



Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Developed In Partnership With



Safeguarding You
to Safeguard Children

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Governance Endorsement

Justin Leydesdorff, Chair, NZRL Board

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CEO Statement

New Zealand Rugby League (NZRL) is committed to transforming the lives and wellbeing of its people and communities, bringing to life the philosophy of 'More Than A Game.' We have a duty to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of our people by ensuring rugby league is a safe space that enables and empowers our tamariki and rangatahi to flourish fully in society.

We recognise that sports and recreation are the largest sector for child/young people engagement outside of education. Therefore creating a safe environment for all involved is critical. We are committed to being a safer organisation that demonstrates child safety in our engagement with tamariki, rangatahi and whānau and safe practice for staff.

In seeking to develop and embed an NZRL wide safeguarding culture, we are also passionate about guiding, supporting and leading our NZRL communities on their safeguarding journey. So they too reflect being safe organisations that demonstrate child safe practice—creating a collective rugby league safeguarding culture. One that safeguards everyone, children, staff and volunteers, our rugby league communities and NZRL.

We are dedicated to a rugby league environment that prevents abuse, reflects zero-tolerance for abuse and ensures the wellbeing of all.

Greg Peters, CEO NZRL

1. Our Commitment to Safeguarding

We believe safeguarding is a shared responsibility and one we take seriously. We want to make certain our children and young people involved in rugby league can thrive and flourish in a safe environment that encourages their participation and belonging, making sure their experiences of NZRL and our sport are positive.

At NZRL, we are committed to ensuring we take every step possible to ensure our provisions and environments are safe and empowering for children, young people, families and staff. Our partnership with specialists Holistic Safeguarding supports us in ensuring NZRL and our rugby league communities continuously demonstrate child safety best practice.

NZRL has zero tolerance for abuse. We expect respectful and positive behaviours, conduct and values at all times from all those who represent NZRL and our sport.

This Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, along with the safeguards outlined, are just some of the steps we are taking to create and embed a safeguarding culture.

We believe having a safeguarding culture helps us be proactive in preventing risks and protecting our children/young people, staff, rugby league communities and NZRL. This policy represents our safeguarding commitment to ensure:

- We aim to prevent vulnerability, adversity and/or abuse from occurring within NZRL and our rugby league communities.
- Any person(s) facing risks of vulnerability, adversity

Our Definitions

- **A child or young person** – as someone aged from 0-18 years. We also include those who are 18 years of age or older when meeting additional [Children Act 2014 child/young person definitions](#).
- **Staff** – Any person serving or officially representing NZRL via our name/branding or provision being offered, irrelevant of whether they are in a paid, voluntary or contracted position.

* This excludes any persons who may be wearing branded merchandise but who is not doing so in an official capacity or due to an official association (e.g. shop merchandise).



and/or abuse within NZRL, our rugby league communities or who comes to our attention is supported and protected.

2. Policy Scope

- This policy applies to all those serving or representing NZRL directly or indirectly within the rugby league community.
- Includes staff are in direct or non-direct child facing positions. Safeguarding must be represented by all.
- Encompasses all activities, services, provisions and environments, including online platforms or digital resources.

3. Our Principles

While not exclusive, some of our principles applicable to this policy include:

- Having zero tolerance for child abuse and neglect.
- Our belief safeguarding is a shared responsibility.
- Our commitment to developing and maintaining a safeguarding culture that safeguards everyone (young people, staff and NZRL).
- Taking every step possible to support our rugby league community in making certain rugby league is a safe sport, free from harassment, adversity and abuse.
- Being legally compliant and exceeding these requirements where possible by promoting child safe best practice.
- Being child-focused and centred in our youth engagement, practice and services.
- Being inclusive and valuing diversity, helping everyone to engage and reach their full potential.
- Maintaining a consistency of practice that evidences our safeguarding expectations and continuous improvements.
- Upholding our responsibility to work collaboratively with child protection services when responding to known or suspected abuse and/or neglect concerns.

4. Legislation

International and New Zealand legislation informs this policy and our procedures. This includes but is not exclusive to the:

- [Children Act 2014](#)
- [Crimes Amendment Act 2011, Section 195 and 195A](#)
- [Harmful Digital Communication Act 2015](#)
- [Health and Disability Commissioner Act 1994](#)
- [Health and Safety at Work Act 2015](#)
- [Human Rights Act 1993](#)
- [Oranga Tamariki Act 1989](#)
- [Privacy Act 2020](#)
- [Summary Offences Act 1981](#)
- [Te Tiriti o Waitangi/Treaty of Waitangi](#)
- [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 \(UNCRC\)](#)

Any critical reviews of legislation that holds a significant relevance to this policy may prompt an earlier policy review. Alternatively, any non-critical legislation amendments will be incorporated within the next scheduled policy review.

Appendix 1 – details further information on legislation.

5. Inclusivity

As a sport, Rugby League supports physical and mental health, as well as our social development. Rugby League is an inclusive sport, a sport that can serve all and is inclusive. One where everyone has the opportunity to reach their sporting potential.

We are committed to providing opportunities for all to grow, and our staff welcome and value our differences across diversity as a whole.

In addition to advocating and upholding New Zealand legislation supporting equality, diversity and inclusion.



We also recognise, advocate for and uphold Child and Human Rights.

- [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 \(UNCRC\)](#)
- [Human Rights Act 1993](#)

6. Duty of Care

NZRL holds a duty of care for all people accessing and providing our services. This includes protecting people from any unnecessary risk of adversity and/or harm. All possible care must be taken to ensure everybody's well-being and safety is met at all times.

At NZRL, our duty of care adopts a parental responsibility for any child/young person when the NZRL activity is provided independently from the child's parent/guardian's supervision. For activities requiring Parent/Guardian supervision, the parental responsibility, including active supervision of the young person, remains with the parent/guardian. We aim for our service information to reflect:

- When parental/guardian supervision is required.
- Enrolment information and parent emergency contact details are required for all services where parental/guardian supervision is not required.
- All personal data is kept securely and is not shared with any third party without consent¹.
- Parental/guardian consent is required for:
 - Activities requiring a 1:1 staff/child ratio.
 - For taking any child/young person imagery.
 - For transporting any child/young person.
 - For staff to be able to contact a young person directly regarding their NZRL activities.

6.1.1 NZRL Supervision of Children/Young People	6.1.2 Parent/Guardian Supervision
▪ We aim for all our provisions to be delivered in the line of sight and sound of other staff and/or adults. ▪ Parents may be encouraged to stay if the children are of an age or developmental level, where greater levels of supervision are required. ▪ We aim to work to a minimum of 2 staff being present when delivering child/youth services. Where this is not possible, the following safeguards are utilised: ○ Activities requiring 1:1 ratios are reflected in our service information and may only be delivered with written parent/guardian consent. We also ensure these provisions hold increased safeguarding measures (e.g. increased monitoring and evaluations, etc.).	Unless under our care by being enrolled for and accessing one of our child/youth activities, NZRL cannot accept supervisory responsibilities for any child or young person. Parents/Guardians are required to ensure they have appropriate supervision plans in place for all activities requiring parental supervision. In accordance with New Zealand Summary Offences Act 1981, all children under 14 years require appropriate supervision. This may be by a person's 14 years or over if that supervision care is reasonable in its expectations.

