

HEATH R.U.F.C.



Club Safeguarding Policy

(updated 1st September 2019)

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CONTACT DETAILS

Safeguarding Officer for the Club

Carol McFadden Mob: 07964218850 e-mail: carolsartpad@hotmail.co.uk

Junior Chairman & Secretary

Paul Sutcliffe Mob: 07403064417 e-mail: sprog2010@hotmail.co.uk

Brook Ward Mob: 07835166032 e-mail: brooktward@gmail.com

CB District Safeguarding Manager Yorkshire RFU

Hugh Gumbs Mob 07751480784 e-mail: hughgumbs@hotmail.com

NB. As required all necessary contact numbers for Social Services / Safeguarding Unit are held by the Safeguarding Officer

FOREWORD

The HEATH R.U.F.C (Hereinafter known as 'The Club') has a moral and legal obligation to ensure that it provides the highest possible standard of care for its young players/members.

This Club Safeguarding Policy has been developed to protect both the young players and also the coaches, volunteers and the committee members of the club. The policy is made up of several policies;

- Anti-bullying
- Ethics
- Child protection

It is backed up by a code of conduct and guidelines.

The Club asks all its members for their full co-operation in the implementation of the policy which covers the following key areas.

- The policy defines the responsibility of volunteers to safeguard and promote the interests and well-being of our young players.
- The policy provides a framework for the recruitment, suitability and deployment of our volunteers.
- The policy emphasizes the importance of good conduct by coaches, volunteers, parents and players.
- The policy clearly defines the definition of abuse, raises awareness and establishes the correct reporting procedures if abuse is suspected.
- The policy gives guidance to parents on the care and transportation of children in their care.

Please note the following:

This policy is applied to all young players who are under 18. Within the RFU regulations a male player is permitted to play in the adult game when he reaches his 17th birthday. In these circumstances certain aspects cannot practically apply. However, those responsible for the management of adult teams which include 17 year old players, must at all times be mindful of their safety and well being.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 It is the responsibility of every adult working within rugby union, whether as a professional or volunteer to ensure that all young people can enjoy the sport in a safe enjoyable environment.
- 1.2 The Club recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of its young members by protecting them from physical, emotional or sexual harm and from neglect or bullying of any kind.
- 1.3 The club will ensure that all adults who work with young people are aware of their role and responsibilities and that all training opportunities are made available to them.
- 1.4 The Club will take all reasonable steps to ensure that individuals involved in the game are aware of situations which may compromise their responsibility or position.

2.0 KEY NOTES

- 2.1 Anyone under the age of 18 should be considered as a young person for the purpose of this document.
- 2.2 The welfare of all young people is paramount.
- 2.3 All young people, whatever their age, gender, culture, ability, language, religious beliefs, racial origin and/or sexual identity should be able to take part in rugby union safe from abuse of any kind.
- 2.4 All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- 2.5 Individuals working with young people will be made aware of good practice to ensure they are not placed in situations where allegations could be made.
- 2.6 Any adult who suspects abuse should be made aware that it is their duty to take action.

3.0 DEFINITION AND INDICATIONS OF ABUSE (IN/OUTSIDE THE CLUB)

3.1 Emotional Abuse (Definition)

Exists where a child is denied proper love and affection. This may include situations where the child is constantly shouted at or verbally abused. Emotional abuse is likely to make the child withdrawn and nervous. Another form of emotional abuse is where

the child is constantly over protected which leads to retarded social and emotional development. Emotional abuse may also be found in a rugby situation where the children are subject to unrealistic pressure by parents or trainers. Where the child is given repeated negative feedback and their efforts to progress are ignored or even over-emphasis of the winning ethic.

3.1.1 Emotional Abuse (Indications)

- Low Self-esteem.
- Decline in concentration levels.
- Continual self-depreciation.
- Emotional immaturity.
- Extremes of behaviour.
- Physical, mental and/or emotional lags in their development.
- Overreact to their own mistakes.
- Fear new situations.

