

'Respect Rugby'



**Upholding the values, behaviours, and mandatory
practices of Rugby Union**

AN INITIATIVE OF THE NSW RUGBY UNION IN CONJUNCTION
WITH PLAY BY THE RULES



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CODE OF CONDUCT

The NSWRU will act in accordance with Rugby Australia's Code of Conduct specific to each participant in the game. These can be accessed at their website. The [Code of Conduct](#) includes specifics for:

- Players
- Coaches
- Administrators, Officer of a Rugby Body
- Match Officials
- Spectators/Parents
- Other Participants.

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CONDITIONS OF ENTRY

By entering this venue, all persons agree to be bound by the following terms and conditions:

- They will conduct themselves in a proper and reasonable manner and in accordance with **Rugby Australia (RA) Code of Conduct** and associated Safety documents which can be found at:- [RA Policy Register](#)
- Compliance with any reasonable direction of the Ground Marshal, Match Officials, or any other office holder of the NSWRU or affiliated body
- Submit yourselves to the NSWRU or affiliated body's Judiciary or any other disciplinary forum if so required
- Consumption of alcohol is governed by location specific rules.

The following prohibitions will be strictly enforced:

- Mobile telephones and cameras are prohibited from use in any change room
- Persons under the influence of alcohol or drugs are prohibited from entering or remaining on the venue
- Smoking is prohibited in enclosed spaces or areas set aside for or being used by spectators to watch the match (e.g. within 10m of the playing enclosure or grandstand)

The Club owning or hiring this ground has the right to remove any person from this venue if that person's behaviour is considered dangerous or unacceptable.

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TEAM PROTOCOLS



PRIOR TO THE GAMES KICK-OFF

- Coaches to introduce themselves to their opposition and the match referee
- Players to line-up on the field and shake hands with their opposition
- Ensure that arrival on the field is prior to games scheduled kick-off

AT THE END OF THE GAME

- Teams to shake hands with each other with both captains to also shake the match referees' hand
- Teams to give three cheers to the opposition
- The whole playing group to give three cheers to the match referee and touch judges
- Each coach to shake hands with the opposition coach and match referee
- Match referee to be invited to any related after-match functions

