

KEEPING KIDS MORE THEN SAFE

ACTION PLAN



*Supporting Victorian Rugby League Clubs to adopt The
National Rugby league Child Protection and
Safeguarding Children Policy*



NRL's Commitment to Safeguarding Children and Young People

The NRL is committed to promoting a safe environment and protecting the wellbeing of all children and young people across all NRL activities, services, facilities, and programs.

The NRL's Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy seeks to deliver this commitment by serving as a comprehensive guide to assist Rugby League administrators, officials, members and volunteers who have a high level of interaction with children and young people, in understanding their responsibilities and recognising child protection issues that are important to the safeguarding of children and young people. This includes consideration of the unique needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, those of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds and children and young people with a disability.

Any concerns or allegations related to child safety will be acted upon immediately by the NRL in accordance with the relevant legislation and in adherence to the NRL's Safeguarding Children and Young People Framework and Policies.

As a sport, the NRL will always place the safety and welfare of children and young people above all other considerations.

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PURPOSE

This Action Plan and accompanying resources have been prepared to support Victoria Rugby league affiliated clubs to adopt the National Rugby League Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

This support will assist affiliated clubs in Victoria to meet their Child Safe Standard requirements and deliver a child safe sport and experience.

This Action Plan should be read in conjunction with the following:

- National Rugby League Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy
- National Rugby League Child Safe Code of Conduct
- National Rugby League Safeguarding Children and Young People: Complaints and Reporting Procedure
- National Rugby league Safeguarding Children and Young People: Induction and Training Requirements
- National Rugby league Safeguarding Children and Young People: Recruitment and Screening Requirements

Victorian Rugby league clubs can adopt this package in its entirety. Adoption of the action plan can support existing processes.

For the purpose of this action plan and recourses the following definitions apply.

National Rugby league People mean:

- (a) NRL Board, employees and volunteers
- (b) Committee members office bearers and employees of an Affiliated association and/or Clubs
- (c) Volunteers of an Affiliated associations and clubs
- (d) Coaches (including assistant coaches)
- (e) Senior and junior players
- (f) Referees
- (g) Affiliated club volunteers, including team volunteers.
- (h) Parents/guardians

WHY SHOULD VICTORIAN RUGBY LEAGUE CLUBS ADOPT THE NATIONAL RUGBY LEAGUE CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY AND PROCEDURES

The NRL are committed to promoting a safe environment for all Children and Young People and to assisting staff, officials, players, coaches, members and volunteers to recognise child protection issues and safeguarding procedures. As a sport, we must always place the safety and welfare of Children and Young People above all other considerations.

The National Rugby League recognises each State in Australia has established state specific frameworks in responding to child protection and implementing the National child Safe Organisation framework.



The National Rugby League has developed this Action Plan to support affiliated organisations and clubs anywhere in Australia to develop a child safe organisation ensuring kids are active in a fun, safe and inclusive environment.

HOW DO VICTORIAN RUGBY LEAGUE CLUBS ADOPT THE NATIONAL RUGBY LEAGUE CHILD PROTECTION SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE POLICY AND PROCEDURES?

The National Rugby League has developed the below steps to support affiliated organisations and clubs to adopt the National Rugby League Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Procedures.

Appendix A: provides a checklist for the adoption of the National Rugby League Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy.

Step 1

Have the committee endorse all the documents found at <https://www.playrugbyleague.com/play/safety/child-safety/>

PLEASE NOTE:

Depending on the rules of Incorporation and/or Constitution your organisation may need to pass a resolution to dissolve any existing policy and then adopt the National Rugby League Safeguarding Children and Young People.

Step 2

Once the National Rugby League Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy has been endorsed at minimum the following must be made available on the associations or club's website.

- National Rugby League Safeguarding and Young People Policy
- Endorsed NRL Commitment Statement to Child Safety
- Endorsed NRL Child Safe Code of Behaviour - Child Safe Conduct to keep our Children and Young People Safe.