7. Safe Workforce

There is a requirement for all staff and others associated with NZRL to understand the critical responsibility they have to:

¹The only exception would be for health or safety purposes. If applicable, all information would then be shared per our information sharing and Privacy Act requirements.



- Help protect children, young people and adults from all forms of known or suspected abuse and/or neglect.
- Be alert to incidents of possible abuse and/or neglect that may be occurring outside the scope of our services and environments that may be impacting on those to whom we do provide a service.
- Maintain our safeguarding culture, ensuring safeguarding requirements are understood and put into practice by all who work for, volunteer on or access our programmes, services and facilities.

7.1 Children Act 2014 Safety Checks

As per the Children Act 2014, our safety check processes reflect risk assessment and police screening elements. We also recognise contact with children and young people as positions that include in-person contact or contact via digital resources.

We adopt this basis when implementing safety check processes for any person:

- Undertaking unpaid work that is being conducted as part of an educational or vocational training course.
- Employed or engaged by us on a paid basis to work with children/young people, whether that work is in person or via digital resources.

7.2 Child Safe Safer Recruitment

As part of our safeguarding culture, we seek to demonstrate best practice and, therefore, exceed our required practice by implementing child safe safer recruitment processes.

Our child safe safer recruitment remains inclusive of both risk assessment and police screening processes, and requirements apply to:

- All persons employed or engaged by us (staff or volunteer) irrelevant of whether their position is or isn't child facing.
- Any Contractors where their role or part of their role involves contact with children and young people (although a proportionate approach may be taken).

Omitting or ignoring any of our child safe safer recruitment due diligence requirements will be reviewed as serious misconduct and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

7.2.1 Risk Assessment Processes

- All position adverts reflect NZRL as adopting child safe safer recruitment processes.
- All positions are based on a formal Position Description incorporating safeguarding responsibilities.
- We require a completed Application form (CV's may accompany an application form).
- Interview processes include a safeguarding component.
- Identification verification and verification of the right to work in New Zealand is confirmed.
- Police Screening is undertaken (applicable to the position level).
- Verification of qualifications, certificates and registrations (if applicable).
- A minimum of two references is sourced, and processes include safeguarding questions and may include verification of references provided.

7.2.2 Police Screening

We value support structures, such as police screening. However, we recognise they are only one part of our child safety recruitment processes and only as suitable as the data known on the day of completion.

- Police screening is to be completed before any employment or engagement commences.
- Police checks conducted under the Children Act 2014 for Core Workers are exempt from the Criminal Records (Clean Slate) Act 2004).
- All applicants must inform those managing their recruitment at the time of any criminal conviction(s) or charge(s) that are pending and/or any past convictions.



- Upon employment and/or at any time during employment and/or engagement, the applicant must inform their Manager or the next most senior person directly of any criminal conviction(s) or charge(s) that are pending and/or any past convictions not previously disclosed.

7.3 Renewed Police Screening

In addition to police screening upon appointment, we will also renew our staff police checks. We aim for all renewed police screening checks to be:

- Ideally completed bi-annually from the person's appointment date or last renewal.
- As per the Children Act 2014, renewal check periods do not exceed a maximum period of 3 years from the person's appointment or last renewal.
- Additionally, we reserve the right to request a police check at any other time due to the nature of the organisation, the individual's position and/or changes in their position that require a revised police check.

7.4 Negative Results

- If a police record check reveals a history or any criminal conviction(s) that is unsatisfactory or that has failed to be declared by the applicant during any stage of recruitment, the matter will be discussed with the applicant, and a determination will be made as to the appropriate course of action.
- For a police screening check result that does hold an offence(s), but that offence(s) **does not meet** with the [Children Act 2014 Schedule 2 Specified Offences](#) (which require Ministry exemption), we will take into consideration the below factors when making decisions regarding workforce suitability:
 - The applicant's openness and honesty throughout the recruitment process.
 - Any police screening advice, guidance and/or recommendations (if applicable).
 - The seriousness of the offence.
 - The age of the individual at the time.
 - Offence timeframes.
 - Any mitigating circumstances and/or influencing societal conditions relating to the offending and/or timeframe.
 - The probability of risk relating to the same or similar behaviour reoccurring.
 - The individual's commitment to rehabilitation and changing their perspectives and behaviour in question.
- In certain circumstances, if the police check is unsatisfactory or if the applicant has provided fraudulent information or failed to declare relevant information, an offer of employment or engagement may not be made or may be rescinded.
- Likewise, if a staff member's police check renewal has an unsatisfactory result or if the staff member has provided fraudulent information or failed to declare relevant information, their employment and/or engagement may be terminated immediately.

7.5 No Settlement Agreements

We commit to not using 'settlement agreements' where these are contrary to our safeguarding culture. Should a staff member resign or cease to provide their services to us, this will not prevent any staff concern and/or allegation that has been received against them from being investigated under our safeguarding policies and procedures.

It is important for all involved that every effort is made to reach a conclusion in all cases of staff concerns and/or allegations bearing on the safety or welfare of children and/or young people, particularly when the person concerned may have continued access to children



and/or young people outside of our setting and/or the rugby league community.

8. Safeguarding Roles and Responsibilities

We regard safeguarding as a shared responsibility across our workforce. Every person has a moral, ethical and organisational obligation to uphold their safeguarding responsibilities and take any concerns about the welfare of children and/or suitability of staff seriously.

8.1 All Staff Safeguarding Responsibilities

At NZRL, we will be seeking for all position descriptions to reflect the below-shared safeguarding responsibilities. These responsibilities will be held in the same regard as all other position responsibilities.

- Safeguarding is a shared responsibility.
 - Ensure all child/youth engagement is to be within a safe and inclusive environment (including online platforms).
 - Adhere to all safeguarding policies, procedures and our code of conduct.
 - Staff are to model their Position of Trust, ensuring their conduct is as expected and reflective of being a positive role model for our youth.
- All staff are expected to:
 - Complete all safeguarding learning and development within any applicable timeframes.
 - Be alert to recognising any possible indicators of vulnerability, abuse and/or neglect.
 - Report any child or staff concerns.
 - Staff are to demonstrate respect and inclusivity across all areas of diversity.

8.2 Safeguarding Staff

As part of our best practice, we will also be introducing Designated Safeguarding Staff.

These staff will be lead members for any safeguarding or child protection concerns and support. Full responsibilities will be noted within their Position Descriptions. However, some example responsibilities include:

- Being the first point of contact for any safeguarding advice and guidance.
- Taking the lead for NZRL’s response to any well-being concerns, including working together with families and any applicable services.
 - Supporting our safeguarding culture implementation and monitoring within NZRL and our rugby league communities.

Appendix 2 - details information on our Safeguarding Staff.

8.3 Safeguarding Induction and Training

A) Induction	B) Training
Within their 1st week all new staff should be aware of: - Our definition of a child/young person (up to 18yrs). - How to access this Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. - The 4 categories of abuse. - How to report any safeguarding concerns, including who to report concerns to and what to do should that person be unavailable and/or the concern relate to that person.	All staff are to receive NZRL’s Safeguarding and Child Protection eLearning, which is designed to support staff in being able to recognise, respond to, report/refer, and record any child welfare concerns or allegations against staff, in accordance with our safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures. Staff holding specific safeguarding responsibilities are required to undertake further safeguarding and child protection training enabling them to develop the knowledge and skills needed for their specific safeguarding responsibilities.



