



## **SYDNEY RANGERS FC MEMBER PROTECTION POLICY**

**Last updated: July 2022**

### **1. Introduction**

The Sydney Rangers FC's ("the Club") core objective is to foster participation in football in an inclusive environment, free from discrimination and harassment.

### **2. Purpose of our policy**

The main objective of our Member Protection Policy ("our Policy") is to maintain responsible behaviour and ethical and informed decision-making by members and participants in the Club. Our Policy outlines our commitment to a person's right to be treated with respect and dignity, to have their personal information handled in an appropriate manner, and to be safe and protected from abuse.

Whilst the Club's Constitution codifies Club membership and governance, our Policy informs everyone involved in our Club of their particular legal and ethical rights and responsibilities and the standards of behaviour that are required when participating in Club activities. It also specifies the consequences of breaching these standards of behaviour. This Policy is in alignment with Football Federation Australia's Member Protection Policy.

### **3. Who our policy applies to**

Our Policy applies to everyone involved in the Club including Club Officials, individual Members (including Life Members), coaches, managers and spectators. Under the provisions of the Club's Constitution, all Club Members must abide by our Policy, the Code of Conduct and Club Rules.

### **4. Extent of our policy**

Our Policy covers:

- unfair decisions;
- inappropriate handling of personal information by the Club;
- inappropriate behaviour that occurs at practices, meetings, matches, social events organised or sanctioned by the Club, the Association (i.e. Canterbury District Soccer & Football Association), the State Body (i.e. Football NSW), the National Body (i.e. FFA), any other football association which is responsible for management or organisation of a football competition or event and on away or overnight trips; and
- any behaviour that brings or is likely to bring the Club or the game of football into disrepute, including but not limited to breaches of our Code of Conduct, By-Laws and Club Rules/Constitution.

### **5. Club officials' responsibilities**

Club Officials will:

- implement and comply with our Policy, the Code of Conduct and Club By-Laws, Rules/Constitution;
- promote our Policy to everyone involved in the Club;



- promote and model appropriate standards of behaviour at all times;
- respond to alleged breaches or complaints made under our Policy promptly, fairly, and confidentially;
- review this policy every 12–18 months; and
- seek advice from, and if necessary or appropriate, refer serious issues to Association, State Body, National Body (or relevant other association), or, if necessary, to the Police or relevant authority.

Serious issues include unlawful behaviour that involves or could lead to significant harm and includes criminal behaviour (e.g. physical assault, sexual assault) and any other issues that the State Body or National Body request to be referred to them (e.g. where Club Officials have a conflict of interest).

## **6. Individuals' responsibilities**

Everyone associated with the Club must:

- comply with the standards of behaviour outlined in our Policy, the attached Code of Conduct, By-Laws and Club Rules/Constitution;
- treat others with respect;
- be responsible and accountable for their behaviour; and
- follow the guidelines outlined in our Policy if they wish to make a complaint or report a concern about discrimination, harassment or other inappropriate behaviour.

If the Club is participating in a competition organised by the Association or any other association, there will be specific rules and policies which will also apply to the participants in that competition. In those circumstances, participants must comply with those rules and policies as well.

## **7. Harassment, discrimination and bullying**

The Club opposes all forms of harassment, discrimination and bullying.

This includes:

- treating or proposing to treat someone less favourably because of a particular characteristic;
- imposing or intending to impose an unreasonable requirement, condition or practice which has an unequal or disproportionate effect on people with a particular characteristic; and
- any behaviour that is offensive, abusive, belittling, intimidating or threatening — whether this is face-to-face, indirectly, or via communication technologies such as mobile phones and computers.

Some forms of harassment, discrimination and bullying are against the law and are based on particular characteristics such as age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, pregnancy, political or religious beliefs, race and marital status.

The Club takes all claims of harassment, discrimination, bullying and cyber bullying seriously. We encourage anyone who believes they have been harassed, discriminated against or bullied by a Member or associated person to raise the issue with the Club who will respond to the complaint in accordance with our Policy (see *Section 10. Responding to Complaints*).



## **8. Inclusive practices**

The Club is inclusive and welcoming and we invite Members from all areas of our community.

### **8.1 People with disability**

Where possible we will include people with disability in our teams and Club. We will make reasonable adaptations (e.g. modifications to equipment and rules within the Club's control) to enable participation.

### **8.2 People from diverse cultures**

We will support and respect people from diverse cultures and religions to participate in our Club and where possible will accommodate requests for flexibility (e.g. modifications to uniforms).

### **8.3 Sexual and gender identity**

All people, regardless of their sexuality or gender identity, are welcome at our Club. We strive to provide a safe environment for participation and will take action over any discriminatory behaviour.

## **9. Handling of personal information**

The Club respects the privacy of all Members, coaches and managers and only collects personal information that is necessary to carry out its core functions and activities.

The Club's primary purpose for the collection of personal information is the registration of players and teams with the Association. Members' contact details (i.e. email addresses and telephone numbers) are also used by Club Officials, coaches and managers to communicate with Members about football and Club social activities.

We handle all personal information confidentially and will not disclose it to any other person, club or organisation without the relevant individual's consent.