Step 3

Ensure all registration, endorsement forms and agreement forms used by the association or club are updated to include the following acknowledgement:

I agree to be bound by any Codes of Behaviour and Policies of (Insert organisation of club name), including the NRL Child Safe Code of Behaviour – Child Safe Conduct to keep our children and Young People Safe.

UNDERSTANDING CHILD AND YOUTH RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY IN VICTORIA

National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

In early 2019, the Australian Human Rights Commission released the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (the National Principles). Endorsed by members of the Council of Australian Governments, these principles outline 10 high-level elements that are fundamental for making an organisation safe for children and that help to guide organisations in understanding the aspects of creating a child safe culture.

The National Principles are:

- Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.
- Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
- Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
- Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.
- People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.
- Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused.
- Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.
- Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
- Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved.
- Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

On endorsing the National Standards the Victorian Government implemented the Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy. The Victorian Government acknowledged that safe service environments don't just happen; they require ongoing planning, commitment and maintenance.

The Working with Children check system aims to create safe and supportive service environments where children and young people can receive services and participate in activities essential to their development and wellbeing.

Organisations who run businesses regulated by the Working With Children Check system must have a Child and youth risk management strategy (the strategy) to help create a safe and supportive environment for children.

Developing a strategy helps you to identify potential risks of harm to children and young people so you can create and implement solutions to minimise these risks.

A well-developed strategy will help your organisation achieve its objectives by providing a clear and consistent framework to guide and support the stakeholders who work/volunteer with your organisation or who benefit from your services.



The Victorian Government has implemented eleven (11) Child Safe Standards

These 11 Child Safe Standards are:

1. Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.
2. Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.
3. Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
4. Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
5. Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.
6. People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.
7. Processes for complaints and concerns are child-focused.
8. Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.
9. Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
10. Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.
11. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

By endorsing the NRL Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and by following this Action Plan your organisation or club will provide this strategy.

THE NATIONAL RUGBY LEAGUE COMMITMENT TO CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

NRL is committed to providing everyone involved in rugby league, including Children and Young People, with a positive, enriching and safe sporting environment that promotes participation and development. We seek to do this by providing a safe, fair and inclusive environment for everyone involved in the NRL and the sport of rugby league.

This includes but is not limited to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People, Children and Young People with a disability, LGBTI Children and Young People and Children and Young People from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

NRL strives to demonstrate the NRL Beliefs at every level of the organisation and participation in rugby league:

- We are inclusive;
- We are united;
- We are disciplined; and
- We are positive.

All participants, volunteers, coaches and trainers participating across all levels of the NRL commit to observing the framework documents when they agree to terms and conditions at the time of

registration. NRL Directors, officers, staff, contractors and volunteers agree to abide by the policies and codes set out in the Framework as part of their employment or contractual obligations, or commitment to the NRL.

By endorsing the NRL Child Safe Code of Behaviour - Child Safe Conduct to keep our Children and Young People Safe your association and club will be ensuring kids are active in a fun, safe and inclusive environment.

RECRUITMENT AND WORKING WITH CHILDREN SCREENING

The NRL Safe Guarding Children and Young People Policy outlines recruitment and pre -screening processes for all employees and relevant volunteer positions. Your organisation or club MUST follow these requirements along with State obligations.

Working With Children Check Victoria outline as an organisation, you need to understand your obligations. You must:

- not engage or continue to engage anyone in child-related work who doesn't have a valid Working with Children (WWC) Check, unless they are exempt under the *Worker Screening Act 2020* (the Act) or have lodged an application for a Check that's currently being assessed (subject to the below)
- not engage or continue to engage anyone who would otherwise be exempt from holding a valid Check, if they have received a WWC Exclusion and not subsequently received a Check
 - not engage or continue to engage anyone in child-related work who is subject to obligations or orders specified in clause 1 of Schedule 5 of the Act
 - not allow people who are charged with, convicted or found guilty of sexual, violent or drug offences specified in clause 2 of Schedule 5 of the Act to work with or care for children while their application is processed or their Check reassessed
 - not offer the services of any person who doesn't have a Check to another organisation if the work to be undertaken with that organisation is child-related work
 - know how to check if a person is allowed to work with children while their application is processed by using Check status
 - know how to check if a person has a valid Check by using Check status
 - ensure paid workers doing child-related work have an Employee Check, not a Volunteer Check
 - know when your workers' Checks expire, and
 - respect and protect workers' privacy.