▪ Their right to refer child abuse and/or neglect concerns directly to Oranga Tamariki or the Police.	All staff are required to refresh their safeguarding and child protection training. Preferably annually, but without exceeding a bi-annual timeframe.
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9. Safe Practice

We are passionate about making certain all our children and young people get to enjoy rugby league and the well-being opportunities this sport brings.

Equally, we are as passionate about making certain staff can provide these opportunities in a manner that promotes safe practice and minimises any opportunities for their suitability to be working and/or engaging with children/young people to be questioned.

9.1 Position of Trust

When someone is regarded as part of our workforce, particularly when engaging with children/young people, this reflects NZRL trusts them and has endorsed them as having a certain level of authority.

These components reflect what is known as a 'Position of Trust'. **All staff are considered as being in a Position of Trust.**

As well as any natural relationship power dynamics between adults and children, or between peers, when being in a Position of Trust (e.g. staff, young leaders, etc.), the person holding this position, has or is perceived as having power, influence and authority over a child/young person, due to the nature of their role and/or association to our organisation.

There is potential for this power or position of influence to be misused to persuade and encourage or intimidate a

The below requirements are in place to ensure everyone's safety and well-being, as well as promote conduct that is designed to be in the best interests of all. We take our expected safeguarding conduct expectations and any breaches of these seriously.

child/young person into certain negative behaviours or activities.

Due to the potential for misuse, it is vital all staff uphold all safeguarding expectations and act as positive role models. As well as safeguarding children/young people, this also helps to safeguard staff from possible allegations

Due to the imbalance of power and risks of exploitation, we regard any person **using their Position of Trust or trusted association to us** to instigate and/or engage in a sexual relationship and/or conduct with someone under 18 years of age as a serious breach of this Position of Trust. This is inclusive of and irrelevant to whether the young person is of a legal consent age.

All staff will be issued with either a copy of or access to our Safeguarding Code of Conduct to ensure they have the awareness needed to promote and implement the necessary and required safe practice.

**Conduct breaching this Position of Trust may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.
Any breaches of the law will be referred to New Zealand Police.**

9.2 Safeguarding Code of Conduct

It is a requirement for all those employed or engaged by NZRL to operate within our Safeguarding Code of Conduct. Staff will be issued with a copy of or access to our Safeguarding Code of Conduct to ensure they are familiar with these requirements and in implementing safe practice. Staff must always maintain our conduct requirements and appropriate professional boundaries.

Staff are to avoid any engagement and/or behaviour that could be open to misinterpretation and report and record any such incident, should they occur.

Similarly, it is important that staff make sure all children and young people are aware of any activity ground rules/behavioural expectations, etc., applicable to their conduct as participants. This helps to support the enjoyment and safety of all children/young people and the safe practice of our staff.



Our Safeguarding Code of Conduct encompasses requirements on physical and verbal conduct across all environments (including online and via digital resources) and provides further guidance on key areas of practice. Including but not exclusive to:

- Physical Contact, Verbal Engagement and Communication
- Social Media.
- Imagery of Children/Young People
- Supervision
- Changing Rooms
- Transport
- Overnight Stays.

Appendix 3 holds our Safeguarding Code of Conduct Summary

9.3 Engaging Children and Young People in Our Safeguarding Culture

At NZRL, we know the importance of children and young people being encouraged and empowered. This includes ensuring they know they have a voice, feeling safe to use that voice and trust their voice will be heard. Whilst not exclusive, some of the ways NZRL will be seeking to include children and young people in our safeguarding culture is:

- Providing child and family-friendly versions of our safeguarding and child protection guidance.
- Promoting our safeguarding culture and expectations.
- Ensuring all safeguarding information is accessible to children and families.
- Regularly reaffirming with children, young people and families our ways of working and conduct expectations for children, young people and staff.
- Ensuring children, young people and their families know they can share any concerns with our staff, including our specific safeguarding staff and how they can contact these staff members.
- Ensuring all our service monitoring and evaluation processes incorporate and/or focus on our safeguarding culture.
- Utilising the child/young person's voice within our service reviews and developments.

9.4 Complaints

At NZRL, we make every effort to ensure all our members receive a positive and excellent service experience. Should, for any reason, we fail to meet these expectations, members are, in the first instance, encouraged to share their experience with a staff member. Should the matter remain outstanding, the member is then encouraged to take forward their concern via our Complaints Procedure. Should a concern relate to any of the below, these would be considered a safeguarding concern and not a complaint.

- A child/young person or staff member is in a vulnerable position.
- A person's conduct towards a child/young person is or is potentially of concern.
- Staff conduct is against our Code of Conduct.
- An allegation has been made against a staff member.

10. Recognising Safeguarding and Child Protection Concerns

Section 2, Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 defines child abuse as: *“child abuse means the harming (whether physically, emotionally, or sexually), ill-treatment, abuse, neglect or deprivation of any child or young person.”*

We know that abuse does not discriminate. It can be perpetrated by anyone, to anyone and within any environment. Global and national case examples show sport is and has not been immune to risks of exploitation by unsafe people.

We recognise that concerns may relate to – a child or young person's well-being; and/or an allegation against a staff member.

As with child protection services, we recognise the following as categories of abuse:



Neglect	Physical Abuse	Emotional Abuse	Sexual Abuse
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10.1 Neglect

Neglect	
Neglect is the persistent failure or deliberate denial to meet a child or young person's basic needs when reasonably able to do so. Neglect may involve but is not exclusive to: - Physical Neglect – Insufficient housing, food, clothing, etc. - Medical Neglect – Failure to take care of their physical (including dental) and mental health needs. - Supervisory Neglect – Leaving a child home alone or without someone safe looking after them (day or night) - Emotional Neglect – Not giving the attention, emotional engagement and love needed through play, talk and everyday affection. - Educational Neglect – failure to enrol the child in educational services, allowing chronic non-attendance and/or inattention to any special educational needs. - Neglect may also occur during pregnancy, e.g. as a result of lack of prenatal care, maternal substance abuse, etc. Neglect can be a one-off incident but mostly represents persistently failing to act or meet a child's needs to the extent the child's health and development is, or is likely to be, significantly harmed. Neglect remains the most common form of abuse.	
<i>Physical indicators may include</i>	<i>Behavioural indicators may include</i>
- Persistently showing noteworthy levels of being uncared for, extremely dirty, wearing inappropriate clothing, e.g. for weather, activities, etc. - Non-organic failure to thrive, e.g. underweight, small for their age. - Persistent nappy rash or skin disorders without medical cause. - Non-medical related reasons for indicators such as e.g. frequent hunger, malnutrition or obesity. - Having poor hygiene, constantly dirty or smelly and no understanding of basic hygiene. - Unattended health and/or dental problems, including a lack of proper medical or dental attention. - Poor speech or other developmental delays. - Frequently tired or falling asleep.	- Stealing/hoarding (particularly food or clothing). - Unsupervised for long periods, spending lots of time outside of the home, e.g. streets, neighbours, at school or other activities beyond usual hours. - Experiences of abandonment by parents/guardians. - Falling behind in education work and/or attendance. - A reluctance to attend a particular activity, organisation, environment, etc. - Indiscriminate attachment to adults, affection seeking, or a severe lack of attachment to a parent(s)/guardian(s). - Abuse of alcohol or drugs. - Aggressive, destructive and/or offending behaviour. - Poor peer relationships, having few friends. - Poor social skills or other developmental delays. - Poor emotional response/lack of expression or enthusiasm, low self-esteem, dull, unsmiling. - Anxiety about being left. - Running away

10.2 Emotional Abuse

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is where behaviour towards or of a child, has a damaging impact on the child's psychological, physical, social, intellectual and/or emotional functioning or development. Often the result of the child being exposed to persistent negative experiences and treatment that causes a severe and long-lasting impact on their well-being and development. However, it can also include exposure to a single severe incident (e.g. witnessing a serious assault).