3.2 Neglect (Definition)

Exists where an adult fails to meet a child's basic needs of food, warmth, protection etc. Neglect may also be found where children are constantly left alone or unsupervised. Neglect in a sport situation could include a trainer not ensuring a child is safe or exposing it to undue cold or unreasonable physical demands which may result in an unacceptable risk of injury.

3.2.1 Neglect (Indications)

- Constant hunger or tiredness.
- Sudden weight loss.
- Poor personal hygiene.
- Poor state or on appropriate clothing.
- Frequent lateness or absence from the coaching sessions.
- Low self-esteem.
- Poor social peer relationship.
- Untreated medical problems.
- Neurotic behaviour.
- Destructive tendencies.
- Bedwetting / regression.

3.3 Physical Abuse (Definition)

Where a person physically injures or hurts or fails to prevent physical injury (or suffering) to a child. In a rugby situation this may be a coach exposing a young player to exercise/training which disregards the capacity of their immature and growing body. Other examples are:-

- **Coaches/Managers or helpers who expose young players to alcohol or give them the opportunity to drink alcohol below the legal age.**
- **Coaches who expose young players to performance enhancing drugs and recommend that they take them.**

Physical abuse covers a wide range of injuries that could lead to short/long term effects in the child's health and their overall well-being. Such injuries can be caused in a number of ways:-

Hitting	Shaking	Squeezing	Burning/scalding
Biting	Drugs	Poison	Alcohol
Suffocation	Drowning	Neglect	Injurious items
Animals	Other children		

3.3.1 Physical Abuse (Indications)

- Current unexplained injuries.
- Inappropriate excuses to explain injury.
- Reluctance to discuss injuries.
- Untreated injury.
- Admission of punishment which appears excessive.
- Withdrawal from physical contact.
- Arms and legs kept covered even in hot weather.
- Fear of returning home.
- Fear of medical help.
- Self destructive tendencies.
- Aggression towards others.
- Running away.

3.4 Sexual Abuse (Definition)

Where a person uses a child or adolescent sexually for their own gratification. This includes indecent exposure, indecent words or suggestions, fondling, oral and anal sex, masturbation and showing pornographic material as well as full sexual intercourse. Sexual abuse can be committed by both male and females. In a rugby situation the close proximity of coaches and others to young people provides opportunities for potential abusers to exploit their position of trust to sexually abuse.

3.4.1 Sexual Abuse (Indications)

- Having soreness or bleeding in the throat, genital or anal areas.
- Regression to much younger behavioural pattern.
- Unexplained changes in behaviour.
- Behaving in a way sexually inappropriate to their age and being obsessed with sexual matters, as opposed to normal exploration.
- Staring blankly, seeming to be unhappy, confused or sad.
- Appearing to be bothered or worried but not willing to talk about this.
- Becoming aggressive and hurtful.
- Distrust of adults.
- Inappropriate language.
- Inappropriate sexual awareness.

4.0 RESPONDING TO DISCLOSURE, SUSPICIONS AND ALLEGATIONS

It is **NOT** the responsibility of club volunteers to decide that abuse is occurring, but it **IS** their responsibility to take action and report on any concerns.

4.1 Principles to be adopted

In all cases of reported poor practice/abuse the following principles must always be adopted.

DO:

- Stay calm – do not rush into inappropriate action. React calmly in order not to alarm the young person.
- Reassure the child – that they are not to blame and confirm that you know how difficult it must be to confide.
- Listen sympathetically – to what the child says and show that you take them seriously.
- Keep questions to a minimum – the law is very strict and child abuse cases have been dismissed where the child has been led or words and ideas have been suggested. Only ask questions to clarify.
- Ensure you clearly understand what the child has said – in order that the information can be passed on to the appropriate agencies.
- Consult with the Clubs Child Protection Officer – ensuring that you communicate all the information accurately.
- Maintain confidentiality – complete an incident report form (available from the C.P.O./Junior Secretary). All incidents will be treated with an ‘open mind’ and be handled in a fair and equitable manner. Confidentiality must be maintained until a case is proven.
- Ensure the safety of the young person – if urgent medical attention is required the call an ambulance, inform the doctor of the concerns and ensure they are aware that this is a child protection issue.

