

## **Southern Football Netball League (SFNL)**

### **CYBER SAFETY POLICY**



The SFNL has an obligation to maintain a safe physical and emotional environment for 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 Cybersafety issues. The Internet and ICT devices/equipment bring great benefits to all users and to the effective operation of AFL Victoria, individual leagues and clubs.

Inc. No: A0052503J  
ABN: 81 295 351 439  
Level 1, 145 Keys Road  
Moorabbin VIC 3189  
PO Box 1018  
Moorabbin 3189  
Phone: (03) 9553 5644

The SFNL 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. The SFNL aims, therefore, to maximise the benefits of these technologies, while at the same time to minimise the dangers and manage the risks.

### **Underlying Principles**

The policy is written in light of the Mission Statement of AFL Victoria whereby it aims to: Develop, Foster, Co-ordinate and Sustain Australian Football at the Club and League level throughout Victoria

### **Policy**

The SFNL and its member clubs will develop and maintain rigorous and effective Cybersafety practices which aim to maximise the benefits of the Internet and ICT and allow for the effective operation of the SFNL and its member clubs, whilst minimising and managing any risks.

These Cybersafety 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.

The SFNL 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. The League and/or club name, 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. Members of the SFNL and its clubs have a responsibility to ensure that all online communications are in

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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 SFNL 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 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.

All members of the SFNL 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 applies to all SFNL clubs and umpire associations.

## **PROCEDURE**

The SFNL and/or club officials or members 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 SFNL General Manager - Operations.

The SFNL will investigate the matter, and where it believes a breach of the Cyber Safety Policy may have occurred the SFNL may, after considering the evidence, 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, the SFNL may notify the Police of the incident. Should the sanction not be accepted, the SFNL will investigate the matter in accordance with its By-Laws and may result in a notification to Police where the SFNL or club is legally obliged to do so, and

the allegations will be forwarded to the SFNL Investigation Officer. If there is evidence, charges will be laid and the complaint will proceed to the league's 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 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.

Lee Hartman  
Chief Executive Officer – SFNL  
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