



NRL Victoria Child Safe Standards

PARENTS AND GUARDIANS GUIDE

Date created:	1 July 2022				
Audience:	Parents and Guardians of Members and Participants who are under the age of 18 years.				
Version:	1				
Purpose of Document:	(a) To summarise and simplify what parents and guardians need to know about all of our responsibilities to keep children and young people in Rugby League safe; and (b) To ensure that parents and guardians have oversight of the information that NRL Victoria distributes to its members under the age of 18 years.				
Actions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read and understand.• Ask and ensure that Parents and Guardians acknowledge that they have read and understand this guide• Encourage others to read and understand				
Review:	1 July 2023				
Contact:	Scott McNaughton - 0402 892 836 – smcnaughton@nrl.com.au				
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Other relevant resources (See NRL Victoria Website):	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• eSafety Guide• Guidance to deal with Child Safe Concerns• Tips and Scripts for Complaint Management• Form – Confidential Record of Child Safe Concern				



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The Child Safety Policy sets out the responsibilities that all Clubs and Participants within Rugby League (including parents) have to keep our kids safe. It consists of:

- NRL Victoria's Policy for Safeguarding Children & Young People, and
- NRL Victoria's Code of Conduct for dealing with Children & Young People.

WHY YOUR CHILDREN'S SAFETY IS OUR PRIORITY:

1. We love Rugby League. We also love your kids playing Rugby League with us and want them to keep participating. Yet we realise that they have to FEEL safe to enjoy Rugby League and want to keep coming back.
2. All kids have a right to feel safe, be involved and have a voice in decisions that affect them*.
3. Society has changed, and with it, higher standards of behaviour are now expected – of all of us. Sometimes, even though we have good intentions, others' *perception* of behaviour is different. So we want to help you to understand how we will work with you to protect your children.

WHAT WE'RE TRYING TO DO:

We're here to help. Victoria has legislative requirements and mandatory standards in place about child safety. We can't ignore those. But we want to make it as simple as possible for you, your kids and all of NRL Victoria's volunteers, coaches and members to keep children safe.

We've developed simple resources for you to explain how we keep children and young people safe in our sport. This Guide also includes links to our other child safe resources that we hope are helpful for you to summarise and simplify the key commitments, messages and boundaries that we adhere to and practice in Rugby League when they are part of our community.

SOME CHILD SAFETY GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS:

You know your children best. Also, our schools now often teach their students about safety, boundaries with adults and that it's OK to speak up if they don't feel comfortable or safe. You can also help us to reinforce the key messages we have for children about child safety in Rugby League, just as in life.

The three key messages we have in our Child Safe "Teens Guide" are:



1. Rugby League should be fun, safe and enjoyable.
2. You should never feel uncomfortable around others in Rugby League, particularly adults.
3. If you don't feel safe or comfortable, it's OK to speak up. We want you to tell an adult that you trust – whether that's your Mum or Dad, guardian, coach or another member of your club or family.

We know that children are more likely to speak up if they feel valued and are listened to in an authentic and genuine way. So please help us to keep the conversations open with your kids about how they are feeling

SOME CONVERSATION TIPS TO TALK ABOUT SAFETY WITH YOUR CHILDREN:

It's not always comfortable talking to kids about how they are feeling in our Rugby League community or other environments. The delivery of conversations is just as important as the message or content itself. You're more likely to engage with children about tricky topics if the conversation is calm, non-judgmental and open. That is, you're listening carefully to them and open to hearing more – showing empathy and letting them know that they're doing the right thing by talking.

To open up a conversation with your child about safety in Rugby League, first of all, choose the right time. Sometimes, you may get more information in casual interactions, such as when driving in the car or going for a walk together. You could try using an example that you have heard of with another kid and whether they had seen or heard anything similar. For example, *"another parent at the club told me that they were worried about how the coach is talking to their child. Have you seen or heard anything similar?"*.

IF YOU NEED HELP:

If ever your child tells you that they are not happy, comfortable or safe in our [organisation/sport], please tell an appropriate senior person in [organisation/sport] such as your club's Child Safety Officer or a trusted Rugby League official. Then we'll make sure that any issue raised is dealt with appropriately and in line with our Child Safety Policy.