DO NOT:

- Panic or allow your feelings to be evident.
- Make promises you cannot keep – explain that you will need to tell other people.
- Make the child repeat the story unnecessarily.
- Delay.
- Speculate or make assumptions.
- Approach the alleged abuser.
- Take sole responsibility.

4.2 Record a report

Information passed to external agencies must be as helpful as possible. It will be necessary to make a detailed report at the time of disclosure. The report should contain the following details:

- The young person's name, address, date of birth, race, ethnic origin and any disability they may have.
- Nature of the allegation.
- A description of any injuries/bruising.
- Any observations about the behaviour/emotional state of the young person.
- Times, locations, dates.
- The young person's account in their own words of what has happened.
- Actions that have been taken as a result of your concerns.
- Whether the person writing the report is expressing their own concerns or those of the third party.
- Sign and date.
- Keep a copy.

4.3 DO NOT INVESTIGATE YOURSELF

IMMEDIATELY CONTACT THE SAFEGUARDING OFFICER WHO WILL TAKE THE APPROPRIATE ACTION. (In the absence of the Safeguarding Officer the Junior Club Secretary Deputises).

5.0 TAKING APPROPRIATE ACTION

CONCERNS ABOUT POOR PRACTICE AND POSSIBLE ABUSE WITHIN THE CLUB.

This would relate to anyone working with young people in a paid or voluntary capacity e.g. volunteer coaches, club helpers, club members or staff.

Child abuse can and does occur outside the family setting. It is crucial that those involved with the Club and rugby union are aware of the possibility and that all allegations are taken seriously and appropriate actions pursued.

Allegations often relate to poor practice where an adult's behaviour is inappropriate and may be causing concern to a young person, colleague or parents.

Poor Practice constitutes any behaviour which contravenes the Coaches and Parents Code of Conduct (See 9.0 Good Practice).

5.1 If a young person informs you.

If a young person informs you that he/she is concerned about someone's behaviour towards them in the rugby setting, the steps in 4.0 Responding to Disclosure, Suspicions and Allegations must be followed.

If the allegation is that of poor practice, the Safeguarding Officer will:

- Report the matter to the RFU Ethics and Equity Manager.

If the allegation is one of abuse then the Safeguarding Officer will:

- Ascertain whether the young person needs medical attention and phone an ambulance.
- Refer the allegation to Police or Social Services. They will give further advice.
- Inform the RFU Ethics and Equity Manager and forward a written report (Appendix 3).

5.2 Observation

ACTION TO TAKE IF YOU BECOME AWARE THROUGH YOUR OWN OBSERVATIONS OR THROUGH A THIRD PARTY OF POSSIBLE ABUSE OCCURRING AT A YOUNG PERSONS HOME OR IN SOME OTHER SETTING (OUTSIDE OF RUGBY).

If this happens you should:

- Ensure the safety of the young person – if he/she requires immediate treatment, call an ambulance, inform the doctors of your concern and ensure they are aware that this is a safeguarding issue.
- Follow the instructions in 4.1 and 4.2.

5.3 Please Remember

In all cases please always remember the following:

- It is often more difficult for some young people to disclose abuse than others. Young people from ethnic minorities may have regularly experienced racism, which may lead them to believe that certain groups, including those in authority do not really care about their well-being. They may well feel they have a good reason to question whether the response may be different.
- Disabled young people may have to overcome additional barriers before feeling that they can disclose abuse. They may rely on the abuser for their daily care and not know of alternative sources of care. The abuse may be the only attention/affection they have experienced. There may be communication differences and they will almost certainly have to overcome prejudices which block our willingness to believe they may be abused or to use their medical condition to explain away indicators which in a non-disabled young person would concern us.

These groups of people need us to be extra vigilant and to give thought as to how we will respond.

