CHILD SAFEGUARDING AND WELLBEING POLICY

This template is designed for Queensland Rugby League affiliated clubs to meet our obligations to the Child Safe Standards and Universal Principle in Queensland. The template uses clear, practical language suitable for volunteers, parents, and committee members.

It is anchored to the Queensland Rugby League (QRL) Children & Youth Risk Management Strategy (CYRMS) with all legislation referenced being Queensland or Commonwealth law. Clubs should tailor shaded/italicised sections to reflect local arrangements.

ITEM	DETAIL
Policy Name	Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing Policy
Club	Highfields & District Junior Rugby League Club
Version	1.0
Approved By	
Approval Date	
Review Date	
Policy Owner	Highfields & District Junior Rugby League Club

CHILD SAFEGUARDING AND WELLBEING POLICY

1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to:

- Affirm Highfields & District Junior Ru commitment to the safety, wellbeing and dignity of all children and young people involved in rugby league;
- Set clear expectations for behaviour, responsibilities and decision-making;
- Comply with Queensland and Commonwealth child safeguarding legislation; and
- Align club-level practice with Queensland Rugby League (QRL) safeguarding frameworks, including the Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy (CYRMS).

Child Safety is non-negotiable. Everyone involved in our Club shares responsibility for keeping children and young people safe.

2 SCOPE & APPLICATION

This Policy applies to all people involved in our Club, including but not limited to:

• Members and participants	• Referees, match officials and volunteers
• Players and athletes	• Medical and support personnel
• Parents, guardians and carers	• Support Squad Members and Member Protection Information Officers
• Spectators and supporters	• Board, committee and sub-committee members
• Coaches, assistant coaches and managers	• Affiliated clubs, leagues, associations, sponsors and partner organisations

This Policy applies to conduct occurring:

- During training, games, events, meetings, camps and travel;
- At Club facilities and QRL sanctioned venues; and
- In online and digital environments connected to Club activities.

3 POLICY STATEMENT

The Highfields & District Junior Rugby L is committed to meeting its obligations under the Queensland Child Safety legislation and to operate in a manner consistent with the Queensland Child Safe Standards and the Universal Principle of Cultural Safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

Accordingly, the Highfields & District Junior Rugb :

- Is committed to creating, maintaining and promoting rugby league environments that are safe, inclusive, respectful and free from Harm for all children and young people;
- Has ZERO tolerance for all forms of child abuse, Grooming, neglect or Harm, whether physical, emotional, psychological, cultural or sexual;
- Recognises children and young people as rights-holders and places their safety, wellbeing and best interests at the centre of decision-making;
- Supports and encourages the participation and voice of children and young people, including providing age-appropriate information about their rights, expected behaviour and how to raise concerns;
- Actively involves and values families, carers and communities as essential partners in safeguarding children and young people;
- Is committed to culturally safe, inclusive and accessible practice, particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with disability, and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds;
- Ensures that adults and peers involved in the Club understand their safeguarding responsibilities and are supported through screening, training and clear expectations of behaviour;
- Maintains child-focussed, accessible and responsive pathways for raising, identifying and responding to concerns, complaints or incidents;
- Acts promptly, proportionately and fairly when concerns are raised, including meeting mandatory reporting and information-sharing obligations under Queensland law; and
- Regularly reviews and improves safeguarding practices, learning from incidents, near-misses, feedback and changes in legislation or guidance.

The safety and wellbeing of children and young people always takes priority over sporting, competitive, operational or reputational considerations.

4 LEGAL & POLICY FRAMEWORKS

This Policy has been developed to ensure Highfields & District Junior Rmeets its child safeguarding and wellbeing obligations under Queensland law, while operating consistently with QRL safeguarding frameworks.

4.1 Queensland Legal Obligations

This Policy gives effect to the Club's obligations under Queensland child-safe legislation, including:

i. The *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024* (Qld), including the Queensland Child Safe Standards and the Universal Principle of Cultural Safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children; and
ii. The *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000* (Qld), including Blue Card requirements.

The Club also recognises its responsibilities under child protection, criminal and information-sharing laws where concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing arise.

4.2 Queensland Rugby League Safeguarding Framework

This Policy is aligned with and supports implementation of the CYRMS.

The CYRMS establishes QRL's Queensland-specific approach to:

- Identifying and managing child safeguarding risks;
- Preventing Harm and responding to concerns; and
- Meeting legal obligations that do not sit within national sporting policies.

This Policy describes the Club's role within that framework.

4.3 National Policies

Rugby league also operates under national safeguarding and integrity policies established by the National Rugby League (NRL).

These national policies set baseline expectations for behaviour, conduct and integrity. Where Queensland law imposes additional or higher obligations, those requirements apply and are addressed through the CYRMS and this Policy.

