Newtown Swans Junior Australian Rules Football Club Incorporated

Anti-Bullying Policy

Version 1.0
Effective: 22 July 2020

Policy Statement

The Newtown Swans Junior Australian Rules Football Club Incorporated (Newtown Swans) regards violence, unlawful discrimination, sexual harassment, bullying and abuse in any form as intolerable.

The Newtown Swans believe that all people have the right to play and socialise in an environment which is safe and inclusive. Any reports of inappropriate behaviour will be treated seriously, sympathetically and confidentially, and if necessary, will be investigated thoroughly.

The focus of this policy is to address bullying behaviour. The Newtown Swans does not accept any form of bullying behaviour.

The purpose of this policy is to set out the Newtown Swans position on bullying and the plan for preventing, identifying and responding effectively to bullying behaviour, both in person and online, obvious and hidden. This policy does not replace any other policy provided by the AFL[1], including child protection[2], and the Coaches Code of Conduct[3].

In 2020 the Newtown Swans released the following core values: to be

- Friendly, inclusive & community driven,
- Passionate about skill developmental,
- Courageous in our actions, and
- Respectful

This is the standard of behaviour expected of those affiliated with the Newtown Swans.

This policy is effective from 22 July 2020 is to be reviewed every 3 years.

Application

This policy applies to all persons affiliated with the Newtown Swans, including an individual sitting on a committee, volunteer, support personal (managers, sport trainers), coaches and assistant coaches, players, umpires and other officials, affiliated clubs, parents, guardians, spectators and sponsors.

Definition of bullying[4]

Bullying has three main features – it:

1. Involves the misuse of power in a relationship,
2. Is ongoing and repeated, and
3. Involves behaviours that can cause harm.

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[1] AFL policies are maintained at the following location: https://www.afl.com.au/policies

[2] https://aflsj.com.au/wp-content/uploads/sites/12/2017/03/Child-Protection-Working-with-Children.pdf

[3] https://aflq.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Coaches_Code_Conduct.pdf

[4] This definition was obtained from the Department of Education in NSW (https://education.nsw.gov.au/student-wellbeing/attendance-behaviour-and-engagement/anti-bullying#Anti-bullying0)

Bullying can happen in person or online, it can be obvious, or it can be hidden.

Bullying can have a lasting impact on all involved, including bystanders. This is why the Newtown Swans believe it is essential that teams, officials and parents work together to make participation in AFL games and training safe for everyone.

Bullying behaviour can also involve intimidation, victimisation and harassment, including that based on sex, race, religion, disability or sexual orientation, both online and offline.

Bullying can be illegal if it involves behaviours that include physical violence, threats of violence, damaging property or stalking.

There are some behaviours, which while not classified as bullying, still need to be addressed and resolved. Examples of these behaviours are as follows:

- Mutual arguments and disagreements (where there is no power imbalance),
- Not liking someone or a single act of social rejection,
- Bad sportsmanship and isolated comments about game performance,
- One-off acts of meanness or spite,
- Isolated incidents of aggression, intimidation or violence.

Parents Responsibilities

If a parent becomes aware of bullying, or other poor behaviours within a team or on the AFL pitch, they are to do the following:

- Contact the Newtown Swans Official (Coach or Manager) responsible for the individual and advise the situation, obtain witnesses if possible,
- Do not approach any other player, or their family,
- Work with the Newtown Swans to establish a plan for dealing with the current situation and future bullying incidents.

If parents wish to speak to a Newtown Swans Official directly about an incident, please direct them to the Club President, or Child Protection Officer. Contact details for these officials is on the Club website.

Prevention and Response

Prevention

1. It is the Newtown Swans intention to provide a safe, inclusive, and respectful football community.
2. The Newtown Swans have a Code of Conduct (Appendix A) for players, coaches, parents and spectators to ensure there is no bullying, harassment, intimidation, or discrimination against anyone at our games or at training sessions.
3. Newtown Swans Officials (Coaches and Managers) promote a safe, positive team environment, and will be mindful to observe player interactions for signs of bullying[5].

[5] Signs of bullying can be found https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/WhatIsBullying/Pages/Signs-of-bullying.aspx along with additional resources.

4. At the beginning of each season each Newtown Swans Juniors team will hold a session to discuss the following:

    - Newtown Swans Code of Conduct. Players will discuss and tailor this Code. All will be expected to sign-on to the Code of Conduct. A template for the Code of Conduct can be found in Appendix A.
    - The Newtown Swans Anti-Bullying Policy. The focus will be what bullying includes, and the associated penalties.

