



Ongar Rugby Football Club

CHILD WELFARE POLICY

CLUB PRINCIPLES ON CHILD WELFARE

1. Anyone under the age of 18 should be considered as a child or young person for the purposes of this document.
2. The welfare of all children and young people is paramount.
3. All children and young people, regardless of age, gender, ability, race, religion, ethnic origin, nationality, social status or sexual orientation should be able to enjoy the game in an environment safe from abuse of any kind.
4. It is the responsibility of child protection professionals to determine whether abuse has taken place but it is everyone's responsibility within the sport of rugby union to report concerns.
5. All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately as per RFU/RFUW Policy and Procedures.
6. Working in partnership with parents/carers is essential for the protection of young people.
7. The RFU/RFUW recognises the roles and responsibilities of statutory agencies in relation to safeguarding children/young people and promoting their welfare, and is fully committed to complying with the procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children's Boards.
8. The RFU/RFUW Policy and Procedures for the Welfare of Young People is mandatory and all affiliated clubs and Constituent Bodies must appoint a Welfare Officer to ensure that the appropriate procedures are followed.

CLUB STRUCTURE FOR MANAGING CHILD WELFARE

The Club shall ensure that that a Child Welfare Officer (CWO) is appointed. The CWO will be accountable to the Club Committee and have the following duties:

- Ensure the club has a child protection policy and implementation plan
- Ensure codes of conduct are well publicised and adhered to
- In consultation with the Essex RFU Welfare officer ensure all reported incidents are managed at the appropriate level in line with RFU procedures
- Ensure all relevant club members are aware of training opportunities
- Ensure all parents are aware of the club policy on child protection and the correct protocols for voicing concerns
- Be aware of local social services and area child protection committee contacts
- Sit on relevant committees

The current Child Welfare Officer is

Philip Cranwell

Mobile 07976 547493

Telephone 01277 362082

Email ongar.minirugby@btinternet.com

CLUB PROCEDURES FOR MANAGING CASES OF ABUSE OR POOR PRACTICE

Principle

All coaches, players, parents, players and spectators have a responsibility to raise any concerns they have about the welfare of a child or the conduct of an adult towards young people.

Within a Club or rugby setting

If these concerns are within or linked to the Club's activities for children and young people, then these concerns should first be raised with the Child Welfare Officer. If the concerns involve the conduct of the Child Welfare Officer then the concerns should be escalated to the Club President or Secretary.

Outside a Club or rugby setting

If these concerns about a child or young person participating in the Club's activities but not related to the Club's activities, they can be still be raised with the Child Welfare Officer.

Process

The Child Welfare Officer will contact the RFU Child Protection Officer and Essex RFU Welfare Manager for guidance using an Incident Report Form.

If the guidance of the RFU and/or Essex RFU is that it is a case of Child abuse then the Child Welfare Officer will refer the allegation to the Police or Social Services.

If the guidance of the RFU and/or Essex RFU is that it is a case of poor practice then the Club will investigate the case following the procedure set out below:

1. In consultation with senior club officials a decision will be made whether or not to suspend, temporarily, the person accused. Each case will be considered on its merit.
2. A disciplinary hearing may be called. The panel should be made up of three club members with regard to the following criteria:
 - a. No person who has been involved in bringing the case to the disciplinary hearing should sit on the panel.
 - b. Senior management of the club must be represented.
 - c. As the case relates to poor coaching practice, experience in this field must be represented.
 - d. The Essex RFU Welfare Manager can be invited.
3. The accused will be advised of receipt of the report and provided with both copies of the reports and all witness statements.
4. The accused will be invited to attend any disciplinary hearing.
5. The accused must be given sufficient advance notice of the disciplinary hearing.
6. The accused must be given the opportunity to offer his/her side of the events and call witnesses.
7. Once the disciplinary panel reaches a decision it should be communicated to the accused and confirmed in writing and to the parents of a young person.
8. A copy of the finding must be sent to the Essex RFU Welfare Manager and RFU Child Protection Officer.
9. Possible outcomes include
 - a. Temporary suspension of coach, parent or spectator
 - b. Person may only coach whilst supervised.
 - c. Coach must undertake RFU/RFUW Safeguarding and Protecting Young People Course.
 - d. Coach must attend SCUk Good Practice and Child Protection Course.
 - e. Coach must attend appropriate RFU/RFUW Coaching Course.

RECOGNISING ABUSE IN RUGBY UNION

In order to provide young people with the best possible experiences and opportunities in the sport of 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 young people, safeguards them and promotes their welfare, but also protects all personnel from allegations of abuse or poor practice.

