



NRL Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy

Queensland

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Purpose

This Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy (**Policy**) provides an outline of how the NRL Safeguarding Children and Young People Framework will operate (**Framework**).

NRL will employ the Framework to deliver its commitment to keeping our Children and Young People involved in NRL activities and/or programs safe.

The Framework, and this Policy applies to Children and Young People who are involved in NRL activities, programs, services and facilities across all levels of the sport and serves as a guide to assist NRL People in understanding their responsibilities regarding the safeguarding of Children and Young People in NRL.

The unique needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People, Children and Young People from culturally and linguistically diverse (**CALD**) backgrounds, and Children and Young People with a disability, are considered by NRL People within the performance of their roles and responsibilities under this Policy.

All capitalised terms in this Policy are defined terms which can be found in the Dictionary at Appendix 1, unless the context of their use is otherwise.

NRL Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy - Queensland

Policy owned by the Australian Rugby League Commission

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For further information about this policy contact the NRL Child Safety and Policies Officer

1. FRAMEWORK DOCUMENTS

This Policy should be read in conjunction with and is supported by the Framework Documents which includes:

- › NRL Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of Behaviour (**Code**);
- › NRL Safeguarding Children and Young People Recruitment and Screening Requirements (**Recruitment and Screening Requirements**);
- › NRL Safeguarding Children and Young People Induction and Training Requirements (**Induction and Training Requirements**);
- › NRL Safeguarding Children and Young People Complaints and Reporting Procedure (**Complaints and Reporting Procedure**);
- › NRL Code of Conduct (Community Rugby League); and
- › NRL Code of Conduct (Employees).

2. SCOPE

This Policy applies to:

- › all NRL staff (employees and contractors);
- › all employees and contractors of the NRL Affiliated States;
- › Volunteers, coaches, sports trainers and participants who have a current and valid registration via the NRL Competition Management System;
- › anyone engaged to provide NRL Services on behalf of NRL;
- › QRL - where the Framework is adopted; and
- › NSWRL – where the Framework is adopted.

In circumstances where this Policy does not apply to NRL States, Associations, Regions, Leagues, Clubs or community leagues, the NRL is committed to assisting those bodies to understand their obligations in relation to Children and Young People by providing resources, access to training materials and transparent and consistent communications.

3. NRL COMMITMENT TO SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

NRL is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all Children and Young People who are involved in our game through activities, programs, services or facilities. Our policies and procedures seek to:

- › address risks to child safety; and
- › establish and nurture a child safe culture and practices.

In the event a concern or allegation of abuse relating to a Child or Young Person under the care of NRL is raised, it will be treated seriously by the NRL, in a culturally sensitive and respectful manner. It will be fully investigated according to our published policies and guidelines, consistent with industry best practice and relevant legislative instruments.

Our suite of child safe policies incorporated in the Framework are:

- accessible in forms that are easy to understand;
- have been informed by stakeholder consultation; and
- communicated to children, young people and their families, our staff and volunteers and the general public.

NRL will enthusiastically promote the safety, participation and empowerment of Children and Young People throughout rugby league and into grassroots programs.

We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.

In circumstances where state and local leagues are not under the direct governance and control of the NRL, it is expected that those leagues will take responsibility for providing a safe environment for Children and Young People to participate in rugby league and will demonstrate their commitment and understanding of best practice in safeguarding Children and Young People as presented in the NRL Commitment to Safeguarding Children and Young People and Framework Documents.

3.1 QLD Child Safe Standards

The NRL requires all affiliated State and club organisations to implement the relevant State Child Safe Standards.

The QLD Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy for Organisations

- <https://www.qld.gov.au/law/laws-regulated-industries-and-accountability/queensland-laws-and-regulations/regulated-industries-and-licensing/blue-card/organisations/risk-management-strategies>

The NRL requires each affiliated and club organisations to implement as soon as reasonably possible the foundation steps provided by Blue Card.



