

POLICY

SAFETY IN SCHOOL SPORT

Responsibility of:	School Support Services	DoE File: FILE2015/344
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Target Audience:	School staff, teachers and parents	

1. APPROPRIATE TEACHING OF BODY CONTACT SPORTS

Sport in the school curriculum

Physical Education is one of the required key learning areas of the curriculum. Sport is one component of a Physical Education program. The participation of children in sport must take place in an environment and under conditions which ensure maximum safety. Particular care and precautions should be exercised for the safety of students involved in body-contact sports especially Rugby League and Rugby Union.

Contact sports should be included in school sports programs under conditions which ensure safety for student participants.

Supervision

The following guidelines should be observed:

- Written parental consent must be obtained for students to participate in school representative sport.
- Student welfare and supervision by teachers must be maintained.
- All teams in school representative competitions should be controlled by qualified or experienced teachers, coaches and officials.
- In the case of an injury to a student which may have serious implications, appropriate action should be taken by the teacher, coach and/or official on duty. The student should be supervised and the parent notified.
- In the event of any injury, teachers are required to enter details in the in accordance with the [Recording and reporting student injuries guidelines](#) as soon as possible.

Equipment and dress

- Students should wear the appropriate clothing for the sport in which they are participating.
- Players should be encouraged to wear correctly fitted mouth guards especially at school representative events.

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- Players should be encouraged to wear approved protective equipment where appropriate, for example shoulder pads for body-contact sports like Rugby League.
- Footwear should be inspected prior to each match and players not permitted to participate if the 'sprigs' or 'studs' have sharp edges or are excessively worn.

Venues

- Teachers, coaches and officials should ensure that venue surfaces are suitable for play.
- The use of hydrated lime in the marking of grounds is to be avoided.
- Goalposts for school representative events should be well padded with the recommended covers.
- Corner flags and other markers should be of non-injurious material.
- Spectators should be kept well back from the sideline during play.

Safety considerations in school representative sport

- Each school should have a structured training and coaching program and selection criteria for representative teams. Training should be appropriate to the player's position and physique.
- Teachers, coaches and officials should be aware of the strength and physical requirements of the activity. Students should be selected on the basis of ability and suitability for the sport/position they are to play.
- Students should only participate in vigorous activities if medically fit.
- Teachers, coaches and officials should try to identify students who may be suffering an injury. If a teacher has reason to believe that a student is injured, the student should not be allowed to continue to participate. This is to avoid aggravation of injury.
- Students should not return to playing after injury until it is clear that the injury has healed. If there is any doubt, the student is not to play until medically cleared.
- Teacher, coaches and officials should take appropriate precautions to protect students from the effects of severe climatic conditions including shade for spectators, sunscreen for players and adequate supplies of fluids.
- Teachers, coaches and officials should ensure that adequate warm-up/warm-down exercises are undertaken by players.
- Where possible, there should be a person present at each sporting venue who has current first-aid qualifications. A well-equipped medical kit must be available at each venue. Basic hygiene procedures should be observed.

Safety considerations for selected sports

The [Rugby League Laws for Mini Footy and Mod League](#) are to be observed for safe conduct of play.

For Rugby Union, primary schools should use the [Rugby Kids Pathway rules for boys and girls \(6–12-years-old\)](#), and for secondary schools use the [U/19 Rugby Law Variations](#).

Selection of players for Rugby League and Rugby Union

- Teachers/coaches should be aware of the strength and physical requirements for front and second row forwards.
- Teachers who select, coach, manage or train teams should make an assessment of all players to determine whether they have the physique to play in the front or second row of a scrum. Students with long thin necks must not play in the front or second row of scrums. Students assessed as having an inappropriate physique must not be allowed to play in these positions.
- If a front row or second row forward is injured, the coach must ensure that the replacement player has the appropriate physique, training and experience to fill the position. If a suitable replacement is not available, the team must play one member short or forfeit the game.

2. ATHLETICS AND GYMNASIUM TEACHING IN SCHOOLS

Athletics and gymnastics comprise a number of disciplines and as a compulsory part of the physical education curriculum should be taught by all teachers.

The teaching of those elements in which incorrect technique may create a higher risk of injury should only be taught after teachers have received appropriate training.

It is acknowledged that there are a number of schools in the Northern Territory which do not have trained physical education teachers. Where possible, Principals may wish to obtain the services of qualified coaches, i.e. those accredited by the Australian Track and Field Coaches Association.

3. RELATED POLICY, LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS

Teachers taking school sport should refer to [School Sport Australia](#) for additional information.