



Complaints and Child-Safety Handling Procedure

A clear and practical process for receiving, responding to, recording and referring Club complaints and child-safety concerns.

Document owner	Southlakes Roosters Junior Rugby League Football Club Executive Committee
Approved by	Executive Committee
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Next review	Within 12 months of adoption, and after any significant incident or material policy change

Volunteer requirements: All adult volunteers working with children, and any other person required by law or NSWRL requirements, must hold a current Working with Children Check verified by the Club. Volunteers are expected to follow the requirements relevant to their role, including applicable Club, NRL and NSWRL child-safety policies and codes of behaviour. The Club will provide access to the relevant information, training, and support.

Supporting our volunteers: Southlakes Roosters is run by volunteers. Volunteers are expected to act reasonably, follow the guidance relevant to their role, and ask for help when they are unsure. They are not expected to have legal, investigative, or specialist child-protection expertise or to manage serious matters alone. The Club will support volunteers who act honestly and in good faith, provide reasonable guidance, and refer matters to NSWRL or another appropriate authority when they are beyond the volunteer's role or experience.

Using NRL and NSWRL policies: This document provides practical Club-level guidance. It does not replace applicable NRL, NSWRL or competition policies and procedures. Where an established NRL or NSWRL process applies, the Club and its volunteers will follow that process rather than create or conduct a separate internal process.

Immediate danger or urgent risk: Call Police on 000. Take reasonable steps to protect the child or other person from immediate harm.

1. Purpose

This procedure explains the practical steps Club volunteers should follow when a complaint or child-safety concern is raised. It applies to complaints about Club activities, conduct, communication, team matters, member protection, and child safety.

The Club may address straightforward matters within its authority and available volunteer capacity. Serious, complex, conflicted, unresolved or specialist matters will be referred to NSWRL or another appropriate authority.

2. Scope

Complaints will be handled under the applicable Club, NRL, NSWRL or competition process. Routine Club matters may be addressed informally or considered by an unconflicted Club official or the Executive Committee. Allegations of prohibited conduct and serious, complex, conflicted or unresolved complaints should be referred to through the NSWRL complaints process.

Concerns involving the safety or wellbeing of a child should be reported through the NSWRL Child Safeguarding pathway. Matters involving immediate danger, suspected criminal conduct or statutory reporting requirements should be referred to Police, a child-protection agency or another appropriate authority. Club volunteers are not expected to investigate serious, or specialist matters or manage them without appropriate support.

3. Guiding principles

- Child safety and wellbeing are the priority.
- Children and young people will be listened to, taken seriously, and supported to participate in decisions affecting them.
- The Club will respond to complaints as promptly as reasonably practicable, respectfully, and consistently.
- No person will be victimised or disadvantaged for raising genuine concern or participating in a complaint process.
- Procedural fairness will be provided, subject to immediate safety needs and directions from external authorities.
- Information will be shared only with those who need it to protect people, meet legal obligations, or manage the complaint.
- The Club will recognise conflicts of interest and use an alternative or external pathway where impartial handling cannot be assured.

4. Key roles

President

The President is the Club's primary contact for significant complaints and child-safety matters. The President's role is to coordinate an appropriate initial response, involve the Executive Committee where appropriate and seek guidance or refer the matter to NSWRL or another authority. The President is not expected to investigate or manage a serious or complex matter without appropriate support.

Secretary

The Secretary may receive complaints, keep necessary Club records, and assist with correspondence and referrals. The Secretary is not expected to investigate complaints or determine outcomes.

Member Protection Information Officer (MPIO)

The MPIO provides impartial information about available support pathways. The MPIO may listen, explain options, and provide relevant contact information. The MPIO does not investigate, mediate, decide complaints or advocate for either party. Serious or complex matters should be referred to NSWRL or another appropriate authority.

Complaint Handling

Straightforward Club matters may be considered by an unconflicted Club official or the Executive Committee. Serious, complex or child-safety matters, matters requiring specialist expertise, and matters involving a conflict of interest should be referred to NSWRL. No volunteer is required to accept responsibility for handling a complaint if they do not have the capacity, experience or impartiality needed.

5. Making a complaint or raising a concern

A complaint or concern may be raised with the Club President at president@southlakesroosters.com.au or the Club Secretary at secretary@southlakesroosters.com.au. If the concern involves either person, it should be directed to the other contact or referred directly to NSWRL through the appropriate pathway.

The person receiving the concern should, where possible, make a brief factual record of:

- who raised the concern.
- what they said happened.
- who may be affected.
- whether there is an immediate safety concern; and
- whether anyone else, including NSWRL or Police, has already been contacted.

Signpost: Do not investigate. Listen calmly, clarify only what is necessary to understand immediate risk, record the person's own words, avoid leading questions, and do not promise absolute confidentiality.