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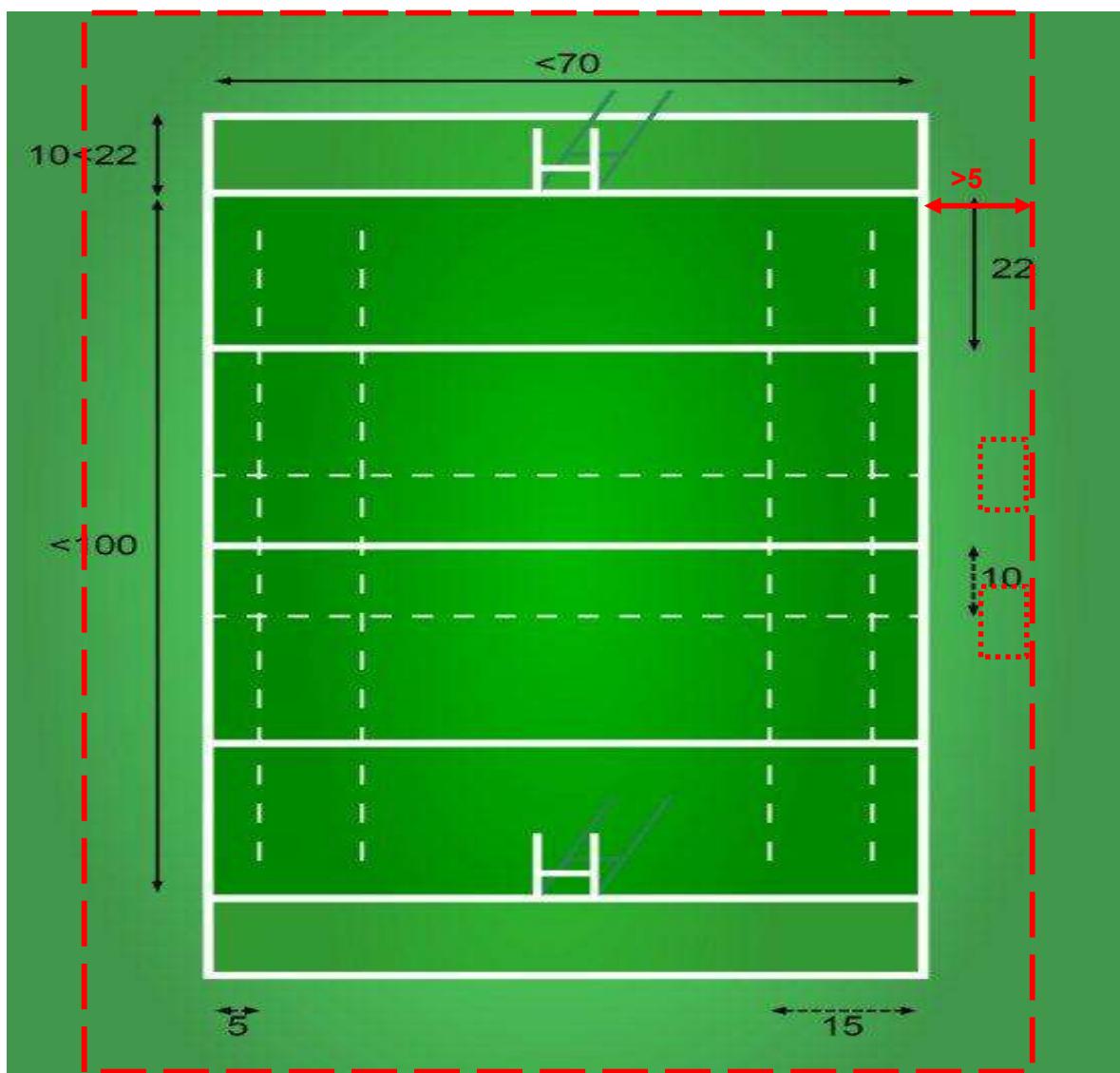
GROUND MARSHALS

1. For the duration of the allocated game your sole responsibility is being the Ground Marshal.
2. Ensure before each game:
 - a. Crowd Control rope is in place
 - b. Team Zones are marked out
 - c. 'Conditions of Entry' signage is visible
3. Introduce yourself to both Match Referee and other club's Ground Marshal prior to the game commencement.
4. Wear the Ground Marshal fluorescent vest as an outer garment for the entire game.
5. Ensure spectators maintain *Codes of Conduct* by identifying and responding to any potential breaches.
6. Keep everyone except the referee and any authorised additional persons behind the ropes.
7. Manage the behaviour of participants within the team zone.
8. Report any breaches of the *Codes of Conduct* via correct incident reporting (online).
9. Surveillance of the venue for the duration of the match. This includes, at a minimum, meeting the other club's Ground Marshal and completing two laps of the playing enclosure at the following intervals:
 - I. 10 mins into the 1st half
 - II. 10 mins into the 2nd half
10. Shake hands with match officials and the other club's Ground Marshal at the conclusion of the game.

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GROUND SET UP



Ground Set Up

- Set out the Crowd Control Ropes at least 5 metres from both sidelines.
- In the case of 2 or more fields being side-by-side; if the spacing between the fields is <10m, **NO-ONE** is allowed between the 2 fields.
- Put goal post pads, corner posts and flags in specific positions.
- Mark out Team Technical Zones.
 - 1 on each side of the half-way line.
 - Zones start a min. 5m from half-way line.
 - Each zone must be <10m in length and <3m in width.
 - Must be >2m from the touch line.

