



# NRL VICTORIA

## 2025 CODE OF CONDUCT PROCEDURES

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### **Preamble**

*NRL Victoria (NRL VIC) adopts the Rugby League Code of Conduct nationally implemented by the National Rugby League (NRL). The following outlines the procedures of the Code as issued by the NRL.*

### **1. Purpose**

The purpose of the Rugby League Code of Conduct Procedures is to provide administrators with details of the processes that are to be followed in the case of a breach of the Code as well as information regarding penalties, appeals and notices.

**Important** – every person who attends a Rugby League Venue or Facility does so with the permission and license of the home club and/or League. Breaches of this Code of Conduct may result in penalties up to and including a fine, loss of team match points and/or suspension of the perpetrator and/or child/family member. **Clubs are responsible for the conduct of their players, parents/careers, coaches, officials and spectators.**

### **2. Definition**

For the purposes of this Code, participants include:

- Registered players;
- Accredited persons (Coaches, First Responders, League Safe Trainers, Referees, CMOs and Touch Judges);
- Officials (club, league or association staff and volunteers, ground managers and duty officials);
- Parents/carers of players, sponsor representatives and club supporters;
- Members of the general public attending as spectators.



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### **3. Procedures**

#### **Section (A) Breaches of the Code - Ground Manager on Match Day**

- (i) Any person/s committing an offence, as listed under the Rugby League Code of Conduct Summary of Offences, may be reported by the Ground Manager, or an official of the home club/league, to the Team Manager or other representative of the team which that person/s is supporting. Where a team does not have a Team Manager present, a request or direction from the Ground Manager, or official of the home club/league, to any representative/official of the team or the team's club, shall be regarded as a direction to the Team Manager for the purposes of this Code.
- (ii) The Ground Manager and/or the Team Manager/official must advise the offending person/s of the relevant breach of the Code. The Ground Manager and/or the Team Manager/official should complete a Code of Conduct Incident Report form and endeavour to obtain the name/s and contact details of the offending person/s.
- (iii) In the event that the inappropriate conduct continues, the Ground Manager and/or the Team Manager/official may request the offending person/s to immediately leave the venue or facility. This should also be noted on the Code of Conduct Incident Report form.
- (iv) In the event that the offending person/s refuses to obey the direction of the Ground Manager and/or Team Manager/official, the Ground Manager may seek the assistance of the venue/facility security staff to request the offending person/s to immediately leave the venue or facility.
- (v) If the offending person/s continues to refuse the direction of the Ground Manager and/or Team Manager/official and/or venue/facility security staff, the Ground Manager may ask the referee to stop the match. If the offending person/s either ceases the inappropriate behaviour or leaves the venue or facility, the match may be resumed. If not, the match may be terminated. In the event that the match is so terminated, NRL VIC may, at its absolute discretion, award the competition points to the non-offending team, or declare that neither side shall be awarded competition points for that match.



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### **Section (B) Breaches of the Code - Referee, Touch Judge, Club and/or League Official on Match Day**

- (i) Any person/s committing an offence, as listed under the Rugby League Code of Conduct Summary of Offences, may be reported to the Ground Manager, or an official of the home club/league, by a referee, touch judge, club and/or league official. The Ground Manager or the referee, touch judge, club and/or league official should complete a Code of Conduct Incident Report form and endeavour to obtain the name/s and contact details of the offending person/s.
- (ii) Breaches under this clause 3, B, (i) may be dealt with under the match day provisions listed above in clause 3, A, (i) to (v) or be the subject of a separate report. In either case, a Code of Conduct Incident form must be completed.

### **Section (C) Breaches of the Code - Club and/or League Official at Function or Event**

- (i) Any person/s committing an offence, as listed under the Rugby League Code of Conduct Summary of Offences, may be reported by a club and/or league official. The club and/or league official should complete a Code of Conduct Incident Report form and endeavour to obtain the name/s and contact details of the offending person/s.
- (ii) Breaches under this clause 3, C, (i) should be the subject of a separate report.