It is not always easy to differentiate poor practice from abuse. It is not the responsibility of employees or volunteers in the sport of rugby union to determine whether or not abuse is taking place. It is their responsibility to identify poor practice and possible abuse and to act if they have a concern about the welfare of a child or young person.

There are four main types of abuse:

1. Emotional abuse

This occurs when individuals persistently fail to show young people due care with regard to their emotional welfare, when a young person may be constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted, or be subjected to sarcasm and unrealistic pressures. There may also be over-protection, preventing young people from socialising, or bullying to perform to high expectations. The young person may lose self-confidence and may become withdrawn and nervous.

In a rugby situation, emotional abuse may occur when coaches, volunteers or parents:

- provide repeated negative feedback.
- repeatedly ignore a young player's efforts to progress.
- repeatedly demand performance levels above the young player's capability.
- over-emphasise the winning ethic.

2. Abuse by neglect

This occurs when a young person's essential needs for food, warmth and care both physical and emotional are not met.

In a rugby situation neglect may occur when:

- young players are left alone without proper supervision.
- a young player is exposed to unnecessary heat or cold.
- a young player is not provided with necessary fluids for re-hydration.
- a young player is exposed to an unacceptable risk of injury.

3. Physical abuse

This occurs when individuals including other young people, deliberately inflict injuries on a child or young person, or knowingly do not prevent such injuries. It includes injuries caused by hitting, shaking, squeezing, biting or using excessive force. It also occurs when young people are given alcohol, or inappropriate drugs, or there is a failure to supervise their access to these substances.

In a rugby situation physical abuse may also occur when:

- young players are exposed to exercise/training which disregards the capacity of the player's immature and growing body.
- young players are exposed to over-playing, over-training or fatigue.
- any person exposes young players to alcohol and gives them the opportunity to drink alcohol below the legal age or fail to supervise access to alcohol.

- young players are provided with or encouraged to take prohibited substances including performance-enhancing drugs.

4. Sexual abuse

Girls or boys can be abused by adults (both male and female) or other young people. This may include encouraging or forcing a child or young person to take part in sexual activity.

In a rugby situation sexual abuse may occur when:

- an adult uses the context of a training session to touch young people in an inappropriate sexual way.
- coaches, managers or volunteers use their position of power and authority to coerce young players into a sexual relationship.
- coaches or managers imply better progression of the player in return for sexual favours.

CLUB POLICY ON BULLYING

What is bullying?

Bullying is not always easy to define and will not always be an adult abusing a young person. It is often the case that the bully is a young person.

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim. There are three main types of bullying: physical, verbal and emotional.

Bullying can be:

- emotional - being unfriendly, excluding (emotionally and physically), tormenting (e.g. hiding rugby kit,
- threatening gestures including sending threatening texts messages.
- physical - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence.
- racist - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures.
- sexual - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments.
- homophobic - because of, or focusing on the issue of sexuality.
- verbal - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing.

Signs and symptoms

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Children and Young People have described bullying as:

- being called names.
- being teased.
- being hit, pushed, pulled, pinched, or kicked.
- having their bag, mobile or other possessions taken.
- receiving abusive text messages.
- being forced to hand over money.
- being forced to do things they do not want to do.
- being ignored or left out.
- being attacked because of religion, gender, sexuality, disability, appearance or ethnic or racial origin.

Other signs and symptoms

A child or young person:

- doesn't want to attend training or club activities.
- changes their usual routine.
- begins being disruptive during sessions.
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence.
- has possessions going missing.
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable.
- starts stammering.
- has unexplained cuts or bruises.
- is bullying other children.
- stops eating.
- is frightened to say what's wrong.

These signs and behaviours may not constitute bullying and may be symptoms of other problems. Clubmembers, coaches and volunteers need to be aware of these possible signs and report any concerns to the Club Welfare Officer or CB Welfare Manager.

In a rugby situation bullying may occur when:

- a coach adopts a win-at-all-costs philosophy.
- a player intimidates others.
- an official is over officious.

Club Principles

- Bullying of any kind is not acceptable within the Club
- The Club has a 'telling' culture and anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the Club's Child Welfare Officer
- Bullying will be taken seriously, responded to promptly, and procedures followed to deal with the situation.
- It is the responsibility of every adult working in rugby union whether professional or volunteer, to ensure that all young people can enjoy the sport in a safe enjoyable environment.

Objectives of the anti-bullying policy

- All Club members, coaches, volunteers and parents should have
- an understanding of what bullying is.
- All Club members, coaches and volunteers should know what the Club policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All players and parents should know what the RFU/RFUW/Club/
- Constituent Body policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- Players and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.