Key	
	Technical Zone
	Crowd Control Rope

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TEAM MANAGERS

- 1) Ensure you have access to the Match Day App at the ground with internet access, and sign in. Close the Xplorer App so they don't conflict.
- 2) Confirm team members playing that day are added and remove those that are not. Ensure jersey numbers and positions are recorded.
- 3) Record the name of the coach, ground marshal, first aid attendant and Assistant Referee in the appropriate places on the team sheet.
- 4) Introduce yourself to the other team's Manager.
- 5) Swap devices with the other manager and check the opposing team's players match what is recorded in the Match Day App (including names and jersey numbers).
- 6) Introduce yourself to the referee and referee coach (if appointed).
- 7) Ensure the technical zone is correctly setup, with your water runners wearing appropriate bibs.
- 8) Confirm with the referee where and when would be appropriate to speak with them after the game.

In game checklist for Coaches/Managers

- 1) Set the behavioural expectation for your players and supporters/parents – stay positive and keep yelling from the sideline to a minimum.
- 2) Manage player behaviour before it becomes an issue (e.g. poor sportsmanship or safety).
- 3) Ensure players get sufficient game time.
- 4) Remember it is the captain's responsibility to discuss issues with the referee, so train them up to do that appropriately. You cannot approach the referee during the match.

Post-game checklist for Coaches/Managers

- 1) Stay positive regardless of the result. Show support toward the other team and referee. Be humble in victory and gracious in defeat.
- 2) Meet with the other manager and referee to confirm the score and cards (red/yellow/blue) have been recorded correctly in the app before submitting the result. Other than discussing the result, you should not debrief the referee at this point.
- 3) Ensure any players with suspected concussion are provided with a Concussion Referral and Return form and Head Injury Fact Sheet.
- 4) Provide the referee (and AR if they were involved) with the name and jersey number of any players issued with a red card so they can accurately complete the send-off report. Ensure these match with the Match Day App.
- 5) Allow the referee to warm-down/change/debrief with the referee coach before discussing the game with them. This should be at least 15 mins after full-time.
- 6) Use this time to warm the team down and get your thoughts in order. Focus on understanding different interpretations rather than who was right/wrong. Look up any Laws before you ask the Ref about them.
- 7) Be aware of potential power imbalances, particularly if the referee is under the age of 18 and ensure your feedback/discussion is appropriate. What you think is appropriate may

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come across as aggressive/argumentative to the recipient. If you think this will be a problem then use the [Referee Feedback form](#) to provide feedback to the referee association. This will then be filtered and provided to the referee through their referee coach. It also helps identify the developmental needs of the referee and assist with making appropriate referee and referee coach appointments.

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ASSISTANT REFEREES

Remember that you are there to assist the referee, not to referee the game. To build a good relationship with the referee it is recommended that you:

- 1) Meet with them before the game (at least 5 mins, and ideally when they arrive at the ground) to introduce yourself, advise if you are accredited and ask what the referee's requirements are.
- 2) Join the local referee association so that you are kept up to date with law/interpretation changes and invited to their monthly education nights. This is a good opportunity to build relationships with referees away from the field, and to ensure you are on the same page.
- 3) Support the referee's decisions (even if you disagree with them) and give them encouragement if they are having a tough game.
- 4) Report issues/incidents to the referee and give recommendations if asked but accept that the referee may see them differently or have a different view on how the incident should be handled. They are the captain of the Match Official team and they have ultimate responsibility for any decisions, even if made on your recommendation.
- 5) Observe the Rugby AU code of Conduct. Do not speak down to players, officials, or the referee.
- 6) If you have issues doing any of these things, then you should remove yourself from the role.

Note that if you are an adult and the referee is under the age of 18 that a power imbalance exists and ensure that you respect the referee's role and help them to develop.

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REFEREE COACHES

The following guidance is provided around how to build positive relationships with other game participants, and to avoid conflict situations.

Before the game

- Introduce yourself to the team coaches, managers, and ground marshals.
- Explain your role (to improve the referee) and request that they give you any feedback about the referee so as not to confuse the referee with conflicting or excessive information.
- Request they not approach the referee after the game until you have completed your debrief.
- Oversee the referee's pre-match process and remind them of the need to find/appoint ARs and ground marshals if they forget.

