

2.1 Child Protection Policy (Working With Children Check)

1. Application

The New South Wales Rugby League Ltd (NSWRL) Child Protection Policy (Policy) applies to all participants (Members) registering to play, officiate, coach, administer or volunteer at NSWRL clubs, associations, districts and affiliates. All Members must comply with the Policy. Where reasonable, all parties connected to Rugby League in NSW and the ACT, including sponsors and spectators, must also comply with the Policy.

The Policy has been endorsed by the NSWRL and incorporates and supports the National Rugby League Member Protection Policy (NRL Policy). Further, the NRL Policy, as incorporated into the NRL Code of Conduct, binds all Members. For removal of all doubt, parties bound by the NRL Policy, the NRL Code of Conduct, and connected to Rugby League in NSW and the ACT are also bound by this Policy.

This Policy commences on 01 April 2015 and will operate until replaced. The Policy will be fully implemented at all NSWRL clubs, associations, districts and affiliates by 31 March 2016.

2. Position Statement

The NSWRL is committed to:-

- » Ensure the safety, welfare and well-being of children participating in Rugby League and protect them from child abuse – whether actual or the threat thereof; and
- » Prevent people who pose a risk to the safety, welfare and well-being of children from being employed or engaged in child related work within the NSWRL and its clubs, associations, affiliates and districts.

Members and connected parties subject to this Policy must place the safety and welfare of children above all other considerations and must comply with Child Protection laws.

Child Protection laws in NSW and the ACT (and other States & Territories throughout Australia) criminalise child abuse. These laws also set out how cases of child abuse will be reported and investigated. Further, to assist in preventing such cases, several laws also establish regulation of and protocols to 'check' and monitor the status of those employed (paid or voluntarily) in 'child related work', including in sporting clubs.

The NSWRL requires that any child who is abused or anyone who reasonably suspects that a child has been or is being abused by someone within our sport, to report it immediately to the police or relevant government agency and the affiliated club.

All allegations of child abuse will be dealt with promptly, seriously, sensitively and confidentially. A person will not be victimised for reporting an allegation of child abuse and the privacy of all persons concerned will be respected.

If anyone bound by this policy reasonably suspects that a child is being abused, including by his or her parent/s, they are advised to contact the police, relevant government agency, affiliated club, district, or the NSWRL immediately. Any report made to the affiliated club, district, or the NSWRL will be immediately reported to the police or relevant government agency. The club, district and NSWRL will not attempt to investigate, settle, resolve, or intervene in any matter.

3. Statutory Guidelines: Working with children

From 31 March 2016, all Junior Rugby League clubs affiliated with the NSWRL must comply with the relevant legislation when employing workers (paid or voluntary) (“**Workers**”) if involved with a Junior Rugby league team, Junior Rugby League Club, Junior Rugby League Association or Junior Rugby League State Body. A link to the relevant legislation is noted below.

NSW: <http://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/working-with-children/working-with-children-check>

ACT: http://www.ors.act.gov.au/community/working_with_vulnerable_people_wwvp

4. Taking Images of Children

A high level of care needs to be exercised by clubs, associations, districts, and affiliates when dealing with the issue of photographic images of children. Permission must be obtained from a child’s parent/guardian before any image of the child can be taken. Further, the usage of the image must be fully disclosed to the parent/guardian prior to consent being given.

The privacy of each Member must be protected so as to avert the possibility of any photos of children in sporting magazines and sporting websites being misused and/or altered for inappropriate purposes, or for the identity of Members to be distinguishable. Children must not have their identities revealed unless permitted by the parent/guardian. Further, photographic equipment (including camera/smart phones) must not be used, and images must not be taken near or in the vicinity of change rooms, showers, and toilets.

Third party photographers must have their bona fides verified by the club, district, association, or affiliate, with appropriate consent forms completed. The NSWRL urges clubs, districts, associations and affiliates to be aware of obvious risks and to take steps, where possible, to minimise those risks.

5. Timing

A phasing-in period has been set out in the Regulations to operate from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016.