If you reasonably believe[^] any child is in immediate danger of a significant nature, please call 000 to speak with police. You can also contact services such as Parent Helpline, NAPCAN, Lifeline, Kids Helpline and the Raising Children Network.

*Australian Government National Child Office for Child Safety Complaint Handling Guide: Upholding the rights of children and young people – A Reference Guide, 2019.



Commission for Children and Young People – Empowerment and Participation of Children Tip Sheet.

^ A **reasonable belief** is one that a reasonable person in the same position would have formed on the same grounds.



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THREE IMPORTANT MESSAGES

The three key messages to always keep in mind are:

4. Rugby League should be fun, safe and enjoyable.
5. You should never feel uncomfortable around others in Rugby League, particularly adults.
6. If you don't feel safe or comfortable, it's OK to speak up. We want you to tell an adult that you trust – whether that's your Mum or Dad, guardian, coach, team manager, Club Child Safety Officer/MPIO or another member of your Rugby League club or family.

YOUR RIGHTS

We believe that all kids involved in our sport should:

- Feel comfortable;
- Feel safe;
- Have a right to contact your parents/guardians or others if you feel unsafe, uncomfortable or distressed at any time when you are involved in Rugby League;
- Be provided with clear directions and given the chance to positively change your behaviour if Rugby League staff, coaches, volunteers or officials believe that you have broken any rules or policies or you have misbehaved;
- NOT be subject to disciplinary action involving verbal or physical punishment, or any form of treatment that could reasonably be considered cruel, frightening, humiliating or like you are being put down; and
- Contribute suggestions or feedback about Rugby League.

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU IN Rugby League

Rugby League now has a Child Protection Commitment Statement that aims to make sure you are protected from harm. When involved in Rugby League, we want it to be enjoyable for everyone. So, we'll try to make sure that activities are suitable for your age and development and are led by qualified people.



Rugby League commits to:

- Doing our best to make sure that you are protected from harm;
- Supervising your involvement in Rugby League in Victoria;
- Obtaining parent/guardian permission in writing before we can:
 - take you on an excursion;
 - arrange overnight stays or camps; and/or
 - provide transport to another location.
- Ensuring that employee/coach/volunteer/official-to-teens ratios are maintained. (Note - please check with us if you are unsure what is meant by “ratios”);
- Trying to make sure that you are not alone with staff, coaches, volunteers or officials where they can't be seen by other adults;
- Trying to make sure that Rugby League staff, coaches, volunteers and/or officials stay within their role. This means that they cannot be employed for looking after you or visiting you at your home unless with the permission of your Parent/Guardian. They are not allowed to friend you on Facebook, take photos or footage of you for Instagram, YouTube, Snap Chat or other forms of social media unless they are doing this through official club communication channels with the consent of your parent/guardian.
- Communication between you and coaches, officials and volunteers in our sport must be regarding your involvement in Rugby League unless your Parent/Guardian has given their permission for you to have contact with them at a particular time;
- Guiding teens fairly, respectfully and appropriate to their age and background;
- Reporting and responding to any incidents of abuse or neglect towards teens involved in Rugby League.
- Where and when possible, our Rugby League staff, volunteers and officials wearing a uniform and/or having an appropriate name badge visible on when on duty.

What to do if you have concerns:

- If at any stage you feel uncomfortable, unsafe or worried, you should let your parent/guardian or a trusted adult in Rugby League know what has happened – they will want to support you.
- All you need to do is tell someone about what happened and they will do their best to make sure



that you feel safe and protected from harm.

WHAT RESPONSIBILITIES OF TEENS IN Rugby League

When you are involved in Rugby League, you also have some responsibilities. These include:

- Letting a member/parent/guardian know if you are unhappy or you don't feel safe;
- Treating other participants and adults with respect;
- Following the rules when involved in Rugby League;
- Remembering that there are others involved in Rugby League. You are certainly free to choose your own friends. However, don't stop other teens or younger kids from enjoying and participating in Rugby League; and
- Listening to others and respecting their opinions.