5.4 Maintain Confidentiality

In all cases every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained.

Information should be handled on a need to know basis. This will include the following people:

- The Clubs Safeguarding Officer/ or Acting SGO.
- The person making the allegation.
- Social Services and Police.
- The parents of the young person alleged to have been abused.

6.0 ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Bullying is not always easy to define and may not always be an adult abusing the young person. It is often the case that the bully is a young person. There are three main types of bullying.

1. Physical e.g. hitting, kicking, theft.
2. Verbal e.g. racist or homophobic remarks.
3. Emotional e.g. persistent negative feedback.

The club takes bullying very seriously. Any incidents will be investigated and anyone found to be bullying may be subject to an interview. After an interview appropriate action may be requested of the perpetrator.

Appropriate action may be:

- Obtain an apology from the bully(ies) to the victim.
- Inform parents of the bully(ies).
- Insist on the return of items 'borrowed' or stolen.
- Insist bullies compensate the victim.
- Hold club/team discussions about bullying.
- Provide support for the coach of the victim.

The club takes bullying very seriously and will deal with any bullying incidents accordingly. Steps to prevent bullying are included within the Code of Conduct for Players.

7.0 Equity Policy

This club is committed to ensuring that equity is incorporated across all aspects of its development. In doing so it acknowledges and adopts the following Sport England definition of sports equity:

Sports equity is about fairness in sport, equality of access, recognising inequalities and taking steps to address them. It is about changing the culture and structure of sport to ensure it becomes equally accessible to everyone in society.

The Club respects the rights, dignity and worth of every person and will treat everyone equally within the context of their sport, regardless of age, ability, gender, race, ethnicity, religious belief, sexuality or social/economic status.

The club is committed to everyone having the right to enjoy their sport in an environment free from threat of intimidation, harassment and abuse.

All club members have a responsibility to oppose discriminatory behaviour and promote equality of opportunity.

The club will deal with any incidence of discriminatory behaviour seriously, according to the club disciplinary procedures.

8.0 RECRUITMENT OF STAFF, COACHES AND VOLUNTEERS

Anyone may have the potential to abuse young people in some way. The Club takes its role seriously and will take reasonable steps to ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from working with their young people.

The following checks will take place to ensure the protection of the young people:

- All adults who are in contact with young people, whether paid or voluntary will complete an application form.
- All adults who have 'regular supervisory contact with young people' will undertake DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check. These adults will include:
 1. Committee Members
 2. All Coaches/Assistant Coaches
 3. Team Managers
 4. Referees
- Two written references will be taken up (if appropriate).
- All volunteers will undergo an informal induction which:
 1. Coaching qualifications, if applicable, are verified.
 2. Training needs are identified
 3. Appropriate Codes of Conduct/Good Practice are signed.
 4. The roles, responsibilities and expectations of the job are clarified.
 5. Safeguarding procedures are explained and training needs established.

9.0 GOOD PRACTICE

Codes of conduct will ensure that all young members and the individuals who work with them within the game are in a safe environment. When working with young people, coaches and officials must adopt the following guidance. Each coach will be given a copy of the following code of conduct which must be signed and returned to the Safeguarding Officer.

9.1 Code of Conduct for Coaches

Always be publicly open when working with young people. Avoid situations where you and an individual child are completely unobserved.

Rugby is a physical game. Situations will occur when, in order to teach or coach certain techniques it is necessary to make contact with the player. However, the following must apply:

- Parents and young players must be made aware of situations in which this may happen when they join the club.
- Physical handling should only be used for safety reasons or where there is no other way of coaching the technique.

Contact or touching which is inappropriate (not directly related to the coaching context) or aggressive will **NOT** be tolerated.

Teams are to be supervised in changing rooms, by two DBS checked adults of the appropriate gender. Coaches will have separate changing rooms. Only coaches and DBS checked adults will be admitted to the changing rooms. Coaches must be vigilant whilst in the changing room.

Attention will always be given to gender. Females will be given separate changing rooms.