Emotional abuse includes persistently withholding affection, failing to give a child the love or attention they need for healthy emotional, psychological and social development. This includes causing a child/young person to live in fear, for example - exposing children to seeing and/or hearing the ill-treatment of another. Emotional abuse can also include conveying to the child they are worthless, unloved, inadequate, valued only if they meet another person's needs or any other form of degrading, isolating and/or rejecting the child.

Overprotection that significantly limits a child's exploration, learning and participation in normal social interaction, is another form of emotional abuse. As is age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on and/or expected of a child that is beyond their capability. Emotional abuse also relates to any deliberate or persistent disregard for the child/young person's cultural identity and well-being.

Emotional abuse is associated with all categories of abuse. However, it may also be the only form of abuse suffered by a child.

<i>Physical indicators may include</i>	<i>Behavioural indicators may include</i>
▪ Frequent physical complaints, e.g. real or imagined, such as headaches, nausea and vomiting, and abdominal pains (may coincide with the child being underweight or dehydrated). ▪ Delays in physical development, slow development or regression ▪ Sleep problems like bedwetting or soiling with no medical cause, nightmares, poor sleeping patterns, being tired, lethargic, falling asleep at inappropriate times. ▪ Talking about hurting themselves or ending their lives (suicide threats, attempts, self-harm). ▪ Eating disorders. ▪ Sudden speech disorders. ▪ Stunted growth, failure to thrive (non-organic). ▪ Abuse of alcohol or drugs.	▪ Excessive lack of self-esteem or confidence. ▪ Overly compliant and apologetic, an excessive fear of making mistakes. ▪ Difficulty developing normal relationships, including poor peer relationships. ▪ Lacks trust in others. ▪ Concerning interactions between the child and parent/guardian or another adult (e.g. overly critical, lack of affection, demonstrating fear). ▪ Reluctance to attend an activity, a particular place, organisation, setting, etc. ▪ Staying at school/other activities outside hours and not wanting to go home. ▪ Inability to cope with praise, unable to express views when asked, cope in social settings. ▪ Aggressive behaviour (active or passive). ▪ Very 'clingy', possessive, attention-seeking, sometimes obsessive or risk-taking behaviour. ▪ Depression, habitually frightened, anxious and/or nervous. ▪ Habit disorders – hair twisting, sucking, biting, rocking, etc. ▪ Indiscriminate with affection. ▪ Stealing (particularly food) or destroying property.

10.3 Physical Abuse

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is when a child is injured or has been placed at serious risk of being injured or suffering significant harm as a result of a physically aggressive act(s). Injuries may result from a single incident, or combine with other circumstances and may be deliberately inflicted or the unintentional result of behaviour, e.g. shaking an infant, physical discipline.

Physically abusive behaviour includes (but is not limited to) hitting, punching, shaking, throwing, slapping, shoving, kicking, biting, burning or scalding, drowning and suffocating. Faking or deliberately inducing an illness within a child may also be a form of physical abuse and this would include giving children harmful substances such as drugs, alcohol or poisons.

<i>Physical indicators may include</i>	<i>Behavioural indicators may include</i>
- Head injuries. - Unexplained bruises, welts, scratches, cuts and abrasions (specifically regular, multiple, clustered and/or historic). - Injuries in areas that are soft tissue, hidden and/or unusual places, e.g. face, back or tummy, buttocks, backs of legs, inner thighs, soles of feet, etc. - Unexplained fractures, sprains, dislocations and broken bones. Particularly to the head, face, hip or shoulder dislocations. Especially in young babies or immobile children. - Injuries with particular patterns, e.g. bite marks, belt mark, fingertip bruising (e.g. being forcefully held). - Burn or scald marks (including cigarette burns, stove ring, iron, rope). - Strangulation or suffocation marks. - Ingestion of alcohol and drugs. - Poisoning. - Symptoms of dehydration in babies, e.g. drowsy, quiet, pale with cold extremities, rapid pulse and breathing rate. - Shaken baby syndrome – vomiting, signs of bleeding in their eyes, appear floppy, overly drowsy, pale, cold extremities and/or is unresponsive	- Disclosing that physical harm has or may have occurred. - Unlikely explanations for injuries. - Explanations not making sense, changing or differing and/or not fitting with presented injuries. - Refusal to discuss/access medical help and/or delayed access to treatment. - No explanation, or child, or parent can't recall how the injuries occurred. - Reluctance to have parent/guardian contacted. - Mistrust of adults/demonstrating fear of particular adults/caregivers/peers. - Fear of going home and/or to a particular location, including running away. - Being bullied and/or bullying others, and/or displaying controlling behaviour towards others. - Patterns of illness/claims of illness surrounding contact with a particular person. - Withdrawn, depression, moods or acting out behaviours. - Aggressive behaviour, disruptive nature or severe temper outburst. - Anxious, nervous, restless, jittery, flinching when approached or touched. - Expressing little or no emotion when hurt. - Being fearful when other children cry or shout. - Being excessively friendly to strangers, relationship difficulties. - Being passive and compliant. - Reluctance to undress and/or inappropriately dressed, e.g. wearing long-sleeved clothes/remaining covered on hot days

It's important to remember we can all hurt ourselves accidentally and sometimes injuries may match some of the points noted.

However, what can help to identify non-accidental injuries is often the context surrounding the injury:

- Does the injury fit with the explanation given?
- Is the injury plausible to the child's age and/or developmental level?
- Is there a variance in explanations between those around the child and/or between them and the child?
 - Are the injuries in unusual places (e.g. soft tissue areas, hidden areas, on both sides) or do they have any particular patterns?
 - Does there appear to be a delay in seeking assistance?
 - Are the injuries appearing to be untreated?

10.4 Sexual Abuse

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is any action where any person (adult or peer (other children)) uses any perceived or actual power, authority or position they may have over a child for sexual purposes. This includes whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. Effectively forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in or be exposed to sexual activities.

Sexual abuse does not always involve physical contact (e.g. penetrative acts such as rape or oral sex); it can be non-penetrative acts (e.g. masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching inside or outside of clothing).

Non-contact activities such as exposing a child/young person to offensive material, producing or watching sexual images/activities, or encouraging them to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, inappropriate sexual situations or comments, are also all forms of sexual abuse.

Sexual abuse often begins with some form of grooming, which is where the person prepares the child for sexual abuse by lowering their resistance, inhibitions and by seeking to gain their trust and compliance. Grooming and forms of sexual abuse can also occur via the internet and social media.