<u>Response</u>

1. Responding to bullying is the shared responsibility of the Newtown Swans Committee, Officials, players, parents and caregivers.
2. Reports of bullying can be made to any Newtown Swans Official. The impacted Coach and Manager, Child Protection Officer, and Newtown Swans Committee (if applicable) will address the reported bullying in a timely manner.
3. If a player, parent or caregiver believes a matter is not being dealt with effectively, they can refer the matter directly to the Child Protection Officer or Newtown Swans Club President (or delegate) for resolution.
4. For incidents of physical violence, and where required, first aid should be administered and emergency services contacted whenever necessary.

Roles and Responsibilities (Team Officials or Club Representatives)
If an incident of bullying or inappropriate behaviour is reported the following steps must be taken:

- Notify the Child Protection Officer as soon as possible to report the incident.
- Work with the Child Protection Officer to classify the incident as Minor, Moderate or Severe. Definitions of these classifications are provided in Appendix B. A moderate or severe incident will also require notification to the Newtown Swans Club president, and Head of Football.
- **Minor incident**: once an incident is classified as a minor incident, the Team Officials (Manager and Coach) are responsible for establishing a plan for dealing with and resolving the situation. The Child Protection Officer can provide additional support if required.
- **Moderate or Severe incident**:
    - Once an offense that is classified as Moderate or Severe has been reported the Child Protection Officer will inform the Newtown Swans President and Head of Football.
    - A sub-committee of these representatives or delegates, as appropriate, will be formed to review the incident and investigate with the individual/s involved.
    - Once the sub-committee has reached a decision on the incident, it will be communicated to the offending individual/s parents or caregivers and a citation issued. A sample Citation is provided in Appendix C.
- All written communication with the impacted and offending individual/s about the incident in question will require the Club President and Child Protection Officer copied in.

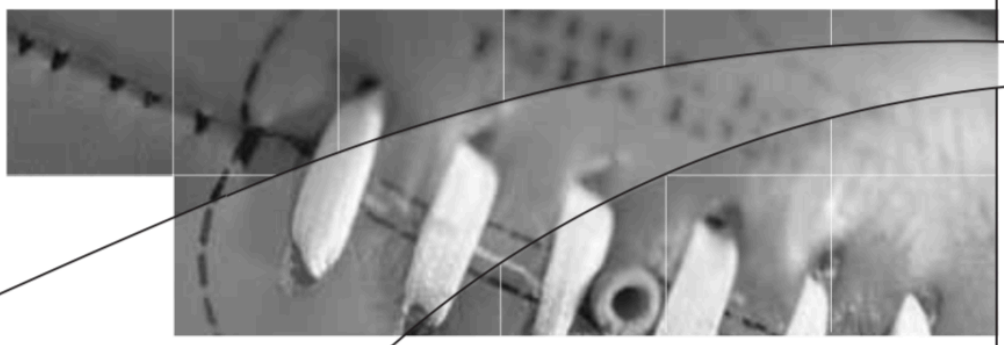
- The Child Protection Officer will keep a register of all incidents.

Details of penalties can be found in Appendix B.

A flowchart has been provided to outline how an incident is to be managed. Refer to Appendix D.

Appendix A
AFL Code of Conduct

Codes of conduct



Section 9

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Codes of conduct – fair play

Codes of conduct provide clear behavioural guidelines and promote a quality environment in which the game and participants can flourish. Codes of conduct need to be monitored by the football committee and an appropriate procedure established to deal with any breaches of the players' code of behaviour contract. This could take the form of a tribunal or establishing set penalties for breaches to the players' code of behaviour contract.

Be a 'good sport' player

- Play by the rules.
- Don't argue – you will look a real goose!
- Control your temper – you will gain real respect.
- Be a team player – teams win games not individuals.
- Treat all players fairly – as you would like to be treated.
- Work with your coach and teammates – not against them.
- Play for enjoyment and to improve your skills.
- Don't lower yourself, your coach, your parents or your team by making any remarks based on race or gender.

Be a 'good sport' coach

- Promote the laws and rules of our game.
- Maximise enjoyment before winning.
- Group players competitively and develop their confidence.
- Avoid the trap of overplaying talented players just to win.
- Ensure player welfare as a priority – above winning!
- Remember the age of your team – keep things in perspective.
- Lead the way with respect for opponents, umpires and officials.
- Attain coaching accreditation and keep up with new ideas.
- Avoid aggressive behaviour and derogatory and insulting language – set the right example.

Be a 'good sport' parent and spectator

- Encourage participation but don't force it.
- Teach the message that it's not whether you win or lose but how you play the game.
- Encourage an understanding of the rules by showing a genuine interest.
- Never ridicule mistakes or defeats – you will destroy confidence quickly.
- Remember you are there to support the children's enjoyment before your own.
- Lead by example and respect all players, coaches, umpires and spectators.
- Personally recognise all volunteers who are giving their valuable time.
- Never publicly criticise umpires – raise your concerns calmly in private.
- Lead the way in stamping out all racial, verbal or physical abuse.

