

CHILD SAFETY POLICY



Purpose: This policy outlines St Marys Rugby League Club's commitment to maintaining child safety, and the measures we take to ensure the safety and well-being of all children involved in our rugby league programs, in accordance with the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian Child Safe Standards.

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, parents, and participants involved in St Marys Junior Rugby League Club.

Policy Statement: St Marys Rugby League Club (SMRLC) is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for children. We adhere to the Child Safe Standards to ensure the safety, welfare, and well-being of all children in our Club.

Child Safe Standards:

1. **Child Safety is Embedded in Organisational Leadership, Governance, and Culture:**
 - The Board of Directors, Management, Staff and Volunteers are committed to child safety and ensuring that child safety is a priority in all aspects of our operations.
 - We have clear policies and procedures that promote child safety which are communicated to all involved in our Club and are regularly reviewed and updated as required.
2. **Children Participate in Decisions Affecting Them and Are Taken Seriously:**
 - We encourage children to express their views.
 - We listen to and respect children's opinions and take their suggestions / concerns seriously.
3. **Families and Communities Are Informed and Involved:**
 - We engage with families and communities to ensure they are informed about our child safety policies and practices.
 - We welcome feedback and involvement from families and the community in our child safety efforts.
4. **Equity is Upheld and Diversity is Taken into Account:**
 - We respect and value diversity and ensure that our programs are inclusive and accessible to all children.
 - We provide additional support to children with diverse needs to ensure their safety and participation.

5. **People Working with Children Are Suitable and Supported:**
 - We conduct thorough background checks and screening for all staff working with children.
 - We provide ongoing training and support to ensure staff and volunteers are equipped to uphold child safety standards.

6. **Processes to Respond to Complaints of Child Abuse Are Child-Focused:**
 - We have clear procedures for lodging complaints and responding to complaints of child abuse or the safety and well-being of children.
 - We ensure that all complaints are taken seriously and handled promptly and sensitively.

7. **Staff Are Equipped with the Knowledge, Skills, and Awareness to Keep Children Safe Through Continual Education and Training:**
 - We provide regular training and professional development opportunities for staff and volunteers on child safety.
 - We ensure that all staff and volunteers are aware of their responsibilities and the procedures for reporting concerns.

8. **Physical and Online Environments Minimise the Opportunity for Abuse to Occur:**
 - We conduct regular risk assessments of our physical and online environments to identify and mitigate potential risks to child safety.
 - We implement measures to ensure that our environments are safe and secure for children.

9. **Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is Continuously Reviewed and Improved:**
 - We regularly review and evaluate our child safety policies and practices to ensure they are effective and up-to-date.
 - We seek feedback from children, families to inform our continuous improvement efforts.

10. **Policies and Procedures Document How the Organisation is Child Safe:**
 - We document our child safety policies and procedures.
 - We ensure that all staff, volunteers, and participants are aware of and understand our child safety policies.

ST MARYS RUGBY LEAGUE CLUB has the following initiatives in place to support our Child Safety Policy:

- The SMRLC Board of Directors must have a WWCC regardless of whether they have direct contact with minors.
- All volunteers & officials (coaches, trainers, manager's, committee persons, etc) must have a WWCC or application number prior to acting in any official capacity with St Marys Junior Rugby League Club.
- All volunteers and officials must complete the **NRL Child Safety - Patrons of the Game** course prior to acting in any official capacity.
- Parents who are also coaches, trainers, managers and / or officials must also have a WWCC or application number prior to acting in any official capacity with SMRLC – they are not exempt.
- Any concerns raised by the Office of the Children's Guardian are communicated to the CEO for immediate investigation and action. The CEO addresses and responds to the Office of the Children's Guardian within 48 hours of receipt.
- The Rugby League Administrator maintains comprehensive records of all officials including position, team they are responsible for, full name, application received, registration with Penrith and District Junior Rugby League, WWCC verification, NRL Child Safety Course completion, their Club membership number and expiry, and where appropriate accreditation.
- All officials undergo an induction process prior to the commencement of the season whereby their responsibilities in relation to child safety and wellbeing are reinforced.
- The Club employs a full-time Rugby League Manger, Rugby League Administrator and Community & Development Officer to ensure the professional running of all rugby league operations.
- The Club's full-time employees are supported by the Junior League President and Junior League Secretary, as appointed by the Board. Collectively these employees and volunteers make up the Junior League Executive Committee. The President and Secretary are heavily involved in the day-to-day operations and easily accessible to monitor all activities, hear complaints and report same to the Board of Directors.
- The Rugby League Office is open 9am – 5pm, Monday to Friday.