<i>Physical indicators may include</i>	<i>Behavioural indicators may include</i>
▪ Bruising, lacerations, bite marks, including injuries to areas such as breasts, buttocks, thighs and genitalia. ▪ Unusual or excessive itching, redness, swelling or bleeding in the genital area. ▪ Frequent complaints of headaches and/or stomach pains. ▪ Discomfort when walking or sitting down. ▪ Signs of being sexually active, STIs, pregnancy, torn, stained or bloody underclothing (particularly if under 16 years). ▪ Compulsive eating or dieting. ▪ Nightmares/other sleep problems without explanation. ▪ Chronic urinary tract infections or difficulty/pain when urinating or blood in urine or stools. ▪ Self-injury (cutting, burning). ▪ Suicide attempts. ▪ Regression, e.g. bedwetting or thumb sucking. ▪ Unexplained gifts or new possessions. ▪ Purposefully making themselves unattractive.	▪ Alluding to having a secret. ▪ New words for body parts. ▪ Resists removing clothes or wearing inappropriate clothing, e.g. for the weather. ▪ Trying to feel clean via obsessive washing. ▪ Persistent and/or age-inappropriate sexual interest, play and/or comments. ▪ Encourages others to behave sexually or play sexual games. ▪ Exposure to or involvement in child sexual abuse material (photos/videos, etc.). ▪ Sexual promiscuity or exploitation. ▪ Fear of intimacy or closeness. ▪ Running away from home. ▪ Fear of a particular person, gender, activity, place, etc. ▪ Significant difficulty relating to adults or peers. ▪ Significant change in status or quality of relationships with friends and/or parents. ▪ Friendships or relationships with older individuals and/or groups ▪ Problems with schoolwork or unexplained changes in behaviour or school results. ▪ Sudden mood swings: rage, fear, withdrawal, depression, anxiety, persistent crying, etc. ▪ Challenging and aggressive behaviour. ▪ Drug or alcohol abuse. ▪ Risk-taking behaviour, such as starting fires. ▪ Cruelty to animals.

11. Responding to Concerns

11.1 Disclosures of Abuse and/or Neglect

A disclosure is when a person shares something relating to vulnerability, abuse and/or neglect. There are 3 main types of disclosure:

Direct Disclosure:	Indirect Disclosure:	Third-Party Disclosure:
When a person tells you directly, they are being abused or neglected. They might begin with one example and see how you react before sharing their whole story.	This is when a person doesn't tell you directly but consciously or subconsciously communicates their experience indirectly. For example, via behaviours, emotions, art, writing, appearance, enquiries or discussions, and/or via other possible indicators of abuse and/or neglect.	This is when someone (e.g. parent/guardian, friend, another professional, another parent) shares a concern about another person. Sometimes (more commonly when coming from a child), disclosures can be initially portrayed as a third party. However, it later transpires to be an <i>indirect disclosure</i> , e.g. "my friend's parent is hurting them" when it is them/their situation.

11.2 Handling A Disclosure

The moment information is shared that indicates a safeguarding concern or possible abuse and/or neglect, this becomes a disclosure. Upon receiving/identifying a disclosure, staffs primary role is to **LISTEN** and allow the disclosure to continue for as long as the person disclosing feels comfortable.

All 'normal' conversation methods such as asking questions, interrupting, offering an opinion/solution, etc., are to be avoided. Whilst unintended, using these practices could result in increasing the risk of harm to the person disclosing and/or jeopardising any possible criminal investigations (if applicable).

Staff are not to investigate or inappropriately question a person making a disclosure.

The below guidance adopts best practice and should support staff in responding to any disclosures.

DO	DON'T
✓ Believe the person and take what they say seriously. ✓ Be accessible. ✓ Listen carefully. ✓ Reassure the person, e.g. <i>they are right to tell someone; it's not their fault.</i> ✓ Thank them for telling you. ✓ Tell them you will try to get help. If necessary, explain this may involve talking to another staff member. ✓ Consult immediately with your Manager and/or Safeguarding Staff. ✓ Make a careful record as soon as possible of what was said in a Safeguarding Incident Form.	✗ Do not say anything critical, e.g. 'why didn't you tell me sooner.' ✗ Do not jump to conclusions, especially about the abuser. It may be someone still trusted, liked and/or loved by the person. ✗ Do not investigate any concerns suspected or raised, or ask leading questions, e.g. <i>did this happen at home?</i> ✗ Do not make promises or tell them you will keep anything a secret. ✗ Do not stop them when they are speaking freely (just listen) and do not feel the need to fill any silences. ✗ Do not let anyone who may be involved in the abuse know the child/person has said anything to you. If the abuser is unknown, we are to assume this may involve the child's parents or guardians.

T.E.D – Tell, Explain, Describe

TED is a helpful structure to remember when trying to gather more information without risking asking leading questions.

T

TELL –

Tell me what happened?

E

EXPLAIN –

Can you explain where this happens?

D

DESCRIBE –

Can you describe how you felt about that?

Helpful Responses

“I’m glad you were able to tell me/someone”.

“I will help you as best as I can”.

“This is so important; I need to speak to someone to get advice on how we can help you”.

12.Reporting Concerns

In creating a safeguarding culture, we seek to reflect as much as possible the prevention of concerns from arising.

The goal of prevention is not only to prevent risks and/or unsafe practice from occurring but to also prevent any concerns that have arisen from continuing and/or escalating.

Safeguarding is a shared responsibility, and we hold a responsibility to help support children/young people, their families and/or any of our workforce who may be experiencing vulnerability, as well as help to protect any person who may be suffering from and/or at risk of suffering from adversity and/or abuse.

12.1 Mandatory Reporting

NZRL operates a mandatory internal safeguarding reporting process. This means all staff are expected to report any safeguarding and/or child protection concerns to our Safeguarding Staff and/or their Manager. This includes, but is not exclusive to, whether concerns are in the context of:

- Child peer-to-peer interactions;
- The child or young person’s family/home environment;
- In places/organisations outside of the family or NZRL;
- Via the child’s engagement and/or involvement with NZRL;
- Allegations against NZRL Sport staff; or
- Allegations against any other professional.

Concerns must be shared immediately with Safeguarding Staff or their Manager. In exceptional circumstances, where this is not possible, concerns must be shared no later than before the staff person’s shift or session of work within NZRL ends.

However, any person, at any time, unsatisfied with decisions/actions taken and/or who believes a child/young person to be at risk of suspected and/or known abuse or neglect may contact Oranga Tamariki or Police directly.



Emergency/Immediate Concerns	Non-emergency child welfare concerns
■ In an emergency or if immediate assistance is required, action should be taken and not delayed for reporting purposes. ■ Reporting processes become applicable as soon as possible during or after the immediate assistance needed has been provided. ■ Emergency assistance should be sought from emergency services (e.g. Police, Ambulance, Fire) via dialling 111. ■ Police would be the key agency if there is immediate danger and/or an immediate response is required, including for child welfare concerns.	For all concerns relating to child welfare, particularly those when abuse and/or neglect is known or suspected, should be reported in accordance with the following flow chart.

12.2 Child/Young Person, Parent/Guardian or Others Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

NZRL encourages young people and parents to report any concerns relating to the safety or well-being of their own or another child(ren) or young persons in NZRL and/or our rugby league community. This can be done by speaking to any staff member or by contacting any of our safeguarding staff.

People can also contact Oranga Tamariki and/or the Police directly. We do politely ask to be informed of any direct referrals.

Our Safeguarding Staff will aim to respond to all concerns as soon as possible. All initial responses to concerns will be no later than 3 working days from the initial contact with our Safeguarding Staff being made.

12.3 Right to Refer Directly to Oranga Tamariki or the Police

We would encourage the sharing of any safeguarding concerns with us in the first instance. However, all persons have the right to report any child abuse/neglect concerns directly to Oranga Tamariki and/or the Police.