- ▶ <https://www.qld.gov.au/law/laws-regulated-industries-and-accountability/queensland-laws-and-regulations/regulated-industries-and-licensing/blue-card/organisations/risk-management-strategies>

3.2 NRL PEOPLE – UNDERSTANDING BEHAVIOURAL REQUIREMENTS

NRL is committed to ensuring that each person involved in delivery of NRL programs, activities and services to Children and Young People understands their role and the behaviour expected of them in keeping Children and Young People safe from abuse and neglect, through application of this Policy and the Framework Documents, prior to them starting with NRL.

NRL People will be provided access to this Policy and the Framework Documents, including the Code prior to being interviewed for a position within the NRL, and again on acceptance of any employment offer.

All NRL People will:

- ▶ have clear position descriptions which will be risk assessed with respect to potential interactions with Children and Young People to determine minimum child safety training requirements; and
- ▶ complete an induction program which will include specific subject matter instruction about the NRL's commitment to safeguarding Children and Young People.

Training and information will be provided to all NRL People on an ongoing and regular basis. NRL People indicate, in writing or by electronic acknowledgement, that they have read and are committed to the Code. Our volunteers and participants agree by electronic acknowledgement, that they have read, agree and are committed to safeguarding Children and Young People consistent with the relevant Framework Documents and the NRL MPP as part of the online participation and volunteer registration process.

The onus is on each NRL Person to understand their responsibilities for safeguarding Children and Young People and to inform the NRL of any change of circumstances that may affect their ability to comply with NRL's commitment to keeping Children and Young People safe.

3.3 RECRUITMENT AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT SCREENING - NRL PEOPLE

NRL is committed to taking action to minimize the likelihood of recruiting people who are unsuitable employees, by implementing recruitment and screening processes for all roles within NRL.

NRL apply minimum threshold requirements across all roles performed by NRL People and volunteers who work with Children and Young People to reduce the likelihood of recruiting staff or volunteers who are unsuitable to work or volunteer with Children and Young People.



NRL recruitment procedures:

- › ensure NRL's commitment to safeguard Children and Young People is communicated in all positions advertised by NRL;
- › require all shortlisted candidates are provided with the policies comprised in the Framework, including the Code, for review prior to attending an interview;
- › require face-to-face interviews are held for all applicants except in extenuating circumstances, and notes reflecting this are kept on the applicants file;
- › require all interviews include standardised child safety related questions;
- › require two verbal professional reference checks are undertaken;
- › require interview responses and reference check details and responses are recorded in the applicant's files and archived; and
- › require screening checks including identity, national police checks, and/or working with children checks (**WWCC**) (requirements vary depending on relevant legislation) and qualification checks are undertaken.

3.4 NRL'S COMMITMENT TO PROVIDING INDUCTION AND TRAINING TO STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

NRL has a policy regarding induction and training requirements. NRL has engaged with third party providers for advice on best practice content inclusions and delivery methods for its diverse cohort of employees and volunteers.

NRL has implemented processes to monitor compliance with induction and training requirements related to safeguarding Children and Young People for NRL People and registered volunteers. NRL supports ongoing education and training consistent with current best practices for NRL People and volunteers, to ensure the topic is kept top of mind and relevant to NRL People and volunteers. NRL People and volunteers have access to current information relevant to specific legislation applying in the State or Territory they are based in, or where they may travel to perform their duties.

3.5 NRL'S COMMITMENT TO INVOLVING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR GUARDIANS

This policy is intended to empower children. NRL people involve them when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them. NRL people listen to their views and respect what they have to say.

NRL people promote diversity and acceptance within the NRL, and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome. In particular, we:



- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- ensure that children with a disability are safe and can participate equally.

NRL provides information and resources to Children and Young People and their guardians in a variety of ways as part of its commitment to educating Children and Young People and their guardians about the principles of self-protection, empowerment and the behavioural expectations of NRL People and volunteers. NRL provides accessible gateways for Children and Young People and their guardians to report instances of Child Abuse and/or other inappropriate behaviours towards Children and Young People.