During the game

- If there are safety issues with how the game is being played you should bring that to the referee's attention at half-time, or through the AR if it is more urgent. You might also discuss with the coach(es) in order for them to pro-actively manage the player behaviour.
- If there are code of conduct issues with spectators/people in the technical zone, bring that to the ground marshal's attention and submit a Respect Rugby report.
- If the referee is under the age of 18 and you deem it would be unsafe for the game to continue then you may gain their attention at the next stoppage and have that discussion with them. Remember that the referee has the sole authority to make that decision and we need to build their confidence and agency to make that decision. Do not undermine their confidence or authority.

After the game

- After your debrief be available for positive discussions with coaches and other participants. Ideally this means you are not appointed to do back-to-back games.

Do-nots

- Do not get involved in heated discussions. Follow the ATE dot points (do not participate, don't debate, don't escalate, vacate the area).
- Do not appoint yourself as the ground marshal. We have a ground marshal from both clubs for a reason.
- Do not criticise the behaviour/technique of individual players or teams in public. If you have a concern discuss it with the referee, the player's coach, or raise it with the competition manager. Potentially discuss with the player if they are over the age of 18, but definitely not if they are a minor.

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REPORTING ABUSE

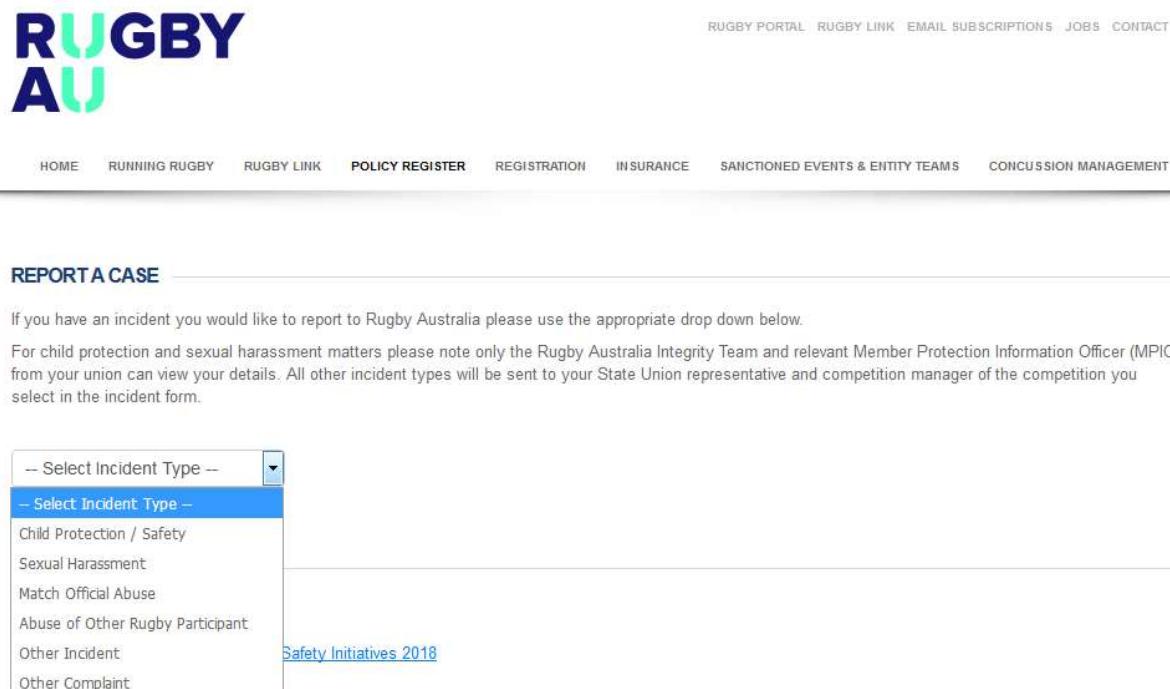
Reporting responsibilities:

On field – the referee should deal with incidents of abuse by players within the playing enclosure as required by law (generally Law 9 – foul play). If a red card is issued, the referee is required to submit a send-off report to the competition organiser.

Offfield – the home ground marshal has primary responsibility to submit an electronic incident report as described below. This does not prevent other people that witnessed the incident from also submitting reports (e.g. referee or away ground marshal).