Should any person decide to refer their concerns directly, we would welcome being notified of all reports made to external services relating to a child/children in our care and/or our staff

12.4 NZRL Whistleblowing Policy

Whistleblowing is a term used to describe the reporting of concerns within an organisation outside of mainstream reporting frameworks. Should any person have a significant concern but for some reason distrust or feel blocked in using our identified reporting framework, NZRL's Whistleblowing Policy is another form of support to encourage the reporting of any potential significant organisational and/or welfare concerns.



Worried About a Child/Young Person?

- Stay Calm.
- Ensure the child's or any other person's immediate safety.
- Listen to, believe and reassure the person they did the right thing in telling someone.
- If appropriate, use TED (Tell/Explain/Describe) to help prompt for more information.
- Explain to the person that you are going to try and help and will need to tell a colleague, so you can make sure the right help can be identified.

Person Reporting

NO IMMEDIATE RISK:

- Inform your Manager or Safeguarding Staff.
- If they are unavailable, inform the next most senior person.
- Confidentiality – keep information to only those assisting/or who need to know.

SAFEGUARDING INCIDENT FORM

- ASAP Record concerns and actions on a Safeguarding Incident Form.

IMMEDIATE DANGER:

- Contact Police immediately on **111**
- Follow police advice.
- Inform your Manager or Safeguarding Staff ASAP.
- If they are unavailable, the next most senior person.
- Confidentiality – keep information to only those assisting/or who need to know.

SAFEGUARDING INCIDENT FORM

- ASAP Record concerns and actions on a Safeguarding Incident Form.

Person Responding

Manager/Safeguarding Staff

Those staff responding to concerns will work together with the staff member reporting to:

- Identifying if concerns meet child protection needs.
- If so, contact Oranga Tamariki on 0508 326 459 to either seek advice and guidance or refer the concern.
- If outstanding, seek clarity from Oranga Tamariki (or Police) on when and who will inform the child's parent(s).
- If not child protection, these staff will determine if concerns can be supported internally or with community support.
- Retain notes on actions taken within the Safeguarding Incident Form and secure this data in a confidential location.
- Monitor and review the case.

If shared with Oranga Tamariki follow up:

- If no response has been received within advised timescales; and/or
- If concerns remain, or additional concerns present.

Whilst we advocate being informed of any concerns relating to children in our care or our staff, any person believing a child to be at risk of abuse and/or neglect has the right to make a referral directly to Oranga Tamariki (0508 326 459) or the Police (111).

Should this action be taken, we do politely request we are informed as soon as possible.

Worried About a Staff Member?

- Stay Calm.
- Ensure the child's or any other person's immediate safety.
- Listen to, believe and reassure the person they did the right thing in telling someone.
- If appropriate, use TED (Tell/Explain/Describe) to help prompt for more information.
- Explain to the person that you are going to try and help and will need to tell a colleague, so you can make sure the right help can be identified.

Person Reporting

NO IMMEDIATE RISK:

- Inform your Manager or Safeguarding Staff.
- If the concern relates to them or they are unavailable, inform the next most senior person.
- Confidentiality – only share the information with the person to whom you are reporting.

SAFEGUARDING INCIDENT FORM

- ASAP Record concerns and actions on a Safeguarding Incident Form.

IMMEDIATE DANGER:

- Contact Police immediately on **111**
- Follow police advice.
- Inform your Manager or Safeguarding Staff ASAP.
- If the concern relates to them or they are unavailable, inform the next most senior person.
- Confidentiality – only share the information with the person to whom you are reporting.

SAFEGUARDING INCIDENT FORM

- ASAP Record concerns and actions on a Safeguarding Incident Form.

Person Responding

Manager/Safeguarding Staff

The person responding will work together with staff to follow procedures, including:

- Identifying if concerns meet child protection needs.
- If so, contact Oranga Tamariki on 0508 326 459 to either seek advice and guidance or refer the concern.
- If required, seek clarity from Oranga Tamariki (or Police) on when and who will inform the child's parent(s).
- If not child protection, take forward internal processes, putting in place any interim safeguards if required.
- Retain notes on any actions taken within the Safeguarding Incident Form and secure this data in a confidential location.
- Monitor and review the case.

Whilst we advocate being informed of any concerns relating to children in our care or our staff, any person believing a child to be at risk of abuse and/or neglect has the right to make a referral directly to Oranga Tamariki (0508 326 459) or the Police (111).

Should this action be taken, we do politely request we are informed as soon as possible.

12.7 Responding to Staff Concerns and/or Allegations

Any information questioning the suitability of our staff or their ability to work safely with children and young people is taken seriously. Any information of this nature will be investigated, no matter if the concern is current, historic, known or suspected, direct or via a third party.

This may also include us working together with child protection services (Oranga Tamariki, Police), Ministries and/or Sport New Zealand for support and/or case management.

12.8 Staff Reporting Concerns and/or Allegations Against Staff

Our Safeguarding Policies, Procedures and Code of Conduct are designed to support best practice and reflect the expected engagement and behaviours required of staff.

Should an allegation arise, they generally relate to 3 key areas:

- Staff have behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child/young person.
- Staff have possibly committed a criminal offence in relation to a child/young person.
- Staff have behaved towards a child/young person in a manner that indicates they are unsuitable to work with children.

12.9 Managing Concerns and/or Allegations Against Staff

- Any concerns/allegations that breach New Zealand laws and/or that require specialist support and investigation will be referred directly to the Police and/or Oranga Tamariki.

In these circumstances, if we are aware the staff member also serves another child facing organisation/service, this information will also be shared with Child Protection Services. These specialist services can then determine if and how any information is taken forward and/or conveyed to that/those organisation(s) if applicable.

- Depending on the nature and/or severity of the concern/allegation raised, NZRL may also be required to ensure any applicable external bodies are aware of the concern/allegation raised, e.g. Ministries (e.g. for our Early Years services), Sport New Zealand.
- Concerns not meeting child protection service thresholds will be investigated via NZRL's internal Investigation Policy and processes. This would relate to all concerns that reflect a worry but do not necessarily indicate risks of known or suspected abuse or neglect. Should any indicators of known or suspected abuse or neglect present during an investigation, then NZRL will escalate these concerns to child protection services for their support, advice and guidance.
- In the interests of safeguarding all those involved and in accordance with our Investigation Policy, the staff member(s) concerned will only receive advanced notice of an initial meeting when we are confident that doing so poses no risk to any involved persons and/or the investigation. When this is in doubt or unknown, the staff member(s) concerned may not receive advanced notice of the initial meeting. However, they will be informed of their rights and options at the beginning of the meeting and upon being informed of the concern/allegation raised.
- To safeguard the child/young person, or other children/young people **and** the staff member concerned from any possible further vulnerability, NZRL may implement any immediate safeguards for an identified timeframe or until the matter is resolved. These can include but are not exclusive to:
 - Additional supervision of the staff member concerned.
 - Redeploying the staff member concerned to alternative non-child/family facing duties.
 - Suspension of the staff member concerned from duty.
- All actions taken are done so in the interests of protecting **all** those involved and in the interests of maintaining a fair investigation. No action should be interpreted as anything other than a precautionary safeguard while the matter is under investigation.
- As much as possible, we will assist in addressing support needs for any person(s) impacted by the concerns and/or allegation, e.g. the child and/or their family, the staff member concerned and/or others impacted by the allegations.