Volunteers will respect the rights and dignity of all and treat them with equality.

Coaches must place the well being and safety of the player above the development of performance. Coaches should:

- Avoid overplaying of players (particularly talented players). All players need and deserve equal opportunity to play.
- Remember that young people play for fun and enjoyment and that winning is only part of it.
- Motivate youngsters through positive feedback and constructive criticism.
- Ensure that contact skills are taught in a safe, secure manner, paying due regard to the physical development of young players.
- Never allow young players to train/play when injured.
- Ensure equipment and facilities are safe and appropriate to the age and ability of the players.

Coaches should hold a current RFU coaching award or recognised award.

Coaches should keep up to date with knowledge and technical skill and should be aware of their own limitations. Coaches should only work within the limitations of their knowledge and qualifications.

Coaches must ensure that the activities which they direct or advocate are appropriate to the age, maturity and ability of their players.

Coaches should always promote the positive aspects of their sport (e.g. fair play) and never condone law violations or use of prohibited substances.

Coaches must consistently display high standards of personal behaviour and appearance.

Coaches should refrain from smoking in the presence of children.

Coaches should never overtly criticise players or use language actions which may cause the players to lose self esteem or confidence.

Young players should not be allowed to drink alcohol or encouraged to drink alcohol if they are under the legal age to do so.

Prohibited Practice

Everyone should also be aware that as a general rule, it does not make sense for a coach to:

- Spend amounts of time alone with children away from others.
- Take children alone on car journeys, however short.
- Take young people to their home or other secluded place where they will be alone.
- Engage in rough physical games, sexually provocative games or horseplay with young people.
- Take part in any dynamic 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, this should be done with utmost care and with due regard to the safety and well-being of young players.
- Allow any form of inappropriate touching or make sexual suggestive remarks to a young player, even in fun.
- Use inappropriate language or allow young players to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Allow allegations by a young person to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Do things of a personal nature for a young person that they can do for themselves. (Please note that it is recognised that some young people will always need help with things such as lace tying, adjustment of tag belts fitting, head guards, etc).
- Depart the rugby club until the safe dispersal of all young people is complete.

If it should arise that such situations are unavoidable they should only take place with full knowledge and consent of a Committee Member and/or a person with parental responsibility for the player.

If a coach accidentally hurts a player or causes distress in any manner or the player appears to respond in a sexual manner to your actions, misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done, report the incident to a colleague supported by a written report of the incident as soon as possible. Parents/carers should also be informed of the occurrence.

9.2 Code of Conduct for Match Officials

When refereeing young players, match officials should:

- Recognise the importance of fun and enjoyment when officiating young players.
- Provide verbal feedback in a positive way during games.
- Appreciate the needs of the players.
- Be a positive role model.
- Recognise that safety is paramount.
- Explain decisions – most young players are still learning.
- Never tolerate verbal abuse.

Officials should not:

- Change in the same area as young players.
- Shower with young players – agree a timetable with the coaches.
- Be alone with young players at any time – if a young player comes into the dressing room, ensure another adult is present.
- Check studs without the coach being present.
- Administer first aid.

- Allow a young player to continue playing if there are doubts about their fitness.
- Tolerate bad language from young players.
- Engage in any inappropriate contact with young players.
- Give a lift to a player unless there are other young people or adults in the car and the parents are aware.
- Take a young player to your home.
- Overtly criticise young players or use language which may cause the player to lose confidence or self-esteem.
- Make sexual explicit remarks to young players, even in fun.

Officials must always:

- Report in writing to the Club Safeguarding Officer and/or Junior Secretary, behaviour by adults which you feel contravenes RFU Safeguarding Policy:
 - Verbal bullying by coaches/parents/spectators.
 - Physical abuse by coaches/parents/spectators.
 - Inappropriate or aggressive contact by an adult to a young person.
 - Verbal abuse directed at the official by young people or adults.

9.3 Code of Conduct for Parents

Parents should be made aware of their role in protecting the young people of the club and should read the following Code of Conduct.