Sample
Players' code of behaviour & contract with the game
All junior sporting bodies have formulated codes of behaviour for all people involved. It is important that players in the AFL Sport Education program have a common code of behaviour to adhere to in all games.
After consultation with the class group, this code of behaviour has been formulated for the AFL Sport Education program. All players in the competition must sign this contract:
• Play by the rules.
• Do not argue with an umpire or other official. If you disagree you should pursue the matter with your team manager at a later time.
• Play to enjoy the game and improve your football skills.
• Control your temper and do not indulge in any verbal or physical abuse of an umpire, official or other player.
• Be a good sport and acknowledge all good efforts from your teammates and opponents.
• Work equally hard for yourself and your team.
• Co-operate with your coach, teammates, umpires, officials and opponents, without whom there would be no game.
I agree to abide by the code of behaviour above
Signature of player: _____
Date: _____
School: _____

Players' code of behaviour & contract with the game (template)

All junior sporting bodies have formulated codes of behaviour for all people involved. It is important that players in the AFL Sport Education program have a common code of behaviour to adhere to in all games.

After consultation with the class group, this code of behaviour has been formulated for the AFL Sport Education program. All players in the competition must sign this contract:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

I agree to abide by the code of behaviour above.

Signature of player: _____

Date: _____

School: _____

Appendix B: Definition and Penalties

Definitions

Minor Incident is typically a one-off minor incident, or severe inappropriate behaviour not considered to be bullying behaviour.

Moderate Incident could be bullying behaviour where the incident is not aggressive or violent.

Severe Incident could be a repeat occurrence of a moderate offence or bullying behaviour that is considered aggressive or violent.

It is recognized that there may be some subjectivity and overlap of these different incidents. It is for this reason that the Child Protection Officer is to be involved in all incidents to assist with classification and ensure consistency.

Actions and Penalties

Any individual/s, against whom bullying behaviour is alleged, shall be afforded natural justice in the determination of the outcome.

A minor incident can be addressed through the following:

- Discussion with parents/caregivers of all individuals involved.
- A consultation and mentoring process which will allow individuals ample opportunity to modify their behaviour.
- Modification to the individuals on Newtown Swans participation (for example if the offender is a player, sitting off for half the game) as considered appropriate by the Team Officials.

Minor incidents and penalties are to be managed by the Team Officials (Coaches and Managers) with notification to the Child Protection Officer. Penalties are at the discretion of the Team Officials unless agreed otherwise.

A moderate incident can be penalised as follows:

- Discussion with parents/caregivers of all individuals involved.
- A consultation and mentoring process which will allow individuals ample opportunity to modify their behaviour.
- One-week suspension of affiliation with Newtown Swans. This would include both training and games.
- Club service as appropriate, for example assisting with weekend game duties during suspension.

A severe incident can be penalised as follows:

- Discussion with parents/caregivers of all individuals involved.
- A consultation and mentoring process which will allow individuals ample opportunity to modify their behaviour.

- First offence: two-week suspension of affiliation with Newtown Swans. This would include both training and games.
- Second offence: four-week suspension of affiliation with Newtown Swans. This would include both training and games. In addition, if there are no mitigating circumstances a further penalty of downgrading a division (for players) can be considered. For example, a Division 1 player could be downgraded to Division 2 or 3. Examples of mitigating circumstances could include genuine remorse and contrition for the behaviour.
- If the player is responsible for a further severe incident the sub-committee can consider suspending the player registration for the remainder of the season.
- Club service as appropriate, for example assisting with weekend game duties during suspension.
- AFL NSW/ACT provides a National Player & Official Deregistration policy which is required to be implemented as follows:
  "Deregistration will commence on the date on which the most recent Suspension of the Player/Official (being the Suspension which resulted in that Player/Official reaching or exceeding the total of sixteen (16) weeks Suspension) ends."[6]

The sub-committee is able to use discretion in the application of penalties as it sees fit - but will at all times ensure consistency and fairness.

[6] Extract from the National Player & Official Deregistration Policy dated February 2020 (https://resources.afl.com.au/afl/document/2020/02/06/b3e14782-032f-4b72-a184-301a83ac8c27/National-Player-and-Official-Deregistration-Policy-February-2020.pdf)

Appendix C – Sample Citation

To Parent/Caregiver,

The incident resulting in the injury of another player on <<Date>> has been referred to the Newtown Swans Committee. This incident is not in accordance with the Club Values, and in particular 'playing in the right spirit, respecting our teammates' and has been classified as a Moderate/Severe incident.