### **Section (D) Lodgement of the Code of Conduct Incident Report**

All Code of Conduct Incident Reports must be lodged with the home league in the manner prescribed by no later than 12 noon on the first working day after the breach occurred.

After reviewing the Incident Report, NRL VIC shall decide whether any further action under the Code is warranted. Considerations will include, but are not limited to, the below;

- Whether there is substantial and reliable evidence to justify a charge,
- The extent to which the person is to blame for the incident is considered,
- The seriousness or conversely the triviality of the persons conduct,
- Whether any other person was injured in the incident, at the risk of being injured or placed in a position of unacceptable vulnerability,
- Whether the offending person was provoked,
- The previous conduct of the offending person, and;
- Any mitigating or aggravating circumstances.

If in the opinion of NRL VIC no action is warranted, even though a breach may have occurred, NRL VIC may write to the offending person/s and/or the person/s club, if known, and advise them that a breach has occurred, but no action is being taken at this time.

The league shall maintain a register of Incident Reports.



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### Section (E) Code of Conduct Breach Notice

If NRL VIC believe that a breach has occurred, and a penalty is warranted, they shall issue a Code of Conduct Breach Notice to the person/s and/or the person/s club by no later than 5:00pm on the second working day after the breach occurred. The Breach Notice shall clearly state the;

- Details of the breach (as per the NRL Code of Conduct Summary of Offences);
- The proposed penalty, and;
- A date and time by which a written response is due, normally within 24 hours of the person/s involved being charged.

A person will be deemed to have been charged with an offence immediately when such person is informed (verbally, in writing or electronically) by the Secretary of that person's club (or the club that person has some connection with).

A person/s or their club representative can respond in one of the following ways;

- Early Guilty Plea – Should one be provided, this enacts the penalty as laid out in the Breach Notice within timeframes specified for the Early Guilty Plea, but may be adjusted based on further evidence provided as in (D).
- Guilty – This enacts the penalty as laid out in the Breach Notice but may be adjusted based on further evidence provided as in (D).
- Not Guilty – Dependent on further evidence provided to justify the Not Guilty Plea, this will result in the removal of penalties, reduction of penalties or see the matter directed to the NRL VIC Judiciary Panel.
- No Contest - When a person elects not to contest the offence charged, the making of that election does not constitute an admission on his/her part that he/she is guilty, or otherwise responsible for, the conduct charged but, rather it is an indication that he/she has chosen for one reason or another not to contest the charge. In the instance the No Contest plea is entered, either the Early Guilty Plea or Guilty Plea penalties will be enacted dependent on timeframes outlined in the Breach Notice.

Once the offending person/s and/or the person/s club have responded to the Breach Notice, NRL VIC shall determine if the charge is sustained and if so, whether a penalty applies. If the person/s and/or the person/s club accept the penalty, no further action is necessary, and the penalty will take effect immediately.

NRL VIC shall write to the offending person/s and/or the person/s club and advise them of the result of the charge and the penalty imposed (if any), normally by no later than 5:00pm on the fourth working day after the breach occurred.



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### **Section (F) Code of Conduct Appeal**

The offending person/s and/or the person/s club may request an appeal against the penalty. An appeal may only be lodged on the basis of new evidence not previously presented (e.g. new video evidence, new witness statements, etc.). A non-refundable fee of \$100 must accompany any request for appeal and the appeal must be lodged by 12 noon the day after receiving the Result of the Charge and the penalty imposed.

NRL VIC will refer the request for appeal to the General Manager (or delegate nominated by the General Manager) who will review the new material and determine if an appeal may go ahead.

If an appeal is approved, NRL VIC will convene a tribunal consisting of up to three officials nominated by the league, one of whom may be a lawyer, to hear the appeal. The proposed penalty will be set aside until the Appeal Hearing has been completed.

An Appeal Hearing shall not proceed, and the proposed penalty will be in force, where the offending person/s and/or the person/s club representative fail to appear.