3.6 NRL'S COMMITMENT TO CHILD ABUSE REPORTING

NRL's Safeguarding Children and Young People Complaints and Reporting Procedures apply to all NRL People and volunteers. All suspected abuse, bullying, harassment and grooming (and other inappropriate behaviour) must be reported in accordance with the NRL Safeguarding Children and Young People Complaints and Reporting Procedure and relevant legislation.

All allegations, disclosures and concerns regarding Child Abuse including reports of any other form or inappropriate behaviour are documented by NRL. All allegations, disclosures and concerns regarding Child Abuse are treated seriously by the NRL and investigated having regard to the set of facts and relevant legislation. All responses to allegations, disclosures and concerns are recorded, monitored and archived. Under the Code, a failure by an NRL Person or volunteer to report is serious misconduct.

3.7 NRL'S COMMITMENT TO POLICY COMPLIANCE AND REVIEW TO CREATE A CHILD-SAFE CULTURE

NRL monitors compliance with the Framework Documents. It is a requirement of ongoing employment and volunteering for NRL People to disclose convictions, charges or other factors affecting their suitability to engage with Children and Young People. Compliance audits of NRL People are conducted periodically. Volunteers are required to re-register every season and provide current WWCC details and evidence of completed training and accreditation required, depending on the volunteer position they are undertaking.

NRL is committed to maintaining and improving this Policy, the Framework Documents, and NRL's Safeguarding Children and Young People procedures and practices, to keep Children and Young People safe from neglect and abuse.

NRL formally reviews delivery of programs, activities, services and facilities to identify potential risks to Children and Young People and formal reviews are undertaken at least annually. NRL has procedures in



place to undertake annual reviews of this Policy, as part of its ongoing compliance with safeguarding requirements. Reviews and alterations of this Policy may occur more frequently due to legislative changes, specialist expert advice, organisational changes, incident outcomes and other matters deemed appropriate by the NRL from time to time.

4. RELATED LEGISLATION

Legislation relevant to the protection of Children and Young People is binding on the NRL and all NRL People. A full list of relevant legislation is set out in Appendix 2 of this Policy.

5. NRL RESPONSIBILITIES

Entity	Role/Responsibility
Board Executive HR Integrity Legal Football Community	- Promote NRL commitment to this Policy and its expectations. - Support review of this Policy on an annual cycle as a minimum or at a time governed by legislation, specialist external advice, regulations, or organisational learnings that promote a change to the Policy and all relevant procedural guidelines. - Monitor compliance to the Policy via an inbuilt review mechanism. - Confirm adequate resources are allocated to allow for the development and effective implementation of this Policy. - Advocate for the safety of Children and Young People and promote their rights to participating in a safe environment. - Develop opportunities for regular discussion at all levels of NRL to support a culture of openness and continued improvement and accountability to child protection and member welfare. - Empower and engage Children and Young People by providing support under this Policy and the Framework Documents and championing the enshrined expectations.

Entity	Role/Responsibility
Executive Managers HR Integrity Legal Football Community	• Ensure all NRL People employed by NRL understand their obligations in relation to this Policy and Framework Documents. • Ensure all NRL People develop an understanding of the Policy by explaining its operation to all NRL People via induction processes, including a minimum of one compulsory training session, and regular discussions and guidance at supervision and team meetings. • Oversee the development and implementation of the Policy and Framework Documents, procedures and guidelines and confirm the Policy and Framework Documents are in place to support NRL's commitment to providing a safe environment for Children and Young People. • Confirm adequate resources are allocated to allow effective implementation and understanding of the Policy and Framework Documents. • Provide support to NRL People and volunteers in reaching any decision to initiate appropriate forms of action to protect a child from abuse, neglect, grooming or exploitation and enable reporting. • Ensure appropriate supports, such as counselling and formal debriefing are provided for any NRL People and volunteers involved in any matter relating to a concern for the safety and wellbeing of a Child or Young Person. • Advocate and promote child rights by empowering and engaging Children and Young People in support of the Policy and Framework Documents. • Proactively share resources and experience in the development of child safe initiatives. • Develop opportunities for regular discussion at all levels to support a culture of continuous improvement and accountability of child protection and member welfare across the NRL.