Report format and content:

The [report](#) is submitted online. As per the screenshot below, select the appropriate incident type. Child protection and sexual harassment incidents are only visible to the NSWRU MPIO and RA Integrity Team. All other report types follow the process below.



The screenshot shows the Rugby Australia website's navigation bar with links for HOME, RUNNING RUGBY, RUGBY LINK, POLICY REGISTER, REGISTRATION, INSURANCE, SANCTIONED EVENTS & ENTITY TEAMS, and CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT. Below this, a section titled 'REPORT A CASE' is shown. A dropdown menu is open, listing incident types. The 'Child Protection / Safety' option is highlighted in blue, while others like 'Sexual Harassment' and 'Match Official Abuse' are listed below it.

The form is very similar to the paper incident report in use by many competitions. The report should only contain the facts of the incident and, where possible, include the following information:

1. The identity or, where an identity is uncertain, a description of the abuser.

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2. A description of what happened, with detail as to what was said or done by the abuser. The description of the actual words used is pivotal in determining the level of abuse at a subsequent hearing.
3. Where the abuse occurred.
4. When the abuse occurred.

Once the report is submitted, it will follow the process flow outlined in Appendix A.

Incident Report distribution

The incident report will automatically email several people, based on the competition selected. All the people below may be emailed, depending on the details of the report:

- The Competition Manager (club games) or Convenor (school games).
- Where the victim's club is identified, the club, school, or Referee Association contact.
- Where the abuser's club is identified, the club, school, or Referee Association contact; and
- NSWRU Respect Rugby Manager.

For example, the Match Official Abuse form includes the Referee Association, so that the report goes to the Association President as well as the Competition Manager and NSWRU. The other incident types do not include that option.

Actions to be taken on receipt of the report.

Initial responsibility for dealing with an incident rests with the club, school, or Referee Association of the offender, particularly for low-level incidents. Where this management is ineffective and the abusive behaviour continues, or where the offence is more serious (mid-range or high level), the competition organiser may decide to cite the person(s) named to appear before a Judiciary or Code of Conduct Committee.

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PROCEDURES

PROCEDURE TO DEAL WITH AND REPORT UPON ABUSE BEFORE, DURING OR AFTER A MATCH.

Rugby Australia is committed to providing a safe environment, which is free from harassment and abuse for everyone, and promotes respectful and positive behaviour and values.

Definition of harassment.

"Harassment means any type of behaviour that the other person does not want and does not return and that is offensive, abusive, belittling or threatening. The behaviour is unwelcome and of a type that a reasonable person would recognise as being unwelcome and likely to cause the recipient to feel offended, humiliated or intimidated."

Definition of abuse.

"Abuse is a form of Harassment and includes physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, and abuse of power. Examples of abusive behaviour include bullying, humiliation, verbal abuse and insults."

The RA Code of Conduct and Member Protection Policy aims to ensure the Rugby's core values, good reputation and positive behaviours and attitudes are maintained, and ensures every person involved in rugby is treated with respect and dignity, and is safe and protected from abuse.

All participants in the game are bound to the RA Code of Conduct. Club Officials, Coaches and Match Officials have responsibilities to ensure that behavioural expectations are set and maintained for other participants in the game, including players, parents, and spectators. Where Ground Marshals are appointed, they are normally delegated responsibility for managing behaviour outside the playing enclosure on game day.

Actions by the Ground Marshal on identifying an incident of harassment or abuse.

The Ground Marshal's job description is described in a separate document and governed by the competition rules of each competition organiser. In general, each team is required to provide a Ground Marshal, and these two people should work together to ensure that the playing enclosure and surrounds are kept safe, maintained in accordance with the competition rules, and that breaches of the code of conduct are dealt with.