6. Complaint response process

1. Listen and record

Listen calmly, take the concern seriously and make a brief factual record. Do not investigate or promise complete confidentiality.

2. Address immediate safety

If anyone is in immediate danger, call Police on 000 and take reasonable steps to obtain assistance.

3. Notify the appropriate Club contact

Pass the concern promptly to the President at president@southlakesroosters.com.au, the Secretary at secretary@southlakesroosters.com.au, or another unconflicted Executive Committee member. If no suitable Club contact is available, or if the matter is serious, complex or conflicted, it should be referred directly to NSWRL. The MPIO may provide information about available pathways but does not take control of the complaint.

If the Club's MPIO position is vacant, unavailable, or affected by a conflict of interest, members may be referred to the NSWRL MPIO at mpio@nswrl.com.au

4. Refer where appropriate

Serious, complex, conflicted or specialist complaints should be referred to NSWRL through its Submit a Ticket process. Concerns involving the safety or wellbeing of a child, including suspected abuse, neglect, grooming or other prohibited conduct involving a child, should be reported through the NSWRL Child Safeguarding reporting platform or by emailing mpio@nswrl.com.au

If a child or another person is in immediate danger, call Police on 000. A referral to Police, a child-protection agency or another statutory authority must not be delayed while the Club seeks guidance from NSWRL. The Club will follow any directions received and will not conduct a separate investigation that could interfere with an NSWRL, Police or statutory-authority process.

5. Follow up

The Club will keep a brief record of the referral and any Club actions. Relevant parties should be advised of the next steps where appropriate, noting that confidential information or external outcomes may not be available to the Club.

Signpost: NSWRL provides for escalation where a complaint is serious, conflicted, beyond the Committee's skills or unresolved. Refer to the [NSWRL Complaints Handling Tips](#) and the applicable NSWRL reporting pathway

7. Child-safety concerns

A concern that a child may have been harmed, abused, groomed, neglected, or placed at serious risk must be treated seriously and referred promptly through the appropriate safeguarding pathway.

The volunteer receiving the concern should:

- listen calmly and take the concern seriously.
- record the person's words as accurately as reasonably possible.
- ask only what is necessary to understand whether there is an immediate safety risk.
- avoid investigating, interviewing witnesses, or asking leading questions.
- avoid promising absolute confidentiality.
- Call Police on 000 if a child or another person is in immediate danger.
- pass the concern promptly to the President, Secretary, or another unconflicted Executive Committee member; and
- report the concern through the NSWRL Child Safeguarding reporting platform or by emailing mpio@nswrl.com.au

Where reporting to Police, the Department of Communities and Justice or another statutory authority may be required, the Club will seek appropriate guidance and make or support the required referral.

Volunteers are not expected to determine whether abuse has occurred, interpret complex reporting obligations without support or investigate the concern themselves. Their role is to listen, make a brief factual record, address any immediate danger, and pass the concern through the appropriate pathway.

8. Interim measures

Where it is necessary to address an immediate safety concern while advice is being obtained, the Executive Committee may take temporary administrative steps within the Club's authority, such as adjusting supervision, access, or duties. These are precautionary steps and do not represent a finding against any person. Where the alleged conduct may require formal provisional or disciplinary action, the matter should be referred promptly to NSWRL, and the Club will follow the applicable NSWRL process or direction.

9. Procedural fairness

Where the Club is authorised to decide a matter, it will act fairly and give affected people a reasonable opportunity to respond. The Club will follow any relevant NRL or NSWRL process and any direction given by an external authority.

10. Records

The Club will keep a brief, factual, and confidential record of complaints received, referrals made and Club decisions taken. Access will be limited to those who need the information. Personal complaint details should not be recorded in ordinary Committee minutes.

Where NSWRL manages the matter, the Club will retain only the correspondence and information required for its own records.

11. Outcomes

The Club may address straightforward matters within the authority provided by its Constitution, rules and applicable NRL or NSWRL policies. Matters requiring formal disciplinary action or specialist consideration should be managed or supported through the applicable NSWRL process.

12. Review or escalation

A person may ask an unconflicted Executive Committee member to consider whether the Club followed this procedure. Serious, complex, conflicted, unresolved or specialist complaints may be referred directly to NSWRL through its Submit a Ticket process. Child-safeguarding concerns should instead be reported through the NSWRL Child Safeguarding reporting platform or by emailing mpio@nswrl.com.au.

Any formal review, appeal, investigation, or disciplinary process will be managed under the applicable NRL, NSWRL or competition policy. The Club and its volunteers will cooperate with that process but are not expected to establish or conduct a separate process where the matter falls within NSWRL's authority or expertise.