Entity	Role/Responsibility
	• Ensure NRL People and volunteers are aware of appropriate recruitment, screening and employment practices in relation to working, coaching and volunteering with Children and Young People and their families. • Ensure the NRL is committed to supporting bodies such as State, Leagues and Clubs where this Policy does not apply regarding: ○ appropriate recruitment, screening and employment engagement practices in relation to individuals with specific roles in working, coaching, umpiring or volunteering with Children and Young People and their families; ○ training information and resources; and ○ information sharing to assist entities in creating and implementing policies for volunteer and employees.
ALL Staff Volunteers Contractors Consultants	• Maintain a full understanding of the commitments and expectations of this Policy and Framework Documents in relation to safeguarding Children and Young People. • To undertake any induction and training set out in this Policy and Framework Documents in relation to policy and procedures relevant to keeping Children and Young People safe. • Seek guidance from management if there is ever any lack of understanding in relation to the commitments and expectations as set out in this Policy and Framework Documents. • To take action to protect children and young people from all forms of abuse, bullying, harassment, grooming and exploitation. • To assist in creating and maintaining a child safe culture and a culture of inclusion and safety. • Adopt the practices and behaviour set out by this Policy as standard when performing their roles. • Report concerns or evidence regarding safety of Children and Young People in the NRL through appropriate reporting channels as set out in the NRL Safeguarding Children

Entity	Role/Responsibility
	and Young People Complaints and Reporting Procedure and other relevant Framework Documents. • Ensure the NRL is committed to supporting bodies such as State, Leagues and Clubs where this Policy does not apply regarding: ○ appropriate recruitment, screening and employment engagement practices in relation to individuals with specific roles in working, coaching, umpiring or volunteering with Children and Young People and their families; ○ training information and resources; and ○ information sharing to assist entities in creating and implementing policies for volunteer and employees.
NRL Child Safety Officer NRL Integrity NRL Legal Representative	• Investigate and take appropriate action in respect of any report received in relation to any breach of this Policy or any other Framework Document. • Investigate and take appropriate action in respect of any report in relation to child safety or Child Abuse or any other inappropriate behaviour in accordance with the NRL Safeguarding Children and Young People Complaints and Reporting Procedure. • Provide guidance, support and advice to all NRL People in relation to concerns about the welfare of a Child or Young Person's wellbeing. • Act as a key contact for queries, comments or concerns raised by NRL People in relation to safeguarding Children and Young People from Child Abuse and other inappropriate behaviour. • Act as a resource to NRL People and provide connections to local community networks and agencies if needed (e.g. Child Protection authorities) in relation to safeguarding Children and Young People from Child Abuse and other inappropriate behaviour. • Review reports in relation to investigations conducted under this Policy and provide feedback to appropriate NRL People.

Entity	Role/Responsibility
	• Develop, maintain and review this Policy, the Framework Documents and associated procedures and processes. • Take appropriate action in respect of any NRL People found to be in breach of this Policy, the Framework Documents and any other related safeguarding Children and Young People policies and procedures (which may include dismissal).
NRL People and Culture Team	• Maintain a full understanding of the commitments and expectations of this Policy and Framework Documents. • To undertake any induction and training set out in this Policy and Framework Documents in relation to policy and procedures relevant to keeping Children and Young People safe. • Seek guidance from NRL Child Safety Officer and NRL Legal if there is ever any lack of understanding in relation to the commitments and expectations as set out in this Policy and Framework Documents. • To take action to protect Children and Young People from all forms of abuse, bullying, harassment, grooming and exploitation. • To assist in creating and maintaining a child safe culture and a culture of inclusion and safety. • Adopt the practices and behaviour set out by this Policy regarding recruitment, screening, training, induction, audit and compliance checks as set out in this Policy and Framework Documents. • Adopt the practices and behaviour set out in the Framework Documents as standard when performing their roles. • Report concerns or evidence regarding safety of Children and Young People in the NRL through appropriate reporting channels as set out in the NRL Safeguarding Children and Young People Complaints and Reporting Procedure and other Framework Documents.