If the Ground Marshal witnesses or has reported to him or her (including by the referee) an incident of abuse, then he or she has a responsibility to deal with it. This includes:

1. Ascertaining the facts of the situation, including identification of the abuser(s), and the seriousness of the abuse.
2. Dealing with the abuse, in partnership with the other Ground Marshal. Options include:

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- a. Issuing a warning to the abuser.
 - b. Seeking assistance from club officials to manage the behaviour.
 - c. Requesting that the abuser leave the facility.
 - d. Calling the police.
3. If the Ground Marshal is unable to deal with an incident, and they believe that it will impact on the safe conduct of the match, they must bring it to the attention of the match Referee. This should be done at the next stoppage of play, and through the Assistant Referee where one is appointed.
4. If the circumstances warrant it, the Ground Marshal should arrange for the referee to be escorted from the field of play at the end of the match to ensure no further incidents occur.
5. After the incident, the home team Ground Marshal is required to submit an [online incident report](#). The process for this is described below.

Actions by the Referee on identifying an off-field incident of harassment or abuse which impacts on the game.

The referee is to draw the attention of the Ground Marshal to any off-field behaviour which is impacting on the game. This could be done in several ways, with the most urgent solution being to stop the game and call the Ground Marshal(s) onto the field to brief them. By moving the referee to the centre of the field it draws them away from the cause of the abuse, rather than getting them involved in dealing with off-field issues.

Examples of incidents which could be impacting on the game are:

- The abuse is increasing the likelihood of foul play.
- The abuse is affecting decision making; and
- The match officials feel threatened.

On identifying that the abuse has taken place, the referee may brief the Ground Marshal at the next stoppage or, if urgent, stop play immediately. If the abuse occurs before the match, the referee must not commence the game until the steps 2-3 below have been completed. If the abuse occurs after the game the procedure below at step 2 is to be followed and the referee completes an incident report as detailed below.

During a match when the referee has stopped play because of abuse from the sideline, he is to do the following:

1. Move at least past the 15m line, and preferably the centre of the field.

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2. Call the Ground Marshals to them.
3. The referee describes the abuse to the Ground Marshals and requests that they take whatever action necessary to ensure the abuse ceases.
4. The referee restarts the match once the Ground Marshals move to deal with the cause of the abuse. This draws the attention of the crowd back to the game, rather than focusing on the cause of the abuse.
5. If the abuse continues and the referee believes that it would be dangerous to continue the game, the referee should again stop play, and move to the centre of the field. At this point they should call over both Ground Marshals and team Captains and advise that the match is abandoned (Law 5.10).
6. A new and unrelated incident of abuse off the field results in this process being repeated from step 1. The game is only abandoned if the conditions in step 5 are met.

After abuse has occurred a referee must submit an incident report using the [online report](#).

Incident Report content and link.

The incident report is to be written in a narrative form. Where such information can be obtained the report should include:

- The identity or, where an identity is uncertain, a description of the abuser.
- A description of what happened, with detail as to what was actually said or done by the abuser. The description of the actual words used is pivotal in determining the level of abuse at a subsequent hearing.
- Where the abuse occurred.
- When the abuse occurred.

The report is submitted using this [link](#).

This can be accessed on any web browser, including on a mobile phone.

Actions to be taken by the Competition Manager.

On receipt of an Incident Report, the Competition Manager is to discuss with the complainant if they would like the matter dealt with under Member Protection Policy or Code of Conduct utilising the flowchart in Appendix B. Depending on the severity of the case, the Competition Manager

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might use the Member Protection Contact to have this discussion and confirm which process is to be used.

assess the report as to the severity of the behaviour reported. Low level and repeated low level are to be referred to the club or clubs involved for action as appropriate (Warning and/or Counselling). All other reports are to be submitted via the online link and will be investigated to determine further course of action if required. Please see the flow chart attached below.

The Competition Manager is to report back to the club, school, or Referee Association contact and to NSW Rugby the resolution and action taken in respect of the incident within two weeks of its receipt. If the issue is not resolved within this period, the Competition Manager is to report the progress of the investigation as above every week until the incident is resolved. It is expected that the club, school, or Referee Association contact will update the report author on progress, and always provide pastoral care for that person.

