part in MDLAC activities.

The canteen (where applicable) will provide a variety of healthy food choices and healthy food choices will be available at all our events and functions. The range of confectionery will be limited. MDLAC will attempt to make fresh fruit options and water available to all members when a canteen is in operation.

**Smoke Free Policy**

MDLAC operates in a smoke free environment. In an open park the venue is defined as ‘*the area inside an imaginary boundary 50 metres from the outside perimeter of the athletics track*’. All areas within the track and field area will be Smoke Free, including the pavilion, canteen, toilet blocks, spectator areas, and competing areas.

The Committee, coaches and officials shall not smoke in view of the public or athletes during the lead up to and conduct of Little Athletics events. All MDLAC meetings and functions will be smoke free. Visitors will be required to observe this policy.

Non-compliance with the policy will be handled by providing an explanation of the MDLAC Smoke Free policy to the person, including the identification of areas in which smoking is allowed. In the case of continued non-compliance with the policy, MDLAC officials will use their discretion as to the steps to be taken, which may include asking the person to leave the premises or function. Mildura Rural City Council also has a smoke free policy at sporting venues.

**Responsible Alcohol and Drug Management**

MDLAC has a zero tolerance to alcohol and illicit drug use. There will be no sale or consumption of alcohol during the conduct of any MDLAC events.

All members of MDLAC have a responsibility to ensure that they take reasonable care to protect their own health and safety and that of others whilst in this environment. This means not being affected by alcohol or other drugs. Any athlete, family member, carer or visitor to an MDLAC event who is believed to be affected by drugs or alcohol or seen in possession of drugs (or drug paraphernalia) or alcohol will be approached by an official and requested to leave the event. This may involve MDLAC calling a taxi or notifying Victoria Police if deemed warranted.

For the purpose of this Policy, MDLAC defines alcohol and drugs as follows:

* “Alcohol” refers to any beverage, containing an alcoholic content that temporarily impairs a person’s physical or mental capacity.
* “Drugs” refers to a chemical substance, whether it is legal or illegal, which may have the ability to impair a person’s physical or mental capacity. These can include non-prescribed drugs, for example, but not limited to, speed, heroin, amphetamines, LSD, crack, cocaine, ecstasy, marijuana, etc.
* “Member” refers to any athlete and their family members or carers associated with MDLAC, whether financial (fee-paying) or not.

**MDLAC CODE OF CONDUCT**

**Introduction**

This code of conduct sets out the behaviour expected of all members and visitors to MDLAC events. The code of conduct also sets out the obligations of the Committee in conjunction with responsibilities of members and visitors. Please also refer to “Creating a Child Safe Organisation”, which follows Code of Conduct.

**Code of Conduct**

MDLAC has adopted and adheres to *the Aussie Sports Code of Conduct* as shown below. Within this there is a clearly defined code of behaviour for administrators, officials, coaches, parents and athletes. All persons involved are bound by these codes, which help develop and maintain the highest levels of fair play, sportsmanship and enjoyment in the sport of their choice by our children and all who support them. In the event of inappropriate behaviour occurring that is reported and deemed to contravene the MDLAC Code of Conduct, the Committee will decide the most appropriate follow-up in accordance with the Constitution.

**Athletes Code of Conduct**

* Play by the rules
* Never argue with an official. If you disagree, ask the team manager, chaperone, or supervising adult to deal with the matter.
* Control your temper. Verbal abuse of officials and sledging other athletes, deliberately distracting or provoking an athlete are not acceptable or permitted behaviours.
* Work equally hard for yourself and/or your Centre. Your Centre’s performance will benefit, so will you.
* Be a good sport, applaud all good results of other athletes whether they are your own Centre or others.
* Treat all athletes as you like to be treated, do not bully or take unfair advantage of another competitor.
* Cooperate with your age group leader, team manager, coach & other athletes. Without them there would be no competition.
* Participate for the fun of it, not just to please parents or coaches.

**Parents/Spectators Code of Conduct**

* Encourage children to participate, if they are interested. However, if a child is not willing, do not force him or her.
* Focus upon the child’s efforts rather than the overall outcome of the event. This assists the child in setting realistic goals related to his/her ability by reducing the emphasis on winning.
* Teach children that an honest effort is as important as victory, so that the result of each event is accepted without undue disappointment.
* Encourage children to always participate according to the rules.
* Remember children are involved in little athletics for their enjoyment, not yours.
* Remember that children learn best from example. Applaud good efforts by all participants.
* Never ridicule or yell at a child for making a mistake or losing an event.
* Respect officials’ decisions and teach children to do likewise.
* If you disagree with an official, raise the issue through the appropriate channels rather than questioning the official’s judgement and honesty in public. Remember, most officials give their time and effort for your child’s involvement.
* Support all efforts to remove verbal and physical abuse from sporting activities.
* Recognise the value and importance of being a volunteer. They give their time and resources to provide recreational activities for the children and deserve your support.
* Demonstrate appropriate social behaviour by not harassing athletes, coaches or officials.
* Smoking or the use of illicit drugs at the centre or being under the influence of alcohol or drugs is not permitted.

**Coaches’ Code of Conduct**

* Encourage all abilities to participate, participation is everything to a young athlete.
* Participation is total, winning is a bonus.
* When providing one on one support for a child always ensure it is in full view of others.
* Avoid over-coaching the better performing athletes, the ‘just average’ athletes need and deserve equal time.
* Be reasonable in your demands on a young athlete’s time, energy & enthusiasm.
* Teach athletes the rules of the sport are mutual agreements, which no one should evade or break.
* Whenever possible, group athletes to give a reasonable chance of success.
* Remember that children participate for fun and enjoyment and that winning is only part of their motivation. Never ridicule or yell at the children for making mistakes or losing an event.
* Ensure that equipment & facilities meet safety standards & are appropriate to the age & ability of the athletes.
* Take into consideration the maturity level of the children when scheduling and determining the length of training times and competition.
* Develop respect for the ability of opponents as well as for the judgement of officials and coaches.
* Follow the advice of a GP when determining when an injured athlete is ready to recommence training or competition.
* Make personal commitment to keep yourself informed of sound coaching principles and the principles of growth and development of children.
* Demonstrate appropriate social behaviour, by not harassing athletes, other coaches or officials, smoking on the arena or being intoxicated.
* Do not use bad language.
* Physical contact with athletes must be appropriate as required to demonstrate a skill. Permission from the child must be obtained before physical contact and must be ceased immediately if the child appears uncomfortable.

**Officials Code of Conduct**

* Compliment all participants on their effort.
* Be consistent, objective and courteous in calling infringements or fouls.
* Condemn unsporting behaviour and promote respect for all opponents.
* Ensure that the ‘spirit of the game’ for children is not lost by using common sense and not over-emphasising errors.
* Ensure that equipment and facilities meet safety standards and are appropriate to the age and ability of the participants.
* Publicly encourage rule changes which will reinforce the principles of participation for fun and enjoyment.
* Ensure that your behaviour is consistent with the principles of good sporting behaviour. Actions speak louder than words.
* Make personal commitment to keep yourself informed of sound officiating principles and the principles of growth and development of children.
* Do not use offensive language.