A Member may request access to the personal information held about them by the Club, which will be provided within a reasonable period. If a Member considers any personal information held by the Club to be inaccurate, incomplete or out-of-date, the Club will take reasonable steps to correct that information so that it is accurate, complete and up-to-date.

From time to time the Club publishes photographs of Members, coaches, managers and spectators on its website. During the Club's registration process, Members are provided with the opportunity to request not to have their photographs published on the website and best endeavours are made to ensure that such requests are adhered to by the Club. Any Member, coach, manager or spectator who sees a photograph of themselves on the website that they wish to be removed may contact a Club Official and the photograph will be removed within a reasonable period.



## 10. Responding to complaints

### 10.1 Complaints

The Club takes all complaints about on and off-field behaviour and inappropriate handling of personal information seriously. The Club will handle complaints based on the following principles of procedural fairness:

- all complaints will be taken seriously;
- both the person making the complaint (**complainant**) and the person the complaint is against (**respondent**) will be given full details of what is being said against them and have the opportunity to respond;
- irrelevant matters will not be taken into account;
- decisions will be unbiased and fair; and
- any disciplinary action taken will be conducted in accordance with the Club's Rules/Constitution, which requires, among other things, for a member to be given written notice of the disciplinary charge, the right to attend the hearing and the right to be heard on penalty (if found guilty of the charge or if the member admits the charge)..

More serious complaints may be escalated to the Association, State Body, National Body or the police.

If the complaint relates to suspected physical assault, sexual assault or other criminal activity, then the Club will encourage that behaviour to be reported to the police and/or relevant government authority.

### 10.2 Complaint-handling process

When a complaint is received by the Club, the complaint will be referred to the Club's Committee, who will:

- listen carefully and ask questions to understand the nature and extent of the problem;
- ask what the complainant would like to happen;
- explain the different options available to help resolve the problem;
- take notes; and
- maintain confidentiality but not necessarily anonymity.

Please email [Committee@sydneyrangersfc.com.au](mailto:Committee@sydneyrangersfc.com.au) to begin this process. If the complaint relates to the Club's Committee, the complaint should be directed to the Club Registrar [[registrar@sydneyrangersfc.com.au](mailto:registrar@sydneyrangersfc.com.au)].

Once the complainant decides on their preferred option for resolution, the Club will assist, where appropriate and necessary, with the resolution process. This may involve:

- supporting the complainant to talk to the respondent;
- bringing all the people involved in the complaint together to talk objectively through the problem (this could include external mediation);
- gathering more information (e.g. from other people who may have seen the incident or behaviour);
- seeking advice from third parties (e.g. state department of sport or anti-discrimination



agency);

- referring the complaint to the Association, State Body or National Body; or
- referring the complainant to an external agency such as a community mediation centre, the police or the anti-discrimination agency.

### **10.3 Disciplinary measures**

The Club can take disciplinary action against anyone it considers may have breached our Policy or to have made false and malicious allegations. Any disciplinary measure taken must:

- be applied consistent with any contractual and employment rules and requirements (where such contractual or employment rules and requirements apply to the matter);
- be in accordance with the requirements of the Club's Constitution e.g. a formal disciplinary proceeding involves, among other things, written notice of the charge being given to the member against whom the charge is made, the member having the right to attend the hearing to answer the charge and their right to be heard on penalty if they are found guilty of the charge or admit guilt;
- be based on the evidence and information presented and the seriousness of the breach; and
- be consistent with the codes, rules and policies of the Association, State Body and National Body, where applicable.

Possible measures that may be taken include:

- withdrawal of any awards, records or achievements bestowed in any tournaments, activities or events held or sanctioned by the Club;
- suspension or termination of participation in a Club activity or activities;
- suspension or termination of engagement in a role or roles within the Club; or
- suspension of Club membership for a period of time, or expulsion from the Club's membership;
- a fine; or
- a reprimand.

### **10.4 Investigations into suspected breaches of our Policy by Club Officials**

Irrespective of whether a complaint has been received, Club Officials may initiate an investigation into suspected breaches of our Policy. The process will be led by the Club's President. Disciplinary action may be taken by the Club following the completion of the initial investigation as if a complaint had been received in respect of the suspected breach.

### **10.5 Appeals**

A member registered to play in a competition with the Club and whose ability to play in the competition is affected by a decision of or disciplinary measure imposed by the Club may have the ability to lodge an appeal to the Association, State Body or National Body, as the case may be. However, this will depend on the relevant competition or rules of the relevant Association, State Body or National Body at the relevant time.

Separately, appeals against decisions of the Judiciary Committee of the Association may be made to the Appeals Committee of the Association, in respect of a Judiciary Committee penalty imposed on a player, coach or manager. Grounds for an appeal to the Appeals Committee of the Association are limited to the



following:

- Failure to afford procedural fairness;
- Lack of jurisdiction;
- Insufficient evidence;
- Incorrect interpretation of the Association Constitution, By-Laws or Policies;
- Severity of the penalty.

Additional rules and regulations apply in relation to appeals, as published from time to time by the Association.

An appeal to the Appeals Committee of the Association can be made by completing an incident report and requesting that the Club's Association Delegate submit it to the Association Secretary for consideration by the Association's Protest and Disciplinary Coordinator. Please note that the Association will not accept incident reports from individuals (i.e. the Club's Association Delegate must submit it to the Association on a complainant or respondent's behalf).