



CYBER SAFETY POLICY

[AFL Goldfields Cyber Safety Policy](#)

As adopted by the RDFNL, our club (GISBORNE GIANTS FOOTBALL NETBALL CLUB) is committed to complying with the AFL Goldfields Cyber Safety policy set out below:

Rationale

AFL Goldfields has an obligation to maintain a safe physical and emotional environment for our affiliated leagues, their league officials, staff, registered players, umpires, coaches, club members, parents, spectators and sponsors.

This responsibility is increasingly being linked to the use of the Internet and Information & Communication Technologies (ICT), and has seen the emergence of a number of related Cyber safety issues. The Internet and ICT devices/equipment bring great benefits to all users and to the effective operation of the AFL Victoria, individual leagues and clubs.

AFL Goldfields places a high priority on the acceptable use of ICT devices/equipment which will benefit members however; it recognises that the presence in the sporting arena of these technologies can also facilitate anti-social, inappropriate, and even illegal behaviour and activities. AFL Goldfields aims, therefore, to maximise the benefits of these technologies, while at the same time to minimise the dangers and manage the risks.

Policy

The AFL Goldfields Cyber Safety Policy applies across the Ballarat FNL, Central Highlands FL, Riddell District FNL, Maryborough Castlemaine District FNL, and their affiliated Clubs.

This policy does include all Club, League and AFL Goldfields staff, along with all registered players, umpires, coaches, club members, parents, spectators and sponsors.

AFL Goldfields, its affiliated Leagues and their member clubs will develop and maintain rigorous and effective Cyber safety practices which aim to maximise the benefits of the Internet and ICT and allow for the effective operation of the Leagues and Clubs across the AFL Goldfields Region, whilst minimising and managing any risks.

These Cyber safety practices will aim to not only maintain a cyber safe sporting environment but also to address the needs of the league officials and club members to receive education about the safe and responsible use of present and developing information and communication technologies.

Associated issues that AFL Goldfields will address include the need for relevant education about Cyber safety for the Leagues and their members clubs, the need for ongoing funding for Cyber safety practices through inclusion in the annual budget, implications for the design and delivery of the cyber safety program, the professional development and training, disciplinary responses to breaches of the Cyber safety policy and the availability of appropriate professional support.

AFL Goldfields takes seriously its responsibility in providing robust policy, guidelines and education for its members in relation to what is deemed acceptable and appropriate online behaviours. AFL Goldfields, its affiliated Leagues, clubs (and their motto, crest, logo and/or uniform) must not be used in any way which would result in a negative impact for the league or club and its members. Affiliated Leagues and Clubs of AFL Goldfields have a responsibility to ensure that all online communications are in keeping with the leagues expectations in relation to appropriate and respectful interactions with officials, coaches, umpires, players, parents, spectators and sponsors. Players will not post inappropriate comments about individual AFL Goldfields or League officials, umpires, players, club or club members; which if said in person during the playing of a game would result in disciplinary action being taken.

“Cyber bullying is a way of delivering covert psychological bullying. It uses information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated and hostile behaviour, by an individual or group that is intended to harm others.”(Belsey 2007)

Cyber bullying includes, but is not limited to, the following misuses of technology: harassing, teasing, intimidating, racially vilifying or threatening another person by sending or posting inappropriate and hurtful e-mail messages, instant messages, text messages, phone messages, digital pictures or images, or Web site postings (including social network sites eg facebook or blogs) and the sending, receiving and/or possession of naked or sexually explicit images of a person. Club members

must also be aware that postings from their individual accounts, whether done by themselves or another person will remain the responsibility of the account owner.

AFL Goldfields, its affiliated Leagues and individual clubs must be aware that in certain circumstances where a crime has been committed, they may also be subjected to a criminal investigation by Police over which the league and/or club will have no control. This particularly applies to 'sexting' where the image is of a person under the age of 18 years whereby Police will be informed immediately a club becomes aware of the situation.

This policy applied to all the AFL Goldfields affiliated Leagues, along with their Netball competitions – excluding the Central Highlands Netball Association.

Procedure

AFL Goldfields or league officials, staff, registered players, umpires, coaches, club members, parents, spectators and sponsors who feel that they have been the victims of such misuses of technology should save and store the offending material on their computer, mobile phone or other device. They should then print a copy of the material and immediately report the incident to the relevant club/league representative.

All reports of cyber bullying and other technology misuses will be reported to the AFL Goldfields Regional General Manager or applicable League Operations Manager.

AFL Goldfields or its affiliated League will investigate the matter, and where it believes a breach of the Cyber Safety Policy may have occurred AFL Goldfields or the applicable League may, after considering the evidence and following discussion with both Clubs and with League officials, offer a sanction to the offender/s. Should this sanction be accepted by the offender/s the sanction will be applied immediately and the sanction entered into the players Tribunal history. Where it considers it to be required, AFL Goldfields or the applicable League may notify the Police of the incident.

Should the sanction not be accepted, AFL Goldfields or the applicable League will investigate the matter in accordance with the Investigation Procedure as set out in the AFL Victoria Country By Laws and the allegations will be forwarded to the AFL Goldfields Investigation Officer. Where considered appropriate, AFL Goldfields may also refer the matter to the Police where AFL Goldfields, the League or club is legally obliged to do so, or considers it appropriate.

If AFL Victoria or the AFL Commission or its staff receives a complaint about an online issue, the allegations will be forwarded to the Regional General Manager or League Operations Manager for assessment and further action. If the matter is referred to the Investigations Officer and if he considers there is evidence to support claims of a breach of this policy, charges will be laid and the complaint will proceed

to the AFL Goldfields Independent Tribunal, exactly the same as if the investigation relates to physical violence or other reportable offences.

Penalties

Any proven charges will automatically lead to a minimum of a two (2) match suspension for a registered player. In deciding the final penalty, consideration will be given to the seriousness of the act, the impact on the victim, the impact on the club/league/AFL Victoria and the prior good history or otherwise of the player.

Players charged with these types of offences for a second or subsequent time and where a suspension has been previously imposed will face deregistration. Any player presented before the tribunal for the first or subsequent time on a cyber bullying offence must be aware that the penalties available to the tribunal members will cover the complete range including deregistration.

In the case of a non-playing club member being proved to have engaged in harassment or bullying, the club employing, engaging or otherwise associated with the person at the time of the conduct shall be deemed to be vicariously liable for the conduct of the person and shall pay to the League a penalty to be determined by the league.

Important terms used in this document:

(a) The abbreviation '**ICT**' in this document refers to the term 'Information, Communication and Technologies.

(b) '**Cyber safety**' refers to the safe and responsible use of the Internet and ICT equipment/devices, including mobile phones.

(c) The term '**ICT equipment/devices**' used in this document, includes but is not limited to, computers (such as desktops, laptops, PDAs), storage devices (such as USB and flash memory devices, CDs, DVDs, floppy disks, iPods, MP3 players), cameras (such as video, digital, webcams), all types of mobile phones, video and audio players/receivers (such as portable CD and DVD players), Gaming Consoles, and any other, similar, technologies as they come into use.