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COMMENCE INVESTIGATION

Actions to take for Clubs/Associations after a potential breach of the Code of Conduct / Member Protection Policy (MPP)

- 1) Do not wait for an incident report to be lodged. Start gathering evidence immediately while it is fresh.
- 2) Put in place measures to prevent any further harm/breach of the code of conduct/MPP
- 3) Appoint a senior person on the ground as investigating officer to immediately document:
 - a. Names and contacts details of witnesses, including possible complainants and accused.
 - b. Request those people write a statement of what occurred when they get home and email it to you (that day).
 - c. Collect photographic/video evidence if available (from witnesses or videographer).
 - d. Take copies of offending posts (for social media incidents).
- 4) Once the competition manager receives a formal complaint, they may appoint their own investigating officer, in which case the club's investigating officer should handover any material they have already collected or subsequently receive.
- 5) Investigations need to be completed ASAP, ideally within 24 hours, while people's memories are still fresh. The investigating officer's report then needs to be submitted (to the club committee or competition manager) within one week of the incident, so that any Code of Conduct Hearing can be conducted in the following week.

Clubs and their officials can be found in breach of the RA Code of Conduct for failing to assist an investigation, failing to comply with RA policies, or failing to put measures in place to control spectator behaviour.

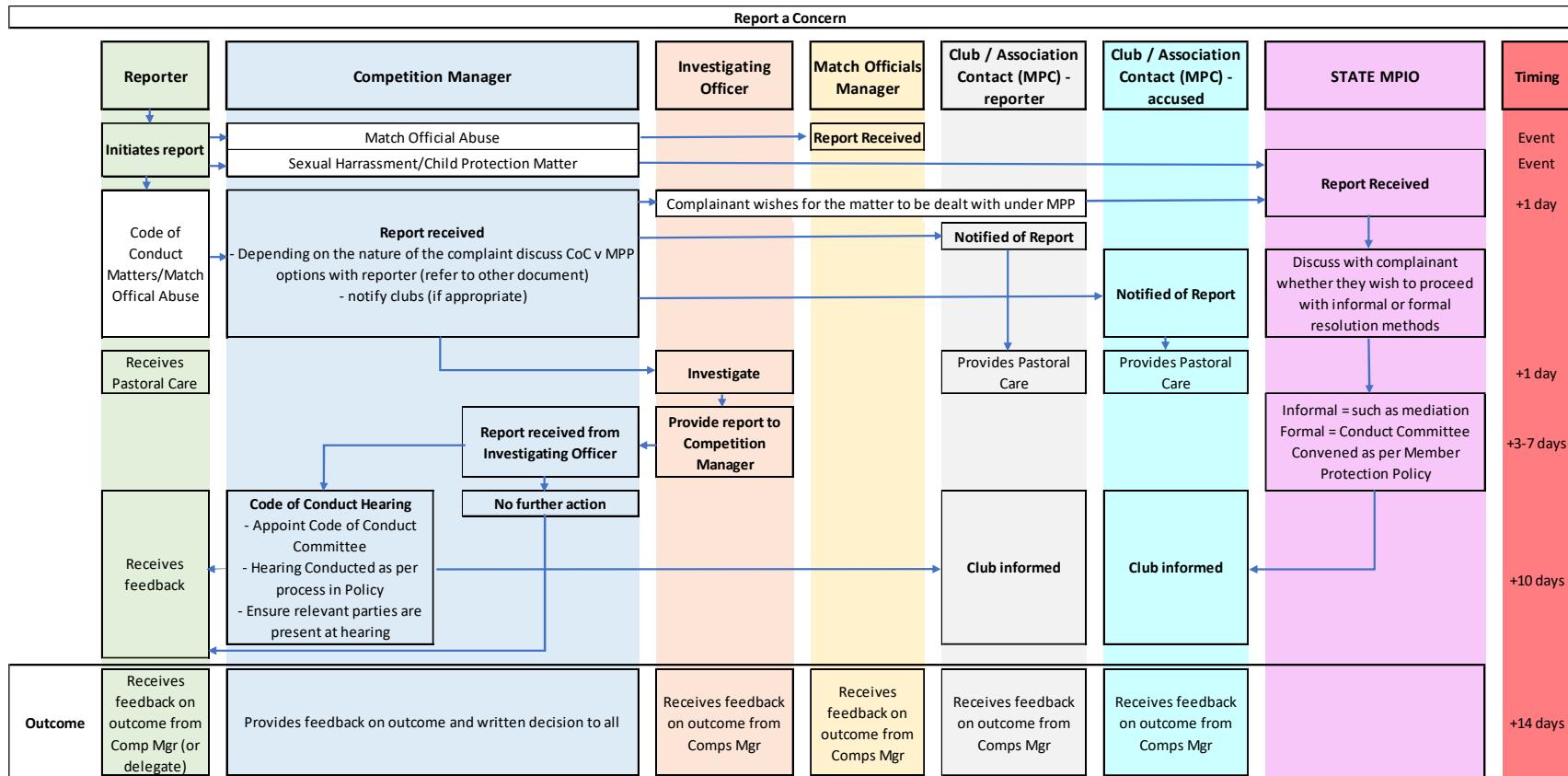
Note that if the complainant chooses to resolve the issue through the Member Protection Policy then it is possible the issue may be resolved through informal means (e.g. mediation), in which case the investigation may not be required. However, should the investigation be required it is better to have already gathered the evidence.

