

NRU Safeguarding



**TEAMWORK
RESPECT
ENJOYMENT
DISCIPLINE
SPORTSMANSHIP**

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Safeguarding Guidance and Code of Conduct for Club Coaches and Volunteers

This document provides a summary of what is required by coaches and team managers of mini and youth teams to ensure best practice. If this is followed by all staff and volunteers, they will be supported and protected as they carry out their roles.

If you have any queries or concerns about Safeguarding, you should first contact your Club Safeguarding Office who will be able to help.

All adults that supervise children and vulnerable adults on a regular basis, such as coaches, must have an enhanced **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Certificate** processed and risk assessed by the RFU. This must be obtained **before** working unsupervised with children.

It is important that you have read and understood the Guidance and Practice in the **Safeguarding Toolkit** and have attended a **RFU Safeguarding Course**. Examples of poor practice may be:

- ⤴ Shouting/ abusive language
- ⤴ Excessive Training and training/playing in extreme weather conditions
- ⤴ Not allowing players of different abilities to develop and play together
- ⤴ Ridicule of player errors
- ⤴ Ignoring Health and Safety Guidelines
- ⤴ Abuse of match officials
- ⤴ Failing to adhere to the club's code of conduct

It is important that you have read and understood the **Northumberland Rugby Union (NRU) Cyber Policy and Guidance**. Coaches and officials should never contact individual children directly through social media or phone. They should always include a parent, official or other players.

Any inappropriate or aggressive contact or touching between adults and children is unacceptable. Adults and children must **never** play contact versions of the sport together including training games and contact skills.

In order to play a player up or down an age grade, coaches must follow the regulations issued by the RFU in **Regulation 15 and the Protocols issued by NRU**. Permission **must** be obtained from the NRU Hon. Secretary **before** playing a player up or down an age grade.

Adults who wish to take children on tour must follow the guidance in '**Touring with Children and Vulnerable Adults**', complete the required forms and obtain permission from their club, NRU and for tours outside the UK and Ireland, the RFU.

It is against the law to sell alcohol to someone under 18 years and for an adult to buy alcohol on behalf of someone under 18 years. As role models adults should avoid excessive drinking in their presence and ensure that at least one nominated person does not drink alcohol.

Safeguarding - Overview

On all occasions the RFU and NRU consider the welfare of the child paramount.

Children are the lifeblood of the game and it is crucial that they are cared for in the correct manner. Any player under the age of 18 is classed as a child and should be respected as such.

The *RFU Safeguarding Guidance & Code of Conduct* sets out the key principles as well as providing best practice guidance. **Everyone shares the responsibility** for safeguarding and, therefore, this policy and guidance will be both relevant and useful for all those involved in creating safe environments in rugby union whether as a parent, coach, spectator or club official.

In order to provide children with the best possible experiences and opportunities in rugby union, **it is imperative** that everyone operates within an accepted ethical framework and demonstrates exemplary behaviour. This not only ensures the game makes a positive contribution to the development of children, safeguards them and promotes their welfare but also protects all personnel from allegations of abuse or poor practice.

If you have any queries or concerns about Safeguarding, you should first contact your Club Safeguarding Officer who will be able to help you.

Allegations of abuse or poor practice must be reported to the RFU via your Club Safeguarding Officer (CSO) or CB Safeguarding Manager. **It is important** when reporting an incident that the RFU are informed as soon as possible in order to effectively manage any case or concern.

To promote and maintain good safeguarding practices, the RFU created and regularly deliver safeguarding courses. These courses are held throughout the country and are designed for all individuals within a rugby environment. **It is recommended** that all NRU Clubs hold a Play It Safe course every two years and a representative from each Age-Grade has attended at least one RFU approved safeguarding course.

The RFU utilises the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) to operate and manage a criminal record checking process for those working with children or vulnerable adults. A conviction or caution does not necessarily impede an individual's future in the game; each situation is considered in relation to the individual circumstances. All adults working with children or vulnerable adults in NRU Clubs must hold a current DBS check.