APPENDIX 1 - DICTIONARY

TERM	DEFINITION
Associations	An organisation level within Community Rugby League.
Bullying	Bullying involves the inappropriate use of power by one or more persons over another less powerful person and is generally an act that is repeated over time. Bullying has been described by researchers as taking many forms which are often interrelated, and may include: • Verbal (name calling, put downs, threats); • Physical (hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting); • Social (ignoring, excluding, ostracising, alienating); and/or • psychological (spreading rumours, stalking, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions).
Children and Young People	A person under the age of eighteen (18) years. Child or Young Person shall mean a single person falling within the definition of Children and Young People.
Child Abuse	Abuse is an act by a parent, caregiver, other adult or older adolescent that endangers a Child or Young Person's physical or emotional health or development. Abuse can be a single incident, but usually takes place over time. Abuse can happen in several different ways, and can be Physical, Emotional or Psychological and/or Sexual Abuse. Abuse can also be Neglect and harassing behaviour such as Bullying.
Child Safe Organisation	An organisation that complies with the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (Volume 6).
Clubs	Community Rugby League Clubs
Code	The NRL Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of Behaviour (Code) aims to identify and prevent behaviour that may be Harmful to Children and Young People. The Code outlines what is, and what is not,

	acceptable behaviour or practice when working with or engaging with Children and Young People.
Code of Conduct	Code of Conduct which applies to all registered participants, officials and volunteers taking part in community rugby league.
Contractor	A Contractor is any person or firm that undertakes a contract to provide services for or in partnership with the NRL.
Criminal Record	A list of a person's previous criminal convictions.
Emotional or Psychological Abuse	Emotional or psychological abuse occurs when a Child or Young Person does not receive the love, affection or attention they need for healthy emotional, psychological and social development. Such abuse may involve repeated rejection or threats to a Child or Young Person. Constant criticism, teasing, ignoring, threatening, yelling, scapegoating, ridicule and rejection or continual coldness are all examples of emotional abuse. These behaviours continue to an extent that results in significant damage to the Child's or Young Person's physical, intellectual or emotional wellbeing and development.
Employees	An employee is any individual with a valid NRL employment contract, regardless of the nature of the contract.
Family Violence	Family violence occurs when Children and Young People are forced to live with violence between adults in their home. It is harmful to the Child or Young Person. Family violence can include witnessing violence or the consequences of violence. Family violence is defined as violence between members of a family, or extended family, or those fulfilling the role of family in a Child or Young Person's life. Exposure to family violence places Children and Young People at increased risk of physical injury and harm and has a significant impact on their wellbeing and development.
Framework	The NRL Safeguarding Children and Young People Framework.
Framework Documents	This NRL Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy (Policy); NRL Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of Behaviour (Code);

	NRL Safeguarding Children and Young People Recruitment and Screening Requirements (Recruitment and Screening Requirements); NRL Safeguarding Children and Young People Induction and Training Requirements (Induction and Training Requirements); NRL Safeguarding Children and Young People Complaints and Reporting Procedure (Complaints and Reporting Procedure); NRL Code of Conduct (Community Rugby League); and NRL Code of Conduct (Employees).
Grooming	Grooming is a term used to describe what happens when a perpetrator of abuse builds a relationship with a Child or Young Person, with a view to abusing them. There is no set pattern in relation to grooming Children or Young People. For some perpetrators, there will be a lengthy period of time before the abuse begins. The Child or Young Person may be given special attention and, what starts as an apparently normal display of affection, such as cuddling, can develop into sexual touching or masturbation and then into more serious sexual behaviour. Other perpetrators may draw a Child or Young Person in and abuse them relatively quickly. Some abusers do not groom Children or Young People but abuse them without forming a relationship at all. Grooming can take place in any setting where a relationship is formed, such as leisure, music, sports and religious activities, in internet chatrooms, in social media or by other technological channels.
Harm	Harm to a Child or Young Person is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the Child's or Young Person's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. It is immaterial how the harm is caused. Harm can be caused by: • Emotional or Physiological Abuse, Physical Abuse or Neglect; • Sexual Abuse; • a single act, omission or circumstance; and/or • a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances.
Identity Check	Verification of someone's identity through validation of more than one form of identification.

