



THE GREAT  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS'  
ASSOCIATION OF  
QUEENSLAND



## GPS RUGBY REVIEW WORKING GROUP - UPDATE TERM 1, 2019

Dear Parents

The GPS Association Working Party, established to review the *Rugby Review Report* into the serious spinal injuries experienced by four boys during 2018, has today released its response to the report's recommendations.

The Working Party's highest priority is to ensure changes are made that improve player care and safety.

The GPS Association Working Party 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 Phillipotts (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 Party met regularly during Term 1, 2019 to progress this important work.

A clear objective of the group is to lead the implementation of recommendations from the *Rugby Review Report* and to develop a consistent approach to rugby preparation, coach accreditation and facility management at all GPS rugby venues.

This process has involved reviewing current practices and aims to create new models of competition that encourage boys to play the game in a safe educational context. The Working Party has referenced guidelines, protocols and accreditation from the sport's governing body, Rugby Australia, to develop its best practice standards. Each school is committed to following the guidelines detailed in this letter.

For 2019, the Working Party has identified five key focus areas. They are:

- 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 have been identified for implementation prior to and during the 2019 GPS Rugby season:

1. Player Readiness
  - All players will participate in a minimum pre-season training program.
  - All players, coaches and officials will register on Rugby Xplorer (Rugby Australia's official app and digital network).
  - All U16A, 2nd and 1st XV Front Row players will undertake additional training and assessment under the new Rugby Australia Front Row Passport pilot program.
  - All schools will introduce components of the World Rugby 'Activate' Program as a training and game day warm-up program.
  - All schools will adopt the Rugby Australia 'Confidence in Contact' framework as part of their training regime.
2. Coach Accreditation and Training
  - All coaches will complete the SMART Rugby online registration.
  - All coaches will complete (as a minimum) a practical and theoretical induction and coaching program, delivered by qualified coaches.
3. First Aid and Medical Support
  - All schools will adopt 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.
  - All schools will adhere to Rugby Australia guidelines regarding concussion and serious injury protocols.
4. Grounds and Facilities
  - All schools will conduct a pre-season audit of their training and match facilities.
  - All schools will conduct a 'Game Day' audit of their facilities, as per the Rugby Australia guidelines.
5. Competition Structure
  - 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 further review 'Grading review' process will be conducted at the end of Round 3 of the GPS rugby competition.

The Working Party will continue to meet during Term 2 to further refine the implementation of these initiatives in preparation for the 2019 GPS Rugby season.

We look forward to sharing further information in relation to these important initiatives aimed at ensuring the ongoing care of safety of our rugby players during 2019 and beyond.

Regards,

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*

### **Background to the *Rugby Review Report* and the establishment of the GPS Working Party**

For the past 100 years, the GPS rugby competition has provided thousands of boys with the opportunity to play this wonderful game. Regrettably, in 2018 four students experienced serious injuries whilst playing rugby. As a result of these injuries, the GPS Association, in conjunction with Rugby Australia and the Queensland Rugby Union, convened a Review Committee led by Mr James Bell QC, to investigate these injuries. The Review Report was produced and released on 18 January 2019. The full report can be found on the Rugby Australia website [www.rugbyau.com](http://www.rugbyau.com)