Every club that runs mini/midi/youth rugby must have a Club Safeguarding Officer. **It is important** that NRU Clubs make all players, parents, coaches and officials aware of how to contact their CSO. It is recommended that the following poster is downloaded and displayed around your Club:

http://www.englandrugby.com/mm/Document/General/General/01/31/70/37/RFUCSOPoster_English.pdf

The following is an extract from the RFU Initial Issue/Concern Reporting Form that can be downloaded from:

<http://www.englandrugby.com/governance/safeguarding/reporting-and-incident>

Initial Issue/Concern Reporting Form

Name of child/adult:	Address:
Male/Female	
Age/Date of Birth:	Club: Age Grade:
What is the concern? (include details of the person whose behaviour has raised concerns)	
When and where did this concern/incident occur?	
Do you have any other comments?	
Your name:	Club: Club Role:
Address:	

What should be reported?

The welfare of the child is paramount. In order to assist the RFU and your club in upholding this principle you are asked to complete the form for any issues/concerns or incidents. When completing the form please give full names and their club roles. Concerns may be about the behaviour of any child or adult involved or spectating at your club and *could* include:

- General concerns about a child's welfare
- Concerns related to a safeguarding incident e.g. bullying or poor practice
- Concerns, Suspicions or allegations of misconduct
- Breaches of the RFU Core Values or your club Code of Conduct
- Allegations of abuse made by or against any child or adult

To discuss a specific concern or issue contact your Club Safeguarding Officer or your Constituent Body Safeguarding Manager [Alan Heinzman] in the first instance.

Safeguarding – Advice for Children

Rugby is fun - it gives you the opportunity to make new friends, try out new activities and amaze yourself with what you can do!

But for a few children the fun is spoilt by adults who do or say things during sporting activities that hurt or frighten them. What these children are experiencing may be abuse. And they may feel they have no one to talk to about it. Or that no one will listen to them or believe what they say.

Is something worrying you? Don't keep it to yourself

- Tell an adult you trust as soon as possible. This could be: a parent or someone else in your family; another member of staff at the club; a teacher or school counsellor; your doctor or school nurse.

Your club will have a Club Safeguarding Officer who will have a good knowledge of the RFU guidance on safeguarding children in rugby. The Safeguarding Officer is there for all children involved in rugby and makes the needs of these a priority. If you have a concern about yourself or another child, how you are being treated by others or something that is making you unhappy your Club Safeguarding Officer is there for you.

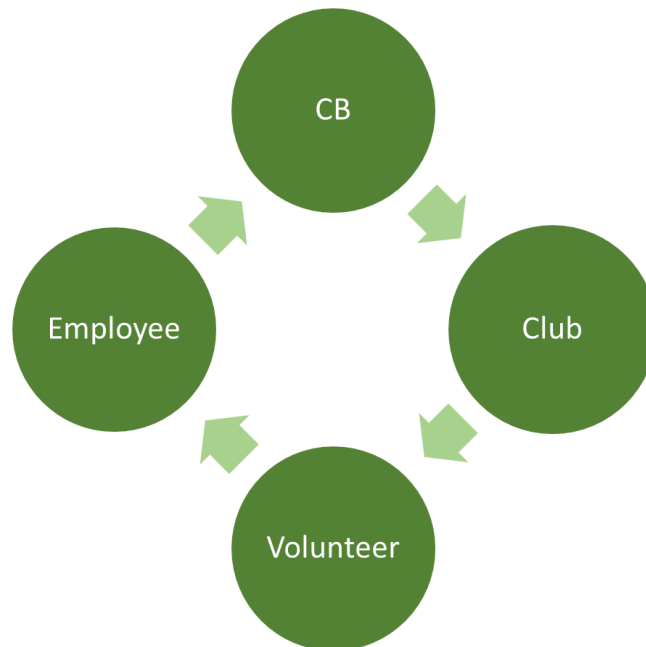
- Find out who they are and tell them about your worries.
- Make sure you are not alone again with the person who has tried to harm you.

ChildLine

ChildLine is the free, 24-hour helpline for children and young people in the UK. You can call about any problem, at any time - day or night. Call 0800 1111.

Think U Know

www.thinkuknow.co.uk offers age relevant guidance, videos, games and top tips for children of all ages



The CB

Appoints and manages a CB Safeguarding Manager and, where appropriate, a deputy. Ensures that the CBSM has representation or a reporting mechanism within the CB structure

Conducts a Safeguarding Audit on a minimum of 10% of member clubs per year.