NRL VIC will fix the date, time and place for the Appeal Hearing as soon as practicable after the appeal is approved and will advise all relevant parties.

The Appeal Tribunal may regulate any proceedings brought before it in such a manner as it thinks fit provided that it must give all persons entitled to be heard by it the opportunity to be heard and to make submissions in respect of the issue of penalty.

The Appeal Tribunal may confirm, reverse or modify the proposed penalty and make such orders and give such directions as in its absolute discretion it thinks fit. (NOTE that Appeal Tribunal must apply penalty conditions under NRL VIC Tough Love Policy where applicable).

NRL VIC shall advise all parties of the Appeal Tribunal's decision as soon as is practicable after the Appeal Hearing.



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### **4. Penalties**

(a) Low Range Offence

A fine of up to \$500.00, and/or loss of competition points, and/or suspension of the coach, first aid officer, referee, touch judge, official or spectator from attending future matches.

(b) Mid Range Offence

A fine of up to \$1,000, and/or suspension of the coach, first aid officer, referee, touch judge, official or spectator, and/or team and/or club from the competition on a temporary basis.

(c) High Range Offence

A fine of up to \$2,500 and/or suspension of the coach, first aid officer, referees, touch judge, official or spectator, and/or team and/or club from the competition for the remainder of the season, or permanently.

These penalties are in addition to any penalty which may be imposed by the NRL VIC Judiciary Panel.

### **5. Ground Manager & Roped-off Grounds**

All Host Clubs are expected to have a Ground Manager on duty and wearing the appropriate Ground Manager uniform.

All Ground Managers are also expected to have completed the NRL's online Ground Manager course.

All Host Clubs are expected to ensure the playing field is roped-off as a visible barrier between the playing field and the spectator area.

The person lodging the Incident Report should make every reasonable endeavour to determine whether a Ground Manager was on duty and if the Ground Manager was identifiable in the correct Ground Manager uniform.

The person lodging the Incident Report should make every reasonable endeavour to determine whether the Playing area was roped off with some form of barrier to visibly separate the Playing area and the Spectator area.

When completing the Incident Report Form this section of the Form, asking whether a Ground Manager was on duty and were the Grounds roped-off should be completed.



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If it is determined that a Ground Manager was not on duty or was not identifiable then a \$100 penalty will be applied to the Host Club.

If it is determined that the Ground was not roped off, then a \$100 penalty will be applied to the Host Club.

If the Host Club fails to have a Ground Manager and the Playing area is not roped off, then a penalty of \$200 will be applied to the Host Club.

### 6. General

(a) Code of Conduct matters will involve (but are not limited to) incidents that happen outside of the Field of Play. Likely instances are:

- Being abusive to match officials
- Refusing to obey directions
- Being under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs at a match, function or event
- Being abusive to club and/or league staff and volunteers
- Misbehaviour by participants on a tour, camp or tournament
- Misbehaviour on any form of transport on the way to or from any match, function or event

All person/s are liable to be dealt with under the Code of Conduct.

(b) Most incidents involving a registered player during a match for playing incidents will be handled by the league's judiciary, if the incident aligns to judiciary penalties as listed in the Judiciary Penalties and Procedures. Players may still be charged under Code of Conduct for breaches of the Code.

(c) The provisions of the Code of Conduct relating to breaches can apply to both individuals (whether they align to a particular club or not) or a club.

A Breach Notice can be sent to a person/s that is identified on the Incident Report Form. Any subsequent penalty will apply directly to that person/s.

A Breach Notice can be sent to a club where it is believed that their supporters have breached the Code, whether they are identified or not. In this case, any subsequent penalty will apply directly to that club.

A Breach Notice can also be sent to a club where an individual has been identified, for example a Coach or First Responder. In this case, any subsequent penalty will apply to the identified person.

(d) The time frames contained within this Code of Conduct may be adjusted at NRL VIC's sole discretion and as a guide will only exercise this option to adjust time frames if it is in the interest of fairness and natural justice where circumstances justify.