

## 17.5 CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

It is the Club's responsibility to ensure the highest possible standard of welfare and protection for all young people, both male and female, who are under 18 years of age, it has within its care when playing matches, training or practice sessions, travel and at all times they are in the Club's charge.

All adults who work with young people are in a position of trust which has been invested in them by the parents, the sport and the young person. This relationship can be described as one in which the adult is in a position of power and influence by virtue of their position. Sexual activity or inappropriate touching by an adult with a child under the age of 16 years is unlawful, even where there is apparent consent from the child. A consensual sexual relationship between an adult in a position of trust within the rugby setting and a child over 16 years of age is contrary to the Policy and Procedures for the Welfare of Young People in the Sport of Rugby Union.

Adults must not encourage a physical or emotional dependant relationship to develop between the person in a position of trust and a young person in their care.

All those within the organisation have a duty to raise concerns about the behaviour of coaches, officials, volunteers, administrators and professional staff which may be harmful to the children, young people in their care, without prejudice to their own position.

To recognise that abuse does take place in sport and that raising awareness and understanding of the main forms of abuse and establishing communication and reporting procedures if abuse is suspected will further safeguard the children, young players, coaches and all others working within the game.

The Club will appoint a Club Safeguarding Officer who will be responsible for all matters of young people's welfare as outlined in this document and the RFU/RFUW Child/Young Player Protection Policy.

It is widely recognised that there are 4 main areas of abuse that we should all be aware of: **Emotional, Neglect, Physical and Sexual.**

These are outlined in more detail in the Welfare of Young People in Rugby Union Guidance publication.

There may, however, be the risk within rugby union for abuse to occur that does not necessarily fit into the above categories. The culture and traditions of rugby along with stereotypical behaviour, may give rise to unacceptable behaviour leading to situations where abuse may occur and young players are at increased risk.

Safeguarding the welfare of all our young players is paramount. As adult volunteers we have a moral and a legal responsibility to provide the highest possible standard of care.

It is the Club's aim that all coaches and volunteers working with young people should:

- Have a Job Description.
- Have a recognised Child Protection Training (CPT) certificate with Lead coaches qualified to the UKCC Level 1 Certificate in Coaching Rugby Union (or equivalent).
- All assistant coaches to have attended a minimum of an RFU TAG, CLA, Start Rugby, Rugby Ready or equivalent course.
- All coaches to stay up-to-date with rugby coaching and child protection/welfare issues.
- Encourage each Lead coach to attend a Safeguarding & Protecting Young People in Rugby course.
- All coaches, managers, volunteers etc to be given a copy of the Club's Policies and Codes of Conduct and be expected to keep to them at all times.

### **Unacceptable Practices**

- (a) Take young people to their own home or any other place where they will be alone with them.
- (b) Spend any amount of time alone with young people away from others.
- (c) Take young people alone on car journeys, however short.
- (d) If it should arise that such are unavoidable they should only take place with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge in the Club/governing body and/or a person with parental responsibility for the young person. In exceptional circumstances where a coach, manager or volunteer cannot obtain the consent of someone in charge in the Club/governing body and/or person with parental responsibility for the young person then if it is in the welfare interest of the young person, paragraph a) and c) do not have to be followed. If this occurs the adult must record the occurrence with the Club Safeguarding Officer.
- (e) Engage in rough, physical games, sexually provocative games or horseplay with children/young people.
- (f) Take part as a player in any dynamic contact games or training sessions with young people. If there is a need for an adult to facilitate learning within a coaching session through the use of coaching aids e.g. contact pads etc, this should be done with the utmost care and with due regard to the safety of the young players.
- (g) Share a room with a young person unless the individual is the parent/guardian of that young person.
- (h) Engage in any form of inappropriate sexual contact and/or behaviour.
- (i) Allow any form of inappropriate touching.
- (j) Make sexual suggestive remarks to a young person even in fun.

- (k) Use inappropriate language or allow young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- (l) Allow allegations by a young person to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- (m) Do things of a personal nature for a young person that they can do for themselves unless you have been requested to do so by the parents/carer. It is recognised that some young people will always need help with things such as lace tying, adjustment of TAG belts, fitting head guards and the precluding of anyone attending to an injured/ill young person or rendering first aid.
- (n) Depart the rugby club or agreed rendezvous point until the safe dispersal of all young people is complete.
- (o) Cause an individual to lose self esteem by embarrassing, humiliating or undermining the individual.
- (p) Treat some young people more favourably than others.
- (q) Agree to meet a young person on their own on a one to one basis.

### **The Following is MANDATORY**

#### Youth Protection Criminal Records Bureau Accreditation Procedure

All people who have regular supervisory contact with children/young people or in a management role within the club, in whatever capacity, **MUST** be bona fide members of the Club, complete and submit all relevant documentation etc to the Club Safeguarding Officer, undertake the Enhanced Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) check accreditation process within eight weeks of their appointment to a position which involves regular supervisory contact with young people.

CRB disclosures must be conducted through the RFU Child Protection Department who have jurisdiction to deal with any matters arising from such disclosure.

If an individual declines or refuses to go through the CRB accreditation process he/she will not be allowed to be involved in any aspect of work with children or young people within the Club.

The accreditation is recognised for a maximum period of three years, when the process will be carried out again.

### **Procedure in any Instance of Alleged Abuse**

Any concerns about the behaviour or actions of anyone within the Club detrimental to a child's welfare or any instance of child abuse **MUST be reported to the Club's Safeguarding Officer and the County Safeguarding Manager without delay.**

He/she will report this to the relevant Youth Section Chairman and the Club Chairman.

An investigation of the alleged incident will be carried out by the relevant Youth Section Chairman, Club Safeguarding Officers (CSOs) and two Club members of good standing.

Following this investigation the following actions can be taken:

1. That there is no case to answer and no further action required.
2. That the incident was due to poor practice, inexperience or lack of understanding by the person(s) identified.

### **Action**

The person(s) is informed of the correct practice, procedure or policy that should have been followed.

They are made aware of the potential seriousness of the situation and the consequences of their actions.

The person(s) be cautioned or severely cautioned as to his/her future conduct.

3. There is a case to answer and the individual(s) are deemed to be at fault through not following established rules, procedures or guidelines.

### **Action**

Suspended/banned from working with young people.

Suspended/banned from Club membership.

Appropriate authorities informed of the incident.

4. For serious and/or unlawful allegations/offences the appropriate authorities are to be informed without delay.
5. Any concerns or suspicions of child abuse outside the rugby club environment, report these to the Club's Club Safeguarding Officer.
6. If an allegation or concern relates to the Club's Club Safeguarding Officer this should be reported to the Club Chairman who will refer it firstly to the County Safeguarding Manager who will report this to the RFU Safeguarding Executive.

### **In All Cases**

In each of the above cases except number 1 a record of the incident, findings and resultant penalty be kept on the Club file for 5 years.

All the people involved must be kept fully informed of the situation as it progresses.

**We are all responsible for the welfare and safety of young people and vulnerable adults in our care. It is important that if abuse or poor practice is suspected or there are suspicions that it may be happening then this must/should be reported to the CLUB SAFEGUARDING OFFICER.**

**A safe environment benefits young players and adult volunteers alike.**