Procedures and management of bullying

1. Report bullying incidents to the Club Welfare Officer, record (using the RFU Incident Record Form). If the incident is an adult bullying a young person, the Club Welfare
2. Officer will report the incident to the RFU Child Protection Officer. If the incident is a young person bullying a young person, the Club will manage this, and can access advice and support from the Club Welfare Officer or RFU Child Protection Officer at any stage of the process.
3. Parents may be informed and asked to come to a meeting to discuss the problem.
4. If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted.
5. If mediation fails and the bullying is seen to continue the Club can initiate disciplinary action under the relevant constitution.

CLUB POLICY ON PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

Principles

Physical contact in rugby should always be intended to meet the child's needs, NOT the adult's.

The adult will only use physical contact if their aim is to:

- develop sports skills or techniques.
- to treat an injury.
- to prevent an injury or accident from occurring.
- to meet the requirements of the game.

The adult will seek to explain the nature and reason for the physical contact to the child reinforcing the teaching or coaching skill. Unless the situation is an emergency, the adult should ask the child for permission. Young people will be encouraged to voice concerns they have if any physical contact makes them feel uncomfortable or threatened.

Contact will not involve touching genital areas, buttocks, breasts or any other part of the body that might cause a child distress or embarrassment. Physical contact will always take place in an open or public environment and not take place in secret or out of sight of others.

Physical punishment

Any form of physical punishment of children is unlawful by coaches, volunteers and professionals, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour unless it is by way of restraint.

Contact as part of coaching

There are specific circumstances within the sport of rugby union which will require coaches or teachers to come into physical contact with children and young people from time to time in the course of their duties. Examples will include activities where safe practice is critical, e.g. the introduction/development of scrummaging. Adults should be aware of the limits within which such contact should properly take place, and of the possibility of such contact being misinterpreted. It should be recognised that physical contact between an adult and a child that may occur during legitimate teaching or coaching may be misconstrued or misunderstood by a pupil, parent or observer. Touching young participants, including well intentioned informal and formal gestures such as putting a hand on the shoulder or arm, can, if repeated regularly, lead to the possibility of questions being raised.

Adults in positions of responsibility will not make gratuitous or unnecessary physical contact with children and young people. It is particularly unwise to attribute frequent touching to their teaching or coaching style or as a way of relating to young participants.

Responding to distress and success

There may be occasions where a distressed young person needs comfort and reassurance which may include physical comforting such as a caring parent would give. Physical contact may also be required to prevent an accident or injury and this would be wholly appropriate. A young person or coach may also want to mark a success or achievement with a hug or other gesture. Adults will use their discretion in such cases to ensure that what is (and what is seen by others present) normal and natural does not become unnecessary and unjustified contact, particularly with the same young person over a period of time. The adult will recognise that what, to an adult may seem to be appropriate, may not be shared by a young person.

Sports science and medicine

There may be some roles within Rugby Union where physical contact is and/or a requirement of the role, particularly sports science or medicine. These tasks should only be undertaken by properly trained or qualified practitioners. This guidance does not seek to replace the specific guidance and codes of practice developed for those professionals and reference should be made to the appropriate body for that discipline.

POLICY ON RECRUITMENT OF COACHES & VOLUNTEERS

Principles

- All coaches and volunteers will be required to complete an application form and CRB check form.
- Until the satisfactory results of the CRB check are evidenced to the Club no coach or volunteer will participate in training sessions or engage with children unsupervised.
- All coaches will be required to read and agree to adhere to the Club Child Welfare Policy, especially the Coaches Code of Ethics.
- Coaches & volunteers will be expected to attend relevant training, development and planning meetings and workshops to ensure they can carry out their role to the best of their ability. These may be organised by Ongar RFC, Essex RFU, RFU or other appropriate external organisations.

COACHES CODE OF ETHICS

1. All rugby coaches must respect the rights, dignity and worth of every child and young person with whom they work and treat them equally.
2. All rugby coaches must place the physical and emotional wellbeing of all young players above all other considerations, including the development of performance.
3. The relationship that a rugby coach develops with the players with whom they work must be based on mutual trust and respect.
4. All rugby coaches must ensure that all activities undertaken are appropriate to the age, maturity, experience and ability of the players.
5. All rugby coaches will encourage young players to accept responsibility for their own behaviour and performance.
6. All rugby coaches should clarify with the young players (and their parents/carers) what is expected of them both on and off the rugby field and also what they are entitled to expect from the coach.
7. All rugby coaches should work in partnership with others within the game (officials, doctors, physiotherapists, sports scientists) to ensure the wellbeing, safety and enjoyment of all young players.
8. All rugby coaches must promote the positive aspects of the sport e.g. Fair Play. Violations of the Laws of the Game. Behaviour contrary to the spirit of the Laws of the Game or relevant regulations or the use of prohibited techniques or substances must never be condoned.