13. Accessibility and communication

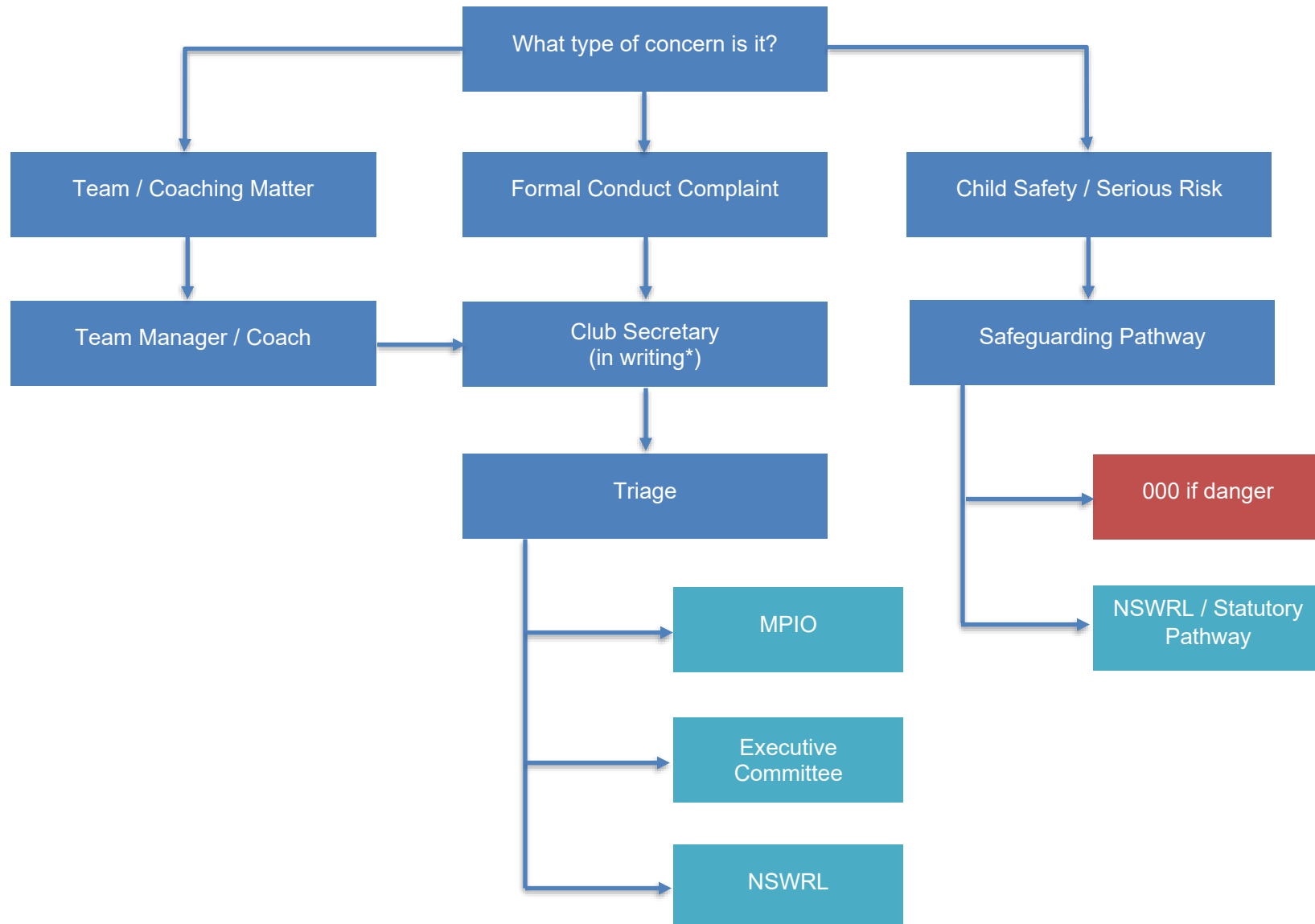
The Club will make reasonable adjustments so children, people with disabilities, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can safely raise concerns and understand the process. A child may have a parent, carer, or other support person present unless doing so would create a safety concern or conflict.

14. Monitoring

The Executive Committee should review this procedure annually and after any significant matter that identifies a practical improvement. The review may be completed as part of the Club's annual child-safe review.

Appendix A: Intake and action checklist

✓	Check
☐	Immediate danger considered
☐	Brief factual record made
☐	Appropriate Club contact notified
☐	NSWRL Child Safeguarding report made, where appropriate
☐	NSWRL complaint referral made through the Submit a Ticket process, where appropriate
☐	Police, child-protection agencies, or other authorities contacted, where required
☐	Any temporary safety action recorded
☐	Follow-up recorded

Appendix B: Complaint and Escalation Pathway

*Child safety / immediate concerns may be raised verbally and must not be delayed by the written complaint requirement.