Alternative Forms of Rugby
Policy Guidance for Clubs Season 2023-24

Alternative Forms of Rugby include:

Walking Rugby
Touch Rugby (Adult)
Touch Rugby (Mixed Male and Female)
Touch Rugby (Adult & Youth Mixed Team)
Sevens Rugby (Adult and Age Grade)

Last season there were a number of Safeguarding incidents around alternative forms of rugby, and in particular, Touch Rugby.

The Northumberland Rugby Union Board of Directors fully support clubs attempting to grow inclusive rugby and make it accessible to as wide an audience as possible. However, there is a duty upon us all to make all forms of rugby as safe as possible, we have therefore issued the following guidelines for clubs which must be followed for season 2023-24.

The guidelines are there to protect the club, the coaches and the players involved.

Policy Guidance - it is a requirement that:

1. **All participants involved in alternative forms of the game MUST be registered on the RFU GMS system. This applies to both adults and age grade (Under 18) players, coaches and team managers.**

2. **The organisers of the alternative form of rugby ie, Coaches and Team Managers, MUST hold a valid RFU DBS and at least one person in these positions of authority and trust MUST be in attendance if there are vulnerable players or players under the age of 18 participating.**

3. **The organisers of the alternative form of rugby ie, Coaches and Team Managers, should also have taken the RFU Play IT Safe Safeguarding Course if Under 18s and/or vulnerable adults are participating in the alternative form of rugby.**

4. **To comply with Regulation 9, a qualified first aider must always be in attendance at sessions. It is suggested that a couple of people within the squad (and this can include players and does not necessarily have to be the team manager or coaches), holds an RFU 1st aid course qualification or the equivalent of Level 3 First Aid at Work. Please speak to your Club RugbySafe Lead for more advice.**
   Note, RFU 1st Aid Courses are valid for three years.

5. **A dynamic risk assessment is to be carried out prior to each session.**

6. **Clubs must include alternate forms of rugby in their annual risk assessment and audits. Safeguarding measures must be put in place to cover all forms of the game, all weathers, and all potential participants.**
   Examples include:
   a. separate changing rooms so adults are not changing with Under 18s (even if the adult is a parent) and you don't have male, female and U18s using one changing room.

b. separate shower facilities for male/female/age grade players.
c. consideration should also be given to changing room and shower layout and access as you may have to delay a group from accessing facilities whilst others use them.

Safeguarding Notes

To be able to apply for an RFU DBS, the person must be on GMS and must have completed the online "Introduction to Safeguarding" course.
Note, you can not apply for an RFU DBS until you have completed the online course.
The online course is free and can be accessed via course finder (click on "virtual courses").

If you have Under 18s or vulnerable adults participating in Walking or Touch Rugby, as a minimum, the Team Manager and Lead coach should have completed a Play It Safe course.

It is good practice for all coaches and people in a position of trust and authority to have completed a Play It Safe course.
Note, the Play It Safe Course is for any volunteer, coach or match official who is working with or who has responsibility for children within rugby.

Club Safeguarding Officers (CSO's) will be able to assist you with DBS checks, courses and general advice around Safeguarding.

If you have any questions or wish to seek further advice, please contact the County Office.

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