Ensures that each club running activity for children has its own safeguarding policy which reinforces the RFU Safeguarding Policy and procedures which reflect each club's unique local circumstances

Co-ordinates the management of DBS disclosures through the CBSM

Ensures that all safeguarding incidents or issues are reported to the RFU Safeguarding team and manages disciplinary cases referred back to the CB by the RFU

The Club

Appoints a Club Safeguarding Officer (CSO), and where appropriate a deputy, as the first point of contact for safeguarding and welfare concerns

Ensures that the CSO: is a member of, or attends the appropriate club committees making safeguarding issues a priority at the proper level; and works in accordance with the Safeguarding Toolkit

Develops a safeguarding training plan ensuring that as a minimum: the CSO attends an “In Touch” Workshop within six months of taking up the post, each mini and youth age group has at least one person who has attended the “Play It Safe” course

Informs all members, parents and children when a new CSO is appointed

Publishes the club’s own safeguarding policy which reinforces the RFU Safeguarding Policy and procedures which reflects the unique local circumstances for that club and makes it accessible to all members

Ensures all club officers and committee members are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities

Ensures that at any youth disciplinary panel the CSO supports the child and ensures the panel considers the child’s emotional wellbeing throughout

Identifies any signs of harm and reports them to the CBSM and/or the RFU Safeguarding team

Ensures that the club’s children’s workforce have up-to-date DBS checks in accordance with Best Practice Guidance and Regulation 21.

The Volunteer and the Employee

Works towards creating a safe, friendly and welcoming environment and treats children with respect in accordance with the Core Values

Understands and complies with their club’s safeguarding policy

Aims to follow all guidance in this document [RFU Safeguarding Policy Guidance and Procedures] when working with children

Completes any training considered appropriate for their role

Those working in Regulated Activity have an enhanced DBS disclosure processed and cleared by the RFU, in accordance with RFU Regulations

Safeguarding – Types of Abuse

There are four main types of abuse: **physical, sexual, emotional and neglect.**

An individual may abuse or neglect a child directly or may be responsible for abuse by failing to prevent another person harming that child.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

Examples of physical abuse in sport include extreme physical punishments; forcing a child into training and competition that exceeds the capacity of his or her immature and growing body or limitations of a disability; assaulting a person; or where the child is given drugs to enhance performance or in the case of a child, delay puberty.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing a child to take part in sexual activities, which may involve inappropriate touching, penetrative or non-penetrative sexual acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual photographic or online images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on their development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing them from participating in normal social interaction. Emotional abuse may involve a child seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another as well as serious bullying, causing children to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may also occur alone.

Examples of emotional abuse in sport include subjecting children to constant criticism, name-calling, and sarcasm or bullying. It could also include their regular exclusion from an activity, non-selection for a team, failing to rotate squad positions or more subtle actions such as staring at or ignoring a child. Putting players under consistent pressure to perform to unrealistically high standards is also a form of emotional abuse.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of their health or development. Neglect may involve a parent failing to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment), failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, or to ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers) or to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Examples of neglect in sport could include: not ensuring children are safe; exposing them to undue cold or heat or unsuitable weather conditions, or exposing them to unnecessary risk of injury.

Other considerations:

Bullying

Bullying is often considered to be a fifth type of abuse but when it does occur it usually has elements of one or more of the four categories identified. The bully can be a parent who pushes too hard, a coach or manager with a '**win at all costs**' (*) attitude or another intimidating child. It should also be recognised that bullying can take place in the virtual world of social networking sites, emails or text messages. Bullying should not be ignored and the victim should be supported through what can be a traumatic experience. Bullying will not just go away. Bullies can be very cunning and develop strategies to avoid it being seen by anyone but the victim. Bullying takes many forms but ultimately it is the perception of the victim that determines whether or not they are being bullied rather than the intention of the bully. There are opportunities to bully at any rugby club or activity. It is the way that incidences are dealt with which makes the difference between life being tolerable or becoming a misery for the victim.