- The Rugby League Community & Development Manger’s responsibilities include being the conduit between players and officials. The Community & Development Manager attends training sessions and game days, monitors, assesses and talks to players and officials about their experiences, and provides guidance where appropriate. The Rugby League Community & Development Manager will raise any concerns with the Junior League Executive Committee, and where appropriate, the Board of Directors.
- The St Marys Rugby League Registration Policy handbook provides all players, parents, and officials with the rules designed to deliver a safe and positive environment for all. All senior players, officials and parents of minors must sign acknowledging receipt of The Handbook, which outlines several policies and the Club’s stance regarding:
 - Codes of Conduct & Behaviour Rules
 - Zero Tolerance regarding breaches of the codes of conduct.
 - Penrith Junior League Code of Conduct
 - Spectator / Parent Code of Conduct
 - Unauthorised Entry to the sporting Field
 - Respect and Approach of Referees
 - Tips to Stamp out Sports Rage
 - Anti-Discrimination, Harassment & Bullying
 - Guidelines for Social Media
 - What Happens to People who Break the Rules
 - on and off-field behaviour
 - how to report a complaint and the process.
 - any complaints regarding suspected child abuse will be reported to the police.
 - Child Safety Standards
 - Equitable Access & Usage
 - NRL Head Injuries Policy Statement
 - Key contacts for submitting complaints and / or concerns.
- The St Marys Rugby League Registration Policy handbook is published on the Club’s website.
- The SMRLC Rugby League Manager submits a report to the CEO and Board of Directors each month outlining all activities, including any complaints, incidents or concerns and action taken to date.
- The SMRLC Community & Development Manger submits a report to the CEO and Board of Directors each month outlining all activities including any complaints, incidents or concerns and action taken to date.
- The Junior League Executive provide the Board with a copy of the minutes from every Junior League Executive meeting.

- Where appropriate, any reports or concern regarding the welfare of a minor will be escalated to the CEO immediately for review by the CEO and Board of Directors.
- St Marys Junior Rugby League Facebook page and Instagram account provides immediate and open lines of communication for all participants.
- The SMRLC social media guidelines, as outlined in the Registration Policy Handbook, notes it is inappropriate for adult officials to communicate on a one-on-one basis with players under the age of 18 years.
- Any official tours must be sanctioned by the Board of Directors. Any such tour:
 - is subject to a risk assessment carried out by Senior Club Management.
 - requires at least one parent per player to take part in the tour, and to room with their child & family ONLY.
 - Mandatory Touring Information, Parental Consent Form & Acknowledgement of Touring Terms & Conditions form for all participants.
 - Guidelines for Parents and Players Sheet
 - Guidelines for Club Officials & Representatives & acknowledgement form.
- Living Works Program - In partnership with Youth Employment Services (YES) and Lifeline, SMRLC provides a Suicide Prevention training workshop. Our volunteers work with some of the most at-risk ages for suicide. If we can equip our volunteers and officials with the tools to identify the causes earlier, we will be in a greater position to support our young men and women.
- MINIFIT Program - Led by Anthony Minichiello, Mini-fit encourages health, fitness and wellbeing amongst kids. It aims to improve the growth and development of children, educating our young players on the importance of an active and healthy lifestyle (5 – 12 years).
- BELIEVE I ACHIEVE PROGRAM – The Club’s most senior players hold training sessions with the U5, U6, U7, and U8 groups, rotating our youngest players through various skills and activities. At the end of each session, Mini players were presented with a football by the senior players. This program is a great initiative fostering engagement with our junior players.

- NSW Rugby League Changing Rooms Program – Presented to players from Under 11's to Under 17's, the program is designed to educate and provide support to our rugby league community in dealing with mental fitness and wellbeing.
- Official SMRLC Female Rugby League Ambassador – NRLW Player Sarah Togatuki. Sarah's appointment fosters engagement and communication with young female players.
- SMRLC Equitable Access Policy.

Monitoring and Review

This policy and the Club's initiatives will be constantly monitored and reviewed to ensure their effectiveness and relevance. Amendments will be made as necessary to reflect changes in legislation, best practices, and the well-being of all participants.

Statement of Intent

This Statement of Intent establishes the expectation that child safety is considered and prioritised in all current and future planning, policies, and practices. St Marys Rugby League Club pledges to:

- Ensure that child safety is at the forefront of our operations and decision-making processes.
- Foster an environment where children can participate in activities without fear of harm or abuse.
- Maintain Procedures for identifying, reporting, and responding to child safety concerns.
- Provide ongoing education and training for staff, volunteers, and stakeholders on child safety practices and responsibilities.
- Work collaboratively with parents, guardians, and the broader community to uphold the highest standards of child safety.