4.4 What This Means for Our Club

For Highfields & District Junior Rugby Le, this means:

- We must create environments where children and young people feel safe, respected and supported;
- We must ensure required screening (including Blue Cards) and training are in place for relevant roles;
- We must take active steps to identify and reduce risks to children and young people in our activities;
- We must respond appropriately when concerns are raised and follow QRL reporting and escalation pathways; and
- We must prioritise Child Safety over sporting, reputational or operational considerations.

This Policy does not replace QRL procedures or investigations. It sets out our shared responsibilities at club level and how we contribute to keeping children and young people safe in rugby league.

5 ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES & EXPECTATIONS

Creating and maintaining a child-safe club is a shared responsibility. Everyone involved in Highfields & District Junior Rugby League C plays a role in protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

This section outlines high-level responsibilities and expectations, recognising that roles and structures may differ between clubs.

5.1 Shared Responsibility

All people involved in the Club are expected to:

- Prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and young people;
- Treat others with respect and dignity;
- Act in ways that promote safe, inclusive and culturally safe environments; and
- Raise concerns or risks to Child Safety when they arise.

No one is expected to manage safeguarding concerns on their own. Support and guidance are available through QRL safeguarding frameworks.

5.2 Club Committee and Leadership

The Club's committee and leadership are responsible for setting the tone, culture and expectations for safeguarding within the Club. This includes:

- Promoting a culture where Child Safety is taken seriously;
- Supporting the implementation of this Policy and related safeguards;
- Ensuring appropriate roles are in place (such as a Support Squad Member and/or a Member Protection Information Officer);
- Supporting screening, training and awareness; and
- Ensuring concerns are responded to and escalated appropriately through QRL pathways.

5.3 Coaches, Team Officials and Volunteers

Coaches, managers, officials and volunteers have a direct role in creating safe environments for children and young people. They are expected to:

- Model respectful, inclusive and child-safe behaviour;
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries;
- Understand and follow this Policy and relevant Codes of Conduct;
- Be alert to risks, concerns or changes in behaviour; and
- Raise concerns promptly through appropriate Club or QRL channels.

5.4 Parents, Carers and Spectators

Parents, carers and spectators play an important role in supporting a safe and positive environment. They are encouraged to:

- Support Club expectations for behaviour;
- Treat children, officials and volunteers with respect;
- Raise concerns if something does not seem right; and
- Engage constructively and respectfully with the Club on Child Safety and wellbeing matters.

5.5 Children and Young People

Children and young people have the right to:

- Feel safe and respected at the Club;
- Be listened to and taken seriously;
- Take part in decisions that affect them, where appropriate; and
- Speak up if they feel uncomfortable, unsafe or worried about themselves or others.

The Club is committed to supporting children and young people to understand these rights in age-appropriate ways.

6 SAFE BEHAVIOUR & PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES

Safe behaviour and clear boundaries are essential to preventing Harm and creating positive rugby league environments.

6.1 Expected Behaviour

All people involved in the Club are expected to:

- Act in the best interests of children and young people;
- Maintain appropriate physical, emotional and online boundaries;
- Use inclusive, respectful language and behaviour; and
- Comply with applicable Codes of Conduct and Club policies.

Behaviour that may place a child or young person at risk – even if Harm has not occurred – is taken seriously and addressed early.

6.2 Professional Boundaries

Professional boundaries help protect both children and adults. This includes:

- Avoiding unnecessary one-on-one situations in isolated settings;
- Ensuring communication with children is appropriate, transparent and accountable;
- Following guidance on social media, messaging and digital communication; and
- Recognising that safeguarding expectations apply both on and off the field.

Guidance on acceptable behaviour is supported by QRL Codes of Conduct and safeguarding frameworks.

7 RISK AWARENESS AND RAISING CONCERNS

7.1 Understanding Risk

Risk to children and young people can arise in many settings, including:

- Training, games and events;
- Travel, camps or overnight activities;
- Online and digital environments; and
- Through behaviour, supervision or environmental factors.

The Club recognises that identifying and addressing risks early is key to preventing Harm.

7.2 Raising Concerns

Concerns should be raised whenever:

- A child or young person's safety or wellbeing is at risk;
- There is suspected or actual Harm, abuse or neglect;
- Concerning behaviour, boundary issues or Grooming indicators are observed; or
- An incident or near-miss highlights a safeguarding risk.

Concerns do not need to be proven before being raised. If something does not feel right, it should be reported.

7.3 Reporting and Support

- Immediate safety concerns should always be prioritised.
- The Club follows Queensland Rugby League reporting and escalation pathways, including referral to appropriate authorities where required by law.
- The Club does not investigate serious safeguarding matters independently.
- Support will be provided to those involved, with the best interests of the child central to all responses.