PARENTS & SPECTATORS CODE OF ETHICS

Parents and spectators will:

- Help players to achieve their objectives
- Ensure that the code of conduct is adhered to at all times
- Always encourage and applaud good play for both teams
- Never ridicule or shout at players, and show respect for coaches and referees
- Remember that players are taking part for enjoyment. Rugby should be fun.
- **Remember that all officers of the club are volunteers**

Violation of the code of conduct and action to be taken:

If a parent/guardian or spectator violates this code then the Child Welfare Officer will deal with the matter in the appropriate manner. It is essential that this is done quickly so that action can be taken to address the concern.

Action for case of inappropriate parent or spectator behaviour:

First incident – parent or spectator will be asked verbally to desist

Second incident – parent will be asked to move away from the field of play to a spectator zone (at Ongar RFC this is the decked zone in front of the pavilion)

Third incident – parents will be informed that their child's membership will be suspended and their child removed from any current activity. The parent will be asked to attend a disciplinary hearing by a committee consisting of the Club Chairman, Child Welfare Officer and another Club Officer. The Club reserves the sanction of suspension or expulsion of membership, especially in severe or repeated violations.

PLAYERS CODE OF ETHICS

Players will:

- Abide by the rules and spirit of the game
- Not use deliberate or dangerous play, poor sportsmanship or foul language
- Respect the directions of coaches at all times, both for their safety and the safety of others
- Show respect and courtesy at all times to coaches, referees, team-mates, opponents and parents/guardians
- Be gracious in victory and defeat
- Be punctual at all times
- Treat equipment with respect, and respect the facilities provided by Ongar Rugby Club
- Behave in a manner which will not put another person at risk, for example kicking a ball in the direction of a person or persons

Violation of the code of conduct and action to be taken:

If as a parent/guardian, player, coach or observer you feel that part of the code of conduct is being broken, it is essential that this is raised with the Child Welfare Officer, who will deal with the matter in the appropriate manner. It is essential that this is done quickly so that action can be taken to address the concern.

In cases of inappropriate player behaviour each instance will be noted with the coach. If this behaviour is disruptive to the enjoyment of the session of other player and coaches, action will be taken.

Action for case of inappropriate player behaviour:

First incident – player will be told to correct behaviour in session

Second incident – player will be asked to stand on sidelines for remainder of session, and a letter will be sent to the parent, addressing points of concern as outlined in Code of Conduct

Third incident – parent will be asked to attend sessions for set period of time

Subsequent incidents – a letter will be sent to the parent or guardian asking them not to allow the player to attend sessions for a set period of time

In the case of severe incidents, a disciplinary committee consisting of Youth Chairman, Incident Officer and Coach will discuss the incident with the parent or guardian, and decide on a course of action

CLUB POLICY ON THE USE OF PHOTOGRAPHIC & VIDEO IMAGES

The Club will adhere to the RFU policy on the use of photographic and video images set out in the 8 key principles below.

1. Ensure parents/guardian/young person have granted their consent for the taking and publication of photographic images and have signed and returned the Parent/Guardian and Young Person Permission Form.
2. All young people must be appropriately dressed for the activity taking place.
3. Photography or recording should focus on the activity rather than a particular young person and personal details, which might make a young person vulnerable, such as their exact address, must never be revealed.
4. Where an individual has achieved success in the game (e.g. when selected for representative side or showing triumph over adversity) permission must be gained from parent/guardian and young person to use photographs/recordings and relevant details.
5. Where possible, to reflect the RFU/RFUW Equity Policy photographs/recordings should represent the diverse range of young people participating in rugby.
6. Anyone taking photographs or recording at any rugby event must have a valid reason for doing so and seek the permission of the organisers/persons in charge.
7. They should make themselves known to the event organisers/ persons in charge and be able to identify themselves if requested during the course of the event.
8. All concerns regarding inappropriate or intrusive photography should be reported in confidence to the RFU Child Protection.

Additionally, the Club has three other principles:

- The Club will ensure that Registration forms include a consent clause which parents will have the opportunity to decline.
- Parents/guardians can request the withdrawal of any image featuring their child at any time regardless of any earlier consent.
- The Club will only use images for the promotion of the Club, its activities and the sport of rugby union in an accurate and appropriate portrayal.