In the event of a discrepancy between the Victorian requirements and the NRL Policy the State requirements will take precedent.

As a minimum Victorian affiliated organisations and clubs requires staff or volunteers appointed to the following roles must obtain and hold a valid Working With Children Check:

- All coaches who interact and deal with Children and Young People
- Referees who officiate rugby league matches involving children and young people.
- Club captains who interact and deal with children and young people.
- Organisation and club officials who interact with children and young people
- Any other employee or volunteer who is directly involved in the delivery of programs and services to children and young people.

RECORD OF WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECKS

The NRL Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy outlines recruitment and pre -screening processes for all employees and relevant volunteer positions. This process includes the appropriate recording of the details of current Blue Card.

By endorsing this action plan your affiliated organisation or club agree to maintain appropriate records as prescribed by the NRL.

INDUCTION PROCESSES

The NRL Safeguarding Children and Young People Induction and Training Requirements policy outlines minimum requirements for induction and re-fresher training for all affiliated associations and clubs.

The induction training is to be completed prior to the employee or volunteer taking up their direct role with children and young people. At minimum this induction course covers:

- Understanding NRL relevant child safety policies.
- Understanding NRL's commitment to Safeguarding Children and young people engaged in the game.
- Read, understand and sign an acknowledgement of the NRL Child Safe Code of Conduct and National Code of Conduct

Who is required to complete the Induction Course and regular re-fresher training

Induction courses have been designed for relevant rolls within affiliated organisations and clubs. These roles include:

- Boards, management, and general staff

- Coaches
- Referees
- Other persons directly involved in the delivery of programs or services to children and young people.
- Any other person who is required to hold a valid Working with children Check as a result of their direct role within the organisation or club.

By endorsing this action plan the affiliated organisation of club acknowledges their commitment to ensuring these courses are readily available and completed by positions identified. An appropriate register is to be maintained as a record of this requirement.

CHECKLIST FOR ADOPTION OF THE NATIONAL RUGBY LEAGUE CHILD SAFETY STANDARDS

The following checklist items detail the minimum actions required by affiliated organisations and clubs to adopt the NRL Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy.

PLEASE NOTE:

- Items 1-3 are recommended as annual actions before the season begins
- Items 4-5 are ongoing action items.

	Item	Actioned
1	Endorse the following documents at the AGM or committee meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRL Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy • NRL Safeguarding Children and Young People Induction and Training Requirements Policy • NRL Child Safe Code of Behaviour – Child Safe Conduct to keep our Children and Young People Safe • NRL National Code of Conduct • NRL Safeguarding Children and Young People Complaints and Reporting Procedures. 	
2	Appoint a Child Safety Officer and a Member Protection Information Officer who are responsible for championing child safety within the affiliated organisation or club	
3	Ensure the documents are publicly available and accessible to current and potential members on the affiliated organisation or clubs' website and/or social media pages.	
4	Continually manage and monitor recruitment, screening and induction of the games participants	

5	Report and take appropriate action regarding any instances or allegations of prohibited conduct in accordance with the process set out in the NRL Safeguarding Children and Young People Complaints and Reporting Procedures.	
6	Maintain as a minimum the foundation actions to meet the Victoria Child Safe Organisation requirements.	

ENDORISING THE NRL POLICY FOR SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The NRL Affiliated Association or Club may adopt the NRL Policy for Safeguarding Children and Young People by either:

- passing a resolution adopting the NRL’s Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy at a committee meeting; or
- passing a resolution in accordance with your Affiliated Association or Club’s constitution or rules of incorporation.