<<insert details of the incident>>

<<Provide any mitigating circumstances such as: We also note the following:

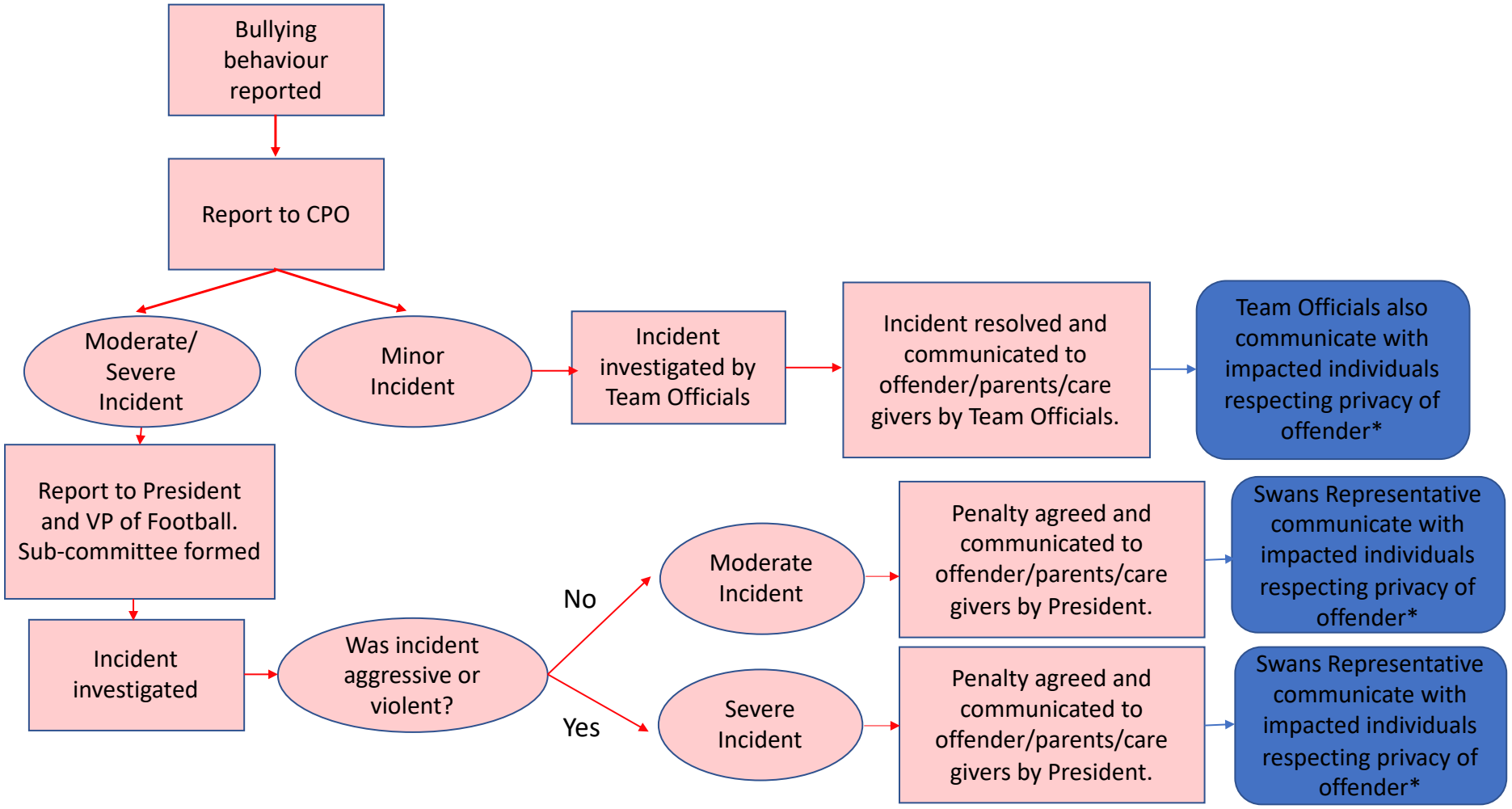
- XX was honest in acknowledging his intent.
- XX apologised to the injured player.>>

Action to be taken

The Committee has decided to take the following action in relation to the incident on <<date>>:

XXX is to be suspended for XX weeks starting from <<from date>> to <<to date>>. This means that XXX will miss <<details of all games and training sessions to be missed>>. During this time XXX is also not permitted to attend training sessions.

Appendix D - Administration Flow Chart



* If at any time the offender or impacted individual are unhappy with the process or outcome, the matter can be escalated to the President or Child Protection Officer (CPO).