Further detail on reporting and response processes is set out in relevant QRL policies and procedures.

8 TRAINING, SCREENING, MONITORING & REVIEW

8.1 Training and Screening

Highfields & District Junior Rugby Le is committed to ensuring that people involved in the Club understand their responsibilities in keeping children and young people safe. This includes:

- Ensuring required screening checks (including Blue Cards) are held for relevant roles;
- Supporting access to child safeguarding information, education and training appropriate to roles; and
- Reinforcing safeguarding expectations through inductions, communication and Club practices.

Training and screening requirements are guided by QRL frameworks and the CYRMS.

8.2 Monitoring and Continuous Improvement

Child Safety and wellbeing is an ongoing responsibility. The Club aims to:

- Remain alert to safeguarding risks within Club activities and environments;
- Learn from incidents, concerns, feedback and near-misses;
- Reflect on what is working well and where improvements may be needed; and
- Strengthen safeguarding practices over time.

Monitoring activities may be informal or structured, depending on the size, capacity and activities of the Club.

8.3 Review of the Policy

This Policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure it:

- Remains consistent with Queensland law;
- Continues to align with QRL safeguarding frameworks, including the CYRMS; and
- Reflects changes in Club activities, structure or identified risks.

Where guidance or requirements change, the Club will take reasonable steps to update this Policy and related practices.

8.4 Use of QRL Guidance and Support

This Policy is designed to set out club-level commitments and expectations. Detailed guidance on risk management, reporting, and escalation is provided through QRL policies, procedures and the CYRMS.

The Club is encouraged to seek advice and support from QRL where questions or safeguarding concerns arise.

9 DEFINITIONS

child/children/young Person/young People	A child or young person is any person under 18 years of age.
Child Safety	Child safety refers to protecting children and young people from Harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation, and creating environments where they feel safe, respected and supported.
Club	The Club means Highfields & District Jun, being a Queensland Rugby League affiliated club responsible for the delivery of rugby league activities under the auspices of Queensland Rugby League.
Harm	Harm means any action, omission or circumstance that has, or is likely to have, a significant impact on a child or young person's physical, psychological, emotional or cultural wellbeing. Harm may occur as a single incident or over time.
Grooming	Grooming refers to behaviour intended to build trust with a child or young person (and sometimes their family) for the purpose of exploiting or Harming them. Grooming can occur in person or online and may not be immediately obvious.
Cultural Safety	Cultural safety means environments where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people feel respected, valued and free from Harm, and where their identity, culture and lived experience are acknowledged and supported.
CYRMS	CYRMS means the Queensland Rugby League Children & Youth Risk Management Strategy, which sets out Queensland-specific systems for identifying, managing and responding to child safeguarding risks.
Member Protection Information Officer (MPIO)	A Member Protection Information Officer (MPIO) is a trained support role who provides information and guidance in relation to a member protection and child safeguarding matters. MPIOs do not investigate complaints or make decisions.
Support Squad Member	A Support Squad Member is a trained role within rugby league who provides assistance, guidance and support to individuals in relation to integrity, member protection and child safeguarding matters. Support Squad Members do not investigate matters, make findings, or determine outcomes.

10 Appendix A | Related Documents and Frameworks

This Policy operates as part of a broader safeguarding and integrity framework for rugby league in Queensland. It should be read in conjunction with the following documents, where applicable. The following documents also apply to all people involved in our Club, including but not limited to those listed in clause 2 of this Policy.

Queensland Rugby League (QRL)

- *Children & Youth Risk Management Strategy (CYRMS)*
  - Sets out Queensland-specific systems for identifying, managing and responding to child safeguarding risks and meeting statutory obligations.
- *QRL Member Protection Policy*
  - Provides definitions, behavioural standards, prohibited conduct, complaint handling principles and disciplinary arrangements.
- *QRL Complaints, Reporting and Response Procedures*
  - Outlines reporting pathways, escalation, response processes and interaction with external authorities.
- *QRL Codes of Conduct and Integrity Frameworks*
  - Establish expected standards of behaviour for participants, officials, volunteers and others involved in rugby league.

Club Level Documents

- *Club Constitution*
- *Complaints and Grievance Procedures*
- *Club Code of Conduct(s)*
- *Social Media, Communication and Photography Policies*
- *Privacy and Information Handling Policies*

These documents support the practical implementation of child safeguarding expectations at club level.

National Frameworks

- *NRL Safeguarding, Integrity and Conduct Policies*

National policies establish baseline expectations across the game. Where Queensland law or policy imposes additional or higher obligations, those requirements apply.

Application

This Policy sets out club-level commitments and expectations. Detailed guidance on risk management, reporting, response and escalation is provided through QRL frameworks, including the CYRMS. Where there is any inconsistency, Queensland legislation and QRL safeguarding frameworks prevail.