Example wording for committee/member endorsement:

That the [INSERT ASSOCIATION/CLUB] endorses and adopts the NRL Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy, NRL Safeguarding Children and Young People Induction and Training Requirements Policy, NRL Child Safe Code of Behaviour – Child Safe Conduct to keep our Children and Young People Safe, NRL National Code of Conduct, NRL Safeguarding Children and Young People Complaints and Reporting Procedures effective as at [date].

All documents can be found at (web address when on the NRL site).

Ongoing endorsement of the Safeguarding Children & Young People Framework

The NRL regularly reviews the Framework to ensure that it meets the needs of our sport, to respond to changes in state or federal legislation and to improve the usability of the resources. It is recommended that Affiliated Associations, Clubs and Indoor Centres commit to re-endorse the Policy, re-appoint a Child Safety Officer and promote the documents at the start of each committee cycle.

The benefits of this are:

- Commitment to keeping Children and Young People safe.
- Maintaining good governance by keeping child safeguarding a priority each season.
- Induction and re fresher Education of the committee on child safeguarding roles and responsibilities.
- Ensuring the most current versions of the NRL Safeguarding Children and Young People documents are in use, which will include current contacts for reporting to the NRL Child Safety Officer and child protection authorities.
- Enabling a culture that values and practices safe practices around children and young people.

CHECKLIST TO IMPLEMENT THE CHILD AND YOUTH RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Victorian Child Safe Standards can be located at <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/the-11-child-safe-standards/>

By endorsing this NRL Action Plan the affiliated organisation or club at minimum will implement actions to meet the foundation steps as outlined by the Victorian Commission for Children and Young People.

PROMOTING NRL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE COMMITMENT

THE NRL recognises Affiliated organisations and clubs use a variety of platforms to communicate with current and prospective members, including websites, social media pages, email and posters.

The best place to house the NRL endorsed documents is via the organisations or clubs' website. This ensures current members can access them and demonstrates your commitment to child safeguarding to parents or guardians who are searching for local sporting opportunities.

Other suggestions are to:

- Create a post on your association or club Facebook page to promote the documents. Pin the post to ensure visibility.
- Add the documents and/or the Commitment to Safeguarding Children and Young People to the 'About' section of your Facebook page.
- Email the documents to all club contacts at the beginning of the season with a message from your Child Safety Officer.
- Add contact details to the editable Child Safety Poster and place it around your association or club rooms (available at NRL website address when loaded).

CHILD SAFETY OFFICER

Consider the following when recruiting a Child Safety Officer, where possible:

- Look for potential volunteers with professional skillsets that will help them adapt quickly to the role.
- Appoint persons with a demonstrated ability to connect with your Association or Club community, people with strong listening and empathy skills and an ability to form empowering, respectful relationships with Children & Young People.
- Avoid appointing individuals already undertaking important roles with Children & Young People like coaches or junior coordinators.



Purpose of the position:

The Child Safety Officer (CSO) will champion a culture of child safety where everyone takes responsibility and Children and Young People feel safe, empowered and included.

The CSO will ensure that the Affiliated Association or Club has adopted the NRL's Policy for Safeguarding Children and Young People and that the Affiliated Association or Club implements practices and procedures in line with the NRL Code of Behaviour for Affiliated Associations and Clubs.

The CSO must always hold a valid Working with Children Check.

Duties of the position:

- Communicate and promote relevant NRL Safeguarding Children and young People commitment statement, policies and procedures.
- Promote good practice for safeguarding Children and Young People within the Affiliated Association or Club, creating a welcoming and safe environment for Children and Young People
- Encourage and promote an environment where Children, Young People, Parents and Guardians are participants in the decision making process
- Be the point of contact for all safeguarding Children and Young People matters
- Advise the Committee on roles that require Working with Children Checks
- Attend all Committee meetings and ensure that safeguarding Children and Young People is a standing agenda item for each Committee meeting
- Ensure all complaints, allegations and/or suspicion of Prohibited Conduct are reported to the Police and/or Government Agency and the relevant State and Territory governing bodies in line with NRL Policy for Safeguarding Children and Young People
- Ensure all paperwork, background checks and Working with Children Checks are completed