

Return To Play Policy.

TYPE OF POLICY	Participation
EFFECTIVE DATE	5 th February 2019
POLICY OWNER	Australian Rugby League Commission
POLICY CONTACT	NRL General Manager – Game Development and Education

A. REASON FOR POLICY

This policy has been developed to ensure that players return to training and competition games at the appropriate time following an injury and/or illness.

B. POLICY STATEMENT

This policy provides for appropriate assessments to be made by sports trainers on the capacity of players to return to the field of play following an injury and/or illness.

C. SCOPE

This policy is applicable to all players, sports trainers, coaches and administrators.

D. DEFINITIONS

INJURY REPORT FORM	Document completed by sports trainer that records details of player injury
SPORTS TRAINER	An NRL accredited Sports Trainer

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E. FORMS/REFERENCES

FORM TITLE	LINK
Injury Report Form	https://playrugbyleague.com/trainer/documents/

F. POLICY HISTORY

PARTICIPATION POLICY IDENTIFICATION NUMBER	VERSION	RELEASE DATE	AUTHOR
P006	2.0	5 th February 2019	National Participation Policy Committee

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1.0. INTRODUCTION

Rugby League is a contact sport where injuries occur on a variety of levels from minor muscular related sprains and strains to fractures to more serious injuries such as head and spinal injuries.

This policy provides direction to sports trainers with a series of processes and procedures that they must follow for a player whom may have suffered a significant injury or illness to be medically cleared to return to play the game of Rugby League.

This policy is applicable for participants that are injured at training or in games which require a sports trainer to assess if the player can return to the field of play. This policy also extends to participants whom, due to specific injuries and illnesses, have missed at least one (1) competition game.

The sports trainer must operate under the principle to do no further harm and should never allow a player(s) to return to the field of play if they assessed that recovery is not complete or that there is a risk of further injury.

2.0. INJURY ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES – GAME OR TRAINING SESSION INJURY

In the circumstance when a player sustains an injury in a training session or game, the sports trainer will make an assessment on the capacity of the player to continue their participation in the training session or game. The sports trainer will communicate their assessment of the **player's capacity to continue participation in the training session** or game to coaching staff to ensure that player welfare is and will always remain paramount in the game of Rugby League. An injury report form should be completed to document all injuries for all players that have been assessed by the sports trainer.

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3.0. WHEN A MEDICAL CLEARANCE IS REQUIRED

Circumstances/conditions in which a medical clearance is required include:

- Where due to an injury or illness a player has missed games and training for longer than one week (7 days)
- Any form of cardiac (heart) condition
- Hypertension (history of high blood pressure)
- Broken bones of any sort
- Suspected facial fractures
- Significant soft tissue injuries (where a player has not recovered to a playing capacity one-week post insult)
- Any form of concussion or suspected concussion
- Any form of unconsciousness, no matter how brief
- Any form of potential cervical (neck) injury
- Repeated episodes of illness of already diagnosed medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes and epilepsy
- Any injury involving the eye which impacts **on the participant's vision**
- Any player recovering from a significant or potentially contagious illness, such as:
 - Chicken Pox
 - Measles
 - Whooping cough
 - Glandular fever
 - Pneumonia
 - Herpes zoster
 - Any form of influenza where it has caused the player to miss games and training greater than one week (7 days)
 - Any immune depressed conditions as deemed necessary by accredited sports trainers

The above list is not exhaustive and it is expected that a sports trainer will implement a common-sense approach when requesting a medical clearance. Many of the above-mentioned conditions can result in the injury or illness continuing or being made worse through physical activity. There can be risks presented to other participants in circumstances where other players are exposed to illnesses that are contagious.

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4.0. OBTAINING A MEDICAL CERTIFICATE

If a player meets any of the criteria set out in paragraph 3 above, they will be required to obtain a clearance from a medical practitioner (Doctor) to return to the field of play. This medical clearance must be lodged to the treating sports trainer, whom upon receipt of this medical clearance, will communicate to the coaching staff the approval of the player to return to training and/or playing. The NRL Head Injury / Concussion Medical Clearance is the recommended form for all concussion return to play medical clearances.

The requirements for medical clearances should not be seen as being onerous or as being overly officious by the sports trainer. It is a requirement that players seek professional medical attention for conditions that may cause them further serious health problems in the future.