Poor Practice

Incidents of poor practice arise when the needs of children are not afforded the necessary priority, compromising their wellbeing. Poor practice can easily turn into abuse if it is not dealt with as soon as concerns are raised or reported. Examples of poor practice may be **shouting, excessive training, creation of intra-club 'elite squads', ridicule of players' errors, ignoring health and safety guidelines (*)** and failing to adhere to the club's code of conduct.

*** These issues are addressed in the Age-Grade Rugby Guidance Document June 2016 (and supported by NRU) that is available to download from:**

<http://northumberlandrugbyunion.com/filecache/604/4b0/14376-age-grade-guidance--july-2016.pdf>

Safeguarding – Best Practice

Please refer to the following link for full details of best practice guidance for:

http://www.englandrugby.com/mm/Document/MyRugby/Volunteers/01/30/36/55/RFU_Safeguarding_Policy_Guidance_and_Procedures_Neutral.pdf

- Safe environments
- Recruitment
- Training
- Supervision
- Adult - Child ratios
- On Tour
- Inappropriate relationships with children
- Safeguarding disabled children
- Good role models
- Alcohol
- Contact rugby
- Coaching techniques
- Physical intervention
- Changing rooms & showers
- Transportation
- Photographic images
- Sharing of electronic material/media

Safeguarding – Procedures

How to react to concerns about the welfare and safety of children Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility. This means that everyone in rugby has a responsibility to respond to any concerns that they or others, may have about a child, or the behaviour of an adult. This relates to concerns which arise both within the rugby environment and outside of the rugby environment.

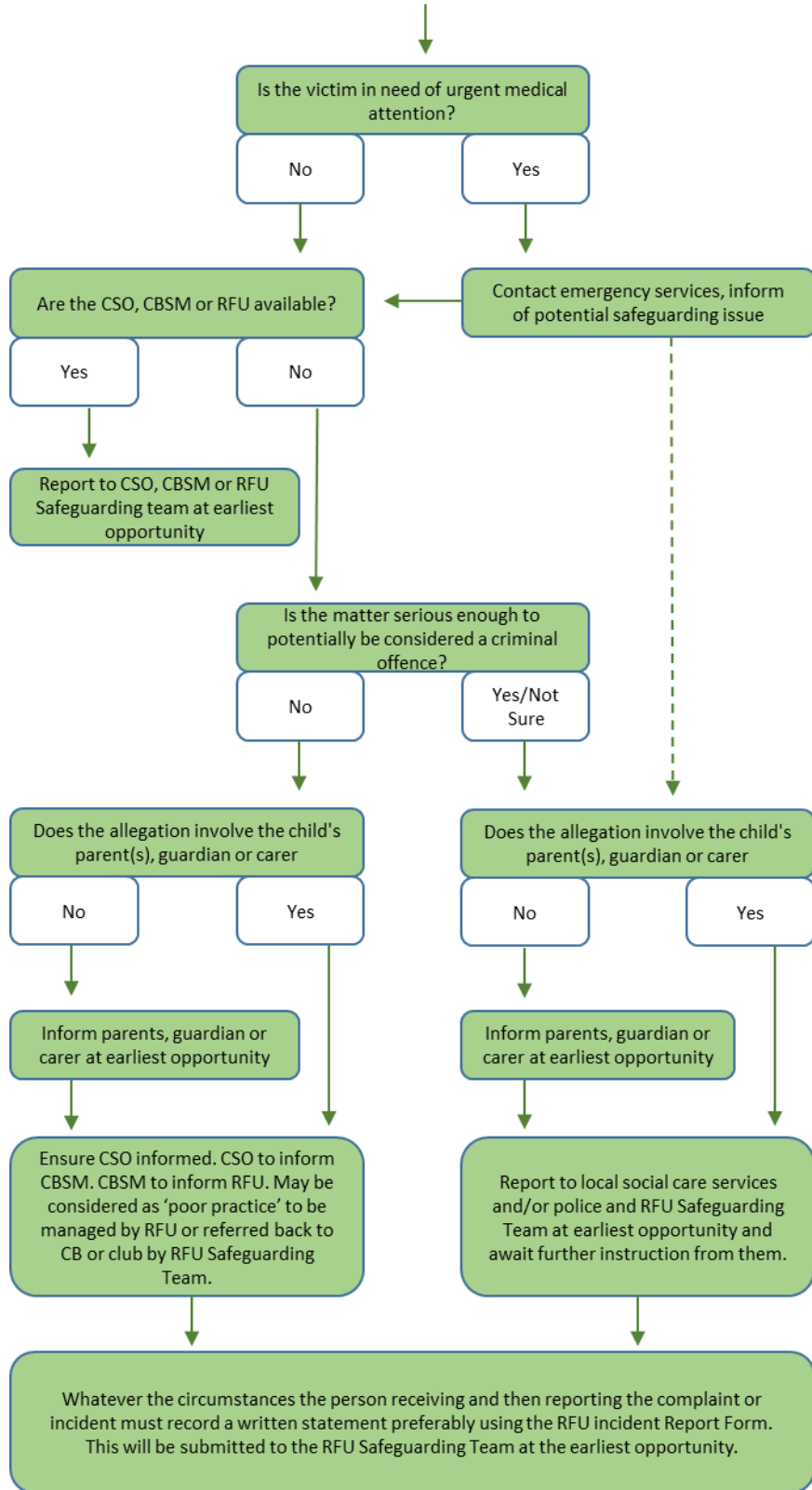
Please refer to the following link for full details of the procedures to follow if a child has disclosed concerning information to you OR you have witnessed or had reported to you an incident or complaint involving the behaviour of an adult in relation to a child, which may be considered abuse or poor practice