12.10 Deliberately False Allegations Against a Staff Member

In the event a safeguarding concern(s) and/or allegation(s) is shown to have been deliberately false, we would view this as a serious matter that may result in:

- Disciplinary action up to and including dismissal; and/or
- Us engaging the Police to identify appropriate action against the person responsible.

12.11 Supporting our Rugby League Community

Our rugby league community safeguarding and child protection resources encourage our communities to inform NZRL of any concerns and/or allegations against a staff member that indicates known or suspected abuse or neglect and requires the involvement of child protection services.

When informed of any community staff concern/allegation, we reserve the right to adopt any of these or our Investigation policy requirements. All

responses would be managed in conjunction with the rugby league community setting concerned. However, NZRL retains the right to determine the direction of the case management, including the involvement of child protection services and/or Police if necessary.

As well as making decisions surrounding escalation, the CEO of NZRL may also make the decision for any other applicable external bodies to be informed, e.g. Ministries, Sport NZ, etc.

12.12 New Zealand Sport and Recreation Complaints and Mediation Service

We strongly encourage all those with a safeguarding concern relating to NZRL to contact us for support in the first instance. We take these concerns seriously, and we have processes in place, including designated safeguarding staff, to help ensure all processes follow best practice.

However, should someone be dissatisfied with our response to a concern or for any reason see our advocated reporting processes as a block to sharing their concern, we would support that person contacting [New Zealand's Sport and Recreation Complaints and Mediation Service](#).

This service is contracted by [Sport NZ](#) but is independent of any sporting bodies, clubs and organisations and can assist individuals with a complaint or dispute in connection with sport or recreation in New Zealand. The service is free and confidential. To enquire about a complaint or dispute, please call 0800 493 612. There is no obligation to proceed, and calls are not recorded.

13. Referring Safeguarding Concerns

We advocate safeguarding as a shared responsibility and appreciate we too hold a responsibility to support children/young people, their families and/or any of our workforce experiencing vulnerability. Any welfare concerns identified and/or presented will be explored upon their own individual merit, and our responses will be in accordance with any consent, information sharing and/or referral needs.

Depending on the significance of the concerns, we may undertake responses aligned to any of the following intervention levels:



13.1 Early Help:	13.2 Community Support:
The goal of early help is to help reduce the prevalence and severity of vulnerabilities that have already presented. It is basically aiming to prevent any vulnerabilities from taking hold and/or becoming ingrained, escalating and/or from being repeated. With consent from the family, we can explore support options as: ▪ Tailoring and being flexible with our service as much as possible. ▪ Working together with families to help access the support they may need (e.g. signposting to and/or supporting families with referrals to specific community services).	Sometimes support from more than one service may be needed; in these circumstances, with consent from the family, we can seek to help the family access the community multi-agency support needed. Multi-agency community-led support. The below can offer assistance in identifying local support available: ▪ Family Services Directory http://www.familyservices.govt.nz/directory/ ▪ Oranga Tamariki Children's Teams https://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/support-for-families/childrens-teams/ ▪ Strengthening Families http://www.strengtheningfamilies.govt.nz/
13.3 Child Protection Services:	
Any concern indicating known or suspected abuse or neglect will be referred to Oranga Tamariki or the Police. We may escalate lower level (e.g. early help/community support) concerns to child protection services when: ▪ The Parent/Guardian fails to acknowledge and/or engage with us regarding the identified concerns, particularly when external service support needs have been identified and concerns for the child/young person remain. ▪ Current support measures are failing to address the concerns, and concerns are continuing to impact the child, other children or are escalating. ▪ The necessary support and/or multi-agency community structures is not available. When seeking advice and guidance from Oranga Tamariki, we may do this by sharing our concerns but with-holding any identifying information. However, if, upon hearing the concerns, Oranga Tamariki advises for concerns to be referred, we are then required to share the applicable identifying information.	Oranga Tamariki - is New Zealand's statutory child protection service and are responsible for investigating concerns relating to suspected or known abuse or neglect. Referrals are made via the Contact Centre (0508 326 459) or email at contact@mvcot.govt.nz Lines are open 24/7. After 5pm and on weekends, social workers are only available for emergency situations. However, calls are encouraged as all case needs will be assessed. Police - are the other child protection service. They have Child Protection Units, a division specifically designated to investigate child abuse/neglect cases. They work closely with Oranga Tamariki to support the child's welfare, although their specific responsibilities relate to those cases where criminal charges and/or prosecutions may be applicable. ▪ 111 for emergencies ▪ 105 for non-emergencies – ask for the child protection unit
13.4 Online Safeguarding Concerns	
For online concerns, Netsafe can also offer support services. Netsafe is an independent, non-profit organisation focused on online safety. They provide online safety education, advice and support. Netsafe's free and confidential helpline is set up to help with online bullying, abuse and harassment. Open from 8am-8pm Monday to Friday, and 9am-5pm on weekends and public holidays. Netsafe – 0508 NETSAFE (0508 638 723) or email queries@netsafe.org.nz	

13.5 Child Protection Service's Responses to NZRL

When referring concerns to Oranga Tamariki, NZRL staff should seek to be provided with –

- Clarity on what will happen next.
- If outstanding, how will the child's family be informed of the referral and by when?
- Clarity on how NZRL will receive feedback on relevant information and/or the case progression (within case remits).

13.6 NZRL Escalations

In responding to concerns, should any of the below be present, the concern will be escalated for CEO and/or Board awareness and/or support.

- There is potential for concerns having occurred and/or escalated due to significant NZRL practice errors.
- Case requires NZRL disciplinary actions.
- There are any significant errors in practice from partner agencies that may impact on the concern, NZRL and/or our rugby league community or sporting reputation.
- The concern requires being shared with external partner agencies (outside of child protection services).
- There is, or maybe a risk of media interest and/or the concern has similarities to previous cases covered by NZ and/or international media.

14. Recording Concerns

- All concerns are to be recorded on a Safeguarding Incident Form as soon as possible.
- Completed forms should be forwarded to the Safeguarding staff member and/or Manager to whom the safeguarding concern has been reported.
- Incident forms may be shared after reporting your concern, but they must be shared with the person handling the report as soon as possible.
- Where possible, staff are encouraged to record **word for word** anything stated by the child/person, as well as any responses given and any actions taken.
- Physical indicators should be recorded on a Safeguarding Incident Form Body Map.
- All information will be kept securely and in accordance with NZRL information storage policies and procedures and legislative requirements.

Records should:

- **Be specific** – what is the exact nature of the concern, which category of abuse does it suggest?
- **Reflect the evidence** – what was seen, heard, who said what, when, how?
- **Be precise** – with responses displayed, actions taken, by who, when.
- **Be factual** – records should be factual to what has happened, been said or is supported by evidence. They should avoid containing any opinions. If included, records should clearly reflect these points as an opinion.

15. Sharing Information

All non-child abuse concerns require parental consent for the sharing of information. **Unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so**, we will aim to be open and honest with young people (when age/developmental level appropriate) and parents/guardians about any concerns we may have or have become aware of. This could be purely sharing we are concerned, and under our child safety policies and procedures, we are required to share these concerns internally and/or externally. If consent is refused, in some cases, this in itself may escalate the level of concern and prompt the need for sharing of information.