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APPENDIX A

Code of Conduct Workflow



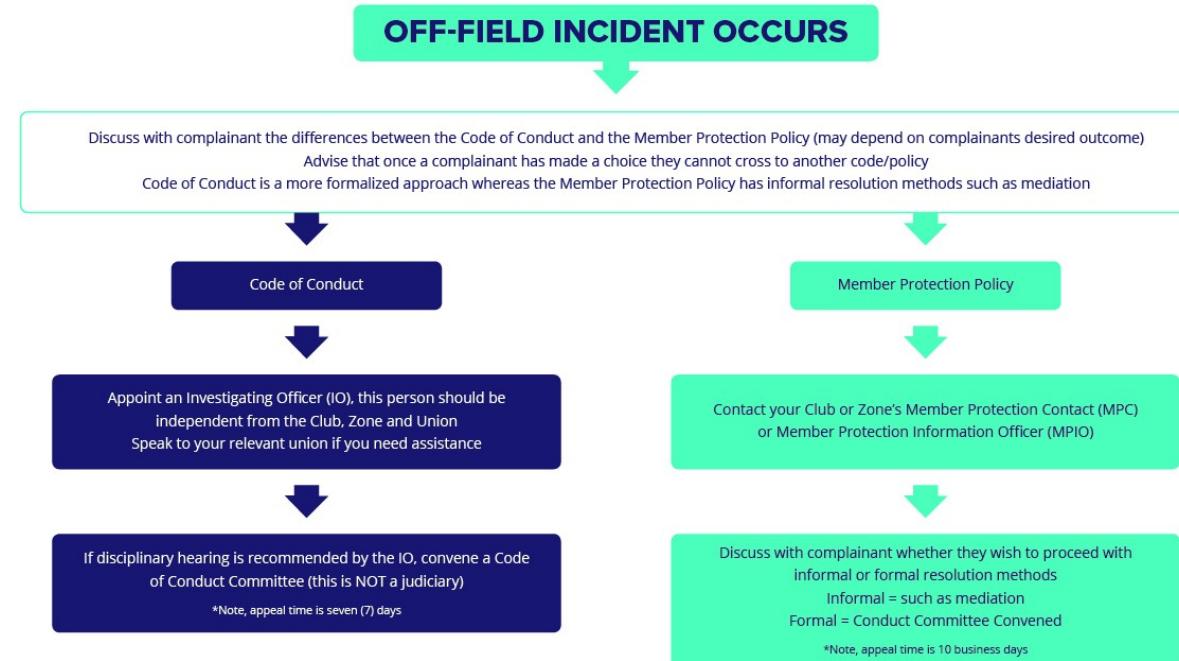
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APPENDIX B

Choosing Code of Conduct or Member Protection Policy

CODE OF CONDUCT AND MEMBER PROTECTION



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