DO:

- Get to know your child's coach – the coach will play an important role in your child's development.

- Respect the coach's opinion – he/she should be more knowledgeable than you.
- Establish clear lines of communications – find out when it is convenient and appropriate to contact the coach.
- Encourage your child to improve his/her skills through coaching sessions.
- Teach your child that winning isn't everything – it is important to recognise and reward effort.
- Encourage your child to play by the rules.
- Set a good example – applaud players on both sides.
- Remember your child takes part for their enjoyment, not yours.

DON'T:

- Yell at your child or other children for making a mistake – they are all trying their hardest.
- Ignore any bad behaviour, cheating or bad manners by your child – reasonable prompt action is appropriate.
- Coach from the sidelines – if you want to get involved talk to the coach after the competition.
- Abuse the official – they are volunteers and your child cannot play without them.

Parents should note that the club rules state that no child under the age of 12 may be left at the club without a guardian/approved carer.

Parents should note that only approved people displaying the correct ID badge containing their DBS number may enter the changing rooms. The club recognises that this may be a problem for the children in the U7's/U8's age

groups. A changing room has been set aside for these children who **MUST** be accompanied by an adult.

9.4 Code of Conduct for Young Players

- Participate for the 'fun of it', not just to please your parents or coach.
- Play fairly – treat all other participants as you yourself would like to be treated.
- Work equally hard for yourself and your team mates – your team's performance will benefit and so will your own.
- Co-operate and listen to your coach and competition officials – they are more knowledgeable than you.
- Speak to an adult if you are unhappy about anything.
- Speak to an adult if you feel another young player is being bullied.

APPENDIX A – PHOTOGRAPHY

The club follows the general guidelines of the RFU. Should any parent have any particular concerns regarding photography, they must speak to the Safeguarding Officer / Junior Secretary.

APPENDIX B – TRANSPORTATION OF CHILDREN

Whilst it is recognised that some teams rely on volunteers taking children to matches in their private cars, this is not recommended good practice.

Any parent who continues to take children in private cars should note the following:

- Drivers should ensure their car insurance covers them for taking other people's children in their car. What would happen if the parent sued the driver following an accident causing injury to their child?
- Parents insured to carry children in their cars should sign a declaration stating this. The Junior Secretary will keep a register of all such drivers.
- A consent form must be obtained by the driver from the parent of the child. (Forms available from the Junior Secretary).
- Drivers should ensure there is always another adult in the car when driving children. Never allow drivers to be alone with children to protect the child from abuse or the driver from false allegations.

APPENDIX C – CYBER GUIDANCE – WEBSITE AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

Electronic communications and the club website are a key part of the daily operation of the club. The club complies with the guidance provided by the RFU in its "Safeguarding Toolkit" to ensure that no inappropriate materials or links are included

on its website, and that distribution groups for e-mails and apps always include both the young person and their parent. Coaches and club officials must not communicate with young people through social networking sites such as Facebook; coaches should not be “friends” with the children they coach. Communications by telephone should be with the parent.

For further guidance please refer to the RFU “Safeguarding Toolkit”:

<http://www.englandrugby.com/governance/safeguarding/policy-and-guidance>

APPENDIX D – TOURING WITH CHILDREN

The Club will implement the RFU guidance “Touring with Children” when considering arrangements for any club tours. This guidance includes:-

- Information/briefing requirements for parents their children, and any volunteers;
- Ensuring that those supervising have had an RFU DBS check
- Ensuring adequate rotas for supervision are in place at all times, with first aid trained officials, both whilst travelling and at the tour site
- Appropriate vetting and allocation of accommodation
- Emergency procedures
- Notification of the RFU with respect to insurance
- Completion of a risk assessment and tour planning checklist

Club officials organising tours will consult with the more detailed guidance provided by the RFU document “Touring with Children”:

http://www.englandrugby.com/mm/Document/General/General/01/31/70/61/SafeguardingUpdates_RFU_Version3_colour_English.pdf

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