For abuse concerns, **unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so**, we will still aim to seek parental consent to share information. However, we are required to share any relevant child abuse concerns with appropriate services with or without parental consent.



When it is appropriate to share information with parents/guardians, we will seek to:	It would be unsafe or inappropriate to share concerns with parents/guardians or the young person directly:
▪ Do so as soon as possible. ▪ Be open and honest about why and what we are concerned about. ▪ Explain whether the concerns hold: ○ A level of only requiring our support. ○ A potential for information needing to be shared with others. If so, who, what information may be shared and how. ○ Explaining and reassuring, this process is about seeking support for the child/family, and we will support them through the process. ○ Seek their consent/agreement to information being shared.	▪ When doing so may increase the risk of harm to the person concerned, staff or others. ▪ When it is unclear who is/has caused any suspected abuse. ▪ When doing so may impact on any possible child protection investigation. ▪ When specialist child protection services have advised us not to share concerns at that stage.

16. Support for Those Involved

16.1 Child/Young Person and their Family

All safeguarding concerns requiring parental consent will reflect working together with the child and their family.

For child protection concerns being managed in conjunction with statutory services, the sharing of information and support structures for the child/young person and their parent/carer will be managed under guidance from these specialist services. Where possible and appropriate, NZRL will aim to ensure the parent(s)/guardian of any child/young person, who is the subject of or subject to any concerns, are kept informed on the case progress.

16.2 Involved Staff Member

NZRL will ensure any staff member who is the subject of safeguarding concerns and/or allegations is, as appropriate, kept informed of the concerns raised and the investigation progress as much as possible. NZRL can also arrange for the staff member concerned to seek support, e.g. Employee Assistance Programmes.

Depending on the circumstances, including the duration of any investigation, any safeguarding requirements that involve the staff member needing to be absent from work pending the completion of an investigation, NZRL may exercise its discretion for some or all of the period of absence to be unpaid. If absence is applicable, NZRL will make arrangements to ensure the staff member is kept informed of all role, responsibility and workplace developments during their absence.

All processes will be in accordance with statutory responsibilities and NZRL employment policies and procedures.

All safeguarding actions taken are done so in the interests of protecting **all** of those involved and in the interests of maintaining a fair investigation. No action should be interpreted as anything other than a precautionary safeguarding measure while a concern/allegation is under investigation.

16.3 Other Persons

Should a case identify support needs for any other persons impacted by a safeguarding case, NZRL will, where possible, arrange to provide appropriate support, including that which may be provided via internal and external structures.



17. Policy Monitoring and Review

- This policy will be reviewed in a timeframe not exceeding 3 years from its last review. We will aim for all policy reviews to be annual.
- Some circumstances may trigger an early review; this includes but is not limited to legislative changes, organisational changes, case learnings, etc.
- We will utilise any applicable workforce and customer communication, along with any case learnings, to inform our safeguarding policy and procedural reviews.

18. Other Applicable Policies and Procedures

- NZRL's Employment Policies, Procedures and Staff Information
- NZRL's Whistleblowing Policy
- NZRL's Safeguarding Code of Conduct



Appendix 1 – Legislation

<u>Children Act 2014</u> Requires organisations to have a child protection policy and safety check staff. The Act details ‘contact’ as encompassing: - Physical contact; - Oral communication (in person or by phone); - Communication through any electronic medium, including by way of writing or visual images.	<u>Crimes Amendment Act 2011 - Section 195 and 195A</u> Introduces possible criminal accountability for any staff member of a residential facility who fails to protect a child from harm or abuse.	<u>Education Act 1989</u> Governs the education system and requirements for schools and early years education.
<u>Harmful Digital Communication Act 2015</u> Identifies 10 principles to help safeguard people from some forms of online harm and abuse.	<u>Health and Disability Commissioner Act 1994</u> Protects the rights of health and disability customers and advocates 10 rights as well as complaint resolution support when those rights have been breached.	<u>Health and Safety at Work Act 2015</u> Requires organisations to uphold a duty of care and provide a safe environment for all.
<u>Human Rights Act 1993</u> Governs the work of the New Zealand Human Rights Commission. Human Rights outlaws discrimination on the basis of diversity.	<u>Oranga Tamariki Act 1989</u> Defines child abuse and governs our state care services.	<u>Privacy Act 2020</u> Protects the gathering, holding, sharing and storing of personal information.
<u>Summary Offences Act 1981 - Section 10B – Leaving a child without reasonable supervision and care</u> Details supervision requirements for children under the age of 14 years.	<u>Te Tiriti o Waitangi/Treaty of Waitangi</u> A constitution promising to protect Māori and Māori culture.	<u>United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 (UNCRC)</u> UNCROC is a human rights treaty that enshrines specific children's rights in international law.

Appendix 2 – Safeguarding Staff

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As part of our shared safeguarding culture, we welcome and encourage our NZRL staff to become safeguarding champions. For further information on becoming a safeguarding champion, please contact the Safeguarding Lead above.



Appendix 3 –Safeguarding Code of Conduct Summary

Our Staff Will...	Our Staff Will Not...
✓ Only commence active duties once all elements of safer recruitment are complete and deemed satisfactory. ✓ Complete all required safeguarding induction and training. ✓ Abide by all safeguarding expectations and demonstrate safeguarding as a shared responsibility. ✓ Uphold their Position of Trust by being a positive role model and maintaining professional boundaries. ✓ Only undertake physical contact with a child/young person when needed to support the child and/or the sport, and will do so in accordance with our advocated safeguards. ✓ Only use positive, encouraging and age-appropriate language when engaging with or in the vicinity of children and young people. ✓ Work within all expected supervision ratios and aim to be in the line of sight and sound of others. ✓ Maintain a duty of care for all, including completing all applicable safeguarding risk assessments. ✓ Take the rights of the child seriously and demonstrate child-centred practice. ✓ Support the empowerment of children and young people. ✓ Act on any safeguarding concerns. Reporting any worries relating to a child's well-being and/or staff conduct to their Manager or Safeguarding Staff. ✓ Promote inclusivity across diversity, ensuring everyone can participate, belong and is treated with respect.	✗ Use any form of physical discipline or communication that ignores, permits or enables physical abuse. Including expecting a child/young person to continue when there has been a clear disclosure and/or indicator of physical pain and/or injury. ✗ Initiate or perform any unnecessary physical contact with a child/young person or do things for a child that the child can do for themselves. ✗ Initiate or engage in any discussions or behaviours in the presence of or with a child/young person that has a sexual association or is any form open to perceptions of grooming. ✗ Use any form of conduct that may be deemed as shameful, derogatory, oppressive, humiliating, belittling or degrading. ✗ Avoid lone working (unless permitted as part of an authorised programme that reflects strict safeguards). ✗ Avoid any direct digital or social media correspondence with children/young people when doing so: ○ Is outside of NZRL's authorisation; and ○ Is without written parental/ guardian consent; and ○ Does not relate to NZRL matters. ✗ Show any form of preference or bias towards a child(ren) or young person(s). ✗ Do any of the following without organisational and parental consent – ○ Take any imagery of a child/young person. ○ Transport a child/young person. ○ Take a child/young person outside of the service location, e.g. to an event, on an excursion, etc. ✗ Operate under the influence of or in possession of drugs or alcohol

Any breach of our Safeguarding Code of Conduct is taken seriously and may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