http://www.englandrugby.com/mm/Document/MyRugby/Volunteers/01/30/36/55/RFU_Safeguarding_Policy_Guidance_and_Procedures_Neutral.pdf

The flow chart on the following page can be used for guidance as to how to respond to a concern.

A child has disclosed concerning information to you OR you have witnessed or had reported to you an incident or complaint involving the behaviour of an adult in relation to a child, which may be considered abuse or poor practice

STAY CALM – REASSURE – NO PROMISES – FEW QUESTIONS – FOLLOW GUIDE



Safeguarding – How the RFU will Respond to Concerns

The RFU encourages and supports “whistle-blowing” and will, where appropriate, notify the statutory agencies of any allegation and work in partnership with them.

The wellbeing of the child must be central to any procedures involving them. The RFU will work in partnership with local children’s services and rugby clubs to support the victim and witnesses.

Incident Referral Process

Regulation 21 requires all incidents, suspicions and concerns regarding a child to be reported to the RFU Safeguarding Team as soon as possible. Once the RFU Safeguarding team receives written notification of an incident, allegation or disclosure they will assume management of the case. If the case is being investigated by the police, the Safeguarding team will liaise with them and discuss whether or not to proceed with RFU disciplinary action prior to or alongside the police investigation.

Once the RFU assumes management of the case the club should take no further action until advised to do so by the RFU or relevant authority.

The RFU will ensure that the club and Constituent Body are kept informed of procedure and progress.

Those under investigation

Under this Policy the RFU is committed, first and foremost, to protecting the interests of the child. In the course of a referral being made to the RFU or statutory agencies, individuals who are accused of causing harm will be informed of the procedures by the RFU. They may also request at any time an update on the progress of the referral. Investigations are concluded as quickly as possible to ensure that those guilty of causing harm are dealt with expeditiously and those falsely or mistakenly accused are able to return to the game with reputation intact.

Suspension from Rugby Union

A temporary suspension order or suspension order may be issued by the RFU Legal Officer in accordance with RFU Regulation 21. Please refer to the Regulations in the RFU handbook or on the RFU website for further information. The RFU procedures establish a clear route through which complaints, incidents, problems and enquiries are handled, as set out within RFU Regulation 21.

Safeguarding Contacts

CB Safeguarding Manager

Alan Heinzman

Alan.heinzman@btopenworld.com

Home: 0191 2362987

Mobile: 07511 644483

CB Assistant Safeguarding Manager

Gary Robson

garyrobson1@gmail.com

Home: 01434 634182

Mobile: 07717 201931

General Advice

CB Chair of Youth

Lee Weatherley

leeweatherley73@gmail.com

Mobile: 07590427459

County Administrator

Claire Sharpe

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Rugby Development Officer

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