Leagues	A level within Community Rugby League.
NSWRL	New South Wales Rugby League Limited.
NRL	National Rugby League Limited.
NRL Affiliated States	The State entities controlled by the NRL being: VIC, NT, WA and SA.
NSWRL League	New South Wales Rugby League.
NRL MPP	NRL Member Protection Policy.
NRL People	The following persons associated with the NRL and/or NRL Affiliated State Entities: - all employees (including casual); and - contractors/consultants who are engaged to provide services to the NRL or an NRL Affiliated State; and - volunteers and participants registered in the participation system within Community Rugby League.
NRL Services	NRL Services means services provided by a service provider to the NRL in relation to NRL activities, programs and facilities across all levels of the sport.
Neglect	Neglect is the persistent failure or deliberate denial to provide a Child or Young Person with the basic necessities of life. Such neglect includes the failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, adequate supervision, clean water, medical attention or supervision to the extent that the Child's or Young Person's health and development is, or is likely to be, significantly harmed.

	Categories of neglect include physical neglect, medical neglect, abandonment or desertion, emotional neglect and educational neglect. The issue of neglect must be considered within the context of resources reasonably available.
Physical Abuse	Physical abuse occurs when a person subjects a Child or Young Person to non-accidental physically aggressive acts. The abuser may inflict an injury intentionally or inadvertently as a result of physical punishment or the aggressive treatment of a Child or Young Person. Physically abusive behaviour includes (but is not limited to) shoving, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, biting, burning, excessive and physically harmful over-training and kicking. It also includes giving Children and Young People harmful substances such as drugs, alcohol or poison. Certain types of punishment, whilst not causing injury, can also be considered physical abuse if they place a Child or Young Person at risk of being hurt.
Professional Boundaries	Effective and appropriate interaction between professionals and the clients they serve. Boundaries exist to protect the professional and the client.
QRL	Queensland Rugby League Limited.
Regions	A level within the Community Rugby League structure.
Sexual Abuse	Sexual abuse occurs when an adult or a person of authority (e.g. older) involves a Child or Young Person in any sexual activity. Perpetrators of sexual abuse take advantage of their power, authority or position over the Child or Young Person for their own benefit. Sexual Abuse can include making sexual comments to a Child or Young Person, engaging in or enticing Children or Young People to participate in sexual conversations over the internet or on social media, kissing, touching a Child's or Young Person's genitals or breasts, oral sex or intercourse with a Child or Young Person.

	Encouraging a Child or Young Person to view pornographic magazines, websites and videos, engaging in or enticing a Child or Young Person in sexual conversations over the internet and Sexual Exploitation are also considered forms of sexual abuse.
Sexual Exploitation	Sexual exploitation occurs when a Child or Young Person is forced into sexual activities that are then recorded in some way and/or used to produce pornography. Such pornography can be in the form of actual photos or videos or published on the internet. Exploitation can also involve a Child or Young Person who are forced into prostitution.
State Leagues	Includes the Affiliated States and QRL and NSWRL.
WWCC	Working with Children Check is an Australian background check requirement, assessing the criminal record, child protection information and other information of those working or volunteering in child related work. Each State or Territory has their own legislation and requirements. The equivalent check in Queensland is known as a "Blue Card."

APPENDIX 2 – RELEVANT QLD LEGISLATION

PRINCIPLE CHILD PROTECTION ACT	MANDATORY REPORTING	BLUE CARD	RELATED REQUIREMENTS
Child Protection Act 1999 (QLD)	Child Protection Act 1999 (QLD)	Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act	Section - 229BB Criminal Code Section - 229BC Criminal Code