

GPS RUGBY REVIEW WORKING GROUP - UPDATE TERM 2, 2019

Dear Parents,

The GPS Association wishes to provide the following update on the activities of the Working Group established to respond to the *Rugby Review Report* into serious spinal injuries experienced by four boys during 2018.

The Working Group has continued its important activities during Term 2 to ensure changes are made that improve player care and safety.

The group's objectives are to enact the guidelines of the sport's governing body Rugby Australia, lead the implementation of recommendations from the *Rugby Review Report*, and develop a consistent approach to rugby preparation, coach accreditation and facility management at all GPS rugby schools. The Review Recommendations will be implemented over a three-year period.

This process has involved reviewing current practices to create new competition models that encourage boys to play the game in a safe educational context. The Working Group has been collaborating with Rugby Australia to develop its best practice standards. Each school has, as is practicable, applied guidelines detailed in this letter.

The Working Group previously identified five key focus areas:

- Player readiness;
- Coach accreditation and training;
- First aid and medical support;
- Grounds and facilities; and
- Competition structure.

Within each of these broad areas, a number of specific initiatives will be implemented prior to and during the 2019 GPS Rugby season.

1. Player readiness

- All players will have completed a pre-season training program.
- All players, coaches and officials will have registered on Rugby Xplorer (Rugby Australia's official app and digital network).
- All U16A, 2nd and 1st XV Front Row players will have undertaken the 'Front Row Passport' program and been accredited by independent Rugby Australia assessors.
- All Front Row players in under age A squads will have participated in the Rugby Australia 'Front Row Readiness' program at their respective schools.
- All schools will have introduced components of the World Rugby 'Activate' program as a training and game day warm-up program.

- All schools will have adopted the Rugby Australia 'Confidence in Contact' framework as part of their training regime.

2. Coach accreditation and training

- All coaches will have completed the SMART Rugby online registration prior to the commencement of the 2019 season.
- All coaches will have completed (as a minimum) a practical and theoretical induction and coaching program, delivered by qualified coaches.

3. First aid and medical support

- All schools have adopted the Rugby Australia guidelines for first aid staff and facilities each game day.
- As part of the 'Game Day' protocols, the Directors of Rugby will provide details of first aid and medical support provided on game day to the visiting school's Director of Rugby.
- All schools will adhere to Rugby Australia's guidelines regarding concussion and serious injury protocols.
- All schools will provide an ambulance (or similar vehicle) at the grounds on game day.
- All schools have staff or medical staff who have completed the World Rugby Immediate Care Course.
- All schools will electronically record injuries after each round.
- The Directors of Rugby will review injury rates after the conclusion of Round 5 and again at season's end, to make informed decisions about additional injury prevention measures for the 2020 season.

4. Grounds and facilities

- All schools have conducted a pre-season audit of their training and match facilities.
- All schools will implement Rugby Australia 'Game Day' guidelines.

5. Competition structure

- All schools will adhere to Rugby Australia's Participation Policy by completing the GPS Player Safety checklist in the days prior to weekend matches.
- All schools will consistently apply the Rugby Australia guidelines pertaining to 'Size for Age'.
- All schools will participate in a pre-season grading process to facilitate 'like-for-like' games.
- A Grading Review Panel has been established and will review all grading applications on a week-by-week basis.

The GPS Association Working Group comprises representatives from each GPS school, including Dr. Michael Carroll (GPS Chairman and College Principal, St. Joseph's College, Gregory Terrace), Mr. Peter Fullagar (GPS Executive Committee member and College Principal, St. Joseph's Nudgee College), Mr. Anthony Micallef (GPS Deputy Chairman and Headmaster, Brisbane Grammar School), Mr. Sean Tasker (Director of Sport and Activities, Anglican Church Grammar School), Mr. Nigel Greive (Director of Sport and Activities, Ipswich Grammar School), Mr. Steve Phillpotts (Director of Rugby, Brisbane Boys' College), Mr. Dan Ritchie (Director of Rugby, Brisbane State High School), Mr. Jono Farrell (Director of Rugby, Toowoomba Grammar School), Mr. Bryan Hain (GPS Rugby Sub-Committee Chairman and Director of Sport and Activities, The Southport School) and Ms. Nicole L'Efevre (GPS Executive Officer).

The Working Group will meet during Term 3 to assess the progress of the GPS Rugby season.

In support of the Working Group's activities, many staff at individual schools have been working diligently to ensure the 2019 GPS Rugby Season is the best it can be and the recommendations from the *Rugby Review Report* are successfully implemented to enhance the safety of our rugby players during 2019 and beyond. We look forward to providing you with further updates on our progress.

Sincerely,

The Principals and Headmasters of the nine GPS schools.

Mr. Richard Morrison, Headmaster, Ipswich Grammar School

Mr. Anthony Micallef, Headmaster, Brisbane Grammar School

Dr. Michael Carroll, Principal, St. Joseph's Gregory Terrace

Mr. Peter Hauser, Headmaster, Toowoomba Grammar School

Mr. Peter Fullagar, Principal, St. Joseph's Nudgee College

Mr. Greg Wain, Headmaster, The Southport School

Mr. Paul Brown, Headmaster, Brisbane Boys' College

Dr. Alan Campbell, Headmaster, Anglican Church Grammar School

Mr. Wade Haynes, Executive Principal, Brisbane State High School